

我留学英国

走出英国伦敦希思罗机场 个刚满十三岁的小男孩,拖着 大大的行李箱, 一脸天真好奇地 开始了他

长达八年的留学生涯 在英国

中国书籍出版社



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Tang Ge's Road of Discovery

The Greek philosopher Aristotle once wrote the enlightened truism: "Happiness depends on ourselves." This is a lesson which takes most of us the best part of a lifetime to learn. Yet for some it is a wisdom acquired early through force of circumstance.

One blustery autumn in 1996 I went to London's Heathrow Airport to meet the son of a close friend from Beijing. Searching the straggling line of tousled travellers emerging through into the arrivals lounge, I spotted a bewildered-looking Chinese youth with short-cropped hair dragging an enormous suitcase. This was Tang Ge, son of my good friend, an energetic and talented Chinese journalist. I had agreed to act as legal guardian for Tang Ge while he attended school in England though, I must admit, not without some misgivings. She and I had had numerous conversations in Beijing on the wisdom of sending her young son, then barely 14 years old, to school in far-away England. While I respected her wish to give her son the best educational opportunities, as well as Tang Ge's own enthusiasm and excitement at the prospect of foreign travel, I wondered what effect the upheaval would have on him. Before coming to England Tang Ge had barely lived outside

his native hometown. How would he cope with the English language? Would he miss his home and friends? Would he suffer a crisis of identity? Wouldn't it be more sensible for him to study abroad after he had completed high school in China?

Tang Ge spent the first few days of his new life at our home in north London. Like many kids of his age he was a disarming mixture of worldliness and naiveté. In Kunming he had become used to looking after himself, as both parents pursued their frenetic careers. Yet he seemed fresher and more innocent than many kids of his age in Britain, many of whom face the daily pressures of drugs, sex and fashion. We went on a sightseeing tour of London where, sitting atop an open double-decker bus, he gazed at this mysterious new world, bewildered by the dual sense of the alien and the familiar. In Trafalgar Square he was mobbed by hungry pigeons who came to feed from his hand and perched shamelessly on his wiry, table-flat hair.

A few days later I travelled with him to his new school in North Hampton. It was one of those grey English days when the colour is sucked from the landscape and everything becomes a pale shadow of itself. The school's PR officer, a businesswoman in a natty sports car, met us at the station and drove us to the school. She had been responsible for recruiting hapless students from China and I at once felt uncomfortable. The school felt cold and unwelcoming and its facilities left much to be desired. As I left Tang Ge, a slight, insecure figure, waving to me from the school gate, I felt a pang of

anxiety and wondered how he would settle down in this unfamiliar world.

Mark Twain once wrote that "The worst loneliness is not to be comfortable with yourself." Over the following months and years Tang Ge was to experience loneliness in several forms. There was the loneliness of homesickness; the loneliness of being different from his rich Hong Kong schoolmates; the loneliness of separation from new-found friends; above all, there was the loneliness of not knowing who he really was.

Most adolescents suffer crises of identity at some time or another. When we are on the brink of adulthood we strain to view ourselves as others might view us. We crave acceptance, yet lack real confidence. Often we try to reinvent ourselves in the image of others.

Tang Ge has been through all this—often without the support of family or close friends. As many of his beautiful, forlorn prose show, he sought comfort in academic achievement, literature and, occasionally, the more wayward behaviour of youth. Over time he learnt to adapt to the new challenges of life in England. He made close friendships and discovered the enriching solace of love. He has learnt to overcome loneliness through a growing confidence in his own identity.

Sadly, I have not seen Tang Ge as often as I would have liked over the last few years. He spent one Christmas with us at my parents' house in rural Shropshire, but after months of hard study and mental anguish he was exhausted and retreated to his room much of the time like a hibernating spar-

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row. Recently, my wife and I visited him in his neat little apartment in Oxford and we were both amazed and impressed by the confident young adult he had become.

Reading his fluid prose has been a revelation. I knew he had a strong penchant for literature: his mother had often told me of his childhood literary successes, when he won competitions and had pieces published in the local newspapers. But the flair and confidence of his prose—above all the introspective sincerity of his outpourings—mark him out as a writer of real talent. Many people go through life without discovering their true abilities. As Benjamin Franklin put it, "Hide not your talents, they for use were made. What's a sundial in the shade?"

I am delighted that Tang Ge has now emerged from the shade of modesty to bring us this wonderful collection of essays. I am sure it will be an inspiration to many readers-especially those who are studying, or planning to study, in far-flung foreign lands.

London 28th May 2004

序

希腊哲学家亚里士多德有一句名言:幸福要靠我们自己。我 们许多人要经历大半生才能理解这句话。而对有些人来说, 环境 使他们早早便领悟了这一真谛。

1996年的一个秋日,我到伦敦希思罗机场接一个好友的儿子。看着一个个从机场走出的疲惫的旅客,很快,我搜索的目光落到了一个留着平头,拖着一个巨大行李箱的中国男孩身上。男孩的眼睛透着疑惑、不知所措的神情。这就是唐戈,我的一位中国好朋友的儿子。几个月前,在经过一段时间的犹豫之后,我答应她,在唐戈英国学习期间,做他的监护人。我曾经同这位朋友讨论过多次,让她不到14岁的儿子独自漂洋过海,到英国留学是否明智。她希望给孩子提供最好的教育机会,对这一点我非常尊重。唐戈对出国留学也充满向往。不过,我却暗暗担心,不知道这种巨大的生活变迁会对唐戈产生什么影响。唐戈从来没有离开过家,他将如何适应英语的环境?想家怎么办?会不会遇到自我认知危机?也许更明智的做法是高中毕业后再出国留学?

唐戈在英国的最初几天是在伦敦北部我的家中度过的。像同龄的许多孩子一样,他有时显得像大人一样老成,但同时又十分天真。同那些天天受到诸如毒品、性和时装等压力的英国孩子比起来,唐戈带来的是一股清新的青春气息。我们一起游览伦敦市容,在敞篷双层游览车上,唐戈睁大着双眼,看着面前这个既神秘,又似曾相识的新世界。在特拉法加广场,开心的唐戈任鸽子旁若无人地站在他的小平头上索取食物。

几天后,我送唐戈到他位于北安普敦的新学校。那天,天灰

蒙蒙的。树木、房子看上去就像是一个个淡灰色的影子。学校的公关,一个开着时髦跑车的女士,从火车站把我们送到校园。就是她在中国成功的游说,为学校招来了一批批天真、单纯的学生。我感到很不自在。这个学校让人感到冷冰冰的,不友好,设施也很一般。当唐戈孤零零地站在校门口向我告别时,我突然感到了一种强烈的不安。我不知道唐戈将怎样在这个陌生的世界中安顿下来。

马克·吐温曾经写道:最糟糕的孤独是无法找到心中的平和。 在后来的岁月中,唐戈体验到了各种孤独的滋味:对家乡、父母 的思念;同新朋友分手后的孤独;同班里富裕的香港同学相比, 感到与众不同时的那种孤独。而最主要的,是无法认知自己的孤 独。

大多数的年轻人都会在某个不同的时期经历一段自我迷失的 阶段。当我们走在进入成年期的边缘时,许多人将会倾向于在别 人的眼中找寻自我。在还不具备真正自信的情况下,我们渴望着 被认同。我们时常试着根据别人眼中的形象重新创造一个新的自 我形象。

在没有家人、朋友的支持和帮助下,唐戈独自经历了所有的一切。在他许多优美、凄凉的散文中,不难看出他是在追求学业的成功和文学的创作中找到了那份属于自己的安慰,以及偶尔从文字中透出的几分年轻的"任性"。在经历岁月的洗礼后,他适应了英国的生活,学会了接受这种新生活所带给他的挑战。他交到了许多知心的朋友,发掘了这些富足的友爱中所带来的那份安慰。他渐渐地找到了自我,找到了自信,这一切也使他学会了如何在漫长、孤寂的留学生活中征服那种内心中的孤独感。

非常遗憾的是在过去的几年中,我未能如愿以偿地时常与唐 戈见面。初到英国时,他曾和我们全家在我父母所居住的什罗浦 的小乡村里度过了一个圣诞节,但是在许多个月里的繁重学业的 压力下, 唐戈却像是一只冬眠的小麻雀, 在自己的房间里度过了 圣诞节大多数的时间。最近, 我和我的太太到牛津探访唐戈, 见 到他时我们都非常的惊讶, 因为他已从一个一脸孩子气的小男孩 变成了一个充满自信的青年。

阅读他流畅的散文会让人有一种意外的发现。我知道他一直以来都非常地热爱文学。他的母亲曾经向我提起他小时候在写作方面获得的奖项,以及在报纸和杂志上发表过的文章。他运用了这种对散文的天赋以及自信,用文字的方式充分地流露出了他真实的内心世界——也使他成为了一个真正具有天赋的年青作家。许许多多的人用一生的时间找寻,却不能发掘出自己天赋的才能。本杰明·富兰克林曾说过: "不要埋没你的天赋,你应该把它们发扬光大。藏在阴影中的日晷又能发挥什么作用呢?"

我非常欣喜,今天唐戈终于可以给读者们带来一本他所创作的精彩的散文集。我非常肯定这本书将给许多读者带来启示和激励——特别是那些即将飘洋过海,踏上异国之路的年轻留学生们。

Stephen Hallett (郝曦) 伦敦 2004年5月28日

自 序

离开故土,来到英国,那是无数个平淡、寂寞、无歌的日子。 在很长的一段时间里,我对自己的怀疑、否定,让自己总是觉得 很担心,很无助。一个人在外,独自打点一切,挣扎在欲飞而不 能的日子,这旅途又谈何容易。走得太久了,累极了,是否也无 所谓了?

英国是一个美丽的国家,这里也有许多友善的人们,然而在日常生活中也时常能察觉到歧视的阴影。英国人多数表现得很有涵养,但也不难发现有的人客气的外表下流露的冷淡和成见。对这种大环境,气愤之外更多的却是无奈。然而在这种气氛下却压抑了许多心灵的自然交流与成长。有时,真会让人窒息得想离开这里。

夜里不看书的时候,脑子闲下来,一片空白。晴朗的夜晚,望着天上的星星月亮,不免落泪。从前的生活似乎已经被掩埋,而自己的未来又不知在哪里。不知道自己是否会顺利地念完书,也不知道毕业以后会去哪里,能做些什么,是否也会像有些英国学生一样,毕业即失业呢?我只能日日企盼,默默憧憬那一段还不属于自己的未来。

其实,远渡重洋,不就是为了追求更广阔的世界吗?空间、时间、心灵,都是值得探索的,不坚持往前跨一步,怎么知道前面海阔天空?不抬头仰望,怎知天地壮丽?我不想这样子困在这里!

然而这种呐喊,其实是不足为外人道的,因为在这种环境下, 总令我有种说不出话的无力感,于是无数的情感,所有的压力、 委屈、困惑以及不解,也只能往自己的心里硬塞。生活开始变得越来越枯燥,似乎一切眼前所见已成必然的规律,而我只是重复走着日与夜的路线,以及每一个留洋海外的学子都要经历的寂寞和孤独……

我似乎必须在我的文字世界里,才能完整地,不受扭曲地讲清楚我的感觉。虽然可能只有我懂,但能写出来就有一种倾诉的舒畅,那是很好的感觉,起码是自己的文字。于是我开始写作,那无数触动的情感如雨水般倾泄,直流进我的字里行间。透过这小小的文字方框,我能把生活中那些感动,那些难以忘怀的,那些被遗忘的事物以近镜以慢速呈现出来,用文字的方式来记录所有的一切,跟熟悉的自己、陌生的自己,细味这条成长路上的苦与乐。有了这些文字相伴,清苦的留学生活便有了几分色彩。我突觉苦闷的异乡生活起了变化,好像灿烂的阳光照进斗室,燃亮起寸寸孤立的空间,为自己那似乎已要沉睡的形体注入生气。苦,不再苦了;孤寂,不再孤寂了,我找到了心灵的一份寄托。

这半年来,我越写越勤,总觉得写过的每篇文章,都是我生命中的一道年轮,记载着我当时的领悟与感受,刻下一道道成长的痕迹,其实我的文字在技巧方面是蛮差的,总是不够精简,我知道我还要不断地努力,可我想一直写下去。在学校里,写英文的论文;在公司,写英文的报告;在自己的时间里,涂抹中文的诗歌散文。做一个沉浸于一片书香世界的文人,是我最奢侈的享受。

唐戈 2004年6月1日 于牛津

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