

My Country and My People

吾国与吾民

林语堂 著

黄嘉德 译

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赛珍珠序 /007

INTRODUCTION

自序 /014

PREFACE

上部：基本要素 Part One: Bases

导言 /018

PROLOGUE

第一章 中国人民

Chapter One The Chinese People

一 南方与北方 /036

I. NORTH AND SOUTH

二 退化 /047

II. DEGENERATION

三 新血统之混入 /053

III. INFUSION OF NEW BLOOD

四 文化之巩固作用 /059

IV. CULTURAL STABILITY

五 民族的童年 /066

V. RACIAL YOUTH

第二章 中国人之德性

Chapter Two The Chinese Character

一 圆熟 /070

I. MELLOWNESS

二 忍耐 /075

II. PATIENCE

三 无可无不可 /078

III. INDIFFERENCE

四 老猾俏皮 /083

IV. OLD ROGUERY

五 和平 /091

V. PACIFISM

六 知足 /097

VI. CONTENTMENT

七 幽默 /103

VII. HUMOR

八 保守性 /111

VIII. CONSERVATISM

第三章 中国人的心灵

Chapter Three The Chinese Mind

一 智慧 /116

I. INTELLIGENCE

二 女性型 /121

II. FEMININITY

三 缺乏科学精神 /127

III. LACK OF SCIENCE

四 逻辑 /131

IV. LOGIC

五 直觉 /136

V. INTUITION

六 拟想 /140

VI. IMAGINATION

第四章 人生之理想

Chapter Four Ideals of Life

一 中国的人文主义 /150

I. CHINESE HUMANISM

二 宗教 /154

II. RELIGION

三 中庸之道 /163

III. THE DOCTRINE OF THE GOLDEN MEAN

四 道教 /172

IV. TAOISM

五 佛教 /182

V. BUDDHISM

下部：生活

Part Two: Life

导 言 /196

PROLOGUE

第五章 妇女生活

Chapter Five Woman's Life

一 女性之从属地位 /200

I. THE SUBJECTION OF WOMEN

二 家庭和婚姻 /209

II. HOME AND MARRIAGE

三 理想中的女性 /217

III. IDEAL OF WOMANHOOD

四 我们的女子教育 /223

IV. EDUCATION OF OUR DAUGHTERS

五 恋爱和求婚 /227

V. LOVE AND COURTSHIP

六 妓女与妾 /233

VI. THE COURTESAN AND CONCUBINAGE

七 缠足的习俗 /242

VII. FOOTBINDING

八 解放运动 /247

VIII. EMANCIPATION

第六章 社会生活和政治生活

Chapter Six Social and Political Life

一 公共精神的缺乏 /252

I. ABSENCE OF THE SOCIAL MIND

二 家族制度	/258
II. THE FAMILY SYSTEM	
三 徇私舞弊和礼俗	/265
III. NEPOTISM, CORRUPTION AND MANNERS	
四 特权与平等	/272
IV. PRIVILEGE AND EQUALITY	
五 社会阶级	/276
V. SOCIAL CLASSES	
六 阳性型的三位一体	/281
VI. THE MALE TRIAD	
七 阴性型的三位一体	/284
VII. THE FEMALE TRIAD	
八 乡属制度	/295
VIII. THE VILLAGE SYSTEM	
九 “贤能政府”	/299
IX. “GOVERNMENT BY GENTLEMEN”	

第七章 文学生活

Chapter Seven Literary Life

一 文学之特性	/310
I. A DISTINCTION	
二 语言与思想	/314
II. LANGUAGE AND THOUGHT	
三 学术	/322
III. SCHOLARSHIP	
四 学府制度	/328
IV. THE COLLEGE	
五 散文	/333
V. PROSE	
六 文学与政治	/339
VI. LITERATURE AND POLITICS	
七 文学革命	/343
VII. LITERARY REVOLUTION	
八 诗	/347
VIII. POETRY	
九 戏剧	/371
IX. DRAMA	
十 小说	/386
X. THE NOVEL	

十一 西洋文学之影响 /399

XI. INFLUENCE OF WESTERN LITERATURE

第八章 艺术家生活

Chapter Eight The Artistic Life

一 艺术家 /410

I. THE ARTIST

二 中国书法 /415

II. CHINESE CALLIGRAPHY

三 绘画 /425

III. PAINTING

四 建筑 /444

IV. ARCHITECTURE

第九章 生活的艺术

Chapter Nine The Art of Living

一 日常的娱乐 /458

I. THE PLEASURES OF LIFE

二 居室与庭园 /468

II. HOUSE AND GARDEN

三 饮食 /477

III. EATING AND DRINKING

四 人生的归宿 /488

IV. THE END OF LIFE

赛珍珠序 | Introduction

中国近来有一种新的倾向，这是一个重要的运动，就是青年学者底对于本国的热心探讨。上一世代，他们的父老中之前进分子，对于本国底现状，已骚然怀缺望。他们受了环境的激动，憬然自觉；中国倘墨守历来底故辙，真不足以当危险而带挑战性的西方现代文明之敌手。我的所谓现代文明，指政治的倒不如指经济的、教育的和军事的变动底重要。这一辈父老，当代中国青年底父执，是真正的革命分子。他们推翻了专制统治权，他们用不可思议的速度更易了教育制度，他们用不屈不挠的精神，计划并建立了现代的共和政体。皇帝统治下底守旧政府从未有能如此迅速以完成这样伟大的变革在这样伟大的一个国家！

现代的中国智识青年，就生长于这个大变革的社会环境里头，那时父兄们吸收了孔教的学说，习诵着孔教经书而却举叛旗以反抗之。于是新时代各种学说乘时而兴，纷纭杂糅，几乎扯碎了青年们底脆弱的心灵。他们被灌输一些科学知识，又被灌输一些耶稣教义，又被灌输一些无神论，又被灌输一些自由恋爱，又来一些共产主义，又来一些西洋哲学，又来一些现代军国主义，实实在在什么都灌输一些。侧身于顽固而守旧的大众之间，青年智识分子却受了各种极端的教育。精神上和物质上一样，中国乃被动地铸下了一大漏洞，做一个譬喻来说，他们乃从旧式的公路阶段一跃而到了航空时代。这个漏洞未免太大了，心智之力不足以补苴之。他们的灵魂乃迷惘而错失于这种矛盾里面了。

这个缺陷的第一结果是产生一批青年，男女二性都包括在内，但主要的是男性，他们老老实实不知道怎样自存于自己的国家里头，或生存于他们的国家所滞留着一个时代中，他们大部分系留学外洋，以致忘却了他们自己的民族底实际。这些游移不定的青年，自然很容易接受许多革命领袖的宣传，认为所谓中国之落伍，乃出于外国的政治和物质底势力伸入之缘故，中国底守旧，却把世界拿来做了替罪羔羊。倘不承认中国自身前进之迟缓，那很容易大声疾呼，倘非外国的侵略，中国在物质条件上早已跟列强并驾齐驱了呢。

这样的结果，便是一种新的革命情绪。后来果真解脱了两桩束缚，那是治

外法权和协定关税。可是解脱以后有明显的变迁足以表明改革底良果。事实了然，向之为弱点者依然为弱点，而此等弱点又生而存在于人民底观念中。举例以明之，一个革命领袖往往当他地位一旦巩固，即变成保守而腐败起来，不殊于旧式的官僚，别种史实，其情形亦复如是。中国具有如许诚实而智慧之青年，岂竟忽略了这个实情。要知中国历来之时局变动，实与外国不甚相干，而过去倘有甚何关系，亦很容易阻止而免除之，只消中国能及早减少一些惰性、而她的领袖减少一些颀顽的自私心理。

于是继之以一个失望而狂热的时期，因而增加理想的崇拜西洋热度。列强的发皇强盛，觉得是科学发达的直接结果。这是一个幼稚的复杂心理蔓延的时机，爱国青年乃分趋二途：其一抑郁沮丧于国家之现状，其一则欲掩盖其实况于外人。关于他们的国是问题，卒无真理可得。他们于是怀恨而又艳羡外人。

倘西洋能继续其繁荣而保持和平，中国人的心理又将若何，殊不易言。不过西洋却未能如此顺利持续，也就够了！中国人好像狠着劲儿地欣赏世界大战之爆发，企业繁荣之崩溃、不景气，以及科学家尝试挽救此等厄运之失败，时而感到满足，他们于是说，中国毕竟还是不坏。然而在我们眼前，分明各处都是饥荒，遍地都有土匪，彼此彼此，谁也没有比谁好了些，照这样说来，或许古代中国倒是不错的，不妨追溯前代，看看中国的古代哲理如何。至少它教导了人民以恬澹、知足、乐天的德性，它教导人民享乐少量的物质倘不得较大者，它调整了人生而奠定了相当的稳健与安全的基石。近来西方研究中国问题之兴趣，以及有些西方学者之羡慕中国型生活底稳健，欣赏中国艺术哲学底高明，益使中国青年坚其自信之心。

今日所显现的结局，则又为古代经典格言的反复重演，父老吃了酸果，致令儿孙为之齿软。少年中国已经厌倦于父兄的革命热情，方且退而有复古之倾向，看了他们勉为十足纯粹中国人的不自然底决心，样子很是有趣；他们要吃中国的土产，穿中国的土布，而服行中国原来的生活习惯。中国有许多欧化青年今日欲行重返纯粹中国式生活，差不多是一种流行的时髦风尚而为外观的，恰如当初他们的父辈嗜尚西装革履、刀叉大餐而欲往哈佛大学留学，这些现代青年曾经长期地穿过西装，吃过西餐，而且曾经留学过哈佛，又精通英国文学远胜于本国语言，现在他们对于这一切都感到头痛，而欲重返其远祖的怀抱。

这个倾向各方面都流露着，不限于服饰和礼俗的外观。所见于艺术与文学者当远为重要。好像几年前中国新小说的题材，大多描写些恋爱问题，半西洋

式的男女奸情，家庭革命，全部的调子是类乎病态的，绝非适合于中国底国情。艺术和其他文学所表现的内容有过之无不及。但健全状态终于渐渐抬头了，这是出于朴素的平民生活的健全性。智识青年开始发掘自己的群众的内容了。他们开始明了小市镇中的生活，农村里的生活，才是中国的真实而原来的生活。这种生活，欣幸地尚未沾染驳杂的摩登习气而能保持她纯洁健全的天真。他们乃开始感到欣慰，知道自己的民族尚有此伟大而结实的基础，因而热情地转向这一条路线以求新的灵感。这对于他们是新颖的。它是怡情的、幽默的、值得保有的，总之，是纯粹中国的。

他们底达到这个新的观点曾获取旁人的协助。我想他们倘踽踽独行而无所凭藉，不会有这么优美的成绩，而相助他们的便是欧美。我们西洋人不独消极地襄助他们，呈露我们的文化的一种崩溃趋势；我们却积极地示以我们的根本生活力之倾向。欧美对于各种普罗运动的热情，已使少年中国想起他们自己的普罗群众，从而探讨本国人民的非常的美质，这些人民的生活，尚保持着他们固有的纯洁生活而不受世界骚攘之牵动。自然，每当困恼徬扰之际，这样的安稳恬静将有力地地上达于知识分子。

不过我们西方人倘要等待这些新兴文艺的作家技巧成熟而能清晰正确地说明中国，怕需要长长的等待一下子——怕不是我们这一世所能等待的了。可喜尚有少数作家例外，他们的精神伟大足以保持其纯洁而不致迷茫于时代的纷扰中。利用历代积累的诡辩与学识、幽默足以观察人生的本来面目，精明足以了解自己的文化，更能了解别人的文化。智慧足以选择他们原来固有的而为纯粹真实的事物。我盼望了长久，这少数作家中或有一位替我们写一本中国的自我说明，它必须要是一本有真价值的书，浸满以本国人民的根本精神。屡次我翻开这一类著作，初时总是注满了热情和希望，但终于失望地掩却了它，因为它是不真实的，是夸张的，盖由于太殷勤以辩护那些伟大而毋庸辩护的特点。它是专为对外人作宣传而写的，所以不称于中国底真价值。

一本阐述中国的著作，它的价值足以当得起阐述中国者，不能犯上述任何一点毛病。它必须坦白而无愧，因为真实的中国人是宏伟的人民。宏伟足以坦白而称无愧于其生活言行；它必须敏慧而明达，因为中国人的彼此内心的灵悟，敏慧明达过于其他民族；它必须是幽默的，因为幽默是中国人民天生的根性，这机敏、愉快、慈和的根性是基于惨愁的经历和乐天的观念而产生的；它必须用流利恰当而美丽的词句来表现，因为中国人常重视精细和恰当的美。只有中

国人才能写这么一本书。可是我不免又想：就是中国人好像也还没有能写这么一本书者。因为去寻找一位现代英语著作的中国作家而不致跟本国人民隔膜太远有若异国人然，而同时又须立于客观的地位，其客观的程度足以领悟全部人民的旨趣，这样的人才，不是轻易找得到。

可是出乎不意，与历来的伟大著作的出世一样，《吾国与吾民》不期而去世了。它满足了我们一切热望的要求，它是忠实的，毫不隐瞒一切真情。它的笔墨是那样的豪放瑰丽，巍巍乎，焕焕乎，幽默而优美，严肃而愉悦。对于古往今来，都有透彻的了解与体会。我想这一本书是历来有关中国的著作中最忠实、最巨丽、最完备、最重要底成绩。尤可宝贵者，他的著作者，是一位中国人、一位现代作家，他的根蒂巩固地深植于往昔，而丰富的鲜花开于今代。

赛珍珠

ONE of the most important movements in China today is the discovery of their own country by young Chinese intellectuals. A generation ago the most progressive of their fathers were beginning to feel a stirring discontent with their own country. They were conscious, indeed the consciousness was forced upon them, that China as she had been in the past was not able to meet the dangerous and aggressive modernity of the West. I do not mean the political modernity so much as the march of economic, educational and military events. These Chinese fathers, fathers of the present generation in China, were the real revolutionists. They forced out of existence the old dynastic rule, they changed with incredible speed the system of education, with indefatigable zeal they planned and set up a scheme of modern government. No ancient government under an emperor ever accomplished with more imperial speed such tremendous changes in so great a country.

In this atmosphere of change, the present intellectual youth of China has grown up. Where the fathers imbibed the doctrines of Confucius and learned the classics and revolted against them, these young people have been battered by many forces of the new times. They have been taught something of science, something of Christianity, something of atheism, something of free love, something of communism, something of Western philosophy, something of modern militarism, something, in fact, of everything. In the midst of the sturdy medievalism of the masses of their countrymen the young intellectuals have been taught the most extreme of every culture. Intellectually they have been forced to the same great omissions that China has made physically. They have skipped, figuratively speaking, from the period of the

unimproved country road to the aeroplane era. The omission was too great. The mind could not compensate for it. The spirit was lost in the conflict.

The first result, therefore, of the hiatus was undoubtedly to produce a class of young Chinese, both men and women, but chiefly men, who frankly did not know how to live in their own country or in the age in which their country still was. They were for the most part educated abroad, where they forgot the realities of their own race. It was easy enough for various revolutionary leaders to persuade these alienated minds that China's so-called backwardness was due primarily to political and material interference by foreign powers. The world was made the scapegoat for China's medievalism. Instead of realizing that China was in her own way making her own steps, slowly, it is true, and somewhat ponderously, toward modernity, it was easy hue and cry to say that if it had not been for foreigners she would have been already on an equality, in material terms, with other nations.

The result of this was a fresh revolution of a sort. China practically rid herself of her two great grievances outside of Japan, extraterritoriality and the tariff. No great visible change appeared as a consequence. It became apparent that what had been weaknesses were still weaknesses, and that these were inherent in the ideology of the people. It was found, for instance, that when a revolutionary leader became secure and entrenched he became conservative and as corrupt, too often, as an old style official. The same has been true in other histories. There were too many honest and intelligent young minds in China not to observe and accept the truth, that the outside world had very little to do with China's condition, and what she had to do with it could have been prevented if China had been earlier less sluggish and her leaders less blind and selfish.

Then followed a period of despair and frenzy and increased idealistic worship of the West. The evident prosperity of foreign countries was felt to be a direct fruit of Western scientific development. It was a time when the inferiority complex was rampant in China, and the young patriots were divided between mortification at what their country was and desire to conceal it from foreigners. There was no truth to be found in them, so far as their own country was concerned. They at once hated and admired the foreigners.

What would have happened if the West had continued prosperous and at peace cannot be said. It is enough that the West did not so continue. The Chinese have viewed with interest and sometimes with satisfaction the world war, the depression, the breakdown of prosperity, and the failure of scientific men to prevent these disasters. They have begun to say to themselves that after all China is not so bad. Evidently there is hunger everywhere, there are bandits everywhere, and one people is not better than another, and if this is so, then perhaps China was right in olden times, and perhaps it is just as well to go back and see what the old Chinese philosophy was. At least it taught people to live with contentment and with enjoyment of small things if they had not the great ones, and it regulated life and provided a certain amount of security and safety. The recent interest in China on the part of the West, the wistfulness of certain

Western persons who envy the simplicity and security of China's pattern of life and admire her arts and philosophy have also helped to inspire the young Chinese with confidence in themselves.

The result today is simply a reiteration of the old Biblical adage that the fathers have eaten sour grapes and the children's teeth are set on edge. Young China, being wearied of the revolutionary ardors of its fathers, is going back to old China. It is almost amusing to see the often self-conscious determination to be really Chinese, to eat Chinese food, to live in Chinese ways, to dress in Chinese clothes. It is as much of a fad and a pose to be entirely Chinese these days among certain young westernized Chinese as it was for their fathers to wear foreign clothes and eat with knives and forks and want to go to Harvard. These present young people have worn foreign clothes all their lives and eaten foreign food and they did go to Harvard, and they know English literature infinitely better than their own, and now they are sick of it all and want to go back to their grandfathers.

The trend is apparent everywhere, and not only in the externals of dress and customs. Far more importantly is it to be seen in art and literature. The subject of modern Chinese novels of a few years ago, for instance, dealt chiefly with modern love situations, with semi-foreign liaisons, with rebellions against home and parents, and the whole tone was somewhat sickly and certainly totally unrooted in the country. There is still more than enough of this in both art and literature, but health is beginning to creep in, the health of life from plain people living plain and sturdy lives upon their earth. The young intellectuals are beginning to discover their own masses. They are beginning to find that life in the countryside, in small towns and villages is the real and native life of China, fortunately still fairly untouched with the mixed modernism which has made their own lives unhealthy. They are beginning to feel themselves happy that there is this great solid foundation in their nation, and to turn to it eagerly for fresh inspiration. It is new to them, it is delightful, it is humorous, it is worth having, and above all, it is purely Chinese.

They have been helped to this new viewpoint, too. They would not, I think, have achieved it so well alone, and it is the West which has helped them. We of the West have helped them not only negatively, by exhibiting a certain sort of breakdown in our own civilization, but we have helped them positively, by our own trend toward elemental life. The Western interest in all proletarian movements has set young China to thinking about her own proletariat, and to discovering the extraordinary quality of her country people, maintaining their life pure and incredibly undisturbed by the world's confusion. It is natural that such tranquility should greatly appeal to intellectuals in their own confusion and sense of being lost in the twisted times.

Communism, too, has helped them. Communism has brought about class consciousness, it has made the common man articulate and demanding, and since modern education in China has been available to the children of common people, they have already been given a sort of voice, at least, wherewith to speak for themselves, however inadequately. In the art and literature of the young Leftists in China there is a rapidly spreading perception of the value of the common man and

woman of their country. The expression is still crude and too much influenced by foreign art, but the notion is there. One sometimes sees these days a peasant woman upon a canvas instead of a bird upon a bamboo twig, and the straining figure of a man pushing a wheelbarrow instead of goldfish flashing in a lotus pool.

Yet if we of the West were to wait for the interpretation of China until these newly released ones could find adequate and articulate voice, it would be to wait long—longer, perhaps, than our generation. Happily there are a few others, a few spirits large enough not to be lost in the confusion of the times, humorous enough to see life as it is, with the fine old humor of generations of sophistication and learning, keen enough to understand their own civilization as well as others, and wise enough to choose what is native to them and therefore truly their own. For a long time I have hoped that one of these few would write for us all a book about his own China, a real book, permeated with the essential spirit of the people. Time after time I have opened a book, eagerly and with hope, and time after time I have closed it again in disappointment, because it was untrue, because it was bombastic, because it was too fervent in defense of that which was too great to need defense. It was written to impress the foreigner, and therefore it was unworthy of China.

A book about China, worthy to be about China, can be none of these things. It must be frank and unashamed, because the real Chinese have always been a proud people, proud enough to be frank and unashamed of themselves and their ways. It must be wise and penetrative in its understanding, for the Chinese have been above all peoples' wise and penetrative in their understanding of the human heart. It must be humorous, because humor is an essential part of Chinese nature, deep, mellow, kindly humor, founded upon the tragic knowledge and acceptance of life. It must be expressed in flowing, exact, beautiful words, because the Chinese have always valued the beauty of the exact and the exquisite. None but a Chinese could write such a book, and I had begun to think that as yet even no Chinese could write it, because it seemed impossible to find a modern English-writing Chinese who was not so detached from his own people as to be alien to them, and yet detached enough to comprehend their meaning, the meaning of their age and the meaning of their youth.

But suddenly, as all great books appear, this book appears, fulfilling every demand made upon it. It is truthful and not ashamed of the truth: it is written proudly and humorously and with beauty, seriously and with gaiety, appreciative and understanding of both old and new. It is, I think, the truest, the most profound, the most complete, the most important book yet written about China. And, best of all, it is written by a Chinese, a modern, whose roots are firmly in the past, but whose rich flowering is in the present.

Pearl S. Buck

自序 | Preface

在这一本书里头，我只想发表我自己的意见，这是我经过长时间的苦思苦读和自我省察所收获的，我不欲尝试与人论辩，亦不欲证定我的各项论题，但是我将接受一切批评。盖孔老夫子说过：“知我者其惟春秋乎！罪我者其惟春秋乎！”正区区之所窃比焉。中国是一个庞大的国家，而她的民族生命，涵育着太复杂的内质，欲加以阐述，势难免于牴牾歧异之见解。任何人苟有持相反之论旨者，鄙人准备随时供给可能的材料以便利之。但是真理终是真理，它将克服任何巧黠的私见。人类对于真理的领悟，只在稀有的一刹那，这领悟的一刹那倒是永存的而不是私见能永存。是以大规模搜集证据，整列排比，五色缤纷，令人目眩，结果仅能导致腐迂之结论，渊博而无当。因为陈览真理的领悟，需要较为简纯的风格，其实亦即为见理精深的风格。

写了这本书，我将冒犯许多阐述中国的著作家，也是显而易见的，尤其是祖国的同胞和一般大爱国家。此辈大爱国家——鄙人与之实互不相涉，因为他们的偶像，不是我的偶像，他们的爱国思想也不是我的爱国思想。说不定我也同样爱我的国家，可是我常小心翼翼在他们面前隐藏起来，因为人或许穿着爱国主义的大褂，过久则破碎而零落，而人方穿了破碎的大褂，炫耀过市——在中国，或在世界各处——服之终身而弗渝。

我堪能坦白地直陈一切，因为我心目中的祖国，内省而不疚，无愧于人。我堪能暴呈她的一切困恼纷扰，因为我未尝放弃我的希望。中国乃伟大过于她的微渺的国家，无需乎他们的粉饰。她将调整她自己，一如过去历史上所昭示吾人者。

我也不是为了西方的爱国分子而写这一本书，因为我怕——承他们的情——摘引我书中的片段，比之怕爱国人的误解更为厉害。我这一本书是写给淳朴而忠恕的一般人的，忠恕之道为古代中国之特长，今则已成绝响，我的这一本书，只能受知于这样纯朴的观点。我所说的话，是只说向那些尚未丧失人类基本德性的人们，因为只有这些人才能理解我。

1935年6月于上海

IN this book I have tried only to communicate my opinions, which I have arrived at after some long and painful thought and reading and introspection. I have not tried to enter into arguments or prove my different theses, but I will stand justified or condemned by this book, as Confucius once said of his *Spring and Autumn Annals*. 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. And I shall always be able to assist with very convenient material anyone who wishes to hold opposite theses. But truth is truth and will overcome clever human opinions.

It is given to man only at rare moments to perceive the truth, and it is these moments of perception that will survive, and not individual opinions. Therefore, the most formidable marshalling of evidence can often lead one to conclusions which are mere learned nonsense. For the presentation of such perceptions, one needs a simpler, which is really a subtler, style. For truth can never be proved; it can only be hinted at. It is also inevitable that I should offend many writers about China, especially my own countrymen and great patriots. These great patriots—I have nothing to do with them, for their god is not my god, and their patriotism is not my patriotism. Perhaps I too love my own country, but I take care to conceal it before them, for one may wear the cloak of patriotism to tatters, and in these tatters be paraded through the city streets to death, in China or the rest of the world.

I am able to confess because, unlike these patriots, I am not ashamed of my country. And I can lay bare her troubles because I have not lost hope. China is bigger than her little patriots and does not require their whitewashing. She will, as she always did, right herself again.

Nor do I write for the patriots of the West. For I fear more their appreciative quotations from me than the misunderstandings of my countrymen. I write only for the men of simple common sense, that simple common sense for which ancient China was so distinguished, but which is so rare today. My book can only be understood from this simple point of view. To these people who have not lost their sense of ultimate human values, to them alone I speak. For they alone will understand me.

The Author

June, 1935
Shanghai