

TRANSLATING BA JIN'S / AND UNDERSTANDING THE HISTORICAL AND  
CULTURAL CONTEXT

By

KENNETH TRAN LY

---

A Thesis Submitted to The Honors College

In Partial Fulfillment of the Bachelors degree  
With Honors in

East Asian Studies

THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA

M A Y 2 0 2 1

Approved by:

---

Dr. Feng-Hsi Liu, Dr. Maggie Camp  
Department of East Asian Studies

## Table of Contents

<b><u>Introduction</u></b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b><u>Source Text 《憶》</u></b> .....	<b>11</b>
A. <u>憶</u> .....	11
B. <u>最初的回憶</u> .....	15
C. <u>家庭的環境</u> .....	38
<b><u>Translation /</u></b> .....	<b>51</b>
A. <u>Memories</u> .....	51
B. <u>Earliest Memories</u> .....	57
C. <u>Family Situation</u> .....	93
<b><u>References</u></b> .....	<b>116</b>
<b><u>Acknowledgment</u></b> .....	<b>117</b>

## Introduction

In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century in China, the debate surrounding anarchism has long been overshadowed by the fight between the Nationalists and the Communists. The May Fourth period, so-called named after the nationalistic protest against Japanese aggression on May 4, 1919, is a period during the late 1910s to early 1920s that was characterized by blossoming political ideologies due to a lack of a central, guiding ideology. Chinese students and intellectuals were at the forefront of this movement and freer than ever to speak openly (Wright, 2001, p. 123-124). Debates included Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, nationalism, anarchism, social Darwinism etc. One of the most famous anarchists from this era is Ba Jin.

Born to a wealthy family in Chengdu, Sichuan province, China, Ba Jin (1904-2005), the pen name of Li Yaotang, received a traditional Confucian education as well as an education in modern languages and literature (Britannica, 2020). Thus, Ba Jin embodied the tension between the old values and the new ideologies in China at the time. For most of the early part of his life, Ba Jin experienced political turmoil and deadly wars. Firstly, he witnessed the collapse of the Qing dynasty in 1912 after a mutiny in Wuchang, which ended nearly 2,000 years of dynastic rule in China (Wright, 2001, p. 118). One of the most important leaders of this mutiny was Sun Yatsen. Not wanting to become the president of the New Republic, Sun Yatsen appointed Yuan Shikai as the president in 1912 (Wright, 2001, p. 122). However, Yuan Shikai was a disappointment to the revolutionary cause. Yuan Shikai did not believe that China was ready for Republican rule and that a constitutional monarchy was much more appropriate for China (Wright, 2001, p. 122). Furthermore, Yuan Shikai was sympathetic towards the Japanese, which upset a lot of Chinese people. He admired the imperial style of governance in post-Meiji Japan, and he gave in to Japan's Twenty-one Demands, which gave the Japanese special privileges and control of China (Wright, 2001, p. 122). Yuan Shikai's misrule caused a lot of people to lose faith in the Nationalist government. As a result, Yuan Shikai's regime collapsed with his death in 1916, and China slipped into a period of political confusion, dubbed the Warlord Period (Wright, 2001, p. 123).

The Warlord Period was a period when many warlords fought for the control of China after the fall of Yuan Shikai's government. Because there was no guiding political ideology during this period, Chinese students and intellectuals had much debate for what China's future should be (Wright, 2001, p. 123). This is the so-called May Fourth Movement, as mentioned earlier. The Warlord Period and the May Fourth Movement are analogous to the Warring States Period (800-200 B.C.) and "Hundred Schools of Thought." Like Yuan Shikai's government, the Zhou dynasty collapsed due to internal corruption and foreign aggression. After the "barbarians" sacked Zhou's capital in the eighth century B.C., the Zhou government fled east (Wright, 2001, p. 20). This marked a distinction between the former Western Zhou and the latter Eastern Zhou. During the Eastern Zhou, the Zhou king's authority weakened so much that the feudal states under him became more or less independent, and the warlords started fighting for control (Wright, 2001, p. 20). This period of in-fighting is called the Warring States Period, and it more or less resembles the Warlord Period during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The "Hundred Schools of Thoughts" emerged as a response to stop the in-fighting between the warring states (Wright, 2001, p. 21). Like the May Fourth Movement, the "Hundred Schools of Thought" was a period of flourishing political thoughts, and political thinkers during this era came up with many different political ideologies to correct China's wrongs and to serve as a model for the future of China (Wright, 2001, p. 21). Notable political ideologies and philosophies that arose during the "Hundred Schools of Thought" period include Confucianism, Daoism, Legalism, Mo-ism, and Logicians (Wright, 2001, p. 21-39). Thus, the Warlord Period and the May Fourth Movement during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century in many ways resembles the Warring States Period and the "Hundred Schools of Thought" nearly 2,000 years prior.

Furthermore, some have argued for the similarity between anarchism and Daoism. As the bible of Daoism, the Daodejing says, "The existence of the best ruler is barely known to the people" (Lao Zi, Ch. 17). Therefore, the less a ruler interferes in the daily lives of people, the better. Laozi supports naturalness, and an expansive, overbearing government would be counterproductive to this concept. Similar to Daoism,

anarchism says that any type of rule is counterproductive and unnecessary, and anarchism can be extended to any ideology opposed to rule (Rapp, 2012, p. 4-5). According to the definition of anarchism, Daoism would therefore be considered anarchistic. Additionally, the etymology of anarchism is *an-archos*, which is Greek for “without a ruler”; similarly, the Wei-Jin Daoist term *wujun* means “without a prince” (Rapp, 2012, p. 4-5). Therefore, one can draw parallelisms between anarchism and Daoism.

However, some reject these similarities. Some have argued that Daoism is not centralized and not well defined, so focusing on those few who highlighted anarchist thought in the classical Daodejing would be distorting and radicalizing it; on the other hand, extending anarchism would be watering it down and minimizing its radical thoughts (Rapp, 2012, p. 8). Furthermore, some have argued that Daoism supported sage kings who rule with *laissez-faire* and a limited government, not full-fledged anarchism (Rapp, 2012, p. 21). Some contend that classical Daoism was corrupted into anarchist thought by the later Wei-Jin Daoists (Rapp, 2012, p. 24). Furthermore, some assert that Daoism is reactionary, individualist, negative, passive, and backward-looking, whereas anarchism is revolutionary, socialist, positive, and forward-looking (Rapp, 2012, p. 26-29). While drawing parallelisms between anarchism and Daoism may be controversial, comparing and contrasting them help us more clearly frame anarchism and define what Daoism and anarchism are.

Ba Jin became an anarchist in the mid-1920s after being drawn to leftist ideology while he was in school (Britannica, 2020), which coincided with the open political discussions of the May Fourth Movement. Around this period, the treaty of Versailles was signed, ending World War I. The treaty allowed the Japanese to keep the German territories in China, which enraged many Chinese people, leading to the May Fourth protest against Japanese aggression. (Wright, 2001, p. 127). As a result, many Chinese felt disillusioned with the West, who had nearly destroyed themselves during World War I; therefore, many Chinese turned to Marxism-Leninism, which was highly critical of the West (Wright, 2001, p. 128). The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) was also organized during this time (Wright, 2001, p. 129).

The Nationalists and the Communists were distrustful of each other, but they did team up during the First United Front with a common goal of ending the Warlord Period. Sun Yat-sen believed that communism was unsuitable for China, and the Soviets only wanted to use Sun Yat-sen to fuel the bourgeois revolution and dispose of him afterward (Wright, 2001, p. 131). Sun Yat-sen allowed Chinese Communists to join the Nationalist Party in 1922; however, one of Sun Yat-sen's generals, Chiang Kai-shek, strongly opposed this (Wright, 2001, p. 131). Sun Yat-sen died in 1925, and Chiang Kai-shek became the all-important command of the military, where Chiang Kai-shek led his incredibly successful Northern Expedition (Wright, 2001, p. 132). Chiang Kai-shek captured Wuhan in 1926, Shanghai and Nanjing in 1927, and Beijing in 1929, which he renamed Beiping (Wright, 2001, p. 131-132). Thus, Chiang Kai-shek ended the warlord period and reunified China. No longer needing the Chinese Communists, Chiang Kai-shek broke off with them, and the Chinese Civil War between the Nationalists and the Communists began (Wright, 2001, p. 130). The Chinese Communists relocated to the countryside after diminishing support in the urban areas (Wright, 2001, p. 133). Around this time, Ba Jin wrote his first novel *Miewang* in 1929 under the pen name of Ba Jin (Britannica, 2020). The name Ba Jin is derived from the combination of the Chinese transliteration of Michael Bakunin and Peter Kropotkin, two famous Western anarchists who heavily inspired him (Rapp & Youd, 2015).

In 1931, Japan invaded Manchuria and created the puppet state of Manchukuo with Henry Pu Yi, who was the last emperor of the fallen Qing dynasty, as the head of state (Wright, 2001, p. 134). Chiang Kai-shek thought it was more important to defeat the Chinese Communists than the Japanese because he reasoned that only an internally unified China would be strong enough to resist Japanese invasion (Wright, 2001, p. 135). After four unsuccessful attempts to conquer the Communists in the countryside, Chiang Kai-shek and the Nationalists army finally defeated the Communists in 1934 and forced them to relocate from Jiangxi to Shaanxi during the Long March, which was a treacherous march from 1934-1935 where the Communists' numbers were decimated (Wright, 2001, p. 135-137). The Chinese Communists

headquartered in the town in Yan'an, which was a geographically strategic location that was nearly impossible for the Nationalists to penetrate (Wright, 2001, p. 137). Chiang Kai-shek attempted many times to uproot them but with no success, which did not play well with public opinion (Wright, 2001, p. 138). In 1935, students in Beiping and Shanghai protested the anti-Communist campaigns, insisting that "Chinese must not kill Chinese" (Wright, 2001, p. 138). These sentiments reached Zhang Xueliang's units, which were in charge of fighting the Chinese Communists in Shaanxi, and Zhang reduced the anti-Communist campaigns in 1936 (Wright, 2001, p. 138). As a result, Chiang Kai-shek flew to Xi'an, the provincial capital of Shaanxi, to persuade Zhang to continue the anti-Communist campaigns, but Chiang Kai-shek was unsuccessful (Wright, 2001, p. 138-139). Zhang and his men surrounded Chiang Kai-shek's quarters and placed him under house arrest; Chiang was then allowed to fly back to Nanjing but with Zhang's company (Wright, 2001, p. 139). When they arrived at Nanjing, Chiang Kai-shek called off the anti-Communist campaign but placed Zhang under house arrest (Wright, 2001, p. 139). In 1937, Chiang Kai-shek declared an all-out war against the Japanese and initiated the Second Unit Front, which was a period of cooperation between the Nationalists and the Communists against the Japanese (Wright, 2001, p. 139).

These mark the events that have occurred in Ba Jin's life up to the point when he wrote *I* in 1936, an autobiography that I will be translating for this thesis. In his autobiography, Ba Jin describes the mutiny and chaos that ensued the few nights leading up to the fall of the Qing dynasty (Ba Jin, 1994, p. 48-49). Ba Jin also paints a first-hand account of the harrowing scenes from the street fighting in 1917 in Chengdu that occurred during the Warlord Era immediately after the collapse of Yuan Shikai's government (Ba Jin, 1994, p. 66). Ba Jin's accounts of the violence he witnessed during his lifetime provide a personal experience of the events that unfolded in China in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Throughout his autobiography, Ba Jin portrays himself as a compassionate person who is worried about all creatures and people from all walks of life. From his earliest memories, he recalls playing with his household's chickens and naming them all. He refers to them as his "companions" and his "troops"

(Ba Jin, 1994, p. 13). He becomes distressed when some of the chickens are ordered to be slaughtered for a meal, and he pleads to his mother to save them; however, he is unsuccessful, which devastates him (Ba Jin, 1994, p. 16-18). He asks, "Why is it that chickens are to be killed and to be eaten?" (Ba Jin, 1994, p. 18). From a young age, Ba Jin is already pondering life and its cruelties. This sentiment is echoed when he watches people fry silkworm pupa to eat, and he thinks, "The fate of being a silkworm is also very tragic!" (Ba Jin, 1994, p. 38). Not only does Ba Jin care about animals, but he also cares about people. The most extreme case is when he watches a prisoner being tortured by his father, who was a high-ranking official. When his father was adjudicating, he used harsh punishment to force a confession out from the convict. Ba Jin was begging in his mind for them to release the prisoner (Ba Jin, 1994, p. 41), but they kept beating him. Because his father was so cruel during this scene, Ba Jin said that his father was unrecognizable. Finally, when he was a little older, he talks about how he would hang out with his "subordinates." They didn't hide anything from him. They talked about both the good and bad of their masters with him, and they view him as a friend who sympathizes with them (Ba Jin, 1994, p. 61). When he listens to their painful stories and the pitiful ways some of them died, he is saddened and wants to stand up and rebel for them (Ba Jin, 1994, p. 61-62). In his autobiography, Ba Jin portrays himself as an empathetic person who sympathizes with the weak and pitiful.

Ba Jin also strongly dislikes traditional values and social etiquette. Ba Jin views the traditional Confucian values as evil, dangerous, and superficial. Ba Jin blames the Confucian codes for the death of many people as "unnecessary sacrifices" (Ba Jin, 1994, pg. 70). According to Ba Jin, the traditional Confucian values are actually harmful to many people, including the servants mentioned earlier. Furthermore, after his grandfather's death, his uncles all battle for his grandfather's inheritance while using the superficial Confucian codes of being "brothers on the surface, but enemies in secrecy" (Ba Jin, 1994, p. 69). Materialism, while being amicable as advocated by the Confucian codes, are a dangerous combination, according to Ba Jin. There are also elements of hypocrisy and betrayal in that phrase.



Furthermore, Ba Jin dislikes social etiquette and rituals. After hanging out with the servants more and more, Ba Jin realizes that etiquettes are “hypocritical” because only the master benefits, while the subordinates suffer (Ba Jin, 1994, p. 62). Ba Jin also refuses to participate in social rituals. He refuses to kowtow to his grandfather on his birthday as a way of paying respect; as a result, he is beaten by his mother for the first time, but he still refuses (Ba Jin, 1994, pg. 46). He also refuses to pray on the Lunar New Year, even though he is constantly mocked for this (Ba Jin, 1994, pg. 63). Ba Jin staunchly refuses to participate in these rituals. Not only does Ba Jin fundamentally disagree with the traditional values, philosophies, and ways of thinking, but he also refuses to participate in old-fashioned behaviors.

The roots of Ba Jin’s attraction to anarchism can thus be traced to as early as his childhood. Firstly, Ba Jin is a highly compassionate person who cares about those who are suffering and are pitiful. He supports standing up for these types of people equally, no matter if they are from a poor or high-class background. Secondly, Ba Jin is highly repulsed by traditional behaviors and ways of thinking because he thinks they are hypocritical and dangerous. Ba Jin supported anarchism instead of communism because communism concentrated too much power into a single, dictatorial party (Rapp & Youd, 2015). In communism, the proletariat would rise up and suppress the bourgeoisie, but as previously established, Ba Jin supports treating people equally. According to Rapp & Youd, 2015, Ba Jin favored direct democracy and having peasant councils. Ba Jin criticized Lenin’s War Communism and Stalin’s nationalization and forced collectivization because they were brutal and even genocidal (Rapp & Youd, 2015). The Great Leap Forward imitated revolutionary Stalinism and War Communism (1918-1920); however, Mao Zedong was much more serious about the socialist utopian goals, and he criticized Stalin for being too focused on elites, technology, and material wealth, rather than raising class consciousness (Bernstein et al., 2010, p. 22-23). Mao Zedong claimed that the Great Leap Forward was one of the events to surpass Great Britain and catch up with the U.S., but Mao only intended to surpass the Soviet Union (Shen & Xia, 2011). In reality, the Great Leap Forward led to one of the worst famines in Chinese history, which was

foreshadowed by Stalin's forced collectivization policies (Rapp & Youd, 2015). Extending his criticism of the Soviet Union's leadership, it can be concluded that Ba Jin probably believed that the cause of famine during the Great Leap Forward was due to the Chinese Communist Party's leadership. Thus, Ba Jin favored anarchism over Marxism.

Even though his works were heavily criticized by the Chinese Communist Party, Ba Jin was a significant anarchist writer in China during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and he continues to be a popular writer even to this day. During his lifetime, China underwent massive political and social changes, and his works beautifully capture his experience of living through this political turmoil. Even anarchism has been overshadowed by the fight between the Nationalists and the Communists, Ba Jin serves to highlight anarchism during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century of China.

## Source Text 《憶》

### A. 憶

啊，為什麼我的眼前又是一片漆黑？我好像落進了陷阱裏面似的。我摸不到一樣實在的東西，我看不見一個具體的景象。一切都是模糊，虛幻。……我知道我又在做夢了。

我每夜都做夢。我的腦筋就沒有一刻休息過。對於某一些人夢是甜蜜的。但是我不曾從夢裏得到過安慰。夢是一種苦刑，它不斷地拷問我。我知道是我的心不許我寧靜，它時時都要解剖我自己，折磨我自己。我的心是我的嚴厲的裁判官。它比 Torquemada<sup>1</sup> 更殘酷。

“夢，這真的是夢麼？”我有時候在夢裏這樣地問過自己。問樣，“這不就是夢麼？”在醒著的時候，我又有過這樣的疑問。夢景和真實漸漸的融合成了一片。我不再能分辨什麼是夢和什麼是真了。

薇娜·妃格念爾<sup>2</sup> 關在席呂謝爾堡中的時候，她說過：“那冗長的，灰色的，單調的日子就像是無夢的睡眠。”我的身體可以說是自由的，但我不是也常常過著冗長的，灰色的，單調的日子麼？誠然我的生活裏也有變化，有時我不過著兩種完全不同的生活，然而這變化有的像電光一閃，光耀奪目，以後就歸於消滅；有的甚至也是單調的。一個窒悶的暗夜壓在我的頭上，一隻鐵手扼住我的咽喉。所以便是這些灰色的日子也不像無夢的睡眠。我眼前盡是幻影，這些日子全是夢，比真實更壓迫人的夢，在夢裏我被殘酷地拷問著。我常常在夢中發出叫聲，因為甚至在那個時候我也不曾停止過掙扎。

這掙扎使我太疲勞了。有一個極短的時間我也想過無夢的睡眠。這跟妃格念爾所說的是卻又不同。這是永久的休息。沒有夢，也沒有真；沒有人，也沒有自己。這是和平。這是安靜。我得承認，我的確願望過這樣的東西。但那只是一時的願望，那只是在我的精神衰弱的時候，常常經過了這樣的一個時期，我的精神上又起了一種變化，我為這種願望而感到羞慚和憤怒了。我甚至責備我自己的懦弱。於是我便以痛悔的心情和新的勇氣開始了新的掙扎。

我是一個充滿矛盾的人。“我過的是兩重的生活。一種是為他人的外表生活，一種是為自己的內心生活，”<sup>3</sup> 我的靈魂裏充滿了黑暗。然而我不願意拿這黑暗去傷害別人的心。我更不敢拿這黑暗去玷污將來的希望。而且當一個青年懷著一顆受傷的心求助於我的時候，我縱不是醫生，我也得給他一點安慰和希望，或者伴他去找一位名醫。為了這個緣故，我才讓我的心，我的靈魂擴大起來。我把一切個人的遭遇，創傷等等都裝在那裏面，像一隻獨木小舟沉入大海，使人看不見一點影響。我說過我生來就帶有憂鬱性，但是那位

作為“憂鬱者”寫了自白的朋友，卻因為看見我終日的笑容而詫異了，雖然他的臉上也常常帶著孩子的傻笑。其實我自己的話也不正確。我的父母都不是性情偏執的人，他們是同樣地溫和，寬厚，安份守己，那麼應該是配合得很完滿的一對。他們的靈魂裏不能夠貯藏任何憂鬱的影子。我的憂鬱性不能夠是從他們那裏得來的。那應該是在我的生活環境裏一天一天地磨出來的。給了那第一下打擊的，就是母親的死，接著又是父親的逝世。那個時候我太年輕了，還只是一個應該躲在父母的庇護下生活的孩子。創傷之上又加創傷，仿佛一來就不可收拾。我在七年前給我大哥的信裏曾寫道：“所足以維繫我心的就只有工作。終日工作，終年工作。我在工作裏尋得痛苦，由痛苦而得滿足。……我固然有一理想。這個理想也就是我的生命，但是我恐怕我不能夠活到那個理想實現的時候。……幾年來我追求光明，追求人間的愛，追求我理想中的英雄。結果我依舊得到痛苦。但是我並不後悔，我還要更大的勇氣走我的路。”但是在這之前不久的另一封信裏我卻說過：“我在心裏築了一堵牆，把自己囚在憂鬱的思想裏。一壺茶，一瓶墨水，一管鋼筆，一卷稿紙，幾本書……我常常寫了幾頁，無端的憂愁，便來侵襲。仿佛有什麼東西在我的胸膛裏激蕩，我再也忍不下去，就擲了筆披起秋大衣往外面街上走了。”

在這兩封信裏不是有著明顯的矛盾麼？我的生活，我的心情都是如此的。這個恐怕不會被人了解罷。但是原因我自己卻明白。造成那些矛盾的就是我過去的生活。這個我不能抹煞，我卻願意忘掉。所以在給大哥的另一封信裏我又說：“我怕記憶。我恨記憶。它把我所願意忘掉的事，都給我喚醒來了。”

的確我的過去像一個可怖的陰影壓在我的靈魂上，我的記憶像一根鐵鏈絆住我的腳。我屢次鼓起勇氣邁著大部往前面跑時，它總抓住我，使我退後，使我遲疑，使我留戀，使我憂鬱。我有一顆飛向廣闊的天空去的雄心，我有一個引我走向光明的信仰。然而我的力氣拖不動記憶的鐵鏈。我不能忍受這遲鈍的步履，我好幾次求助於感情，但是我的感情自身被夾在記憶的鉗子裏也失掉了它的平衡而有所偏倚了。它變成了不健康而易脆弱。倘使我完全信賴它，它會使我在彩虹一現中隨即完全隱去。我就會為過去所毀滅了。為我的前途計，我似乎應該撇棄為記憶所毒害了的感情。但是在我這又是勢所不能。所以我這樣永久地顛簸于理智與感情之間，找不到一個解決的辦法。我的一切矛盾都是從這裏來的。

我已經幾次說過了和這類似的話。現在又來反復解說，這似乎不應該。而且在這時候整個民族的命運都陷在泥淖裏，我似乎沒有權利來絮絮地向人訴說個人的一切。但是我終於又說了。因為我想，這並不是我個人的事，我在許多人的身上都看見和這類似的情

形。使我們的青年不能夠奮勇前進的，也正是那過去的陰影。我常常有一種奇怪的想法：倘使我們是沒有過去生活的原始人，我們也許能夠做出更多的事情來。

但是回憶抓住了我，壓住了我，把我的心拿來肢解，把我的感情拿來拷打。它時而織成一個柔軟的網，把我的身體包在裏面；它時而燃起猛烈的火焰，來燒我的骨髓。有時候我會緊閉眼目，棄絕理智，讓感情支配我，聽憑它把我引到偏執的路上，帶到懸崖的邊沿，使得一個朋友竟然驚訝地嚷了出來：“這樣下去除了使你成為瘋子以外，還有什麼？”其實這個朋友卻忘了他自己也有不小的矛盾，他和我一樣也是為回憶所折磨的人。他以為看人很清楚，卻不知看自己倒糊塗了。他把自己看作人類靈魂的醫生，他給我開了個藥方：妥協，調和；他的確是一個好醫生，他把為病人開的藥方拿來讓自己先服了。然而結果藥方完全不靈。這樣的藥醫不了病。他也許還不明白這是什麼緣故。他卻知道唯一的靈藥應該是一個“偏”字：不是跟過去調和，而是把它完全撇棄。不過我的病太深了，一劑靈藥也不會立刻治好多年的沉痾。

.....

我又是做夢了。我的眼前是一片漆黑，不，我的眼前盡是些幻影。我的眼睛漸漸地亮了，那些人，那些事情.....難道我睡得這麼深沉麼？為什麼他們能夠越過這許多年代而達到我這裏呢？

我全然在做夢了。我忘記了周圍的一切，我忘記了我自己。好像被一種力量拉著，我沉下去，我沉下去，於是我到了一個地方。難道我是走進了墳墓，或者另一個龐貝城被我發掘了出來？我看見了那許多人，那些都是被我埋葬了的，那些都是我永久失掉了的。

我完全沉在夢景裏面了。我自己變成了夢中的人。一種奇怪的感情抓住了我。我由一個小孩慢慢地長大起來。我生活在許多我的同代人中間，分享他們的悲歡。我們的世界是狹小的。但是我們卻把它看作宇宙般地廣大。我們以一顆真摯的心和一個不健全的人生觀來度我們的日子。我們有更多的愛和更多的同情。我們愛一切可愛的事物：我們愛夜晚在花園上面天空中照耀的星群，我們愛春天在桃柳枝上鳴叫的小鳥，我們愛那從樹梢灑到草地上面的月光，我們愛那使水面現出明亮珠子的太陽。我們愛一隻貓，一隻小鳥。我們愛一切的人。我們像一群自私的孩子去領取生活的賜予。我們整天盡興地笑樂，我們也希望別人更夠笑樂。我們從不曾傷害過別的人。然而一個黑影來掩蓋了我們的靈魂。於是憂鬱在我們的心上產生了。這個黑影漸漸地擴大起來，跟著它就來了種種的事情。一個打擊上又加第二個。眼淚，呻吟，叫號，掙扎，最後是悲劇的結局。一個一個年輕的生命遭摧殘。有的離開了這個世界，留下一些悲痛的回憶給別人；有的就被打落在泥坑裏面不能自撥。

.....

啊，我怎麼做了一個這麼長久的夢！我應該醒了。我果然能夠擺脫那一切而醒過來麼？那許多生命，那許多被我愛過的生命在我的心上刻畫了那麼深的跡印，我能夠把他們完全忘掉麼？

我把這一切已經埋葬了這麼多的年代，為什麼到現在還會有這樣長的夢？這樣痛苦的夢？甚至使我到今天還提筆來寫《春》？

過去，回憶，這一切把我縛得太緊了，把我壓得太苦了。難道我就永遠不能夠擺脫它而昂然地，無牽挂地去走我自己的路麼？

我的夢醒了。這應該是最後的一次了。我要擺脫那一切絆住我的腳的東西。我要擺脫一切的回憶。我要把它們全埋葬在一個更深的墳墓，我要忘掉那過去的一切。

不管這是不是可能，我既然開始了我的路程，我既然跟那一切掙扎了這許多年代，那麼，我還要繼續掙扎下去。在永久的掙扎中活下去，這究竟是我度過生活的美麗的方法。

1936年5月

<sup>1</sup>Torquemada: 十五世紀西班牙宗教裁判所的裁判官。

<sup>2</sup>薇娜·妃格念爾 (V. Figner, 1852-1942): 舊俄民粹派女革命家，在席呂謝爾堡監獄裏給關了二十年。一九〇六至一九一五年僑居國外，後返國家。她寫了許多回憶錄（《難忘的勞動》，1921-1922年版）。

<sup>3</sup>在這裏我借用了妃格念爾的話。她還說：“-在外表上我不得不保持安靜勇氣的面目，這個我做到了；然而在黑夜的靜寂裏我會帶著痛苦的焦慮來想：末日會到來嗎？-到了早晨我就戴上我的面具開始我的工作。”她用這些話來說明她被捕以前的心境。

## B. 最初的回憶

“這個娃娃本來是給你的弟媳婦的，因為怕她不會好好待他，所以送給你。”

這是母親在她的夢裏聽見“送子娘娘”說的話。每當晴明的午後，母親在她那間朝南的屋子裏做針綫的時候，她常常對我們弟兄姊妹（或者還有老媽子在場）敘述她這個奇怪的夢。

“第二天就把你生下來了。”

母親擡起她的圓圓臉，用愛憐橫溢的眼光看我，我那時站在她的身邊。

“想不到卻是一個這樣淘氣娃娃！”

母親微微一笑，我們也都笑了。

母親很愛我。雖然她有時候笑著說我是淘氣的孩子，可是她從來沒有罵過我。她讓我再溫柔，和平的氣氛中度過了幼年時代。

一張溫和的圓圓臉，被刨花水捫得光光的頭髮，常常帶笑的嘴。淡青色湖縐滾寬邊的大袖短襖，沒有領子。

我每次回溯到我的最遠的過去，我的腦子裏就浮現了母親的面顏。

我的開初的回憶是跟母親分不開的。我尤其不能忘記的是母親的溫柔的聲音。

我四五歲的光景，跟著母親從成都到了川北的廣元縣，父親在那裏做縣官。

衙門，很大一個地方，進去是一大塊空地，兩旁是監牢，大堂，二堂，三堂，四堂，還有草地，還有稀疏的桑林，算起來大概有六七進。

我們住在三堂裏。

最初我同母親睡，睡在母親那張架子床上。熱天床架上掛著羅紋帳子或者麻布帳子，冷天掛著白布帳子。帳子外面有微光，這是從方桌上那盞清油燈的燈草上發出來的。

清油燈，長的頸項，圓的燈盤，黯淡的燈光，有時候燈草上結了黑的燈花，必剝必剝地燃著。

我睡在被窩裏，常常想著“母親”這兩個字的意義。

白天，我們在書房裏讀書，地點是在二堂旁邊。窗外有一個小小的花園。

先生是一個溫和的中年人，面貌非常和善。他有時繪地圖。他不曾畫鉛筆畫。他有彩色鉛筆，這是我們最羨慕的。

學生是我的兩個哥哥，兩個姐姐和我。

一個老書僮服侍我們。這個人名叫賈福，六十歲的年紀，頭髮已經白了。

在書房裏我早晨認幾十個字，下午讀幾頁書，每天都早就放學出來。三哥的功課比我的稍微多一點，他比我只大一歲多。

賈福把我們送到母親的房裏。母親給我們吃一點糖果。我們在母親的房裏完了一會兒。

“香兒，”三哥開始叫起來。

我也叫著這個丫頭的名字。

一個十二三歲的瓜子臉的少女跑了進來，露著一臉的笑容。

“陪我們到四堂後面去耍！”

她高興地微笑了。

“香兒，你小心照應他們！”母親這樣吩咐。

“是。”她應了一聲，就帶著我們出去了。

我們穿過後房門出去。

我們走下石階，就往草地上跑。

草地的兩邊種了幾排桑樹，中間露出一條寬的過道。

桑葉肥大，綠蔭蔭的一大片。

兩三隻花雞在過道中間跑。

“我們快來拾桑果！”

香兒帶笑地牽著我的手往桑樹下面跑。

桑葚的甜香馬上撲進了我的鼻子。

“好香呀！”

滿地都是桑葚，深紫色的果子，有許多碎了，是跌碎了的，是被雞的腳爪踏壞了的，是被雞的嘴殼啄破了的。

到處是鮮艷的深紫色的汁水。

我們兜起衣襟，躬著腰去拾桑葚。

“真可惜！”香兒一面說，就揀了幾顆完好的桑葚往口裏送。

我們也吃了幾顆。

我看見香兒的嘴唇染的紅紅的，她還在吃。

三哥的嘴唇也是紅紅的，我的兩手也是。

“看你們的嘴！”



香兒撲嗤笑起來。

她摸出手帕給我們揩了嘴。

“手也是。”

她又給我們揩了手。

“你自己看不見你的嘴？”三哥望著她的嘴笑。

在後面四堂裏雞叫了。

“我們快去找雞蛋！”

香兒連忙揩了她的嘴，就牽起我的手往裏面跑。

我們把滿兜的桑葚都倒在地上了。

我們跑過一個大的乾草堆。

草地上一隻麻花雞伸長了頸項得意地在那裏一面走，一面叫。

我們追過去。

這隻雞驚叫地撲著翅膀跳開了。別的雞也往四面跑。

“我們看哪一個先找到雞蛋？”

香兒這樣提議。結果總是她找到了那個雞蛋。

有時候我也找到的，因為我知道平時雞愛在什麼地方下蛋。

香兒雖然比我聰明，可是對於雞的事情我知道的就不比她少。

雞是我的伴侶。不，它們是我的軍隊。

雞的兵營就在三堂後面。

草地上兩邊都有石階，階上有房屋，階下就種桑樹。

左邊的一排平房，大半是平日放舊家具等等的地方。最末的一個空敞房間就做了雞房，裏面放了好幾隻雞籠。

雞的數目是二十幾個，我給它們都起了名字。

大花雞，這是最肥的一隻，松綠色的羽毛上加了不少的白點。

風頭雞，這隻雞有著灰色的羽毛，黑的斑點，頭上多一撮毛。

麻花雞，是一隻有黑黃色小斑點的雞。

小風頭雞比風頭雞身子要小一點。除了頭上多一撮毛外，它跟普通的母雞就沒有分別。

烏骨雞，它連腳，連嘴殼，都是烏黑的。

還有黑雞，白雞，小花雞，……各種各類的名稱。

每天早晨起床以後，洗了臉，我就叫香兒陪我到三堂後面去。

香兒把雞房的門打開了。

我們揭起了每一隻雞籠。我把一隻一隻的雞依著次序點了名。

“去罷，好好地去耍！”

我們撒了幾把米在地上，讓它們圍著啄吃。

我便去了，進書房去了。

下午我很早就放學出來，三哥有時候比較遲一點放學。

我一個人偷偷地跑到四堂後面去。

我睡在高高乾草堆上。乾草是溫暖的，我覺得自己好像睡在床上。

溫和的陽光愛撫著我的臉，就像母親的手在撫摩。

我半睜開眼睛，望著雞群在下面草地上嬉戲。

“大花雞，不要叫！再叫給別人聽見了，會把雞蛋給你拿走的。”

那隻大花雞得意地在草地上踱著，高聲叫起來。我叫它不要嚷，沒有用。

我只得從草堆上爬下來，去拾了雞蛋揣在懷裏。大花雞愛在草堆裏生蛋，所以我很容易地就找著了。

雞蛋還是熱烘烘的，上面粘了一點雞毛，是一個很可愛的大的雞蛋。

或者小風頭雞被麻花雞在翅膀上啄了一下就跑開了。我便吩咐它：

“不要跑呀！喂，小風頭雞，你怕麻花雞做什麼？”

有時候我同三哥在一起，我們就想出種種方法來指揮雞群遊戲。

我們永遠不會覺得寂寞。

傍晚吃過午飯後（我們就叫這做午飯），我等到天快要黑了就同三哥一起，叫香兒陪著，去把雞一一地趕進了雞房，把它們全照應進了雞籠。

我又點一次名，看見不曾少掉一隻雞，這才放了心。

有一天傍晚點名的時候，我忽然發覺少了一隻雞。

我着急起來，要往四堂後面去找。

“太太今天吩咐何師傅捉去殺了。”香兒望著我笑。

“殺了？”

“你今天下午沒有吃過雞肉嗎？”

不錯，我吃過！那碗紅燒雞，味道很不錯。

我沒有話說了。心裏卻有些不舒服。

過了三四天，那隻黑雞又不見了。

點名的時候，我望著香兒的笑臉，氣得流出眼淚來。

“都是你的錯！你坏得很！他們捉雞去殺，你曉得，你做什麼不跟我說？我捏起小拳頭要打香兒。

“你不要打我，我下次跟你說就是了。”香兒笑著向我告饒。

然而那隻可愛的黑雞的影子我再也看不見了。

又過了好幾天，我已經忘掉了黑雞的事情。

一個早上，我從書房裏放學出來。

我走過石欄杆圍著的長廊，在拐門裏遇見了香兒。

“四少爺，我正在等你！”

“什麼事情？”

我看見她着急的神氣，知道有什麼大事情發生了。

“太太又喊何師傅殺雞了。”

她拉著我的手往裏面去。

“哪一隻雞？快說。”我睜著一對小眼睛看她。

“就是那隻大花雞。”

大花雞，那隻最肥的，松綠色的羽毛上長著不少白色斑點。我很愛它！

我馬上掙脫香兒的手，拚命往裏面跑。

我一口氣跑進了母親的房裏。

我滿頭是汗，我還在喘氣。

母親坐在床頭椅子上。我把上半身壓著她的膝頭。

“媽媽，不要殺我的雞！那隻大花雞是我的！我不准人家殺它！”

我拉著母親的手哀求。

“我說是什麼大事情！你這樣着急地跑進來，原來是為著一隻雞。

母親溫和地笑起來，摸出手帕給我揩了額上的汗。

“殺一隻雞，值得這樣着急嗎？今天下午做了菜，大家都吃的。”

“我不吃，媽，我要那隻大花雞，我不准人殺它。那隻大花雞，我最愛的……”

我急得哭了出來。

母親笑了。她用溫和的眼光看我。

“癡兒，這也值得你哭？好，我喊香兒陪你到廚房裏去，喊何廚子把雞放了，由你另外揀一隻雞給他。”

“那些雞我都喜歡。隨便哪隻雞，我都不准人家殺！”我依舊拉著母親的手說。

“那不行，你爹吩咐殺的。你快去，晚了，恐怕那隻雞已經給何厨子殺了。”  
提起那隻大花雞，我忘掉了一切。我馬上拉起香兒的手跑出了母親的房間。  
我們氣咻咻地跑進了廚房。

何厨子正把手裏拿著的大花雞往地上一擲。

“完了，殺死了。”香兒嘆口氣，就呆呆地站住了。  
大花雞在地上撲翅膀，松綠色的羽毛上染了幾團血。  
我跑到它的面前，叫了一聲“大花雞”！

它閉著眼睛，垂著頭，在那裏亂撲。身子在骯髒的土地上擦來擦去。頸項上現出一個大的傷口，那裏面還滴出血來。

我從沒有見過這樣的死的掙扎！

我不敢伸手去挨它。

“四少爺，你哭你的大花雞呀！”這是何厨子的帶笑的聲音。  
他這個凶手！他親手殺死了我的大花雞。

我氣得全身發抖。我的眼睛也模糊了。

我回頭撥步就跑，我不顧香兒在後面喚我。

我跑進母親的房裏，就把頭放在她的懷中放聲大哭：

“媽媽，把我的大花雞還給我……”

母親溫和地安慰我，她稱我做癡兒。

爲了這件事，我被人嘲笑了好些時候。

這天午飯的時候，桌子上果然添了兩樣雞肉做的菜。

我望著那兩個菜碗，就想起了大花雞平日得意地叫著的姿態。

我始終不曾在菜碗裏下過一次筷子。

晚上楊嫂安慰我說，雞被殺了，就可以投生去做人。

她又告訴我，那隻雞一定可以投生去做人，因爲殺雞的時候，袁嫂在廚房裏念過了“往生咒”。

我並不相信這個老媽子的話，因爲離現實太遠了，我看不見。

“爲什麼做了雞，就該被人殺死做菜吃？”

我這樣問母親，得不著回答。

我這樣問先生，也得不著回答。

問別的人，也得不著回答。

別人認爲是很自然的事情，我卻始終不懂。

對於別人，雞不過是一隻家禽。對於我，它卻是我的伴侶，我的軍隊。  
我的一個最好的兵就這樣地消失了。  
從此我對於雞的事情，對於這種爲了給人類做食物而活著的雞的事情，就失掉了興趣。

不過我還在照料那些剩餘的雞，讓它們先後做了菜碗裏的犧牲品，連風頭雞也在內。

老媽子裏面，有一個楊嫂負責照應我和三哥。

高身材，長臉，大眼睛，小脚。三十歲光景。

我們很喜歡她。

她記得許多神仙和妖精的故事。晚上我和三哥常常找機會躲在她的房裏，逼著她給我們講故事。

香兒也在場，她也喜歡聽故事。

楊嫂很有口才。她的故事比什麼都好聽。

我們聽完了故事，就由她把我們送回到母親房裏去。

壩子裏一片黑暗。草地上常常有聲音。

我們幾個人的脚步聲在石階上很響。

楊嫂手裏捏著油紙捻子，火光在晃動。

我們回到母親房裏，玩一會兒，楊嫂就服侍我在母親的床上睡了。

三哥跟著大哥去睡。

楊嫂喜歡喝酒，她年年都要泡桑椹酒。

桑椹熟透了的時候，草地上布滿了紫色的果實。

我和三哥，還有香兒，我們常常去拾桑椹。

熟透了的桑椹，那甜香真正叫人的喉嚨癢。

我們一面拾，一面吃，每次拾了滿衣兜的桑椹。

“這樣多，這樣好！”

我們每次把一堆一堆的深紫色的桑椹指給她看，她總要做出驚喜的樣子說。

她揀幾顆在鼻子上聞，然後就放進了嘴裏。

我們四個人圍著桌子吃桑椹。

我們的手上都染了桑椹汁，染得紅紅的，嘴也是。

“夠了，不准再吃了。”

她撩起衣襟揩了嘴唇，更打開立櫃門，拿出一個酒瓶來。

她把桑葚塞進了一個瓶裏，一個瓶子容不下，她又去取了第二個，第三個。每個瓶裏盛著大半瓶白色的酒。

多少恨  
昨夜夢魂中  
還似舊時游上苑  
車如流水馬如龍  
花月正春風

——南唐李後主：《憶江南-懷舊》

從母親那裏我學著讀那叫做“詞”的東西。  
母親剪了些白紙訂成好幾本小冊子。  
我的兩個姐姐各有一本。後來我和三哥每個人也有了這樣的一本小冊子。  
母親差不多每天要在小冊子上面寫下一首詞，是依著順序從《白香詞譜》裏抄來的。

是母親親手寫的娟秀的小字。

晚上，在方桌前面，清油燈的燈光下，我和三哥靠了母親站著。

母親用溫柔的聲音給我們讀者小冊子上面寫的字。

這是我們幼年時代的唯一的音樂。

我們跟著母親讀出每一個字，直到我們可以把一些字鏈接起來讀成一句為止。

於是母親給我們拿出來那根牛骨做的印圈點的東西和一盒印泥。

我們弟兄兩個就跪在方凳子上面，專心地給讀過的那首詞加上了圈點。

第二個晚上我們又在母親的面前溫習那首詞，一直到我們能夠把它背誦出來。

但是不到幾個月母親就生了一個妹妹。

我們的小冊子裏有兩個多月不曾添上新的詞。

而且從那時候起我就和三哥同睡在一張床上，在另一個房間裏面。

楊嫂把她的床鋪搬到我們的房裏來。她陪伴我們，照料我們。

這個妹妹大排行第九，我們叫她做九妹。她出世的時候，我在夢裏，完全不知道。

早晨我睜起眼睛，陽光已經照在床上了。

母親頭上束了一根帕子，她望著我笑。

旁邊突然響起了嬰兒的啼聲。

楊嫂也望著我笑。

我有一種莫名其妙的感覺。

這是我睡在母親床上的最後一天了。

秋天，天氣漸漸地涼起來。

我們恢復了讀詞的事情。

每天晚上，二更鑼一響，我們就闔上那本小冊子。

“喊楊嫂領你們去睡罷，”母親溫和地說。

我們向母親道了晚安，帶著疲倦的眼睛，走出去。

“楊嫂，我們要睡了。”

“來了！來了！”楊嫂的高身材出現在我們的面前。

她常常牽著我走。她的手比母親的粗得多。

我們走過了堂屋，穿過大哥的房間。

有時候我們也從母親的後房後面去。

我們進了房間。房裏有兩張床：一張是我同三哥睡的，另一張是楊嫂一個人睡的。

楊嫂愛清潔。所以她把房間和床鋪都收拾得很乾淨。

她不許我們在地板上吐痰，也不許我們在床上翻斤斗。她還不許我們做別的一些事情。但是我們并不恨她，我們喜歡她。

臨睡時，她叫我們站在旁邊，等她把被褥鋪好。

她給我們脫了衣服，把我們送進了被窩。

“你不要就走開！給我們講一個故事！”

她正要放下帕子，我們就齊聲叫起來。

她果然就在床沿上坐下來，開始給我們講故事。

有時候我們要聽完了一個滿意的故事才肯睡覺。

有時候我們就在她敘述的中間閉上了眼睛，完全不知道她在說些什麼。

什麼神仙，劍俠，妖精，公子，小姐……我們都不去管了。

生活就是這樣和平的。

沒有眼淚，沒有悲哀，沒有憤怒。只有平靜的喜悅。

然而剛剛翻過了冬天，情形又改變了。

晚上我們照例把那本小冊子闔起來交給母親。

外面響著二更的鑼。

“喊你們二姐領你們去睡罷。楊嫂病了。”

母親親自把我們送到房間裏。二姐牽著三哥的手，我的手是母親牽著的。

母親照料著二姐把我們安置在被窩裏，又囑咐我們好好地睡覺。

母親走了以後，我們兩個睜起眼睛望著帳頂，然後又掉過臉對望著。

二姐在另一張床上咳了幾聲嗽。

她代替楊嫂來陪伴我們。她就睡在楊嫂的床上，不過被褥帳子完全換過了。

我們不能夠閉眼睛，因為我們想起了楊嫂。

三堂後邊，左、右邊石階上的一排平房裏面，第四個房間，沒有地板，一盞瓦油燈放在破方桌上面……

那是楊嫂從前住過的房間。

她現在生病，又回到那裏去了，就躺在她那張床上。

外面石階下是光禿的桑樹。

在我們的房裏推開靠裏一扇窗望出去，看得見楊嫂的房間。

那裏很冷靜，很寂寞。

除了她這個病人外，就只有袁嫂睡在那裏。可是袁嫂事情多，睡得遲。

我們以後就沒有再看見楊嫂，只知道她在生病，雖然常常有醫生來給她看脈，她的病還是沒有起色。

二姐把我們照料得很好。還有香兒給她幫忙。她晚上也會給我們講故事。

我漸漸地把楊嫂忘記了。

“我們去看楊嫂去！”

一天下午我們剛剛從書房裏出來，三哥忽然把我的衣襟拉一下，低聲對我說。

“好！”我毫不遲疑地點了點頭。

我們跑到三堂後面，很快地就到了右邊石階上的第四個房間。

沒有別人看見我們。

我們推開掩著的房門，進去了。

陰暗的房裏沒有聲音，只有觸鼻的臭氣。在那張矮矮的床上，藍布帳子放下了半幅。一幅舊棉被蓋著楊嫂的下半身。她睡着了。

床面前一個竹凳上放著一碗黑黑的藥湯，已經沒有熱氣了。

我們膽怯地走到了床前。

紙一樣白的臉。一頭鬢蓬的亂髮。眼睛閉著。嘴微微張開在出氣。一隻手從被裏垂下來，一隻又黃又瘦的手。



我有點不相信這個女人就是楊嫂。

我想起那張笑臉，我想起那張講故事的嘴，我想起大堆的桑葚和一瓶一瓶的桑椹酒。

我仿佛在做夢。

“楊嫂，楊嫂。”我們兄弟兩個齊聲喊起來。

她的鼻子裏發出一個細微的聲音。她那隻垂下來的手慢慢地動了。

身子也微微動著。嘴裏發出含糊的聲音。

眼睛睜開了，閉了，又睜開得更大一點。她的眼光落在我們兩個的臉上。

她的嘴唇微微動了一下，好像要笑。

“楊嫂，我們來看你！”三哥先說，我也跟著說。

她勉強笑了，慢慢地舉起手撫摩三哥的頭。

“你們來了，你們還記得我。……你們好罷？……現在哪個在照應你們？……”

聲音是多麼微弱。

“二姐在照應我們。媽媽也來照應我們。”

三哥的聲音裏似乎淌出了眼淚。

“好。我放心了。……我多麼記挂你們啊！……我天天都在想你們。……我害怕你們離了我覺得不方便……”

她說話有些吃力，那兩顆失神的眼珠一直在我們弟兄的臉上轉，眼光還是像從前那樣地和善。

她這樣看人，把我的眼淚也引出來了。

我一把抓住了她的手。這隻手是冷冰冰的。

她的眼光停留在我的臉上。

“四少爺，你近來淘不淘氣？……多謝你還記得我。我的病不要緊，過幾天就會好的。”

我的眼淚滴到她的手上。

“你哭了！你的心腸真好。不要哭，我的病就會好的。”

她撫著我的頭。

“你不要哭，我又不是大花雞啊！”

她還記得大花雞的事情，跟我開起玩笑來。

我並不想笑，心裏只想哭。

“你們看，我的記性真壞！這碗藥又冷了。”

她把眼光向外面一轉，瞥見了竹凳子上的藥碗，便把眉頭一皺，說著話就要撐起身子來拿藥碗。

“你不要起來，我來端給你。”

三哥搶著先把藥碗捧在手裏。

“冷了吃不得。我去喊人給你煨熱！”三哥說著就往外走。

“三少爺，你快端回來！冷了不要緊，吃下去一樣。你快不要驚動別人，人家會怪我花樣多。”她費力撐起身子，掙紅了臉，着急地阻止三哥道。

三哥把藥碗捧了回來，潑了一些藥湯在地上。

她一把奪過了藥碗，把臉俯在藥碗上，大口地喝著。

她擡起頭來，把空碗遞給三哥。

她的臉上還帶著紅色。

她用手在嘴上一抹，抹去了嘴邊的藥渣，頹然地倒下去，長嘆一聲，好像已經用盡了力氣。

她閉上眼睛，不再睜開看我們一眼。鼻子裏發出了輕微的響聲。

她的臉漸漸地在褪色。

我們默默地站了半晌。

房間裏一秒鐘一秒鐘地變得陰暗起來。

“三少爺，四少爺，四少爺，三少爺！”

在外面遠遠地香兒用她那帶調皮的聲音叫起來。

“走罷。”

我連忙拉三哥的衣襟。

我們走到石階上，就被香兒看見了。

“你們偷偷跑到楊大娘房裏去過了。我要去告訴太太。”

香兒走過來，見面就說出這種話。她得意地笑了笑。

“太太吩咐過我不要帶你們去看楊大娘，”她又說。

“你真壞！不准你向太太多嘴！我們不怕！”

香兒果然把這件事情告訴了母親。

母親並沒有責罵我們。她只說我們以後不可以再到楊嫂的房間裏去。不過她並沒有說出理由來。

日子一天一天地過去，像水流一般地快。

然而楊嫂的病不但不曾好，反而一天天地加重了。

我們經過三堂後面那條寬的過道，往四堂裏去的時候，常常聽見楊嫂的奇怪的呻吟聲。

聽說她不肯吃藥。聽說她有時候還會發出怪叫。

人一提起楊嫂，馬上做出恐怖的，嚴肅的表情。

“天真沒有眼睛：像楊嫂這樣的好人怎麼生這樣的病！”

母親好幾次一面嘆氣，一面說。

但是我不知道楊嫂究竟生的是什麼病。

我只知道廣元縣沒有一個好醫生，因為大家都是這樣說。

又過了好幾天。

“四少爺，你快去看，楊大嫂在吃虱子！”

一個下午，我比三哥先放學出來，在拐們裏遇到香兒，她拉著我的膀子，對我做了一個怪臉。

“我躲在門外頭看。她解開衣服捉虱子，捉到一個就丟進嘴裏，咬一口。她接連丟了好幾個進去。她一面吃，一面笑，一面罵。她後來又脫了裹腳布放在嘴裏嚼。真髒！”

香兒極力在摹仿楊嫂的那些動作。

“我不要再看！”

我生氣地掙脫了香兒的手，就往母親的房裏跑。

虱子，裹腳布，在我的腦子裏無論如何跟楊嫂連不起來。楊嫂平日很愛乾淨。

我不說一句話，就把頭放在母親的懷裏哭了。

母親費力好些功夫來安慰我。她含著眼淚對父親說：

“楊嫂的病不會好了。我們給她買一副好點的棺材罷。她服侍我們這幾年，很忠心。待三兒，四兒又是那樣好，就跟自己親生的差不多！”

母親的話又把我的眼淚引出來了。

我第一次懂得死字的意義了。

可是楊嫂并不死，雖然醫生已經說病是無法醫治的了。

她依舊活著，吃虱子，嚼裹腳布，說胡話，怪叫。

每個人對這件事情都失掉了興趣，誰也不再到她的房門外去偷看，偷聽了。

一提起楊嫂吃虱子……大家都不高興地皺這眉頭。

“天呀！有什麼法子使她早死，免得受這種活罪。”

大家都希望她馬上死，卻找不到使她早死的辦法。

一個堂勇提議拿毒藥給她吃，母親第一個反對。

但是楊嫂的存在卻使得整個衙門籠罩了一種憂鬱的氣氛。

無論誰聽說楊嫂還沒有死，馬上就把臉沉下來，好像聽見了一個不祥的消息。

許多人的好心都希望著一個人死，這個人卻是他們所愛的人。

然而他們的希望終於實現了。

一個傍晚，我們一家人在吃午飯。

“楊大娘死了！”

香兒氣咻咻地跑進房來，開口就報告這一個好消息。

袁嫂跟著走進來證實了香兒的話。

楊嫂的死是毫無疑惑的了。

“謝天謝地！”

母親馬上把筷子放下。

全桌子的人都噓了一口長氣，好像長時期的憂慮被一陣風吹散了。

仿佛沒有一個人覺得死是一件可怕的事情。

然而誰也無心吃飯了。

我最先注意到母親眼裏的淚珠。

健康的楊嫂的面影在我的眼前活潑地出現了。

我終於把飯碗推開，俯在桌子上哭了。

我哭得很傷心，就像前次哭大花雞那樣。同時我想起了楊嫂的最後的話。

一個多月以後母親對我們談起了楊嫂的事情：

她是一個寡婦。她在我們家裏做了四年的老媽子。

我所知道的關於她的事情就只有這一點點。

她跟著我們從成都來，卻不能夠跟著我們回成都去。

她沒有家，也沒有親人。

所以我們就把她葬在廣元縣。她的墳墓在什麼地方，我不知道。

我也不知道墳前有沒有石碑，或者碑上刻著什麼字。

“在陰間（鬼的世界）大概無所謂家鄉罷，不然楊嫂倒做了異鄉的鬼了。”母親偶爾感嘆地對人說。

在清明節和中元節，母親叫人帶了些紙錢到楊嫂的墳前去燒。

就這樣地，“死”在我的眼前第一次走過了。

我也喜歡讀書，因為我喜歡我們的教讀先生。

這個矮矮身材白面孔的中年人有種種辦法取得我們的敬愛。

“劉先生。”

早晨一走進書房，我們就給他行禮。

他帶笑地點點頭。

我和三哥坐在同一張條桌前，一個人一個方凳子，我們覺得坐著不方便，就跪在凳子上面。

認方塊字，或者讀《三字經》，《百家姓》，《千字文》。

劉先生待我們是再好沒有的了。他從來沒有罵過我們一句，臉上永遠帶著溫和的微笑。

母親曾經叫賈福傳過話，請劉先生不客氣地嚴厲管教我們。

但是我從不知道嚴厲是怎麼一回事。我背書背不出，劉先生就叫我慢慢地重讀。我願意什麼時候放學，我就在什麼時候出去，三哥也是。

因為這個緣故我們更喜歡書房。

而且在充滿陽光的書房裏看大哥和兩個姐姐用功讀書的樣子，看先生的溫和的笑臉，看賈福的和氣的笑臉，我覺得很高興。

先生常常在給父親繪地圖。

我不知道地圖是什麼東西，拿來做什麼用。

可是在一張厚厚的白紙上面繪出許多條纖細的黑綫，又填上各種的顏色，究竟是一件有趣的事情。

還有許多奇怪的東西，例如現今人們所稱為圓規之類的儀器。

繪了又擦掉，擦了又再繪，劉先生那種俯著頭專心用功的樣子，仿佛還在我的眼前。

“劉先生也很辛苦啊！”我時時偷偷地望先生，這樣地想起來。

有時候我和三哥放了學，還回到書房去看先生繪地圖。

劉先生忽然把地圖以及別的新奇的東西收起來，笑嘻嘻地對我們說：

“我今晚上給你們畫一個娃娃。”

這裏說的娃娃就是人物圖的意思。

不用說，我們的心不能夠等到晚上，我們就逼著他馬上繪給我們看。

如果這一天大哥和二姐，三姐的功課很好，先生有較多的空時間，那麼用不著我們多次請求，他便答應了。

他拿過那本大本的綫裝書，大概是《字課圖說》罷，隨便翻開一頁，就把一方裁小了的白紙蒙在上面，用鉛筆繪出了一個人，或者還有一兩間房屋，或是還有別的東西。然後他拿彩色鉛筆塗上了顏色。

“這張給你！”

或者我，或者三哥，接到了這張圖畫，臉上總要露出十分滿意的笑容。

我們非常喜歡這樣的圖畫。因為這些圖畫我們更喜歡劉先生。

圖畫一張一張地增加，我的一個小木匣子裏面已經積了幾十張圖畫了。

我一直缺少玩具，所以把這些圖畫當作珍寶。

每天早晨和晚上我都要把這些圖畫翻看好一會兒。

紅的，綠的顏色，人和狗的房屋……它們在我的腦子裏活動起來。

然而這些畫還不能夠使我滿足。我夢想著那張更大的圖畫：有獅子，有老虎，有豹子，有豺狼，有山，有洞……

這張畫我似乎在《字課圖說》，或者別的書上見過。先生不肯繪出來給我們。

有幾個晚上我們也跑到書房裏去向先生討圖畫。

大哥一個人在書房裏讀夜書，他大概覺得寂寞罷。

我們站在旁邊看先生繪畫，或者填顏色。

忽然牆外面響起了長長的吹哨聲。

先生停了筆傾聽。

“在夜裏還要跑多遠的路啊！”

先生似乎也憐憫那個送鷄毛文書的人。

“他現在又要換馬了！”

於是輕微的馬蹄聲去遠了。

那個時候緊要的信函公文都是用專差送達的。送信的專差到一個驛站就要換一次馬，所以老遠就吹起哨子來。

先生花了兩三天的功夫，終於在一個下午把我渴望了許久的有山，有洞，有獅子，有老虎，有豹，有狼的圖畫繪成功了。

我進書房的時候，正看見三哥捧著那張畫快活地微笑。

“你看，先生給我的。”

這是一張多麼可愛的畫，而且我早就夢見先生繪出來給我了。

但是我來遲了一步，它已經在三哥的手裏了。

“先生，我要！”我紅著臉，跑到劉先生的面前。

“過幾天我再畫一張給你。”

“不行，我就要！我非要不可！”

我馬上就哭出來，不管先生怎樣勸，怎麼安慰，都沒有用。

同時我的哭也沒有用。先生不能夠馬上就繪出同樣的一張畫。

於是我恨起先生來了。我說他是壞人。

先生沒有生氣，他依舊笑嘻嘻地向我解釋。

然而三哥進去告訴了母親。大哥和二姐把我半拖半抱地弄進了母親的房裏。

母親帶著嚴肅的表情說了幾句責備的話。

我止了淚，傾聽著。我從來就聽從母親的吩咐。

最後母親叫我跟著賈福到書房裏去，向先生賠禮；她還要賈福去傳話請先生打我。

我埋著頭讓賈福牽著我的手再到書房裏去。

但是我並沒有向先生賠禮，先生也不曾打我一下。

反而先生讓我坐在方凳上，他俯著身子給我系好散開了的鞋帶。

晚上睡覺的時候，我在枕頭邊拿出那個木匣子，把裏面所有的圖畫翻看了一邊，就慷慨地全送給了三哥。

“真的？你自己一張也不要？”

三哥驚喜地望著我，有點莫名奇妙。

“我都不要！”我毫無留戀地回答他。

在那個時候我有一種近乎“不完全，則寧無”的思想。

從這一天起，我們就再也沒有向先生要過圖畫了。

春天。萌芽的春天。嫩綠的春天。到處散佈生命的春天。

一天一天地我看見桑樹上發了新芽，生了綠葉。

母親在本地蠶桑局裏選了六張好種子。

每一張皮紙上面布滿了芝麻大小的淡黃色的蠶卵。

蠶卵陸續變成了極小的蠶兒。

蠶兒一天一天地大起來。

家裏的人爲了養蠶的事情忙著。

大的簸箕裏面擺滿了桑葉，許多根兩寸長的蠶子在上面爬著。

大家又忙著摘桑葉。

這樣的簸箕一個一個地增加。它們佔據了三堂後面左邊的兩間平房。這兩間平房離我們的房間最近。

每天晚上半夜裏，或是母親或是二姐，三姐，或是袁嫂，總有一次要經過我們的房間的後門到蠶房去加桑葉。常常是香兒拿著煤油燈或者洋燭。

有時候我沒有睡着，就在床上看見煤油燈光，或者洋燭光。可是她們卻以為我已經睡熟了，輕腳輕手地在走路。

有時候二更鑼沒有響過，她們就去加桑葉，我也跟著到蠶房去看。

淺綠色的蠶在桑葉上面蠕動，一口一口地接連吃著桑葉，簸箕裏一片沙沙的聲音。

我看見她們用手去抓蠶，就覺得心裏像被人搔著似地發癢。

那一條一條的軟軟的東西。

她們一捧一捧地把蠶沙收集攏來。

對於母親，這蠶沙比將來的蠶絲還更有用。她養蠶大半是爲了要得蠶沙的緣故。

大哥很早就有冷骨風的毛病，受了寒氣便要發出來。一發病就要痛三四天。

“不曉得什麼緣故，果兒會得到這種病，時常使他受苦。”

母親常常為大哥的病擔心，看見人就問有什麼醫治這個病的藥方，那時候在廣元似乎沒有好醫生。但是老媽子的肚皮裏有種種古怪的藥方。

母親也相信她們，已經試過了不少的藥方，都沒有用。

後來她從一個姓薛的鄉紳太太那裏得到了一個藥方，就是：把新鮮的蠶沙和著黃酒紅糖炒熟，包在發痛的地方，包幾次就可以把病治好。

在這個大部分居民拿玉蜀黍粉當飯吃的廣元縣裏，黃酒是買不到的。母親便請父親托人在合州帶了一罈來預備著。

接著她就開始養蠶。

父親對母親養蠶的事並不贊成。母親曾經養過一次蠶。有一回她忘記加桑葉，蠶因此餓死了許多。後來她稍微疏忽一點，又讓老鼠偷吃了許多蠶去。她心裏非常難過，便發誓以後不再養蠶了。父親害怕她又遇到這樣的事情。

但是不管父親怎樣勸阻她，不管背誓的恐懼時時折磨她，她終於下了養蠶的決心。

這一年大哥的病果然好了。我們不知道這是不是薛太太的藥方生了效。不過後來母親就同薛太太結拜了姊妹。

以後我看見蠶在像山那樣堆起來的一束一束的稻草莖上接了不少白的，黃的繭子。我有時也摘下了幾個繭子來玩。

以後我看見人搬了絲車來，把蠶子一捧一捧地放在鍋裏煮，一面就搖著絲車。



以後我又看見堂勇們把蠶蛹用油煎炒了，拌著鹽和辣椒吃，他們不絕口地稱贊味道的鮮美。

“做條蠶命運也很悲慘啊！”我有時候會這樣地想起來。

父親在這裏被人稱做“青天大老爺”。

他常常穿著奇怪的衣服坐在二堂上的公案前面審案。

下面兩邊站了幾個差人（公差），手裏拿著竹子做的板子：有寬的，那是大板子；有窄的，那是小板子。

“大老爺坐堂！……”

下午，我聽見這一類的喊聲，知道父親要審案了，就找個機會跑到二堂上去，在公案旁邊站著看。

父親在上面問了許多話，我不知道他為什麼要問這些。

被問的人跪在下面，一句一句地回答，有時候是一個人，有時候是好幾個人。

父親的臉色漸漸地變了，聲音也變了。

“你胡說！給我打！”父親猛然把桌子一拍。

兩三個差人就把犯人按倒在地上，給他褪下褲子，露出屁股。一個人按住他，別的人在旁邊等待著。

“給我先打一百小板子再說！他這個混帳東西不肯說實話！”

“青天大老爺，小人冤枉啊！”

那個人趴在地上殺豬也似地叫起來。

於是兩個差役拿了小板子左右兩邊打起來。

“一五，一十，十五，二十……”

“青天大老爺在上，小人真是冤枉啊！”

“胡說！你招不招？”

那個犯人依舊哭著喊冤枉。

屁股由白而紅，又變成了紫色。

數到了一百，差人就停住了板子。

“稟大老爺，已經打到一百了。”

屁股上出了血，肉開始在爛了。

“你招不招？”

“青天大老爺在上，小人無話可招啊！”

“你這個東西真狡猾！不招，再打！”

於是差役又一五一十地下著板子，一直打到犯人招出實話為止。

被打的人就由差役牽了起來，給大老爺叩頭，或者自己或者由差役代說。

“給大老爺謝恩。”

挨了打還要叩頭謝恩，這個道理我許久都想不出來。我總覺得事情不應該是這樣。

打屁股差不多是坐堂的一個不可少的條件。父親坐在公案前面幾乎每次都要說：

“給我拉下去打！”

有時候父親還使用了“跪擡盒”的刑罰：叫犯人跪在擡盒裏面，把他的兩隻手伸直穿進兩個杠桿眼裏，在腿彎裏再放上一根杠桿。有兩三次差人們還放了一盤鐵鏈在犯人的兩腿下面。

由黃變紅，由紅變青的犯人的臉色，從盤著辮子的頭髮上滴下來的汗珠，殺豬般的痛苦的叫喊……

犯人口裏依舊喊著：“冤枉！”

父親的臉陰沉著，好像有許多黑雲堆在他的臉上。

“放了他罷！”

我在心裏要求著，卻不敢說出口。這時候我只好跑開了。

我把這件事對母親講了。

“媽，為什麼爹在坐堂的時候跟在家裏的時候完全不同？好像不是一個人！”

在家裏的時候父親是很和善的，我不曾看見他罵過人。

母親溫和地笑了。

“你是小孩子，不要多管閑事。你以後不要再去爹坐堂。”

我並不聽母親的話，因為我的確愛管閑事。而且母親也不曾回答我的問題。

“你以後問案，可以少用刑。人家究竟也是父母養的。我昨晚看見‘跪擡盒’，聽到犯人的叫聲心都緊了，一晚上沒有睡好覺。你不覺得心裏難過嗎？”

一個上午，房裏沒有別人的時候，我聽見母親溫和地對父親這樣說。

父親微微一笑。

“我何嘗願意多用刑？不過那些犯人實在狡猾，你不用刑，他們就不肯招。況且刑罰又不是我想出來的，若是不用刑，又未免沒有縣官的樣子！”

“恐怕也會有屈打成招的事情。”

父親沉吟了半晌。

“大概不會有的，我定罪時也很仔細。”

接著父親又堅決地說了一句：

“總之我決不殺一個人。”

父親的確沒有判過一個人的死罪。在他做縣官的兩年中間只發生了一件命案。這是一件謀財害命的案子。犯人是一個漂亮的青年，他親手把一個同伴砍成了幾塊。

父親把案子懸著，不到多久我們就回成都了。所以那個青年的結局我也不知道了。母親的話在父親的心上產生了影響。以後我就不曾看見父親再用“跪擡盒”的刑罰了。

而且大堂外面兩邊的站籠裏也總是空的，雖然常常有幾個戴枷的犯人蹲在那裏。

打小板子事情卻還是常有的。

有一次，離新年還遠，僕人們在門房裏推牌九，我在那裏看了一會兒。後來父親知道了，就去捉了賭，把骨牌拿來叫人拋在廁所裏。

父親馬上坐了堂，把幾個僕人抓來，連那個管監的劉升和何厨子都在內，他們平時對我非常好。

他們都跪在地上，向父親叩頭認錯，求饒。

“給我打，每個人打五十再說！”

父親生氣地拍著桌子罵。

差人們都不肯動手，默默地望著彼此的臉。

“喊你們給我打！”父親更生氣了。

差人大聲應著。但是沒有人動手。

劉升他們在下面繼續叩頭求饒。

父親又怒吼了一聲，就從籤筒裏抓了幾根籤擲下來。

這時候差人只得動手了。

結果每個人挨了二十下小板子，叩了頭謝恩走了。

我心裏很難過，馬上跑到門房裏去。許多人圍著那幾個挨了打的人，在用燒酒給他們揉傷處。

我聽見他們的呻吟聲，不由得淌出眼淚來。我說了些討好他們的話。

他們對我仍舊很親切，沒有露出一點不滿意的樣子。

又有一次，我看見領九妹的奶媽挨了打。

那時九妹在出痘子，依照中醫的習慣連奶媽也不許吃那些叫做“發物”的食物。

不知道怎樣，奶媽竟然看見新鮮的黃瓜而垂涎了。

做母親的女人的感覺特別銳敏。她會在奶媽的嘴上嗅出了黃瓜的氣味。

一個晚上奶媽在自己的房裏吃飯，看見母親進來就露出了慌張的樣子，把什麼東西往枕頭下面一塞。

母親很快地就走到床前把枕頭掀開。

一個大碗裏面盛著半碗涼拌黃瓜。

母親的臉色馬上變了。就叫人去請了父親來。

於是父親叫人點了明角燈，在夜裏坐了堂。

奶媽被拖到二堂上，跪在那裏讓兩個差人拉著她的兩隻手，另一個差人隔著她的寬大的衣服用皮鞭打她的背。

一，二，三，四，五……

足足打了二十下。

她哭著謝了恩，還接連分辯說她初次做奶媽，不知道輕重，下次再不敢這樣做了。

她整整哭了一個晚上。

第二天早晨母親就叫了她的丈夫來領她去了。

這個年輕的奶媽臨走的時候臉色淒慘，眼角上還滴下淚珠。

我為這個情景所感動而下淚了。

我後來問母親為什麼要這樣殘酷地待她。

母親微微地嘆了一口氣。她不說別的話。

以後也沒有人提起這個奶媽的下落。

母親常常為這件事情感到後悔。她說那個晚上她忘記了自己，做了一件自己也不知道為什麼要做的事情。

我只看見母親發過這一次脾氣。

記得一天下午三哥為了一件小事情，擺起主人的架子把香兒痛罵了一頓，還打了她幾下。

香兒向母親哭訴了。

母親把三哥叫到她面前去，溫和地向他解釋：

“丫頭同老媽子都是跟我們一樣的人，即使犯了過錯，你也應該好好地對她們說，為什麼動輒就打就罵？況且你年紀也不小了，更不應該罵人打人。我不願意讓你以後再這樣做。你要好好地記住。”

三哥埋下頭，不敢說話。香兒高興地在旁邊暗笑。

三哥垂著頭慢慢地往外面走。

“三兒，你不忙走！”

三哥又走到母親的面前。

“你還沒有回答我，你要聽我的話。你懂的嗎？你記得嗎？”

三哥遲疑了半晌才回答說：

“我懂.....我記得。”

“好，拿雲片糕去。喊香兒陪你們去耍。”

母親站起來，在連二櫃上放著的磁缸裏取了兩疊雲片糕遞給我們。

我也懂母親的話，我也記得母親的話。

但是現在母親也做了一件殘酷的事情。

我為這件事情有好幾天不快活。

在這時候我就已經感覺到世界上有許多事情是安排得很不合理的了。

在宣統做皇帝的最後一年，父親就辭了官回成都去了，雖然那個地方有許多人挽留他。

在廣元的兩年的生活我的確過得很愉快，因為在這裏人人都對我很好。我們家添了兩個妹妹：九妹和十妹。

這兩年中間我只挨過一次打，因為祖父在成都做生日，這裏敬神，我不肯磕頭。

母親用鞭子在旁邊威脅我，也沒有用。

結果我挨了一頓打，哭了一場，但是我始終沒有磕一個頭。這是我第一次挨母親的鞭子。

從小時候起我就討厭禮節。而且這種厭惡還繼續發展下去。

父親在廣元做了兩年的縣官，回到成都以後買了四十畝田。

別人還說他是一個“清官”。

### C. 家庭的環境

我們回到成都，又換了一個新的環境，而且不久革命就爆發了。

我當時一點也不懂什麼叫做革命，更談不到擁護或者害怕，只有十月十八日的兵變給我留下了一個恐怖的印象。

那些日子我仍舊在書房裏讀書。一天一天聽見教書先生（他姓龍）用激動的聲音講起當時川漢鐵路的風潮。

龍先生是個新黨，所以他站在人民一方面。自然他不敢公開說出反對清朝政府的話。不過對於被捕的七個請願代表他卻表示大的尊敬，而且他不喜歡當時的總督趙爾豐。

二叔和三叔從日本留學回來不過一兩年。他們的辮子是在日本剪掉了的（我現在記不清楚是兩個人的辮子都剪掉了，還只是其中的一個一個剪掉了辮子），現在他們帶上了假的辮子。有些人在背後挖苦他們，罵他們是革命黨。

我的腦後垂著一根小小的，用紅頭繩纏的硬辮子；我每天早晨都要母親或者老媽子給我梳頭，我覺得這是很討厭的事情。因此我倒喜歡那些主張剪掉辮子的革命黨。

陰曆十月十八日是祖母的生忌（冥壽），家裏的人忙著擺供。

午就聽說外面風聲不大好。

五點鐘光景，父親他們正在堂屋裏磕頭。忽然一個僕人進來報告：外面發生了兵變，好幾家銀行和當舖都被搶了。我們二伯父的公館也遭到變兵的光顧。

其實後一個消息是不確實的。二伯父的公館雖然離我們這裏很近，但是在當時誰也失掉了判斷力，況且二伯父一家又是北門一帶的首當，很有遭搶劫的可能。

於是堂屋裏起了一個小小的騷動，眾人馬上四散了。各人回到房裏去想“逃難”的辦法。

父親和母親商量了片刻，大家就忙亂起來。

一個僕人幫忙父親把地板撬開一塊，從立櫃裏取出十幾封銀元放在地板上面。後來他們又放了好幾封銀元在後花園的井裏。

又有人忙著搬梯子來，把幾口紅皮箱放到頂樓板上面去，那裏是藏東西的地方。

同時母親叫人雇了幾乘轎子來，把我們弟兄姊妹帶到外祖母家裏去。大哥陪著父親留在家裏。

我和母親坐在一乘轎子。母親抱著我。我不時偷偷地拉起轎簾看外面的街景。

街上有些人在跑。好幾乘轎子迎面撞過來。沒有看見一個變兵。

晚上我們都擠在外祖母房裏，大家都不說話。

外面起了槍聲，半個天空都染紅了。一個年輕的舅父在窗下對我們說話。這些話都是很可怕的。

外祖母閉著眼睛念佛。

後來附近一帶突然起了嘈雜的人生。好像離這裏只有十幾步路的趙公館給變兵打進去了。

鬧聲，哭聲，槍聲，物件撞擊聲……響成了一片。

外祖母逼著母親逃走，母親不肯。大家爭論了片刻，母親就帶著我們到了後面天井裏。外祖母一定不肯走，她說她念佛吃素多年了，菩薩會保佑她。

天是紅的。幾株樹上有烏鴉在叫。槍聲，我們也聽得很清楚。

母親發出了幾聲絕望的嘆息。她還關心到外祖母，關心到父親。

舅父給我們搬了梯子來。牆并不高。一個老媽子先爬到牆外去。然後母親，三哥，我都爬過去了。接著我的兩個姐姐也爬了過去。

牆外是一個菜園。我們在菜畦裏躲了好些時候，簡直顧不到寒冷了。

後來我們看見沒有什麼動靜，才到那個管菜園的老太婆的茅棚裏坐了一夜。

那個老太婆親切地招待我們，還給我們弄熱茶來喝。

母親一晚上都在擔心家裏的事情。第二天十九日的上午外面平靜了，她就帶著我一個人先回家。父親和大哥驚喜地迎接我們。

父親告訴我們：昨晚半夜裏果然有十幾個變兵撬了大門進來。家裏已經有了準備。十幾個堂勇端起火藥槍在二門外的天井裏排成了兩排，再加上三叔的兩個鏢客（三叔在南充做知縣，剛剛從那裏回來）。變兵看見這裏人多，不敢動手，只說來借點路費。父親叫人拿了一封銀元出來送給他們，他們就走了。只捐失了這一百元。以後再也沒有變兵進來過。

這一晚上在家裏只有父親和大哥照料著。叔父和孀娘們都避弄了，祖父也到別處去了。

這一天是母親和我的生日，但是家裏已經忘了這件事情。

從此我們就平平安安地過下去。地板下面的銀元自然取了出來。井裏的卻不知給誰拿去了，父親叫人來淘了兩次井，都沒有找到。

趙爾豐被革命黨捉住殺頭的消息使龍先生非常高興，同時在我們的家裏產生了種種不同的印象。在以後許多天理，我們都聽見人們在談論趙爾豐被頭殺的事情。

共和革命算是成功了。

二叔和三叔頭上的假辮子也取了下來。再沒有人嘲笑他們的“禿頭”了。

在一個晴明的下午，僕人姜福（他不知道從哪裏剛學會了剪髮的手藝）找了一把剪髮的洋剪刀，把我和三哥的小辮子剪掉了。

接著我們全家的男人都剪掉了辮子。僕人中有一兩個不肯剪的，卻不留心在街上給警察強迫剪去了。

我們家裏開始做新的國旗。照例由父親管這些事情。他拿一大塊白洋布攤在方桌上，先用一個極大的碗，把墨汁塗了碗口，印了一個大圓形在布上，然後用一個小杯子在大圓形的周圍印了十八個小圈。在大圓形裏面寫了一個“漢”字，十八個小圈代表當時的十八省。

我對於做國旗的事情感到興趣。但是不久中華民國成立，我們家裏又把大漢旗收起，另外做了五色旗。

祖父因為革命而感到悲哀。父親沒有表示什麼意見。二叔斷送了他的四品的官。三叔卻給自己起了個“亡國大夫”的筆名。三叔還是一個詩人，寫過不少詩詞。祖父也是詩人，還印過一冊詩集《秋棠山館詩鈔》送人。父親和二叔卻不常做詩。

至於我們這一輩，雖然大都是小孩子，但是對於清朝政府的滅亡，都覺得高興。

清朝倒了。我們依舊在龍先生的教導下面讀書。但是大哥不久就進了中學。

兩年半以後，母親永遠離開了我們。

母親死在民國三年（一九一四年）舊曆七月的一個夜裏。

母親病了二十多年。她在病中是十分痛苦的。一直到最後一天，她還很清醒，但是人已經不能夠動了。

我和三哥就住在隔壁的房間裏。每次我們到病床前看她，她總要流眼淚。

在我們兄弟姊妹中間，母親最愛我，然而我也不能夠安慰她，減輕她的痛苦。

母親十分關心她的兒女。她臨死前五天還叫大哥到一位姨母處去借了一對金手鐲來。她嫌樣子不好看，過了兩天她又叫大哥拿去還了，另外在二伯母那裏去借了一對來。這是為大哥將來訂婚用的。她在那樣痛苦的病中還想到這些事情。

我和三哥都沒有看見母親死。那個晚上因為母親的病加重，父親很早就叫老媽子照料我們睡了。等到第二天早晨我們醒來時，棺材已經進門了。

我含著眼淚，心裏想著我是母親最愛的孩子。

棺材放在簽押房裏。閉殮的時候，兩個人手裏拿著紅綾的兩頭預備放下去。許多人圍著棺材哭喊。我呆呆地望著母親的沒有血色的臉。我恨不能把以後幾十年的眼光都用來在這個時候飽看她。



紅綾終於放下去了。它掩蓋了母親的遺體。漆匠再用木釘把它釘牢。幾個人就擡著棺蓋壓上去。

二姐和三姐不肯走開，她們傷心地哭著，把頭在棺材上面撞。

晚上睡覺的時候，我還聽見簽押房裏兩個姐姐的哀哀的哭聲。我不能夠閉上眼睛。我的眼淚也淌了出來。我憐憫我的兩個姐姐。我也憐憫我自己。

早晨我也會被她們的哭聲驚醒。我就躺在床上，含著眼淚禱告母親保佑我的兩個姐姐。

白天我常常望者簽押房裏靈帷前母親的放大的照像。我心裏想著這時候母親在什麼地方。

家祭的一夜，我們三弟兄匍匐地跪在靈前蒲團上，聽著張二表哥誦讀父親替我們做好的一篇祭文。

.....吾母竟棄不孝等而長逝矣.....不孝等今竟為母之人矣.....

誦讀的聲音很可笑。我不過是一個十歲的孩子，我細嚼著這兩句話的滋味，我的眼淚滴在蒲團上了。

第二天靈柩就擡了出去，先寄殯在城外一座古廟裏，後來安葬在磨盤山。父親在一個墳墓裏做好了兩個穴。左邊的一個是留給他自己用的。三年後他果然睡在那個穴裏面了。

靈柩擡出去以後，家裏的一切恢復了原狀。母親房裏的陳設跟母親在時並沒有兩樣，只多了一張母親的放大半身照像。

常常我走進父親的房間，看不見母親，還以為她在後房裏，便溫和地叫了一聲“媽”。但是我馬上就想起母親已經是另一個世界裏的人了。

我成了一個沒有母親的孩子。跟有母親的堂兄弟們比起來，我深深地感到了沒有母親的孩子的悲哀。

也許是爲了填補這個缺陷罷，父親後來就爲我們接了一個更年輕的母親來。

這位新母親待我們也很好。但是她並不能夠醫好我心上的那個傷痕。她不能夠像死去的母親那樣地愛我，我也不能夠像愛亡母那樣地愛她。

這不是她的錯，也不是我的錯，因爲在這之前我們原是兩個彼此不瞭解陌生的人。母親死後四個多月的光景二姐也死了。

二姐患的是所謂“女兒癆”的病。我們回到成都不久她就病了。有一次她幾乎死掉，後來有人介紹四聖祠醫院的一個英國女醫生來治好了她。

因此母親叫人買了刀叉做了西餐，請了四聖祠醫院的幾個“洋太太”到我們家裏吃飯。這是我們第一次跟西洋人接觸。她們都會說中國話。我覺得她們也很和氣。

母親同那幾個英國女醫生做了朋友。她帶著我到她們的醫院裏去玩過幾次，也去看過病。她們送了我們一些西洋點心和好幾本書。我很喜歡那本皮面精裝的《新舊約全書》官話譯本。不過那時候我並沒有想到去讀它。母親死後，我們就沒有跟那幾個英國女醫生來往了。

母親一死，二姐就沒有過一天好日子。大概是過分的悲痛毀壞了她的身體。

她一天天地瘦弱起來，臉上沒有一點血色，面孔也是一天比一天也憔悴。她常常提起母親就哭，我很少看見她笑過。

“媽，你看二姐多可憐，你要好好地保佑二姐啊！”我常常在暗中禱告。

但是二姐的病依舊沒有起色。父親請了許多名醫來給她診斷，都沒有用。

冬天一到，二姐便睡倒了。誰看見她，都會嘆息地說：她瘦得真可憐。

舊曆十一月二十八日是祖父的生日，從那一天起，我們家裏接連唱了三天戲。戲台在大廳上，天井裏坐了十幾桌客。全家的人帶著笑容跑來跑去。

二姐一個人病在房裏，聽見這些鬧聲，她一定很難受。晚上客人散去了大半，父親便叫人把二姐扶了出來，遠遠地坐在階上看戲。

二姐坐在一把藤椅上，不能動，用失神的眼光茫然地望著戲臺。我不知道她眼裏看見的是什麼景象。

臉瘦成了一張尖臉，嘴唇也枯了。我的心為愛，為憐憫而痛苦了。

“我要進去，”二姐把頭略略一偏，做出不能忍耐的樣子低聲說。老媽子便把她扶了進去。

三天以後二姐就永遠閉了她的眼睛。她也死在天明以前。那時候我在夢裏，不能夠看見她的最後一刻是怎樣過去的。

我那天早晨做了一個奇怪的夢。我到了一個墳場。地方很寬，長滿了草。中間有一座陌生人的墳。墳後長了幾株參天的柏樹。仿佛是在春天的早晨。陽光在樹梢閃耀，墳前不少的野花正開出紅的，黃的，藍的，白的花朵。兩三只蝴蝶在花間飛舞。樹枝上還有些山鳥在唱歌。

我站在墳前看墓碑上刻的字，一陣微風把花香送進我的鼻子裏。忽然墳後面響起了哭聲。

我驚醒了。心跳得很厲害。我在床上躺了片刻。哭聲依舊在我的耳邊蕩漾。我分辨出來這是三姐的哭聲。

我感到了恐怖。我沒有疑惑：二姐死了。

父親忙著料理二姐的後事。過了一會兒，姨外婆坐了轎子來數數落落地哭了一場。

回到成都以後我還是一個小孩。能夠同我在一塊兒玩的，就只有三哥和幾個年紀差不多的堂，表弟兄，此外還有幾個僕人。在廣元陪我們的香兒已經死了。

大哥已經成人。他喜歡和姐姐，堂姐，表姐們一塊兒玩。

在我們這個大家庭裏，我們這一輩的男男女女很多。我除了兩個胞姐和三個堂姐外還有還幾個表姐。她們和大哥的感情都很好。她們常常到我們家裏來玩，這時候大哥就忙起來。姐姐，堂姐，表姐聚在一塊兒，她們給大哥起了一個“無事忙”的綽號。

遊戲的種類是很多的。大哥自然是中心人物。踢毽子，拍皮球，擲大觀園圖，行酒令。酒令有好幾種，大哥房裏就藏得有幾副酒籌。

常常在傍晚，大哥和她們湊了一點錢，買了幾樣下酒的冷菜，還叫厨子做幾樣熟菜。於是大家圍著一張圓桌坐下來，一面行令，一面喝酒，或者談一些有趣味的事情，或者評論《紅樓夢》裏面的人物。那時候在我們家裏除了我們這幾個小孩外，沒有一個人不曾讀過《紅樓夢》。父親在廣元買了一部十六本頭的木刻本，母親有一部石印小本。大哥後來又買了一部商務印書館出版的鉛印書。我常常聽見人談論《紅樓夢》，當時雖然不曾讀它，就已經熟悉了書中的人物和事情。

後來有兩個表姐離開了成都，二姐又跟著母親死了。大哥和姐姐們的聚會當然沒有以前那樣地熱鬧，但是也還有新的參加者，譬如兩個表哥和一個年輕的叔父（六叔）便是。我和三哥也參加過兩三次。

不過我的趣味是多方面的。我跟著三哥他們組織了新劇團，又跟著六叔他們組織了偵探隊。我還常常躲在馬房裏躺在轎夫的破床上烟燈旁邊聽他們講青年時代的故事。

有一個時期我和三哥每晚上都要叫姜福陪著到可園去看戲。可園演的有川戲，也有京劇。我們一連看了兩三個月。父親是那個戲院的股東，有一厚本免費的戲票。而且座位是在固定的包廂裏面，用不着臨時去換票。我們愛看武戲，回來在家裏也學著翻斤斗，翻杠桿。

父親喜歡京戲。當時成都戲園加演京戲聘請京班名角，這種事情大半由他主持。由上海到成都來的京班角色，在登台之前常常先到我們家來吃飯。自然是父親請客。他們有時也在我們的客廳裏清唱。

有一次父親請新到的八九個京班名角在客廳裏吃飯。飯後大家正在花園裏玩，那個長老旦的寶幼亭（我們先聽過了他的唱片）忽然神經錯亂，跪在地上賭咒般地說了好些話。衆人拉他，他不肯走，把父親急得沒有辦法。我們在旁邊覺得好笑。我和這些戲子都很熟，有時我還跟著父親到後臺去看他們化裝。

一個唱青衣的小孩名叫張文芳，年紀不過十四五歲，當時在成都也受人歡迎。他的哥哥本來也唱青衣，如今嗓子壞了不再登臺了。就管教弟弟，靠著弟弟過活。他也到我們家裏來過一次。他完全是個小孩，并沒有一點女人氣。然而在戲裏他卻改換面目做了種種的薄命的女人。我看慣了他演的那些悲劇，一點也不喜歡。但是有一次離新年不遠，我跟著父親到了他們住的地方（大概就是在戲園裏面），看見他穿一身短打，手裏拿了一把木頭的關刀寂寞地舞著，我不覺望著他笑了。我和他玩了好一會兒，問答了一些事情，直到父親來帶我回家的時候。我想，他的生活一定是很寂寞的罷。

然而說句公平的話，父親對待戲子的態度很客氣，他把他們當作朋友，所以能夠得到他們的信任。他並沒有玩過小旦。

三叔卻不同，他喜歡一個川班的小旦李鳳卿。祖父也喜歡李鳳卿。有一次祖父帶我去看戲。李鳳卿包了頭穿著粉紅衫子在臺上出現以後，祖父帶笑地問我認不認識這個人。

李鳳卿時常來找三叔。他也常常同我們談話。他是一個非常親切的人，會寫一手娟秀的字。他雖然穿著男人的衣服，但是舉動和說話都像女人，有時候手上，臉上還留著脂粉。

有一次三叔把李鳳卿帶到我們客廳裏來化裝照相。我看見他在那裏包頭，擦粉，蹣跚。他先裝扮成一個執長矛的古代的女將，後來就改扮做一個旗裝貴婦。這兩張照片後來都掛在三叔的房裏，三叔還親筆題了詩在上面。

李鳳卿的境遇很悲慘。後來在祖父死後不多久他也病死了，剩下一個妻子，連埋葬費也沒有。還是三叔出錢把他安葬了的。

三叔做了一副挽聯吊他，裏面有“……也當忍死須臾，待儂一訣”的話。

二叔也做過一副挽聯，我還記得上下聯的後半句是：“……哪堪一曲廣陵，竟成絕響。……惆悵落花時節，何處重逢。”

後來二叔偶爾和教書先生談起這件事情，那個六十歲的曹先生不覺驚訝地問道：

“XX先生竟然也好此道？他不愧是一位風雅士！”

“這 XX 先生”是指三叔。三叔在南充做知縣的時候，曹先生是那個縣的教官。曹先生到我們家來教書還是三叔介紹的。李鳳卿當時在南充唱戲，三叔在那裏認識了他。

聽見“風雅士”三個字，就跟平日聽見曹先生的“大清三百年來深仁厚澤浹淪肌髓”的話一樣，我覺得非常肉麻。

二叔對曹先生談起李鳳卿的生平。他本是一個小康人家的子弟。十三四歲時給仇人搶了去，因為他家裏不肯出錢賭取，他就被人壞了身子賣到戲班裏去，做了旦角。

五叔後來也玩過川班的旦角。他還替我們編過劇本。

我們組織過一個新劇團，在桂堂後面竹林裏演新劇。竹林前面有一塊空地，就做了我們的舞臺。我們用複寫紙印了許多張戲票送人，拉別人來看我們的表演。

我們的劇本是自己胡亂編的，裏面沒有一個女角。主要演員是六叔，二哥（二叔的兒子），三哥和香表哥；我和五弟（也是二叔的兒子）兩個只做配角，或者在戲演完以後做點翻杠桿的表演。看客多半是女的，就是姐姐，堂姐，表姐們。我們用種種方法強迫她們來看，而且一定要戲演完才許她們走。

父親也被我們拉來了。他居然坐在那裏看完我們演的戲。他又給我們編了一個叫《知事現形記》的劇本。二哥和三哥扮著戲裏面兩個主角表演得有聲有色的時候，父親也哈哈地笑起來。

在公館裏我有兩個環境，我一部分時間跟所謂“上人”在一起生活，另一部分時間又跟所謂的“下人”在一起生活。

我常常愛管閑事，我常常在門房，馬房，廚房裏面和僕人，馬夫們一起玩，常常向他們問這問那，因此他們都叫我做“稽查”。

有時候轎夫們在馬房裏煮飯，我就替他們燒火，把一些柴和枯葉送進那個柴灶裏去。他們打紙牌時，我也在旁邊看，常常給那個每賭心輸的老唐幫忙。有時候他們也誠懇地對我傾吐他們的痛苦，或者坦白地批評主人們的好壞。他們對我什麼事都不隱瞞。他們把我當作一個同情他們的小朋友。我需要他們幫忙的時候，他們也毫不吝惜。

我生活在僕人，轎夫的中間。我看見他們怎樣懷著原始的正義的信仰過那種受苦的生活，我知道他們的歡樂和痛苦，我看見他們怎樣跟貧苦掙扎而屈服，而死亡。六十歲的老書僮趙升病死在門房裏。抽大烟的僕人周貴偷了祖父的字畫被趕出去，後來做了乞丐，死在街頭。一個老轎夫離開我們家，到斜面一個親戚的公館裏當看門人，不知道怎樣竟然

用一根褲帶吊死在大門裏面。這一類的悲劇以及那些活著的“下人”的沉重的生活負擔，如果我一一敘述出來，一定會使最溫和的人也無法制止他的憤怒。

我在污穢寒冷的馬房裏聽那些老轎夫在烟燈旁敘述他們痛苦的經歷，或者在門房裏黯淡的燈光下聽到僕人發出絕望的嘆息的時候，我眼裏含著淚珠，心裏起了火一般的反抗的思想。我宣誓要做一個站在他們這一邊，幫助他們的人。

我同他們的友誼一直繼續到我離開成都的時候。不過我進了外國語專門學校以後，就很少有時間在門房和馬房裏面玩了。接著我又參加了社會運動。

我早就不到廚房裏去了，因為我不高興看謝厨子和老媽子調情（他後來就同祖父的一個老媽子結了婚，那個女人原是一個寡婦），而且謝厨子仗著祖父喜歡他，常常欺凌別人，也使我不滿意他，雖然我從前常常到廚房去看他燒菜做點心。

我愈是多和“下人”在一起，愈是討厭“上人”中間那些虛偽的禮節和應酬。有兩次在除夕全家的人在堂屋裏敬神，我卻躲在馬房裏轎夫的破床上。那裏沒有人，沒有燈，外面有許多人叫我，我也不應。我默默地聽著爆竹聲響了又止了，再過一會兒我才跑出來回到自己的房間去。

家裏平日敬神的時候，我也會設法躲開。我爲了這些事情常常被人嘲笑，但是我始終照自己的意思做。

六叔，二哥，香表哥三個人合作辦了一種小說雜誌，名稱就叫《十日》，一個月出三本，每本用複寫紙抄了五六份。

我是雜誌的第一個訂戶。大哥把他那篇最得意的哀情小說在《十日》雜誌第一期上面發表了，所以他們也送他一份。還有一個奉表哥也投了一篇得意的稿子。

在我們家裏大哥是第一個寫小說的人。他的小说是以“暮春三月，江南草長，雜花生樹，群鶯亂飛，”的舊句開始的。奉表哥的小說是以“杏花深處，一角紅樓，”的句子開始的。接著就是“斗室中有一女郎在焉。女郎者何，X其姓，XX其名，”諸如此類的公式文章。把“女郎”兩個字改作“少年”就成了另一篇小說。小說的結局離不掉情死，後面還有一封情人的絕命書。

我對於《十日》雜誌上千篇一律的才子佳人的哀情小說感不到興趣。而且我親眼看見他們寫小說時分明攤開了好幾本書在抄襲。這些書有尺牘，有文選，有筆記，有上海新出的流行小說和雜誌。小說裏每段描寫景物的四六句子，照例是從尺牘或者文選上面抄來的。他們寫小說並不費力。不過對於那三個創辦雜誌的人的抄錄，裝訂，繪圖的種種苦心我卻非常佩服。

《十日》雜誌出版了三個月，我只花了九個銅元的訂費，就得到厚厚的九本書。

民國六年春天成都發生了第一次巷戰。在這七天川軍同滇軍的巷戰中，我看見了不少可怕的流血的景象。

在這時候二叔的兩個兒子，二哥和五弟突然患白喉症死了。我在幾天的功夫就失掉了兩個同伴。

他們本來可以不死，但是因為街上斷絕了行人，請不到醫生來治病，只得讓他們躺在家裏，看著病一天天地加重。等到後來兩個轎夫背著他們跨過戰壕，冒著槍林彈雨趕到醫院時，他們已是奄奄一息了。

戰事剛剛停止，我和三哥也患了喉症。我們的病還沒有好，父親就病死了。

父親很喜歡我。他平時常常帶著我一個人到外面去玩。在他的病中他聽說我的病好多了，想看我，便叫人來陪我到他的房裏去。

我走到床前，跪在踏腳凳上，望著他的憔悴的臉，叫了一聲“爹”。

“你好了？”他伸出手撫摩我的頭。“你要乖乖的。不要老是拼命叫‘羅嫂！羅嫂！’你要常常來看我啊！”羅嫂是在我們病中照料我們的那個老媽子。

父親微微笑了。

“好，你回去休息罷。”過了半晌父親這樣吩咐了一句。

第三天父親就去世了。他第一次昏過去的時候，我們圍在床前哭喚他。他居然醒了轉來。我們以為他不會死了。

但是不到一刻鐘光景，他又開始在床上抽氣了。我們看著他一秒鐘一秒鐘地死下去。

於是我的環境馬上改變了。好像發生了驚天動地的劇變。

滿屋子都是哭聲。

晚上我和三哥坐在房間裏，望著黯淡的清油燈光落淚。大哥忽然走進來，在床沿上坐下去，哭著說：“三弟，四弟，我們……如今……沒有……父親……了……”

我們弟兄三個痛哭起來。

自從父親接了繼母進來以後，我們就搬到左邊廂房裏住。後來祖父吩咐把我們緊隔壁的那間停過母親靈魂柩的簽押房裝修好，做了大哥結婚時的新房。大哥和嫂嫂就住在我們的隔壁。

這時候嫂嫂在隔壁聽見了我們的哭聲，便走過來勸慰大哥。他們夫婦埋著頭慢慢地出去了。

父親埋葬了以後，我心裏更空虛了。我常常躑躅在街頭，我總覺得父親在我的前面，仿佛我還是依依地跟著父親走路，因為父親平時不大喜歡坐轎，常常帶了我在街上慢步閑走。

但是一走到行人擁擠的街心，跟來往的人爭路時，我才明白我是孤零零的一個人。從此我就失掉了人一生只能夠有一個的父親了。

父親死後不久，成都又發生了更激烈的巷戰。結果黔軍被川軍趕走了，全城的房屋燒毀了很多。不用說我們受了驚，可是並沒有大的損失。

我們自然有飯吃，只是缺少蔬菜和油葷。

在馬房裏轎夫們喝著燒酒嚼著乾鍋魁（大餅）來充塞肚裏的饑餓，他們買不到米做飯。

槍炮聲，火光，流血，殺人，以及種種殘酷的景象。而且我們偶爾也挨近了死的邊緣。……

巷戰不久就停止了。然而軍閥割據的局面卻一直繼續下去，到現在還沒有打破。

三哥已經進了中學，但是父親一死，我進中學的希望斷絕了，祖父從來不贊成送子弟進學校讀書，現在又沒有人出來替我講話。

我便開始跟著香表哥念英文。每天晚上他到我們家裏來教我，並不要報酬。這樣繼續了三年。他還幫助我學到一點其它的知識。祖父死後我和三哥進了外國語專門學校，我就沒有時間跟著香表哥念書。他後來結了婚，離開了成都，到樂山教書去了。

香表哥（他的本名是濮季云）是一個真摯而聰明的青年。當時像他那樣有學識的年輕人，在我們親戚中間已經是很難得的了。然而家庭束縛了他，使他至今還在生活的負擔下面不斷地發出絕望的呻吟，白白地浪費了他的有為的青春。

但是提起他，我卻不能不充滿了感激。我的智力的最初發展是得到兩個人的幫助的，其中的一個就是他。還有一個是大哥，大哥買了不少的新書報，使我能夠貪婪地讀完了它們。而且我和三哥一塊兒離開成都到上海，以及後來我一個人到法國去念書，都少不了他的幫助。雖然為著去法國的事情我跟他起過爭執，但是他終於順從了我的意思。

在我的心裏永遠藏著對於這兩個人的感激。我本來是一個愚蠢的，孤僻的孩子。要是沒有他們的幫助，也許我至今還是一個愚蠢的，孤僻的人罷。

父親的死使我懂得了更多的事情。我的眼睛好像突然睜開了，我更看清楚了我們這個富裕大家庭的面目。



這個富裕的大家庭變成了一個專制的大王國。在和平的，友愛的表面下我看見了仇恨的傾軋和鬥爭；同時在我的渴望自由發展的青年的精神上，“壓迫”像沉重的石塊重重地壓著。

我的身子給綁得太緊了，不能夠動彈。我也不能夠甩掉肩上的重壓。我把全部的時間用來讀書。書本卻蠶食了我的健康。

我一天一天地瘦下去。父親死後的一年中間我每隔十幾天就要病倒一次，而且整個冬天一直在吞丸藥。

第二年秋天我進了青年會的英文補習學校。祖父知道了這件事情，也不干涉，因為他聽說學會英文可以考進郵局工作，他又知道郵局的薪水相當高，薪水是現金，而且逐年增加，位置又穩固，不會因政變或其它的人事變動而失業。我的一位舅父當時是郵局的一個高級職員，親友們都羨慕他的這個“好位置”。

我在青年會上了一個月的課就生了三次病。祖父知道了便要我在家裏靜養。不過他同意請香表哥到我們家裏來正式教我念英文，還吩咐按月送束修給香表哥。其實所謂束修的數目也很小，不是一元，便是兩元。

自從父親死後，祖父對我的態度也漸漸地改變。他開始關心我，而且很愛我。後來他聽見人說牛奶很“養人”，便出錢給我訂了一份牛奶。他還時常把我叫到他的房裏去，對我親切地談一些做人處世的話。甚至在他臨死前發狂的一個月中間他也常常叫人把我找去。我站在他的床前，望著他。他的又黑又瘦的老臉上露出微笑，眼裏卻淌了淚水。

以前在我們祖孫兩個中間並沒有感情。我不曾愛過祖父，我只是害怕他；而且有時候我還把他當作專制，壓迫的代表，我的確憎恨過他。

但是在他最後的半年裏不知道怎樣，他的態度完全改變了，我對他也開始發生了感情。

然而時候是這麼短！在這一年的最後一天（舊曆），我就失掉了他。

新年中別的家庭裏充滿了喜悅，爆竹聲挨門挨戶地響起來。然而在衆人的歡樂中，我們一家人卻匍匐在靈前哀哀地哭著死去的祖父。

這悲哀一半是虛假的，因為在祖父死後一個多星期的光景，叔父們就在他的房間裏開會處分了他的東西，而且後來他們還在他的靈前發生過爭吵。

可惜祖父沒有知覺了，不然他對於所謂“五世同堂”的好夢也會感到幻滅罷。我想他的病中的發狂決不是沒有原因的。

祖父是一個能幹的人。他在曾祖死後，做了多年的官，後來“告歸林下”。他買了不少的田產，修了漂亮的公館，收藏了好些古玩字畫。他結過兩次婚，討了兩個姨太太，

生了五兒一女，好見到了重孫（大哥的兒子）。結果他把兒子們造成了彼此不相容的仇敵，在家庭裏種下了長期爭鬥的根源，他自己依舊免不掉發狂地死在孤獨裏。並沒有人真正愛他，他沒有人真正瞭解他。

祖父一死，家庭就變得更黑暗了。新的專制壓迫的代表起來代替了祖父，繼續拿舊禮教把“表面是弟兄，暗中是仇敵”的幾房人團結在一起，企圖在二十世紀中維持封建時代的生活方式。結果產生了更多爭鬥和傾軋，造成了更多的悲劇，而裂痕依舊是一天一天地增加，一直到最後完全崩潰的一天。

祖父像一個舊家庭制度的最後的衛道者那樣地消失了。對於他的死我並沒有遺憾。雖然我在哀悼失掉了一個愛我的人，但是同時我也慶幸我獲得了自由。從這天起在我們家裏再沒有一個人可以支配我的行動了。

祖父死後不到半年，在一九二〇年暑假我和三哥就進了外國語專門學校，從補習班讀到預科，本科，在那裏接連念了兩年半的書。在學校裏因為我沒法交出中學畢業文憑，後來改成了旁聽生，被剝奪了獲得畢業文憑的權利。這件事情竟然幫助我打動了繼母和大哥的心，使他們同意我拋棄了學業同三個一路到上海去。

民國十二年（一九二三年）春天在槍林彈雨中保全了性命以後，我和三哥兩個就離開了成都的家。大哥把我們送到木船上，他流著眼淚離開了我們。那時候我的悲哀是很大的。但是一想到近幾年來我的家庭生活，我對於舊家庭並沒有留戀。我離開舊家庭不過像甩掉一個可怕的陰影。但是還有幾個我所愛的人在那裏呻吟憔悴地等待宰割，我因此不能不感到痛苦。在過去的十幾年中間我已經用眼淚埋葬了不少的屍體，那些都是不必要的犧牲者，完全是被陳舊的禮教和兩三個人一時的任性殺死的。

一個理想在前面向我招手，我的眼前是一片光明。我懷著大的勇氣離開了我住過十七年的成都。

那時候我已經受了新文化運動的洗禮，而且參加了社會運動，創辦了新的刊物，並且在刊物上寫了下面的兩個短句作為我的生活的目標了：

奮鬥就是生活，  
人生只有前進。

## Translation I

### A. Memories

Ah, why was there a veil of pitch-black before my eyes again? It seemed like I had fallen into a trap. I could not feel a real thing; I could not see a detailed scene. Everything was muddled and illusory..... I knew that I was dreaming again.

I dreamt every night. My mind never had a moment of rest. For some people, dreams are sweet, but I have never received comfort from dreams. Dreams are kind of torture; they never stop interrogating me. I knew that my mind would not allow me tranquility; it always wanted to dissect me, to torment me. My mind was my strictest critic. It was crueler than Torquemada<sup>1</sup>.

“Dream, was this really a dream?” I sometimes asked myself these types of questions in my dreams. For example, “Was this not a dream?” When I was awake, I also had these types of suspicions. Dreams and reality slowly melted together into one piece. I could no longer distinguish what was a dream and what was real.

When Vera Figner<sup>2</sup> was imprisoned in Shlisselburg Fortress, she said, “those long, gray, monotonous days were like a dreamless sleep.” I can say that my body is free, but don’t I also often have long, gray, monotonous days? Indeed, my life also had variety. Sometimes, I had two completely different lives, but some of these changes were like a flash of electric light, brilliantly dazzling the eyes. Afterward, it ended. Some were even monotonous. A stuffy night pressed on my head, with an iron fist gripping my throat. Therefore, it was more like these gray days were not like a dreamless sleep. My vision completely filled with images. These days were completely dreams, dreams that oppressed people more than reality. In these dreams, I was cruelly interrogated. I often in my dreams let out a cry because even in those times, I didn’t ever stop struggling.

This struggle made me very fatigued. For an extremely brief moment, I also wanted a dreamless sleep. This was however again different from what Figner said. This was an everlasting rest. No dreams,

no reality; no people, no me. This was peace. This was tranquility. I have to admit that I indeed have wished for this type of thing. However, that was only a one-time wish. That was only when my spirit was weak and often passed through a phase like this. My spirit also had a transformation. I now instead feel disgrace and anger for these types of wish. I even criticized my own weakness. As a result, I took my sorrowful, regretful frame of mind and new courage to start a new struggle.

I was a person filled with contradictions. "I lived a dual life. One type was an outside life for others, and one type was an inner life or myself."<sup>3</sup> My soul is completely filled with darkness, but I didn't wish to bring this darkness to harm other people's minds. I even more didn't dare to bring this darkness to stain the hopes for the future. Additionally, when a youth with a wounded heart asked me for help, I was not a doctor, but I had to give him a little comfort and hope, or I had to accompany him to find a famous doctor. For this reason, I then allowed my heart and my soul to broaden. I placed every person's bitter experiences, traumas, and so on in there, like a small, lonely, wooden boat sinking into the ocean, making people not see the disturbance. I had said that I had depression since I was born, but that friend, as a "depressed patient" who had written a confession so, was flabbergasted on account of seeing my smile all day long, although his face also often carried a child's silly smile. Actually, my own words are not accurate. My parents were both not people prejudiced in nature. They were equivalently warm, magnanimous, and content with one's lot. They should be a very compatible couple. Their souls could not hide a shadow of melancholy. My depression could not have come from them. It should have been rubbed off from my life and environment day by day. The first blow was my mother's death, followed by my father's death. I was too young at that time. I was still just a child who should have lived under his parents' protection. Trauma added onto more trauma, as if once it comes, it cannot be put in order. In a letter that I wrote to my older brother seven years ago, I said, "That which is sufficient to maintain my mind consists only of work. Work all day, work all year. I find pain in work, but I get satisfaction from pain..... I admittedly had a dream. This dream was also my life, but I fear that I will not live to realize that dream..... For the past several years, I

chased the bright prospects; I chased the world's love; I chase my dream's hero. I still get pain in the end, but I don't regret it. I still want to use greater courage to walk my path." But in another letter not long before this, I contradictorily said, "I have built a wall in my heart and locked myself in my depressing thoughts. A pot of tea, a bottle of ink, a fountain pen, a roll of manuscript, a number of books..... I often wrote a number of pages, and a reasonless worry came to invade me. As if something was surging from my chest, I could not handle it anymore, so I tossed my pen and draped on my fall coat to walk outside."

Don't these two letters have an obvious contradiction? My life and my mind were both like this. I fear that this will not be understood by others, but I understood the reason. What caused those contradictions was my past life. I cannot expunge this, but I want to forget it. Therefore, in another letter to my older brother, I said, "I am afraid of remembering. I hate remembering. It awakes me to all of the things that I wanted to forget."

Indeed, my past was like an atrocious shadow pressing on my soul. My memory was like an iron chain impeding my feet. Every time I drummed up the courage to take a big step forward, it always grabbed onto me, making me step backward, making me hesitate, making me reluctant to leave, making me depressed. I had a great ambition to fly towards the wide sky. I had a belief causing me to walk towards the light. But my strength could not drag the iron chain of memory. I could not handle this sluggish gait. I had asked for help from my heart many times, but my feelings themselves, clipped between my memory's claws, had also lost their balance and somewhat lean. They became unhealthy and easily fragile. If I relied on them completely, like how a rainbow suddenly appears, they will immediately completely disappear. I will be destroyed by the past. For my future plans, I almost should cast aside the emotions poisoned by memory, but I could not with my power, so I forever bounce between reason and emotion like this, without finding a solution. Every contradiction of mine comes from here.

I had said words similar to this many times. I don't need to explain it again now. This is almost not necessary. Moreover, during this time, the fate of an entire nationality is sinking into the mud, I almost

have no power to endlessly recount to others all of my personal stories. But I still ultimately said it. Because, I think, this is not my personal matter, I have seen circumstances similar to these on the bodies of my people. It makes us not have enough determination to advance forward in our youth. It is precisely that shadow of the past. I often have one kind of strange thought: if we are people who don't have a past life, we can perhaps do more things.

But memories had gripped me, pressed on me, dismembered my heart, tortured my emotions. Sometimes, it weaved a gentle net, wrapping my body inside; sometimes, it ignited a fierce flame to burn my bone marrow. Sometimes, I will tightly shut my eyes, abandon rationality, allow emotions to control me, allow it to lead me to a bigoted road, bring me to a precipice. It made one friend blurted, "Going on like this, except for making you become a maniac, what else is there?" Actually, this friend forgot that he himself had not a few contradictions. He and I similarly were people who were tormented by memories. He thought he saw people very clearly, but he didn't know he saw himself muddily. He viewed himself as the doctor of the human soul. He gave me a prescription: compromise and reconciliation. He indeed was a good doctor. He took the medicine that he prescribed for patients first. However, the prescription was totally ineffective. This kind of medicine could not cure the disease. Perhaps, he didn't understand the reason. However, he understood the only magical cure was one word: prejudice. Not reconciling with the past, but abandoning it. However, my disease was too deep. Even one dose of magical cure could not immediately cure the grave disease of many years.

.....

I was dreaming again. Before my eyes was a veil of darkness, no, before my eyes was full of mirages. My eyes slowly cleared up, those people, those matters..... Could it be that I was sleeping so deeply? Why can they pass many eras but still arrive at me here?

I was completely dreaming again. I had forgotten my surroundings. I had forgotten myself. Like being pulled by a force, I sunk down, I sunk down. Thus, I arrived at a place. Could it be that I had walked

into a tomb, or another Pompeii had been excavated by me? I had seen those many people, those that were buried by me, those that I had lost forever.

I had completely sunken in dream sceneries now. I had turned into a person inside a dream. A strange feeling grabbed me. I grew up slowly from a small child. I lived among my many contemporaries, sharing their sorrows and happiness. Our world was narrow, but we viewed it as a vast universe. We used our true hearts and morbid human perspective to measure our days. We had more love and more sympathy. We loved cute things. We loved the shining constellations in the night sky in a flower garden. We loved the calling birds on the branches of peach trees and willows in the spring. We loved the moonlight that sprinkles through the trees onto the grass. We loved the sun that makes the water surface shows bright pearls. We loved a cat and a bird. We loved every person. We were like a group of selfish children going to receive life's gifts. We laughed the whole day to the fullest. We also hoped other people could laugh more. We had never harmed another person. However, a dark shadow covered our souls. Therefore, depression was born in our hearts. This dark shadow slowly enlarged, bringing with it all kinds of things. One strike brings a second. Tears, moaning, applaud, struggles, and lastly a tragic ending. One by one, youth's lives turned to ruins. Some had left this world, leaving behind some painful memories for other people; some fell into mud pits and are unable to move.

.....

Ah, how have I had such a long dream! I should be awake now. I surely could break away from everything and wake up? Those many lives, those many lives which I loved portrayed such a deep trace in my heart, could I completely forget them?

I had buried these for many years already. Why did I still have these long dreams now, these types of painful dreams? To this day, it even makes me pick a pen to write *Spring*?

The past and memories, these tied me very tight and pressured me very painfully. Could it be that I forever cannot break away from it, but righteously, walk my own path without worry?

My dream had awoken. This should be the last time. I wanted to break away from the things that impede my feet. I wanted to break away from all of the memories. I wanted to bury them all in a deeper grave. I wanted to forget all of the past.

No matter if this was possible or not, I had started my path. I had struggled with those for these many years. That, I want to continue struggling. Living in a perpetual struggle, this after all was the method by which I measured the beauty of life.

May, 1936

<sup>1</sup>Torquemada: a 15th century Spanish Inquisition judge.

<sup>2</sup>Vera Figner (1852--1942): Russian Narodnik female revolutionary, who was imprisoned in Shlisselburg Fortress for 20 years. She lived in a foreign country from 1906 to 1915, and then returned home. She wrote many memoirs ("Memoirs of a Revolutionist," published 1921-1922).

<sup>3</sup>Here I borrow Figner's words. She also said, "-On the outside, I have no choice but to ensure a mask of tranquility and bravery. I have done this. However, during the night's silence, I will think in a painful anxiety, 'Will the last day come? -In the morning, I will wear my mask and start working.'" She uses these words to clearly explain her mind's condition before being arrested.



## B. Earliest Memories

“This doll was originally for your younger brother’s wife. Because I am afraid that she may not take good care of him well, so I will give him to you.”

These were words from the child-bearing goddess that my mother heard in her dreams. Every clear afternoon, when my mother did needlework in the room facing south, she often narrated this weird dream to us brothers and sisters (or with the female servant present).

“I then gave birth to you on the second day.”

She raised her round face and used her eyes, overflowing with affection, to look at me. I was standing by her side at that time.

“Didn’t expect that it would be this mischievous child!”

Mother laughed slightly, and we all laughed.

Mother loved me very much. Although she sometimes jokingly said that I was a naughty child, she never scolded me. She allowed me to live my childhood in a gentle and peaceful atmosphere.

A warm, round face. Hair smoothed shiny by water of wood shaving. A mouth often carrying a smile. A light cyan coat with a wide silk lapel and large sleeves with no collar.

Every time I recalled my earliest past, my mother’s face appeared in my mind. My earliest memory is inseparable from my mother. What I especially cannot forget is my mother’s gentle voice.

When I was four or five, I went with my mother from Chengdu to Guangyuan county in northern Sichuan. Father worked there as a county magistrate.

The government office was a very large place. When you entered, there was a big vacant lot. The two sides were prisons, the main hall, the second hall, the third hall, the fourth hall, a turf, and a sparse mulberry forest, which added together to about six or seven buildings.

We stayed in the third hall.

At first, I slept with my mother and slept on her canopy bed. On hot days, a ribbed mosquito net or a sackcloth mosquito net was hung on the bed. On cold days, a white cloth mosquito bed was hung. Outside the net was a shimmer. This was from the top of a wick of a clear oil lamp on the square table.

A clear oil lamp with a long neck, a round candle holder, and a dim light. Sometimes, the wick knotted the black lantern, burning while necessarily peeling back.

I slept wrapped in a blanket, often thinking what is the meaning of "mother."

During the day, we were studying in the study room. The location was next to the second hall. There was a small flower garden outside the window.

The teacher was a warm middle-aged man. His appearance was very good-natured. He sometimes painted paintings. He would not draw with a pencil. He had colored pencils. This was what we were most envious of.

The students were my two older brothers, my two older sisters, and me.

A servant attended to us. This person was named Jiafu, a 60-year-old man, whose hair was already white.

In the study, I recognized dozens of characters in the morning. I read several pages in the afternoon. Every day, we ended class early. My third brother had a little more homework than me. He was only one year older than me.

Jiafu brought us to my mother's room. Mother gave us a little bit of candy to eat. We played in my mother's room for a while.

"Xiang'er," my third brother begun to call.

I also called her name.

A girl of 12 or 13 with an oval face came running in, showing a smiling expression.

“Accompany us to play behind the fourth hall!”

She smiled happily.

“Xiang’er, you carefully look after them!” my mother instructed.

“Yes,” she replied then took us out.

We went out through the backdoor.

We walked down the stone steps and ran towards the grass.

There were several rows of mulberry trees planted on both sides of the grass and exposed an aisle in the middle.

The mulberry leaves were fat, and the shade of the tree was wide.

Two to three chickens were running in the middle of the aisle.

“Let’s quickly pick the mulberries!”

Xiang’er tugged on my hand and ran under the mulberry tree with a smile.

The sweet fragrance of the mulberries immediately fluttered into my nose.

“How fragrant!”

The ground was filled with mulberries, a deep purple fruit. A lot were broken, some by falling, some by being stepped on by the chicken’s feet, some by being pecked by the chicken’s beaks.

Everywhere was the gaily deep purple juice.

We folded the front of our shirts into our pockets and bent over at the waist to collect mulberries.

“What a pity!” Xiang’er said, then picking a few intact mulberries to send into her mouth.

We also ate a few.

I saw that Xiang’er’s lips were stained red. She was still eating. My third brother’s lips were also red, and so were my hands.

“Look at your guys’ mouths!”

Xiang’er chuckled.

She pulled out a handkerchief and wiped our mouths for us.

“Hands too.”

She also wiped our hands.

“You can’t see your own mouth?” my third brother gazed at her mouth and laughed.

A chicken called in the back of the third hall.

“Let’s quickly find the chicken eggs!”

Xiang’er promptly wiped her mouth, then tugged on my hand and ran inside.

We poured the lapful of mulberries onto the ground.

We ran past a large haymow.

A chicken on the grass extended its neck and proudly walked, while gawking.

We chased it.

The chicken cried and jumped away flapping its wings. The other chickens also ran in all four directions.

“Let’s see who finds an egg first?”

Xiang’er suggested this. The end was always her finding that egg.

Sometimes, I also found it because I know where the chickens ordinarily love to lay their eggs.

Although Xiang’er was smarter than me, what I know regarding chickens was not less than her.

Chickens were my companion. No, they are my troops.

The chickens’ barracks were behind the third hall.

The two sides of the grass both had stone steps. The top of the steps had buildings. Mulberry trees were planted at the bottom of the steps.

A row of bungalows on the left side, most of which ordinarily stored old furniture and what not. The last wide, empty room acted as a chicken room; the inside had many chicken cages.

The number of chickens were 20 something, and I gave them all names.

Da Hua was the fattest one with white spots speckled on its light green feathers.

Feng Tou chicken had gray feathers, black speckles, and a head with a handful of extra feathers.

Ma Hua was the chicken with black and yellow freckles.

Xiao Feng Tou had a smaller body than Feng Tou. Except for a head with an extra handful of feathers, it didn't have differences from its normal mother.

Wu Gu's feet and mouth were all jet black.

There were also Hei, Bai, Xiao Hua, ..... all sorts of names.

Every morning after waking up and washing my face, I asked Xiang'er to accompany me to the back of the third hall.

Xiang'er opened the door to the chicken room.

We took the lid off every chicken cage. We roll called the chickens one by one.

"Go, go play!"

We sprinkled several handfuls of grain on the ground, and let them encircle us to eat.

Then I left, I went into the study room.

In the afternoon, I finished my studies very early. My third brother sometimes finished his studies later.

I sneakily ran to the back of the fourth hall alone.

I slept on the tall haymow. The dry grass was warm. I felt like I was sleeping on a bed.

The warm sunlight caressed my face, like my mother's hand's stroke.

I half opened my eyes and gazed at the group of chickens frolicking on the grass.

"Da Hua, don't call! If you call, other people will hear, and they will take your eggs from you."

Da Hua proudly strolled around on the grass, and loudly gawked out. I told it to not be noisy, but it was no use.

I had no choice but to climb down from the haymow, and tucked the chicken eggs into my bosom.

Da Hua loved to lay eggs inside the haymow, so I found it very easily.

The egg was still warm with some feathers stuck to the top. It was a cute, large egg.

Or Xiao Feng Tou was pecked by Ma Hua on the wings and ran away. I called it,

“Don’t run! Hey, Xiao Feng Tou, what are you afraid Ma Hua will do?”

Sometimes, I was with my third brother, and we thought of all sorts of games involving ways to conduct the chickens.

We never felt lonely.

In the evening, after we ate lunch (We called this lunch), I waited until it was almost dark to be with my third brother. I asked Xiang’er to accompany us. We drove the chickens one by one into the chicken room. We made sure that they all went into the chicken cages.

I called the names again and saw that I had not missed one chicken, and then I was relieved.

One evening, when I was calling names, I suddenly realized that I was missing a chicken.

I was worried and wanted to go to the back of the third hall to search for it.

“Today, the madam ordered Mr. He to kill it,” Xiang’er smiled looking at me.

“Killed?”

“Did you not eat chicken this afternoon?”

Right, I did eat chicken! That bowl of simmer-fried chicken. The flavor was not bad.

I was speechless. My mind was a little uncomfortable.

Three or four days passed, and I never saw that black chicken.

When I was name calling, I looked at Xiang’er’s smiling face, and tears angrily flowed out.

“It’s all your fault! You are very bad! They were chasing the chickens to kill it. You knew. Why did you not tell me?”

I squeezed my hand into a small fist, wanting to hit Xiang’er.

“Don’t hit me, I will tell you next time,” Xiang’er smiled, begging me for mercy.

But I will never see the shadow of that cute, black chicken again.

Several days passed, and I forgot about the matters with the black chicken.

One morning, I finished studying and came out of the study room.

I walked through the long corridor surrounded by stone railings and ran into Xiang’er around the corner.

“Young master, I was waiting for you!”

“What’s the matter?”

I saw her worried expression, and I knew that something big happened.

“The madam called Mr. He to kill a chicken again.”

She took my hand and dragged me inside.

“Which one? Hurry,” I opened my pair of tiny eyes and looked at her.

“It’s Da Hua this time.”

Da Hua, the fattest one with many white freckles on its light green feathers. I love him very much!

I immediately threw away Xiang’er’s hands and desperately ran inside.

With one breath of air, I ran into my mother’s room.

My head was covered in sweat, and I was panting.

Mother was sitting on a chair at the head of the bed. I pressed the upper half of my body on her knees.

“Mom, don’t kill my chicken! Da Hua is mine! I forbid somebody else to kill it!”

I pulled on my mother’s hand to bed.

“I wonder what’s the big deal! You worriedly ran in like this, and it turns out that it was for one chicken.”

Mother warmly smiled and pulled out a handkerchief to give to me to wipe the sweat off my forehead.

“To kill one chicken, is it worth this worry? When we were making food this afternoon, everyone ate.”

“I won’t eat, mom, I want that Da hua chicken, I won’t let anyone kill it. That Da hua chicken, I love it most.....”

I cried immediately.

My mother smiled. She used her warm gaze to look at me.

“Silly boy, this is also worth you crying? Ok, I will call Xiang’er to accompany you to go to the kitchen, and order Mr. He to free the chicken. You pick another chicken for him.”

“I like all those chickens. No matter which chicken, I will not let anyone kill them!” I said while still tugging on my mother’s hand.

“That won’t work. Your dad ordered the killing. Quickly go. If it’s too late, I’m afraid that chicken might already have been killed by Mr. He.”

When that Da Hua was brought up, I forgot everything. I immediately grabbed Xiang’er’s hand and ran out of my mother's room.

We ran into the room gasping for air.

Mr. He threw Da Hua in his hands towards the ground.

“It’s done for. It’s killed,” Xiang’er sighed and numbly stood there.

Da Hua flapped its wings on the ground, and its light green feathers were stained with blood.

I ran in front of it and cried, “Da Hua!”

It closed its eyes and hung down its head. It flapped around chaotically there. It rubbed its body around on the filthy ground. A large wound showed on its neck. It was still dripping out blood from there.

I had never seen a deadly struggle as such.



I didn't dare to reach out my hand to touch it.

"Young master, you're crying for your Da Hua chicken!" This was Mr. He's laughing voice.

He is a murderer! He killed my Da Hua chicken with his own hands.

I was so angry that my entire body shook. My eyes also became fuzzy.

I turned around and ran. I didn't care that Xiang'er was behind me calling my name.

I ran into my mother's room and placed my head on her bosom and bursted into tears:

"Mom, return Da Hua to me....."

My mother warmly comforted me, and she called me a silly boy.

For this matter, I had been mocked many times.

During today's lunch, the table expectedly had two different plates of chicken.

I looked at those two plates and thought of Da Hua's regular attitude calling proudly.

During the whole time, I never put my chopsticks into the bowl.

At night, Ms. Yang comforted me saying that the chicken was killed, so that it can reincarnate into a person.

She told me that that chicken will definitely reincarnate into a person because when the chicken was being killed, Ms. Yuan was reciting the "reincarnation spell" in the kitchen.

I didn't believe her words because it was too far from reality. I didn't see it.

"Why is it that chickens are to be killed and to be eaten?"

I asked this to my mother, but I didn't receive an answer.

I also asked this to the teacher, but I still didn't receive an answer.

I have also asked other people, but I still didn't receive an answer.

Other people thought that it was a very natural matter, but I didn't understand.

To other people, chickens were poultry. To me, they were my companion, my troops.

My one favorite troop has disappeared just like that.

From then on, I lost interest in chickens, chickens who lived to make food for humankind.

Nevertheless, I still took care of those remaining chickens. I let them in succession become sacrifices in the meals. Even Feng Tou was among them.

Among the maids, there was Ms. Yang who was in charge of taking care of me and my older brother.

Tall in height, a long face, big eyes, and small feet. About 30 years old.

We really liked her.

She remembered many stories about deities and evil spirits. My older brother and I often found opportunities to hide in her room at night and forced her to tell us stories.

Xiang'er was also present. She also liked to listen to stories.

Ms. Yang was eloquent in speech. Her stories were better than anything else.

After we finished listening to the stories, she would send us back to my mother's room.

The dike was dark. The grass often had sounds.

The sounds of our footsteps on the stone steps echoed.

Ms. Yang was pinching an oil paper in her hand that was used for lighting. The flame was flickering.

We returned to my mother's room and played a bit. Ms. Yang then took care to put me in my mother's bed.

My third older brother slept with my oldest brother.

Ms. Yang loved to drink wine. She made mulberry wine every year.

When the mulberries ripen, the grass was covered with purple fruits.

My third older brother and I, and Xiang'er. We often went to collect the mulberries.

The sweet smell of ripped mulberries really made people's throats itch.

We collected the mulberries while eating them. Every time, we collected until our pockets were full of mulberries.

“So many, so good!”

Every time we pointed out the piles and piles of the deep purple mulberries to her, she always said it like this in a pleasant surprise.

She picked up a few berries to put up to her nose to smell, and then she plopped them into her mouth.

The four of us surrounded the table to eat mulberries.

Our hands were stained with mulberry juice. It was stained reddish, and so were our mouths.

“Enough, I won’t allow you to eat more.”

She raised her shirt to wipe her lips. She opened the cabinet door and took out a bottle of wine.

She squeezed the mulberries into the bottle. One bottle couldn’t fit it all. She got out a second and third bottle.

Every bottle had more than half a bottle of white wine.

How much hate

In the dream last night

Still like strolling through gardens in the olden times.

The carriages flowed like water, and the horses were like dragons

The beautiful thing is the spring breeze.

- Li Houzhu of the southern Tang

“Jiangnan Remembrance - Nostalgia”

From my mother, I learned how to read *Ci* Poetry.

My mother cut a few papers and arranged them into several small booklets.

Each of my two older sisters had a book. Afterward, my older brother and I each also had this kind of book.

My mother wrote a poem in the booklet almost every day. They were copied according to the order in the "Anthology of *Ci* Poems Tunes."

My mother personally hand wrote the graceful, little characters.

At night, at the square table, under the light of the clear oil lamp, my third brother and I stood leaning on my mother.

My mother used her gentle voice to read to us the characters written in the book.

This was the only music in our childhood.

We read out loud every character with my mother until we could connect the characters together into a sentence.

Afterwards, my mother took out the thing that was made of cow bone used to stamp circles and a box of red ink for us.

My brother and I knelt on the square stools, and with concentration, we stamped the poems that we just read.

The second night, we were in front of mother again reviewing that poem until we could recite it from memory.

But in less than a few months, my mother gave birth to a younger sister.

New poems were not added to our books for over a month.

Also, from that time on, I slept with my third older brother on one bed in another room.

Ms. Yang moved her bed to our room. She accompanied us and took care of us.

This sister was the ninth to be born, so we called her ninth sister. When she was born, I was in a dream and completely didn't know.

In the morning, I opened my eyes, and the sunlight was already shining on my bed.

A handkerchief was wrapped around my mother's hand. She looked at me and smiled.

There was the sound of a baby's cry besides her.

Ms. Yang also looked at me and smiled.

I had a feeling of unfathomable mystery.

This was the last day that I slept on my mother's bed.

In the autumn, the weather slowly cooled down.

We resumed reading poems.

Every night, when the clock struck nine, we closed that book.

"Call Ms. Yang to put you to bed," my mother said softly.

We wished my mother a good night. We walked out with our tired eyes.

"Ms. Yang, we want to go to bed."

"Coming, coming!" Ms. Yang's tall figure appeared before our eyes.

She often pulled me to go. Her hands were rougher than my mother's.

We walked past the central room and past my eldest brother's room.

Sometimes, we also walked from behind my mother's back room.

We entered the room. The room had two beds: one was for me and my brother, and the other bed was for Ms. Yang.

Ms. Yang loved tidiness, so she cleaned up the room and beds very well.

She didn't allow us to spit on the ground, and she also didn't allow us to do somersaults on the bed. She also didn't allow us to do other things. However, we didn't hate her, but instead we liked her.

At bedtime, she told us to stand at the side and wait for her to spread out the bedding.

She took off our clothes and got us into a blanket tubing.

"Don't just leave! Tell us a story."

She was just about to put down her handkerchief, and we called her in unison.

She expectedly sat down at the bedside and started telling us a story.

Sometimes, we wanted to finish hearing a satisfying story before going to bed.

Sometimes, we closed our eyes when she was in the middle of narrating, completely not knowing what she was saying.

What deities, musketeers, evil spirits, princes, mistresses.....We didn't care anymore.

Life was peaceful as such.

No tears, no sorrow, no anger. Only a peaceful joy.

Then winter rolled around, and the circumstances changed.

At night, we as usual closed that little booklet and give it to my mother.

Outside, the clock struck nine.

"Call your second sister to put you to bed. Ms. Yang is sick."

My mother personally took us to the room. My second sister tugged on my third brother's hand.

My hand was pulled by my mother.

My mother helped my sister put us in bed, and she told us to sleep well.

After my mother left, we both opened our eyes and looked at the top of the canopy, and then we turned our faces to look at each other.

My second sister coughed a few times on the other bed.

She accompanied us in the place of Ms. Yang. She slept on Ms. Yang's bed, but the bedding and the mosquito net had been changed completely.

We couldn't close our eyes because we were thinking of Ms. Yang.

Behind the third hall, inside the row of bungalows on the right side of the stone steps, the fourth room without a floor, an oil lamp was sitting on a broken table.....

That was the room that Ms. Yang used to stay in.

She was now sick, so she returned there. She was laying on her bed.

Bald mulberry trees were at the bottom of the stone steps outside.

Inside our room, we pushed open a window and looked out and saw Ms. Yang's room.

It was very cold and lonely there.

Except for her as this sick patient, only Ms. Yuan sleeps there. But Ms. Yuan had many things to do, so she slept late.

We didn't see Ms. Yang again afterward. We only knew that she was sick. Although the doctor often came to take her pulse, her illness didn't change.

My second sister took care of us very well. Xiang'er also helped her. She also told us stories at night.

I slowly forgot about Ms. Yang.

"We will go see Ms. Yang!"

One afternoon, when I was just coming out from the study room, my third brother suddenly pulled on my shirt and quietly spoke to me.

"Ok!" I nodded without hesitation.

We ran to the back of the third hall and very quickly arrived at the fourth room on the stone steps on the right side.

No one saw us.

We pushed open the covered door and entered.

The dim room didn't have a sound, only a stinky smell that touched the nose. On that short bed. Half of the blue clothed canopy was done. A cotton blanket covered the lower half of Ms. Yang's body. She was asleep.

A bowl of black medicine sat on a bamboo stool in front of the bed. It wasn't warm anymore.

We timidly walked up to the bed.

A face as white as paper. A head of messy, floating hair. Eyes closed. Mouth slightly opened, venting. A hand hung out from the blanket, a yellow and skinny hand.

I almost didn't believe that this lady was Ms. Yang.

I remembered that laughing face. I remembered that mouth that was telling stories. I remembered the huge pile of mulberries and the bottles and bottles of mulberry wine.

It was as if I were having a dream.

"Ms. Yang, Ms. Yang," we, two brothers, called in unison.

Her nose let out a small sound. Her hand that was hanging out started moving.

Her body moved slightly. Her mouth let out an ambiguous sound.

Her eyes opened, and closed, and opened again a little bigger. Her gaze fell on the two of our faces.

Her lips started moving slightly. It seemed like she wanted to smile.

"Ms. Yang, we have come to see you!" My third brother said first. I then said it too.

She laughed with difficulty and slowly raised her hand to stroke my third brother's head.

"You guys came. You guys still remember me..... Are you guys doing well? ..... Who is taking care of you now?....."

Her voice was so weak.

"Second sister is taking care of us. Mom has also come to take care of us."

Tears almost dripped out in my third brother's voice.

"Good. I can relax now..... I worried about you guys to no end. I missed you guys everyday..... I fear that you guys have felt inconvenienced without me....."

Her voice was so strain. Those two absent eyes kept circling our two brothers' faces. Her gaze was still good-natured as before.

With her looking like this, my tears were drawn out.



I grabbed her hand. Her hand was cold as ice.

Her gaze stopped on my face.

“My fourth young master, have you been naughty recently? ..... Thank you for remembering me.

My illness is not serious. It will get better in a few days.”

My tears dripped on her hand.

“You’re crying! You are so kind. Don’t cry. My illness will get better.”

She stroked my head.

“Don’t cry. I am not Da Hua!”

She still remembered the matter about Da Hua. She made a joke with me.

But I didn’t want to laugh. My heart only wanted to cry.

“You guys look, my memory is very bad. This bowl of medicine is cold already.”

She turned her gaze outside and glanced at the bowl of medicine on the bamboo stool, and she wrinkled her eyebrows. She propped her body up and grabbed the bowl of medicine.

“Don’t get up, I will get it for you.”

My third brother rushed over to grab the bowl of medicine and cupped it in his hands.

“It’s cold. You can’t drink it. I’ll go call someone to simmer it for you!” my third brother said walking outside.

“My third young master, quickly carry it back! Don’t worry about it being cold. It’s the same when you take it. Don’t disturb other people. They will blame me for having many tricks.” She held up her body with a great deal of energy with a red face and anxiously blocked my third brother’s path.

My third brother handed the bowl of medicine back, spilling some of the medicine on the ground.

She seized the bowl of medicine and stooped her head down into the bowl and gulped it down.

She raised her head and gave the empty bowl to my third brother.

Her face was still red.

She used her hand to wipe her mouth, wiping away the residues of medicine around her mouth. She laid back down decrepitly, sighed really long. It seemed like she had already exerted the limit of her energy.

She closed her eyes and never opened them again to look at us. Her nose let out a small sound.

The color slowly faded from her face.

We stood silently for a while.

The room became dark second by second.

“Third master, fourth master, fourth master, third master!”

Xiang'er was using her naughty voice outside to call from a distance.

“Let's go.”

I promptly tugged on my third brother's shirt.

We walked to the stone steps and were seen by Xiang'er.

“You guys snuck to Ms. Yang's room. I will go tell the madam.”

Xiang'er walked over. She said these kinds of words upon meeting us. She laughed proudly.

“The madam ordered me to not take you to go see Ms. Yang,” she also said.

“You're very bad. I won't allow you to get nosy with the madam! We're not afraid!”

As expected, Xiang'er told my mother this matter.

My mother didn't scold us. She only told us that we could not go to Ms. Yang's room again. However, she didn't say the reason.

The days passed day by day, as fast as water flowing.

However, Ms. Yang's illness never got better, but instead, it got worse day by day.

When we passed through the path behind the third hall going to the fourth hall, we could often hear Ms. Yang's strange moaning sounds.

I heard that she was not willing to take her medicine. I heard that she sometimes let out a strange call.

As soon as someone mentioned Ms. Yang, people immediately made a terrified and serious expression.

“The heavens truly don’t have eyes: how can a good person like Ms. Yang get such a disease!”

My mother said several times while sighing.

But I didn’t know what disease Ms. Yang actually got.

I only knew that Guangyuan county didn’t have a single good doctor because everyone says so.

Several more days passed.

“Fourth young master, quickly look! Ms. Yang is eating lice!”

One afternoon, I came out of my study before my third brother, and I ran into Xiang’er around the door. She grabbed my arm and made a silly face to me.

“I hid outside the door and watched. She untied her clothes and caught the lice. When she caught one, she threw it into her mouth and bit it. She continued to throw a few more in. She was eating, while laughing, while scolding. She then took off her foot binding and put it in her mouth and chewed it. So dirty!”

Xiang’er mimicked Ms. Yang’s actions with great effort.

“I don’t want to see it!”

I threw off Xiang’er’s hands with anger and ran to my mother’s room.

Lice and foot binding. In my mind, I could not connect them to Ms. Yang in my mind. Ms. Yang normally loved cleanliness.

I didn’t say a word. I just placed my head on my mother’s chest and cried.

My mother expended great effort to comfort me. She said to my father with tears in her eyes,

“Ms. Yang’s illness won’t get better. We have to buy her a good coffin. She has served us all these years. She is very loyal. She took care of our sons very well like her own!”

My mother’s words drew tears out of me.

This was the first time I understood the meaning of death.

But Ms. Yang didn’t die even though the doctors already said that there was no cure for her disease.

She still lived, eating lice, chewing her foot binding, talking nonsense, making strange sounds.

Everyone lost interest in this matter. No one snuck to the outside of her door to see or listen anymore.

At one mention of Ms. Yang eating lice..... Everyone wrinkled their eyebrows unhappily.

“Oh heavens! Is there a way to make her die early so as to avoid bearing this kind of living hell?”

Everyone hoped that she would die immediately, but couldn’t find a way to make her die early.

A daring person proposed to give her poison. My mother was the first to oppose.

However, Ms. Yang’s existence caused the entire government building to be enshrouded in a kind of depressing atmosphere.

No matter who heard that Ms. Yang is not dead, they all immediately lowered their face like hearing ominous news.

Many people hoped that she died with good intentions, but this person was actually someone who everyone loves.

However, their wish finally became a reality.

One evening, when the whole family was eating lunch.

“Ms. Yang has died!”

Xiang’er ran into the room panting. She reported this good news when she opened her mouth.

Mrs. Yuan came in and confirmed Xiang’er’s words.

Ms. Yang's death was not in the least suspicious.

"Thank the heaven and the earth!"

My mother immediately put her chopsticks down.

Everyone at the table exhaled slowly. It was like the long anxiety had been dispersed by a gust of wind.

It seemed as if no one felt that death was a scary thing.

However, no one had the mood to eat.

I was the first to notice the drops of tear in my mother's eyes.

An image of a healthy Ms. Yang appeared vividly before my eyes.

I finally pushed my bowl away and placed my head on the table and cried.

I cried very painfully like how I cried for Da Hua. At the same time, I thought of Ms. Yang's last words.

Over a month later, my mother told us about Ms. Yang:

She was a widow. She worked in our house for four years as a servant.

The only thing I knew about her was just this little.

She came with us from Chengdu, but could not return to Chengdu with us.

She didn't have any family or relatives.

Therefore, we buried her in Guangyuan county. As for where her grave was, I didn't know.

I also didn't know if there was a stone tablet in front of her grave or what words were carved on the tablet.

"In the netherworld (the realm of demons), the hometown probably doesn't matter, otherwise Ms. Yang would be a ghost in a foreign place." My mother occasionally said lamenting.

On Tomb Sweeping Day and the Ghost Festival, my mother ordered people to bring paper money before Ms. Yang's grave to burn.

Just like that, death passed before my eyes for the first time.

I also liked to read because I liked our teacher.

This short-figured middle-aged man with a white face had all sorts of ways to obtain our respect and love.

“Mr. Liu.”

In the morning, as soon as we walked into the study room, we gave him our salutations.

He nodded his head with a smile.

My third brother and I sat at the same table. One square stool per person. When we felt that sitting was not convenient, we knelt on the stools.

We read Chinese characters, or read the “Three Character Classic,” the “Hundred Family Surnames,” or the “Thousand Character Classic.”

How Mr. Liu treats us couldn't have been better. He had never scolded us once. His face always carried a warm smile.

My mother had once told Jiafu to relay a message, which was to ask Mr. Liu to teach us more strictly without fearing being too uncourteous.

But I had never known what was strict. When I couldn't recite a book, Mr. Liu just told me to slowly reread it. I could have just left whenever I wanted. And same for my third brother.

Because of this reason, we loved the study room even more.

Seeing my eldest brother and my two older sisters diligently studying in the sun-drenched study room, seeing my teacher's warm smiling face, and seeing Jiafu's amiable smiling face, I felt very happy.

My teacher often painted a map for my father.

I didn't know what a map was, or what it was used for.

He painted many fine black lines on a sheet of thick, white paper. He also filled it in with many colors. It was actually an interesting thing.

There were also many strange things. For example, instruments like what people call compasses nowadays.

He painted, and then he wiped it clean. He wiped it clean, and then he painted again. Mr. Liu tilted his head down with an absorbed and diligent appearance. It was as if he were still before my eyes.

“Mr. Liu is very hard working!” This was what I thought when I sometimes sneakily watched Mr. Liu.

Sometimes after my third brother and I get out of class, we returned to the study room to see Mr. Liu paint.

Mr. Liu suddenly put back the map and other new and odd things, and he said to us giggling,

“I will paint a baby for you guys tonight.”

This baby meant a painting of a human subject.

No need to be said, our hearts couldn't wait until tonight. We forced him to immediately draw it for us.

If today my eldest brother, second sister, and third sister all do their homework well, my teacher would have more free time. Then we would have no need to beg many times before he agreed.

He took out the big thread-bound book, which would be the “Character Lessons and Illustrations.” He flipped to a page and covered it with a white square of paper that was cut small. He used a pencil to draw a person, and one to two rooms, or other things. Then he filled in the colors with colored pencils.

“This sheet is for you!”

As my third brother or I received this painting, my face always showed a smile of complete satisfaction.

We liked this kind of painting very much. Because of these paintings, we liked Mr. Liu even more.

My paintings increased one by one. My little wooden box had already accumulated many paintings.

I had always lacked toys, so I viewed these paintings as treasure.

Every morning and night, I would flip through these paintings and look at them for a while.

Red and green colors, a room filled with people and dogs..... They started moving in my mind.

However, these paintings were not enough to make me content. I dreamt of those bigger paintings with lions, with tigers, with leopards, with wolves, with mountains, with caves....

It was almost as if I had seen these paintings before in “Character lessons and Illustrations” or other books. My teacher was not willing to paint them for us.

There were several nights when we ran to the study room to talk about the paintings with my teacher.

My eldest brother was reading by himself at night. He probably felt lonely.

We stood beside my teacher to watch him draw or fill in colors.

My teacher stopped drawing and listened attentively.

“Who has to run so far at night!”

My teacher seemed to pity that person who had to deliver the documents.

“He needs to swap horses again now!”

Hence, the light clip clops had gone far.

In that time, urgent letters and documents were delivered by special messengers. When this letter’s messenger arrived at a relay station, he would swap horses, so he would blow his whistle from afar.

My teacher spent two to three days of labor. One afternoon, he successfully painted my painting with mountains, caves, lions, tigers, leopards, and wolves that I had long craved for.

When I entered the study room, I saw my third brother holding that painting airily smiling.



“Look, Mr. Liu gave it to me.”

This was such a cute painting. Additionally, I had a dream early on and saw my teacher painting it for me.

But I was one step too late. It was already in my third brother’s hands.

“Mr. Liu, I want it!” I ran in front of Mr. Liu with a red face.

“I will paint another one for you in a few days.”

“No, I want it! I must have it!”

I immediately cried no matter how hard my teacher tried or comforted me. It was no use.

At the same time, my crying was also no use. My teacher couldn’t immediately paint the same picture.

As a result, I hated my teacher. I said that he was a bad person.

My teacher wasn’t angry. He still explained to me giggling.

But my third brother went in and told my mother. My eldest brother and second sister half-pulled, half-tugged me into mother’s room.

My mother said some condemning words with a serious expression.

I stopped crying and listened attentively. I had always obeyed my mother’s command.

Lastly, my mother told me to go to the study room with Jiafu and apologize to Mr. Liu. She also wanted Jiafu to tell Mr. Liu to hit me.

I buried my head and allowed Jiafu to take me to the study room.

But I didn’t apologize to my teacher. My teacher also didn’t hit me once.

Instead, he made me sit on the square stool. He lowered his body and tied my undone shoelace.

At night, when it was time for bed, I took out that wooden box next to the pillow and looked through all of the paintings inside and generously gave them all to my third brother.

“Really? You don’t even want to keep a single one for yourself?”

My brother looked at me with surprise. It was a little baffling.

"I don't want them!" I said not in the least wanting to take them back.

At that time, I had a type of thinking similar to "all or nothing."

From that day forth, we never asked Mr. Liu for a painting again.

Spring. Sprouting spring. Soft green spring. Spring with life disseminating everywhere.

Day by day, I saw new sprouts and green leaves bud on the mulberry trees.

My mother picked six sheets of good seeds from the local bureau of sericulture.

Each sheet of paper was covered with light yellow silkworm eggs the size of sesame seeds.

Each silkworm egg became an extremely tiny silkworm one after another.

The silkworms grew up day by day.

People in the house were busy raising the silkworms.

The large dustpan was filled with mulberry leaves. Many silkworms were two inches long and were climbing on the top.

Everyone was busy picking mulberry leaves.

Similar dustpans increased one by one. They occupied the two bungalows behind the third hall on the left side. These two bungalows were the closest to our rooms.

Every night in the middle of the night, either my mother or my second sister, third sister or Ms. Yuan always passed the backdoor of our room to the silkworm room to add mulberry leaves once. It was often Xiang'er holding a kerosene lamp or a candle.

Sometimes, I hadn't fallen asleep, and I saw the light from the kerosene lamp or the candle from my bed. But they thought I was already asleep, so they walked by softly.

Sometimes, the bell for nine o'clock hadn't rung yet, and they already went to add the mulberry leaves. I also went with them to the silkworm room to see.

Pale green silkworms were squirming on top of the mulberry leaves, eating the mulberry leaves one bit after another. There was a rustling sound from inside the dustpan.

I saw them using their hands to catch the silk worms. I felt it was like scratching an itch.

Those soft silkworms one after another.

They took the silkworm excrement out one handful after another.

According to my mother, this silkworm excrement was more useful than the silk later. Her raising silkworms was mostly for this reason of collecting silkworm excrement.

My eldest brother had postpartum rheumatism from a very young age. It would appear after getting a cold. Once the disease came, there would be three to four days of pain.

“I don’t understand why. Guo’er would get this kind of sickness, which frequently cause him to suffer hardships.”

My mother often worried about my eldest brother’s disease. When she saw people, she asked what prescription there were to cure this disease. At that time, Guangyuan county pretty much didn’t have any good doctors, but the old wives had all sorts of odd prescriptions.

My mother also believed them. She had tried many prescriptions, all of which were ineffective.

Afterwards, she got a prescription from a village leader’s wife whose last name was Xue. It was to get fresh silkworm excrement and fry it with yellow wine and brown sugar, and then wrap it on the painful spots. After wrapping a few times, the disease will then be cured.

In Guangyuan county, where residents mostly eat cornmeal, we couldn’t buy yellow wine. My mother begged my father to ask people to bring a jar from Hezhou to prepare.

Subsequently, she started raising silkworms.

My father did not approve of my mother raising silkworms. My mother had raised silkworms once before. One time, she forgot to add mulberry leaves, and consequently, many silkworms died of hunger.

Afterwards, she was a little careless, and a rat ate many silkworms. She was very sad, and she promised to never raise silkworms again. My father was afraid that she would come across the same thing again.

But no matter how my father dissuaded her, no matter the fear of her past promise constantly torturing her, she was determined to raise silkworms in the end.

This year, my eldest brother's disease really got better. We didn't know whether or not Lady Xue's prescription really had an effect. Nevertheless, my mother became sworn sisters with Lady Xue afterward.

Afterwards, I saw the silkworms pile together like mountains, and many white and yellow cocoons were hanging on stems of grass. Sometimes, I would pick up a few cocoons to play with.

Later, I saw people moved a silk vehicle here. They grabbed handfuls of silkworms into a pot to boil, while rocking the silk vehicle.

Afterward, I saw a few daring people used oil to lightly fry the silkworm pupa. They mixed in salt and pepper to eat. They endlessly praised the delicious flavor.

"The fate of being a silkworm is also very tragic!" I sometimes would think.

My father was known as a "just and incorruptible official" here.

He often wore strange clothes and adjudicated a case while sitting in front of the judge's desk at the second hall.

Two commissioners (bailiffs) stood on the two sides on the bottom. They were holding bamboo boards. There were the wide ones, which were the big boards. There were the narrow ones, which were the little boards.

"The great lord has seated!....."

In the afternoon, when I heard this type of announcement, I knew that my father was going to adjudicate, so I found an opportunity to run to the second hall, so I could observe from next to the adjudicator's desk.

My father asked many questions from above. I didn't know why he wanted to ask these.

The people, who were asked these questions, knelt at the bottom and answered the questions one by one. Sometimes, it was one person. Sometimes, it was many people.

My father's expression slowly changed, and his voice changed too.

"Nonsense! Beat them for me!" My father suddenly slapped the table.

Two to three bailiffs pressed the prisoner on the ground, took his pants off, and exposed his butt. One person was restraining him. The other person was waiting on the side.

"Give me 100 hits with the little board, and then we will allow him to speak again! This ridiculous thing is not willing to speak the truth!"

"Your just and incorruptible honor, this lowly one has been wrongly accused!"

That person was lying face down on the ground, screaming like a pig being killed.

Therefore, the two bailiffs hit him with the two little boards from the left and right side.

"5, 10, 15, 20....."

"Your just and incorruptible honor from above, this lowly one has been truly wrongly accused!"

"Nonsense! Do you confess?"

That prisoner was still calling false accusations while crying.

His butt changed from white to red, and then to purple.

When they counted to 100, the bailiffs stopped the boards.

"Reporting to your honor, we have given 100 hits."

His butt was bleeding. The flesh became tender.

"Do you confess?"

"Your just and incorruptible honor, this lowly one has nothing to confess!"

"This thing is truly sly! No confession, resume hitting!"

The bailiffs went down on the boards again like 5, 10... They kept hitting until the prison confessed the truth.

The person that was beaten was pulled up by the bailiffs. He had to kowtow his honor, either by himself or by the bailiffs speaking on his behalf.

“Thank you, your honor.”

They were beaten but still had to kowtow and give gratitude. I did not understand this principle for a long time. I had always thought that matters should not be like this.

Spanking someone’s bottom was almost a condition one could not do without while sitting in the hall. Almost every time in front of the adjudicator’s desk, my father had said, “Drag him down and beat for me.”

Sometimes, my father used the punishment of the “kneeling and raising box”: make the prisoner kneel in the raising box, extend his two hands and wear on into the eyes of two poles, and place another pole at the bend of his legs. There were two to three times where the bailiffs also coiled iron chains around the bottom of the prisoner’s two legs.

The prisoner’s face changed from yellow to red, from red to blue. Drops of sweat dripped down from the prisoner’s coiled braids. Calls of pain like pigs dying.....

The prisoner’s mouth was still calling, “Innocent!”

My father’s face became gloomy, like many black clouds piling on his face.

“Release him!”

I was begging in my mind but didn’t dare to speak it out. This time, I could only escape.

I spoke about this matter with my mother.

“Mom, why was dad completely different when he was sitting in the hall than when he is at home?

He is like another person!”

When my father was at home, he was very good-natured. I had never seen him scolded anyone before.

My mother laughed warmly.

“You are a little child. Don’t be nosy. Do not go see Dad presiding again in the future.”

I didn’t listen to my mother because I indeed liked to be nosy. However, my mother never answered my question.

“When you hear a case in the future, you can use less punishment. They were also raised by parents after all. Last night, I saw the ‘kneeling and raising box’ and heard the prisoner’s cries, and my heart was tense. I didn’t sleep well for one night. Did you not feel pain in your heart?”

One morning, when no one else was in the room, I heard my mother warmly asked my father this.

My father smiled slightly.

“Since when did I use more punishments willingly? However, those prisoners were really sly. If you didn’t use punishments, they would not be willing to confess. Besides, I did not come up with these punishments. If you didn’t use punishments, there would unavoidably be no model of a county magistrate!”

“I fear that there will also be confessions obtained under torture.”

My father muttered to himself irresolutely for a long time.

“There shouldn’t be. I am very careful whenever I convict someone.”

Subsequently, my father firmly said,

“In brief, I absolutely have not killed a single person.”

My father indeed had never sentenced a person to death. In the two years that my father was the county magistrate, only one case of homicide had occurred. This was a case of plotting to kill somebody for their wealth. The convict was a pretty youth. He personally chopped up his companion into several chunks.

My father suspended the case. Before long, we returned to Chengdu, so I didn't know the ending of that youth.

My mother's words produced an effect in my father's heart. Afterwards, I never saw my father used the "kneeling and raising box" punishment again.

Moreover, the standing cages on the two sides outside the great were always empty, although there were often several prisoners wearing cangues squatting there.

But hitting with the little boards was still common.

One time still far from new year, servants were playing pai gow poker in the gatehouse. I was watching there for a while. Afterward, my father found out and went to seize the bet. He took up the dominoes and told them to throw them into the toilet.

My father immediately presided in the hall. He captured several servants, and even the supervisor Liu Sheng and Mr. He were among them. They ordinarily treated me very well.

They all kneeled on the ground, kowtowing my father, admitting their wrongdoings, and begging for forgiveness.

"Hit them for me, 50 times for each person, and then we will see."

My father scolded while angrily slapping the desk.

The bailiffs were not willing to initiate. They silently looked at each other's faces.

"I said beat them for me!" my father said more angrily.

The bailiffs agreed out loud, but no one initiated.

Liu Sheng and the rest of them continued kowtowing and begging for forgiveness from below.

My father snarled. He grabbed a few fortune sticks from a cup of them and tossed them down.

This time, the bailiffs had to start beating.

In the end, every person got beaten 20 times with the little board. They kowtowed and thanked him.



My heart was very pained and immediately ran into the gatehouse. Many people surrounded those who were beaten. They were using wine to massage the injury spot.

I heard their moaning sounds. I couldn't help but to trickle tears. I said some words supporting them.

They were very amiable towards me. They didn't show an unsatisfied expression.

There was another time, I saw the wet nurse who was guiding my ninth sister received a beating.

That time, my ninth sister was having acne. According to the practice of Chinese medicine, even the wet nurse must not eat those so-called "unhealthy foods."

I didn't know, the wet nurse surprisingly drooled whenever she saw fresh cucumbers.

The feelings of a woman who was a mother was very perceptive. She would smell the smell of cucumbers on the wet nurse's mouth.

One night, the wet nurse was eating in her own room. When she saw my mother come in, she exposed a flustered appearance and put everything under the pillow.

My mother quickly walked to the bed and lifted the pillow.

A big bowl contained cold cucumber salad.

My mother's expression immediately changed, and she ordered people to ask my father to come.

Accordingly, my father ordered people to light a lamp. He would preside that night.

The wet nurse was dragged up to the second hall. She was kneeling there, allowing two bailiffs to pull out her two hands. Another bailiff separated her wide clothes and used a lash to whip her back.

One, two, three, four, five.....

As much as twenty times.

She cried thanking him. She continued saying this was her first time being a wet nurse and didn't know the severity of the crime, and wouldn't dare to do it again next time.

She cried for a whole night.

The next morning, my mother called her husband to take her away.

Before departure, this young wet nurse had a miserable expression. The corner of her eyes also dripped a teardrop.

I was actually sad in this circumstance and also cried.

Afterwards, I asked my mother why she was treated so cruelly like this.

My mother sighed slightly. She didn't say anything else.

Later, nobody mentioned this wet nurse's whereabouts.

My mother often felt regretful in this situation. She said she forgot herself that night and did something that she didn't know why she wanted to do.

This was the only time I saw my mother lose her temper.

I remembered one afternoon, for a little thing, my third brother put on a role of a master and reprimanded Xiang'er and beat her a few times.

Xiang'er complained tearfully to my mother.

My mother called my third brother in front of her and warmly explained to him,

"Servant girls and women are the same people as us. Even if they did something wrong, you should also speak to them properly, so why did you easily hit and scold them? Besides, you are not young anymore, so you shouldn't hit people, and even less so scold people. I am not willing to let you do this again. You have to remember this well."

My third brother buried his head and didn't dare to say anything. Xiang'er happily snickered on the side.

My third brother slowly walked outside, while hanging his head down.

"Hey, don't rush away!"

My third brother walked in front of my mother again.

“You still haven’t answered me. You have to listen to what I say. Do you understand? Do you remember?”

My third brother hesitated for quite a while and finally replied,

“I understand..... I remember.”

“Good, take the cake away and call Xiang’er to play with you guys.”

My mother stood up and obtained two slices of cake from the porcelain jar on the second cabinet and gave them to us.

I also understood my mother’s words. I also remembered my mother’s words.

But my mother had also done something cruel now.

I was not happy about this matter for several days.

During this time, I already felt that many things in the world were not arranged reasonably.

In the last year that Pu Yi was the emperor, my father resigned and returned to Chengdu, although that place had many people urging him to stay.

During my life in the two years in Guangyuan county, I was truly happy because the people there treated me very well. Our family had two additional sisters: ninth sister and tenth sister.

In these two years, I was only beaten once because my grandfather celebrated his birthday in Chengdu. We paid our respects here, but I was not willing to kowtow.

My mother stood on the side and used a whip to threaten me, but it still didn’t work.

As a result, I was beaten and cried, but I didn’t kowtow once from beginning to end. This was the first time that I was whipped by my mother.

From when I was little, I hated etiquettes. Furthermore, this kind of disgust continued to develop.

My father served as the county magistrate of Guangyuan county for two years. He bought 40 acres of land when he returned to Chengdu.

Others still said that he was an “honest and upright official.”

### C. Family Situation

We returned to Chengdu and changed to a new scenery. Moreover, it was not long before the revolution erupted.

At that time, I didn't know what the revolution was. I didn't know either to support or be afraid of it. Only the mutiny of October 18th gave me a terrified impression.

During those days, I was still reading in the study room and day by day listened to the teacher (whose last name was Long) tell us the fad about the railroad with an excited voice.

Mr. Long was a member of the new party, so he stood on the side of the people. Naturally, he didn't dare to voice his opposition to the Qing government in public. However, he expressed great reverence for the seven petitions who were arrested, and he didn't like the viceroy at that time: Zhao Erfeng.

My second uncle and third uncle returned home after studying abroad in Japan for not over one or two years. They cut their braids in Japan (I can't remember clearly now if both of their braids were cut, or only one of them cut their braid). They wore fake braids now. Some people made cutting remarks behind their backs and scolded them for being in the revolutionary party.

Behind my head hung a little braid with a red tie. Every morning, I wanted my mother or a servant to brush my hair for me. I felt like it was a very annoying thing. Therefore, I liked that revolutionary party, which advocated cutting your braids.

October 18th on the lunar calendar was my deceased grandmother's birthday, so everyone was busy arranging stuff.

In the afternoon, I heard that the sound of the wind outside was not too good.

At around 5, my father and family were kowtowing in the central room. Suddenly, a servant came in and reported that a mutiny was occurring outside. Many banks and pawnshops were being robbed. Our second uncle's mansion also suffered a visit from the rebels.

Actually, the previous information was not accurate. Although my second uncle's mansion was very close to us here, but at that time, everyone lost their judgement. Besides, my second uncle's family was the wealthiest of the northern region, so it was possible that he was robbed.

Thereafter, there was a small uproar in the central room, and everyone immediately scattered in all directions. Each person returned inside the rooms to think of ways to escape.

My father and mother discussed briefly, and everyone rushed and muddled.

A servant helped my father pried the floor open. He obtained dozens of silver coins and put them into the floor. Afterwards, they also put many silver coins into the well in the backyard.

There were also people busy moving a ladder here. They put a few lipsticks and leather cases on the top floor. That was where we hide stuff.

At the same time, my mother ordered people to employ a few palanquins to take us, brothers and sisters, to our grandmother's house. My eldest brother stayed with my father at home.

My mother and I sat in one palanquin. My mother was hugging me. I occasionally sneakily opened the palanquin's curtain to look at the streetscape outside.

Some people were running on the street. Many palanquins came from the opposite direction. I didn't see a single rebel.

At night, we all squeezed into my grandmother's house. No one said anything.

There were gun sounds outside, and half of the sky was stained red. A young uncle said stuff to us from outside the window. These words were very terrifying.

My grandmother closed her eyes and prayed to the Buddha.

Afterwards, there were clamorous sounds of people nearby. It seemed that Zhao's mansion that was only a few steps away from here had been broken in by the rebels.

Noises, crying, gun sounds, objects whomping..... These sounds all merged into one.

My grandmother compelled my mother to escape, but my mother was not willing. Everyone argued briefly, and my mother took us to the back patio. My grandmother was steadfastly not willing to go. She said that she prayed to the Buddha and ate vegetarian food for many years and that the Bodhisattva would protect her.

The sky was red. There were crows calling from the trees. We also heard gun sounds very clearly.

My mother let out a few hopeless sighs. She was still concerned about my grandmother and my father.

My uncle placed a ladder for us. The wall wasn't high. A servant first climbed to the outside of the wall. Then my mother, my third brother, and I all climbed over. Then, my two sisters also climbed over.

The other side was a vegetable garden. We hid in the vegetable garden for a good deal of time. We could not feel the frigid cold at all.

Afterward, we heard no activity, so we went to the thatched shed of the old women who attended that garden and spent the night there.

That old woman received us very amiably. She also made hot tea for us to drink.

My mother worried about family affairs the whole night. It was peaceful outside on the next morning of the 19th, so she took me back to the house first. My father and eldest brother welcomed us pleasantly surprised.

My father told us that last night in the middle of the night, there were about a dozen rebels that broke through the gate and came in. They were already prepared inside the house. About a dozen bold devils carried guns and formed two rows on the patio outside the second gate. (My third uncle was the county magistrate in Nanchong. He had just come back from there). The rebels saw that there were many people here and didn't dare fire. They only asked for some travel expenses. My father told people to give them a few silver coins, and they left. We only lost these 100 yuan. Afterward, there were no rebel soldiers who came again.

That night only my father and eldest brother took care of the household. My uncle and his wife already fled. My grandfather also went elsewhere.

Today was my mother's and my birthday, but everyone in the house forgot about this matter already.

From then on, we went on peacefully. The silver under the floor was naturally taken out. We didn't know who took the silver from the well. My father ordered people dredge the well twice, but we couldn't find it.

The news about Zhao Erfeng being beheaded by the revolutionary party made Mr. Long very happy. At the same time, it produced all kinds of different impressions in our household. Several days later, we heard everyone discussing the matter about Zhao Erfeng being beheaded.

The republican revolutionary was considered to be successful.

The fake braids from my second and third uncle's head were taken off. No one jeered at their "bald heads" again.

On a clear afternoon, the servant Jiang Fu (He didn't know where he recently learned the art of hair cutting from) found a Western pair of scissors for cutting hair. He cut off me and my third brother's braids.

Then, all of the boys in our house cut off their braids. There were one or two servants who were not willing to cut off their braids. They were accidentally forced to have their braids cut off by the police on the street.

Our house started making the new flags. Usually, my father took care of these matters. He spread a large sheet of white foreign cloth on the table. He first used a very big bowl and painted the ink on the rim of the bowl, and he stamped a giant circle on the cloth. Then, he used a small cup to stamp 18 small rings around the big circle. He wrote "Han" in the middle of the big circle. The 18 small circles represented the 18 provinces at the time.



I was interested in making flags. But not long after the Republic of China was established, our family put away the “Han” flag and created the five colors flag.

My grandfather felt sorrow for the revolution. My father did not express any opinions. My second uncle forfeited his rank. My third uncle gave himself the pen name of “The Doctor of a Vanquished Nation.” My third uncle was a poet, and he had written many verses. My grandfather was also a poet, who had printed a poem anthology “Autumn Cherry-Apple Mountain Store” and gave it away to people. My father and second uncle didn’t compose poems.

As for our generation, although most of us were children, we were happy for the extinction of the Qing government.

The Qing dynasty had toppled. We were still studying under the guidance of Mr. Long. But it was not long before my eldest brother entered secondary school.

Two and a half years later, my mother left us forever.

My mother died one night in the third year of the Republic of China (1914) on the seventh month of the lunar calendar.

My mother was sick for over 20 years. She was in extreme pain when she was sick. Until the last day, she was very clear-headed, but she couldn't move anymore.

My third brother and I then stayed in the next-door room. Every time we went to her bedside to see her, she would always shed a tear.

Among us brothers and sisters, my mother loved me the most, but I was not able to comfort her and lessen her burden.

My mother cared about her children very much so. Five days before she died, she still asked my eldest brother to get a pair of golden bracelets from an aunt. She didn’t think they looked good. After two days, she asked my brother to return them and also to get another pair from the wife of the second uncle.

These were for my eldest brother to use for his engagement in the future. She even thought about these matters when she was painfully ill.

My third brother and I didn't see my mother die. That night, because my mother's illness became more serious, my father called a maid to put us to bed very early. When we woke up in the morning the next day, a coffin was already here.

I kept in my tears and thought of how I was my mother's most beloved child in my mind.

The coffin was in the office. When they were preparing to close the coffin, two people were holding the two ends of a red silk cloth preparing to put it down. Many people were crying around the coffin. I numbly watched my mother's bloodless face. I hated how I couldn't use the gaze of many decades later to look at her more fully at this time.

The red cloth was finally placed down. It concealed my mother's body. The lacquerer then used a wooden nail to nail it down. A few people held the coffin lid and pressed it on.

My second sister and third sister were not willing to leave. They cried very broken heartedly. They knocked their heads on the coffin.

When it was time to sleep at night, I still heard the sorrowful crying sounds from my two sisters from the office. I couldn't shut my eyes. My tears also trickled out. I pitied my two sisters. I also pitied myself.

I was woken up by my two sisters' crying in the morning. I lay on the bed. Holding my tears back, I prayed that my mother would protect my two sisters.

During the day, I often looked at the enlarged photo of my mother in front of the coffin drape in the office. I thought in my mind what kind of place my mother was in.

On the night of the family worship, we, three brothers, knelt on the praying mat before the coffin and listened to cousin Zhang recite a sacrificial text that my father wrote for us.

.....My mother had unexpectedly abandoned us and passed away.....We have unexpectedly become our own maternal figures today.....

The sound of the recitation was very funny. I was only a 10-year-old child. I chewed on the flavor of these two sentences, and my tears dripped on the futon.

The next day, the coffin was lifted out. The funeral ceremony was held at an ancient temple, then she was buried in Mopan mountain. My father made two holes in the grave. The left one was for himself to use. Three years later, he expectedly slept in that hole.

After the coffin was carried out, the house returned to its original state. The layout of my mother's room was no different from when she was there, the only thing added was a magnified photo of half of my mother's body.

I often walked into my father's room. When I didn't see my mother, I still thought that she was in the backroom, so I warmly called "mom." But I immediately realized that my mother was already a being of another world.

I have become a motherless child. Compared to my cousins who had mothers, I deeply felt the sorrows of a motherless child.

Perhaps to fill in this shortcoming, my father remarried a younger woman for us.

This new mother also took care of us very well, but she could not heal the scar in my heart. She cannot love me like my deceased mother did. I also could not love her as I did my deceased mother.

This was not her fault, and it was also not my fault because before this, we were originally two strangers who didn't understand each other.

Around over four months after my mother's death, my second sister also died.

My sister got the so-called “daughter’s tuberculosis” disease. Not long after we returned to Chengdu, she got sick. One time, she almost died, and then someone introduced an English female doctor from the hospital of Four Sages Shrine, who cured her.

Therefore, my mother ordered people to buy knives and forks and made a western meal. She invited some of the “foreign ladies” from the Four Sages Shrine to eat at our house. This was our first time in touch with westerners. They could all speak Chinese. I felt that they were very kind.

My mother became friends with those ladies. She took me to their hospitals to play a few times and also to see the doctors. They also gave us some western snacks and many books. I liked the leather-bound hardcover “New and Old Testament” book, which was translated to Chinese. However, I didn’t think to read it at that time. After my mother’s death, we did not talk to those English Female doctors anymore.

As soon as my mother died, my second sister didn’t have a single good day. Her excessive sorrows probably destroyed her body.

She became skinny and frail day by day. Her face didn’t have any color of blood. Her face became haggard day after day. She often mentioned Mother and cried. I saw her smile very little.

“Mom, you see how pitiful second sister is. You have to take good care of her!” I prayed secretly.

But my second sister’s illness never got better. My father called many famous doctors to diagnose her, but it was all useless.

As soon as winter arrived, my second sister fell asleep. Anyone who saw her all sighed, “She was so pitifully skinny.”

The 28th day of the 11th month of the lunar calendar was my father’s birthday. From that day forth, our house sang three days of Chinese opera in a row. The stage was in the great hall. The patio had many tables of guests. Everyone was running back and forth with smiles.

My second sister was sick in the room alone. When she heard all of the bustling, it must have been hard for her to bear. At night, when most of the guests left, my father ordered people to help my second sister come out and sit on the stairs to watch the opera from afar.

My second sister sat on a rattan chair unable to move. She used her soulless gaze to absently watch the stage. I didn't know what scenes she saw in her eyes.

Her face was so skinny that it became a needle-like face. Her lips were also dried. My heart was painful for love and for pity.

"I want to go back in," my second sister said in a low voice while tilting her head slightly and unable to exercise patience. The servants then helped her back in.

Three days later, my second sister shut her eyes forever. She also died before dawn. At that time, I was dreaming and couldn't see how she passed away in her final moments.

I had a strange dream that morning. I arrived at a cemetery. The place was wide and full of grass. The middle had the tomb of a stranger. Behind the grave were planted several Cyprus trees reaching high into the sky. It was like a spring morning. The sunlight glistened at the treetops. Many wildflowers in front of the grave were just having red, yellow, blue, and white buds. Two or three butterflies fluttered in the flowers. The twigs also had mountain birds singing.

I stood in front of the grave and looked at the characters carved on the gravestone. A brief wind carried the floral scents into my nose. Suddenly, sounds of crying came from behind the grave.

I was startled awake. My heart beat very ferociously. I laid in bed for a moment. The sound of crying still echoed in my ears. I was able to differentiate that this was my third sister's crying.

I felt terror. I had no doubts. My second sister was dead.

My father was busy arranging my second sister's funeral. After a while, my grand aunt came in a palanquin and cried on and on.

After returning to Chengdu, I was still a child. Those who could still play with me consisted of my third brother and some cousins around the same age. Besides this, there were some servants. Xiang'er, who also accompanied us at Guangyuan county, had also died.

My eldest brother was already grown up. He liked playing with my older sister and cousins.

In this large family, there were many people in my generation. Besides two sisters and three cousins from my dad's side, I also had several cousins from my mom's side. They had a good relationship with my eldest brother. They frequently came to our house to play. This time, my eldest brother became busy. My sister and cousins got together, and they gave him the nickname of "busy doing nothing."

There were many different types of games. My eldest brother was naturally the center of attention. Kicking shuttlecocks, playing with rubber balls, tossing pictures of the Grand View Garden, and playing drinking games. There were many types of drinking games. My eldest brother's room hid many tallying chips for drinking games.

Often in the evening, they and my eldest brother pooled together some money to buy several kinds of cold food for drinking. They also ordered the chef to make several types of cooked dishes. Then everyone gathered around a round table, ordering others to drink while drinking themselves. Or discussing some interesting things or commenting on the characters in the "Dream of the Red Chamber." At that time in our house, except for us small children, not a single person had not read the "Dream of the Red Chamber." My father bought a set of 16 wood copies at Guangyuan county. My mother had a small set of a stone-printed copy. My eldest brother then bought a set of lead printed books published by The Commercial Press of Beijing. I often heard people discussing the "Dream of the Red Chamber." Although I had never read it, I was already familiar with the characters and affairs in the book.

Afterwards, two of my cousins left Chengdu, and my second sister had died with my mother. It was only natural that my eldest brother and sisters' parties were not as lively as before, but there were

still new participants. For example, one cousin and a young uncle (my sixth uncle). My third brother and I had also participated two to three times.

However, I had many interests. I formed a new troupe with my third brother and others. I also formed a detective team with my sixth uncle and others. I also often hid in the horse stable and lay on the palanquin porter's broken bed next to the smoke lamp. I listened to them tell stories from their youths.

There was a period when my third brother and I every night called Jiang Fu to accompany us to Keyuan to watch plays. Keyuan had Sichuan opera as well as Beijing opera. We consecutively watched for two to three months. My father was a stockholder of that theater and had a thick book of free theater tickets. Also, the seats were in fixed boxes, so there was no need to get tickets at the last moment. We loved to watch martial arts play. We also learned how to do somersaults and circle around poles when we returned home.

My father liked Beijing opera. At that time, the Chengdu opera house gave extra Beijing opera performances and hired famous actors from the Beijing opera squad. This was mostly done by him. They were a group of actors from Shanghai to Chengdu. Before going on stage, they often came to our house to eat first. Naturally, my father invited them. They also sometimes sang opera in our guest room.

There was a time my father invited the eight to nine newly arrived actors to eat in the guest room. After eating, everyone was playing in the flower garden. The one with the woman role in Chinese opera (we had heard his gramophone recording) suddenly became disarrayed. He knelt on the ground and swore to God many kinds of things. Everyone dragged him, but he wasn't willing to leave. It made my father worried to no end. We thought it was funny on the side. I was very close to these opera actors. I sometimes went with my father backstage to watch them put on their makeup.

A child, who sang the role of a young woman, was named Zhang Wen Fang, whose age was no over 14 or 15. At that time, he was very popular in Chengdu. His brother originally sang that role.

Nowadays, his voice was broken and cannot go on stage anymore. He now taught his brother and relied on his brother to survive. He had been to our house once. He was completely a child, but he didn't have one ounce of femininity. However, during performances, he changed his appearance into all sorts of women, who seemed to be born under an unlucky star. I was used to the tragedies that he performed, and I didn't like them at all. But one time, not far from new year's, I went with my father to where they lived (It should be in the theater), and I saw him performing short range sparring. He was holding a Guandao dancing alone. I unconsciously looked at him and smiled. I played with him for a while. We asked each other about some things until when my father came to take me home. I thought that his life must had been very lonely.

However, to speak fairly, my father treated the actors very politely. He regarded them as friends, so he could earn their trust. However, he didn't play with the young actor who played the role of a woman.

My third uncle was not the same. He liked Li Feng Qing, who played the role of a woman of the Sichuan troupe. My grandfather also liked Li Feng Qing. One time, my grandfather took me to see a play. After Li Feng Qing appeared on stage with his head wrapped and wearing a pink shirt, my grandfather smiling asked me if I recognized that person.

Li Feng Qing frequently sought for my third uncle. He also frequently talked to us. He was a very friendly person and could write very beautiful characters. Although he wore men's clothes, his movement and speech were like a woman's. Sometimes, there were still cosmetics on his hands and face.

There was one time when my third uncle brought Li Feng Qing to our guest room to put on makeup and take pictures. I saw him put on a headband, applied powder, and walked on his tiptoes in there. He first dressed up as an ancient female general wielding a lance, and then he changed into an upper-class lady wearing a dress. These two pictures were hung in my third uncle's room. My third uncle also inscribed a poem on the front with his own handwriting.



Li Feng Qing's circumstances were very miserable. Not long after my grandfather died, he also became sick and died. He left behind a wife. He didn't even have money for his burial. It was my third uncle who paid for his burial.

My third uncle composed a poem for him. It contained, ".....Also withstanding death in a flash, wait for me as I bid farewell."

My second uncle also composed a poem. I still remember a few lines from the latter half of the poem, "Who can bear a crooked Guangling, the sound of death echoes..... The time of melancholy and falling flowers where will we reunite."

Afterwards, my second uncle occasionally discussed this matter with the teacher. 60-year-old Mr. Cao asked in surprise,

"Mr. XX was also interested in this? He deserves to be an elegant scholar!"

This "Mr. XX" was pointing to my third uncle. When my third uncle was the county magistrate at Nanchong, Mr. Cao was the military instructor of that county. Mr. Cao, who came to our house to teach, was also introduced by my third uncle. Li Feng Qing was also singing opera at Nanchong at that time. My third uncle became acquainted with him there.

When I heard this phrase of "elegant scholar," it was like listening to what Mr. Cao used to say every day, "The great Qing empire in these last 300 years is deeply kindhearted and beneficence to where it soaks my flesh and bones." I felt very sickened.

My second uncle talked about Li Feng Qing's life with Mr. Cao. He was originally a child of a well-off family. He was kidnapped by his foe when he was 13 or 14. Because his family was not willing to pay to get him back, his health was ruined, and he was sold to an opera house to play a female role in Chinese opera.

My fifth uncle also hung out with the dan character of the Sichuan troupe afterwards. He also wrote opera for us.

We organized a new opera team to perform new operas in the bamboo forest behind the *Gui* hall. There was a vacant lot in front of the bamboo forest, which became our stage. We used carbon paper to create many tickets to give to people and dragged them to see our performance.

Our script was written randomly by ourselves. There was no female protagonist inside. The main actors were my sixth uncle, second brother (second uncle's son), third brother, and cousin Xiang. My fifth brother (also my second uncle's son) and I only did the supporting roles, or we could perform stick acrobatics after the performance. The guests were mostly women, including my sister and female cousins. We used all sorts of methods to force them to come watch. Moreover, we only allowed them to leave when the play is over.

My father was also dragged here by us. Surprisingly, he sat there and watched our entire play. He also wrote us a script called "The Memoirs of knowing and becoming visible." When my second and third brothers dressed up as two characters and acted vigorously, my father laughed aloud.

I had two situations in the residence. I lived with my "superiors" for a portion of the time. For the other portion of the time, I lived with the "subordinates."

I loved to be nosy. I was often at the gatehouse, horse stable, or kitchen hanging out with the servants and horsemen. I often asked them this and that. Therefore, they all called me the "inspector."

Sometimes, the palanquin porters cooked food in the horse stable, so I lit a fire for them. I grabbed some firewood and dried leaves and sent them into that firewood stove. Whenever they played cards, I watched from the side. I always helped the one who loses. Sometimes, they honestly poured out their suffering with me or honestly criticized the good and bad of their masters. They didn't hide anything from me. They viewed me as a friend, who sympathized with them. Whenever I needed their help, they hardly stinted.

My life had been with the servants and palanquin porters. I saw how they could think of the nature of righteousness and faith while living that kind of suffering life. I knew their happiness and pain. I saw how they struggled with poverty and surrendered and died. A 60-year-old man named Zhao Sheng got sick and died in the gatehouse. The servant named Zhou Gui, who smoked opium, stole my grandfather's calligraphy. He was kicked out and later became a beggar and died on the streets. One of the palanquin porters left our house and became a watchman of our relatives' mansion on a slope. I didn't know why he hung himself with his belt on the gate. If I narrate them all of tragedies and the heavy life burdens of those servants, it would definitely make the warmest person unable to curb his anger.

When I listened to those palanquin porters in the filthy and cold horse stable narrate their painful experiences next to the lamp, or when I hear the servants under the dim lights in the gate house let out their desperate sighs, my eyes had tears. My heart had flames and a kind of rebellious thought. I swore to stand by their side and be someone who helped them.

I was friends with them until I left Chengdu. However, after I entered a school specialized in foreign languages, I had very little time to play in the gatehouse and the horse stable. I also participated in social activities.

I didn't go to the kitchen from early on because I was not happy seeing Chef Xie and a female servant flirting (Later on, he married one of my grandfather's servants. She was a widow originally), but Chef Xie relied on my grandfather liking him. He often humiliated others and made me dissatisfied with him. Although, I used to go to the kitchen to see him cook and make snacks.

The more I was with the servants, the more I disliked those hypocritical etiquettes and social niceties among the masters. There were two times on lunar New Year's Eve that the whole family was praying in the room, but I hid in the horse stable and laid on the palanquin porter's broken bed. There were no people, no light there. Many people were calling me outside, but I didn't respond. I silently listened to the sounds of the firecrackers and stopped. After a while, I ran to my room.

Whenever my family prayed every day, I would find ways to hide. I was often mocked for this, but I always did what I wanted to do.

My sixth uncle, second brother, and cousin Xiang collaborated to make a fiction magazine, which was named *10 Days*. Three books came out per month. Each book used carbon copy paper to make five to six copies.

I was the magazine's first subscriber. My eldest brother published his proudest sad story in the *10 Days* magazine in the first issue, so they also gave him a copy. Cousin Feng also contributed a proud manuscript.

In our house, my eldest brother was the first to write novels. His novel opened with the ancient phrase, "In the evening spring of March, the grass was long south of the Yangtze river; the mixed flowers and trees; a group of warblers flying around chaotically." Cousin Feng's novel opened with the sentence, "The apricot blossoms were deep, a corner of the red mansion. Continuing on, "In the room was a young maiden. Who was the girl? Her last name was X, and her given name was XX," and so on with this formula. Changing the "young maiden" into a "youth" would change the novel into another story. The novel's ending did not leave love and death. The ending also had a lover's suicide note.

I wasn't interested in the thousands of the same stories about the sorrows of the perfect lovers in *10 Days*. And I saw with my own eyes when they wrote these novels that they clearly lay out many books to plagiarize. These books included measurements, compilations, notes, and popular novels and magazines newly published in Shanghai. In the novels, every four or six sentences describing a scenery were usually copied from the measurements or collections. They didn't exert great efforts to write novels. However, I extremely admired the painstaking efforts of the three who founded the magazine to copy, to book bind, and to draw.

In the three months that *10 Days* was published, I only spent 9 copper coins for the subscription fee, and I got nine thick books.

During the spring of the sixth year of the Republic of China, Chengdu had the first street fighting. In these seven days, when the troops from Sichuan and Yunnan were fighting, I saw many terrifying scenes of bleeding.

During this time, two of my second uncle's sons, my second brother, and my fifth brother suddenly got diphtheria and died. I lost two companions in a few days.

They could have not died originally, but because the pedestrians were cut off on the road, they couldn't get a doctor to cure them. We could only let them lay at home and watched their disease become more severe day by day. Waiting until two palanquin porters carried them across the trenches and braved the fierce battle to hurry to the hospital, they were already dying.

Just as the battle stopped, my third brother and I also got diphtheria. Before our illness got better, my father got sick and died.

My father liked me very much. He regularly took me out alone to have fun. When he was sick, he heard that my sickness got much better. He wanted to see me, so he ordered people to accompany me to his room.

I walked to the bed and knelt on the footstool. I watched his suffering face and called, "Dad."

"You are better?" He stretched out his hand and stroked my head. "You behave. Don't desperately call, 'Mrs. Luo! Mrs. Luo!' You have to come see me often!" Mrs. Luo was the maid who took care of us while we were sick.

My father smiled slightly.

"Ok, you go back to rest," after a while, my father instructed me.

On the third day, my father died. The first time he lost consciousness, we gathered around the bed and called for him. He unexpectedly awoke again. We thought he wouldn't die.

But before a quarter of an hour, he started gasping for air on his bed again. We watched him die second by second.

Afterwards, my surroundings immediately changed. It was like an earth-shattering change had just occurred.

The whole room was filled with the sound of crying.

My third brother and I sat in the room at night and watched the dim light from the clear oil lamp shedding its tears. My eldest brother suddenly came in on the bedside and said crying, "My third brother and fourth brother, we..... don't have..... a father..... anymore....."

We three brothers bitterly cried together.

Ever since my father took in our stepmother, we were staying in the left wing. Afterwards, my grandfather ordered that the office next to our room that my mother's coffin was in was to be renovated to become my eldest brother's new room for his wedding. My eldest brother and his wife lived next to us.

At this time, my brother's wife heard us crying next door, so she came over to console my eldest brother. The couple buried their heads and slowly walked out.

After my father was buried, my soul became emptier. I often loitered on the street. I always felt that my father was in front of me, as if I was still walking with my father because he ordinarily didn't like riding the palanquin. He often took me to walk leisurely at a slow pace on the streets.

But when I walked onto the crowded streets and struggled for my way through the pedestrians coming and going, I understood that I was alone.

Since then, I lost my father, a person that people can only have one of in their lives.

Not long after my father died, Chengdu had another even more fierce street fight. The conclusion was that the Guizhou troops were kicked out by the Sichuan troops. Many buildings in the city were burned and destroyed. Naturally, we were scared, but we didn't have a great loss.

Of course, we had rice to eat. We were just lacking vegetables and meats.

In the horse stable, the palanquin porters were drinking wine and chewing on dried pancakes (large flat bread) to fill up the hunger in their stomach. They could not buy rice to cook.

Gunshot sounds, flames, bleeding, killing, as well as scenes of all sorts of cruelty. Moreover, we occasionally approached the brink of death.....

It was not long before the street fighting stopped. However, the situation of the warlords' fragmentation continued on. Even to this day, it has not yet completely ended.

My third brother had already entered secondary school, but when my father died, my hope for entering secondary school was cut off. My grandfather had never supported sending the younger generation to school. Now, I had no one to speak on my behalf.

So, I started to study English with cousin Xiang. Every night, he would come to our house to teach us. He didn't want payment. It continued like this for three years. He also helped me learn a little bit of other things. After my grandfather died, my third brother and I went to a school specialized in foreign languages. I didn't have time to study with cousin Xiang anymore. He got married afterwards and left Chengdu. He went to Leshan to teach.

Cousin Xiang (His original name was Pu Ji Yun) was a sincere and smart youth. At that time, an educated young person like him in our family was hard to come by. However, the family held onto him, making him let out desperate moans to life's burdens to this day and wasting his promising youth for no reason.

However, whenever I thought of him, I was full of appreciation. The earliest development of my intellect was due to the help of two people, one of whom was him. The other was my eldest brother. He

bought many papers and books. It made me greedy to finish reading them all. Also, my third brother and I left Chengdu and went to Shanghai, and then I went to France alone to study, which could not have been done without his help. Although he and I had a dispute over this matter of going to France, he yielded to my wish in the end.

I hid my appreciation for these two people forever in my heart. I was a silly and antisocial child. If it were not for their help, perhaps I would still be a silly and antisocial child today.

My father's death had made me understand more things. It was like my eyes suddenly opened. I could see more clearly the face of this prosperous family.

This wealthy family had changed into a dictatorship. Under this peaceful and affectionate appearance, I saw hateful conflict and struggle. At the same time, in the spirit of my youth that yearned for freedom, "oppression" was like a heavy rock pressing down on me.

My body was tied too tightly, unable to budge. I also could not throw off the high pressure on my shoulders. I used all of my time to study. The books also nibbled away at my health.

I became skinnier day by day. Within the year after my father's death, I fell ill every ten days or so. I had to take pills nonstop during the winter.

During the autumn of the second year, I entered an English cram school offered by a youth club. My grandfather knew about this, but he didn't interfere because he heard that studying English can get you a job at the post office. He also knew that the salary at the post office was fairly high. The salary was cash, and it increased year after year. The position was stable and wouldn't become unemployed during a coup d'état or personal change. One of my uncles was a senior executive in the post office at the time. Friends and relatives all envied his "good position."

I became sick three times in the month I was in the youth club. When my grandfather found out, he wanted me to stay home and recuperate. However, he agreed to invite cousin Xiang to our house to



teach me English formally, and he ordered to give monthly payments to cousin Xiang. Actually, the so-called payments were very little. If not one yuan, then two yuan.

Ever since my father's death, my grandfather's attitude towards me slowly changed. He started to care for me and love me. Afterwards, he heard that milk was very nutritious for growth, so he ordered for me some milk. He also frequently called me to his room, and intimately discussed with me how to conduct oneself in society. Even in the month when he went mad before his death, he often asked people to find me. I stood before his bed and looked at him. His dark and skinny old face expressed a smile, but his eyes had tears.

Before, there was no emotion between us grandfather and grandchild. I had never loved my grandfather. I was only afraid of him. Sometimes, I even regarded him as a dictator, representing oppression. I indeed resented him.

However, I didn't know what happened in his last half year, but his attitude changed completely. I started to have feelings for him.

However, the time was so short! On the last day of that year (on the lunar calendar), I lost him.

Other families were full of joy during the New Year. The sounds of firecrackers came from every door and every house. However, in the middle of everyone's gaiety, our family crawled up in the soul and cried sorrowfully for our dead grandfather.

This sorrow was half fake because about more than a week before my grandfather's death, my uncles held a meeting to split up his assets in his room. Also, afterwards, they were still quarreling in front of his soul.

Pity that my grandfather wasn't conscious anymore, otherwise he would be disillusioned with the dream of having "five generations under one roof." I think his madness in his illness was not at all to be without reason.

My grandfather was a very capable man. Before my great-grandfather died, he was a government official for many years, but he quit afterwards. He bought a lot of land, built a beautiful mansion, collected antique calligraphy and paintings. He married twice. He married two concubines and gave birth to two sons and one daughter, and he saw his great grandson (My eldest brother's son). In the end, he made his children into enemies that were incompatible with each other, and he planted the roots of a long struggle in the family. He himself still couldn't escape dying in madness alone. There was no one who truly loved him. He didn't have anyone who truly understood him.

As soon as my grandfather died, the family became darker. The new dictator's oppressive representation replaced my grandfather. They continued to use the old Confucian code of ethics to unite the people under "Brothers on the surface, but enemies in secrecy." They attempted to maintain the feudal lifestyle in the 20th century. In the end, it produced more struggle and internal strife, producing more tragedies. The crack increased day by day, until the last day when it totally collapsed.

My grandfather disappeared like the last tradition defender of the old family system. Regarding his death, I had no regrets. Although I grieved losing someone who loved me, I rejoiced in obtaining freedom at the same time. From this day forth, no one in this family could control my actions anymore.

Not half a year after my grandfather's death, during the summer of 1920, my third brother and I entered a foreign language school. From cram school to preparatory courses and undergraduate courses, we studied there for two years and a half. At school, because I couldn't hand over a high school diploma, I became a student auditing a class. I was deprived of my privilege of earning a diploma. This matter helped me move my stepmother and eldest brother. It made them agree to let me abandon my studies and go with my third brother to Shanghai.

During spring of the 12th year of the republic (1923), after saving our lives during the fierce battle, my third brother and I left Chengdu. My eldest brother took us out to a wooden boat. His tears flowed

when he left us. At that time, my sorrow was very great. But thinking of my life with my family in these recent years, I wasn't reluctant to leave my old family. Leaving my old family was merely like casting off a terrifying shadow. But there were some people who I loved, moaning and gauntly waiting there to be killed. Therefore, I could not not feel pain. In the last ten years, I had used my tears to bury many corpses. Those were all unnecessary sacrifices. They were all killed by the old Confucian code of ethics and two to three people's momentary will.

An ideal waved at me from the front. Before my eyes was a veil of light. I mustered up great courage to leave the Chengdu that I had been living in for the past 17 years.

At that time, I had already received the baptism of the new culture, participated in social campaigns, and launched new publications. Moreover, in the publications, I wrote the two short lines below to be my life's objective:

Struggling is life,

Life only moves forward.

## References

Ba Jin. (1994). *J. Zhongguo Hua qiao chu ban she.*

Bernstein, T. P. & Li, H. Y. (2010). *China learns from the Soviet Union, 1949-present.* Lexington Books.

Britannica, T. Editors of Encyclopaedia (2020, November 21). *Ba Jin.* *Encyclopedia Britannica.*

<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Ba-Jin>

Laozi. (n.d.). *Dao De Jing: A Minimalist Translation.* Project Gutenberg.

Rapp, J. A. (2012). *Daoism and anarchism : Critiques of state autonomy in ancient and modern china.*

ProQuest Ebook Central <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com>

Rapp, J. A. & Youd, D. M. (2015) Ba Jin as Anarchist Critic of Marxism, *Contemporary Chinese*

*Thought*, 46:2, 3-21, DOI: [10.1080/10971467.2015.1003017](https://doi.org/10.1080/10971467.2015.1003017)

Wright, D. C. (2001). *The History of China.* Greenwood Publishing Group.

Shen, Z. H. & Xia, Y. F. (2011) The Great Leap Forward, the People's Commune and the Sino-Soviet

Split, *Journal of Contemporary China*, 20:72, 861-880, DOI: [10.1080/10670564.2011.604505](https://doi.org/10.1080/10670564.2011.604505)

## **Acknowledgements**

I would like to thank Dr. Feng-Hsi Liu for her guidance and mentorship on this project and for supporting me on my journey. I also want to thank Dr. Maggie Camp for teaching the capstone class. I want to thank the Department of East Asian Studies for this incredibly wonderful opportunity.