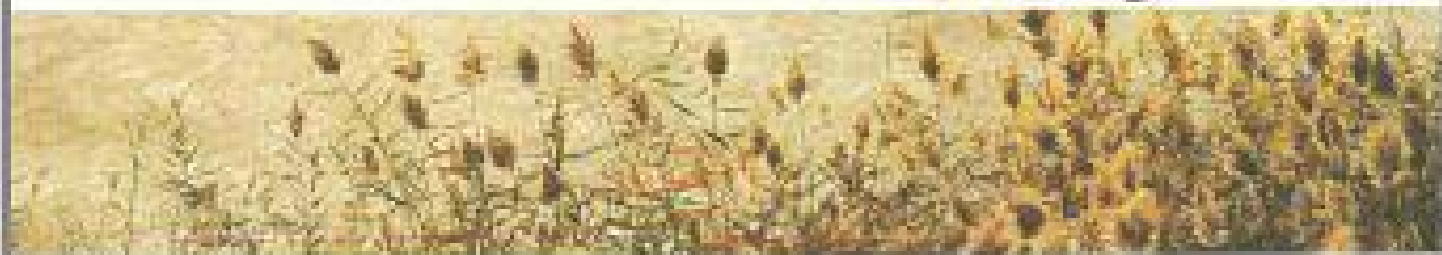




English-Chinese / 中英对照

●●● 受戒
The Love Story
of a Young Monk



○ 汪曾祺 著
Wang Zengqi

外语教学与研究出版社
FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING AND RESEARCH PRESS

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封面



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Publisher's Note

"Once upon a time..." , such is the beginning of a story that may have accompanied many people through their childhood no matter what country they live in and what language they speak. When we grow up, we remain keen on one kind of stories or another. This is because stories always keep us at a fascinating distance: things that take place around us may drive home to us a timeless truth, while remote or illusory stories may as well be relevant to reality or reflect the problems of today.

However, if a story is linked with the name of a country, what can the listener expect from it?

The China Stories series is dedicated to those who are fond of stories and hope to know about China. The reason why we have chosen this way of storytelling is that while people nowadays may easily get to know a country by turning on the television, surfing the Internet or touching a cellphone screen, we believe stories make China look more vivid, serene and down-to-earth than media or political or economic commentators, historical archives or museums

do.

Our stories or "storytellers" generally fall into two categories. Firstly, small works of big names in contemporary Chinese literature, such as *The Love Story of a Young Monk* by Wang Zengqi and *Ah, xiangxue* by Tie Ning; Secondly, Chinese tales told by writers from other lands from the "other" perspectives, like *The Magic of the White Snake* by the German freelancer Helmut Matt. The differences in settings, plots and the storytellers' personalities have added to the charisma of our stories. This China Stories series will maintain its openness by putting forth new stories, so as to present a rich, varied three-dimensional China to our readers. In this sense, this series is catered not only to foreign friends but also to Chinese-speaking natives so that they can observe this country from a fresh point of view.

Instead of lengthy narratives that may wear our readers down, the China Stories series is a collection of short stories and novellas that are meant for a pleasant reading experience, an experience that is made all the more delightful by our elaborately produced bilingual texts and beautiful illustrations.

Whether the storyteller or the listener comes from China or elsewhere, we believe that you can derive your own impression of China from these stories, and feel closer to it whether it was

familiar or strange to you before you lay your hands on the China Stories series. So let's read China Stories, and get a taste of China from them.

Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press

August, 2011

出版说明

“很久很久以前……”，许多人的童年或许都伴随着这样开头的故事，无论她或他身处哪个国家，说着何种语言。当我们长大，依然热衷于各种故事。因为故事总是与人们保持一种远近适宜的奇妙距离：身边发生的故事有时能让人悟到恒久长远的道理，而遥远的甚至虚幻的故事又能使人联想到现实的处境，回应当下的问题。

而当故事与一个国家的名称联系在一起的时候，又会给听者一种怎样的期待？

《中国故事》系列丛书献给那些喜欢听故事并且希望了解中国的人们。之所以选择这种方式而不是别的——毕竟，现在想了解一个国家，打开电视，浏览互联网，或者触摸一下手机屏幕就可以做到——因为我们相信，比起新闻媒体、政经评论或者历史文献、博物馆陈列中的中国，也许故事所反映的那个中国来得更真切，更沉静，也更实在。

故事的来源，或者说“讲故事的人”大体有两类。一方面我们收集了现当代一些中国文学大家的小作品，例如汪曾祺的《受戒》，铁凝的《哦，香雪》；另一方面，来自中国以外的作者们基于“他者”的视角重述中国的传奇，例如德国赫尔穆特·马特先生的《白蛇传奇》。故事的背景和事件彼此不同，更因叙述者的个性特征而平添魅力，本系列还将不断推新以保持一种开放性。因此呈现给各位的这一套丛书应

该是丰富和立体的，希望借此传达的中国形象也能更加真实、丰满。从这个意义上讲，丛书的目标读者应不仅仅限于海外的朋友，其实也包括以中文为母语的读者们，以便透过新鲜的角度来观察这个国家。

这里没有宏大的叙事，而是以中短篇小说的篇幅给读者绝不沉重的阅读体验。这种轻松感还将通过我们精心提供的双语文本和优美插图得到进一步的体会。

无论讲故事的人以及听故事的人是来自中国还是其他国家，我们都相信您能从故事中获得自己对于中国的印象，对这个已经熟悉或者还很陌生的国度，更多一点儿亲近——阅读中国的故事，品味故事中的中国。

外语教学与研究出版社2011年8月

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The Love Story of a Young Monk

It was already four years since Minghai had become a novice.

He had come when he was only thirteen years old.

The name of the place, Anzhaozhuang, was somewhat unusual. The word Zhao signified that the majority of villagers had the same surname, Zhao. Though it was called a village or zhuang, the houses were scattered far apart in twos and threes. From one door could be seen

the neighbouring houses, but it was a long walk to reach them because there was no road, only the winding paths between the fields. As to the word an, that was easy to understand for there was a nunnery in this village, which was originally named Boddha Nunnery. Later it was wrongly called Biqi (Water Chestnut) Nunnery, and even those living within had called it that. "Monks in the monasteries and nuns in nunneries, " so the saying goes, but that nunnery was occupied by monks. Because it was so small it was probably called a nunnery and not a monastery.

When he had lived at home, Minghai had been called Mingzi. From his early childhood, it was decided that he would become a monk. His native village was famous for its supply of monks just as other places were known for their pig-castrators, mat-weavers, coopers, cotton-fluffers, painters and prostitutes. A household with several sons always sent one to be a monk. There were also factions among the monks, and one must have certain relations with them in order to join. Many of the villagers, who had become monks, went to faraway monasteries, such as Lingyin Temple in Hangzhou, Jing'an Temple in Shanghai, Jinshan Temple in Zhenjiang or Tianning Monastery in Yangzhou. But generally, they lived in local temples. Mingzi's family had only a few mu of land, and his three elder brothers could easily cope with the work. As the fourth son, he had no choice but to go to a temple and become a monk.

One day, when he was seven years old, his uncle, who was a monk, visited his home. After consulting with him, Mingzi's parents decided to let him become a monk. He was standing near them and thought it a very reasonable suggestion, finding no cause to object. There were many advantages in such a life! First of all, he could have his meals every day free of charge. As a rule, both the food and clothing of every monk were supplied by the temple. Secondly, he could save money. Once he had learned how to perform the Buddhist rites, he would surely obtain his due portion of the service charge. When he had saved enough money, he could resume his secular life and marry a village girl. If, however, he did not leave the temple, he could buy a few mu of land.

Still, it was not so easy to become a monk in those days. In the first place, the candidate must be good-looking, with a face like a bright full moon. Secondly, he must have a sweet musical voice. Thirdly, he must be intelligent and have a good memory. His uncle studied his face carefully, urged the boy to walk a few steps forward and back, and sing a line from a work song which the local peasants sang while driving oxen to the threshing ground. Finally, his uncle said, "Mingzi will surely be a good monk. I'm willing to vouch for him!" To do that, his parents had to spend money sending the boy to school, there being no illiterate monks. So, Mingzi was enrolled in a private school, studied textbooks and practised

calligraphy. The villagers praised him highly for his neat handwriting.

明海出家已经四年了。

他是十三岁来的。

这个地方的地名有点怪，叫庵赵庄。赵，是因为庄上大都姓赵。叫做庄，可是人家住得很分散，这里两三家，那里两三家。一出门，远远可以看到，走起来得走一会，因为没有大路，都是弯弯曲曲的田埂。庵，是因为有一个庵。庵叫菩提庵，可是大家叫讹了，叫成荸荠庵。连庵里的和尚也这样叫。“宝刹何处？”——“荸荠庵。”庵本来是住尼姑的。“和尚庙”，“尼姑庵”嘛。可是荸荠庵住的是和尚。也许因为荸荠庵不大，大者为庙，小者为庵。

明海在家叫小明子。他是从小就确定要出家的。他的家乡不叫“出家”，叫“当和尚”。他的家乡出和尚。就像有的地方出劊猪的，有的地方出织席子的，有的地方出箍桶的，有的地方出弹棉花的，有的地方出画匠，有的地方出婊子，他的家乡出和尚。人家弟兄多，就派一个出去当和尚。当和尚也要通过关系，也有帮。这地方的和尚有的走得很远。有到杭州灵隐寺的、上海静安寺的、镇江金山寺的、扬州天宁寺的。一般的就在本县的寺庙。明海家田少，老大、老二、老三，就足够种的了。他是老四。他七岁那年，他当和尚的舅舅回家，他爹、他娘就和舅舅商议，决定叫他当和尚。他当时在旁边，觉得这实在是在情在理，没有理由反对。当和尚有很多好处。一是可以吃现成饭。哪个庙里都是管饭的。二是可以攒钱。只要学会了放瑜伽焰口，拜梁皇忏，可以按例分到辛苦钱。积攒起来，将来还俗娶亲也可以；不想还俗，买几亩田也可以。当和尚也不容易，一要面如朗月，二要声如钟磬，三要聪明记性好。他舅舅给他相了相面，叫他前走几步，后走几步，又叫他喊了一声

赶牛打场的号子：“格当嘚——”，说是“明子准能当个好和尚，我包了！”要当和尚，得下点本——念几年书。哪有不认字的和尚呢！于是明子就开蒙入学，读了《三字经》、《百家姓》、《四言杂字》、《幼学琼林》、上《论》、下《论》、上《孟》、下《孟》，每天还写一张仿。村里都夸他字写得好，很黑。

On an appointed day several years later, his uncle came back, bringing an extra Buddhist short jacket which he urged his elder sister to shorten for Mingzi. Wearing this jacket, a pair of ordinary purple trousers and new cloth shoes on his bare feet, Mingzi kowtowed to his parents and set out with his uncle.

While in school, Mingzi had been called Minghai. His uncle said there was no need to change that and so it became his Buddhist name.

They crossed a big lake — an immense lake! — and reached the county seat which was bustling with activity. In the main street there were an official salt shop, tax bureau, cloth store, butcher's and so on. A donkey was grinding sesame seeds in the oil workshop and the aroma filled the street. On both sides were various kinds of stalls selling cosmetics, velvet flowers, silk threads, sugar figures and other goods. In addition, there were also men selling quack remedies and snake performers. Mingzi was fascinated by these interesting sights and would have liked to take a good look at each of them. His uncle, however, urged him along,

saying, "Don't dawdle! Hurry up! Be quick!"

舅舅按照约定的日期又回了家，带了一件他自己穿的和尚领的短衫，叫明子娘改小一点，给明子穿上。明子穿了这件和尚短衫，下身还是在家穿的紫花裤子，赤脚穿了一双新布鞋，跟他爹、他娘磕了一个头，就随舅舅走了。

他上学时起了个学名，叫明海。舅舅说，不用改了。于是“明海”就从学名变成了法名。

过了一个湖。好大一个湖！穿过一个县城。县城真热闹：官盐店，税务局，肉铺里挂着成片的猪，一个驴子在磨芝麻，满街都是小磨香油的香味，布店，卖茉莉粉、梳头油的什么斋，卖绒花的，卖丝线的，打把式卖膏药的，吹糖人的，耍蛇的……他什么都想看看。舅舅一个劲地推他：“快走！快走！”

At last, they reached a river where a small boat was waiting for them by the bank. A tall, slender man about fifty years old stood in the boat, while a girl about the same age as Mingzi squatted in the stern. She was breaking open a lotus seedpod with her hands. The boat set out as soon as Mingzi and his uncle got in.

Before long, Mingzi heard someone talking to him. The speaker was none other than the girl. "Isn't it you who's going to Biqi Nunnery to be a monk?"

Mingzi nodded.

"They'll burn incense scars on your head if you want to be a monk.

Aren't you afraid?"

Not knowing how to answer, Mingzi shook his head vaguely.

"What's your name?"

"Minghai."

"And what do they call you at home?"

"Mingzi."

"Mingzi! I'm called Xiaoyingzi! We'll soon be neighbours. I live next door to your temple. — Take it!" She threw him the remaining half of the lotus seedpod. Mingzi began to break it open and eat the seeds one by one.

到了一个河边，有一只船在等着他们。船上有一个五十来岁的瘦长瘦长的大伯，船头蹲着一个跟明子差不多大的女孩子，在剥一个莲蓬吃。明子和舅舅坐到舱里，船就开了。

明子听见有人跟他说话，是那个女孩子。“是你要到荸荠庵当和尚吗？”

明子点点头。

“当和尚要烧戒疤噢”

明子不知道怎么回答，就含含糊糊地摇了摇头。

“你叫什么？”

“明海。”

“在家的时候？”

“叫明子。”

“明子！我叫小英子！我们是邻居。我家挨着荸荠庵。——给你！”小英子把吃剩的半个莲蓬扔给明海，小明子就剥开莲蓬壳，一颗一颗吃起来。

The old man rhythmically rowed the boat. It was very quiet with only the sound of the oars splashing in the water.

Biqi Nunnery was situated on a picturesque plateau, the highest in the area. Obviously, the man who had built it had made a wise choice. A river flowed in front of the temple. Before the entrance, a large threshing ground was surrounded on three sides with towering willow trees. Inside the main door was a hallway. A statue of Buddha Maitreya sat facing the door and on both sides of his shrine hung a pair of couplets written by an unknown scholar:

His big belly holds the troubles unbearable to others.

His broad smile is aimed at those who are laughable.

Behind Buddha Maitreya stood the statue of Skanda. Across the hallway was a fair-sized courtyard with two ginkgo trees and at each side a row of three chambers. Across the courtyard was the main hall housing the Trakala Buddhas. Together with the shrines,

each was only about four feet high. At the eastern side of the main hall was the chief monk's chamber while at the western side a storeroom. In the eastern wall of the main hall was a rhombus door leading to a long and narrow courtyard, in which were a rockery, some flowerpots and three small side rooms.

大伯一桨一桨地划着，只听见船桨拨水的声音：

“哗——许！哗——许！”

.....

荸荠庵的地势很好，在一片高地上。这一带就数这片地势高，当初建庵的人很会选地方。门前是一条河。门外是一片很大的打谷场。三面都是高大的柳树。山门里是一个穿堂。迎门供着弥勒佛。不知是哪一位名士撰写了一副对联：

大肚能容容天下难容之事，

开颜一笑笑世间可笑之人。

弥勒佛背后，是韦驮。过穿堂，是一个不小的天井，种着两棵白果树。天井两边各有三间厢房。走过天井，便是大殿，供着三世佛。佛像连龕才四尺来高。大殿东边是方丈，西边是库房。大殿东侧，有一个小小的六角门，白门绿字，刻着一副对联：

一花一世界，

三藐三菩提。

进门有一个狭长的天井，几块假山石，几盆花，有三间小房。

Mingzi's daily life in the temple was leisurely. After getting up early in the morning, the first thing he did was to open the front door and tidy up the courtyard, which was easy to sweep clean since it was paved with square bricks. Next, he burnt some joss-sticks before the Buddhas Maitreya, Skanda and Trakala in the main hall, kowtowed to each of them, chanted "NamasAmitabha" and beat the inverted bell three times. The monks of this temple had neither morning nor evening services. Mingzi's beating of the inverted bell three times was all that was required. Having finished these tasks, he fetched water and fed the pigs. At last, when the abbot (namely, his uncle) got up, he waited on him and learned from him how to chant sutras.

Teaching a young novice to chant Buddhist sutras was just the same as teaching pupils to recite their lessons. Both the master and the pupil held a volume of Buddhist scriptures in their hands, the former chanting sentence by sentence and the latter following suit. While chanting, Mingzi's uncle beat time loudly on the table with his palm. He did this according to fixed rhythms. It was like teaching someone to sing Beijing Opera for even the special terms used were from Beijing Opera. His uncle told him time and again that, while chanting Buddhist scriptures, his tone must be in keeping with the correct rhythms and notes. In short, to be a good

monk one needed a sweet voice. He told his young nephew: When a serious flood occurred in the twentieth year of the Republic, some banks of the canal were completely destroyed. As a result, a great number of the inhabitants were drowned. In order to express their condolences for the unlucky victims, people held a grand Buddhist service. All the abbots of the large temples in the county attended. Thirteen monks were invited to preside over the service, while there were as many as over a hundred ordinary monks in attendance. A question then arose: Among the abbots, who was, after all, most qualified to sit in the seat of honour? Having considered this for a long while, Shiqiao, the abbot of Shanyin Temple, was chosen. Sitting there he had appeared just like the Bodhisattva Ksitigarbha. Moreover he had a booming voice. When it came to chanting psalms and burning incense, as soon as he uttered the first words, the more than one thousand onlookers became silent.

As it was said, "Those who can endure all hardships will become, in the end, outstanding men." The uncle, therefore, advised his young nephew to practise singing even on the hottest or coldest days. In addition, he should strive to attain the skill of making his voice resound from the depths of his heart. The novices were expected to learn diligently and refrain from playing. Having been enlightened by this advice, Mingzi studied harder, repeating and learning to chant the Buddhist sutras with fixed rhythms every morning:

"As soon as the incense is burned in the burner—"

"As soon as the incense is burned in the burner—"

"The holy world will be filled with its fragrance—"

"The holy world will be filled with its fragrance—"

"And heavenly Buddhas will appear in their golden figures—"

"And heavenly Buddhas will appear in their golden figures—"

小和尚的日子清闲得很。一早起来，开山门，扫地。庵里的地铺的都是箩底方砖，好扫得很，给弥勒佛、韦驮烧一炷香，正殿的三世佛面前也烧一炷香，磕三个头，念三声“南无阿弥陀佛”，敲三声磬。这庵里的和尚不兴做什么早课、晚课，明子这三声磬就全都代替了。然后，挑水，喂猪。然后，等当家和尚，即明子的舅舅起来，教他念经。



教念经也跟教书一样，师父面前一本经，徒弟面前一本经，师父唱一句，徒弟跟着唱一句。是唱哎。舅舅一边唱，一边还用手在桌上拍板。一板一眼，拍得很响，就跟教唱戏一样。是跟教唱戏一样，完全一样哎。连用的名词都一样。舅舅说：念经，一要板眼准，二要合工尺。说：当个好和尚，得有条好嗓子。说：民国二十

年闹大水，运河倒了堤，最后在清水潭合龙，因为大水淹死的人很多，放了一台大焰口，十三大师——十三个正座和尚，各大庙的方丈都来了，下面的和尚上百。谁当这个首座？推来推去，还是石桥——善因寺的方丈！他往上一坐，就跟地藏王菩萨一样，这就不用说了；那一声“开香赞”，围看的上千人立时鸦雀无声。说：嗓子要练，夏练三伏，冬练三九，要练丹田气！说：要吃得苦中苦，方为人上人！说：和尚里也有状元、榜眼、探花！要用心，不要贪玩！舅舅这一番大法要说得明海和尚实在是五体投地，于是就一板一眼地跟着舅舅唱起来：

“炉香乍爇——”

“炉香乍爇——”

“法界蒙薰——”

“法界蒙薰——”

“诸佛现金身——”

“诸佛现金身——”

.....



When he had finished his morning lesson of chanting sutras (he had also to learn to chant a section of the Buddhist scriptures before

going to bed), the older monks of Biqi Nunnery began to get up one after another.

There were very few inhabitants in this nunnery: only six including Minghai. One of them was his uncle's teacher named Puzhao, an old monk about sixty years old. His Buddhist name was unknown, for people simply called him "Old Monk" or "Old Master". As for Minghai, he called him "Grandfather Master". This old monk, who never chanted Buddhist sutras but only sat motionless, was unsociable and eccentric. He always kept to himself in his room. Except for the Spring Festival, he ate no meat all year round.

In addition, there were three other older monks with the name "Ren": Renshan, Renhai and Rendu. Outside and inside the temple, people called them "First Master" and "Second Master", or "Master Shan" and "Master Hai". Only Rendu alone was called that name because "Master Du" was unpleasant to the ear. In fact, being still very young (only a little more than twenty years old), he did not deserve to be called "Master".

等明海学完了早经——他晚上临睡前还要学一段，叫做晚经——荸荠庵的师父们就都陆续起床了。

这庵里人口简单，一共六个人。连明海在内，五个和尚。有一个老和尚，六十几了，是舅舅的师叔，法名普照，但是知道的人很少，因为很少人叫他法名，都称之为老和尚或老师父，明海叫他师爷爷。这是个很枯寂的人，一天关在房里，就是

那“一花一世界”里，也看不见他念佛，只是那么一声不响地坐着。他是吃斋的，过年时除外。

下面就是师兄弟三个，仁字排行：仁山、仁海、仁渡。庵里庵外，有的称他们为大师父、二师父；有的称之为山师父、海师父。只有仁渡，没有叫他“渡师父”的，因为听起来不像话，大都直呼之为仁渡。他也只配如此，因为他还年轻，才二十多岁。

Renshan, who was Mingzi's uncle, managed the temple. It was very reasonable that people also called him "manager" instead of "abbot". He alone attended to the daily life of the others. In his room on a desk lay an abacus and three volumes of account books. In one was recorded the accounts for money received for the Buddhist services, in the second the rent, and in the third the debts owed to the nunnery. The monks of this temple were frequently invited to perform services by the local Buddhists and afterwards they would, of course, be paid. What else could they live on? Among the various kinds of Buddhist services, chanting sutras for the dead was the most frequent. To perform this, ten monks were required: One would take the leading seat, another would beat a drum and four others would stand at either side of a square table. If there were not enough monks, it was also permissible to have three monks on both sides as well as the leading monk and the drum beater. Since Biqi Nunnery had only four monks, when they were asked to do this service, they had to cooperate with monks from other temples. This

happened from time to time. Generally, they performed the service with only half a set of monks for it was rather troublesome to cooperate and many families could not afford the cost of a full ceremony. Therefore, some families, when one of their members died, invited only two monks, and sometimes only one, to perform this service. Many paid the fees only after they had gathered in their harvest. In such cases, their names were entered in the account books. Since the amounts given to each monk were not equal, just as with actors in a theatrical troupe, they were distributed in fixed proportions. The monk who sat in the seat of honour received the greatest proportion, because, apart from leading the other monks in chanting the Buddhist sutras, he had also to perform a solo chant. When the service came to the point where the condolences to the departed were sung, the other monks laid down their musical instruments and rested, while only the leading monk continued singing slowly with distinct rhythm. Next to him was the monk who beat the drum. Not easy work! The tempo at the beginning of the service was impossible to play well if one was unskilled. As for the rest, their rewards were the same. To prevent the monks from quarrelling at the end of each year, it was necessary to enter their parts in the account book. The temple recorded their work in detail as follows: On such and such a date, so-and-so sat in the seat of honour; so-and-so beat the drum; and so-and-so... In addition, the temple had quite a large amount of land, which was

rented out to tenants. The rents were collected at an appointed time. The nunnery also lent money. Both the tenants and debtors rarely failed to pay their rent and interest, because all were afraid of offending Buddha. The accounts alone kept Renshan busy all day long. There were also a lot of other daily accounts that needed to be entered. Hence, in order to do his work as efficiently as possible, he hung on the wall of his room a plank inscribed with this motto in red paint:

"Diligence in recording at the time will save the trouble of recollection."



仁山，即明子的舅舅，是当家的。不叫“方丈”，也不叫“住持”，却叫“当家的”，是很有道理的，因为他确确实实干的是当家的职务。他屋里摆的是一张账桌，桌子上放的是账簿和算盘。账簿共有三本。一本是经账，一本是租账，一本是债账。和尚要做法事，做法事要收钱，——要不，当和尚干什么？常做法事是放焰口。正规的焰口是十个人。一个正座，一个敲鼓的，两边一边四个。人少了，八个，一边三个，也凑合了。荸荠庵只有四个和尚，要放整焰口就得和别的庙里合伙。这样的时候也有过。通常只是放半台焰口。一个正座，一个敲鼓，另外一边一个。一来找别的庙里合伙费事；二来这一带放得起整焰口的人家也不多。有的时候，谁家死了人，就只请两个，甚至一个和尚咕噜咕噜念一通经，敲打几声法器就

算完事。很多人家的经钱不是当时就给，往往要等秋后才还。这就得记账。另外，和尚放焰口的辛苦钱不是一样的。就像唱戏一样，有份子。正座第一份。因为他要领唱，而且还要独唱。当中有一大段“叹骷髅”，别的和尚都放下法器休息，只有首座一个人有板有眼地曼声吟唱。第二份是敲鼓的。你以为这容易呀？哼，单是一开头的“发擂”，手上没功夫就敲不出迟疾顿挫！其余的，就一样了。这也得记上：某月某日，谁家焰口半台，谁正座，谁敲鼓.....省得到年底结账时赌咒骂娘。.....这庵里有几十亩庙产，租给人种，到时候要收租。庵里还放债。租、债一向倒很少亏欠，因为租佃借钱的人怕菩萨不高兴。这三本账就够仁山忙的了。另外，香烛、灯火、油盐“福食”，这也得随时记记账呀。除了账簿之外，山师父的方丈的墙上还挂着一块水牌，上漆四个红字：“勤笔免思”。

Renshan taught others that, to be a good monk, one should strive to acquire three qualities—none of which he himself possessed. First of all, he was very ugly and could be best described by these words: yellow and fat. His voice not like a bell either, but like a grunting sow. As to his mind, was he clever? Certainly not, otherwise, why did he always lose when gambling? He never wore his Buddhist outer garment in the temple, not even his dark grey Buddhist robe. Normally he dressed in only a short Buddhist jacket with his yellow belly exposed. No matter whether his shoes were old or new, he always shuffled them along instead of putting them on properly. He paid no attention to his appearance, going around the temple making a nasal noise like a pig.

The second monk, Renhai, had a wife. Every summer she came and

lived in the temple for a few months, because it was very cool inside. Of the six inhabitants in the temple, one of them was none other than Renhai's wife. Both Renshan and Rendu called her "sister-in-law", while Minghai called her "mistress". This couple were both finicky over neatness and cleanliness, busying themselves washing and sweeping all day long. In the evening, they enjoyed the coolness of the courtyard. In the daytime, they remained in their room and never stepped outside of it.

仁山所说当个好和尚的三个条件，他自己其实一条也不具备。他的相貌只要用两个字就说清楚了：黄，胖。声音也不像钟磬，倒像母猪。聪明么？难说，打牌老输。他在庵里从不穿袈裟，连海青直裰也免了。经常是披着件短僧衣，袒露着一个黄色的肚子。下面是光脚趿拉着一双僧鞋，——新鞋他也是趿拉着。他一天就是这样不衫不履地这里走走，那里走走，发出母猪一样的声音：“唔——唔——”。

二师父仁海。他是有老婆的。他老婆每年夏秋之间来住几个月，因为庵里凉快。庵里有六个人，其中之一，就是这位和尚的家眷。仁山、仁渡叫她嫂子，明海叫她师娘。这两口子都很爱干净，整天地洗涮。傍晚的时候，坐在天井里乘凉。白天，闷在屋里不出来。

Rendu, the third monk, was clever and skilful.

Whenever Renshan failed to work out the accounts on his abacus he, after rolling his eyes for a moment, calculated them correctly. In gambling, he was sure to win on most occasions, because as soon as some playing cards were shown, he could guess what the others held

in their hands. While playing, there were always some onlookers standing behind his back watching whether or not he cheated. Therefore, when people invited him to play, they would joke, "I'd like to give you some money!" He was not only good at chanting scriptures and performing rites (in fact, few monks of the smaller temples were able to do this as well as he), but he had also mastered the unusual art of tossing the cymbals. For instance, every summer a large-scale service was performed in the open air. The conventional instruments were not used, only a number of large cymbals clashing rapidly. Wearing embroidered outer garments, many monks would toss the cymbals (some of which weighed more than five kilograms) into the air, making them spin while flying skywards, then catching them before they touched the ground. Some would catch them with a variety of gestures known as "the rhinoceros looks up at the moon" or "the man bears a sword at his back".



三师父是个很聪明精干的人。有时一笔账大师兄扒了半天算盘也算不清，他眼珠子转两转，早算得一清二楚。他打牌赢的时候多，二三十张牌落地，上下家手里有些什么牌，他就差不多都知道了。他打牌时，总有人爱在他后面看歪头胡。谁家约他打牌，就说：“想送两个钱给你。”他不但经忏俱通（小庙的和尚能够拜忏的不

多)，而且身怀绝技，会“飞铙”。七月间有些地方做盂兰会，在旷地上放大焰口，几十个和尚，穿绣花袈裟，飞铙。飞铙就是把十多斤重的大铙拨飞起来。到了一定的时候，全部法器皆停，只几十副大铙紧张急促地敲起来。忽然起手，大铙向半空中飞去，一面飞，一面旋转。然后，又落下来，接住。接住不是平平常常地接住，有各种架势，“犀牛望月”、“苏秦背剑”……

This was a display of dexterity, and it was said that Buddha Ksitigarbha was fond of watching it. Actually the most pleased were the women and kids. Therefore, such a service was a good opportunity for the young and handsome monks to show themselves off. Just as after the performance of a well-known theatrical troupe, after a large service ended, some young girls or even married women would disappear — having eloped with the monks.

In addition, Rendu was adept in performing a "flowery" service. It often happened that, in order to satisfy the curiosity of their relatives, some families would ask the monks to perform this kind of Buddhist service if the occasion was not a very sorrowful one, such as celebrating the birth anniversary of a dead relative. This meant that after the formal service had finished, the monks continued to sing ballads, play fiddles, blow flutes and beat drums. The listeners asked the monks to sing their favourite songs. On such occasions, Rendu could sing alone for a whole night in high spirits. Before, he had always gone out, but for the past two years he had stuck more to the temple. He was rumoured to have had many

mistresses. Outwardly he behaved well, always wearing a decorous expression when he encountered young girls or married women, not joking or singing. One day, resting in cool shade on the threshing ground, he was gathered around, and was insisted on a performance. Not to spoil their mood, he said, "OK, I'll sing one for you. It isn't the local one, which you know quite well, but one from Anhui."

Sister thresh barley with a youngster,
Whispering intimate affairs whilst beat.

Though the conversation is private,
It goes on in the next thresh of wheat.

When it was over, the fellows were not thoroughly amused. Then he continued.

In this temple there were no taboos, and no one mentioned anything about them. Renshan smoked a water-pipe, which he took with him when going to perform Buddhist services.

这哪是念经，这是耍杂技。也许是地藏王菩萨爱看这个，但真正因此快乐起来的是人，尤其是妇女和孩子。这是年轻漂亮的和尚出风头的机会。一场大焰口过后，也像一个好戏班子过后一样，会有一个两个大姑娘、小媳妇失踪——跟和尚跑了。他还会放“花焰口”。有的人家，亲戚中多风流子弟，在不是很哀伤的佛事——如做

冥寿时，就会提出放花焰口。所谓“花焰口”就是在正焰口之后，叫和尚唱小调，拉丝弦，吹管笛，敲鼓板，而且可以点唱。仁渡一个人可以唱一夜不重头。仁渡前几年一直在外面，近二年才常住在庵里。据说他有相好的，而且不止一个。他平常可是很规矩，看到姑娘媳妇总是老老实实的，连一句玩笑话都不说，一句小调山歌都不唱。有一回，在打谷场上乘凉的时候，一伙人把他围起来，非叫他唱两个不可。他却情不过，说：“好，唱一个。不唱家乡的。家乡的你们都熟。唱个安徽的。”

姐和小郎打大麦，

一转子讲得听不得。

听不得就听不得，

打完了大麦打小麦。

唱完了，大家还嫌不够，他就又唱了一个：

姐儿生得飘飘的，

两个奶子翘翘的。

有心上去摸一把，

心里有点跳跳的。

.....

这个庵里无所谓清规，连这两个字也没人提起。

仁山吃水烟，连出门做法事也带着他的水烟袋。

The monks loved gambling. The square table in the main hall, which was used for meals, was just right for this, and would be moved to the entrance of the hall. As soon as it was in place, Renshan would take out the chips from his room and throw them on the table. They played cards more often than mahjong. The participants, apart from the three older monks, were a duck-feather collector and a hare hunter, who was also a hen thief. Nevertheless they were all decent souls. The former went from village to village with a shoulder pole and bamboo baskets crying intermittently in a hoarse voice, "Any duck feathers for sale?"

The latter had a secret instrument, a dragonfly made of copper. At the sight of a hen, he would launch the dragonfly. When the hen came over and pecked at it, its spring would unwind and choke the hen rendering it incapable of cackling for help. Then the thief would promptly rush forward and catch it.

他们经常打牌。这是个打牌的好地方。把大殿上吃饭的方桌往门口一搭，斜放着，就是牌桌。桌子一放好，仁山就从他的方丈里把筹码拿出来，哗啦一声倒在桌上。斗纸牌的时候多，搓麻将的时候少。牌客除了师兄弟三人，常来的是一个收鸭毛的，一个打兔子兼偷鸡的，都是正经人。收鸭毛的担一副竹筐，串乡串镇，拉长了沙哑的声音喊叫：

“鸭毛卖钱——！”

偷鸡的有一件家什——铜蜻蜓。看准了一只老母鸡，把铜蜻蜓一丢，鸡婆子上去就是一口。这一啄，铜蜻蜓的硬簧绷开，鸡嘴撑住了，叫不出来了。正在这鸡十分纳闷的时候，上去一把薅住。

Minghai had once asked him to let him have a look at his copper dragonfly, which he took to Xiaoyingzi's home, trying it out in front of the door. In a trice, Xiaoyingzi's mother ran out, complaining, "Are you crazy? How can you bring such a foolish thing here to play with?"

Immediately Xiaoyingzi ran up to him and urged, "Give it to me! Give it to me!"

She tried it out on a black hen. It really did work! The hen was choked and it stood motionless with shock.

When the sky was overcast or rainy, these two would come to the Biqi Nunnery to while away their leisure hours there. If there were no partners, the three monks dragged the old monk to gamble with them, at the end of which Renshan used to swear angrily, "Mother! I've lost again! I won't play next time!"

They never ate meat secretly, instead slaughtered pigs at the end of every year in the main hall. They did it just like ordinary households with boiled water, a wooden basin and sharp knife. While the pig was being secured, it cried lustily. The difference was

that they held a ceremony for it with the old monk chanting in a serious manner the sutra of reincarnation for the pig, which was about to go to Heaven.

The moment when Rendu thrust a sharp knife into the bound pig, a spurt of red blood would gush out.

明子曾经跟这位正经人要过铜蜻蜓看看。他拿到小英子家门前试了一试，果然！小英子的娘知道了，骂明子：

“要死了！明子！你怎么到我家来玩铜蜻蜓了！”

小英子跑过来：

“给我！给我！”

她也试了试，真灵，一个黑母鸡一下子就把嘴撑住，傻了眼了！

下雨阴天，这二位就光临荸荠庵，消磨一天。

有时没有外客，就把老师叔也拉出来，打牌的结局，大都是当家和尚气得鼓鼓的：“×妈妈的！又输了！下回不来了！”

他们吃肉不瞒人。年下也杀猪。杀猪就在大殿上。一切都和在家人一样，开水、木桶、尖刀。捆猪的时候，猪也是没命地叫。跟在家人不同的，是多一道仪式，要给即将升天的猪念一道“往生咒”，并且总是老师叔念，神情很庄重：

.....一切胎生、卵生、息生，来从虚空来，还归虚空去。往生再世，皆当欢喜。南无阿弥陀佛！

三师父仁渡一刀子下去，鲜红的猪血就带着很多沫子喷出来。

.....

Mingzi frequently went to Xiaoyingzi's home, which was surrounded on three sides by water, except on the western side, where there was a small path to Biqi Nunnery. They were the only inhabitants in this spot. Around the isolated courtyard were planted six large mulberry trees, which blossomed and bore mulberries every summer; three bore white berries, the other three purple ones. Near the house was a vegetable garden growing melons, beans and other vegetables all year round. The lower part of the courtyard's wall was built with bricks while the upper part was of compacted earth. The main door was painted with tung oil, on which was pasted a couplet for the Spring Festival. Inside was a large courtyard. On one side were a cowshed and a rice-husking shed and on the other a pigsty, a chicken coop and an enclosure for ducks. A stone mill stood in the open air. The house was to the north, its walls also made of bricks lower down and compacted earth higher up. The roof was covered with tiles and straw. Obviously, the building had been recently repaired for the timbers were still white. In the centre of the house was a main hall where the gold paint on the portrait of the House God had not yet turned black. On both sides of the hall were bedrooms, which had windows fitted with square transparent glass, rarely used in the countryside. Under the eaves

of the house was a pomegranate tree on one side and a cape jasmine on the other, both of which had grown as high as the eaves. Every summer, when red and white flowers blossomed on these trees, they were very beautiful. The fragrance of the cape jasmine flowers was strong and could be detected even in Biqi Nunnery if the wind blew in that direction.



明子老往小英子家里跑。小英子的家像一个小岛，三面都是河，西面有一条小路通到荸荠庵。独门独户，岛上只有这一家。岛上有六棵大桑树，夏天都结大桑葚，三棵结白的，三棵结紫的；一个菜园子，瓜豆蔬菜，四时不缺。院墙下半截是砖砌的，上半截是泥夯的。大门是桐油油过的，贴着一副万年红的春联：

向阳门第春常在，

积善人家庆有余。

门里是一个很宽的院子。院子里一边是牛屋、碓棚；一边是猪圈、鸡窠，还有个关鸭子的栅栏。露天地放着一具石磨。正北面是住房，也是砖基土筑，上面盖的一半是瓦，一半是草。房子翻修了才三年，木料还露着白茬。正中是堂屋，家神菩萨的画像上贴的金还没有发黑。两边是卧房。隔扇窗上各嵌了一块一尺见方的玻璃，明亮亮的——这在乡下是不多见的。房檐下一边种着一棵石榴树，一边种着一棵栀子花，都齐房檐高了。夏天开了花，一红一白，好看得很。栀子花香得冲鼻子，顺风

的时候，在荸荠庵都闻得见。

The family was small: Uncle Zhao, Aunt Zhao and their two daughters — Dayingzi and Xiaoyingzi. They had no sons. In recent years, since there had been no disease, locusts, drought or floods, life had been very prosperous. Their produce was enough to supply them with all sorts of foodstuffs. They also rented ten mu of land from the temple. In one mu of their own fields, they had planted water chestnuts. This was probably Xiaoyingzi's idea, because she was very fond of them. Another mu was planted with arrowheads. In addition, they had many chickens and ducks. The income from the eggs and duck feathers alone bought a year's supply of salt and cooking oil.

Uncle Zhao was a jack of all trades, not only skilled in farm work, but also in repairing boats, building walls, baking bricks, cooping tubs, splitting bamboo and weaving jute rope. As strong as an elm tree, he never coughed or suffered from a backache. He was kind to everybody and remained silent all day long. Aunt Zhao also enjoyed good health. Although fifty years old, she still had keen eyesight. She was always neatly dressed with her hair combed. She too busied herself from early morning till late night, cooking food for the pigs, feeding the hens and ducks, salting vegetables(the dried radishes she salted tasted delicious), milling beancurd, weaving reed baskets and so on. In short, they were a good match, both

being very industrious.

Aunt Zhao often cut paper flower-designs for the villagers. It was a tradition that, when a wedding ceremony was held, the parents would stick red paper flower-designs on their daughter's dowry. In order to bring good luck and to make the dowry appear more magnificent, the paper-cuts were usually made with charming characters or designs, such as "a phoenix flies toward the sun", "live to a ripe old age in conjugal bliss", "may your descendants flourish for ten thousand generations" or "boundless happiness and longevity". Aunt Zhao's paper-cuts were very popular. Even villagers from far away invited her to make them for them.

"Aunt Zhao, we've fixed our wedding ceremony for the sixteenth of this month. When will you come to help us?"

"I'll come early in the morning the day before."

"You must come on time!"

"Certainly! Of course!"

The two daughters resembled their mother very much, especially in their eyes, with the black and white sharply contrasted. They looked like clear water when still and shooting stars when moving. The two sisters were always immaculately dressed. According to local custom, at fifteen or sixteen years of age, every girl should

comb her hair into a bun. How smoothly they styled theirs, with the red wool, black hair and white hairpins! Whenever Aunt Zhao took her two daughters to a fair, everyone turned to look at them.

这家人口不多。他家当然是姓赵。一共四口人：赵大伯、赵大妈，两个女儿——大英子、小英子。老两口没有儿子。因为这些年人不得病，牛不生灾，也没有大旱大水闹蝗虫，日子过得很兴旺。他们家自己有田，本来够吃的了，又租种了庵上的十亩田。自己的田里，一亩种了荸荠——这一半是小英子的主意，她爱吃荸荠，一亩种了茨菇。家里喂了一大群鸡鸭，单是鸡蛋鸭毛就够一年的油盐了。赵大伯是个能干人。他是一个“全把式”，不但田里场上样样精通，还会罩鱼、洗磨、凿砬、修水车、修船、砌墙、烧砖、箍桶、劈篾、绞麻绳。他不咳嗽，不腰疼，结结实实，像一棵榆树。人很和气，一天不声不响。赵大伯是一棵摇钱树，赵大娘就是个聚宝盆。大娘精神得出奇。五十岁了，两个眼睛还是清亮亮的。不论什么时候，头都是梳得滑滴滴的，身上衣服都是格挣挣的。像老头子一样，她一天不闲着。煮猪食，喂猪，腌咸菜——她腌的咸萝卜干非常好吃，舂粉子，磨小豆腐，编蓑衣，织芦筐。她还会剪花样子。这里嫁闺女，陪嫁妆，瓷坛子、锡罐子，都要用梅红纸剪出吉祥花样，贴在上面，讨个吉利，也才好看：“丹凤朝阳”呀、“白头到老”呀、“子孙万代”呀、“福寿绵长”呀。二三十里的人家都来请她：



“大娘，好日子是十六，你哪天去呀？”——“十五，我一大清早就来！”

“一定呀！”——“一定！一定！”

两个女儿，长得跟她娘像一个模子里脱出来的。眼睛长得尤其像，白眼珠鸭蛋青，黑眼珠棋子黑，定神时如清水，闪动时像星星。浑身上下，头是头，脚是脚。头发滑滴滴的，衣服格挣挣的。——这里的风俗，十五六岁的姑娘就都梳上头了。这两个丫头，这一头的好头发！通红的发根，雪白的簪子！娘女三个去赶集，一集的人都朝她们望。

Though the two sisters looked alike, their personalities were entirely different. The elder sister was very gentle and quiet. Like her father, she rarely spoke. In contrast, the younger one had a glibber tongue than even her mother. She talked eloquently for long periods until her elder sister complained, "You just twitter from morning till night..."

"Like a magpie!"

"You admit it yourself! It really upsets me!"

"Are you feeling restless?"

"Yes, I am!"

"There are other reasons besides me!"

There was a deep meaning in her words. Dayingzi already had a fiancée, at whom she had once stolen a glance. He was an honest, good-looking young man, whose family was well-off. She was quite

satisfied with the match, which had been arranged by the parents of both sides. The wedding date, however, was still undecided.

Dayingzi had seldom gone out in the past two years, always busying herself preparing her dowry. She could both cut and sew dresses by herself, but her embroidered floral patterns were still inferior to her mother's. Having seen a bride in the town some days ago, she complained that the way her mother made her designs was too old-fashioned. The townspeople had adopted new ways, and their embroidery was just like real flowers and plants. This put her mother on the spot. Coming to her rescue, the "magpie" shouted, "I can recommend someone to you."

姐妹俩长得很像，性格不同。大姑娘很文静，话很少，像父亲。小英子比她娘还会说，一天叽叽呱呱地不停。大姐说：

“你一天到晚叽叽呱呱——”

“像个喜鹊！”

“你自己说的！——吵得人心乱！”

“心乱？”

“心乱！”

“你心乱怪我呀！”

二姑娘话里有话。大英子已经有了人家。小人她偷偷地看过，人很敦厚，也不难

看，家道也殷实，她满意。已经下过小定，日子还没有定下来。她这二年，很少出房门，整天赶她的嫁妆。大裁大剪，她都会。挑花绣花，不如娘。她可又嫌娘出的样子太老了。她到城里看过新娘子，说人家现在绣的都是活花活草。这可把娘难住了。最后是“喜鹊”忽然一拍屁股：“我给你保举一个人！”

It was Mingzi. When he had studied at school, he had accumulated half a volume of drawings, which he liked very much. After joining Biqi Nunnery, he continued to look at it frequently, and at times, copied them on the reverse side of pages torn from an account book. By and by he could draw well. Xiaoyingzi added, "He can draw. And what he draws is just like the real thing!"

Then, Xiaoyingzi invited Mingzi to her home and prepared some ink, brush and paper. After a little while, he had produced some designs.

"Wonderful! Wonderful!" Looking at his drawings, Dayingzi exclaimed in delight. "With such designs I can use the new styles."

The second layer of stitches were put among those of the first ones, so that the colour was varied gradually from dark to light without any break. The method her mother employed failed to eliminate the clear contrast between dark and light.

Being both a servant and adviser of Mingzi, Xiaoyingzi urged him, "Draw a pomegranate flower! Draw a cape jasmine flower!"

这人是谁？是明子。明子念“上《孟》、下《孟》”的时候，不知怎么得了半套《芥子园》，他喜欢得很。到了荸荠庵，他还常翻出来看，有时还把旧账簿子翻过来，照着描。小英子说：

“他会画！画得跟活的一样！”

小英子把明海请到家里来，给他磨墨铺纸，小和尚画了几张，大英子喜欢得了不得：

“就是这样！就是这样！这就可以乱戛！”

——所谓“乱戛”是绣花的一种针法：绣了第一层，第二层的针脚插进第一层的针缝，这样颜色就可由深到淡，不露痕迹，不像娘那一代绣的花是平针，深浅之间，界限分明，一道一道的。小英子就像个书僮，又像个参谋：

“画一朵石榴花！”

“画一朵栀子花！”

She then went out to pick these blossoms from the trees and handed them to him to copy. After much practice Mingzi could draw a variety of flowers. Looking at these, Aunt Zhao was very pleased and patted his head saying, "What a clever boy you are! I hope you will be my adopted son."

All at once, Xiaoyingzi encouraged him by squeezing his shoulder, "Go on, call her 'Mother'! Quick! Quick!"

Mingzi fell to his knees and kowtowed to Aunt Zhao. From then on, he regarded her as his adopted mother.

Before long, three pairs of embroidered shoes made by Dayingzi were passed round the whole district. Many young girls came to admire them, even from as far as thirty li away, some on foot and others by boat, all praising her profusely, "Oh, what a beautiful design! They're not embroidered flowers, they're fresh ones!"

Bringing paper with them, many begged Aunt Zhao to do them a favour, namely, to ask the young novice to draw some flower designs for them. Some wanted them for door curtains, decorative streamers or embroidered shoes. Whenever Mingzi came to draw flowers, Xiaoyingzi made a snack for him— boiling two eggs, steaming a bowl of taros or frying some dumplings with lotus-root starch.



她把花掐来，明海就照着画。

到后来，凤仙花、石竹子、水蓼、淡竹叶、天竺果子、腊梅花，他都能画。

大娘看着也喜欢，搂住明海的和尚头：

“你真聪明！你给我当一个干儿子吧！”

小英子捺住他的肩膀，说：

“快叫！快叫！”

小明子跪在地下磕了一个头，从此就叫小英子的娘做干娘。

大英子绣的三双鞋，三十里方圆都传遍了。很多姑娘都走路坐船来看。看完了，就说：“啧啧啧，真好看！这哪是绣的，这是一朵鲜花！”她们就拿了纸来央大娘求了小和尚来画。有求画帐檐的，有求画门帘飘带的，有求画鞋头花的。每回明子来画花，小英子就给他做点好吃的，煮两个鸡蛋，蒸一碗芋头，煎几个藕团子。

So her elder sister could have more time to prepare her dowry, Xiaoyingzi did all the extra farm work. Of course, Mingzi gave her a hand.

The busiest work was transplanting seedlings, irrigating the paddy-fields with a waterwheel and weeding the fields. Other hard jobs were harvesting the rice and threshing the grain on the threshing ground. It was impossible for a single family to accomplish all this unaided, so they all helped each other by working collectively in each other's fields in turn. The helpers got no pay, but were rewarded with six meals a day of meat and wine. Working together in the fields, they sang ballads accompanied by the beating of gongs and drums. It was very lively.

At other times of the year, when the farm work was not so heavy, each family worked separately.

At the third weeding, the rice seedlings had already grown high. Working in this vast expanse of green, Xiaoyingzi sang:

The cape jasmine flowers blossom in six petals,

There is a bridge before my door.

On hearing her clear voice, Mingzi knew at once it was Xiaoyingzi, and raced to the spot. He bent his head and began to weed as soon as he was with her. Usually, it was also his job to lead the buffalo to the water for a mud bath. According to local custom, after taking off the yoke and allowing the beast to take a drink of water, the animal was led to a muddy pool where it would frolic until covered with mud to protect it from mosquito bites.

Two people working a waterwheel for half a day could secure enough water for irrigation. Mingzi and Xiaoyingzi stood side by side treading the wheel rhythmically, singing softly the various ballads learned from Rendu.

The Zhao family had no threshing ground of their own, so after the harvest, they threshed their wheat at Biqi Nunnery. When Uncle Zhao ate his meal, Mingzi worked in his place for a while. Flourishing the whip to urge on the animal, he called out the work signal, "Ge tan de..."

Though this did not mean anything, it was very pleasant to hear.

When Mingzi sang it, Aunt Zhao listened and said in admiration, "What a sweet voice the boy has!"

"So pleasant to hear!" Dayingzi chimed in, putting down her knitting.

"He's the best singer in the thirteen provinces," Xiaoyingzi remarked proudly.

因为照顾姐姐赶嫁妆，田里的零碎生活小英子就全包了。她的帮手，是明子。

这地方的忙活是栽秧、车高田水、薅头遍草，再就是割稻子、打场了。这几茬重活，自己一家是忙不过来的。这地方兴换工。排好了日期，几家顾一家，轮流转。不收工钱，但是吃好的。一天吃六顿，两头见肉，顿顿有酒。干活时，敲着锣鼓，唱着歌，热闹得很。其余的时候，各顾各，不显得紧张。

薅三遍草的时候，秧已经很高了，低下头看不见人。只听见非常脆亮的嗓子在一片浓绿里唱：

梔子哎开花哎六瓣头哎.....

姐家哎门前哎一道桥哎.....

明海就知道小英子在哪里，三步两步就赶到，赶到就低头薅起草来。傍晚牵牛“打汪”，是明子的事。——水牛怕蚊子。这里的习惯，牛卸了轭，饮了水，就牵到一口和好泥水的“汪”里，由它自己打滚扑腾，弄得全身都是泥浆，这样蚊子就咬不透了。低田上水，只要一挂十四轧的水车，两个人车半天就够了。明子和小英子就伏在车杠上，不紧不慢地踩着车轴上的拐子，轻轻地唱着明海向三师父学来的各处

山歌。打场的时候，明子能替赵大伯一会，让他回家吃饭——赵家自己没有场，每年都在荸荠庵外面的场上打谷子。他一扬鞭子，喊起了打场号子：

“格当嘚——”

这打场号子有音无字，可是九转十三弯，比什么山歌号子都好听。赵大娘在家，听见明子的号子，就侧起耳朵：

“这孩子这条嗓子！”

连大英子也停下针线：

“真好听！”

小英子非常骄傲地说：

“一十三省数第一！”



As the wheat the temple collected from its tenants was also dried on the same ground, Mingzi often guarded the threshing ground with Xiaoyingzi. Sitting close to each other on a stone roller, they listened to frogs croaking and grasshoppers making the sound "sha..." or they looked at the fireflies flitting before them and

the shooting stars in the sky.

"Ah, I've forgotten to tie a knot in my belt!" cried out Xiaoyingzi suddenly.

The local people believed that if one tied a knot in one's belt while watching a shooting star one's wish would come true.

Gathering water chestnuts was Xiaoyingzi's favourite occupation. When autumn was over, the leaves of the water chestnuts had withered. Then the nuts could be pulled out. This was why she liked this work. Besides, water chestnuts grew in the mud, so to find them she had to go barefooted. When she trod on a hard knob she would reach into the mud and pull out a purplish-red water chestnut. She liked doing this and made Mingzi help her, and often trod with her bare foot on his purposely.

晚上，他们一起看场——荸荠庵收来的租稻也晒在场上。他们并肩坐在一个石碾子上，听青蛙打鼓，听寒蛇唱歌——这个地方以为蝼蛄叫是蚯蚓叫，而且叫蚯蚓叫“寒蛇”，听纺纱婆子不停地纺纱，“吵——”，看萤火虫飞来飞去，看天上的流星。

“呀！我忘了在裤带上打一个结！”小英子说。

这里的人相信，在流星掉下来的时候在裤带上打一个结，心里想什么好事，就能如愿。

.....

揠

After finishing their work, Xiaoyingzi returned home with a basket full of water chestnuts, leaving her footprints on the soft mud ridges. These fascinating footprints, with five tiny toes, a flat sole and a slender heel, evoked in Mingzi an unprecedented feeling of pleasure, disturbing him.

Mingzi often went to town in the Zhaos' boat to buy incense, candles, oil and salt for the temple. In the slack season Uncle Zhao rowed the boat, while in the busy one, Xiaoyingzi went in the boat rowed by Mingzi.

The waterway passed through the middle of a stretch of reedy marshes. There were no inhabitants on either side, which made Mingzi a little nervous. Not knowing why, he would row as fast as he could.

"Mingzi! Mingzi!" Xiaoyingzi shouted to him. "What's the matter with you? Have you gone mad? Why do you row so fast?"

The day when Mingzi was to leave for Shanyin Temple to undergo the initiation rites finally came.

"Do you really want to become a monk?"

"Yes."

她挎着一篮子荸荠回去了，在柔软的田埂上留了一串脚印。明海看着她的脚印，傻了。五个小小的趾头，脚掌平平的，脚跟细细的，脚弓部分缺了一块。明海身上有一种从来没有过的感觉，他觉得心里痒痒的。这一串美丽的脚印把小和尚的心搞乱了。

.....

明子常搭赵家的船进城，给庵里买香烛，买油盐。闲时是赵大伯划船；忙时是小英子去，划船的是明子。

从庵赵庄到县城，当中要经过一片很大的芦花荡子。芦苇长得密密的，当中一条水路，四边不见人。划到这里，明子总是无端端地觉得心里很紧张，他就使劲地划桨。

小英子喊起来：

“明子！明子！你怎么啦？你发疯啦？为什么划得这么快？”

.....

明海到善因寺去受戒。

“你真的要去烧戒疤呀？”

“真的。”

"They'll burn twelve holes in the top of your head with incense sticks. Won't that be very painful?"

"If so, I'll clench my teeth. My uncle said it was the worst hardship a monk must face."

"Isn't it possible not to have them?"

"Without those scars a man is only a half monk."

"But what's the use of being a real monk?"

"Then you can go anywhere and put your Buddhist robes in any temple."

"What do you mean?"

"You can sleep and eat there."

"Free of charge?"

"Of course! And monks coming from other districts are given the first chance to perform the Buddhist services."

"So that's why it's said, 'Monks coming from other districts can chant the Buddhist sutras better.' Is it all because of the scars on your head?"

"No. You must also have a certificate."

"Oh, I see! You get a certificate to show you're a real monk."

"好好的头皮上烧十二个洞，那不疼死啦？"

"咬咬牙。舅舅说这是当和尚的一大关，总要过的。"

"不受戒不行吗？"

"不受戒的是野和尚。"

"受了戒有啥好处？"

"受了戒就可以到处云游，逢寺挂褡。"

"什么叫‘挂褡’？"

"就是在庙里住。有斋就吃。"

"不把钱？"

"不把钱。有法事，还得先尽外来的师父。"

"怪不得都说‘远来的和尚会念经’。就凭头上这几个戒疤？"

"还要有一份戒牒。"

"闹半天，受戒就是领一张和尚的合格文凭呀！"

"Yes."

"Then, I'll take you there by boat."

"Thanks."

Early the next morning, Xiaoyingzi rowed her boat to the bank in front of Biqi Nunnery. Not knowing why, she felt very excited. Filled with curiosity, she wanted to have a look at the large, well-known Shanyin Temple and watch the ceremony.

Shanyin Temple was the largest one in the whole county. Located on the outside of the county town's eastern gate, it faced a deep moat and was surrounded by tall trees on three sides. As the temple was hidden among the trees, only its magnificent roof was visible from afar. People, therefore, did not know how large it really was. Planks hung on the trees warned: "Beware of fierce dogs." Normally few people dared venture there, but during an initiation ceremony, the dogs were locked up and visitors were allowed to enter the temple freely.

It was indeed a very large temple! Its threshold was higher than Xiaoyingzi's knees. On either side of the entrance were two large posters. On one was written, "Initiation ceremony in progress", and on the other, "Silence!" The atmosphere inside was solemn. No one dared even cough loudly. Minghai went to enroll and complete the formalities. Xiaoyingzi strolled alone around the temple. Good heavens! The four vajras were more than thirty feet tall. Obviously, they had been recently cleaned. The courtyard was at

least two mu in area, paved with blue stone slabs and planted with pines and cypresses. The Mahavira Hall was enormous. The moment you stepped into it, you felt a sudden chill all over your body. Everything glistened with a dazzling golden colour. The Buddha Sakyamuni sat on a lotus-stand, which was higher than Xiaoyingzi. Looking up at its face, she could only see the slightly closed lips and fat, round chin. The circumference of the red candles on both sides was so large that you could not put your arms round them. Among the offerings on the altar before the statue, apart from fresh flowers, velvet flowers and silk flowers, were also a corallite, a jade ruyi and a large elephant tusk. Some joss-sticks burned in the incense burner. The fragrance was so strong that, after leaving the hall, Xiaoyingzi could still smell it and even her clothes had absorbed the scent. Heavy embroidered streamers were hung everywhere and she could not guess what they were made of. The inverted bell was so large, it could hold at least ten buckets of water. And the "wooden fish", as big as a cow's head, was painted red. After leaving there she went to look at the hall of the Arhats and then climbed up the Pavilion of a Thousand Buddhas. There were indeed a thousand small Buddhas! Following the other visitors, she saw the Tripitaka Pavilion. Volume after volume of Buddhist sutras was not a particularly interesting sight. Oh dear! Her legs already ached! Suddenly, it occurred to her that she had to buy cooking oil, silk yarn for her elder sister, cloth to

make shoes for her mother, two silver butterflies to decorate the ribbons of her own skirt and tobacco for her father, so she left the temple.

“就是！”

“我划船送你去。”

“好。”

小英子早早就把船划到荸荠庵门前。不知是什么道理，她兴奋得很。她充满了好奇心，想去看看善因寺这座大庙，看看受戒是个啥样子。

善因寺是全县第一大庙，在东门外，面临一条水很深的护城河，三面都是大树，寺在树林子里，远处只能隐隐约约看到一点金碧辉煌的屋顶，不知道有多大。树上到处挂着“谨防恶犬”的牌子。这寺里的狗出名地厉害。平常不大有人进去。放戒期间，任人游看，恶狗都锁起来了。

好大一座庙！庙门的门坎比小英子的胳膊都高。迎门矗着两块大牌，一边一块，一块写着斗大两个大字：“放戒”，一块是：“禁止喧哗”。这庙里果然是气象庄严，到了这里谁也不敢大声咳嗽。明海自去报名办事，小英子就到处看看。好家伙，这哼哈二将、四大天王，有三丈多高，都是簇新的，才装修了不久。天井有二亩地大，铺着青石，种着苍松翠柏。“大雄宝殿”，这才真是个大殿！一进去，凉嗖嗖的。到处都是金光耀眼。释迦牟尼佛坐在一个莲花座上。单是莲座，就比小英子还高。抬起头来也看不全他的脸，只看到一个微微闭着的嘴唇和胖敦敦的下巴。两边的两根大红蜡烛，一搂多粗。佛像前的大供桌上供着鲜花、绒花、绢花，还有珊瑚树、玉如意、整棵的大象牙。香炉里烧着檀香。小英子出了庙，闻着

自己的衣服都是香的。挂了好些幡。这些幡不知是什么缎子的，那么厚重，绣的花真细。这么大一口磬，里头能装五担水！这么大一个木鱼，有一头牛大，漆得通红的。她又去转了转罗汉堂，爬到千佛楼上看了看。真有一千个小佛！她还跟着一些人去看了看藏经楼。藏经楼没有什么看头，都是经书！妈吔！逛了这么一圈，腿都酸了。小英子想起还要给家里打油，替姐姐配丝线，给娘买鞋面布，给自己买两个坠围裙飘带的银蝴蝶，给爹买旱烟，就出庙了。



It was almost noon before she had finished shopping and returned to the temple. The monks were eating in the dining hall. How large it was! It could seat nearly eight hundred of them! This temple emphasized discipline even during meal times. On the Buddha's seat were placed two tin vases in which were inserted red velvet flowers. Behind the seat sat an old monk wearing a red garment embroidered with golden yarn and holding a ruler in his hand. If any monk happened to make a slight noise while eating, the old monk was ready to rap him with his ruler. But, in fact, he never had to do this. Though so many monks ate together, none made any noise. How strange that was! Seeing Mingzi also sitting among them, Xiaoyingzi wanted to call to him but hesitated, wondering whether or not it was prohibited. At last she plucked up her courage and

shouted to him, "I'm going now!" With his eyes fixed on the table, Mingzi nodded slightly. Xiaoyingzi left in a conspicuous manner, not caring that so many monks stared at her.

等把事情办齐，晌午了。她又到庙里看了看，和尚正在吃粥。好大一个“膳堂”，坐得下八百个和尚。吃粥也有这样多讲究：正面法座上摆着两个锡胆瓶，里面插着红绒花，后面盘膝坐着一个穿了大红满金绣袈裟的和尚，手里拿了戒尺。这戒尺是要打人的。哪个和尚吃粥吃出了声音，他下来就是一戒尺。不过他并不真的打人，只是做个样子。真稀奇，那么多的和尚吃粥，竟然不出一点声音！她看见明子也坐在里面，想跟他打个招呼又不好打。想了想。管他禁止不禁止喧哗，就大声喊了一句：“我走啦！”她看见明子目不斜视地微微点了点头，就不管很多人都朝自己看，大摇大摆地走了。

Three days later in the early morning Xiaoyingzi went to see Mingzi again. She knew that he had become a real monk the night before at midnight. In order to prevent this from being seen by outsiders, it was usually done at midnight. She knew that his hair had been cut by an old barber and his crown shaved as smooth as a ball, otherwise the burning would leave a big scar instead of just a dot. Then the old monk smeared twelve dots of date paste on his crown and lit them with joss-sticks. Immediately after that, Mingzi had to drink a bowl of mushroom soup to inflame the scars on his head and walk around instead of lying down. Mingzi had told her about that.

Xiaoyingzi saw that the new monks were really walking around the waste ground near the city wall, all wearing greyish-blue Buddhist robes. Each had twelve black spots on their bald heads. These would become tiny round scars only after the scabs had fallen off.

Judging by the smiles on their faces, they seemed very happy. At the first glance, she easily spotted Mingzi among them. She shouted to him from across the moat, "Hi, Mingzi!"

"Oh, Xiaoyingzi!"

"Have you been initiated?"

"Yes, I have."

"Did it hurt much?"

"Yes."

第四天一大清早小英子就去看明子。她知道明子受戒是第三天半夜——烧戒疤是不许人看的。她知道要请老剃头师傅剃头，要剃得横摸顺摸都摸不出头发茬子，要不然一烧，就会“走”了戒，烧成了一片。她知道是用枣泥子先点在头皮上，然后用香头子点着。她知道烧了戒疤就喝一碗蘑菇汤，让它“发”，还不能躺下，要不停地走动，叫做“散戒”。这些都是明子告诉她的。明子是听舅舅说的。

她一看，和尚真在那里“散戒”，在城墙根底下的荒地里。一个一个，穿了新海青，光光的头皮上都有十二个黑点子。——这黑疤掉了，才会露出白白的、圆圆的“戒疤”。和尚都笑嘻嘻的，好像很高兴。她一眼就看见了明子。隔着一条护城

河，就喊他：

“明子！”

“小英子！”

“你受了戒啦？”

“受了。”

“疼吗？”

“疼。”

"Does it still hurt?"

"Not now!"

"When will you come back?"

"The day after tomorrow."

"Morning or afternoon?"

"Afternoon."

"I'll come to fetch you!"

"Good!"

...

Xiaoyingzi met him with the boat and helped him get in.

It had grown hotter. Xiaoyingzi had put on a white linen blouse, a pair of black silk trousers and straw sandals. On one side of her hair she wore a cape jasmine blossom, on the other a pomegranate flower. Seeing that Mingzi wore a new grey Buddhist robe with the white collar of his shirt exposed, she urged him, "Take off your robe right now! Aren't you hot?"

Each of them took an oar. Xiaoyingzi began to row in the middle of the boat, Mingzi at the stern.

"现在还疼吗?"

"现在疼过去了。"

"你哪天回去?"

"后天。"

"上午?下午?"

"下午。"

"我来接你!"

"好!"

.....

小英子把明海接上船。

小英子这天穿了一件细白夏布上衣，下边是黑洋纱的裤子，赤脚穿了一双龙须草的细草鞋，头上一边插着一朵栀子花，一边插着一朵石榴花。她看见明子穿了新海青，里面露出短褂子的白领子，就说：“把你那外面的一件脱了，你不热呀！”

他们一人一把桨。小英子在中舱，明子扳艄，在船尾。

On their way, she questioned him as if they had been separated for a whole year. She asked him whether any monk had wept or cried out during the burning. He replied that no one had said anything, except a monk from Shandong who cursed, "You bastards! I won't be burned any more! "

She asked if there was anything special about the face and voice of the abbot.

"Yes."

"They say his bedroom is more beautiful than a young girl's. Is it true?"

"Yes, it's true. Everything is embroidered with flowers."

"Is it perfumed?"

"Yes, he burns a rare incense. It's very expensive."

"They say he composes poetry, paints and is good at calligraphy. Is

that so?"

"Yes. Those big characters engraved on the bricks on both sides of the corridor were written by him."

"It is true he had a concubine?"

"Yes."

"Is she only nineteen?"

她一路问了明子很多话，好像一年没有看见了。她问，烧戒疤的时候，有人哭吗？喊吗？明子说，没有人哭，只是不住地念佛。有个山东和尚骂人：“俺日你奶奶！俺不烧了！”

她问善因寺的方丈石桥是相貌和声音都很出众吗？

“是的。”

“说他的方丈比小姐的绣房还讲究？”

“讲究。什么东西都是绣花的。”

“他屋里很香？”

“很香。他烧的是伽楠香，贵得很。”

“听说他会做诗，会画画，会写字？”

“会。庙里走廊两头的砖额上，都刻着他写的大字。”

"他是有个小老婆吗？"

"有一个。"

"才十九岁？"

"I heard so."

"Is she pretty?"

"They say she is."

"Did you see her?"

"No, how could I? I was kept in a room all day long."

Mingzi informed her that he had been told by an old monk that Shanyin Temple intended to choose him as a tail-Samir, but this had not been finally decided because the monk responsible had not returned.

"What does tail-Samir mean?"

"Whenever a Buddhist service is held, they have to choose two monks to be the head-Samir and the other the tail-Samir. The former is more experienced and able to chant a great deal of the Buddhist scriptures; the latter must be young, clever and handsome."

"What's the difference between an ordinary monk and the tail-

Samir?"

"Both the tail-Samir and the head-Samir have the possibility of becoming an abbot in future. When the present abbot retires, either of them can take his place. The present abbot was a tail-Samir before. "

"听说。"

"好看吗?"

"都说好看。"

"你没看见?"

"我怎么会看见?我关在庙里。"

明子告诉她，善因寺一个老和尚告诉他，寺里有意选他当沙弥尾，不过还没有定，要等主事的和尚商议。

"什么叫‘沙弥尾’?"

"放一堂戒，要选出一个沙弥头，一个沙弥尾。沙弥头要老成，要会念很多经。沙弥尾要年轻，聪明，相貌好。"

"当了沙弥尾跟别的和尚有什么不同?"

"沙弥头，沙弥尾，将来都能当方丈。现在的方丈退居了，就当。石桥原来就是沙弥尾。"

"Will you be a tail-Samir?"

"I don't know yet."

"Will you be in charge of Shanyin Temple as soon as you've become an abbot? Oh, what a large temple you'll run!"

"It's too early to talk like that."

After rowing for a while, she said to Mingzi in earnest, "You mustn't be an abbot!"

"All right, I won't."

"And you mustn't be a tail-Samir either."

"OK, I won't."

After they had rowed a little further the reed marshes appeared before them.

Xiaoyingzi suddenly put down her oar and went to the stern, whispering in his ear, "I'll be your wife. Do you agree?"

Miangzi stared at her in astonishment.

"Answer me, quickly!"

"Um ..." he replied.

"What does that mean? Do you want me? Do you?"

“你当沙弥尾吗？”

“还不一定哪。”

“你当方丈，管善因寺？管这么大一个庙？！”

“还早呐！”

划了一气，小英子说：“你不要当方丈！”

“好，不当。”

“你也不要当沙弥尾！”

“好，不当。”

又划了一气，看见那一片芦花荡子了。

小英子忽然把桨放下，走到船尾，趴在明子的耳朵旁边，小声地说：“我给你当老婆，你要不要？”

明子眼睛鼓得大大的。

“你说话呀！”

明子说：“嗯。”

“什么叫‘嗯’呀！要不要，要不要？”

"Yes, I want you!" he shouted.

"What are you shouting for?"

"I want you!" he said again in a low voice.

"Row quickly!"

Xiaoyingzi hopped back to her seat. Both rowed as fast as they could; the boat sped into the reeds.

The reeds had greyish-purple tassels, soft and smooth like rings of shining silk thread. In some places, they had grown spikes like small red candles. On the water surface, there were duckweeds, blue and purple in colour and long-legged mosquitoes and water spiders. The little white flowers of the wild water chestnuts had already blossomed. Then a lapwing, startled, flapped its wings and flew away across the reeds to a safe distance.

...

明子大声地说：“要！”

“你喊什么！”

明子小小声说：“要——！”

“快点划！”

英子跳到中舱，两只桨飞快地划起来，划进了芦花荡。

芦花才吐新穗。紫灰色的芦穗，发着银光，软软的，滑溜溜的，像一串丝线。有的地方结了蒲棒，通红的，像一支一支小蜡烛。青浮萍，紫浮萍。长脚蚊子，水蜘蛛。野菱角开着四瓣的小白花。惊起一只青桩（一种水鸟），擦着芦穗，扑鲁鲁鲁飞远了。

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Translated by Hu Zhihui

一九八〇年八月十二日，
写四三年前的一个梦。

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Special Gift

异秉

Those who lived in the same street as Wang Er well knew how he had made his fortune.

From no one knows when he had operated a cooked meat stall in the corridor of the Baoquantang Apothecary. His meat was stewed and

soaked with gravy. He stayed at home in the morning and did business in the afternoon.

His house was on a slope by the river in the back street, cut off from the other houses. It was a rather shabby place with broken brick walls, a thatched roof and a mud floor. However, it was quite spacious, clean and neat, and rather cool in the summer. There were three rooms in the house. The central one served as the sitting room. Overhead on the wall above a stone mill was his five-character motto: "Heaven, Earth, Emperor, Parent, Teacher." Of the two side rooms, one was the kitchen as well as the workshop, and the other the bedroom for the whole family: his wife, his son, his daughter and himself only, as his parents had both passed away. The house was always so quiet. Hardly any noise could be heard from within. From the other houses in the back street, there was a ceaseless uproar: a man beating his wife while clutching at her hair, a woman thrashing her child with a pair of coal tongs, an old woman muttering curses against whoever had stolen her egg-laying hen as she chopped away on the wooden block with a kitchen knife. Such noises were never heard from Wang Er's household. The Wangs were early risers. Before daybreak, Wang Er was up getting the foodstuff ready, making a fire and cooking food. His wife ground beans soon after she had done her hair. Every day a good deal of homemade, gravy-soaked dried beancurd was sold from Wang Er's

stall. After grinding the beans, the woman helped stoke the fire, her round face aglow in the firelight. The air around was permeated with a spiced fragrance that came from the Wang family. Later, when Wang Er raised a small donkey, his wife no longer needed to go round and round, pushing the mill; the beast did the job instead. All she had to do was to pour bowlfuls of beans into the hole of the millstone and add a little water soon afterwards. This gave her plenty of time to do her mending and sewing, a busy job in a family of four. Wang Er's son resembled his mother, with his round face, his eyes often in slits when he smiled. His young sister took after her father, having big eyes and a narrow face. The brother had studied in an old-fashioned private school. When he was able to keep accounts, he quitted school and attended to the donkey, taking it to the river to drink and letting it roll on the grass. When he got older, he helped his father with the business and his sister took over his job of grazing the donkey.



王二是这条街的人看着他发达起来的。

不知从什么时候起，他就在保全堂药店廊檐下摆一个熏烧摊子。“熏烧”就是卤

味。他下午来，上午在家里。

他家在后街濒河的高城上，四面不挨人家。房子很旧了，碎砖墙，草顶泥地，倒是不仄逼，也很干净，夏天很凉快。一共三间。正中是堂屋，在“天地君亲师”的下面便是一具石磨。一边是厨房，也就是作坊。一边是卧房，住着王二的一家。他上无父母，嫡亲的只有四口人，一个媳妇，一儿一女。这家总是那么安静，从外面听不到什么声音。后街的人家总是吵吵闹闹的。男人揪着头发打老婆，女人拿火叉打孩子，老太婆用菜刀剁着砧板诅咒偷了她的下蛋鸡的贼。王家从来没有这些声音。他们家起得很早。天不亮王二就起来备料，然后就烧煮。他媳妇梳好头就推磨磨豆腐——王二的熏烧摊每天要卖出很多回卤豆腐干，这豆腐干是自家做的——磨得了豆腐，就帮王二烧火。火光照得她的圆盘脸红红的。（附近的空气里弥漫着王二家飘出的五香味。）后来王二喂了一头小毛驴，她就不用围着磨盘转了，只要把小驴牵上磨，不时往磨眼里倒半碗豆子，注一点水就行了。省出时间，好做针线。一家四口，大裁小剪，很费工夫。两个孩子，大儿子长得像妈，圆乎乎的脸，两个眼睛笑起来一道缝。小女儿像父亲，瘦长脸，眼睛挺大。儿子念了几年私塾，能记账了，就不念了。他一天就是牵了小驴去饮，放它到草地上去打滚。到大了一点，就帮父亲洗料备料做生意，放驴的差事就归了妹妹了。

Every afternoon, when classes were over and every household washed rice for supper, Wang Er began to prepare his stall. Why did he select such a location as the Baoquantang Apothecary? Perhaps because it was well situated, not far from either East Street or West Street, or the other lanes in the vicinity. Perhaps he chose it because that traditional Chinese medicine store had a spacious corridor, with quite some distance from the counter to the

entrance, or perhaps because there were few customers who came to the store to have their prescriptions filled in the evening and the food stall would not interfere with their business. He had someone put in a few good words to the proprietor of the store, and he himself called on the proprietor to express his gratitude. This had occurred many years before. The equipment of his stall, called shengcai by the local people, was kept against the wall in the back passage of the store, right under the poster of Marshal Zhao which hung from the second beam of the house. Wang Er's shengcai was comprised of two long planks, two three-legged high stools (with two legs at one end and one leg in the middle of the other) and several boxes with a glass-paned front. Before he was ready to do business, Wang Er set down his stools, put a couple of planks steadily on them, and placed the glass boxes in a row. In the boxes were melon seeds, pumpkin seeds, fried salty peas, deep-fried peas, brittle deep-fried broad beans and spiced peanuts. At the other side of the planks were the hot foods such as dried beancurd with gravy, beef, cattail-bag meat and pig's head meat. As a rule, people in this region did not eat beef. Those who did seldom had it steamed or braised in soya-bean sauce. They just bought some at the stalls where the beef was cooked in salt and spice and covered with red leaven. It was piled high in a box. When purchased, the slab of beef was cut into slices on the spot and placed on the customer's plate. On top was a sprinkle of garlic leaf bits followed by a

spoonful of hot pepper paste.

Cattail-bag meat seemed to be the specialty of the county. Each cattail bag was about three by one and a half inches. It was lined with thin sheets of beancurd and filled quite full with small bits of meat mixed with water chestnut powder. Afterwards, the bag was tied in the middle with a hemp string, forming the shape of a gourd. When the bag was opened after being cooked, the meat was still in the shape of a gourd with a trace of the cattail bag on the surface. Cut into slices, it really whetted one's appetite.

Pig's head meat was sold after being sorted into three parts: snout, ear and face. The face was also referred to as the "big fat". The customer could select whichever part he wished. At dusk, Wang Er's business came to a climax. He was busy cutting meat with a kitchen knife, receiving money from the customers and wrapping different varieties of deep-fried, fried and salted peas and melon seeds. Hardly did he have a breather. After nine o'clock, when the kerosene in his two high-screened lamps was nearly consumed, and when the bottoms of the meat trays and pea boxes became visible, his wife turned up and brought him his supper. Then he washed his face with a hot towel and had his meal. After supper, there was still a little business to attend to. Therefore he was in no hurry to put away his shengcai. He would then pour himself a cup of hot tea, seat himself in a chair inside the shop and listen to people

gossip while throwing glances at the stall. Whenever he saw someone coming, he rose to get ready a few plates of meat or wrap up peas and seeds for a short while. All his customers were familiar acquaintances. What time they came and what they wanted was as clear to him as daylight.

The shops and stalls in this street knew well enough how business was going on in other shops and stalls. Business had been bad in the past few years. With some shops things fared better, but all they could do was just keep business going. In the grips of a recession, the shelves of other stores grew bare. Deliveries were halted and finally, the owners were compelled to sell their shengcai and close up shop. Wang Er's business, to the contrary, grew more and more prosperous. He expanded his stall and increased the number of boxes of peas, seeds and enamel trays of hot food. During the busy hours every evening, a crowd of people would stand in front of his stall. On rainy or snowy days an even greater number of people would come to buy his food. Seeing his customers standing outside under their umbrellas made him uneasy. Then, after he had someone throw in nice words to the shop owner and paid the rent, he moved his stall next door to the Yuanchang Tobacco Shop.

每天下午，在上学的孩子放学，人家淘晚饭米的时候，他就来摆他的摊子。他为什么选中保全堂来摆他的摊子呢？是因为这地点好，东街西街和附近几条巷子到这里都不远；因为保全堂的廊檐宽，柜台到铺门有相当的余地；还是因为这是一家药

店，药店到晚上生意就比较清淡——很少人晚上上药铺抓药的，他摆个摊子碍不着人家的买卖，都说不清。当初还一定是请人向药店的东家说了好话，亲自登门叩谢过的。反正，有年头了。他的摊子的全副“生财”——这地方把做买卖的用具叫做“生财”，就寄放在药店店堂的后面过道里，挨墙放着，上面就是悬在二梁上的赵公元帅的神龛。这些“生财”包括两块长板，两条三条腿的高板凳（这种高凳一边两条腿，在两头；一边一条腿在当中），以及好几个一面装了玻璃的匣子。他把板凳支好，长板放平，玻璃匣子排开。这些玻璃匣子里装的是黑瓜子、白瓜子、盐炒豌豆、油炸豌豆、兰花豆、五香花生米。长板的一头摆开“熏烧”。“熏烧”除回卤豆腐干之外，主要是牛肉、蒲包肉和猪头肉。这地方一般人家是不大吃牛肉的。吃，也极少红烧、清炖，只是到熏烧摊子去买。这种牛肉是五香加盐煮好，外面染了通红的红曲，一大块一大块地堆在那里。买多少，现切，放在送过来的盘子里，抓一把青蒜，浇一勺辣椒糊。蒲包肉似乎是这个县里特有的。用一个三寸来长直径寸半的蒲包，里面衬上豆腐皮，塞满了加了粉子的碎肉，封了口，拦腰用一道麻绳系紧，成一个葫芦形。煮熟以后，倒出来，也是一个带有蒲包印迹的葫芦。切成片，很香。猪头肉则分门别类地卖，拱嘴、耳朵、脸子——脸子有个专门名词，叫“大肥”。要什么，切什么。到了上灯以后，王二的生意就到了高潮。只见他拿了刀不停地切，一面还忙着收钱，包油炸的、盐炒的豌豆、瓜子，很少有歇一歇的时候。一直忙到九点多钟，在他的两盏高罩的煤油灯里煤油已经点去了一多半，装熏烧的盘子和装豌豆的匣子都已经见了底的时候，他媳妇给他送饭来了，他才用热水擦一把脸，吃晚饭。吃完晚饭，总还有一些零零星星的生意，他不忙收摊子，就端了一杯热茶，坐到保全堂店堂里的椅子上，听人聊天，一面拿眼睛瞟着他的摊子，见有人走来，就起身切一盘，包两包。他的主顾都是熟人，谁什么时候来，买什么，他心里都是有数的。

这一条街上的店铺、摆摊的，生意如何，彼此都很清楚。近几年，景况都不大好。有几家好一些，但也只是能维持。有的是逐渐地败落下来了。先是货架上的东西越来越空，只出不进，最后就出让“生财”，关门歇业。只有王二的生意却越做越兴旺。他的摊子越摆越大，装炒货的匣子，装熏烧的洋瓷盘子，越来越多。每天晚上到了买卖高潮的时候，摊子外面有时会拥着好些人。好天气还好，遇上下雨下雪（下雨下雪买他的东西的比平常更多），叫主顾在当街打伞站着，实在很不过意。于是经人说合，出了租钱，他就把他的摊子搬到隔壁源昌烟店的店堂里去了。

The Yuanchang was an old retail and wholesale shop selling tobacco smoked exclusively in long-stemmed pipes. The tobacco from this area was all peeled in thin slices. The operator placed the tobacco leaves on a specially made wooden table clamped tight with ropes and wooden wedges. Then he stood with the table between his two legs and peeled the tobacco using a big knife whose edge was about five inches. The workers all wore white cloth trousers. During their work, the trousers would be stained yellow. Even after work. when they had shed the work clothes, the yellow colour could be seen all over their bodies. Even their hair was yellow. The handicraft workers usually had on them the colour characteristic of their occupations. Dye-house workers all had blue fingertips and grain-mill workers had white eyebrows. Before, the Yuanchang had employed four workers. Every day adults and children would come to see the four tobacco peelers working. By and by the number of workers was reduced to three, two, and then one. Even the last one

was later dismissed. The shop owner made a living by selling cigarettes, matches and small packs of tea. He also bought at wholesale prices two kinds of tobacco to be smoked in water pipes and long-stemmed pipes, and resold them at retail prices. The previously bright shop somehow looked sombre, and the gold characters on the lintel appeared languid. Even the counter seemed bigger and emptier.



源昌烟店是个老字号，专卖旱烟，做门市，也做批发。一边是柜台，一边是刨烟的作坊。这一带抽的旱烟是刨成丝的。刨烟师傅把烟叶子一张一张立着叠在一个特制的木床子上，用皮绳木楔卡紧，两腿夹着床子，用一个刨刃有半尺宽的大刨子刨。烟是黄的。他们都穿了白布套裤。这套裤也都变黄了。下了工，脱了套裤，他们身上也到处是黄的。头发也是黄的。——手艺人带着他那个行业特有的颜色。染坊师傅的指甲缝里都是蓝的，碾米师傅的眉毛总是白蒙蒙的。原来，源昌号每天有四个师傅、四副床子刨烟。每天总有一些大人孩子站在旁边看。后来减成三个，两个，一个。最后连这一个也辞了。这家的东家就靠卖一点纸烟、火柴、零包的茶叶维持生活，也还卖一点趸来的旱烟、皮丝烟。不知道为什么，原来挺敞亮的店堂变得黑暗了，牌匾上的金字也都无精打采了。那座柜台显得特别的大。大，而空。

After Wang Er moved in, he occupied half of the shop, where the

original tobacco-peeling tables once had been placed. He used to set up his stall from east to west at the Baoquantang. But now his stall at the Yuanchang was from north to south. What had once been a stall was now half a shop. With one wooden plank added to the two he already possessed, his present stall was now a terrific L-shaped counter. There was more variety in the food he had for sale. In addition to the gravy-soaked dried beancurd, beef, pig's head meat and cattail bags, in spring he sold a wild bird called sandgrouse. This was a migratory bird with a long beak and long legs. As it arrived when the peach blossom bloomed, some scholar had named it "Peach Blossom Sand-grouse". Wang sold quails, too. When winter set in, he put up a long glass frame with gilded characters on red written inside: "Delicious stewed mutton jelly and spiced rabbit's meat served today." In these residential quarters, mutton was not cooked in the home; it was all bought from stalls. The mutton was stewed with salt. Later it was frozen solid, sliced and mixed with bits of garlic leaves, hot pepper paste and the essential carrot shreds (said to be best for driving away the strong smell of mutton). Soya-bean sauce and vinegar were added at home. Rabbit's meat was cooked the same way as beef, with salt and spices, and later dyed with red leaven.

王二来了，就占了半边店堂，就是原来刨烟师傅刨烟的地方。他的摊子原来在保全堂廊檐是东西向横放着的，迁到源昌，就改成南北向，直放了。所以，已经不能算

是一个摊子，而是半个店铺了。他在原有的板子之外增加了一块，摆成一个曲尺形，俨然也就是一个柜台。他所卖的东西的品种也增加了。即以熏烧而论，除了原有的回卤豆腐干、牛肉、猪头肉、蒲包肉之外，春天，卖一种叫做“鷓”的野味——这是一种候鸟，长嘴长脚，因为是桃花开时来的，不知是哪位文人雅士给它起了一个名称叫“桃花鷓”；卖鹌鹑；入冬以后，他就挂起一个长条形的玻璃镜框，里面用大红腊笺写了泥金字：“即日起新添美味羊羔五香兔肉”。这地方人没有自己家里做羊肉的，都是从熏烧摊上买。只有一种吃法：带皮白煮，冻实，切片，加青蒜、辣椒糊，还有一把必不可少的胡萝卜丝（据说这是最能解膈气的）。酱油、醋，买回来自己加。兔肉，也像牛肉似的加盐和五香煮，染了通红的红曲。

When the New Year came, various spring couplets appeared in the street. Some were specially designed with the shop's name. The Baoquantang had the couplet "Heaven bless common people; may all live long!" designed by the shop owner, a bagong. Some big shops, like the draper's, posted rather ambitious couplets: "We follow Zigong in career and imitate Taozhu in trade." The most popular was: "A thriving business miles and miles round; a large fortune all over the country." For shops which operated on a small margin of profit, the couplets would be modest. One of them read: "May our business thrive like grass in the blooming spring and our financial resources grow like mushrooms after the rain." The last one would be most appropriate for Wang Er's business, which was more than a stall and less than a shop. However, it had never occurred to Wang Er that he should put up a couplet like this.

Besides where would he put it? The space where he had established his stall belonged to the Yuanchang. But his business was indeed like grass in the blooming spring and mushrooms after rain. The most conspicuous indication of his prosperity was a puffing gas lamp which replaced his high-screened kerosene lamp. In those days gas lamps were used only in old-fashioned private banks and silk and satin shops. What a sight to see a gas lamp above Wang Er's delicatessen stall! By contrast, the kerosene lamp above the counter of Yuanchang Cigarette Shop looked all the dimmer.



这条街上过年时的春联是各式各样的。有的是特制嵌了字号的。比如保全堂，就是由该店拔贡出身的东家拟制的“保我黎民，全登寿域”；有些大字号，比如布店，口气很大，贴的是“生涯宗子贡，贸易效陶朱”，最常见的是“生意兴隆通四海，财源茂盛达三江”；小本经营的买卖的则很谦虚地写出：“生意三春草，财源雨后花。”这末一副春联，用于王二的超摊子准铺子，真是再贴切不过了，虽然王二并没有想到贴这样一副春联——他也没处贴呀，这铺面的字号还是“源昌”。他的生意

真是三春草、雨后花一样地起来了。“起来”最显眼的标志是他把长罩煤油灯撤掉，挂起一盏呼呼作响的汽灯。须知，汽灯这东西只有钱庄、绸缎庄才用，而王二，居然在一个熏烧摊子的上面，挂起来了。这白亮白亮的汽灯，越显得源昌柜台里的一盏煤油灯十分地暗淡了。

Wang Er's rise to fortune could also be perceived from his other activities. He could now afford to listen to pingtan whenever he liked. Listening to pingtan was his favourite pastime. Of all the notices and posters in the street. what attracted him most were those announcing pingtan events. They were usually written in thick Chinese ink on sheets of yellow paper measuring three inches by four feet, which read:"Romance of the Three Kingdoms or Outlaws of the Marsh or Anecdotes of General Yue Fei by special invitation of so-and-so from Yangzhou at a certain Teahouse: performances given every day rain or shine as from a certain date. "In those days going to a pingtan teahouse involved some consideration. Firstly it was an expensive pastime. Secondly it was also a time-consuming entertainment. Last but not least the pingtan audience generally enjoyed relatively high social status. People might talk if a deli vendor frequented the pingtan teahouse. But in recent years, Wang Er did not feel out of place sitting among the audience. He did not fear gossip anymore and went wherever it pleased him, either to the Little Fairyland or Five Willow Garden teahouses to listen to Romance of the Three Kingdoms, Outlaws of the Marsh, or Anecdotes

of General Yue Fei. In the summer when the days were long he went more often, dressed in a long gown made of thin cotton or linen, with a string of cash around him. The matinee started at one o'clock. At nearly four o'clock the story-teller or ballad-singer would stop, usually at a point which was a critical juncture of the plot. A waiter of the teahouse would shout: "Please come early tomorrow!" Then the audience gradually rose to leave. At this time of the day, Wang Er still had time to do his business. Wang Er was busy all day long except for the few hours in the afternoon. The second indication of his prosperity was that during the Chinese New Year he never hesitated to stake money playing paijiu . Wang Er never gambled except for the first five days of the New Year. Gambling was not prohibited during that time. It could be seen in any store. So from the first day on, the shop gate was closed. It was rather dark inside. Behind the counter of the Baoquantang, there was a narrow passage where people offered sacrifices to Shennong . As there was a skylight overhead, it was fairly bright there. After the table in front of the portrait of Shennong was pulled out, the tiles and dice were poured onto the table. Those who played mahjong were of similar social status, but the paijiu players might be from all walks of life. Except for Mr Tao and an apprentice named Chen, all clerks of the Baoquantang took part. So did the rent collector and the live-fish seller who had a scar on his left eye. Some pupils nicknamed him Bayan Har Mountain. and

the name stuck and spread. Everyone in the street called him Bayan Har Mountain, though some people, Wang Er for one, hardly knew the full story.

The stakes they laid were neither high nor low, about ten strings of cash for one game. Ten strings of cash equalled three silver dollars. For higher stakes, one string of cash was divided into three parts ; 300 wen , 300 wen, and 400 wen. If he got eight spots, he won double, or 600 wen; if he got nine spots, heaven spots, or earth spots, he won the whole string of 1,000 wen. Wang Er often played this game. When he staked five strings of cash on One throw, his heart did not race, and his hands did not tremble. But when the rent collector staked as much as 500 wen, his hands trembled uncontrollably. When Wang Er had won quite a lot of money, he offered to be the dealer. Strangely enough, with paijiu players, the more money one had, the more arrogant one became. More often than not. Wang Er was the winner.



王二的发达，是从他的生活也看得出来的。第一，他可以自由地去听书。王二最爱听书。走到街上，在形形色色招贴告示中间，他最注意的是说书的报条。那是三寸宽，四尺来长的一条黄颜色的纸，浓墨写道：“特聘维扬×××先生在×××（茶馆）开讲××（三国、水浒、岳传……）是月×日起风雨无阻。”以前去听书都要经过考虑。一是花钱，二是费时间，更主要的是考虑这于他的身份不大相称：一个卖熏烧的，常常听书，怕人议论。近年来，他觉得可以了，想听就去。小蓬莱、五柳园（这都是说书的茶馆），都去，三国、水浒、岳传，都听。尤其是夏天，天长，穿了竹布的或夏布的长衫，拿了一吊钱，就去了。下午的书一点开书，不到四点钟就“明日请早”了（这里说书的规矩是在说书先生说到预定的地方，留下一个扣子，跑堂的茶房高喝一声“明日请早——！”听客们就纷纷起身散场），这耽误不了他的生意。他一天忙到晚，只有这一段时间得空。第二，过年推牌九，他在下注时不犹豫。王二平常绝不赌钱，只有过年赌五天。过年赌钱不犯禁，家家店铺里可赌钱。初一起，不做生意，铺门关起来，里面黑洞洞的。保全堂柜台里身，有一个小穿堂，是供神农祖师的地方，上面有个天窗，比较亮堂。拉开神农画像前的一张方桌，哗啦一声，骨牌和骰子就倒出来了。打麻将多是社会地位相近的，推牌九则不论。谁都可以来。保全堂的“同仁”（除了陶先生和陈相公），替人家收房钱的抡元，卖活鱼的疤眼——他曾得外症，治愈后左眼留一大疤，小学生给他起了个外号叫“巴颜喀拉山”，这外号竟传开了，一街人都叫他巴颜喀拉山，虽然有人不知道这是什么意思——王二输赢说大不大，说小可也不小。十吊钱推一庄。十吊钱相当于三块洋钱。下注稍大的是一吊钱三三四。一吊钱分三道：三百、三百、四百。七点赢一道，八点赢两道，若是抓到一副九点或是天地杠，庄家赔一吊钱。王二下“三三四”是常事。有时竟会下到五吊钱一注孤丁，把五吊钱稳稳地推出去，心不跳，手不抖。（收房钱的抡元下到五百钱一注时手就抖个不住。）

赢得多了，他也能上去推两庄。推牌九这玩意，财越大，气越粗，王二输的时候竟

不多。



After Wang Er had moved his stall to the Yuanchang Tobacco Shop next door, at nine o'clock every evening he would still go to the Baoquantang with a cup of tea in his hands and sit for an hour or so. His son had grown up and could alone manage to serve the small number of customers who might turn up in the evening.

The Baoquantang was an apothecary with a moderate shop front. For some reason, the shop owner never employed local people. All his employees from manager to water carrier came from Huaicheng. Every year they took a one-month vacation in turn during which time they were allowed to go home to be with their families. For the other eleven months they lived in the shop and their wives were "widowed" for the same period of time. All the clerks in the shop were addressed as "Mr.". Among them, the guanshi, manager, had the highest position, and also a lifelong position. The dismissal of a guanshi was rare. Only when the old guanshi had died could a new one be hired. A guanshi was entitled to "person shares", also known

as "labour shares". He had the right to draw dividends at the end of the year like a shareholder. Consequently he was industrious and loyal to the business. He shouldered all the responsibilities in the shop as the shop owner hardly made an appearance. As was the usual practice, he lived alone in a room behind the portrait of Shennong. The general accounts book, money and precious medicines such as rhinoceros horn, antelope and musk were all locked in this room, and the key was kept in his pocket. Ginseng and pilose antler were not regarded as precious. At mealtimes the manager would sit in the last seat, the seat for the host, indicating that he played host to everyone present on behalf of the shop owner. Few people were able to rise to the post of manager. There were just a few apothecaries in the whole county. The manager of the Baoquantang was surnamed Lu.

Clerks of the second rank were called daoshang, whose job was to cut Chinese traditional medicine into slices or shreds and "drip" bolus. There was a great amount of medicine to be cut at the drugstore every day. Whether the yinpian looked neat and beautiful or not directly affected business. An adept eye could tell by merely glancing at the yinpian what level the daoshang was. A daoshang was a skilled clerk earning the highest salary and the best reputation in the store. As a rule he sat at the second of the "honoured" seats, the first being always vacant unless there was a

guest present. During festivals and on the birthday of the Founder of Medicine (said to be Sun Simiao, rather than Shennong) wine was served at mealtimes. When the manager raised the cup, the daoshang would drink the first mouthful before the others followed suit. The daoshang of Baoquantang was the best medicine cutter in the county. Should he lose his temper and threaten to resign, he would soon receive letters of appointment from other apothecaries.

Nevertheless, conceited and headstrong as he might be, he hardly ever got angry. His surname was Xu. The other employees were called tongshi . The tone of the term was somewhat queer, the stress being laid on the first character. They made out prescriptions and kept accounts. They were but common clerks and might be dismissed any year. Before one was dismissed, the manager did not say anything. He only arranged a dinner party in the last month of the year to express gratitude to everyone for their hard work in the past year. Whoever was invited to sit at the head seat would then roll his bedding and go to work elsewhere. Of course, he had already had an inkling and did not really get fired without a moment's notice. Those dismissed had such a presentiment after the Mid-Autumn Festival. Some of them had already signed agreements with other apothecaries at an earlier date. They quitted rather smartly. Others, however, would ask some people to mediate and linger in the store for another year. Those who stayed would always make a sort of self-criticism and pledge to work to the best of

their ability, but "twice-baked cakes are not good to eat." One who hung on to his place after being discharged could lose face and lower his position. Mr Tao of the Baoquantang was three times on the verge of sitting at the head seat. He had a persistent cough and asthma and was anything but shrewd. He was not fired after all because some of his colleagues had helped patch things up. To him dismissal meant unemployment. Who would accept a man coughing and spitting now and then? Another reason why he remained employed was that he too had his strong points. He never went home. Although in his forties, did not have to perform the duty of rearing offspring, for he was not married. What he had to do now was to be all the more diligent and all the more prudent. Whenever he was seized with fits of asthma, on being asked, "So you are not too well these days, Mr Tao, eh?" he would answer in the midst of his coughs, "As a matter of fact, I...I'm quite well...quite...well." Then he was wheezing again.

As it was, apart from the cooks and water-carriers, the store had virtually four ranks of people: guanshi, daoshang, tongshi and xianggong.

After being trained for three years and one solar term, the few xianggongs at the Baoquantang had completed their apprenticeships and left. The one at work now was named Chen. He had a big head, large eyes and thick lips. His voice was harsh and slurring.



王二把他的买卖乔迁到隔壁源昌去了，但是每天九点以后他一定还是端了一杯茶到保全堂店堂里来坐个点把钟。儿子大了，晚上再来的零星生意，他一个人就可以应付了。

且说保全堂。

这是一家门面不大的药店。不知为什么，这药店的东家用人，不用本地人，从上到下，从管事的到挑水的，一律是淮城人。他们每年有一个月的假期，轮流回家，去干传宗接代的事。其余十一个月，都住在店里。他们的老婆就守十一个月的寡。药店的“同仁”，一律称为“先生”。先生里分为几等。一等的是“管事”，即经理。当了管事就是终身职务，很少听说过有东家把管事辞了的。除非老管事病故，才会延聘一位新管事。当了管事，就有“身股”，或称“人股”，到了年底可以按股分红。因此，他对生意是兢兢业业，忠心耿耿的。东家从不到店，管事负责一切。他照例一个人单独睡在神农像后面的一间屋子里，名叫“后柜”。总账、银钱，贵重的药材如犀角、羚羊、麝香，都锁在这间屋子里，钥匙在他身上，——人参、鹿茸不算什么贵重东西。吃饭的时候，管事总是坐在横头末席，以示代表东家奉陪诸位先生。熬到“管事”能有几人？全城一共才有那么几家药店。保全堂的管事姓卢。二等的叫“刀上”，管切药和“跌”丸药。药店每天都有很多药要切。“饮片”切得整齐不整齐，漂亮不漂亮，直接影响生意好坏。内行人一看，就知道这药是什么人切出来的。“刀上”是个技术人员，薪金最高，在店中地位也最

尊。吃饭时他照例坐在上首的二席——除了有客，头席总是虚着的。逢年过节，药王生日（药王不是神农氏，却是孙思邈），有酒，管事的举杯，必得“刀上”先喝一口，大家才喝。保全堂的“刀上”是全县头一把刀，他要是闹脾气辞职，马上就有别家抢着请他去。好在此人虽有点高傲，有点倔，却轻易不发脾气。他姓许。其余的都叫“同事”。那读法却有点特别，重音在“同”字上。他们的职务就是抓药，写账。“同事”是没有什么了不起的，每年都有被辞退的可能。辞退时“管事”并不说话，只是在腊月有一桌辞年酒，算是东家向“同仁”道一年的辛苦，只要是把哪位“同事”请到上席去，该“同事”就二话不说，客客气气地卷起铺盖另谋高就。当然，事前就从旁漏出一点风声的，并不当真是打一闷棍。该辞退“同事”在八月节后就有预感。有的早就和别家谈好，很潇洒地走了；有的则请人斡旋，留一年再看。后一种，总要作一点“检讨”，下一点“保证”。“回炉的烧饼不香”，辞而不去，面上无光，身价就低了。保全堂的陶先生，就已经有三次要被请到上席了。他咳嗽痰喘，人也不精明。终于没有坐上席，一则是同行店伙纷纷来说情：辞了他，他上谁家去呢？谁家会要这样一个痰篓子呢？这岂非绝了他的生计？二则，他还有一点好处，即不回家。他四十多岁了，却没有传宗接代的任务，因为他没有娶过亲。这样，陶先生就只有更加勤勉，更加谨慎了。每逢他的喘病发作时，有人问：“陶先生，你这两天又不大好吧？”他就一面喘嗽着一面说：“啊不，很好，很（呼噜呼噜）好！”

以上，是“先生”一级。“先生”以下，是学生意的。药店管学生意的却有一个奇怪称呼，叫做“相公”。

因此，这药店除煮饭挑水的之外，实有四等人：“管事”、“刀上”、“同事”、“相公”。

保全堂的几位“相公”都已经过了三年零一节，满师走了。现有的“相公”姓陈。

陈相公脑袋大大的，眼睛圆圆的，嘴唇厚厚的，说话声气粗粗的——呜噜呜噜地说不清楚。



He rose earlier than anyone else in the shop. The first thing in the morning, he emptied and brushed all the chamberpots of his fellow clerks, and then left them in the toilet. After that, he swept the floor, cleaned tables, chairs and the counter, dusted the furniture and opened the doors. Doors in this area were all made of planks about one foot wide, fitted in the slots of frames and thresholds. Chen pulled down the planks one after another and set them upright against the wall in the order of E1, E2, E3, E4, W1, W2, W3, W4. Another task he did was expose medicine to the sun. At sunrise he placed the medicine cut and dripped by Mr Xu onto a round shallow basket, placed it on his head, climbed up a ladder and laid it down on the flat roof. Towards evening he went there again to take it back. This was his happiest moment of the day. He had a chance to look around from this high spot. He saw the roofs of many shops and houses which were pitch black. He saw green trees in the distance and slow-moving sails behind the trees. He saw

pigeons. He saw drifting and fluttering kites. He saw, too, miraculous clouds on July evenings, mysterious, flexible and varying in colour. They were grey, white, yellow, tangerine, or with gold lining. They kept changing, taking the shape of a lion, tiger, horse, or dog. Chen at that time was really happy and relaxed. Apart from that moment, the days appeared to him routine and monotonous. Still another task was to pound medicine. He walked back and forth on a wooden board placed in a boat-shaped iron trough. If it was pepper, he sneezed continually. He also had to cut paper. He used a large curved knife to cut stacks of white paper into squares of different sizes to wrap the medicine. Still another task was to print wrapping paper. He had two more routine tasks during the day. In the morning, he rolled many paper spills for smoking waterpipes. He turned the coin rack upside down and rolled paper spills on it one after another. Although no one in the Baoquantang smoked a water pipe, it had somehow become a practice to get them ready every day in case some outsiders needed them. In the afternoon Chen cleaned the lamp-chimneys. More than ten oil lamps were used in the shop, and all the lamp-chimneys had to be rubbed once a day. In the evening Chen spread poultices on pieces of cloth. He was doing that from the time when people began to light oil lamps to the time that Wang Er came over to sit and chat. After ten he placed the chamberpots under the clerks' beds and blew out the lamps. After latching the door, he could make his bed and

sleep. The clerks slept in the back side rooms, but Chen slept alone in the sitting room. After he laid down the bed board and unrolled his bedding, the small world was entirely his now. Before he slept, he would always recite a few passages from Medical Recipes in Jingles. Those working at the apothecary had to know something about medicine. Families of limited means could not go to the doctor when someone was sick. Thus, if someone came to the apothecary to state the symptoms of an illness, the staff had to be able to say at once, "Drink a dose of bupleurum," "Take three doses of Huoxiangzhengqiwan" , or "Apply some Qilisan". Sometimes he sat in his quilt and thought about his family, about his mother who had been widowed for many years, and about a Spring Festival picture of a unicorn and a boy, which had hung behind the door for many years. He thought and thought until he got tired. He began to snore heavily as soon as his head touched the pillow.

Xianggong Chen had been learning the trade for over a year now. He had burnt joss-sticks thirty times before Marshal Zhao and Shennong. It was his routine work on the first and the fifteenth of every month. Marshal Zhao rode on a black tiger with a golden whip in his hand. On his right and left side was a eight-inch-long couplet in gilded characters against a black background: "Golden whip in hand, he is coming with treasures; black tiger under his legs, he is bringing us riches." Shennong wore long hair and curly

whiskers. He was stark-naked apart from a wreath of large leaves round his waist. He had long fingernails and toenails. He was seated on a rock with one hand clutching a head of glossy ganoderma. Chen was familiar with these two idols and was most pious when burning joss-sticks.

他一天的生活如下：起得比谁都早。起来就把“先生”们的尿壶都倒了涮干净控在厕所里。扫地。擦桌椅、擦柜台。到处掸土。开门。这地方的店铺大都是“铺闷子门”——一列宽可一尺的厚厚的门板嵌在门框和门槛的槽子里。陈相公就一块一块卸出来，按“东一”、“东二”、“东三”、“东四”、“西一”、“西二”、“西三”、“西四”次序，靠墙竖好。晒药，收药。太阳出来时，把许先生切好的“饮片”、“跌”好的丸药——都放在匾筛里，用头顶着，爬上梯子，到屋顶的晒台上放好；傍晚时再收下来。这是他一天最快乐的时候。他可以登高四望。看得见许多店铺和人家的房顶，都是黑黑的。看得见远处的绿树，绿树后面缓缓移动的帆。看得见鸽子，看得见飘动摇摆的风筝。到了七月，傍晚，还可以看巧云。七月的云多变幻，当地叫做“巧云”。那是真好看呀：灰的、白的、黄的、橘红的，镶着金边，一会一个样，像狮子的，像老虎的，像马、像狗的。此时的陈相公，真是古人所说的“心旷神怡”。其余的时候，就很刻板枯燥的。碾药。两脚踏着木板，在一个船形的铁碾槽子里碾。倘若碾的是胡椒，就要不停地打喷嚏。裁纸。用一个大弯刀，把一沓一沓的白粉连纸裁成大小不等的方块，包药用。刷印包装纸。他每天还有两项例行的公事。上午，要搓很多抽水烟用的纸枚子。把装铜钱的钱板翻过来，用“表心纸”一根一根地搓。保全堂没有人抽水烟，但不知什么道理每天都要搓许多纸枚子，谁来都可取几根，这已经成了一种“传统”。下午，擦灯罩。药店里里外外，要用十来盏煤油灯。所有灯罩，每天都要擦一遍。晚上，摊

膏药。从上灯起，直到王二过店堂里来闲坐，他一直都在摊膏药。到十点多钟，把先生们的尿壶都放到他们的床下，该吹灭的灯都吹灭了，上了门，他就可以准备睡觉了。先生们都睡在后面的厢屋里，陈相公睡在店堂里。把铺板一放，铺盖摊开，这就是他一个人的天地了。临睡前他总要背两篇《汤头歌诀》——药店的先生总要懂一点医道。小户人家有病不求医，到药店来说明病状，先生们随口就要说出：“吃一剂小柴胡汤吧”，“服三付霍香正气丸”，“上一点七厘散”。有时，坐在被窝里想一会家，想想他的多年守寡的母亲，想想他家房门背后的一张贴了多年的麒麟送子的年画。想不一会，困了，把脑袋放倒，立刻就响起了很大的鼾声。

陈相公已经学了一年多生意了。他已经给赵公元帅和神农爷烧了三十次香。初一、十五，都要给这二位烧香，这照例是陈相公的事。赵公元帅手执金鞭，身骑黑虎，两旁有一副八寸长的黑地金字的小对联：“手执金鞭驱宝至，身骑黑虎送财来。”神农爷虬髯披发，赤身露体，腰里围着一圈很大的树叶，手指甲、脚趾甲都很长，一只手捏着一棵灵芝草，坐在一块石头上。陈相公对这二位看得很熟，烧香的时候很虔敬。

Chen frequently got beatings, as was common with apprentices. But Chen seemed to be beaten more than was his due. In most cases he was thrashed because he had committed errors such as cutting paper aslant, or breaking a lamp-chimney while rubbing it. The boy did not seem clever. His memory was poor and his movements slow. He was most frequently thrashed by Mr Lu. Not that Mr Lu had an exceptionally quick temper, but that thrashing was for the good of the boy, for making him somebody in the world. One day he got a thorough beating. When descending the stairs after getting the

medicine back from exposure to the sun, he missed a step and upset a whole round basket of alismatis into the sewer. It was Mr Xu who beat him this time. Mr Xu gave him a sound beating by means of a wooden door latch. The boy screamed with pain, "Oh, my! My! I won't do it again. Oh, my! It's all my fault, my!" And no-body could persuade Mr Xu to stop the beating. Everyone knew how he was. The more you tried to stop him, the more fiercely he would beat the boy. What's more, it was a big blunder the boy had committed. (Alismatis was not really precious, but cutting it was time-consuming for it had to be cut into copper-shaped round pieces of equal thickness.) After some time, it was Lao Zhu, the cook, who managed to stop the beating. As everybody knew, Lao Zhu was honest and upright by nature and in the employment of the store the longest. He went to work the earliest of all but hardly ever had a good meal. What he had was just the remaining soup and juice mixed with some rice crust after everyone else had eaten. His fellow clerks all looked at him in awe. He seized the door latch from Mr Xu's hand and remarked, "He is as much flesh and blood as everyone else. "



陈相公老是挨打。学生意没有不挨打的，陈相公挨打的次数也似稍多了一点。挨打的原因大都是因为做错了事：纸裁歪了，灯罩擦破了。这孩子也好像不大聪明，记性不好，做事迟钝。打他的多是卢先生。卢先生不是暴脾气，打他是为他好，要他成人。有一次可挨了大打。他收药，下梯一脚踩空了，把一匾筛泽泻翻到了阴沟里。这回打他的是许先生。他用一根闷闷的木棍没头没脸地把他痛打了一顿，打得这孩子哇哇地乱叫：“哎呀！哎呀！我下回不了！下回不了！哎呀！哎呀！我错了！哎呀！哎呀！”谁也不能去劝，因为知道许先生的脾气，越劝越打得凶，何况他这回的错是不小。（泽泻不是贵药，但切起来很费工，要切成厚薄一样状如铜钱的圆片。）后来还是煮饭的老朱来劝住了。这老朱来得比谁都早，人又出名的忠诚耿直。他从来没有正经吃过一顿饭，都是把大家吃剩的残汤剩水泡一点锅巴吃。因此，一店人都对他很敬畏。他一把夺过许先生手里的门闩，说了一句话：“他也是人生父母养的！”

Chen did not even dare to cry when he was being flogged. In the evening, after the door was shut, he sobbed for quite a long while. He said to his mother who was in the distant hometown: "Mum, I've had another beating. Don't worry, Mum. Just two more years' of beating, and I will be able to make you a living. "

Wang Er came to the Baoquantang every day because the place was full of bustle and excitement. Other stores were deserted after nine o'clock with just an accountant balancing the books and an apprentice taking catnaps. But at the Baoquantang there was a large assembly of people, all homeless bachelors. Among those present were also a few frequent visitors such as qiangyuan, the rent

collector, Bayan Har Mountain, the live-fish seller, Lao Bing who lit and prepared opium for others, and a man named Zhang Han, who was a relative and hanger-on of the Lian family, who owned the Wanshun Sauce and Pickle Shop opposite the Baoquantang. Zhang Han's full name was Zhang Hanxuan. He was frequently referred to as Zhang Han perhaps because since he had been reduced to sponging on others, the character xuan did not befit him. Zhang Han was seventy now. He was a spitting image of Voltaire, with a tapering face and a pointed nose. He had worked as assistant to a ranking official in his younger days, having been to many places and having really seen the world. He was a know-all. Take tobacco-smoking for example. He would tell you that there were five kinds: waterpipe, long-stem pipe, snuff, "refined" tobacco (vs. opium) and Chao tobacco. The last variety was never found in these regions. For alcohol-drinking, he could give a list of names like Shandong yellow, number one red, lotus white ... For tea-drinking, he would mention the Longjing of Shifeng and the Biluochun of Suzhou how tea Yunnan was roasted in a jar and how the tea cup for the Gongfu Tea of Fujian was even smaller than the tiny handleless wine cup, and that the tea was so strong that three small cups of it were sufficient to go with an entire leg of stewed pork. He was most familiar with Zibuyu, and Stories of Autumn Rainy Nights. He could tell many ghost stories. He knew how people released venomous insects in Yunnan and how people in the western part of Hunan drove

standing corpses home. He had seen, with his own eyes drought ghosts, walking corpses and fox spirits. He could not only give a detailed description of them but tell exactly when and where he had seen them. He knew people of all ranks. He had knowledge, too, of witchcraft, fortune-telling, astrology and physiognomy. For he had read Physiognomy by the Hemp-clothed Daoist Priest and Physiognomy of Willow Village and could tell people's fortunes from Qimendunjia, Liurenke and Lingqijing. He never made his appearance until about nine o'clock. (What he did in the daytime was anybody's guess.) People were elated from the moment he came, and he did almost all the talking the whole evening. He was a great storyteller. His stories all followed a logical sequence, with an introduction, development, transition and summing-up. He spoke in a rhythmical tone, rising and falling, with modulation and cadence. His descriptions were vivid and lifelike. Just like a pingtan actor, he would stop at a most critical juncture and leisurely puff at his pipe. The anxious listeners would ask over and over again, "What happened then?" "What happened later?" This was also a happy time for Xianggong Chen. He listened while spreading ointment. When he was too much absorbed in listening, the bamboo stick would stay too long on the oil paper and would waste a sheet of ointment. The moment he realized this, he would hurriedly tuck the sheet of ointment stealthily into his pocket. Nobody would discover it, and nobody would beat him for it.

陈相公挨了打，当时没敢哭。到了晚上，上了门，一个人呜呜地哭了半天。他向他远在故乡的母亲说：“妈妈，我又挨打了！妈妈，不要紧的，再挨两年打，我就能养活你老人家了！”



王二每天到保全堂店堂里来，是因为这里热闹。别的店铺到九点多钟，就没有什么人，往往只有一个管事在算账，一个学徒在打盹。保全堂正是高朋满座的时候。这些先生都是无家可归的光棍，这时都聚集到店堂里来。还有几个常客，收房钱的抡元，卖活鱼的巴颜喀拉山，给人家熬鸦片烟的老炳，还有一个张汉。这张汉是对门万顺酱园连家的一个亲戚兼食客，全名是张汉轩，大家却都叫他张汉。大概是觉得已经沦为食客，就不必“轩”了。此人有七十岁了，长得活脱像一个伏尔泰，一张尖脸，一个尖尖的鼻子。他年轻时在外地做过幕僚，走过很多地方，见多识广，什么都知道，是个百事通。比如说抽烟，他就告诉你烟有五种：水、旱、鼻、雅、潮，“雅”是鸦片。“潮”是潮烟，这地方谁也没见过。说喝酒，他就能说出山东黄、状元红、莲花白……说喝茶，他就告诉你狮峰龙井、苏州的碧螺春，云南的“烤茶”是在怎样一个罐里烤的，福建的功夫茶的茶杯比酒盅还小，就是吃了一只炖肘子，也只能喝三杯，这茶太酽了。他熟读《子不语》、《夜雨秋灯录》，能讲许多鬼狐故事。他还知道云南怎样放蛊，湘西怎样赶尸。他还亲眼见到过早魅、僵尸、狐狸精，有时间，有地点，有鼻子有眼。三教九流，医卜星相，他全知道。他读过《麻衣神相》、《柳庄神相》，会算“奇门遁甲”、“六壬课”、“灵棋经”。他

总要到快九点钟时才出现（白天不知道他干什么），他一来，大家精神为之一振，这一晚上就全听他一个人白话。他很会讲，起承转合，抑扬顿挫，有声有色。他也像说书先生一样，说到筋节处就停住了，慢慢地抽烟，急得大家一个劲地催他：“后来呢？后来呢？”这也是陈相公一天比较快乐的时候。他一边摊着膏药，一边听着。有时，听得太入神了，摊膏药的杆子停留在油纸上，会废掉一张膏药。他一发现，赶紧偷偷塞进口袋里。这时也不会被发现，不会挨打。

One day Zhang Han talked of predestination. He said that Zhu Hongwu, Shen Wanshan and Fan Dan were all born at the first cock-crow of the second earthly branch of the same day of the same month of the same year. "But following the cock-crow, " he went on to say, "their destinies fell into three different classes. High and lofty was Zhu Hongwu, who became an emperor; beneath was Shen Wanshan, who turned out one of the wealthiest businessmen; doomed to death was Fan Dan the pauper, who died of cold and starvation." He added that those who were able to develop their abilities to the fullest and were thoroughly accomplished in their careers all had unusual appearances or special talents. Liu Bang, founder and first emperor of the Han Dynasty, had seventy-two black moles on his buttocks—who else had that? Zhu Yuanzhang, founder and first emperor of the Ming Dynasty, had a most striking appearance from birth—his temples, cheekbones and chin all protruding like five mountains on earth rising upward. Was there another who resembled him? Fan Kuai could eat the whole of a pig's leg raw. Zhang Yide of

Yan slept with his eyes open. Even common traders with capital luck all possessed special qualities. It is the extraordinary person who accomplishes extraordinary things. To this, everybody nodded in agreement.

有一天，张汉谈起人生有命。说朱洪武、沈万山、范丹是同年同月同日同时，都是丑时建生，鸡鸣头遍。但是一声鸡叫，可就命分三等了：抬头朱洪武，低头沈万山，勾一勾就是穷范丹。朱洪武贵为天子，沈万山富甲天下，穷范丹冻饿而死。他又说凡是成大事业，有大作为，兴旺发达的，都有异相，或有特殊的秉赋。汉高祖刘邦，股有七十二黑子——就是屁股上有七十二颗黑痣，谁有过？明太祖朱元璋，生就是五岳朝天——两额、两颧、下巴，都突出，状如五岳，谁有过？樊哙能把一个整猪腿生吃下去，燕人张翼德，睡着了也睁着眼睛。就是市井之人，凡有走了一步好运的，也莫不有与众不同之处。必有非常之人，乃成非常之事。大家听了，不禁暗暗点头。

Zhang Han took a few strong puffs at his long-stemmed pipe. Then he turned to Wang Er, the thread of his discourse suddenly altered: "Take Wang Er, he must also possess some special gift that accounts for his prosperity and fortune. "

"...?"

Wang Er was quite at a loss at the term "special gift".

"It means unusual quality that is different from everybody else's. Do tell us about yours. "

"Speak up!" "Out with it!" Everyone encouraged him.

Despite the small fortune he had amassed, Wang Er was conscious of his own status and had never dared to appear arrogant or self-important. At the others' repeated pleadings, he said sincerely, "Perhaps just this. I separate passing my water from moving my bowels." Fearing he had not made himself understood, he explained, "In the lavatory, I always pass water first, and then have a bowel movement. "

At this Zhang Han clapped and shouted: "So! Feces and urine don't come out together. That is something uncommon. "

张汉猛吸了几口旱烟，忽然话锋一转，向王二道：“即以王二而论，他这些年飞黄腾达，财源茂盛，也必有其异秉。”

".....?"

王二不解何为“异秉”。

“就是与众不同，和别人不一样的地方。你说说，你说说！”

大家也都怂恿王二：“说说！说说！”

王二虽然发了一点财，却随时不忘自己的身份，从不僭越自大，在大家敦促之下，只有很诚恳地欠一欠身说：

“我呀，有那么一点：大小解分清。”他怕大家不懂，又解释道：“我解手时，总

是先解小手，后解大手。”

张汉一听，拍了一下手，说：“就是说，不是屎尿一起来，难得！”

This said, it was past ten thirty. Everyone rose to their feet and bade good night to one another. It was time to latch the doors. Mr Lu glanced towards the counter, only to find Xianggong Chen missing. "Xianggong Chen! Xianggong Chen!" he cried a few times. There was no response.

By this time Xianggong Chen was in the lavatory. Mr Tao found him crouching there when he went himself. However it wasn't the usual time for either of them to move his bowels.

说着，已经过了十点半了，大家起身道别。该上门了。卢先生向柜台里一看，陈相公不见了，就大声喊：“陈相公！”

喊了几声，没人应声。

原来陈相公在厕所里。这是陶先生发现的。他一头走进厕所，发现陈相公已经蹲在那里。本来，这时候都不是他们俩解大手的时候。

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