

LING LI SON OF HEAVEN



FOREIGN LANGUAGES PRESS



图书在版编目(CIP)数据

少年天子：英文 / 凌力 著

北京：外文出版社，2009 (熊猫丛书)

ISBN 978-7-119-05916-7

I. 少... II. ①凌...②关... III. 历史小说—中国—当代—英文 IV. I247.5

中国版本图书馆CIP数据核字 (2009) 第123496号

责任编辑：刘芳念 佟 盟

封面设计：北京维诺传媒文化有限公司

印刷监制：韩少乙

少年天子

凌 力 著

关大卫 英译

© 2009 外文出版社

出 版 人：呼宝民

总 编 辑：李振国

出版发行：外文出版社

中国北京百万庄大街24号

邮政编码 100037

<http://www.flp.com.cn>

印 制：求是印务中心

开本：850mm × 1168mm 1/32 印张：21.25

2009年第1版 第1次印刷

(英)

ISBN 978-7-119-05916-7

15000 (平)

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SON OF HEAVEN

江苏工业学院图书馆
藏书章



FOREIGN LANGUAGES PRESS

First Edition 2009

ISBN 978-7-119-05916-7

© Foreign Languages Press, Beijing, China, 2009

Published by Foreign Languages Press

24 Baiwanzhuang Road, Beijing 100037, China

<http://www.flp.com.cn>

Distributed by China International Book Trading Corporation

35 Chegongzhuang Xilu, Beijing 100044, China

P.O. Box 399, Beijing, China

Printed in the People's Republic of China

Preface

Literature may reflect the ethos of a country or a nation, while at the same time it can transcend the limits of time and space to most widely resonate a truly universal humanity. Literary works of art that move hearts may even inspire the compassion of strangers toward a people or country...

This “Panda Series” of books, expertly translated into English, compiles the works of well-known modern and contemporary Chinese authors around themes such as the city and the countryside, love and marriage, minority folk stories and historical legends. These works reflect the true spirit and everyday lives of the Chinese people, while widely resonating with their changing spiritual and social horizons.

Published from the 1980s, through more than 100 titles in English, this series continues to open wider the window for readers worldwide to better understand China through its new literature. Many familiar and fond readers await the latest in this “Panda Series.” This publication of the “Panda Series” consolidates and looks back at earlier released literary works to draw new readers, while stirring the fond memories of old friends, to let more people share the experiences and views of the Chinese people in recent decades. We express our sincere appreciation to all authors, translators and editors who have engaged in their dedicated and meticulous work over the years to bring out these works. It is their passion and endeavor that have enabled this series to appear now in luminous distinction.

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Emperor Shunzhi and His Family

Emperor Shunzhi: Named Fulin, of the Aisin Gioro clan, the first emperor of the Qing Dynasty following the Manchu conquest and the toppling of the Ming Dynasty.

Nurhachi: Fulin's grandfather, chief of the Jianzhou clan of Nüzhen, who gradually gained control of all Nüzhen territory, declaring himself Great Khan in 1616.

Abahai: Fulin's father who, in 1636, took the title emperor and named his regime Great Qing, reign name Taizong. From that time on the Jianzhou clan of Nüzhen was known as Manchu.

The Empress Dowager: Fulin's mother.

Prince Daishan: Abahai's older brother who helped Fulin's mother to secure the throne for her son.

Prince Jirgalang: As brother of Abahai, he was Fulin's uncle and one of the two co-regents appointed to rule until Fulin came of age by his late father.

Prince Dorgon: Abahai's brother and the second co-regent.

Prince Duoni: Named Duke Xin, the younger brother of Dorgon.

Duke An: Named Yuele, a Manchu prince.

Prince Jian: Named Jidu, the son of Jirgalang.

Prince Xiang: Named Bomubogur, the eleventh son of Abahai, born of Lady Yijing, Fulin's half brother.

Xuanye: Fulin's third son who succeeded to the throne upon the death of Shunzhi, becoming Emperor Kangxi.

Empress: Fulin's niece whom he married after he deposed his first empress.

Lady Shuhui: The Empress' sister and Fulin's concubine.

Lady Jing: The first Empress to Fulin, whom he deposed.

Lady Dongeh: Named Black Pearl, born of a Han/Manchu union, wife to Bomubogur before becoming principal lady of Chengqian Palace. She received the title Precious Concubine and was posthumously awarded the title of empress.

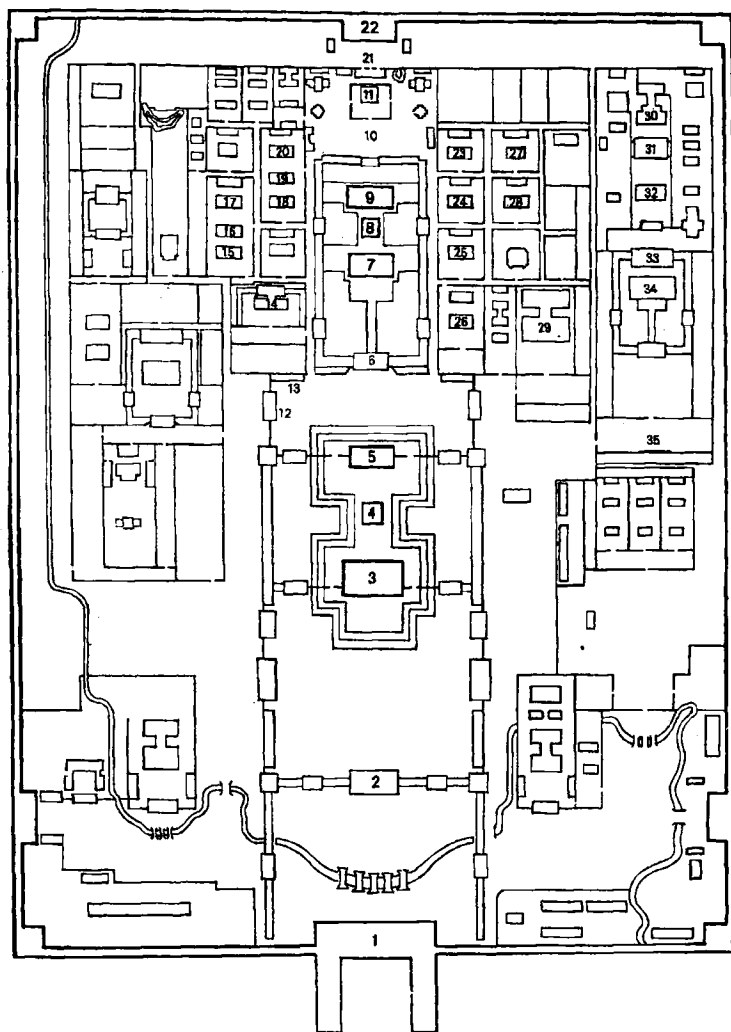
Lady Kang: Formerly Lady Tong, principal lady of Jingren Palace who received the title Lady Kang following the birth of the third imperial son.

Lady Duan: Principal lady of Yonghe Palace.

Lady Gong: Principal lady of Jingyang Palace.

Lady Ke: Principal lady of Yongshou Palace.

PLAN OF THE FORBIDDEN CITY



- | | | |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Meridian Gate | 13. Office of the Grand Secretariat | 25. Jingren Palace |
| 2. Gate of Supreme Harmony | 14. Hall of Mental Cultivation | 26. Zhaigong Palace |
| 3. Hall of Supreme Harmony | 15. Taiji Hall | 27. Jingyang Palace |
| 4. Zhonghe Hall | 16. Tiyuan Hall | 28. Yonghe Palace |
| 5. Hall of Preserving Harmony | 17. Changchun Palace | 29. Fengxian Hall |
| 6. Gate of Heavenly Purity | 18. Yikun Palace | 30. Yihexuan Hall |
| 7. Palace of Heavenly Purity | 19. Tihe Hall | 31. Leshou Hall |
| 8. Jiaotai Hall | 20. Chuxiu Palace | 32. Yangxing Hall |
| 9. Palace of Heavenly Tranquility | 21. Shunzhen Gate | 33. Ningshou Palace |
| 10. Imperial Garden | 22. Shenwu Gate | 34. Huangji Hall |
| 11. Qinan Hall | 23. Zhongcui Palace | 35. Nine-Dragon Screen |
| 12. Longzong Gate | 24. Chengqian Palace | |

Foreword

Dai Yi

Ling Li's novel, *Son of Heaven*, depicts the life of the first monarch of the Qing Dynasty, Aisin Gioro Fulin (reign name Shunzhi). His political career and his love for the imperial concubine Lady Dongeh reflected the myriad conflicts both historical and personal that beset his life. This popular and critically acclaimed novel won the Mao Dun Prize for Literature in 1991.

In her work Ling Li has striven to combine historic fact with artistic lyricism. Whether she was writing about a peasant revolt in the 19th century, the fall of the Ming Dynasty and the rise of the Qing, or as in her latest work, the youth of Emperor Kangxi, Ling Li is able to bring a bygone era vividly to life.

Any writer of historical novels is first of all confronted with the question of presentation. Since the subject is grounded in history, fact should have right of place. However, presenting fact as a novel takes it beyond being a recitation of dates and events. A novel is by definition a work of art, not scholarship. Furthermore art not only permits but demands imagination, fabrication, and exaggeration. A creative artist must have the freedom of a broad canvas where thoughts and inspiration may wander unfettered. For an historical novel to stick to proven fact alone would be to deny it the very essence of creative writing. On the other hand to stray too far from reality would be to divorce the work from the context that gave it life. Therefore the more a writer delves into the subject matter, the deeper the understanding of the era they possess, the more freedom they have in recreating it. Ling Li's strength as a writer is her comprehensive grasp of history, and her ability to burnish the truth with her art.

Ling Li not only spends long periods of time in libraries and archives researching her subject, she also delves into every conceivable corner of society, ferreting out remains of the past, re-discovering events that took place hundreds of years ago. For *Son of Heaven* she immersed herself completely in the 17th century, to absorb images, to experience vicariously the events of daily life for the nobility and ordinary people alike, to ponder her own plot with regard to historical fact and to re-create it all as a work of art. As a result her work is vibrant, the plot is full of unexpected twists, and is populated by flesh-and-blood characters. It is not only an artistic *tour de force* but she has accurately fingered the pulse of the times she is writing about and measured its conflicts.

Shunzhi came to the throne at the age of six and died at the age of twenty-four. The outstanding achievement of the early part of his reign was the unification of China. *Son of Heaven* develops around this core. When the Manchu swept into the central plains of China they numbered no more than a few hundred thousand. For such a small number to rule the much larger Han population was a monumental task. The Manchu had military superiority, and an uncanny ability to organize. However, they were a nomadic people, and preserved many of their barbarian traditions and practices. In particular, the oppressive practices of land appropriation, the persecution of runaway slaves and the order of shaving the front of the head caused long lasting racial enmity. In order to consolidate their power and unite the realm the Manchu could not rely on military might alone. They had to establish a correct set of policies, and change some of their traditional habits and prejudices, thus easing the oppression of the conquered masses. Emperor Shunzhi was outstanding in recognizing the needs of his time and striving to exemplify change. The latter half of his reign was marked by reforms and attempts at progress that propelled the Qing Dynasty toward unprecedented heights. Following upon his heels came Emperors Kangxi, Yongzheng and Qianlong, a period of one hundred

and fifty years during which the economy thrived, cultural activities flourished, and the empire reached its zenith. With the wisdom of hindsight, we might well say that it was Shunzhi who laid the foundations for the achievements of these future monarchs by his insistence on reform, by assimilating the learning of the conquered Han, and the scientific knowledge of Western nations. By employing able ministers, prosecuting corruption, he succeeded to a large extent in steering the nation in a new direction. He contrived to overcome opposition to his ideas and managed to abolish certain traditions to lessen interracial tensions, without sacrificing the support he needed. The land appropriation, the fate of runaway slaves, the corruption at the imperial examinations, the employment of Han officials, and the palace intrigues described in *Son of Heaven* are all authentic. The writer has grasped the direction and the characteristics of those tumultuous times and presented them with honesty and insight.

Shunzhi remains an enigma: compassionate but changeable; quick-tempered with a sadistic streak; responsible yet juvenile; weak and inexperienced; clever and eager to learn; chivalrous with a primal barbarity and simplicity lurking close to the surface. While his public life was a success, his personal life was a failure. The author has portrayed all this in a series of dramatic tableaux that throb with life.

Most of the events and characters in this book are real. The character of the German Jesuit Adam Schall von Bell, known by his adopted Chinese name as Tang Jo-Wang, and his connection with the imperial court are based on his autobiography. The imperial concubine Lady Dongeh was in fact the wife of Shunzhi's younger brother Prince Bomubogur. His humiliation, and subsequent suicide that paved the way for the Emperor to seize the woman he desired are historic fact. The main events of the plot such as the corruption at the imperial examinations, Shunzhi's devotion to Buddhism and his desire to become a monk, the palace intrigues of the manipulative Empress Dowager, and Lady

Donghe's elaborate funeral rites are also taken from recorded history.

Not all historical novels contain so many characters and events. In fact such detail is sometimes impossible to achieve. *Son of Heaven* is able to cleave close to the legend and the facts of its central character because this dramatic era, populated by larger than life characters, is well-documented, and the author with her deep sensibility to history, had the courage and vision to retain or discard according to the needs of her art.

Son of Heaven is an important milestone in Ling Li's career.

Dai Yi was born in Changshu, Jiangsu Province in 1926. A graduate of the History Department of Peking University, he is currently Director of the Research Institute of Qing-dynasty History at the People's University. He is also Director of the Chinese History Association, Academic Critic of the State Council, and a delegate to the National People's Congress, in addition to being author of many books on the subject of the Qing Dynasty and recent Chinese history.

Prologue

A broad plain stretching east to west, criss-crossed by mighty mountain ranges and the rivers, Luan, Bai, and Qinglong, separates Shanhaiguan from the capital. The Great Wall meanders across the mountain chain known as Yanshan. Where the mountains and the rivers meet lies the prefecture of Yongping. In this tenth year of the reign of Shunzhi, the Manchu had conquered eighty percent of all under Heaven. However, the adherents of the fallen Ming Dynasty still clung to a corner of the southwest and Zheng Chenggong's* forces continued their desperate struggle on the high seas to the southeast. But to Yongping Prefecture in the far north, war and the chaos it engendered were but remote rumblings. The harvest was in, and the first frost covered the ground. It was a time of rejoicing; a time of the temple fair. Worshippers and fun-seekers alike swarmed from all around to the famous Dongyue Temple in Hongqiao Town.

Soon after daybreak pedlars began setting up their stalls outside Dongyue Temple and at the crossroads leading to the wide countryside. Their customers were not the devout, but idlers and curiosity seekers. For the temple fair was a great melting pot of peoples. Hans, in their cross-cut or stiff-collared gowns popular in the Ming Dynasty, felt hats and shoes, whom Manchus considered "barbarian", mingled with Manchus and Mongolians. In their turn, the Hans referred to

*After the fall of the Ming regime, Zheng Chenggong began his anti-Qing activities in 1646 and attacked the coastal areas of Zhenjiang and the lower Yangtze River. In 1661, he sailed across the sea to Taiwan when he expelled the Dutch colonialists and set up regime.