

红杏文学丛书
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SHORT STORY INTERNATIONAL

美国国际短篇小说选

入选中国作品

汉英对照



● 盐 灾

蹇 先 艾

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总 序

二十世纪八十年代初,美国出版家坦克尔夫妇独辟蹊径,在纽约创办了一份文学双月刊,名叫《国际短篇小说选》。他们在致读者书中写道:“《小说选》将把你带向世界的四面八方,那里有动人心弦的故事等待你,让你领略未曾见过的遥远国度……与尘世之外的天地。……从这些故事中你将窥视未来与过去,这些故事引人入胜,展示普遍的真实。这种真实超越语言的差别而昭示人类共同的秉性。”

坦克尔夫妇的努力没白费。二十年后的今天,《国际短篇小说选》从众多的文学刊物中脱颖而出,通过对包括中国在内的各国优秀短篇小说的介绍,使人们认识到,全世界人民尽管有种族、肤色和信仰的不同,却有一样的梦想、恐惧与痛苦,都会笑、都会惊奇,都对未来抱有希望。这本杂志最终得到联合国国际文化交流组织的资助,并以该组织的名义出版,从而为增进世界各国人民的友谊与理解起到了独特的作用。

对于中国,这份刊物尤其显得生逢其时。长达十

年的“文革”刚刚结束，文学艺术正在从极左思潮中解脱出来。复苏的冻土下迸发出压抑已久的文学的呼声。几乎在一夜之间，曾经凋零的百花重新绽放。大批反映真实生活、歌颂美好人性的佳作出现在文坛，像早晨阳光下的露珠。作为《中国文学》这本中国唯一的向全世界发行的英、法文文学杂志的编辑，我们面对扑面而来的大量优秀作品感到十分欣喜，但也感到选不胜选，只能如蜜蜂采花，万中取一。然而正是这些经我们选用译载的小说，引起远在大洋彼岸的《国际短篇小说选》的注意，一篇篇经它的转载而传播到更多的国家。

于是我们收到很多国外朋友的来信，他们为发现中国文学的丰富宝藏惊喜。有位读者说，此前他以为中国只有僵化的思想而无优秀的文学，现在他明白，有着五千年文明历史的伟大中国，当代小说写得是多么的优美呵。

许多外国朋友因此来到中国，从了解中国的文学进而了解文学中的中国。也有许多中国作家受邀到外国去，去讲述自己怎样写出了那样动人的作品。

二十年来，《国际短篇小说选》总共选载了我们三十多篇优秀的小说，这些小说都是经过国内外功力深

厚的翻译家译成英文,首先发表在《中国文学》英文版杂志上。转载了我们作品的刊物从美国寄来,我们又把它们寄给原作的作者,为的是与他们共享这份喜悦。中国有一句古诗,叫做“满园春色关不住,一枝红杏出墙来”。无论把它们比做红杏是否恰当,既然已做为文学的使者出访世界,那么它们便可以算是美的和香的了。

现在,我们从这三十多篇美丽的小说中又精选出一些,对照它们的中文和英文编为一套丛书,名字就叫“红杏文学丛书”,分册献给学习英文的中国读者,也献给学习中文的外国读者,如有有志者想来一个中英对看,那更是编者的愿望了。

Introducing “Chinese Masterpieces”

In the early 1980s, two Americans, Sam and Sylvia Tankel, founded the bimonthly journal *Short Story International*. In a letter to their readers they wrote, “*Short Story International* takes you to all points of the compass, to anywhere in the world. There are intriguing stories waiting for you... stories that will involve you in corners of this world you’ve never seen... and in worlds outside this one..., with glimpses into the future as well as the past, revealing fascinating, universal truths that bypass differences in language and point out similarities in people.”

This American couple’s efforts are not in vain. Two decades later today, their journal has emerged as a force to be reckoned with on the international literary scene, disseminating across the world fine short stories from different countries, including China. The peoples of the world may vary in race, color and creed, but *Short Story International* makes one realize that truly all of us share the same dreams, fears, pain, capacity for laughter, sense of wonder, and hopes for the future. The journal eventually gained the financial support of the UN International Cultural Exchange, and, pub -

lished under that organization's name, is playing an ever-increasing role in enhancing understanding between the people of different countries.

For China, this journal was born at the perfect moment. The decade-long trauma known as the "Great Cultural Revolution" had just come to an end, and Chinese literature was being delivered from the influence of "ultra-leftist" ideologies. New, pent-up literary voices began to make themselves heard from beneath the thawing spring soil. Almost overnight, a hundred withered flowers suddenly re-blossomed. Countless fine literary works appeared that reflected the true lives of people and eulogized the beauty to be found in humanity. It was like tears of morning dew breaking into sunlit smiles. Editors of *Chinese Literature*, founded in the 1950s as the only literary journal published in English and French out of China for worldwide circulation, suddenly found their hands full coping with a dazzling outpouring of great short stories. There were so many to publish that issues of the journal often ran out of space. Only a limited number of these masterpieces made it to the journal, as the editors worked like bees buzzing through a sea of flowers. Some of the pieces drew the attention of editors of *Short Story International*, who reprinted them one after another for the benefit of a much larger audience.

Then letters began pouring into the editorial department of *Chinese Literature*, from friends from every corner of the globe, expressing their pleasant surprise at the discovery of Chinese literature as a rich mine of literary gems. One reader said he had thought that China had nothing but ossified thoughts, but upon reading the Chinese short stories carried in this journal was amazed by what beautiful literature writers of a country with a 5,000-year-old civilization were capable of creating. Tempted by these fine short stories, many readers have gone the extra miles to travel to China for a closer look at Chinese literature as well as the land and people depicted in what they had read. Many Chinese writers have also travelled abroad to tell international readers how they have come up with their captivating stories.

Incomplete statistics show that over the last two decades and more, *Short Story International* has carried over thirty outstanding Chinese short stories, beautifully rendered into English, which had been previously published in *Chinese Literature*. Every now and then we receive copies of *Short Story International* that have carried our translations, and make it a point to pass them on to the writers so that they can share in the joy. As the Chinese old saying goes, "The apricot tree makes its presence felt by extending a bough of blossoming flow-

ers over the top of the wall, unbeknownst to those who live behind the wall." In our case, no matter what our short stories are, they have flown across the seas like Chinese literary ambassadors to foreign countries, and thus deserve their reputation as the highest representatives of the Chinese short story.

Now, we have collected a few Chinese masterpieces from that prestigious UN journal and published them once again in this Chinese-English bilingual book series, called *Red Apricot Series* in Chinese and simply *Chinese Masterpieces* in English. The books are meant for Chinese readers learning English, and foreign readers who want to learn Chinese. If you will enjoy reading them by comparing the Chinese originals with the English translations, or vice versa, that is the best this series' editors could wish for.

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蹇先艾(1906-1994),贵州省文联前主席,当代著名作家,生于贵州遵义。1924年还在北京师范大学附中读书时即发表作品。著有《朝雾》等六部短篇小说集。1937到1951年任遵义师范学校校长、贵州大学和贵阳师范学院中文系主任等职。除《蹇先艾短篇小说集》外,还发表过一些中篇小说、散文等。他的短篇小说《盐灾》发表于《中国文学》1994年第3期。

Jian Xian'ai(1906-1994), former chairman of the Guizhou Provincial Federation of Literary and Art Circles, is a well-known contemporary writer in China. He was born in Zunyi County, Guizhou Province. His first works were published in 1924 when he was still a student at the Middle School Affiliated with Beijing Teachers' University. He published six short story collections including *Morning Mist*. From 1937 to 1951, he worked as president of the Zunyi Normal School and chaired the Chinese departments at Guizhou University and Guiyang Normal Institute. Apart from a number of works including *Selected Short Stories by Jian Xian'ai*, he has also published several novelettes, and essays. His short story "The Salt Calamity" was published in the autumn issue of *Chinese Literature*, in 1994.

“明峦我友：

“我告诉你，近来我忽然悲观起来了。你一定会感到非常诧异，怀疑我的精神有点反常。……”

红沙沟小学的教师兼校长臧岚初伏在条桌上，在一盏飘动着惨黄灯花的桐油灯底下，开始写一封长信给他的一个朋友。他是一位瘦削的小个子，脸上带着营养不足的菜黄色。他写信时的神情很紧张，胸脯起伏着，左手紧紧地

1

"My Dear Friend Mingluan:

"I'm sure you'll be surprised to know that I have become very pessimistic recently. Perhaps you will even doubt my sanity..."

Red Sand Furrow Village's primary school teacher, Zang Lanchu hunched over the table under the dimly flickering oil lamp and began a long letter to his friend. He was a frail, short man whose malnourished face was of an unhealthy yellowish complexion. As he wrote, his chest heaved rhythmically up and down, his left hand nervously holding the paper in place. His nearsighted eyes peered barely five inches from the sheet of paper as pent-up anger spluttered from his mouth.

按住信笺，近视眼离纸不到五寸，郁积的怒气呼呼地从他的唇边吐出来。

红沙沟小学设在村里唯一的古庙——观音寺里，位置在半山崖上，大殿供着一些神像，偏殿便作了教室，教室隔壁，就是臧岚初住的屋子。小学教师教了几十个儿童，区里几个月才发一次薪水，生活非常清苦，他长年都和庙里的和尚一起吃素。放了学以后，他便走出门去，在山门外看看那被云雾缭绕着的山景。他脚下便是这小村庄的一百多家住户，在深幽的树林掩映之中，房屋还显不出怎样的破旧。偶尔听见一片喁喁的人声。有时人声没有了，鸡犬声便一唱一和地高扬起来。晚上他没有事的时候，便下山，到村子里去帮农民们记账写信，有好几家人简直离不开他。

臧岚初是县里一个师范生，毕业以后，就分配到这里来了。他根本不愿意在城里住，他认为城里是罪恶的渊薮。为了想过一点农村的生活，为了给农民们做一点事情，他高高兴兴地跑到贫苦的红沙沟来。等他来了以后，才知道乡下和城里差不多，一天到晚，村子里不是拉

The school was housed in the village's only temple, — Guanyin Temple, — halfway up the face of a high precipice. The main temple hall, which contained several Buddhist statues, also served as the school's classroom. Zang Lanchu lived in a room which adjoined the main hall. Life was very strenuous for this primary school teacher — he taught several dozen students, he received his wages only once every few months, and all year round he ate like a vegetarian with the temple monks. After he dismissed the class he would walk along the trails cut into the mountainside and look at the mountain scenery which was often shrouded in a mysterious mist. Below he could see one hundred or so homes nestled in the dense forest. The homes did not appear so dilapidated from such a distance. Occasionally voices could be heard, or the mingling echoes of the sounds of chickens and dogs, rising from below. In the evening Lanchu would hike down the mountain into the village to assist the peasants with their accounts or help them write letters. Several families had come to depend on him.

In the entire county Zang Lanchu was the only graduate from a teachers' school. He had no interest in living in the city because he believed that cities were breeding grounds for iniquity. In order to experience village life and to give some practical help to the villagers he had happily moved to impoverished little Red Sand Furrow after graduation. It wasn't until he arrived there he realized the differences between city and village life were not as great as he had imagined. Not a single day passed in the

兵，就是派款；他更想不到他的好几个亲戚都当了保长、甲长，变成了到处伸手抓钱的人物。进小学的人也是财主家的子弟占多数，穷人家的孩子们是读不起书的。既然分配到这里，没有办法，只好住一个时期再说。他来了半年之后，突然一个新的苦痛开始包围着红沙沟了。他想把他的心事向什么人诉说一下，这里却没有这样一个对象。他忽然想起在邻省的同学王明峦来了，这个人是一向比较了解他的，因此他才在那天晚上来写这封信。

“你向来都知道我是最乐观的人；但决不是一个玩世主义者。我是一个很想前进的，什么艰难困苦都想克服的人。我到这个小村庄来才不过六个月，但是我看到了不少令人愤慨的事情。”

“你一定想不到吧！红沙沟最近闹起盐灾来了。农民们淡食已经一个多月了。今天我下坡去，在村子里走走，我所遇到的每一个人，面貌都非常黝黑，没有一点笑容，像丧亡了什么人一样，不说话，低着头，拖着鞋，不扣衣服，无目的地乱走。我走到街上去，到处都听见一片叹息的

village without some young men dragged off for military service or a new tax imposed on the people. What was even harder for him to believe was that several relatives of his who had begun work as neighborhood and area security supervisors had become exceedingly avaricious and were making illegal money all over the place. He also found that the majority of children he taught were from the wealthier village families, as there was no way the poorer children could go to school. But since he had been assigned to the village there was no other choice, he would have to stay here for a while before saying anything about a transfer. Six months after he arrived a new calamity hit Red Sand Furrow. Zang Lanchu wanted to pour his heart out to someone but there was no one suitable around. He suddenly remembered a former classmate, Wang Mingluan, who lived in a neighboring province. This friend understood him. So that evening he picked up his pen and started the letter.

"You know I've always been optimistic, certainly never cynical. Whatever the difficulty I've always done my best to overcome it and move forward. But although I've only been in this village for six months, I've already seen many distressing things.

"You wouldn't believe it, Red Sand Furrow has been hit by a devastating salt shortage. The villagers have been eating food without salt for more than a month. Today when I walked around the village, each face I saw was in deep despair. It looked as if a funeral were taking place — everyone