

西南聯大 英文課

有聲珍藏版

Freshman

Readings

in

English

陳福田編
羅選民等譯

中和出版
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中

紀念

國立西南聯合大學建校 80 週年

有聲珍藏版



西南聯大舊址（1946年春）

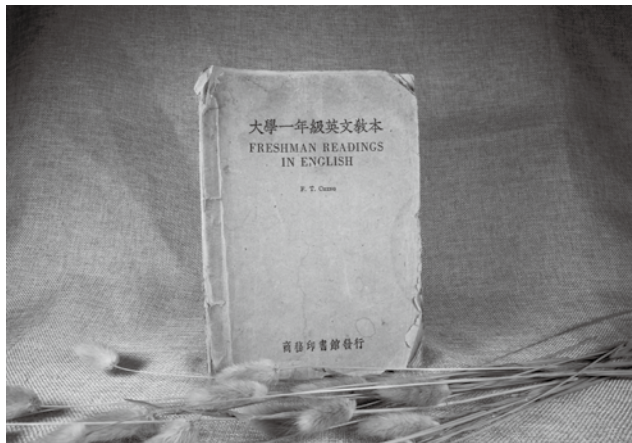
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西南聯大外國語文學系師生合影



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本書前身《大學一年級英文教本》舊書影

序

西南聯大的歷史雖然不到十年，卻成為中國教育史上的一座豐碑，堪稱世界教育史上的奇跡。在那樣一種戰火紛飛、艱苦卓絕的條件下，她在不同的學科中培養了大批未來的國家棟樑之才，真可謂群星燦爛，蔚為奇觀。如果我們問，當今中國外國語言文學界，為何不能像早期西南聯大外文系那樣，培養出諸如錢鍾書、曹禺、穆旦、李賦寧、王佐良、許國璋那樣的大師級人物？這個問題確實會困惑許多人。如果僅僅說那是一個產生大師的時代，這恐怕缺乏足夠的說服力。陳寅恪先生在紀念王國維碑文裡強調的「獨立之精神，自由之思想」或許是一個重要原因。這種「精神獨立」和「思想自由」釋放出來的人文關懷和學術氛圍聚集了一批學識卓越的教授，在他們的教導下，學生放眼世界，以報效國家為己任，發奮學習，勤於思考，最終成為國家之棟樑之才。

在西南聯大外文系的那些學養深厚的教授中，系主任陳福田是其中一位。他主編的《西南聯大英文課》課本（原名《大學一年級英文教本》），將先進的教育理念融入英語教學之中，在提升英語閱讀技能，欣賞英語範文、西方經典之外，更重要的是傳遞了一種深切的人文關懷和高尚的道德情操。閱讀這類教材，學生學到的不是一鱗半爪的語言知識，或者獵奇的故事情節。在這裡，學生知道何為教育，何為學，如何學，為誰學，如何學有所為。在這裡，學生的英文能力得以加強，健全人格得以培養，精神世界得以昇華。放眼當今中國之外語界，具有如此境界的英語教材恐已微乎其微。

《西南聯大英文課》課本是為培養通識人才、博雅之士而編寫的。它着眼未來，追求內涵，厚積薄發，與時下中國外語界魚龍混雜的英文速

成教材相比，具有天壤之別。這部教材有幾個特色。

首先，它扎根於中國社會的土壤之中。課文選材旨在培養中國未來的文化精英，為改革舊制、構建中國的現代性而做好鋪墊。在教材的前三篇課文中，編者向我們展示了西方學者眼中的中國，意在喚起西方的注意和中國國民的覺醒。《貧瘠的春天》是諾貝爾文學獎獲得者賽珍珠的作品。當春天來臨時，生活在水深火熱之中的農民老劉卻看不到希望，甚至對自己活着都不感到慶幸。第二、三篇《負重的牲口》《河之歌》均出自英國戲劇家、小說家毛姆的文集《在中國屏風上》。課文講述了挑夫和繃夫不堪重負的猶如牲口般的生活。

他們不停地上上下下，伴隨着無盡的勞役響起有節奏的吶喊：嘿，哟——嗨，哟。他們赤着腳，光着膀子，汗水順着臉頰直流。歌聲裡滲透着痛苦的呻吟。這是一種絕望的歎息，撕心裂肺，慘絕人寰。這是靈魂在極度痛苦中的吶喊，只不過帶着音樂的節奏罷了。那最後的音符是人類最沉痛的哭訴。生活太難，太殘酷，這是最後的絕望的抗議。那就是河之歌。（P24）

在這樣一種社會語境的參照體系中，受教育者看到的是自己生活中的真實畫面，看到的是自己千千萬萬需要得到拯救的同胞。編者希望學習者不要沉溺於象牙塔之中，而是要直面血淋淋的現實，獻身於社會改造之中，鑄造「修身、齊家、治國、平天下」的博大胸懷。

第二，它立足於教育之上。教材所選範文均是為了服務教育這個大的目標。在這個方面，所選課文有：《通識教育》《民主社會中教育之功用》《教育的目的》《甚麼是大學？》《通識學院的理論》等。

甚麼是教育？英國博物學家托馬斯·亨利·赫胥黎給出如下定義：

我認為教育就是對自然法則智慧的展現，這種展現不僅僅指各種事物及其蘊含的力量，而且也包括人類和他們的各個方面，

以及熱切希望和這些自然法則和諧相處的情感與意志的塑造。因此，在我看來，這就是所謂的教育。(P186)

記得在二十世紀九十年代，中國的高等學校掀起了一陣素質教育（實為通識教育）的高潮，教育部還對之進行大力的推廣。後來有些高校還發出培養複合型人才的呼聲。其實，後者依舊停留在簡單的技術教育層面，它關注的不是思想的訓練，而是技術的疊加。它只是工具理性層面的產物，似乎把外語加上幾門專業課程，合格的複合型外語人才和專業翻譯人才便新鮮出爐了。其實，這不過是一個美好的願望而已。而在二十世紀三十年代，陳福田先生的英語課本就已經將經典的教育理念運用於英語教學之中，用經典的文章來啟發學生的思維，在今天看來，這仍然是發聾振聵之舉。

如果有人要問，通識教育與技術教育的區別在何處？受過通識教育的人應該是甚麼樣的？針對這些問題，我們完全可以在《西南聯大英文課》中找到滿意的答案。

在技術學校，學生們為一份特定的工作做準備，大部分停留在感性活動的層面，做別人可以理解的工作。在職業學校，學生們倒是處在思想和原則的領域之內，但他們仍然局限於某一特定的人類旨趣，他們的認知活動也僅基於此。但是大學之所以相對於這兩類學校被稱為「通識學院」，是因為它的教育不是由特定的興趣所主宰，它不局限於任何單個的人類使命，不是孤立地理解人類的種種努力，而是將人類活動當作整體，將這種理解置於彼此的聯繫之中，置於與總體經驗即我們所謂的人們的生活的關聯之下。(P559)

我認為，一個接受過通識教育的人應該是這樣的：他年輕時受到的訓練可以使其身體服從自己的意志，就像一台機器一樣輕

鬆而愉悅地從事一切工作；他的心智好比一台敏銳、冷靜而有邏輯性的引擎，每個部分能力相當，有條不紊地運行着；他又如一台蒸汽機，待於效力各種工作，紡織思想之紗，鑄就心智之錨；他的大腦中充滿着知識，既有關於大自然的重要真理和知識，也有自然界運行的基本規律；他並不是一個不正常的苦行人，他的生活中總是充滿生機和熱情，但他的激情永遠受制於強大的意志力和敏感的良知；他學會去熱愛一切美好的事物，不論是自然之美還是藝術之美；他憎恨所有的醜惡，並做到尊人如待己。（P188）

透視目前中國外語教育之現狀，許多外語學院變成了職業的訓練場，教師忙於專業教學，灌輸學科的專業知識，教學與研究都離開了學問的原起點。更有甚者，思想已經淡出，學術已經褪色，技術有統領學術的勢頭。如果是創新技術，倒還無可厚非，問題是許多技術和方法無非西方的舶來品。遺憾的是這種簡單的重複應用並沒有讓我們的一些教授心虛，其中還會有人覺得自己已手握倚天劍屠龍刀，可以發令於學術界。在這種氣候下，博雅教育的生態環境必將遭到踐踏，學生得到的教育不過是工具訓練而已。

即便對於專業學者和人文學者，《通識學院的理論》一文中都有這麼一段精彩的論述：

現在如果有人選擇只關注自己的業務領域我並不反對，但如果一個人這樣做是因為他不懂其他業務領域的知識，或是因為他不了解使他的業務變得有理據、有意義的任何相關領域的知識，那我們就可以說雖然此人很專注於自己的業務，但他並不通曉，並不理解它們。這樣的人，從今天所要求的「通識教育」的角度看，與不懂自己買賣的買賣人和只從事自己專業的職業人士沒有本質差別。（P564）

這種論述來自學術界的一個普遍的看法：真正的學者只關心自己的學術研究，甚至是兩耳不聞窗外事。「如果一位學者冒險去探索自己領域與周圍領域的關係，他很容易成為知識普及工作者、文人、思辨者，或者最不好的結果是變得與科學研究背道而馳。」(P563-564)在中國的外語界，不是沒有持這樣觀點的學者，這也許是中國學術界為尋求規範而需要共同度過的一個陣痛時期。歸根結底，這只是一種片面和不成熟的表現。首先，知識首先體現為網狀的整體，就像一個蜘蛛網一樣，一切均指向其中心原點；或者說，知識由中心的原點出發，無限地指向未來，而知識的每個節點都在其中發生作用。其次，在當今的學術界，傳統學科已趨向飽和，學術研究和發現已接近瓶頸，同為這個時代的學者，如果誰持有通識和博雅的教育，就更容易發現新的增長點，產生新的理論和知識。課文中有這樣一段描寫：「他與他們一樣將自己封閉於狹窄的個人興趣之內，而從來不花腦力從整體上理解自己的經驗。遺憾的是，我們大學裡越來越多的席位都被這些僅有特定興趣，掌握專業化知識的人佔據。」(P564)這種理解來自一個世紀以前的西方學者、教育家，我們不得不感歎我們在教育理念上與西方的一些先哲相比，還存在一定的差距。

第三，課本由經典構成。全書共收錄四十二篇課文，涉及文學、教育學、政治學、哲學等。該書選文多樣，有小說、散文、論說文、傳記等。所選英文文章，必出自大家之手，如毛姆、賽珍珠、蘭姆、梭羅、愛倫·坡、羅素等，其中不乏中國的作者，如胡適。這些文章不僅語言優美，更重要的是，它們充滿了深邃的思想、睿智的對話和審美的體驗。

經典對大學教育十分重要，它是文化記憶的基本元素。經典需要一代又一代學者的解讀、闡釋、重構。在無窮循環的闡釋與演繹中，經典猶如美酒佳釀，時間越長，其味越醇。經典作家的聲譽獨立於大眾讀者而存在，經典作品的甘醇伴隨每一位接受過博雅教育之士的生命中的每一個時刻，須臾不曾分離。課本選有《經典之所以為經典》一文，可以告訴學生為何要讀經典，如何去讀經典：

所謂經典著作，就是那些作品，它們能夠給那些對文學表現出持久且濃厚興趣的少數人帶來快樂。這種快樂感之所以存在，是因為這類少數人願意體驗新的快感，於是懷揣一顆永無止境的好奇心，投入於永不止步的再發現當中。成就一部經典之作並不倚仗於倫理道德。經典作品能夠流芳百世，並不是因為其符合某種正典標準，也不是因為其備受關注而免受疏忽，而是因為經典作品是快樂的源泉。（P334）

其實，陳福田先生主編的《西南聯大英文課》課本本身就是一個經典。編者高屋建瓴，以超人的學識，以深邃的思想，薈集了人文社會科學的優秀文章。這些文章具有跨學科的、多層次的特色，都是可讀性極強的範文。閱讀這些文章，能給人以震撼，能給人以感悟，能給人以啟迪，能給人以方向，能給人以力量。課本不僅僅是針對西南聯大的學生，而是面向未來的中國教育。中譯出版社發現這部教材，並深入挖掘，重新編輯，邀請清華大學、北京大學、南開大學、北京外國語大學等多校教師聯合翻譯其中的英文課文，編輯成英漢雙語課本，這於中國外語界，甚至中國教育界，都是一件功德無量的事情。

是為序。

羅選民

2016年歲末寫於廣外雲溪居

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BARREN SPRING

By Pearl S. Buck



BARREN SPRING, from *The First Wife and Other Stories*, by Pearl Sydenstricker Buck, New York, The John Day Company, 1933, pp. 279–283.

Pearl Sydenstricker Buck (1892–1973), American novelist. Her parents were missionaries in China, so she was brought up in our country. She was married, first, to John Lossing Buck, at one time professor of Rural Economics at the University of Nanking. This early part of her life she included in her biography of her mother, in her novel *The Exile*, published in 1935. In the same year she divorced her husband to marry her present husband Richard J. Walsh, owner of the John Day Publishing House. She still writes under the name of Mrs. Pearl S. Buck. *The Good Earth*, generally considered as her best novel on China, was awarded the Pulitzer Prize in 1932 for being the best novel published for the last year in America.



Liu, the farmer, sat at the door of his one-room house. It was a warm evening in late February, and in his thin body he felt the coming of spring. How he knew that the time had now come when sap should stir in trees and life begin to move in the soil he could not have told himself. In other years it would have been easy enough. He could have pointed to the willow trees about the house, and shown the swelling buds. But there were no more trees now. He had cut them off during the bitter winter when they were starving for food and he had sold them one by one. Or he might have pointed to the pink-tipped buds of his three peach trees and his six apricot trees that his father had planted in his day so that now, being at the height of their time, they bore a load of fruit every year. But these trees were also gone. Most of all, in any other year than this he might have pointed to his wheat fields, where he planted wheat in the winter when the land was not needed for rice, and where, when spring was moving into summer, he planted the good rice, for rice was his chief crop. But the land told nothing, this year. There was no wheat on it, for the flood had covered it long after wheat should have been planted, and it lay there cracked and like clay but newly dried.

Well, on such a day as this, if he had his buffalo and his plow as he had always had in other years, he would have gone out and plowed up that cracked soil. He ached to plow it up and make it look like a field again, yes, even though he had not so much as one seed to put in it. But he had no buffalo. If anyone had told him that he would eat his own water buffalo that plowed the good land for him, and year after year pulled the stone roller over the grain and threshed it at

harvest he would have called that man idiot. Yet it was what he had done. He had eaten his own water buffalo, he and his wife and his parents and his four children, they had all eaten the buffalo together.

But what else could they do on that dark winter's day when the last of their store of grain was gone, when the trees were cut and sold, when he had sold everything, even the little they had saved from the flood, and there was nothing left except the rafters of the house they had and the garments they wore? Was there sense in stripping the coat off one's back to feed one's belly? Besides, the beast was starving also, since the water had covered even the grass lands, and they had had to go far afield to gather even enough to cook its bones and flesh. On that day when he had seen the faces of his old parents set as though dead, on that day when he had heard the crying of his children and seen his little daughter dying, such a despair had seized him as made him like a man without his reason, so that he had gathered together his feeble strength and he had done what he said he never would; he had taken the kitchen knife and gone out and killed his own beast. When he did it, even in his despair, he groaned, for it was as though he killed his own brother. To him it was the last sacrifice.

Yet it was not enough. No, they grew hungry again and there was nothing left to kill. Many of the villagers went south to other places, or they went down the river to beg in the great cities. But he, Liu the farmer, had never begged. Moreover, it seemed to him then that they must all die and the only comfort left was to die on their own land. His neighbor had come and begged him to set forth with them; yes, he had even said he would carry one of the old parents on his back so that Liu might carry the other, seeing that his own old father was already dead. But Liu had refused, and it was well, for in the next two days the old mother was dead, and if she had died on the way he could only have cast her by the roadside lest the others be delayed and more of them die. As it was he could put her safely into their own ground, although he had been so weak that it had taken him three days to dig a hole deep enough for her little old withered body. And then before he could get her buried he and his wife had

quarreled over the poor few clothes on the old body. His wife was a hard woman and she would have buried the old mother naked, if he had let her, so as to have the clothes for the children. But he made her leave on the inner coat and trousers; although they were only rags after all, and when he saw the cold earth against his old mother's flesh—well, that was sorrow for a man, but it could not be helped. Three more he had buried somehow, his old father and his baby daughter and the little boy who had never been strong.

That was what the winter's famine had taken from them. It would have taken them all except that in the great pools lying everywhere, which were left from the flood, there were shrimps, and these they had eaten raw and were still eating, although they were all sick with a dysentery that would not get well. In the last day or so his wife had crawled out and dug a few sprouting dandelions. But there was no fuel and so they also were eaten raw. But the bitterness was good after the tasteless flesh of the raw shrimps. Yes, spring was coming.

He sat on heavily, looking out over his land. If he had his buffalo back, if he had his plow that they had burned for fuel, he could plow the land. But when he thought of this as he did many times every day, he felt helpless as a leaf tossed upon the flood. The buffalo was gone; gone also his plow and every implement of wood and bamboo, and what other had he? Sometimes in the winter he had felt grateful that at least the flood had not taken all the house as it had so many other houses. But now suddenly it came to him that he could be grateful for nothing, no, not even that he had his life left him and the life of his wife and the two older children. He felt tears come into his eyes slowly as they had not even come when he buried his old mother and saw the earth fall against her flesh, bared by the rags which had comforted him that day. But now he was comforted by nothing. He muttered to himself.

“I have no seed to plant in the land. There the land lies! I could go and claw it up with my hands if I had the seed and the land would bear. I know my good land. But I have no seed and the land is empty. Yes, even though spring comes, we must still starve!”

And he looked, hopeless, into the barren spring.

Notes

late February, towards the end of the month of February; the latter part of February.

thin, because he had not had enough to eat all through the winter. Did you read any significance into the words *sat* and *one-room* of the previous line?

In this sentence, how did Mrs. Buck avoid repeating the words *the coming of spring*?

it would have been easy enough in other years to know that spring was coming, for *he could have pointed* to the swelling buds on his willow trees, to the pink-tipped buds of his three peach trees and his six apricot trees, to his wheat fields; but, this year, there were no more trees and the land told nothing. **swelling buds**, one of the many signs of the approach of spring. What about *pink-tipped buds*?

in his day, in his lifetime; when he was full of vigor.

at the height of their time, having reached the period of growth when these fruit trees should be bearing the most fruit.

“the land lay there cracked and it lay there like clay only newly dried.”

if he had, but he did not have them.

He ached. He wanted very much to work, but he lacked the seeds and the implements.

their store of grain, their stock or supply of grain.

rafters, the sloping timbers of the roof of a house.

Was there sense in stripping the coat off one's back to feed one's belly? If Farmer Liu did not feed his belly (stomach), he would starve to death; if he stripped the coat off his back and sold the clothes for money to buy food for his belly, he would freeze to death from the cold. Farmer Liu thought that it was more sensible for him to keep his clothes on and try to get food by some other means, by killing his starving buffalo, for example. So he killed the animal.

faces set, faces took on a hard expression, became motionless as in death.

last, utmost; extreme; supreme; greatest.

down the river. What river must this be that flows by *great cities*?

his own father, his neighbor's own father.

hard, hard-hearted; not easily influenced emotionally; unfeeling.

cold. Two meanings: cold in the sense of low temperature, for in winter the ground is actually very cold; cold in the emotional sense, in that the earth was not sympathetic, was unfeeling, unmoved, apathetic.

shrimps, 蝦 .

dysentery, 赤痢 —a disease of the bowels, with inflamed mucous membrane and intestinal glands, griping pains, and mucous and bloody evacuations.

sprouting dandelions, dandelions which were beginning to put forth shoots, to grow. The dandelion is a yellow-flowered composite plant with widely toothed leaves. It grows wild, especially in well-kept lawns, where it is a pest. Sprouting dandelions show that spring was coming.

heavily, sadly; despondently; dolefully; melancholically.

as a leaf tossed upon the flood. This is a mode of expressing abstract (not concrete) ideas by words which suggest pictures or images and is known as a *figure of speech*. This particular figure of speech that we give here is a *simile*, which is an imaginative comparison between objects essentially unlike, except in certain aspects, and declares that A is *like* B, or, “he felt helpless *as* a leaf tossed upon the flood.” A simile may be condensed into a *metaphor*, which imaginatively identifies one object with another, and ascribes to the one qualities of the other. A metaphor assumes that A is B, or, “he was a leaf tossed upon the flood.” A metaphor may usually be expanded into a simile.

he could be grateful for nothing. Why could he be grateful for nothing? Why was he comforted by nothing? Why did tears come now when they had not even come when he buried his old mother?

Questions

1. How did Farmer Liu know that spring was coming? In other years what signs could he have pointed to?
2. What had seemed to him “the last sacrifice”?
3. What further sacrifices did he have to make?
4. Summarize all that the winter’s famine had taken?
5. Why the title “Barren Spring”?

參考譯文

作品簡介

《貧瘠的春天》一文選自賽珍珠所著《原配夫人和其他故事》，紐約的約翰·戴出版公司 1933 年出版，279—283 頁。

作者簡介

賽珍珠 (1892—1973)，美國小說家，因其父母在中國傳教而在中國長大。她的首任丈夫卜凱曾任金陵大學（現南京大學前身）農業經濟學教授。賽珍珠在其 1935 年出版的為母親所寫的傳記《流亡者》中提及了自己的這段早年經歷。是年，她與卜凱離婚，並嫁給約翰·戴出版公司的所有人理查德·沃爾什。她以賽珍珠的筆名創作的小說《大地》1932 年獲普利策獎，被評為當年在美國出版的最佳小說，也被認為是賽珍珠關於中國的小說中最出色的一部。

1 貧瘠的春天

農民老劉坐在自己僅有的一間房門口。那是二月末一個溫煦的黃昏，他瘦削的身體已經感知到春天的來臨。他怎會知道正是這時候樹木的汁液開始顫動，泥土中的生命開始蘇醒呢？他無法給自己一個答案。可是在往年，這本是一件極容易的事情。他本可以指着屋子四周的柳樹，給大家看就要抽條的嫩芽。但是現在樹已經沒有了，嚴冬饑荒時被他全砍了，一棵一棵地賣了。或者他本來還可以指着父親年輕時親手栽種的三株桃樹和六棵杏樹，給大家看那粉嫩的花苞。這些果樹正值壯年，每年都會結下纍纍的果實。但是這些樹也沒有了。最重要的是，往年他還會指着麥地給大家看。在這塊地上，他冬天種麥子，因為那個時

令沒法種水稻；快入夏時，他就會插秧種稻子，而且收成很好。水稻是他田裡的主要農作物。但是今年地裡啥也沒有。沒有離離的麥子，因為該種麥子的時候，田地被洪水淹沒了，現在地都開裂了，像剛乾不久的黏土一樣。

好吧，在這樣一個日子裡，要是還和往年一樣，他的水牛還在，耕犁還在，他應該早已經出門去耕種那片已經開裂的土地了。他很想念犁地，想念平整耕田的樣子，是的，就算他連一顆可以播撒的種子也沒有。但如今他沒有水牛了。要是先前有人勸他把他的水牛宰了吃，他一定會痛罵那個人是個王八犢子。他的水牛可是耕地能手，豐收時還可以幫着拉石磨碾穀子。但這都是過去時了。他已經吃掉了自己的水牛。他和他的妻子、父母還有四個孩子一起把水牛給吃了。

但是，在那個昏暗的冬日裡，他們吃完了儲藏的最後一點糧食，樹也砍光賣了錢，能賣的都賣了，連從洪水中救出的那一點點東西也都賣了，除了房樑和身上的衣服，甚麼都沒有剩下，他們還能怎麼辦？剝掉衣服來填肚子有意義嗎？而且當時牲口也已快餓死了，因為洪水已淹沒草地，連煮牲口的骨和肉所需的柴草也得走很遠才能撿夠。那一天，他看到自己年邁的父母面如死灰，聽到孩子們哭泣不停，眼見小女兒奄奄一息，他被一陣慘痛的絕望鉗住，變得失去了理智，然後鼓起虛弱的氣力，做了他說過永遠不會做的事情。他到廚房拿起刀，走出去，把自己的牲口給宰了。那一刻他絕望地呻吟着，好像親手殺了自己的兄弟。對他而言，這是最後的犧牲。

但這還不夠。是的，他們又開始遭受飢餓的折磨，但已經沒有甚麼可殺的了。村子裡很多人南下投奔別的地方，或者到河流下游的大城市去乞討。但農民老劉絕不乞討。而且他覺得反正大家遲早都要死，死在自己的土地上是剩下的唯一的安慰。鄰居來求他，讓他跟他們一起動身；是的，他的鄰居看到自己的老父親已命歸黃泉時，甚至提出願意跟老劉一道背他的父母趕路。但老劉拒絕了。這樣也不錯，因為兩天以後他的老母親就死了。要是死在半路上，他只能把屍體扔在路邊，否則還

得耽誤其他人的時間，讓更多人因此死去。現在呢，雖說他身體已經十分虛弱，花了整整三天才挖出一個夠深的土穴來掩埋母親乾癟的身軀，但畢竟他可以把她安好地埋葬在自己的土地上。就在母親下葬之前，他和老婆吵了一架，就為老人屍體上那點可憐的衣服。他老婆是個硬心腸的女人，假如老劉同意的話，她就要讓婆婆光着身子下葬，這樣一來扒下來的衣服就可以給孩子們穿。但是老劉還是給母親穿了內衣和褲子離開，儘管那都已經是破布了。當他看到冰冷的泥土蓋在老母親的皮肉上時——喔，這對一個男人來說是一種悲哀，但是又有甚麼辦法呢？然後他又親手將他的老父親、幼小的女兒和一個從未長結實的小兒子一個個埋入泥土。

這就是這場冬日的饑荒從他們身邊所奪走的。饑荒還差點奪走所有人的性命，幸虧洪水過後，隨處可見的水塘裡發現了小蝦，他們便撈來生吃，雖然都因此得了一種難以痊癒的痢疾，但他們一直這樣吃到現在。大概在最後一天，他老婆掙扎着出去，挖到了一些剛發芽的蒲公英，因為沒有柴火，所以也只能生吃了。味兒苦，但在吃膩了沒有滋味的生蝦後，這苦味倒還感覺不錯。是的，春天來了。

他悲涼地坐着，望着外面自己的土地。如果他能要回他的水牛，如果他沒有把耕犁當柴火燒了，他現在就能耕地了。每當他想到這些（他每天都想很多遍），他就覺得十分無助，就像扔進洪水的一片孤葉。水牛不在了，犁也不在了，連一根木頭一節竹子都沒有剩，他還有甚麼呢？冬天裡，有時候他還會心存一絲感激，因為洪水雖然沖毀了很多人家的房子，卻至少沒有把他的所有房屋都沖壞。但現在，他突然意識到沒有甚麼值得他感激的，沒有，甚至他都不感激自己還活着，自己的老婆還活着，還有老大老二兩個孩子。他感覺到淚水慢慢湧上眼眶，就算在埋葬母親那天，看着泥土撒落在母親的軀體上時，他都沒有掉過一滴眼淚，他甚至還因為母親辭世時尚有破布遮體而感到安慰。但現在，他無以慰藉。他喃喃自語：

「我沒有種子可以種地。土地就在那兒！我要是有種子，我會用我

的雙手去刨地，土地就會有收成。我知道我的地肥。但我沒有種子，地裡甚麼也沒有。是的，春天來了，可我們還會捱餓！」

他呆望着這貧瘠的春天，沒有一絲希望。

(羅選民 譯)

THE BEAST OF BURDEN

By W. Somerset Maugham



THE BEAST OF BURDEN, from *On a Chinese Screen*, by William Somerset Maugham, New York, George H. Doran Company, 1922, pp. 77–79.

William Somerset Maugham (1874–1965), English dramatist and novelist. In 1921, Mr. Maugham traveled through China. His impressions of places and persons he recorded in his book of delightful sketches *On a Chinese Screen*, from which book THE BEAST OF BURDEN and THE SONG OF THE RIVER were taken.



At first when you see the coolie on the road, bearing his load, it is as a pleasing object that he strikes the eye. In his blue rags, a blue of all colors from indigo to turquoise and then to the paleness of a milky sky, he fits the landscape. He seems exactly right as he trudges along the narrow causeway between the rice fields or climbs a green hill. His clothing consists of no more than a short coat and a pair of trousers; and if he had a suit which was at the beginning all of a piece, he never thinks when it comes to patching to choose a bit of stuff of the same color. He takes anything that comes handy. From sun and rain he protects his head with a straw hat shaped like an extinguisher with a preposterously wide, flat brim.

You see a string of coolies come along, one after the other, each with a pole on his shoulders from the ends of which hang two great bales, and they make an agreeable pattern. It is amusing to watch their hurrying reflections in the padi water. You watch their faces as they pass you. They are good-natured faces and frank, you would have said, if it had not been drilled into you that the oriental is inscrutable; and when you see them lying down with their loads under a banyan tree by a wayside shrine, smoking and chatting gaily, if you have tried to lift the bales they carry for thirty miles or more a day, it seems natural to feel admiration for their endurance and their spirit. But you will be thought somewhat absurd if you mention your admiration to the old residents of China. You will be told with a tolerant shrug of the shoulders that the coolies are animals and for two thousand years from father to son have carried burdens, so it is no wonder if they do it cheerfully. And indeed you

can see for yourself that they begin early, for you will encounter little children with a yoke on their shoulders staggering under the weight of vegetable baskets.

The day wears on and it grows warmer. The coolies take off their coats and walk stripped to the waist. Then sometimes in a man resting for an instant, his load on the ground but the pole still on his shoulders so that he has to rest slightly crouched, you see the poor tired heart beating against the ribs: you see it as plainly as in some cases of heart disease in the out-patients' room of a hospital. It is strangely distressing to watch. Then also you see the coolies' backs. The pressure of the pole for long years, day after day, has made hard red scars, and sometimes even there are open sores, great sores without bandages or dressing that rub against the wood; but the strangest thing of all is that sometimes, as though nature sought to adapt man for these cruel uses to which he is put, an odd malformation seems to have arisen so that there is a sort of hump, like a camel's, against which the pole rests. But beating heart or angry sore, bitter rain or burning sun notwithstanding, they go on eternally, from dawn till dusk, year in year out, from childhood to the extreme of age. You see old men without an ounce of fat on their bodies, their skin loose on their bones, wizened, their little faces wrinkled and apelike, with hair thin and grey; and they totter under their burdens to the edge of the grave in which at last they shall have rest. And still the coolies go, not exactly running, but not walking either, sidling quickly, with their eyes on the ground to choose the spot to place their feet, and on their faces a strained, anxious expression. You can make no longer a pattern of them as they wend their way. Their effort oppresses you. You are filled with a useless compassion.

In China it is man that is the beast of burden.

“To be harassed by the wear and tear of life, and to pass rapidly through it without the possibility of arresting one's course,—is not this pitiful indeed? To labor without ceasing, and then, without living to enjoy the fruit, worn out, to depart, suddenly, one knows not whither,—is not that a just cause for grief?”

So wrote the Chinese mystic.

Notes

coolie, an unskilled hired laborer or porter. The word is probably derived from the Hindu word *kuli* or *quli*.

pleasing object. The first and the second paragraphs tell what things are pleasing in the coolie.

indigo to turquoise, deep violet-blue to light green-blue.

trudges, walks wearily, with his feet dragging the ground.

causeway, a raised walk or road, across wet and marshy ground.

suit. The short coat and the trousers make a suit of clothes.

all of a piece, all of the same color, because taken from one piece of cloth.

patching, putting a piece of cloth on to mend or repair a hole or rent in the clothing.

extinguisher, a hollow cone for extinguishing, putting out, a candle or other flame.

preposterously, unusually; absurdly; very, very.

string of coolies, line of coolies one following the other.

bales, packages of merchandise usually done up in canvas and corded or metal-hooped.

agreeable picks up the word *pleasing* in the second line of the first paragraph.

padi. *Paddy* is the more usual English form of this word, but *padi* is the correct Malay form. *Padi* is the Malay for *rice*, whether growing or cut, whether in the straw or in the husk. By extension, especially in the adjectival use, the word has come to mean rice in general.

good-natured, inclined to please or to be pleased.

frank, undisguised; open; outspoken; sincere; candid.

drilled into you, taught repeatedly to you; told time and again to you; disciplined into you.

oriental, the Chinese, the Japanese, the Koreans, and others of the Far East or the Orient. The Orient is the place where the sun rises, in the east.

inscrutable, wholly mysterious, incapable of being penetrated or searched into or understood; incomprehensible; not given to expressing their emotions frankly or candidly. The Occidentals or foreigners from the West generally

regard us Orientals of the East as a race of people who do not show our emotions on our faces and are therefore inscrutable or not easily understood by them.

banyan tree, an East Indian moraceous tree, the branches of which send out numerous aërial roots that grow down to the soil and form props or additional trunks, often until a single tree covers so large an area that it will shelter thousands of men; so called by the British in allusion to the use of the space sheltered by the tree as a market-place by the native merchants, or banians.

wayside shrine, a small place of worship by the side of the road.

absurd, silly; weak-minded; foolish.

old residents, foreigners who have lived in our country for many years. Sometimes they are called Old China Hands, although, strictly speaking, the term ought to apply to business men who have been here for a long time.

with a tolerant shrug of the shoulders, as if you had said something that was absolutely wrong, but that they were making allowances for your being a newcomer to China, and were going through all this bother, really unnecessary bother, of getting you to see the truth of the whole matter.

yoke, a frame fitted to a person's shoulders and back for the carrying of heavy packs; also a pole used for the carrying of suspended baskets.

staggering, tottering, swaying, unable to remain steady in walking and standing, because of the heavy loads they were carrying.

wears on, continues on and on; drags on.

stripped to the waist, naked, without any covering, from head to waist.

crouched, bent low or stooped over, with bent legs.

out-patients' room of a hospital, the room in a hospital where the out-patients (outside patients; sick persons who do not live or remain in the hospital) receive treatment.

distressing, causing severe physical or mental strain to the onlooker.

scars, marks remaining on the body after the wounds or ulcers have been healed.

open sores, places where the skin and flesh are ruptured, broken apart, bruised, or diseased, so as to be open to view.

bandages, flexible strips of cloth used in wrapping up wounds.

dressing, treatment of a wound with remedies, bandages, and other things.

the wood of the pole.

an odd malformation, an unusual, abnormal growth on the body.

hump, an out-swelling protuberance, sometimes swelled or pushed beyond the adjacent or near-by surface. In the case of these coolies, this hump is a deformity, a malformation, caused by using that part of the human body too much for the carrying of excessively heavy burdens; but with camels these humps are regular features. Our Chinese camels have two humps while those of Arabia are one-humped and are called dromedaries.

wizened, of shriveled or dried-up appearance.

wrinkled. A wrinkle is a furrowlike crease or depression or ridge in the skin, generally that in the brow, and especially of the kind produced by age.

apelike, like an ape or monkey. The faces of monkeys are very much wrinkled and wizened.

totter, walk unsteadily because of the heavy burdens; stagger.

to the edge of the grave, until they die.

sidling, moving with one side foremost; moving sidewise.

strained, stretched tight, as if in pain, laboring under hardships.

wend, proceed on; go on.

their effort, the effort that they make; their hard exertion.

useless compassion. Compassion, suffering with another, sorrow or pity for another's distress or misfortunes, is useless in the case of this author because there is nothing that he personally can do to relieve or better the existing conditions.

harassed, wearied; made tired.

wear and tear of life, loss or injury to which anything is subjected in the course of use.

arresting, stopping.

to enjoy the fruit, to have satisfaction in the fruits of your labor; to make use of the consequence of your labor; to take delight in what results from your labor.

worn out modifies the person who is departing, who is dying.

This passage is taken from Herbert Giles's *Chuang Tzu*, from the chapter entitled "The Identity of Contraries," to be found on page 15 of the 1889 edition of that book.

莊子，齊物論：「與物相刃相靡其行盡如馳而莫之能止不亦悲乎終身役役而不見其成功爾然疲役而不知所歸可不哀耶。」

mystic, one who believes in the doctrine that the ultimate nature of reality or the divine essence may be known in an immediate insight differing from all ordinary sensation or ratiocination (reasoning, or the mental process of exact thinking).

Questions

1. Describe the coolie on the road as “a pleasing object”? Why “object”?
2. Describe a string of coolies showing how they at first form “an agreeable pattern” but later grow “distressing to watch”?
3. Why is your compassion useless?
4. What is a beast of burden? Name some beasts of burden.

參考譯文

作品簡介

《負重的牲口》一文選自毛姆所著《在中國屏風上》，紐約喬治·H. 多蘭公司1922年出版，77—79頁。

作者簡介

威廉·薩默塞特·毛姆(1874—1965)，英國戲劇家、小說家。1921年，毛姆遊歷中國，將他對中國風土人情的見聞記於文字，並出版風格輕快的散文集《在中國屏風上》，《負重的牲口》與《河之歌》都出自這部作品。

2 負重的牲口

剛開始看到有苦力挑着重擔在路上行走，你會覺得這是個頗有趣味的形象，衝擊着你的眼球。他穿着破衣爛衫，一身藍，從靛藍、天藍到泛白的乳藍，但很應景。他費力地走在稻田間狹窄的田埂上，又或是爬上綠色的山丘，一切都顯得那麼自然。他身上不過一件短外套和一條褲子。倘若他有一套起先還是完好的衣服，後來要打補丁時，他卻沒有想到要選用同一顏色的布塊，手頭甚麼方便就拿甚麼補。為了遮陽避雨，他戴了頂草帽，隆起的部分像個滅火器，帽檐又寬又平，看上去有些怪異。

你看見一長溜苦力走過來，一個接一個，每個人肩上挑一個擔子，兩頭掛着兩個大包，構成一幅愜意的圖景。從水中的倒影看他們匆匆忙忙的樣子十分逗笑。他們路過時你觀察他們的臉，要不是東方人神秘莫測的說法已植入人心，你肯定會說他們面容溫厚坦誠。當他們到了路邊的神祠，在菩提樹下放下重擔，躺下來，快樂地抽煙聊天，而且如果你也嘗試扛過他們一天要挑三十多英里路的重擔，你會很自然地敬佩他們的忍耐力和精神。但是如果你跟旅居中國多年的人說，你對這些苦力心生欽佩之感，他們會聳聳肩，覺得你有些荒謬可笑，然後寬容地告訴你，這些苦力都是牲口。兩千年來，他們祖祖輩輩都是挑重擔的，所以他們幹得很開心也不足為奇。事實上，你自己都能看到他們打很小的時候就開始挑擔了，因為你會遇到小孩子肩頭挑着扁擔，兩頭掛着菜筐，踉踉蹌蹌地蹣跚前行。

日子一天天過去，天氣變暖，這些苦力脫掉上衣，光着膀子走着。有時一個苦力要停下來休息，便把兩頭的包放地上，扁擔還留在肩頭，這樣他就要稍稍蜷蹲着休息一下，這個時候你會看到他那可憐疲憊的心臟在肋骨間跳動。你看得一清二楚，樣子恰似在醫院門診室看見心臟病人的心臟跳動一樣。看到這一幕會讓人有些許莫名的傷感。你再看他們

的脊背，擔子長年疊月的壓迫，留下深紅的疤痕，有時甚至有潰口的瘡疤，很大，沒有繃帶敷料，直接就在木扁擔上摩擦。但最奇怪的是，就好像大自然力圖讓人適應他被交予的這些殘酷用途，一種反常的畸形出現了，苦力們肩上會隆起一個包，就像駝峰一樣，這樣擔子就可以頂在上面。但是儘管心在狂跳，傷已潰爛，不管苦雨還是烈日，他們永遠都行在路上，從黎明到黃昏，年復一年，從童年到遲暮。你看到那些老人骨瘦如柴，皮膚鬆弛地耷拉在骨頭上，乾癟枯槁，臉上滿是皺紋，像瘦猴一樣，頭髮灰白稀疏，在重擔之下跌跌撞撞，一直走向墳墓的邊緣，那是他們最後休息的場所。但苦力們仍在趕路，不能算跑，也不能算走，就是快速地側身而行，眼睛一直盯着地面，好選個下腳的地方，臉上露出緊張焦慮的神情。他們繼續前行時，你眼前再也不是甚麼愜意的圖景了。他們那種疲於奔命的努力讓你感到壓抑，內心充滿憐憫，但又甚麼忙都幫不上。

在中國，人就是負重的牲口。

「被生活損耗、折磨，迅速走完生命歷程，根本得不到休息——這不是很可憐嗎？苦苦地幹，沒個完了，結果還沒活到享受勞動果實的日子，就疲憊地突然逝去，也不知道會落個甚麼歸宿——這難道不令人悲哀嗎？」

那位中國的神秘主義者^①如是寫道。

(羅選民 譯)

① 指莊子。上段引文的文言原文參見註釋 (Notes)。

THE SONG OF THE RIVER

By W. Somerset Maugham

THE SONG OF THE RIVER, from *On a Chinese Screen*, by William Somerset Maugham, New York, George H. Doran Company, 1922, pp. 129–130.



You hear it all along the river. You hear it, loud and strong, from the rowers as they urge the junk with its high stern, the mast lashed alongside, down the swift running stream. You hear it from the trackers, a more breathless chaunt, as they pull desperately against the current, half a dozen of them perhaps if they are taking up a wupan, a couple of hundred if they are hauling a splendid junk, its square sail set, over a rapid. On the junk, a man stands amidships beating a drum incessantly to guide their efforts, and they pull with all their strength, like men possessed, bent double; and sometimes in the extremity of their travail they crawl on the ground, on all fours, like the beasts of the field. They strain, strain fiercely, against the pitiless might of the stream. The leader goes up and down the line and when he sees one who is not putting all his will into the task he brings down his split bamboo on the naked back. Each one must do his utmost or the labor of all is vain. And still they sing a vehement, eager chaunt, the chaunt of the turbulent waters. I do not know how words can describe what there is in it of effort. It serves to express the straining heart, the breaking muscles, and at the same time the indomitable spirit of man which overcomes the pitiless force of nature. Though the rope may part and the great junk swing back, in the end the rapid will be passed; and at the close of the weary day there is the hearty meal and perhaps opium pipe with its dreams of ease. But the most agonizing song is the song of the coolies who bring the great bales from the junk up the steep steps to the town wall. Up and down they go endlessly, and endless as their toil rises their rhythmic cry. He, aw-ah, oh. They are barefoot and naked to

the waist. The sweat pours down their faces and their song is a groan of pain. It is a sigh of despair. It is heart-rending. It is hardly human. It is the cry of souls in infinite distress, only just musical, and that last note is the ultimate sob of humanity. Life is too hard, too cruel, and this is the final despairing protest. That is the song of the river.

Notes

junk, Chinese sailing vessel with high poop and little or no keel.

trackers, boatmen who walk along the edge of the river and pull the boat up the river against the river current. They are called trackers because they track or follow the path along the shore.

chaunt, or **chant**, a short or simple melody characterized by the reciting of an indefinite number of syllables to one tone; the reciting of words in musical monotones.

current, the flow of water in the river.

wupan, literally *wu pan* or five planks, a boat the bottom of which is made up of five planks laid side by side; just as the sampan is literally *san pan* or three planks.

rapid, a swift running part of the river where the surface is usually broken up by obstructions of piles of rocks.

amidships, in or towards the middle of a ship especially with regard to her length.

incessantly, continuing or following without interruption; unceasing; uninterrupted.

like men possessed, like men influenced, controlled, dominated powerfully—said especially of demons and spirits that are evil.

bent double, with body bent over into stooping or curled-up position, into an inverted V position.

travail, labor; toil; severe exertion.

on all fours, crawling on hands and knees, the four alluding to the four limbs, the two arms and the two legs.

beasts of the field, animals that work in the field.

pitiless, because the stream shows no pity.

Why does the leader beat the man who is not putting all his will into the task?

vehement, acting with great force; furious; violent.

turbulent, in commotion; violently agitated or disturbed; tumultuous.

straining, pressed to extremes; doing its utmost; forced to exert itself to the greatest possible extent; making violent efforts.

breaking, ready to come apart, usually with suddenness and violence.

indomitable, not to be subdued; unconquerable; unyielding.

part, break apart.

their rhythmic cry, their chant.

barefoot, not wearing shoes on their feet.

naked to the waist, stripped to the waist; without any clothing down to the waist.

sweat or **perspiration** is moisture that comes out through the pores of the body due, in this instance, to the hard work that the laborers are doing.

despair, desperation; hopelessness; the giving up of all hope.

heart-rending, it tears our hearts apart; it twists sympathy out of us.

hardly, scarcely; barely; almost not.

infinite, vast; immense; inexhaustible; unlimited.

ultimate sob of humanity, the last, final sob of human beings, beyond which no other sob can be so distressing.

protest, solemn declaration of opinion against some act.

Questions

1. Who sang the song of the river?
2. Why is it called “the song of the river”? How does it resemble the river’s flow?
3. What is the meaning of the song?

參考譯文

作品簡介

《河之歌》一文選自毛姆所著《在中國屏風上》，紐約喬治·H. 多蘭公司 1922 年出版，129—130 頁。

3 河之歌

沿着河流一路都可以聽到這歌聲。這是槳手的歌聲，響亮有力。他們奮力地划着木船，順急流而下，船尾翹得老高，桅桿猛烈地擺動。這是繃夫的號子聲，他們在拚盡全力逆流拉船時，聲音會更加急促，讓人透不過氣來。如果拉的是五板船，那可能有幾個人；如果拉的是揚着橫帆的華麗大木船過急流，那就得有幾百人。船中央站着一個漢子不停地擊鼓，給他們助威，讓他們使勁。於是繃夫們使出渾身氣力，就像被魔咒驅使般，腰彎成了九十度。有時在極度費力的情況下，他們就全身趴地匍匐前進，像地裡的牲口。頂着河水無情的阻力，他們拉呀，拉呀，拚命地拉。領頭的在隊伍前後來回奔走，看到有人沒有拚盡全力，就用劈開的竹條抽打他們裸露的脊樑。每個人都必須全力以赴，否則所有的努力就白費了。就這樣他們還唱着激昂又熱切的號子，這是洶湧澎湃的河水的號子。我不知道如何用言語來描述這股勁兒，這裡面帶着心臟的拉扯，肌肉的撕裂，還有人類戰勝無情的自然力量時表現出的不屈不撓的精神。雖然繩子可能斷開，大船可能又會被蕩回，但他們最終能涉過湍流，在疲憊的一天結束後，熱鬧地吃上一頓飽飯，也許還可以抽一槍鴉片，舒服地幻想一番。然而最令人揪心的是岸上的苦力唱的歌，他們得背着從船上卸下的大包，沿着陡峭的台階，一直走到城牆那裡。他們不停地上上下下，伴隨着無盡的勞役響起有節奏的吶喊：嘿，啣——嗨，啣。他們赤着腳，光着膀子，汗水順着臉頰直流。歌聲裡滲透着痛苦的呻吟。這是一種絕望的歎息，撕心裂肺，慘絕人寰。這是靈魂在極度痛苦中的吶喊，只不過帶着音樂的節奏罷了。那最後的音符是人類最沉痛的哭訴。生活太難，太殘酷，這是最後的絕望的抗議。那就是河之歌。

（羅選民 譯）

BIRTH OF A SISTER

By Tan Shih-hua

BIRTH OF A SISTER, from *A Chinese Testament*, purporting to be the autobiography of Tan Shih-hua, as told to Sergiei Mikhailovich Tretiakov, New York, Simon and Shuster, 1934, Chapter XI.

Tan Shih-hua (Teng Hsi-hua) was a student under Sergiei Tretiakov, a teacher of the Russian language in Peiping and known also for his *Roar China*, a dramatic episode in nine scenes.



My uncle's school moved to another temple—a little larger than the old one, but further away from our house. To prevent me from getting too tired, walking to and from the school, he took me to live with him, and sent me home every Saturday. He adopted the European method of holidays. In his school, just as in the public schools, we had one day a week for rest. In private schools the pupils had to sit over their books from one Chinese holiday to another, and holidays in China are as rare as springs in a desert.

One week day I was called out from the class. Our maid was waiting for me. I gathered that something must be wrong with my mother. We had a maid in the house only on days when mother was unable to work. I walked home in a great hurry. On the way the maid told me news which I had not expected at all.

“Your mother has borne you a sister.”

I was glad; I had always been so lonely at home.

The maid turned me over to my grandmother. Craftily and solemnly the old woman led me into mother's room. My mother was lying silent on her bed. She was pale and thin. Her arms were stretched out on the cover. A funny little bit of a bed stood next to hers. Something wrapped in white and made entirely of little balls and wrinkles was in it.

“A little girl,” said my grandmother.

I wanted to touch my little sister, but my grandmother would not let me. Having failed in this, I decided to go immediately to a store and get her some sweets. My grandmother sat down on my mother's bed and released her high, thin laughter. She would stop, look at me,

then laugh again. I paid dearly for those sweets. My grandmother loved to tease me.

I said to her, "It is nice to have a girl."

"No, it is very bad," she said. "Here in Szechwan, we have to give a dowry with the bride. It is just an expense. It would be different if we were living in Kiangsu—there people pay the bride's family."

I did not agree with my grandmother. But she did not care. She was laughing again, probably remembering those sweets.

Careful not to spill it, the maid brought my mother a bowl of boiled chicken. Every woman in China gets boiled chicken for a few days after her labor. Chicken is good. I looked longingly at the bowl. Mother put me next to her on the bed, and we ate the chicken together.

Taking away the empty bowl, my grandmother looked at me, and said seriously and in a businesslike manner, "Really, Shih-hua, it would not be bad if your mother bore you a sister or a brother every year; then you would eat chicken quite often."

A month later, our house was buzzing with relatives. Such a lot of them. My mother was walking about, sweet and affable, but still white and thin, although she had not worked all that month. She entered the sitting room with my little sister in her arms, and all the relatives, one after another, came up to her and touched the little big-eyed girl, whose small stomach was covered with a red flannel apron—a protection against the cold. The relatives argued about whose nose the little girl was going to have, whose eyes, whose mouth. They wished her good fortune.

"May she grow up to be as intelligent as her mother."

"May she become a good hostess."

"May she be the most beautiful bride in Hsien-Shih."

"She will be a famous authoress."

This last wish was expressed by my elder uncle. I knew it because, being himself fond of writing, he always said the same thing to every new-born baby.

The inspection was over, the little girl was wrapped up again and

carried away. The relatives presented my mother with gifts. There were eggs in woven baskets, cackling hens, bags of sugar, selected rice—beautiful rice, which one would like to string on a thread and wear for a necklace, so beautiful it was—and sweets. . . .

My grandmother glanced from the bag of sweets to me, and began laughing again.

The procession of relatives moved to the dining room. At the table, the return gifts from our family were distributed, each relative receiving two red eggs. I was sad; we did not have enough money, so I could not stick a gilt-paper hieroglyphic meaning “luck” on the eggs.

A year later, on my sister’s birthday the same relatives again crowded into our house. A red tablecloth was put on a table in the sitting room, and all sorts of objects were spread out: a needle and thread, a saucepan, a teapot, a paint-brush, an inkpot, a knife, a book of verses, a book of stories, a flexible fencing-foil, a piece of printed silk.

Then the little girl, who, in her embarrassment, was trying to stick her foot into her mouth, was brought to the table, to see what object she would pick up first. If she takes a brush, she will be an authoress; if she grabs at a saucepan, she will be a housewife; if she touches silk, she will be a well-dressed woman; if she picks up a foil, she will make herself famous as a heroine or a chieftain.

I don’t know what object my little sister chose. Judging by the fact that she is now in Peking University, and shows a great deal of interest in literature, she must have chosen a brush or a book. However, she was a niece of two teachers. So many books and so much stationery were piled up that day on the red cloth that the insignificant needle and thread had no chance of getting into the hands of little Shih-kuen.

In those days, she was the important person in the house. But I did not mind. I was grown up. I was six years older than she.

Notes

European method of holidays, having one day of rest a week.

public schools, in our country, the schools established by the city, provincial, or national government where every qualified person can get a free education; the opposites of private school which are maintained by private individuals or bodies for the education of private students.

springs or places where water wells up from the earth are *rare* (hard to find), because so few, in a desert.

one week day, any day in the week but not Sunday.

cover, the quilt or bed-cover.

Why *little balls* and *wrinkles*?

some sweets, some sweet candy for the new-born baby to eat. Of course we know that babies of that age do not eat candy, but how was the little brother to know that? It was cruel of the grandmother to laugh at the young lad. Still, we must excuse her for she was only an ignorant old woman.

paid dearly, suffered much teasing; was often teased because of his mention of going to the store to get the baby some candy.

On what occasion did the grandmother tease him, a little later in the story?

dowry, the money, goods, or estate which a woman brings with her to her husband in marriage; dot.

labor, childbirth; the giving birth to children, because of the pains that attend childbirth.

longingly, with eager desire.

Why *businesslike manner*?

buzzing, noisy because there were so many of them around.

What is this occasion mentioned here, that happens a month later, after the birth of the child?

affable, gracious; courteous; sociable.

Hsien-Shih, their home village in Szechwan.

cackling, making sharp broken noises.

gilt-paper, paper golden-yellow colored.

hieroglyphic, word; pictorial symbol or emblematic figure.

flexible fencing-foil, soft sword used for fencing or sword-exercising.

embarrassment, not knowing what to do.

stationery, writing paper. *Stationery* is not *stationary*, which means “standing still.”

Shih-kuen, the name of the sister.

Questions

1. Notice the customs mentioned in connection with the birth of the sister, the celebration a month later, and the sister's birthday a year later.
2. How much older than his sister was the writer?
3. In what ways does the essay reveal the age of the brother?

參考譯文

作品簡介

《妹妹的出生》選自《中國聖經》一書，據說該書是鄧惜華向謝爾蓋·米哈伊洛維奇·特列嘉科夫口述的自傳，由紐約的西蒙與舒斯特出版公司 1934 年出版。本文選自該書第十一章。

作者簡介

鄧惜華是北平俄語教師謝爾蓋·特列嘉科夫的學生。謝爾蓋因其九幕劇《咆哮吧！中國》而著名。

4 妹妹的出生

叔叔的學校搬到了另一座廟——比以前那座稍微大一點，不過離我家更遠了。叔叔怕我往返學校太累，就讓我跟他住在一起，每個星期六才能回家。叔叔學校採用的是歐洲節假日制度，和公立學校一樣，每週

休息一天。而在私立學校，學生除中國節假日外只能潛心讀書，但中國的節假日又少得彷彿沙漠裡的甘泉。

有一天，我被叫出了課堂，是家裡的女傭在等我。我想，一定是母親出了甚麼事，因為只有在母親沒法做家務的時候家裡才會雇女傭，於是急忙往家趕。路上，女傭跟我說的消息完全出乎我的意料。

「你媽給你生了個妹妹。」

真高興，因為我在家裡一直很孤單。

女傭把我帶到奶奶面前。只見奶奶表情嚴肅，悄悄地把我帶進了母親的房間。母親靜靜地躺在床上，臉色蒼白，身體瘦弱，胳膊放在被子外面。一張小床緊挨着母親的床，看起來很好玩，裡面有個東西用白布包着，圓鼓鼓的，皺巴巴的。

「是個女娃娃。」奶奶說道。

我想摸一摸小妹妹，但奶奶堅決不讓。既然不能摸，我決定馬上去商店給她買幾塊糖果。奶奶在母親的床沿上坐了下來，大聲地笑了，那笑聲又尖又細。有時她會停下，看看我，接着又笑起來。要知道，我為這些糖果可吃了大苦頭，奶奶總愛打趣我。

我對奶奶說：「有個女娃娃真好。」

「不，太不好了。」奶奶回答，「要知道，在咱們四川，需要給新娘準備嫁妝，所以生女娃只會賠錢。如果住在江蘇就不一樣了——那裡的人會給新娘家很多錢的。」

我並不同意奶奶的看法，不過她並不在意，又笑了起來，可能又想起了那些糖果。

女傭為母親端來一碗雞湯，小心翼翼地，生怕灑出來。在中國，每個女人在生完孩子的頭幾天都會喝雞湯的。雞湯味道鮮美，我眼巴巴地盯着那個碗，母親便讓我挨着她坐在床上跟她一起喝。

奶奶拿走空碗的時候看着我，嚴肅而認真地說道：「說的也是，惜華，如果你媽每年都給你生個妹妹或弟弟的話，那也不錯，這樣你就能經常吃雞肉了。」

妹妹滿月的時候，我家因為親戚們的到來而變得熱鬧起來。我家親戚可真多，母親到處打着招呼，對每一個人都那麼親切友善，不過依然顯得蒼白瘦弱，儘管她那個月一點活兒也沒幹。然後，母親抱着我的小妹妹走進客廳，親戚一個接一個地來到她身邊，摸摸那個大眼睛的小女孩。妹妹小小的肚子上蓋着紅色的法蘭絨肚兜，以防着涼。親戚們議論着妹妹的鼻子、眼睛和嘴巴像誰，並送上了美好的祝福。

「長大後一定像媽媽一樣聰明。」

「一定成為好當家。」

「一定成為仙石最美的新娘。」

「一定會成為有名的作家。」

最後一個祝福來自我的伯伯，因為我知道，他對每個新出生的嬰兒都會這麼說。他自己就喜歡寫東西。

每個人都看過妹妹以後，她又被包起來抱走了。親戚們把禮物送給母親，有裝在編織籃中的雞蛋、咯咯叫的母雞、幾袋糖、精挑細選的大米——好漂亮的大米啊，讓人想用線穿起來當項鍊戴，真的很漂亮——還有很多糖果……

奶奶的目光從那袋糖果轉向我，又笑了起來。

親戚們湧進餐廳。餐桌上，每個親戚都得到了我們家的回禮：兩個紅雞蛋。我很難過，因為家裡並不富裕，我不能在雞蛋上黏上一張寫有「福」字的金紙。

一年後，我妹妹生日那天，同一批親戚再次來到我家。客廳的桌子鋪上了紅布，上面擺着各種物件：針線、燉鍋、茶壺、毛筆、墨水瓶、刀子、詩集、故事書、柔軟的鈍劍、印花綢。

小妹妹懵懂無知，正努力把自己的腳塞進嘴裡，就被抱到了桌子邊，看看她首先選甚麼物件。如果拿起毛筆，就會成為作家；如果抓住燉鍋，就為家庭主婦；如果摸到綢子，就會偏好穿戴；如果拿劍，就會成為著名的英雄或首領。

我不知道小妹妹選的是甚麼。鑒於她目前在北京大學就讀，並對文

學表現出濃厚興趣，我猜她當時選的一定是毛筆或書之類的。不過，要知道她有兩個當老師的叔伯。那天，紅布上堆了那麼多書和文具，不起眼的針線根本沒機會跑到我的妹妹小惜娟手上。

那些天，惜娟是家裡的重要人物。不過我並不介意，畢竟我長大了，比她大六歲。

(彭 萍 譯)