

NORTH AMERICAN FOLKLORE

FAMILY

by Shirley Brinkerhoff & Ellyn Sanna

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FOREIGN LANGUAGES PRESS

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图书在版编目 (CIP) 数据

家庭习俗/ (美) 布林克奥夫 (Brinkerhoff, S.), (美) 森娜 (Sanna, E.) 著; 谢书静译. —北京: 外文出版社, 2006

(北美民俗文化阅读)

ISBN 7-119-04444-3

I. 家... II. ①布... ②森... ③谢... III. ①英语—汉语—对照读物②风俗习惯—简介—北美洲 IV. H319.4: K

中国版本图书馆 CIP 数据核字 (2006) 第 046703 号

外文出版社网址:

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

外文出版社电子信箱:

info@flp.com.cn

sales@flp.com.cn

著作权合同登记图字: 01-2005-6428

美国 Mason Crest Publishers 授权外文出版社在中国大陆地区独家出版发行英汉对照版

北美民俗文化阅读

家庭习俗

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责任编辑 王 蕊

封面设计 吴 涛

出版发行 外文出版社

社 址 北京市百万庄大街 24 号

邮政编码 100037

电 话 (010) 68995963

(010) 68329514/68327211 (推广发行部)

印 刷 三河市汇鑫印务有限公司

经 销 新华书店/外文书店

开 本 16 开

字 数 150 千字

印 数 0001—5000 册

印 张 8.25

版 次 2006 年第 1 版第 1 次印刷

装 别 平

书 号 ISBN 7-119-04444-3

定 价 19.80 元

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Folklore grows from long-age seeds. Just as an acorn sends down roots even as it shoots up leaves across the sky, folklore is rooted deeply in the past and yet still lives and grows today. It spreads through our modern world with branches as wide and sturdy as any oak's; it grounds us in yesterday even as it helps us make sense of both the present and the future.



INTRODUCTION

by Dr. Alan Jabbour



What do a tale, a joke, a fiddle tune, a quilt, a jig, a game of jacks, a saint's day procession, a snake fence, and a Halloween costume have in common? Not much, at first glance, but all these forms of human creativity are part of a zone of our cultural life and experience that we sometimes call "folklore."

The word "folklore" means the cultural traditions that are learned and passed along by ordinary people as part of the fabric of their lives and culture. Folklore may be passed along in verbal form, like the urban legend that we hear about from friends who assure us that it really happened to a friend of their cousin. Or it may be tunes or dance steps we pick up on the block, or ways of shaping things to use or admire out of materials readily available to us, like that quilt our aunt made. Often we acquire folklore without even fully realizing where or how we learned it.

Though we might imagine that the word "folklore" refers to cultural traditions from far away or long ago, we actually use and enjoy folklore as part of our own daily lives. It is often ordinary, yet we often remember and prize it because it seems somehow very special. Folklore is culture we share with others in our communities, and we build our identities through the sharing. Our first shared identity is family identity, and family folklore such as shared meals or prayers or songs helps us develop a sense of belonging. But as we grow older we learn to belong to other groups as well. Our identities may be ethnic, religious, occupational, or regional—or all of these, since no one has only one cultural identity. But in every case, the identity is anchored and strengthened by a variety of cultural

traditions in which we participate and share with our neighbors. We feel the threads of connection with people we know, but the threads extend far beyond our own immediate communities. In a real sense, they connect us in one way or another to the world.

传说故事、笑话、小提琴曲、棉被、快步舞曲、抓子游戏、圣徒日游行、蛇形栅栏、万圣节服装，这些东西有什么共同之处？乍看上去似乎没什么，但是所有这些人类的创造形式都属于我们文化生活和经验中的一部分，我们有时称之为“民俗”。

“民俗”指的是一种文化传统，老百姓把这种传统作为生活和文化架构中的一部分来学习和继承。民俗可以是以口头形式传播的，就像我们在朋友那儿听到的都市传奇故事，讲述者会向我们保证那确实是发生在他们堂兄的一个朋友身上的真事；也可以是我们无意间从街上学到的曲调或舞步，或是用已有的材料做出可使用或用来欣赏的东西的方式，就像姨妈缝制的棉被。我们通常已经了解了一些民俗知识，然而却不能确切地意识到是从哪里、又是怎样得到它们的。

尽管我们可以认为“民俗”这个词指的是来自于很久以前或从很远的地方流传而来的文化传统，而事实上，我们是把它作为日常生活的一部分来利用和享受的。它常常是普普通通的，但由于其独特性，我们往往会记住并珍视它。民俗是我们与社会群体中的其他人共享的文化，我们通过这种共享来确立自己的身份特征。我们第一个与他人共享的就是家庭的特征，而家庭习俗——如共享的饭菜、祈祷和歌曲——都帮助我们建立起一种归属感。随着年龄的增长，我们也学会了从属于其他的社会群体。我们的身份特征可以是种族的、宗教的、职业的、区域性的或兼而有之，因为没有人只具有一种文化特征。然而无论如何，各色各样的文化传统都是这些特征赖以生存并得以壮大发展的支柱。我们置身于这种文化传统之中，并与邻人共同分享。我们能够感受到自己与相识的人之间的关联，然而这种关联远远超出了我们所直属的生活范围。实际上，这种关联是以某种方式将我们与世界连接在一起。

Folklore possesses features by which we distinguish ourselves from each other. A certain dance step may be African American, or a certain story urban, or a certain hymn Protestant, or a certain food preparation Cajun. Folklore can distinguish us, but at the same time it is one of the best ways we introduce ourselves to each other. We learn about new ethnic groups on the North American landscape by sampling their cuisine, and we enthusiastically adopt musical ideas from other communities. Stories, songs, and visual designs move from group to group, enriching all people in the process. Folklore thus is both a sign of identity, experienced as a special marker of our special groups, and at the same time a cultural coin that is well spent by sharing with others beyond our group boundaries.

Folklore is usually learned informally. Somebody, somewhere, taught us that jump rope rhyme we know, but we may have trouble remembering just where we got it, and it probably wasn't in a book that was assigned as homework. Our world has a domain of formal knowledge, but folklore is a domain of knowledge and culture that is learned by sharing and imitation rather than formal instruction. We can study it formally—that's what we are doing now!—but its natural arena is in the informal, person-to-person fabric of our lives.

Not all culture is folklore. Classical music, art sculpture, or great novels are forms of high art that may contain folklore but are not themselves folklore. Popular music or art may be built on folklore themes and traditions, but it addresses a much wider and more diverse audience than folk music or folk art. But even in the world of popular and mass culture, folklore keeps popping up around the margins. E-mail is not folklore—but an e-mail smile is. And college football is not folklore—but the wave we do at

the stadium is.

This series of volumes explores the many faces of folklore throughout the North American continent. By illuminating the many aspects of folklore in our lives, we hope to help readers of the series to appreciate more fully the richness of the cultural fabric they either possess already or can easily encounter as they interact with their North American neighbors.

民俗所具有的特点将我们与他人区分开来,例如某种舞步可能是非裔美洲人所特有的,某个故事是属于都市风格的,某首赞美诗是新教徒们吟唱的,某种烹调方法是法国移民的后裔发明的。民俗可以识别出我们,同时它也是我们彼此介绍的最佳方式之一。我们通过品尝他们的食品来了解北美大陆上新的种族群体,我们也可以从其他社会群体中汲取音乐的灵感。故事、歌曲以及形象化的图案在不同群体间传播,并在传播的过程中使所有人受益。因而民俗既是身份的特征、特殊群体的特殊标记,同时也是一种文化货币,通过与我们群体范围之外的人共享而实现它的价值。

民俗通常是人们在不拘形式的情形下学到的。有人,在某个地方,教会了我们那首跳绳的歌谣,然而我们可能记不起到底是在什么地方学到的,也不可能是从某本老师布置课后要读的书里看到的。在我们的世界中有正规知识的领域,然而民俗的领域却是通过共享和模仿,而不是通过正规学习来获得的。我们可以中规中矩地研习它——这正是我们现在正在做的——但是它天然的舞台却是在生活中非正式的、人与人之间的交流模式中。

并非所有的文化都属于民俗的范畴。古典音乐、艺术雕刻或长篇名著属于高层次的艺术形式,它们可能包含民俗的成分,但其本身并不是民俗的一部分。流行音乐或艺术可能基于民俗的主题和传统,但它们面对的是比民间音乐和艺术更为广泛和多样化的群体。然而,即便在流行文化和大众文化的领域里,民俗也一直不断地在边缘地带崭露头角。电子邮件不是民俗的一种——但电子邮件里的笑脸却是;大学足球不是民俗的一种——但我们在体育场中掀起的阵阵人浪却是。

本系列书探讨了北美大陆上民俗文化的众多方面。民俗作为文化的一个组成元素,人们或者已经拥有,或者在平时的交往中会轻易地碰到。通过对生活中民俗文化各个方面的解读,希望能够帮助读者更充分地品味民俗文化的丰富性。



Families have always given their members a sense of belonging.

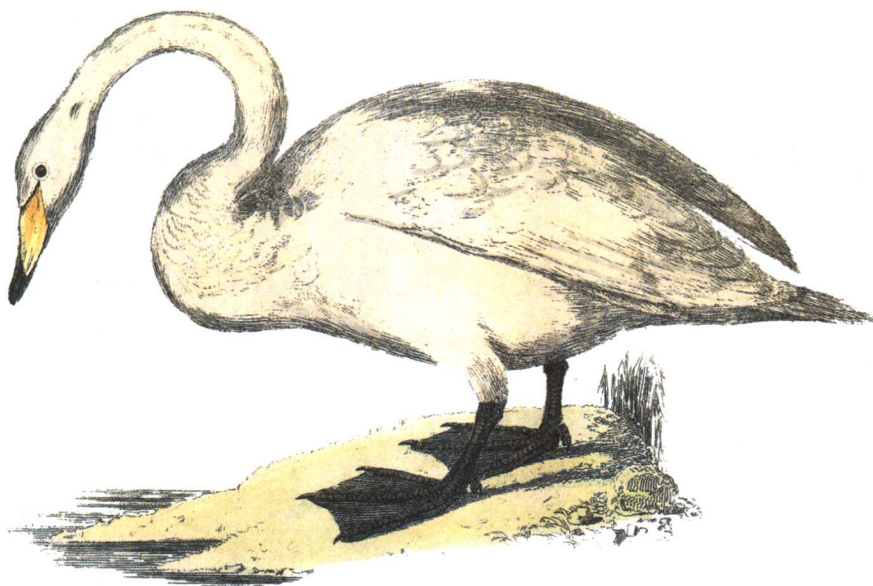


The Meaning of Family

A Sense of Belonging

家庭的含义

归属感



The story of the Ugly Duckling demonstrates the importance of feeling as though we are accepted and loved by others like ourselves.



How surprised the mother duck was when the biggest egg in her nest finally hatched. But the creature that emerged from the broken shell looked nothing like the rest of her brood.

“Look how big he is!” the mother said to her ducklings. “Much bigger than any of you.”

“Ugly, too,” one of the ducklings agreed. “Our feathers are yellow, but his are a dull gray.”

“He doesn’t talk like us, either,” quacked¹ another duckling.

The ugly duckling was so mistreated by the others that he ran away. He found a group of wild ducks living on a pond nearby, but when he tried to join them, they said the same things about him.

“You don’t look like us!”

“You don’t talk like us!”

“Go away!”

当窝中最大的蛋终于孵出来的时候，鸭妈妈大吃一惊：这从破裂的蛋壳中钻出来的小家伙，一点儿都不像窝中的其他宝宝。

“看他的个子有多大呀！”鸭妈妈对孩子们说，“比你们任何一个都大得多。”

“还很丑，”一只小鸭子附和着。“我们的羽毛是黄色的，他的却是暗灰色的。”

“说话也不像我们，”另一个小家伙嘎嘎地叫着说。

受到其他小鸭子如此这般的歧视，这只丑小鸭逃走了。他发现邻近的池塘里住着一群野鸭，可当他试着接近他们时，这些野鸭子也对他说出了同样的话。

“你长得不像我们！”

“你说话不像我们！”

“走开！”

¹ quack: v. 作鸭叫

They flapped their wings at him and quacked loudly, scaring the ugly little duckling.

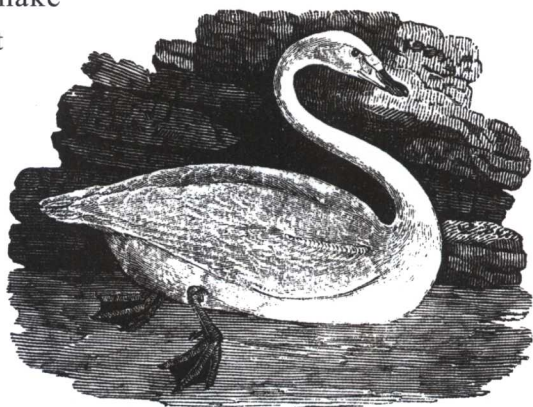
He came to a barnyard where a flock of chickens pecked at **kernels**¹ of corn. “May I eat corn with you?” he asked shyly.

The hen cocked her head and looked him over. “Hmmm, you’re a strange looking one. And you talk funny, too.”

The ugly duckling knew what was coming, and he left the barnyard before the hen could drive him away.

For a short time, the poor little duckling took shelter in the home of an old lady with a cat. He tried to make friends with the cat. He even tried to act like the cat, since the lady seemed so fond of it. But within just a day or two, the duckling’s longing to be in the water overwhelmed him.

“The water?” **purred**² the cat. “You want to go into the water?” He **arched**³ his back and gave a loud meow. “You’re a strange, strange creature.”



他们冲丑小鸭拍打着翅膀，大声地嘎嘎叫着，恐吓着他。

丑小鸭又来到谷仓旁的场院上，一群鸡正在那儿啄着玉米粒。“我能和你们一起吃玉米吗？”他怯生生地问。

母鸡耸起头，上上下下地打量着他。“唔……你长得好奇怪呀，说起话来也滑稽可笑。”

丑小鸭意识到接下来会发生什么，急忙在母鸡赶他之前就逃离了谷仓场院。

在不长的一段日子里，可怜的丑小鸭只能躲在一个老太太的家中与一只猫做伴。他试着和猫交朋友，甚至还试着学猫的样子，因为主人似乎格外宠爱那只猫。可刚刚在那里呆了一两天，丑小鸭想去水中游泳的渴望就变得越来越强烈。

“水？”猫发出咕噜咕噜的喉音。“你想到水里去？”他弓起背，大声地喵了一声。“你可真是个好奇怪好奇怪的家伙。”

At last, tired and sad and longing to find a family of his own, the ugly duckling came to a pond where he saw the most beautiful birds he could imagine. He watched them for an entire day, hiding in the bushes so they wouldn't drive him away. Sometimes the beautiful big birds swam gracefully, their long slender necks reflected in the calm water beneath them. The ugly duckling stretched his neck as far as he could, and felt his own legs ache to swim with them. Sometimes the magnificent birds flew, their powerful white wings sweeping the air and lifting them high above the trees. The ugly duckling flapped⁴ his own wings and, though he tried to be silent, he could not help making one little cry—his own cry that all the other animals had found so strange.

Immediately, the huge birds heard him and answered with cries that sounded just like his. They flew to where he was hiding and landed on the water in front of his bushes. "Come and swim with us!" they said, welcoming him.

The ugly duckling was afraid to join them at first. "I can't. I'm just an ugly duckling," he said.

又疲倦又悲伤的丑小鸭渴望找到自己的家。最后，他来到一个池塘边，在那里见到了他所能想象出的最漂亮的鸟儿。整整一天他躲在草丛中观察他们，这样就不会被他们赶走了。有时，这些美丽的大鸟在水中优雅地游着，纤细修长的脖子倒映在身下平静的水面上。丑小鸭尽其所能地伸长了自己的脖子，觉得自己的腿也渴望着一起来水中游。有时，这些雍容华贵的鸟儿飞了起来，有力的白翅膀优美地从空气中拂掠过，窜到比树梢还要高的空中。丑小鸭拍打着自己的翅膀，尽管他努力不发出声响，不过还是禁不住发出了一声轻轻的鸣叫——那种属于他自己而又令其他动物都觉得奇怪的叫声。

顷刻间，大鸟们听到了他的声音，也用那种听起来跟他一样的叫声回应着他。他们飞到丑小鸭躲藏的地方，降落在草丛前的水面上。“来跟我们一起游吧，”他们热情地邀请他。

开始，丑小鸭还是不敢加入到他们当中。“我不能，我只是一只丑小鸭，”他说。

1 kernel: *n.* (谷物去壳后的)粒

2 purr: *v.* (指猫)发出低而连续的咕噜声

3 arch: *v.* 拱起

4 flap: *v.* 上下或左右摇动、摆动等

The big birds said, "No, you are one of us!"

The duckling couldn't believe it, but when they finally coaxed¹ him into the water, he caught sight of his own reflection. He was no longer gray. His feathers were white now, like theirs. His neck had grown as long and as graceful as theirs. He spread his wings with delight and saw that they looked as powerful as the wings of these beautiful birds.

"You are one of us," cried the swans, and he swam away with them, overjoyed to find his real family at last.

Finding a family of one's own is a major theme in literature, especially children's literature. Humans come into the world with a longing to belong to one group of people above all others, to be loved and accepted and cherished unconditionally, as the ugly duckling finally was.

How do families satisfy that innate² desire to belong? Perhaps the basic component³ is sharing. Families share a history, a present, and hopes for the future.

“不，你就是我们当中的一员！”大鸟们说。

丑小鸭简直不敢相信这是事实，但当他在大家的好言相劝下进到水中的时候，他瞥见了自己在水中的倒影。他的羽毛已不再是灰色的，跟大鸟们的一样洁白无暇。他的脖子也已经长得跟他们的一样纤长而优雅。他欣喜地伸展开翅膀，看到它们也像这些美丽的大鸟们的一样强壮有力。

“你就是我们中的一员，”天鹅们欢呼着。丑小鸭与他们一同游去，为最终找到自己真正的家人而喜出望外。

寻找自己的家是文学作品中的一个重要主题，特别是在儿童文学作品中。人类来到世界上就带着一个超出其他一切的热望：从属于一些人，无条件地得到他们的爱、被他们接纳与珍惜，就像丑小鸭最终找到自己的家人那样。

家庭如何满足这种天生的归属渴望呢？或许基本的因素就是共有。家庭共有着同样的过去、同样的现在以及对未来同样的希望。

■ coax: v. 劝说；哄劝

■ innate: adj. (指特质、感情等)天生的，先天的

■ component: adj. 组成部分，成分