

My name is Sherry Xu, I was born in China. After my marriage to Raymond Zhang, a beloved daughter was born to us on March 30, 1994, and we named her Dongyue Zhang, her English name was Cecilia.

I understand that this video recording is very important, I need to tell the judge and all those present, how we spent the 161 days and nights since our daughter disappeared and until we discovered she was killed; that's how long Oct. 20th the day Cecilia was taken is till March 27 the day Cecilia was found. 161 days. From that horrible discovery until today, how we spent these 720 days and nights, that's how many days it's been from March 27th the day Cecilia was found until today. 720 days and nights, and how our family sank into a deep abyss. But please forgive me; I am unable to do this.

I am unwilling to talk about my pain; unwilling, because even being misunderstood, mistrusted, and slandered is nothing. What kind of pain can compare with the ^{agoni} agony of facing death? Cecilia can no longer speak. Who can tell me what kind of pain she had ^{endured} endured? Who can tell me? Cecilia was only nine years old, but she had to face murder totally alone. As a mother, I gave birth to

her, but I was unable to protect her, so what face do I have to talk about my own pain? I cannot.

I am unwilling to talk about my pain, I cannot tell the whole world my agony, and allow my beloved family and friends to experience once more the sadness my suffering has brought them. I have lost my only flesh and blood, and her departure has hurt all the hearts of those who loved her; there has been too much suffering in this extended loving family. I can no longer withstand the tears and sobbing of the elderly grandparents, I cannot bear the looks of older brothers and sisters that are filled with sadness and pity. I am fully convinced that happiness can be shared, but pain can only be borne in silence. I am reluctant for my relatives to suffer again, and I cannot bear to watch the sorrow of my beloved and loving relatives. I cannot ever bear to talk about my feelings about Cecilia with my husband, who is the most intimate person that I have in this world. Neither of us had any will left to live after talking about it once in 2004. Therefore, I cannot talk about my pain, because I have no strength left to bear the consequences of being so open.

I only want to say a few words for Cecilia.

Spring has arrived. Looking at nature springing back to life, the lovely green lawns and beautiful flowers, kids playing on the lawn; where is my Cecilia, where is she? She can no longer hold my hand, singing children's tunes, the way we used to do as we went home after school. She can no longer run and laugh on the grass; but forever separated from all the wonderful things in this world. Where is she? She is lying in a cold grave, the warmth of spring cannot awaken her; and yet, how she loved life!

In her homework "My Wishes" that she left behind, she told me she loved her school so much that she wished her classroom would appear in her bedroom. But she can no longer go to school, and cannot play with her friends. She loved nature so much, she wished for all the animals to become her friends; she wished that human beings can create their own meat for food without killing animals; but the irony is that she herself was cruelly killed by her fellow "human" kind in order to fulfill his greedy desire. She wished that the world would be filled with love and equality, and wished that there would be no more killings. But her own right to live in this world was snatched from her. She was only nine years old, nine years old; what kind of life was this?

I did not see her remains, as I was advised best not to look at her remains. She was abandoned in the wilderness by her murderer, and was covered by snow for 161 days. It was the howling of a wolf that called the attention of the neighbors, and led to her discovery three days before her birthday. And on that very day, we were waiting for the Police and some impostors of the kidnapers to make an "exchange"; we were fantasizing in vain that on her birthday, she could return to our embrace. How cruel is the human heart!

The last I saw of Cecilia was her pair of footprints. A pair of footprints. Pain cannot be conveyed by words. All these cannot be expressed simply by the word, "pain".

Cecilia will never come back, she is gone forever. For me, I hope that what people will remember from the trial is her smile, her love and fervent wishes for life and this world; and I wish that no more mothers would lose their children, and hope that there will not be anymore killer of children. Mothers share the same tears. What in this world can be equal to life? A mere nine-year-old, a life that is full of love; a sweet and wise life; a fragile and innocent life. How many years of imprisonment must a killer serve in order to be equal to that???

Lastly, I would like to read a poem which I wrote in Cecilia's 10th Birthday.

Dearest Cecilia:

 Birthday wishes (made two days before the news arrived)

Baby, oh dearest baby
birthday candles shining bright
wish you might
at this very moment
blow those weeping candle light
console Daddy and Mommy's
bleeding hearts

Baby, oh dearest baby
your laughter,
singing in our ears
your perfect kisses
imprinting on mommy's face
yet, WHERE ARE YOU?
our Cecilia?

Baby, oh dearest baby
one hundred and sixty two days
these one hundred and sixty two days and nights
our hearts and our loves are with you
never apart

Baby, oh dearest baby
our love to you
like a pulsing heart
lives everlasting
as long as there's life

Our dearest Cecilia
Let us pray to God
Soon you will be home
We will all be together
praising God's holy name
ever after

Sherry du

May 3, 2006