

- (8) tā bēi (gōngsī) chēzhí LE
3sg BEI (company) fire PFV/CRS

S/He was fired (by his/her company).

- (9) nēi — zhī niǎo bēi wǒ — de
that — CL bird BEI I — GEN

érzi fàng — zǒu LE
son release — away PFV/CRS

That bird was let go by my son.

- (10) wǒ — de biāo bēi tōu — diao le
I — GEN watch BEI steal — away CRS

My watch has been stolen.

- (11) nǐ wéishénme bēi pǔ le
you why BEI arrest CRS

Why have you been arrested?

- (12) lǐngzi bēi tā sī — pò LE
collar BEI 3sg tear — broken PFV/CRS

The collar was torn by him/her.

- (13) qióng rén cháng bēi dìzhǔ yā - pò
poor person often BEI landlord oppress

The poor are often oppressed by the landlords.

- (14) hái'zi bēi fùqīn mà de bu zhīdào zěnmē
child BEI father scold CSC not know how

bàn LE
do PFV/CRS

The child was scolded by the father to such an extent that s/he didn't know what to do.

- (15) tā chángcháng bēi tā tàitai dǎ
3sg often BEI 3sg wife beat

He is often beaten by his wife.

- (16) tā yuànyì bēi rén xiào
3sg willing BEI person laugh

S/He is willing to be laughed at by people.

Once it is recognized that the major use of the *bèi* construction is to signal adversity, a number of interesting facts can be explained.

First of all, it has often been noted that the message carried by passive sentences with verbs of perception or cognition is unfortunate or pejorative, whereas the meanings of their verbs are neutral. Consider such verbs of perception or cognition as *kānjiàn* 'see', *fāxiàn* 'discover', and *tīng-dào* 'hear-arrive = able to hear'. They do not convey pejorative meaning by themselves or in nonpassive sentences, such as these:

- (17) wǒ kànjian nǐ le
I see you CRS

I saw you.

- (18) Dǎ-ěr-wén fāxiàn — le jìnhuà — lùn
Darwin discover — PFV evolution — theory

Darwin developed the theory of evolution.

- (19) wǒ tīng — dào — le yǔzhòu de wéiyǔ
I hear — arrive — PFV universe GEN murmur

I heard the murmur of the universe.

The *bèi* constructions containing such verbs, however, have implications of adversity. Thus, (20) implies that Zhangsan shouldn't have been seen or didn't want to be seen, (21) implies that 'that matter' has a pejorative aspect to it, or