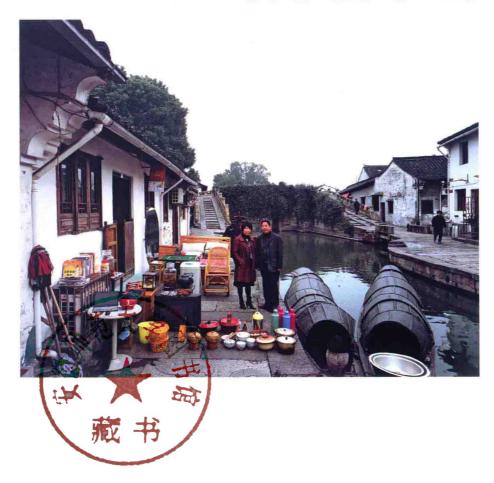


The Family Belongings of 母宏杰 著 Chinese People

中国人的家当



图书在版编目(CIP)数据

中国人的家当 / 马宏杰著;安仁良译. 一 北京:中信出版社,2015.4 ISBN 978-7-5086-4992-4

I. ①中··· Ⅱ. ①马··· ②安··· Ⅲ. ①摄影集 - 中国 - 现代 Ⅳ. ①J421

中国版本图书馆CIP数据核字(2014)第301603号

中国人的家当

The Family Belongings of Chinese People

著者: 马宏杰 者: 安仁良

策划推广:北京全景地理书业有限公司出版发行:中信出版集团股份有限公司

(北京市朝阳区惠新东街甲4号富盛大厦2座 邮编 100029)

(CITIC Publishing Group)

制 版:北京美光设计制版有限公司

承 印 者: 北京利丰雅高长城印刷有限公司

开 本: 965×1194mm 1/16

印 张: 20

字 数:517千字

版 次: 2015年5月第1版

印 次: 2015年5月第1次印刷

广告经营许可证:京朝工商广字第8087号

书 号: ISBN 978-7-5086-4992-4/J·66

定 价: 238.00元

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凡购本社图书,如有缺页、倒页、脱页,由发行公司负责退换。

服务热线: 010-84849555 服务传真: 010-84849000

投稿邮箱: author@citicpub.com

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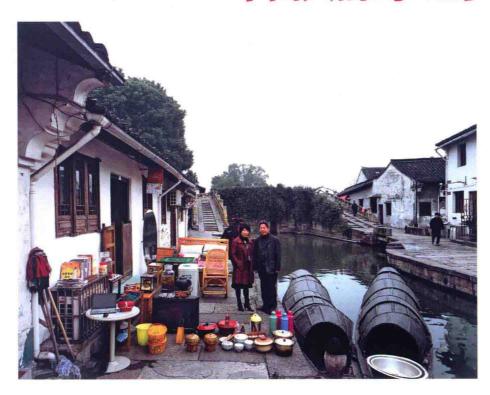
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图书在版编目(CIP)数据

中国人的家当 / 马宏杰著;安仁良译. 一 北京:中信出版社,2015.4 ISBN 978-7-5086-4992-4

I. ①中··· Ⅱ. ①马··· ②安··· Ⅲ. ①摄影集 - 中国 - 现代 Ⅳ. ①J421

中国版本图书馆CIP数据核字(2014)第301603号

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The Family Belongings of Chinese People

著者: 马宏杰 者: 安仁良

策划推广:北京全景地理书业有限公司出版发行:中信出版集团股份有限公司

(北京市朝阳区惠新东街甲4号富盛大厦2座 邮编 100029)

(CITIC Publishing Group)

制 版:北京美光设计制版有限公司

承 印 者: 北京利丰雅高长城印刷有限公司

开 本: 965×1194mm 1/16

印 张: 20

字 数:517千字

版 次: 2015年5月第1版

印 次: 2015年5月第1次印刷

广告经营许可证:京朝工商广字第8087号

书 号: ISBN 978-7-5086-4992-4/J·66

定 价: 238.00元

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凡购本社图书,如有缺页、倒页、脱页,由发行公司负责退换。

服务热线: 010-84849555 服务传真: 010-84849000

投稿邮箱: author@citicpub.com

马宏杰摄影作品中未完结的中国故事

马宏杰1963年在河南省洛阳市的一个工薪家庭中出生,这似乎意味着他也将会跟随父辈的脚步。他的父母是一家国有玻璃厂的工人。在那个年代,这是一份相当稳定的工作,收入体面,住在工人集体宿舍,孩子能够就读厂子弟学校。生活尽管不宽裕,但也能满足全家人的温饱需求。马宏杰中学毕业后也在厂里工作了一段时间。工人的经历在他后来的创作生涯中影响着他的摄影视角,使得他尤其敏锐地看到老百姓日常生活的兴衰变迁和艰辛。

与很多中国人一样,马宏杰童年的大部分时光是在贫穷的农村跟祖 父母和家中的兄弟姐妹们一起度过的。从孩提时起,他就有强烈的 社会正义感。他的祖父驮了一辈子粮食,背部严重扭伤,腰弯成 九十度,再也站不直了。马宏杰至今还记得自己上小学的时候,因 为看到大伯不肯帮祖父背一袋沉重的玉米而气愤。他记得当时的自 己多么渴望能为祖父母做点什么,为他们的生活减少一些艰辛。

像大部分当地人一样, 马宏杰的祖父母把家安在山坡上的窑洞里。从 土墙中挖出一个不大的开孔做窗, 再挖出一扇小门, 好让那一点点 微弱的自然光透过窗纸照进家里。马宏杰特别想从玻璃厂里弄一块 玻璃回来, 给祖父母置一扇像样的窗, 让屋里更亮堂些。善良的祖母 严厉训斥了他, 说即便家里的窗子永远安不上玻璃也比偷东西强。祖 母除了强调道德规范, 也特别向马宏杰灌输受教育的重要性。他就学 期间, 祖父母在一年之中相继去世, 他偷玻璃的计划始终没有得以实 现。尽管祖父母已经不在, 农村劳动人民生活的艰辛和尊严却在他心 中留下了深深的烙印, 其精神至今仍渗透在他的作品中。

马宏杰的父亲曾梦想去念大学,也考上了,却因为祖父患病而不得 不放弃这个梦想。为了照顾生病的父亲,他必须工作,结婚后有了 三个孩子,可梦想却从未在心中消失。马宏杰回忆起那满是冲突、 缺少温暖的家庭生活,回忆起儿时的自己多么渴望自立,他知道未来需要自己去创造,去追求。

那份追求便是摄影。通过镜头,马宏杰找到了一种观察社会的全新视角,找到了一种在他看来最有意义的对世界的题献。他1982年 开始用朋友的相机自学摄影,学会了冲洗胶卷、印照片,技术越来 越好,后来已经能靠为别人冲印彩色照片挣钱。两年后,他娶了一 位中学同学为妻,换到拖拉机厂工作,再没有更多的时间投身摄 影。他与妻子有了一个儿子,夫妻两人艰难地养家糊口。

在贫困时期,马宏杰不得不变卖自己的相机。但他并没有长时间脱离摄影,放弃不是他的风格。儿子三岁那年,他开始研习摄影理论,借来一台相机,开始向不同的平面媒体投寄摄影作品,想碰碰运气。很快,他的作品收到了相当热烈的反响。

在获得不少摄影奖之后,马宏杰终于有了信心于1994年向一家 报社递交了工作申请,从工人变成了摄影记者。在1997年的早期 国有企业改革中,这家报社停业了,而他也必须重新寻找生计。 2004年,他开始就职于《中国国家地理》杂志,他的事业上了一 个新的台阶。接下来的几年中,摄影记者的工作令他直面平常老百 姓生活的种种艰辛,重新唤起了他对祖父艰难生活的记忆。

后来的十年里,马宏杰因为工作任务走遍全国各地,拍下数不清的照片。中国文化的丰饶以及中国社会和经济的巨大变革给他留下了深刻印象,叫他惊诧,他开始自发地记录中国人当下不断改变的生活状况。

他的第一本书《民本》(2010),其中的黑白照片捕捉了中国人 在日常生活中的微妙脸庞。马宏杰的创作以起初的纪实性作品作为 开端,逐渐转变为现在的摆拍。他这一新的创作阶段在《中国人的 家当》里有最为集中的体现。

《中国人的家当》是一份敏锐的证书,包含了对都市化进程中的当代中国大环境多种多样的表达。它反映出物质文化怎样通过个人物品体现,这些个人物品中包含了人的故事,有人的生活和命运,喜悦和心酸,以及他们不断的失败和不懈的梦想。

在这一系列作品里,来自不同社会背景的家庭在于自家门口搭建的布景中,跟从自己家中搬出的物品一起摆造型,面对相机镜头。照片中,有男人和女人,男孩和女孩,婴儿和祖父母,年轻人和家长;有汉族人、哈萨克族人、回族人、黎族人和其他少数民族。他们中有的贫穷,是吃苦耐劳、心地善良的工人阶级,省吃俭用,竭力维持最基本的生计,也有小资新贵和富裕的农民。他们来自社会的各个阶层和角落。

他们的家也默默地参与着其中的故事,有命运的改变,有现代化, 也有那些不断被拆毁的当地特有的传统建筑。在照片中你能看到用 传统工艺烧制而成的陶土瓦和歇山顶彩绘斗拱、坚固的茅草屋顶, 和用泥土和稻草搅和做成的砖做的泥墙,还有竹墙、石墙、红砖墙 和水泥钢筋,以及鞣制的动物皮毛盖成的蒙古毡房,以及房屋主人 自行设计的现代化房屋。

他们所拥有的物品也同房屋一样,反映着其生活状态和经济条件。 其中有精美高级的物品,古董家具、水墨画、古色古香的珍奇摆件,也有极其平常的日常用品。有鸡和猪,驴和马,绵羊和山羊,还有机械工具。从农场到厨房,从田野到工厂,从渔网到晾晒干货的篓子,我们目睹着人们如何在一个剧变中的世界谋求生计。 中国的自然景观在这本作品集中也有它的一席之地,从新疆的吐鲁番盆地,到海南的白沙滩,从江南的水道,到河南的乡村,从一片片向日葵,到广受欢迎的主食玉米,从近乎荒芜的黄土地,到无边蔓延的芳草地,从竹林到落叶树木,从枫树到橡树,我们看到色彩的丰富和横跨中国土地的农耕收获,同时也看到了贫穷、干旱、土地侵蚀和环境恶化。

马宏杰的镜头给予了我们看中国的视角,既深人又宽泛,既客观又深情。翻阅此册,辽阔的、拥有多样性的中国便展现在你眼前,由此证明关于其单调统一的说法之伪,使我们重新审视对这个正在经历巨大历史性变革的国家的本质的假设。

如果这一幅幅画面传达了某种信息,那必定是这样的中国的故事: 既浪漫又悲剧,既讽刺又幽默。这故事中的人们既坚韧又认命,既 谨慎又野心勃勃,既谦逊又平易,既骄傲又不屈。更重要的是,这 些汇合的画面告诉我们,中国的故事是未完成的故事,前方的路于 我们是未卜的。这已不再是充斥着虚浮政府宣传手册、旅游指南和 满是正面和积极的电视剧的中国。这些画面暗示我们,中国的故事 是多样的,是未完成的,多种流派、声音和语言并存,共同讲述自 己的故事。这里有数不清的主角,他们既非英雄也非恶霸,不过是 不折不扣的普通人。

> 迈涯 博士 王艺潼 翻译

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Preface

The Unfinished Story of China in Ma Hongjie's Photography

Born in 1963 in Luoyang, Henan Province, into a working class family, it seemed that Ma Hongjie would follow in the footsteps of his family. His parents both worked at a state-owned glass factory. It was a solid living at the time, with decent pay, apartments for the workers, and schools for their kids. It was not a wealthy life, but it was enough to meet his family's modest needs. When he graduated from middle school, Hongjie joined his parents at the factory. This experience of being a worker would later inform his photographic vision and imbue his gaze with sensitivity to the vicissitudes of ordinary people's lives and struggles.

During his childhood, like many Chinese, Ma Hongjie spent a significant amount of time in the impoverished suburban countryside with his grandparents, and his siblings. Even as a child, he had a keen sense of social justice. His grandfather's back had been wrecked by a lifetime of carrying grain and wrenched into a 90-degree angle, making it impossible for him to stand upright. Ma Hongjie recalls his anger as a primary school student, watching his paternal uncle refuse to help his grandfather with a heavy load of corn. He recalls how badly he wanted to be able do something to make his grandparents' lives somehow easier.

Like many in the area, Ma Hongjie's grandparents made their home in a hillside cave. A tiny door and a small hole for a window were carved out of the earth, allowing very little natural light to make its way inside. Sometimes the window space would be covered with a piece of paper, and Hongjie yearned to bring a piece of real glass from the factory back to the village for them so that they could have a proper window and light. Upon learning of his plan, his scrupulous grandmother scolded him, saying he must not steal, even if it meant they would never have glass in their windows. In addition to stressing a strict moral upbringing, his grandmother instilled in him an awareness of the importance of education. Both grandparents died within a year of one another, while Hongjie was still in school, so he was never able to realize his plans. But the lessons about both the difficulty and dignity of the lives of rural laborers stayed with him, and that spirit is infused in his work till today.

Ma Hongjie's father dreamed of studying and tested into university, but had to give up that dream due to his own father's tuberculosis. He had to go to work to take care of his ailing father, got married and had three children, but never made peace with his lost opportunity. Hongjie recalls a home life so riddled with conflict and bereft of warmth that it made him yearn to strike out on his own and find happiness in his own pursuits rather than waiting for it to materialize through parental love.

That pursuit was photography. Finding the language of the lens, Ma Hongjie discovered a whole new vector for investigating society and inscribing himself into the world in a way that made it meaningful for him. In 1982 he discovered the power of the camera and began to teach himself to take pictures with the camera of a friend. He learned to develop film and print his own photographs and became good enough to start making money developing color photographs for other people. After two years, he got married to a woman with whom he had gone to middle school, and went to work in a tractor factory, leaving him no time to do photography. They had a son, and struggled to made ends meet in the changing economy.

During these economic hard times, Hongjie had to sell his camera. But he could not keep away from photography for long and giving up was not his way. When his son was three, he started reading up on photographic theory and borrowed a camera once again so he could begin to submit his pictures to various print media to see what could come of it and discovered that his work was enthusiastically received.

After winning several prizes from various magazines for his photographs, in 1994 Ma Hongjie was emboldened to apply to a newspaper for a job and made the unlikely transition from worker to photojournalist. In 1997, however, during an early wave of enterprise reform, his newspaper was shut down and he had to seek another position. Then in 2004 he began to work for Chinese National Geography, taking his career to a whole new level. Over the next few years, his work as a photojournalist exposed him to the struggles of ordinary people and rekindled his memories of the bitterness of his grandfather's life.

Over the next decade, Ma Hongjie traveled the country on assignment taking countless pictures. The cultural richness of the Chinese people, and the enormous changes taking place in society and the economy impressed him, and he began to self-consciously document the changing conditions of their lives.

His first book, Grassroots (2010), is a tome of black and white photographs that captures the many subtle faces of everyday life in China. Ma Hongjie's practice has now evolved from its documentary roots and has crossed the boundary into contemporary, staged photography. The strongest works from this new practice of his come together in this volume, *The Family Belongings of Chinese People*.

The Family Belongings of Chinese People is a sensitive testament to the incredibly diverse expressions of contemporary reality in urbanizing China. It shows how people's material culture is expressed through personal belongings that tell stories about their lives and fortunes, their joys and heartbreaks, as well as their persistent failures and tenacious dreams.

In this body of work, families from various backgrounds pose with the contents of their homes, carefully set up outside their places of dwelling, and face the camera with their personal belongings. There are women and men, boys and girls, babies and grandparents, young people and middle-aged parents. They are Han Chinese, Kazakhs, Hui Muslims, Li people, and various other ethnic minorities. They are poor, salt of the earth peasants, straining to eke out the most basic living, and they are wealthy bourgeois nouveau riche. They are barely middle class urbanites, and they are affluent peasants. In short, they occupy the rainbow of social stratifications.

Their homes tell tacit visual stories about changing fortunes, modernization and the character of distinctive local architectural traditions that are rapidly being demolished. There are traditional baked clay roof tiles, and painted, gabled eves; there are sturdy thatched roofs and handmade mud and straw brick walls; there are walls of bamboo, and walls of stone, walls of red brick, cement and

steel; and there are Yurts made of tanned animal pelts, and the self-designed modernized room.

Their possessions are poignant and pedestrian in turn. There are quotidian objects so banal that the very fact their owners saw fit to take them out to be photographed speaks volumes about the economic state of the families. There are fine and fancy things as well, antique furniture, ink paintings, and quaint curios. There are chickens and pigs, donkeys and horses, sheep and goats. And there are tools and instruments of labor. From the farm to the kitchen, the fields to the factories, from fishing nets to drying baskets, we see the ways that people strive to make their livings and their livelihoods in a rapidly changing world where their traditional ways of life.

China's natural world finds its place here as well, from the sunflowers that raise colonies of seeds-the favorite snack of the Chinese Everyman-to the popular staple corn, from nearly barren yellow earth to sprawling grasslands, from bamboo groves to deciduous trees, from maple to oak, we see a farrago of color and agricultural bounty from across the Chinese landscape, and we see poverty, drought, soil erosion and environmental degradation as well. The stunning geographic scope of China is also captured across the breadth of these images-from the Turpan desert of Xinjiang, to the white sand beaches of Hainan, from the waterways of Jiangnan to the countryside of Henan.

In The Family Belongings of Chinese People, Ma Hongjie's lens offers us a gaze across China that is both deep and wide, both impartial and yet compassionate. A journey through the pages of this book

takes us into China's vastness and great diversity, belying facile myths of uniformity and unity, and forcing us to question anew our assumptions about the basic nature of this nation as it undergoes tremendous, world-historic change.

If these images deliver any single message, that message is this: The story of China is at once a story of romance and tragedy, irony and comedy. It is a story of people who are tenacious and fatalistic, modest and ambitious, humble and unassuming, but also proud and unyielding. More important still, this collection of images tells us that the story of China is an unfinished story and the arc of history leads to a place we cannot yet know. This is not the China of glossy propaganda pamphlets, tourist brochures or well-intentioned mass media drama. Instead, these images hint at the ways in which the story of China is plural, and still unfolding-with decentered, heterogloss, polyglot narratives, competing narrators, and myriad protagonists who are neither hero nor villain but undeniably human.

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自序

我为什么要拍"家当"?

写这个序的时候,我正在飞往加拿大的航班上,当时飞机正飞行在俄罗斯东部的库页岛上空。我的好友赵荣生坐在那里读《金刚经》,这是他每天的必修课。我问他读后有什么感受,他说有一种归属感!是的,人的归属是表现在心灵上的。

这架航班上多数是中国人,其中大约一半是已经拿到加拿大永久居住权的中国人,另一半是去探亲旅游的,而我是借休假给自己找一个清静的地方去调整一下心情。

飞机上的加拿大籍华人去加拿大有一种回家的感觉(两边都有家的感觉),而且从这边的家回到那边的家很容易,也很幸福。

中国改革开放30年以来,社会变迁带来的环境污染和民生问题等,使多数有钱人开始"逃离"。

飞机降落前,服务员在为大家送饮料,坐在我旁边的一个中国人问苹果汁是中国的,还是加拿大的?服务员强调说是加拿大原产地的。因为有钱之后他们可以追求更好的生存方式和生活环境。中国相对单一的经济模式就是地产经济,即建设大规模的城市家园,让大量的人买房进入城市。然而,进入城市的基层市民依然在努力满足温饱,他们是中国经济基础的基础。

家当这个选题我拍摄了10年之久。

什么是家当? 我对它的理解就是"家里的东西"。

大约在5岁的时候, 我就跟着父母进了城, 住在父母厂里分配的20 平方米的房子里, 房间里有一张大床、一张小床, 一个方桌和四个 凳子,这些都是公家的,是不属于我们自己的家当。如果生活中还 需要什么家当,可以向厂里的后勤处申请。

后来父亲在寄卖店里花了10元钱买了一台电子管收音机,这是我们家的第一件家当。那个年代我父亲每个月的收入只有48元钱。

1977年,父亲花了100元钱做了一个两开门且带抽屉的大立柜,拉回来的时候家属院的人都很羡慕,那是我们家的第一件家具。

1978年,当时刚刚经历改革的中国的电视台正在播出一部国外电视连续剧《加里森敢死队》。我们家属院的孩子们晚上都往有电视的邻居家里跑,挤着去看电视。有一次我和弟弟被邻居给轰了出来。父亲知道后就去洛阳电视机厂买了一台电子管组装的黑白电视机,为了让电视有些颜色还买了一张三色贴膜贴在电视机上。一个月后,等《加里森敢死队》播完,父亲又把这台电视机给退掉了。

在父亲、大伯和爷爷奶奶分家的时候,父亲只分到4斤黄豆,因为家里只有两口窑洞,他就一直和爷爷奶奶生活在一起。直到1980年我毕业,我们家的全部家当加起来也不够800元钱。

因此,在家当的拍摄当中我选择的大多是中国的基层百姓,他们家 里本身就没有多少值钱的东西敢于拿出来让人看看。我也试图拍摄 一些煤老板或者其他有钱人家的家当,但我发现这很难,因为他们 不会像普通百姓那样敢让别人看到他们的家产。当然,这也是一种 隐私,我应当尊重人家的选择。

对一个国家来说它的财产就是子民。对一个公民来说,他的财产就

是劳作后得到的收获,这个收获的最后形式是拥有财产且被国家认可和保护。

这趟飞机的头等舱机票是3万多元,旁边的旅客告诉我说3万块钱坐 头等舱只为睡得舒服,不值。然而经过12个小时的飞行,当你睡醒 后会突然觉得能躺着睡上一觉的旅行真好,这时候你才会理解创造 财富和利用财富的价值。 登机回国的时候,一个中国人看我们拿着大包小包,便问我是回家吗,我说是。什么是家?家就是:你从这里走出去,还惦记着回来。所谓家当,其实就是看得见摸得着的"家"。

马宏杰

Self-preface

Why I Decided to Make This Series

As I write this, I am currently on a flight to Canada, passing over eastern Russia's Sakhalin Island. My good friend Zhao Rongsheng is next to me, reading the Diamond Sutra, which he does every day. When I ask him how he feels after reading it, he tells me, "a sense of belonging". Indeed, where we feel we belong is a state of mind.

Most of the passengers are Chinese, and about half are Chinese immigrants living in Canada, the other half visiting relatives or vacationing. I'm using my vacation to go someplace quiet and relaxing for a while.

The Chinese passengers with Canadian nationality status will have a sense of returning home, actually both China and Canada are home to them, and from the former to the latter is an easy and pleasant transition.

In the more than three decades since China's Reform and Opening Up, the resulting social transformation has led to many problems, such as pollution and economic imbalance, so that large numbers of more wealthy people have begun to "escape".

Before the plane begins to descend, the attendant comes around with the drinks, and a nearby Chinese passenger asks if the apple juice was produced in China or Canada. The attendant emphasizes that it's from Canada. After accumulating a certain amount of wealth, their new goals now are to achieve a better lifestyle and living environment for themselves. Right now a rather straightforward economic pattern in China is real estate, namely copious numbers of

urban high rises, so that more and more people may buy houses and live in the city. However, even though these people are still striving to put a roof over their heads and food on the table, they are still the basis of society.

It took me ten years to complete this collection.

What are "family belongings"? My interpretation is "things in people's homes".

When I was about 5, my parents took me to live in the city. At the time there was no concept of "buying a house", and we lived in a 20 square meter apartment allocated by the factory my parents worked at. The apartment included one large bed, one small bed, a table and four chairs. Since the factory was state property, so were these, and they were by no means our own. If we ever needed anything else, we could apply to the factory support office.

Later my father bought a tube radio for 10 yuan from the consignment store, marking our very first "belonging". That year his monthly salary was only 48 yuan.

In 1977, my father spent 100 yuan to have a large wardrobe made; it had two doors and several drawers, and when we got it home all our neighbors were deeply envious. That was our first piece of furniture.

In 1978, the newly reformed Chinese television system broadcast an American television series called Garrison's Gorillas. Every evening the children of our courtyard would run to the neighbors' house,