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中英双语版



作家出版社
THE WRITERS PUBLISHING HOUSE



新世界出版社
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Letter of Congratulations

I am happy to learn that a strategic cooperation framework agreement has been signed between China International Publishing Group and China Writers Publishing Group. I would like to extend my warm congratulations on this cooperation!

As a large group specialized in literary works, China Writers Publishing Group is a book and periodical publishing brand name renowned in China's literary circles for pooling substantial resources from eminent writers and publishing a large number of excellent Chinese literary works. As China's oldest and largest organization specializing in international publicity and communication, China International Publishing Group has rich experience in this regard, has established a sophisticated network of overseas marketing channels and has a solid contingent of outstanding translators in various languages. The high-level and wide-ranging strategic cooperation between the two groups, backed by their respective

advantages, will be of great significance for the introduction of top-notch Chinese cultural works to the rest of the world and China's extensive participation in world cultural dialogues.

The introduction of China's best literary works to the rest of the world plays an irreplaceable role in facilitating the communication between people of different countries, promoting mutual understanding and friendship, and building a cultural homeland to be shared by all mankind. It is hoped that in carrying out the spirit of the 6th Plenary Session of the 17th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, and in line with the requirements of the Outline for the 12th Five-Year Program (2011-2015) for Cultural Reform and Development, you will go on to publish and distribute worldwide still more excellent literary works representative of Chinese characteristics, styles and charm. Your mission is to disseminate Chinese culture in an innovative manner, with determination to make progress and through close cooperation, so that you can make new and still greater contributions to inheriting Chinese culture, carrying forward the spirit of our time, making Chinese culture better understood and recognized worldwide, and promoting the great development and prosperity of socialist culture.



Member of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee

Member of the State Council

March 22, 2012

中共中央政治局委员、国务委员刘延东 贺 信

欣悉中国外文局（中国国际出版集团）与中国作家出版集团签署战略合作框架协议，谨致热烈祝贺！


中国作家出版集团作为我国大型专业性文学出版集团，汇聚了大量高水平作家资源，推出了众多中国优秀文学作品，形成了享誉中国文坛的书刊出版品牌；中国外文局作为我国历史最悠久、规模最大的专业对外传播机构，拥有丰富的对外传播经验、成熟的海外营销渠道和多语种高端翻译人才队伍。两家机构依托各自优势，开展多层次、宽领域的战略合作，对促进中国优秀文化精品对外传播、广泛参与世界文明对话具有重要意义。

文学作品的对外传播，在沟通各国人民情感、增进相互了解与友谊、建设人类共有的精神家园中发挥着不可替代的作用。希望你们深入贯彻落实党的十七届六中全会精神，按照国家“十二五”文化改革发展规划纲要要求，以推动中华文化走向世界为己任，开拓创新，锐

意进取，密切合作，对外出版发行更多代表中国特色、中国风格、中国气派的优秀作品，传承中华文化、弘扬时代精神，为增强中华文化在世界上的感召力和影响力、推动社会主义文化大发展大繁荣做出新的更大贡献！



刘向东



二〇一二年三月

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Preface

Walking Tall with Hearts Open to the World

China's ancient civilization of over five thousand years, alongside today's advances, gives the finest affirmation for Chinese people to be able to walk tall with hearts open to the world. Yet for almost the entire last century, the Chinese people had seldom been able to show their true face to the world—which in a certain sense was unjust and not in keeping with the common values shared by all human beings. This omission becomes even more poignant in considering how this remarkable and marvelous culture, belonging to both the Chinese nation and to all of humanity, should have been shared by all the world's peoples. Perhaps due to ideological differences, or perchance even to technical challenges in translating Chinese characters, this failure to attain its place among the exquisite and living literatures of other nations is indeed regrettable.

The english-chinese bilingual edition of *Chinese Literature* has been launched with the mission to bridge this chasm. We will do our best in endeavoring to

enable people across the world to glean a fuller picture of today's China and her people by fostering understanding through present-day Chinese literature. Alongside *Chinese Literature*, the Chinese people can thus walk tall with hearts open to the world, enabling exchange of ideas with other peoples living on this planet, suffusing warmth to shared spiritual and emotional worlds. This is the dream of founders of *Chinese Literature* which we hope will be realized one day soon.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of three characters: '何', '建', and '明'.

Vice-president of the China Writers Association

Director on the Management Board of China Writers Publishing Group

序

在世界自由地阔步行走

中国是个古老的国度，五千多年的文明史和已经崛起的今天，证明我们是可以在世界上任何一个角落自由地阔步行走的。然而，近一个多世纪里，中国人很少以真实的形象在世人面前出现，这有些不太公平和不太符合人类共同的价值理念。特别是中国的文化，辉煌而灿烂，它既是中华民族的，同时又是全人类的，世界上每个民族都可以享受它；但也许是因为传统意识形态的不同，或者更多的是汉文字翻译的技术问题，使中国的文化尤其是同世界其他国家一样美妙和生动的文学不能被介绍到中国以外的地方，这是一件很遗憾的事。

中英双语版的《中国文学》今天问世了，它所要做的事就是期望弥补这样一个遗憾。因此我们倾力想把这件事做好，为的是让世界各国的朋友们能够通过了解当代的中国文学，更亲近和真实地认识今天的中国和中国人。同样，它还可以让中国人伴随着这本《中国文学》更阔步地在世界上自由地行走，同所有生活在这个星球上的人们交

流，温暖共同的精神与心灵世界。这是这本《中国文学》创办者的一点愿望，但愿这份愿望获得成功！

何建明

中国作家协会副主席
中国作家出版集团管委会主任

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Arrowhead Potatoes

SU Tong

When my aunt got home, the first thing she saw was those two roosters with snow-white speckles: one rooster sitting, the other standing, wrapped inside a mesh bag. They looked very well behaved. Seeing the roosters, Aunty realized that my cousin had returned. She did a careful inspection of the floor. Either, these were two roosters with clean habits or they had been starved for a while—the floor looking actually very clean. Aunty clutched the cockscomb of one of the roosters in her hand to check it, and said, “I hope they’re not carrying any bugs. All he’s brought home are two roosters. You can’t even make soup with them. And they don’t even lay eggs. All they do is make a racket in the morning.” Aunty went to the kitchen, and was about to grab a handful of rice to feed the roosters, when she saw a girl she had never seen before, in a peach pink blouse, sitting in the courtyard. She was scraping the skin off an arrowhead potato, using a shard of broken porcelain.

She thought my cousin had brought home a girlfriend. She became quite excited and a bit nervous at the same time. She retreated, as if she were a thief afraid of being caught, and slipped back into the kitchen. She then walked out again, smoothing down

her hair. She stood there and made some coughing sounds. The girl who was scraping the arrowhead raised her head, displaying a well-tanned face with rosy cheeks. One could tell right away this was a girl from the countryside. She jumped to rise from the small stool, and tried to put on a smile for my aunt. It was hard to tell whether this effort was required, just to put on a smile, due to her shy nature, or because it was a smile out of politeness. My aunt could hear her mumbling, in a slurred way, some sort of greeting. Given the heavy country accent, she could not tell what the girl had addressed her as. My aunt must have frowned without knowing. Arms hanging on both sides, the girl's eyes fell on my aunt and then quickly retreated. She timidly turned her eyes towards my cousin's room. Suddenly she called out for my cousin, "Comrade Yang, please come out, please come."

My cousin stumbled out with sleepy eyes. The moment he came out, the girl lowered her head and rushed straight into his room. Seeing my aunt standing there puzzled, my cousin put his hand to his belly and burst out into laughter, saying to her, "Why are your eyes open so wide? You think I've brought home a girlfriend? I am not that advanced yet in thinking – having a country girl for a girlfriend."

My aunt waited for him to explain some more. But he stopped short. He pointed to the girl inside his room, and then the snow-flaked roosters, saying in a more or less perfunctory way, "That's Gu Caixiu, from the Gu Village. She's in a bit of trouble and needs to stay with us, to get away from her home for a few days."

No matter how complex the story of Caixiu (literally, "Colorful-sleeve") might be, it should have all taken place in my aunt's house, and should have had nothing to do with us. But that same night my aunt, one hand gripping onto one of the two roosters, came into our house as if a fireball were chasing after her, saying that there was something urgent she needed to talk about with my mother. Well, the urgent matter was all to do

with Caixiu, and it really was not anything that urgent. Yet my aunt talked like she was handling a matter of life and death. That just showed how complicated the whole situation was. At that time I was still a small child, and did not understand all the intricacies involved in such a thing as “exchange marriage,” which was not an uncommon practice in the villages. All I could catch on to was that this type of “exchange” would be almost like the equations they tried to teach us in math classes, something like $x + y = x_1 + y_1$. If Caixiu’s elder brother wanted to get himself a wife, he had to marry his young sister to his future wife’s elder brother. My aunt made it emphatically clear that this man was quite a bit older. He was also an epileptic. During one of the seizures he suffered he had bitten off his tongue. So this was an older man without a tongue. At this point my mother shouted, “No way! A fine girl’s forced into marriage with a man without a tongue. Why, don’t the people in the Gu Village know they are also under Chairman Mao’s leadership? They’re not treating women as human beings. Her parents may be quite muddleheaded, but don’t tell me the local branch of the Party is letting this happen?”

My aunt said, “Now, now, you do know there’s no point talking like this. The Party branch is so wrapped up learning from Dazhai to run the village as a successful commune, how can they pay attention to a family making exchange marriages? The situation is now pretty difficult because the goose is already cooked; it’s a done deal because Caixiu’s elder brother has already married this man’s sister and taken her home with him. At the other end, Caixiu was coached by a group of educated youths, so she’s now refusing to marry this older man.”

My aunt then started telling us about an educated youth, whose name was Gong Aihua. She said, Caixiu had actually already made up her mind to sacrifice her own life for her elder brother’s sake, but it was Gong Aihua who wouldn’t have it. She had pushed Caixiu to make the proper decision about her own future. This Gong Aihua had actually

laid out a plan for Caixiu to run away. My aunt went on to accuse Caixiu's parents of being heartless, cruel and mean. They just wanted their son to have a better life, and had not even thought twice about pushing their own daughter into this burning pit of a marriage made in hell. But then in the next breath, my aunt kept blaming Gong Aihua for making trouble. How she just wanted to come out as the heroine doing a good deed to get all the attention. She was just that ambitious type of a girl. When her name had not been on the list of educated youths to be sent to the countryside, she actually volunteered to go, all because she wanted to be a star in the news. Then once she got to the village, she tried even harder to show how revolutionary and progressive she was. She was just using Caixiu as a stepping stone to get herself coverage in the newspapers one more time.

My aunt went on bitterly, "Well, I'm not trying to blame her for being this educated youth with progressive thinking. And I don't fault her for trying to save some country girl's future. But she shouldn't try to grab all the credit and attention, and then pass the trouble on for someone else to shoulder. This son of mine, this Big Meow, my son, he doesn't have a brain. He is always under this Gong Aihua's influence. She told him to take Caixiu home with him, and he just complied and took her home. You don't need to tell me: our house is so small and they're all boys, so what are we going to do trying to squeeze in a young girl from the countryside? Won't that start the neighbors' tongues wagging?" My aunt sort of stopped at this point, seeing that my mother, after accepting the arrowheads, did not seem to want to express any opinion.

My aunt knew that with my mother she had to put it all on the table, "We really don't have any space in our house to put up a bed for her. You have an attic in your house, and only your daughter sleeps in that room. Can't we put this girl up in the attic to share the space with my niece? Five days, only for five days. Please, I know, it is a