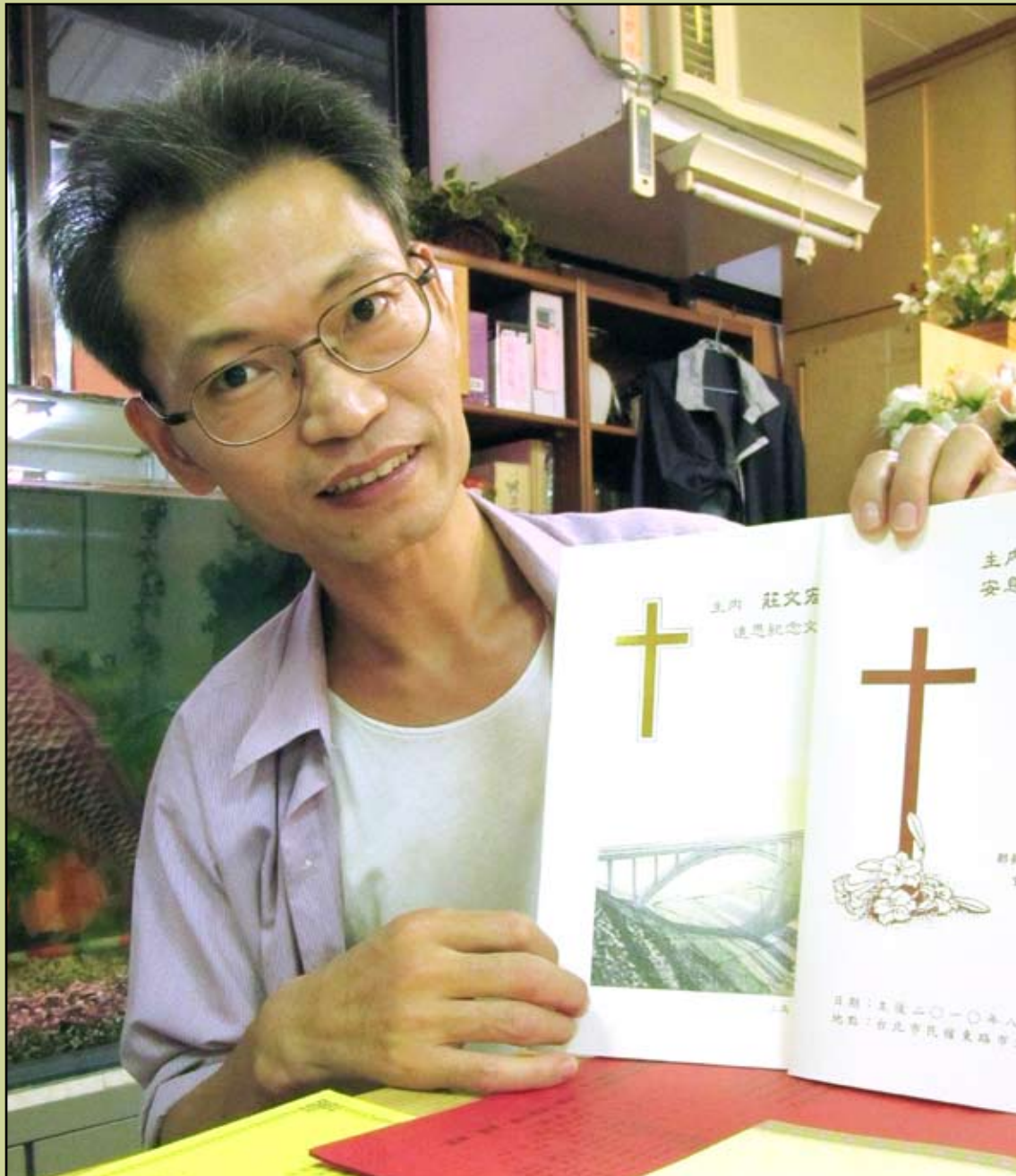


# Much to learn for obituary notice writers

## 最後ㄟ批信 訃聞學問大



While we may write many postcards and letters throughout our lives, perhaps the hardest thing to write is an obituary notice. But composing an obituary notice requires a certain amount of knowledge and expertise because there are many rules and traditions that must be observed.

Since the family **lineage** that appears on the obituary notice can be used as a basis for apportioning the deceased's assets, people might compete to be listed as the eldest grandson of the deceased. In one case, a woman had an affair with a married man. When her father passed away the married man was listed as his son in law. When the **adulterer's** wife found out, it was necessary to do an emergency reprint of the obituary notice to destroy this cast iron evidence of infidelity.

Furthermore, obituary notices should be

restricted to the colors yellow, red and white, decorated by a simple lotus flower or **crucifix**. The contents of the notice should not only invoke memories of the dead person but also express sorrow about the passing.

It's not advisable to send out too many obituary notices, and 100 should be enough for most families. The family of a politician once sent out over 5,000, setting a record for obituary notice printing.

While obituary notices are not legally binding, they can be used as a basis for allocating the deceased's assets. Since some Taiwanese people give male heirs precedence over females, many members of the older generation will leave a special **inheritance** to the eldest grandson, making the issue of who is the eldest grandson a matter of special affection. Generally speaking, the eldest grandson is the eldest son of the eldest son, and is not decided by age.

A funeral home worker surnamed Lin said that the most absurd case she ever encountered involved a single woman who was in a relationship with a married man. Before the woman's father passed away, he treated the man as his son-in-law, so when it came to printing the obituary notices, the adulterer was given the title of son-in-law. Amazingly, when then adulterer's wife found out they had to reprint all the obituary notices to try and sweep the matter under the carpet.

The contents of some obituary notices dispense with tradition altogether. Some people who are soon to depart may leave a message to their friends and relatives saying, "Dear friends, it's time for me to take the next step." Others have said to their siblings or spouse, "Let's continue our relationship in the next life."

Some people are willing to spend NT\$100 for a personalized obituary notice, which works out at 10 times the cost of a regular one. Then there are other people who are content with simply sending out a text message announcing the time and place of the funeral service.

(LIBERTY TIMES, TRANSLATED BY TAIJING WU)

人生走一回，寫過無數張風景明信片，但最後一張卡片-訃聞-可能就無法自己操刀。而訃聞寫起來也沒那麼簡單，因為寫訃聞必須遵守許多民俗相關的規則，且如要將訃聞寫好的話，那學問可大了。

由於訃聞上的輩份排序可做為分家產的證據，有人爭著當長孫；還有人與已婚男子交往，在父親訃聞上讓男友列名「女婿」，被對方的太太知道，緊急重印訃聞，避免多了「妨害家庭」的鐵證。

此外，訃聞設計也不再非得黃紅白三色大卡，配上蓮花或十字架；內容也不僅僅是「音容宛在」，溫馨不帶感傷，反而更動人。

訃聞發送不宜多，多數家屬連基本一百張訃聞量都發不完，但過去也曾有民代家人過世，一次印了五千張訃聞，創下訃聞印刷的數量。

訃聞雖不具法律效力，卻可以做為分家產的依據。部分台灣人有重男輕女觀念，許多長輩會特別留一份遺產給長孫，使得誰是長孫受矚目。一般來說，長孫是大兒子生的第一個男孩，而非依男孫的年紀大小判定。

一位林姓殯葬業員工表示，遇過最荒謬的案例，是一位單身女性與已婚男友交往。該女性的父親生前一直把對方當女婿，所以訃聞上，就把男子列入女婿欄。不料，被對方妻子知道，最後重印訃聞了事。

訃聞內容同樣顛覆傳統，有往生者在訃聞上跟親友道別，寫著「各位好朋友，我先走一步！」也有兄弟姊妹或夫妻，在訃聞中相約下輩子要「再續情緣」。

有家屬願意花一張近百元的代價，訂做個性化訃聞，相較於量化訃聞，得多付十倍價錢；但也有人直接透過手機簡訊，通知親友公祭的時間及地點。

(自由時報記者楊久瑩)

Left: Print shop owner Chang Chao-chin, explains the differences between various kinds of obituary notice on Aug. 13.

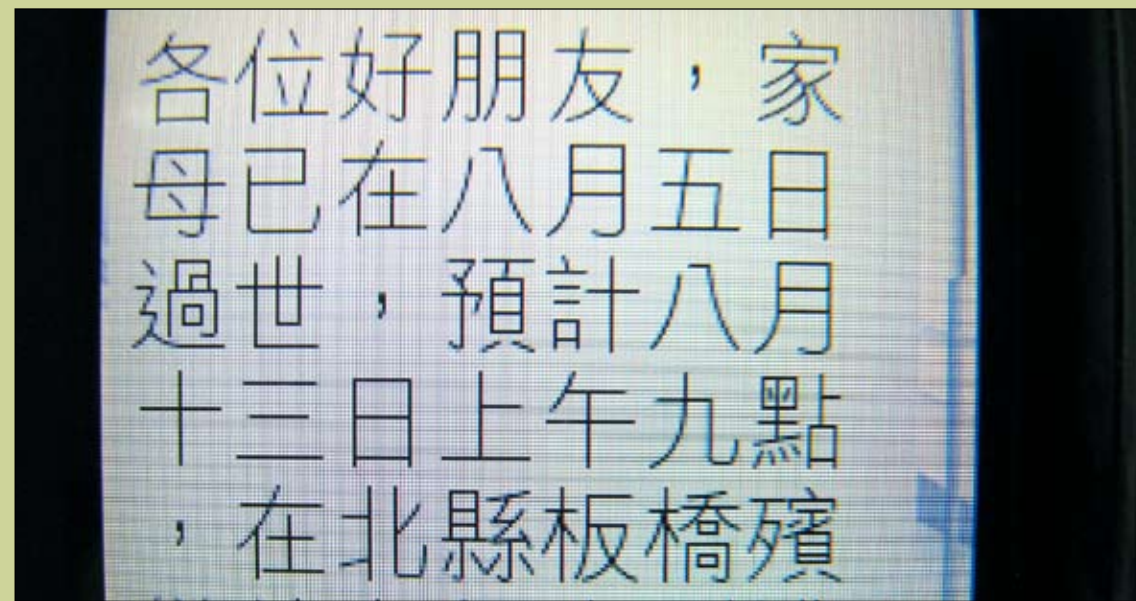
Below: Undated picture of a text message notifying family and friends of a forthcoming funeral service.

PHOTOS: YANG JEOU-YING

左圖：訃聞印刷廠老板張朝琴，說明不同訃聞的差別。

下圖：為了環保，陸續有人透過手機簡訊告知親友告別式的訊息。

照片：自由時報記者楊久瑩



### TODAY'S WORDS

#### 今日單字

#### 1. **lineage** /'liːnɪdʒ/ n.

血統 (xie2 tong3)

**例：**Steve can trace his lineage back to the 18th century.  
(史提夫的血統可以追溯到第十八世紀。)

#### 2. **adulterer** /ə'dʌltərə/ n.

通姦者 (tong1 jian1 zhe3)

**例：**Allen denied the newspaper allegations that he was an adulterer.  
(艾倫否認報紙的指控說他是個通姦者。)

#### 3. **crucifix** /'krʊsə'fɪks/ n.

十字架 (shi2 zi4 jia4)

**例：**Lisa has a small tattoo of a crucifix on her shoulder.  
(麗莎的肩膀上有個小十字架的刺青。)

#### 4. **inheritance** /ɪn'hɛrɪtəns/ n.

遺產 (yi2 chan3)

**例：**The family have been arguing over the inheritance for months.  
(家人們吵遺產的事情已經好幾個月。)