



NATIONAL CHRYSLER RETIREMENT ORGANIZATION

We Protect, Inform, Educate and Communicate!



NCRO AGING DOCUMENTS

NCRO Aging Information Sub-Committee

THE DEATH PROCESS

Zhou Daxin's latest novel, *THE SKY GETS DARK SLOWLY*, is a sensitive exploration of old age and the complex, hidden emotional worlds of the elderly in a rapidly ageing population.

In it he writes, "...Many elderly speak as though they know everything, but of old age they are in fact as ignorant as children. Many elderly are in fact, completely unprepared for what they are to face when it comes to getting old and the road that lay ahead of them.

In the time between a person turning 60 years old, as they begin to age, right until all the lights go out and the sky gets dark, there are some situations to keep in mind, so that you will be prepared for what is to come, and you will not panic.

ONE. The people by your side will only continue to grow smaller in number. People in your parents' and grandmothers' generation have largely all left, whilst many of your peers will increasingly find it harder to look after themselves, and the younger generations will all be busy with their own lives. Even your wife or husband may depart earlier than you, or that you would expect, and what might then come are days of emptiness. You will have to learn how to live alone, and to enjoy and embrace solitude.

TWO. Society will care less and less for you. No matter how glorious your previous career was or how famous you were, ageing will always transform you into a regular old man and old lady. The spotlight no longer shines on you, and you have to learn to contend with standing quietly in one corner, to appreciate the hubbub and views that come after you, and you must overcome the urge to be envious or grumble.

THREE. The road ahead will be rocky and full of precarity. Fractures, cardio-vascular blockages, brain atrophy, cancer...these are all possible guests that could pay you a visit any time, and you would not be able to turn them away. You will have to live with illness and ailments, to view them as friends, even; do not fantasize about stable, quiet days without any trouble in your body. Maintaining a positive mentality and getting appropriate, adequate exercise is your duty, and you have to encourage yourself to keep at it consistently.

FOUR. Prepare for bed-bound life, a return to the infant state. Our mothers brought us into this world on a bed, and after a journey of twists and turns and a life of struggle, we return to our starting point – the bed –and to the state of having to be looked after by others. The only difference being, where we once had our mothers to care for us, when we prepare to leave, we may not have

our kin to look after us. Even if we have kin, their care may never be close to that of your mother's; you will more likely than not, be cared for by nursing staff who bear zero relation to you, wearing smiles on their face all whilst carrying weariness and boredom in their hearts. Lay still and don't be difficult; remember to be grateful.

FIVE. There will be many swindlers and scammers along the way. Many of them know that the elderly have lots of savings, and will endlessly be thinking of ways to cheat them of their money through scam phone calls, text messages, mail, food and product samples, get-rich-quick schemes, products for longevity or enlightenment... basically, all they want is to get all the money. Beware, and be careful, hold your money close to you. A fool and his money are soon parted, so spend your pennies wisely.

Before the sky gets dark, the last stretches of life's journey will gradually get dimmer and dimmer, naturally it will be harder to see the path ahead that you are treading towards, and it will be harder to keep going forward. As such, upon turning 60, it would do us all well to see life for what it is, to cherish what we have, to enjoy life whilst we can, and to not take on society's troubles or your children's and grandchildren's affairs for yourself.

Stay humble, don't act superior on account of your own age and talk down to others – this will hurt yourself as much as it will hurt others. As we get older, all the better should we be able to understand what respect is and what it counts for. In these later days of your lives, you have to understand what it means, to let go of your attachments, to mentally prepare yourself. The way of nature is the way of life; go with its flow, and live with equanimity.

A REFLECTION ON AGING

*Hardly the day started and ... it is already six o'clock in the evening.
Barely arrived on Monday and it's already Friday.
... and the month is almost over.
... and the year is almost up.
... and already 50 or 60 or 70 years of our lives have passed.*

*... and we realize that it is too late to go back...
So... Let's try to take full advantage of the time we have left ...
Let's not stop looking for activities that we like...
Let's put color in our grayness...
Let's smile at the little things in life that put balm in our hearts.
And yet, we must continue to enjoy serenely the time that remains.*

*Let's try to eliminate the 'a er'...
I do it a er...
I will say a er...
I will think about it a er...
We leave everything for 'later' as if 'a er' was ours.
Because what we do not understand is that:
a er, the coffee cools...
a er, priorities change...
a er, the charm is broken...
a er, health passes...
a er, the children grow up...
a er, the parents get older...
a er, the promises are forgotten...
a er, the day becomes the night...
a er, life ends...
And all that 'a er', we find it's often too late...*

*So... leave nothing for 'later'...
Because in always waiting for later, we can lose the best moments,
the best experiences,
the best friends,
the best family...
The day is today... The moment is now...
We are no longer at the age where we can afford to postpone until tomorrow what needs to be done right away*