

Mrs. Duan, a passionate musician, dancer, and shopkeeper, has gone through many ups and downs in her life. Just recently turning 60, she is proud of who she is and loves her family very much. She, her husband, her son, and her two grandsons all love music and dance as the hobby is passed down through generations. Mrs. Duan currently owns a yarn shop, and makes clothing whenever she can, while her husband is a professional Dongjing musician who practices and performs in Xia Guan. Her grandson has studied the guitar for years, and her daughter plays the piano. Mrs. Duan believes that to fully study an instrument, a student must have a teacher in order to better master the instrument rather than self-studying. Her boiling passion for music has influenced her to learn many traditional Chinese instruments. Once in a while, she even enjoys trying new western instruments, such as the guitar and the flute. Mrs. Duan and her husband both love to perform for audiences. Despite her aging, Mrs. Duan is still very active and loves to dance in the evening with her friends and perform for special occasions in the Dali area.

As a young child, she lived through the Great Leap Forward as well as the Cultural Revolution. Hence, she never finished school and was commanded to work in the fields. She says that most of her free time was spent harvesting in the fields. Mrs. Duan also talked about a time of suffering during a Japanese Invasion, and states that the Japanese were cruel and merciless while the Chinese were more passive and obedient. She believes that life in Xizhou has improved significantly since her youth, and has never been happier than she is now. She says that currently, there is more to eat for everyone in Xizhou, and the area is much more beautiful. Although experiencing harsh events through international relations in the past, she has heard great things about the United States of America and has always wanted to go there. However, she believes that it is a bit late for her to go and that she has lost the chance.

Apart from that, Mrs. Duan has also undergone multiple surgeries throughout her lifetime. As a child, she did not receive enough nutrition through the food that she was given, because of China's declining economy, which affected her health in her later years. When she became older, she experienced a malfunction with an internal organ in her abdominal area and therefore needed surgery. After her first surgery, she was no longer allowed to eat certain foods and proteins that could worsen her situation. After 6 surgeries regarding the same malfunction and with each surgery further weakening her, she gained a large number of stitches on the skin outside of her stomach and felt frustrated. The surgeries all made mobility more difficult and almost reached a point where she couldn't enjoy her hobbies anymore. In the past, she also had surgery on her neck due to the popping of a vein within the neck. This surgery caused another visible scar that is located on the left side of her neck. The neck injury prevented her from being able to sing the highest notes that she could once reach before. Because she didn't have as much vocal range, singing became a less enjoyable hobby. Recently, she has also been injured on the leg by one of her chickens, which has prohibited her evening dancing activities. She has also had other leg and knee troubles in the past. Despite the pain and difficulty with each surgery, Mrs. Duan was always able to cope

with it. She still takes pleasure in dancing, even though her legs and knees do not allow her to dance as she could before. She also added that she once believed that she would never make it over 60 years old, and was depressed and felt dejected. Unsure if she would live any longer, she could only prepare for the worst. She told her friends to be prepared if in the next year, she was gone. However, now that she has reached her 60 year old mark, she believes that people should live in the moment and be happier. She also said that her husband helped her through all her tough times and surgeries and supported her when she was feeling the most depressed.

As a woman of 60 years of age, Mrs. Duan has experienced quite a lot in her lifetime. Despite the many obstacles she has faced, Mrs. Duan is still a strong and loving soul; as determined and as happy as she could possibly be for all that she has been through. From her touching story, we can learn to “live in the moment, and try to remain happy”.