

Lesson 2 – “Leaving the Keys For Parents”

Text Translation (English)

My parents have lived in their countryside home for their entire life, their attachment towards this home is like how attached a **breastfeeding infant**¹ is to their mother. Therefore **for many years**², my parents have rarely left the old house. Although grandma, uncle and aunt are all in the city, my parents are determined not to live in the city.

Last year, with the efforts of my wife and I, we finally bought a new house in the county with the money we earned. After the new home was completely renovated, my parents were very happy when they entered into the new place. My wife proposed leaving a key for the parents, but they refused. On that day, my father was drunk, when he woke up, it was **already dark**³. My wife and I strongly **asked him to stay**⁴ for a night in the new home and return back the next day, but they still insisted on taking the late night car ride back to the old home.

After a while, my wife and I were ready to go work out of town. The new house could only be **locked up**⁵ and left vacant. The day before I left, my father came from hometown **to send us off**⁶. My father quietly pulled me aside and said: “Your mother said, you should still leave the new home keys to us. If your mom or myself ever recall, we will come and live for a few days, **and since we’re here anyway we can**⁷ dry your quilt in the sun, and do some cleaning.” As my father was saying this, he was whispering and **was blushing**⁸, like a shy kid.

¹ 没断奶的孩子: unweaned child. 断奶 “to get weaned” lit. means to “cut off” (断) the supply of milk (奶)

² 长年以来: 长年 = many years; 以来 = since

³ 天色已晚: “天色” lit. sky’s color, usually means “the time of day”.

⁴ 留: to remain, to stay. It can also mean to *make* someone stay, as in this case.

⁵ 上锁: to lock up

⁶ 送我们: “送”我们去机场, 就是把我们带到机场。

⁷ 顺便: recall from HSK 4 that 顺便 means “by passing, on the way.” “顺” means to go along the right, or easy direction; “便” is convenience.

⁸ 红着脸: recall from Lesson 1’s text “没有红过脸”. “红” is a verb here meaning “to make red”.

Half a year has passed, the time we return back home was in the middle of a winter⁹ night. We got off the long-distance bus¹⁰, my son was crying because he was very cold¹¹. My wife and I imagined opening the door to see a dusty and desolate sight, sending chills to our heart¹². As we stood downstairs, we looked up, but discovered our light is open. We went up stairs, and surprisingly¹³ my smiling parents opened the door, the warm atmosphere immediately reached us¹⁴. The room was clean, the heater was on, the water was warm, the bedroom bed's quilt is spread neatly, and the delicious smell of food wafted towards me.

Father said, "Your mom received a phone call, and she knows that you all are coming back tonight, so we came here in the new home and was busy here all day¹⁵." As it turned out, my parents wanted me to leave the keys to them because right when we come back from out of town, we can feel the warmth of the home immediately! I got choked up¹⁶ and started to shed tears.

—Modified from *Chinese TV Newspaper*

⁹ 深冬: "deep winter" is when it's coldest.

¹⁰ 长途车: "车"意思是“公共汽车”。

¹¹ 冻得大哭: V+得+result construction. The result of 冻 is “大哭” (cry loudly).

¹² 心里发寒: 发寒, 就是觉得冷。

¹³ 竟: 就是“竟然”, 也就是“居然”。(我们在HSK 4语法4.6.1学过“竟然”, 在HSK 5语法5.1.3学过“居然”。)

¹⁴ 扑面而来: an idiom, meaning heat, wind, scent, or shockwave overwhelmed you. Imagine a big dust storm coming at you, that's 扑面而来 – it comes like a beast pouncing at your face.

¹⁵ 忙了一天: recall that 忙 can be a an adjective (busy), and it can be a verb, meaning “to be busy”. 你忙什么呢? 我忙工作呢。

¹⁶ 鼻子一酸: 就是鼻子感觉酸了一下。“酸” lit. means sour. But if you get a cold, your nose feels “酸”。When water goes in your nose the wrong way, that feels 酸。When you're about to cry, your nose also gets 酸。