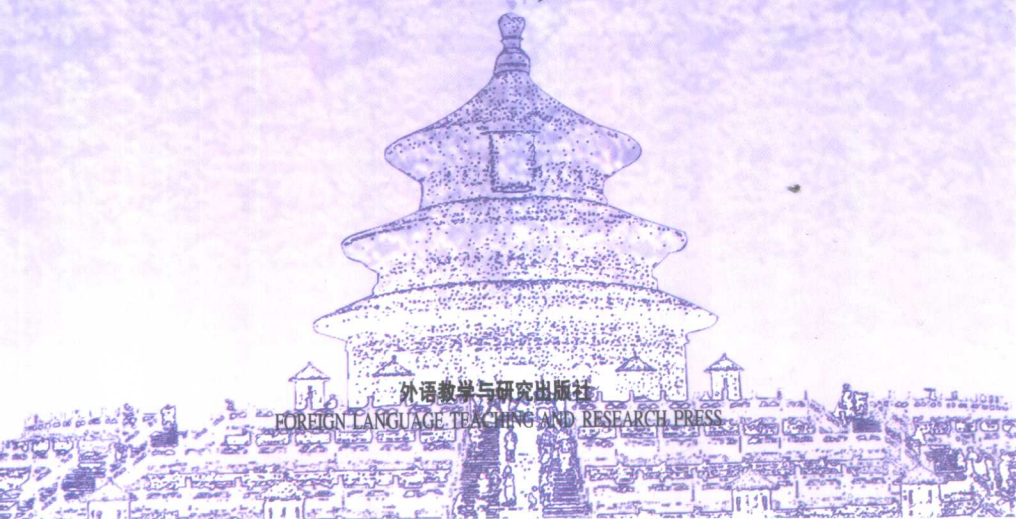


MY COUNTRY *AND* MY PEOPLE

吾国与吾民

林语堂 著



外语教学与研究出版社
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林语堂 著

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出版说明

我们现在将英语作为一种“世界英语”(WORLD ENGLISH)来看待;于是,英语不再只是单纯的一门异族语言,它同时融合着不同民族的表达形式并折射其多姿的文化。一个世纪以来,有过这样的一位位中国人,他们以各自令人惊叹的完美英语,对世界解说着中国,对祖国表达着赤忱。如今,我们相信,还有更多的中国人胸怀一样的向往,因为,跨越世纪的开放中国需要引进,也需要输出。

我们出版中国人的英语著述,正是为有志于此的英语学习者树一个榜样,为下个世纪的中国再添一份自信,还为世界英语的推广呐喊一声喊。

选择林语堂的作品重印出版,首先是因为林氏在向西方介绍中国文化方面杰出的成绩。他用英语创作的一系列作品曾经轰动欧美文坛,并且影响深远,其中有的被美国大学选为教材,有的被政府高层倚为了解中国之必读,一直被视作阐述东方文化的权威著述。其次还因为林氏高超的艺术造诣和非凡的文化修养。作为国际笔会的副会长,并获诺贝尔文学奖的提名,他的创作无疑为他赢得了国际文坛的巨匠地位,同时也为中国人赢得骄傲。再者,应是惊叹于林氏那“极其美妙,令以英文为母语的人既羡慕敬佩又深感惭愧”的精纯娴熟的英语;当然我们也终于让林语堂先生不再遗憾“……三十年著作全用英文,应是文字精华所在,惜未能与中国读者相见……”

《吾国与吾民》是林语堂第一部在美国引起巨大反响的英文著作。林氏在该书中用坦率幽默的笔调、睿智通达的语言娓娓道出了中国人的道德、精神状态与向往,以及中国的社会、文艺与生活情趣。在本书中他发挥自己“两脚踏东西文化”的优势,常用中西比较的眼光看问题。

该书于1935年——林氏举家旅美前夕——由赛珍珠夫妇的The John Day Company出版。赛氏亲自撰写序言,誉其为“最真实、最深入、最完整、最重要的一本关于中国的书”。美国的书评家

T. F. Opie 甚至说：“不管是了解古老的或是现代的中国，只要读一本《吾国与吾民》就足够了。”《吾国与吾民》畅销后，赛珍珠便邀请林语堂赴美写作。应该承认，本书无论从内容上还是语言上来说，都是我国英语爱好者难得的一本读物。但尤需指出的是，林氏的某些观点是与马克思主义相违背的，这绝不代表我们作为出版者的观点，希读者以科学的世界观和方法论为指导，慎审明辨。同样的原因，我们对个别地方的删节也请读者理解。

FOREWORD

One morning in 1905, or the 31st year of the reign of Emperor Guangxu of Qing Dynasty, two brothers set out by boat from their hometown Boa-ah, a mountain hamlet in Fujian province on the southern coast of China, for the port city of Xiamen, some sixty miles away. The boys were full of excitement and chatter, especially the younger one. Yutang was ten years old, and today, he was taking leave of his hometown and going with his brother to study in Xiamen. They were sons of Pastor Lin Zhicheng, who was born in the poor village of Wulisha. Pastor Lin was sending his sons to free missionary schools in Xiamen.

The Pastor was not a follower of convention, so the boys did not wear queues. Yutang was a little guy, deeply tanned, with a prominent forehead, a pair of sparkling eyes, and a narrow chin. Six miles later, when the skiff came to Xiaoxi, the boys changed to a five-sail junk, and sailed toward Zhangzhou on West River. There were paddy fields and farmhouses on either side of the river, and tall mountains stood behind them, clad in grey-purplish hues. Yutang thought it inexpressibly beautiful. After a day's journey, the junk tied up against the bank under some bamboo trees. Yutang was told to lie down, cover himself with a blanket and go to sleep.

But sleep was the last thing on the boy's mind. The boatman sitting at the junk's stern was sucking at his pipe, and between gulps of bitter tea, telling stories about the Empress Dowager Cexi, who ruled the court today, having put the Emperor Guangxu under house arrest for supporting the reformers at the palace. Another junk was tied up on the opposite bank, brightly lit by lanterns. A soft breeze wafted sounds of merrymaking and music from a lute across the water. Oh, what a beautiful scene! Yutang thought. I must remember this evening well, so that the sights and sounds will always be fresh in my

mind when I recall this night, however old I might be.

At the thought of going to school in Xiamen, his heart leapt with anticipation. He often went to watch the sunset behind the tall mountains which completely surrounded the hamlet. The mountain peaks were always shrouded in clouds. How did a person get out of this deep valley, he wondered. What was the world like outside? To the north there was a crack in one of the peaks, left there, it was said, when a fairy stubbed his toe on a rock. The world was so big that it boggled his mind. Two years ago, his father told him the first airplane had a successful test flight. "I've read everything I could lay my hands on about the airplane," his father said, "but I've never seen one, and I don't know whether I should believe it." His father also told him that the best universities in the world were the University of Berlin in Germany, and Oxford University in England. "You must study hard, young man," his father often said, sitting beside the boy's bed at night, turning up the oil lamp and smoking his pipe. "Study hard, so that you can go to one of those universities. Acquire an education and become a famous man."

My father often repeated this story to me. As I sat in his study, surrounded by bookshelves of his works, I knew that Grandfather's words were the inspiration of his life. In his 80 years, my father wrote and translated more than 50 books and became a world-renowned author. The *New York Times* said at the time of his death, "Lin Yutang had no peer as an interpreter to Western minds of the customs, aspirations, fears and thought of his people." Father was a novelist, essayist, philosopher, philologist and lexicographer. He also invented a Chinese typewriter. "But he was more," wrote Prof. Nelson I. Wu of Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri. "He was a total man, stubbornly going his own way through the criticism of lesser minds to become a universal genius."

Father was born in 1895, the fifth of six sons of Lin Zhicheng. The Presbyterian pastor, a self-taught man, communicated to his children a passionate zest for all that was new and modern from the

West, and decided that his sons must learn English and receive Western educations. With the help of one of his brothers and a loan, Yutang attended St. John's University in Shanghai. The main emphasis was on English. Yutang also studied theology, because he wanted to be a pastor like his father. But after extensive reading in science, he began to have doubts about Christian dogma, and changed his major to philosophy.

When he graduated from St. John's in 1916, Yutang accepted a teaching post at Qinghua College in Beijing. Here, he found himself surrounded by Chinese history, and he realized how small the confines of his Christian education had been. He knew that Joshua's trumpet blew down the walls of Jericho, but did not know the folktale of Meng Jiangnu, whose tears for her lost husband at the Great Wall caused a section of the wall to collapse and expose his dead body. Determined to make up for his inadequacy, Yutang haunted bookstores, asking shopkeepers what were the most important books to read, because he was too ashamed to ask others.

When he was not reading, Yutang tried to devise a better method for looking up characters in a Chinese dictionary than the prevailing Kangxi method, the bane of scholars and students alike. At the age of 23, he published "An Index System for Chinese Characters" for which Cai Yuanpei, chancellor of National University of Peking (Beida), wrote a preface. The work attracted the attention of scholars and was a catalyst for change. But Yutang was already dissatisfied with his method, and he continued throughout his life to work on improvements. These were finally incorporated in his monumental Chinese-English dictionary published when he was 77 years old.

Yutang taught at Qinghua for three years, then qualified to study in America. He received a half-scholarship to major in modern languages at Harvard Graduate School of Arts & Sciences. In 1919, he married Liao Cuifeng from Xiamen, and took his bride with him to Cambridge, Massachusetts. At the end of the year, his stipend stopped coming, and he had not enough money to get his Master's degree at

Harvard.

World War I was now over. China had sent some 150,000 laborers to France, and Yutang accepted a job at the American YMCA to teach the laborers to read and write. The couple moved to Le Creusot, a small town in France. When they had saved some money, Yutang had taught himself German, and they went to the University of Jena in Germany because the living standard there was lower. Yutang took courses and transferred credit to receive his Master's from Harvard. To the dean of Harvard Graduate School he wrote in 1920, "I do not wish to plead for any special leniency in giving me the degree. Nor am I going to be intellectually arrested myself after I should get the degree. It is for the reason of great practical utility that I wish to have this certificate. I believe that the Harvard degree will make my progress through the German University much quicker and easier." In 1923, he received his Ph. D. in Philology from Leipzig University, and returned to China.

The country was in turmoil. Politically, China was in the grip of feudal warlords who fought one another incessantly. Yutang, a professor in the English Department of Beida, wrote articles and criticized the corrupt and ineffective government. The feuding warlords fought on. Duan Qirui ordered the arrest of some 50 professors and newspapermen who criticized the government. Yutang's name was on the list. Two editors who were arrested were shot in the same night.

By now my parents had two daughters, my elder sister and myself. We left for Xiamen, where Father joined the faculty of Xiamen University as dean of the College of Arts and Letters. But, University politics made it impossible for him to stay on, and a year later, he joined the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the Wuhan Government, because he admired Foreign Minister Chen Yuren, whom he had known in Beijing. When the Wuhan Government was toppled in 1927, Father quit his job, and we moved to Shanghai.

Here, he began to write the enormously successful *Kaiming English Books*, a series that was adopted as textbooks for middle schools. With his founding of the *Analects* bi-monthly in 1932 in

Shanghai, Father made his reputation in China. The magazine specialized in humor and satire, but it was Father's contributions that most captured the readers. Poking fun at government officials, he once said, "Although you are an official, you still *look* like a man."

Father's lacerating wit earned him the reputation of *enfant terrible* and the accolade "Master of Humor". In 1934 and 1935, he started two more magazines, *This Human World* and *The Cosmic Wind*. Also at this time, Father was writing an English column called "The Little Critic" which appeared in *China Critic* magazine, as well as editing a Chinese dictionary in the style of the *Concise Oxford Dictionary*. At the same time, he was translating English works into Chinese, such as the biography of Henrik Ibsen and George Bernard Shaw's *Pygmalion*. And he was translating Chinese into English, the most notable work of which was Qing dynasty author Shen Fu's *Six Chapters of a Floating Life*, which was published in bilingual form in Shanghai in 1935. The author wrote about the idyllic life he led with his wife Yun, whom Father described in a preface as "one of the loveliest of women in Chinese literature." The story and the translation received wide attention.

Father's "Little Critic" essays caught the attention of Pearl S. Buck, who was living in China, and whose novel *The Good Earth* had won the Pulitzer Prize. One evening the two writers met. They had been speaking of foreign writers in China, when Father suddenly said, "I should like to write a book telling exactly what I feel about China."

"You are the one to do it," Mrs. Buck replied enthusiastically.

Father finished the book in 1935, and it was called *My Country and My People*... In the book, Father surveyed the mental and moral constitution and ideals of the Chinese people, as well as society, literature and the art of living. "China is too big a country, and her national life has too many facets, for her not to be open to the most diverse and contradictory interpretations," he wrote. "I can lay bare her troubles because I have not lost hope."

The politically motivated writers lost no time in tearing the book

apart, but Father was not bothered. "If a man must be a writer," he said, "he should have some courage and speak his mind." He had nothing but contempt for literary prostitutes who owed their living to political bosses.

"The book burst like a shell over the Western world," according to the *New York Times*. "*My Country and My People* is the clearest and most interesting dissection and synthesis of China past and present that I have read," wrote Fanny Butcher in the *Chicago Daily Tribune*. "One of the most important and satisfactory books yet written in English on the character, life and philosophy of the Chinese people," wrote W. L. Langer in *Foreign Affairs*. "No one who wants to know either old or new China need go beyond the covers of *My Country and My People* . . . The whole gamut of matters Chinese is here treated with a deftness, a frankness, an intelligence, a subtlety seldom matched in any work," wrote T. F. Opie in *Churchman*.

Father was 41. Success did not change him. "I am still a child, looking at this extraordinary world with round eyes," he said. "There is so much I must learn; everything arouses my curiosity. I have only one interest, and that is to know more about life, past and present, and to write about it. I would not like fame if it gets in the way."

In 1936, our family, which now included three daughters, went to America, intending to stay only a year. But when the Sino-Japanese War broke out the next year, we had to delay our return. Father was horrified to learn the 52 manuscript volumes of the Chinese dictionary he was editing, which he had not brought to the States, had been destroyed.

In New York, Father began to write *The Importance of Living*, one of his most famous books and a grand synthesis of his philosophy. It became the best-selling book in America in 1938, was translated into a dozen languages, and secured for him the position of a leading interpreter of China to the West. In comparing East and West, he found no difference so sharp as the attitude toward old age. "I am still continually shocked by the Western attitude," he wrote. "I heard an old lady remark that she had several grandchildren, 'but

it was the first one that *hurt*. ' Even with the knowledge that Americans hate to be thought of as old, one still doesn't quite expect to have it put that way. "

On the importance of the home, he wrote, "It has seemed to me that the final test of any civilization is, what type of husbands and wives and fathers and mothers does it turn out. Besides the austere simplicity of such a question, every other achievement of civilization—art, philosophy, literature and material living—pales into insignificance. "

"Dr. Lin has performed the inestimable service of distilling the philosophy of generations of Chinese sages and presenting it against a modern... background, which makes it easily readable and understandable," said *The Saturday Review of Literature*.

Moment in Peking, published in 1940, was a novel of broad canvas which began with the Boxer Rebellion in 1901 and ended with the beginning of the Sino-Japanese War. Like *The Importance of Living*, it became a selection of the Book-of-the-Month Club. It "may well become the classic background novel of modern China", said *Time* magazine.

Father's books were translated into Chinese and well-received, although he was not always pleased with the translations. "My regret is that I did not, through most of my works, meet my readers face to face," he said toward the end of his life, referring to the fact that most of his works' Chinese translations were done by others.

But he was too busy creatively to translate. After the war ended, Father embarked upon an adventure that was to wipe out all his assets and get him deeply in debt. He decided to build a Chinese typewriter that anyone could use without previous training. Because he had written and edited a string of well-received books, including *The Wisdom of China and India* in 1942, he felt he could afford this project. In fact, he had been trying to invent a typewriter ever since he went to Peking in the 1920s. Never mind that Chinese consisted of tens of thousands of ideographs while English had only 26 letters of the alphabet, he thought it could be done.

His solution lay in finding a better way to classify Chinese characters than the Kangxi system. He thought he had the problem solved back in 1931, when he tried to have a model of his invention made in London. But he had run out of funds and returned home with only 30 cents in his pocket.

Now, working like a man possessed, Father was up at dawn and did not go to bed until after midnight. He drew sketches, rearranged characters and redesigned his keyboard. In New York's Chinatown, he found a printer who could mold the characters. Then, he located a small engineering firm to help him with the mechanics and a workshop to produce the parts. Problem after problem had to be overcome, and the bills mounted. Each of the thousand parts was made by hand. But he had sunk so much money into the machine that he could not give up. As their savings vanished, Mother was horrified. But she knew her husband well. He was easygoing about many things, but obstinated about some things, and inventing a typewriter was one of them.

Fortunately, Father had a friend in antique dealer Loo Chin-tsai, who loaned him tens of thousands of dollars to finish the model. Finally, in May 1947, we brought his invention home. It was called the Mingkwai ("clear and quick") Typewriter. The machine had 72 keys. To type a character, one pressed the keys corresponding to the top and bottom parts of a character, and those with similar tops and bottoms appeared on a screen in the center of the machine. The typist then pressed one of eight printing keys according to the position of the correct character on the screen. At a time when computers had not yet become popular, his invention of a scanning screen was remarkable. The typefaces were molded around six hexagonal rollers. No larger than a standard typewriter, the Mingkwai typed 7000 whole characters and by combinations a theoretical total of 90,000.

The typewriter was presented at a press conference held at home, and received great write-ups in the press. Dr. George A. Kennedy, director, Institute of Far East Languages, Yale University, said that "the finding system is the most efficient yet devised, and it

may well be extended to dictionaries and other reference works."

Lee Tuh-Yueh, manager of the Bank of China in New York, said, "I was not prepared for anything so compact and at the same time comprehensive, so easy to operate and yet so adequate." And Father's good friend, the philologist Yuen R. Chao, simply said, "Y. T., I think this is it!"

But Father was deeply in debt. One day I came home from Columbia University where I was attending classes, and found Mother in tears. Although we were in touch with many typewriter companies, we could not hope for quick results. China was in the midst of civil war, and the largest potential market was uncertain.

Sometime later, when we were riding in a taxi and Father was playing with a cardboard mockup of the keyboard, he said, "The crux of the invention is here. The mechanical problems were not hard."

"Then, could you have just used this mockup to sell your invention? Was there any need to build the model?" I asked.

He looked at me for a few seconds. "I suppose I could have," he whispered, "but I couldn't help myself. I had to make a real typewriter. I never dreamed it would cost so much."

The Mingkwai is never manufactured, because it was too costly to produce, and China was in turmoil. But with the coming of the computer age, the mechanical problems of a Chinese typewriter were eliminated. In 1985, the Mitac Automation Company of Taiwan bought Father's "Instant Index System," as his character classification is called, and made it the input system for its computers. "It is my legacy to the Chinese people," Father said.

Father was invited in 1948 to be the head of the Arts and Letters Division of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in Paris. My parents sold their apartment in New York to pay some of their debts, and sailed for France.

At UNESCO, Father wrote memos, prepared reports and attended meetings. He found it frustrating and exhausting. "There are two kinds of animals on earth," he once wrote. "One kind minds his own business, the other minds other people's business. The former are veg-

etarians, like cows, sheep and thinking men. The latter are carnivorous, like hawks, tigers and men of action. I have often admired my colleagues for their administrative ability. I have never been interested in that."

He quit his job and moved to the south of France. He loved the simple life—sitting at a café and watching the fishermen's boats return with their catch, and going to market to shop for food. Life was more reasonable here than in New York. He grabbed Mother's hand and said, "Never mind, we'll start all over again. This pen of mine is still capable of earning a couple of dollars."

In 1954, Father became the first chancellor of the newly founded Nanyang University in Singapore. But, politics forced him to resign in a few months, and he and Mother returned to France. He was 60, but not feeling his age a bit. "I do not long for spring nor am I sad in the autumn," he said, "because my wife doesn't find me old."

They lived so simply that they were like children. He was writing again, and she was growing potatoes on the balcony. They took delight in the simple joys of fresh food and long walks. Later, they returned to New York to be near my sisters. In 1965, Father turned 70, and decided it was time to return to the East. A house was built for him on Yangminshan in the outskirts of Taipei, which he designed himself. He wrote a syndicated column in Chinese called "Whatever's on My Mind" (*Wu Suo Bu Tan*) which was read by five million readers around the world. In 1969, Father was made president of the Taipei Chinese Center, International PEN. He was nominated for the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1972 and 1973. At the time, he was working on the *Lin Yutang Chinese-English Dictionary of Modern Usage* with a small editorial staff in Taipei. The project was sponsored by the Chinese University of Hong Kong. A new Chinese-English dictionary was urgently needed to meet the demands of social and technological change.

The *Dictionary*, which Father called the crowning achievement of his career, was published in October 1972 with great fanfare. It was the first Chinese-English dictionary ever compiled by a Chinese

scholar. The *New York Times* hailed it as "a milestone in communication between the world's largest linguistic groups."

On his 80th birthday, October 10, 1975, friends in Hong Kong organized a big celebration. An even bigger celebration was organized in Taipei. When I met my parents at the Hong Kong airport upon their return, Father's eyes shone with gladness. His cup was full. The only honor that he wanted and had not received was the Nobel Prize. But he was his philosophical self about it. "Let us be reasonable," he once said. "We must have an attitude of expecting neither too much nor too little from life."

Father passed away in Hong Kong on March 26 the following year. Among the many tributes he received was one by the *Reader's Digest's* founder, DeWitt Wallace. Wallace published a memorial booklet of Father's writing that had appeared over the years in the magazine. It was dedicated to the memory of "an evocative spirit of vast range and accomplishment—this man for all cultures who so enriched our lives. He considered his dictionary to be the 'crown' of his career. To anyone who reads his works, it will be apparent that Lin Yutang's crown had many jewels in it."

The *United Daily News* of Taiwan compared Father's achievements in introducing Chinese culture to the West with that of Jesuit missionary Matteo Ricci. In an editorial, the *China Times* of Taiwan said, "Dr. Lin is the scholar and writer who possibly made the greatest contribution in promoting Chinese culture internationally in the recent 100 years. For some in the West who were not well-informed, they heard about Lin Yutang before they heard about China, and heard about China before they heard about the glory of Chinese civilization."

We took his body to Taipei to be buried in the garden of his home. It has now been turned into the Lin Yutang Memorial Library, and is open to visitors. Mother passed away in 1987 at the age of 90.

I am very pleased that the Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press is now publishing four of his most distinguished works,

My Country and My People , The Importance of Living , Moment in Peking and Six Chapters of a Floating Life in English.

Lin Taiyi

August, 1998

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