

野马重返卡拉麦里

张赫凡 著

——戈壁女孩手记



新疆青少年出版社

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自序

我是 21 岁大学毕业后从事新疆野马保护工作的,作为野马中心惟一的一名女技术人员,我开始了与先行者们一道守护野马的未来。

野马曾经是这样的一种动物:它的祖辈栖息在中国,却因沙俄军官普热瓦尔斯基 1878 年首次在新疆奇台古城至巴里坤的戈壁上猎获了野马标本而被冠以一个外国名字——普氏野马。它以其自身漫长的演化史,奠定了达尔文进化论的基础,又因为 6000 万年的古老基因而被人们视为巨大的宝库;它的雄姿曾纵横于西部广袤的大地,后代却远离故土,流落在世界各地;它被人类驯化,最终被文明逼仄得无处容身,在野外可悲地灭绝;值得庆幸的是,野马终于等到了命运的转机,建于 1986 年的吉木萨尔县老台乡西侧荒滩上的新疆野马繁殖研究中心成为它们再次回归荒原的起点。

普氏野马原产于我国新疆的准噶尔盆地和蒙古国的干旱荒漠草原地带,因此又被称为蒙古野马,《中华人民共和国野生动物保护法》将普氏野马列为国家一级保护动物。

野马从 6000 万年前跟狐狸差不多大小进化到现在,成为地球上惟一存活的野生马种。它是生物进化的活标本,对人类寻求生物进化规律、发展生物基因的研究有很大价值。同时,野马不仅在维系生物群落结构与功能的完整性,植物、动物相互作用和协同进化上发挥着重要作用,而且在文化、艺术、美术和观赏方面均充当了不可替代的角色。但目前来说,野马在野外已经灭绝了,仅存的 1000 余匹又散落在世界各地。数量稀少、基因古老、血统纯正、无野生状态,这些特点使野马已经成为比大熊猫更珍贵的物种。人类的子孙后代能否看到真正的野马,现在还是个问号。这是人类过度和盲目利用自然资源,不尊重科学和自然规律导致的恶果。

目前,这些被关进围栏里一百多年的养尊处优的野马们已经处在了一个物种生死存亡的重大关口。在几千万年的自然选择中它们是当之无愧的佼佼者,而现在它们又得面临一次生死抉择。

为了拯救普氏野马这一濒危物种,实现其在原生地回归大自然、重建野生种群的目标,经国际保护组织建议,1985 年起我国先后从英国、德国、美国引进 18 匹野马,在新疆建立野马繁殖研究中心,开始了野马的饲养、繁殖和科研工作。从中心建立到现在,这些背井离乡的“海外游子”对故乡的生态环境表现出了极强的适应性,野马在故乡度过了适应关、繁殖成活关、子一代、子二代和子三代繁殖关,成功地繁殖了四代野马,繁育野马 200 多匹,成活率达 80% 以上,居世界首位。新疆野马繁殖研究中心已成为亚洲第一、世界第二大的野马饲养繁殖研究基地。

2001 年 8 月 28 日,27 匹野马被放归野外,实现了我国第一次野马野放实验的尝试。这个里程碑式的起步标志着我国野生动物保护工作已从单纯的物种异地保护阶段发展到以物种回归自然为代表的野外种群恢复阶段。这是惊世之举,国际社会都在高度关注。

辉煌的背后凝聚了无数默默奉献者的艰辛。

新疆野马中心地处大漠戈壁,空旷孤寂,远离都市,自然环境十分恶劣,如同被现代文明遗忘的小村落一般。年轻活泼的我也像是被困在围栏里的野马一样,背负着常人难以想象的痛苦和压力。多年的青春守望中,我对野马有了深厚的感情,它们就像是自己的老朋友一样。在我无力承受孤独和痛苦时就会到马舍去看野马,每当它们友好地奔向我、亲昵地啃咬我的衣襟时,我的心灵顿时得到了莫大的安慰。我觉得它们虽然不言不语,但仿佛能够看透我的内心,让我觉得自己冥冥之中与野马有着不解之缘。所以从一开始,我就不把野马看作是纯粹的动物,而是把它们当作极富灵性并有着丰富情感的生灵去关爱、去了解,与它们进行心与心的交流。通过观察,我发现野马有着很强的社会性,也像人类社会一样存在着等级,一个家庭组织中也有着尊卑贵贱之分,实行着家长制管理,野马之间也会为了争权夺势、娶妻纳妾发生血腥的搏斗,它们也有着动人的爱情、揪心的离别和泣泪的母爱。

多年来,我已熟知所有的野马,知道它们谁是父亲,谁是母亲,兄弟姐妹又是谁,每匹野马的性格怎么样,何时谈的恋爱,何时成家生子……所有这一切我都了然于胸。我们之间有着难以言传的心灵感应,我可以感受到它们的喜怒哀乐,尤其是对这些自由高傲的生命被长年囚禁的痛苦感同身受。

我禁不住要写日记,写养马人的寂寞,写我的曲折心路,写野马家族的悲欢离合。8年来,我已写下30余万字的日记及观察记录。在此,我从中整理了野马家族及我与野马的故事奉献给所有关爱野生动物的朋友们。我将这些昔日在荒原上奔驰的神秘部落的生活呈现在大家面前,是希望有更多的人来关注野马,关注它们坎坷的命运,因为野马的命运和人类的命运息息相关。我也希望会有人关注戈壁荒原上守望野马的那些年轻的心灵,关注他们的渴望和追求。

如果这些文字能够达到这个目的,我就心满意足了。

Prologue

Immediately after I graduated from the college, I joined the great cause of wild horse protection in Xinjiang. At that time, I was only twenty-one years old. As the only female technician at the Wild Horse Center, I would guard the future of the wild horses with my forerunners.

The wild horses have such a history: they had been lived in China from the time of their ancestors; however, they got the foreign name of Przewalski Horse just because it was Przewalski, a Russian scholar, who first caught their specimen in the Gobi desert between the ancient cities of Qitai and Balikun, Xinjiang, in 1878. They had once galloped across the vast land in the west. But their offsprings were scattered around the world in places far from their homeland. They had been domesticated by man; however, they were finally driven to the corner of tragic extinction in the wild by civilization. With their long history of evolution, they lay the foundation of Darwin's theory of evolution and were considered to be a great treasure for their genes were as old as sixty million years. It is felicitous that the wild horses have finally come to the turning point of their destiny: the Wild Horse Center was set up on the barren northwest to the town of Laotai, Jimsar county, in 1986. It covered 600 hectares and

would be the starting point of the wild horses' journey back to the wilderness.

Przewalski Horses are also known as Mongolian Wild Horses, for they lived originally in the Junggar Basin in Xinjiang, China and the droughty pastures and deserts in the People's Republic of Mongolia. They are listed among those animals under the first grade protection by the Wild Animal Protection Act of PRC.

Sixty million years ago, the Przewalski Horses were just as big as the foxes today. After the long evolution, they are now the only specimens of wild horses living on the earth. They are the living specimens of evolution, and are of great value in our search for the secrets of evolution and development of genes. The wild horses also play a great role in the fields of culture and arts as well as in keeping the integrity of the structure and function of biological community, insuring the interaction and coordinated evolution of plants and animals.

However, as far as today, the wild horses are extinct in the wild, which is one of the tragic results of man's ignoring the laws of science and nature and over-exploitation of natural resources. The only living horses, with a number of over 1,000, are scattered all around the world, leaving people the question whether our offsprings could see the real wild horses. The wild horses, with none of them living in the wild and featuring their small number and pure bloodline, have become a kind of animal even more precious than the giant pandas.

These wild horses have now come to a critical point of survival after more than 100 years of affluent life behind the bars. They have been a winner in tens of thousands of years of natural evolution, but now, they have to make their choice of fate again.

In efforts to save the endangered Przewalski Horses and realize the final goal of sending them back to the nature, since 1985, China has introduced 18 horses from Britain, Germany and the United States, following suggestions of international protection or-

ganizations. The horses have been kept in the Wild Horse Center of Xinjiang, where the breeding and research work have been going on. Since the establishment of the Center, these "lost children" have showed great adaptability to the natural environment of the homeland from which they have been away for such a long time. They have gone through all the critical stages including the adaptation and the reproduction of the first three generations. We have successfully bred them up to the fourth generation, increasing their numbers by more than 200, with a living rate of 80%. As the largest of its kind in Asia, the Center has become the second largest wild horse breeding and research base.

On August 28, 2001, 27 horses were sent back to the wild. This is the first wild horse releasing experiment in China. This event is a milestone in China's wild life preservation, indicating the advance from pure protection to the restoration of wild species.

Behind the great achievements are the physical toiling and spiritual sufferings of the countless dedicators.

The Center is located deep in the harsh environment of the vast Gobi desert. Far from major cities, it is just like a small village forgotten by modern civilizations. When I was here for the first time, young and lively, I came under unimaginable pressure just like the horses behind the bars. After years of life with the wild horses, I now feel such a deep feeling for them that they are just like my close friends. I would always go to see the horses when I cannot bear the loneliness and anguish. When they come to me, nibbling at my clothes, I feel great relief from the bottom of my heart. Though they can't speak, I feel like that they could see through my mind, making me believe that we are predestined soul mates. So, I have never taken them as pure animals from the very beginning. Instead, I have been trying my best to love and understand them with my heart as creatures bestowed with beautiful souls and emotions. After my observation, I find that the wild horses are animals with strong characteristics of

sociality. Just like human beings, they live in family herds consisted of noble and humble members in different ranks. The herds are under patriarch rules. There could be bloody fights between the stallions for privilege or concubines. Between them, you could also find stories of moving love, heart-breaking farewell, and tear jerking affections of the mother for her children.

After so many years, I have been familiar with every single horse here. I know the father, the mother as well as their offsprings. What are their respective tempers? When did they fall in love? When did they have their first baby? I am crystal clear with all the answers. We have that kind of unspeakable telepathy that I could touch every bit of their sentiment, happiness as well as sorrow. Especially, I have a heart-to-heart understanding of their afflictions as souls in captivity which were once so proud and free.

I could not help writing diaries, keeping a record of the loneliness of the horsemen, my own zigzagging emotions, as well as the happiness and sorrow of the wild horse family. In eight years, I have written more than 300,000 words. Here, my dear friends, please allow me to compile the book from my diaries and present to you the stories of the wild horse family as well as those between them and me. I will show you the life of the mysterious herds which had once been galloping all around the wild lands. I do this in hope of that there will be more and more people caring about them and about their life filled with frustrations, for the destiny of wild horses is closely connected with that of us. I also hope that, after reading this book, someone would notice the young hearts protecting the wild horses on the Gobi desert and get some understanding of their yearnings and aspirations.

I would feel greatly satisfied if this book could serve that humble aim.

●第一批放归卡拉麦里荒原的野马。

