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一幅壮锦

A Piece of Zhuang Brocade

绘 画 杨永青
文 字 张菱儿
翻 译 李朝渊
审 定 [美] Steven Orton

选题策划 汪 涛 刘冰远
特别企划 莫 梵
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从前，在壮族人生活的大山脚下有一座茅屋，
里面住着一位善良的老妈妈和她的三个儿子。老妈妈
织得一手好壮锦，织出来的动物、植物就像真的
一样。她靠着织壮锦拉扯三个儿子长大。

Once upon a time, in a thatched cottage at the foot of a mountain in the Zhuang region, there lived a kind-hearted old woman and her three sons. She was such a master weaver of Zhuang brocade that in her works all the patterns of animals and plants were extremely vivid and true to life. She also relied on this handicraft for her livelihood and that of her three sons, whom she raised by herself.

一天，老妈妈去赶集，路过一家店铺时，被一幅五彩画吸引。画里有高大的木楼、鲜花盛开的花园、一望无际的稻田，还有果园、菜园、鱼塘和数不清的鸡鸭牛羊。老妈妈一下子喜欢上了这幅画，就把它买回了家。

One day, the old woman went to the fair and when walking by a shop was attracted by a painting of rich colors in the window. The painting depicted tall wooden towers, lively gardens, vast paddy fields, and orchards, vegetable farms, fishponds, as well as numerous chickens, ducks, cattle and sheep. Fascinated by the painting, she immediately bought it and brought it home.





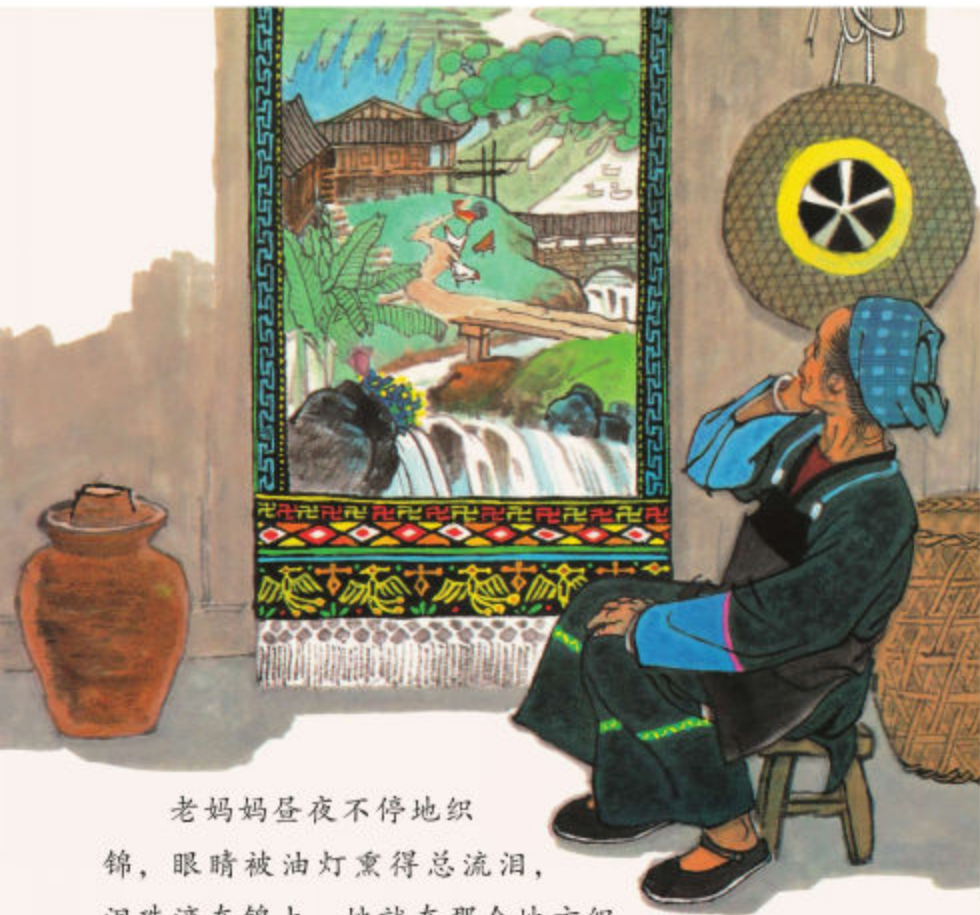
老妈妈展开画给儿子们看，赞叹说：“多美啊！要是我们能住上这样的房子该多好！”老大、老二听了撇撇嘴，说：“阿妈又做美梦啦！”老三却说：“阿妈，如果您把这幅画织成壮锦挂在墙上，可以每天看着它，就像住在画里一样。”老妈妈开心地地点头。

She unfolded the painting and showed it to her sons. She marveled, "How beautiful! How I wish we could live in such a house!" The eldest son and the second son smirked and said, "Mom, you are daydreaming again!" But the youngest son suggested, "Mom, if you can weave a piece of brocade exactly the same as this painting and hang it on the wall, by watching it every day you may feel like you are living in it." The old woman nodded happily at his idea.

She therefore started weaving on the loom. Patterns in the painting were so intricate that she attended to every detail and the progress was slow. Two years passed and she was still at it. The two sons couldn't help complaining, "Mom, you are so slow! Now we have to support the family by cutting and selling firewood. It's so tiring!" Again the youngest son said differently, "If Mom is happy doing it, let her. If you two are tired, just rest at home. I'll go for firewood alone."



于是，老妈妈坐在织布机前，面对着画织起来。画是那么美，老妈妈织得很认真。转眼一年过去了，老妈妈没有织完；第二年又过去了，老妈妈还是没织完。老大和老二抱怨道：“阿妈织得太慢了！现在只靠我们打柴卖钱来维持生活，也太辛苦了！”老三却说：“阿妈愿意织就织吧！你俩累了就歇歇，我自己去打柴！”



老妈妈昼夜不停地织锦，眼睛被油灯熏得总流泪，泪珠滴在锦上，她就在那个地方织出河水和鱼塘；眼睛累得流血了，血滴在锦上，她就在那个地方织出太阳和花朵。三年后，一幅最美丽的壮锦织好了。高大的木楼、漂亮的花园、黄澄澄的稻田、成群的鸡鸭……老妈妈怎么都看不够。

The old woman worked day and night. Because of the oil lamp and long working hours, her eyes were so strained that they were full of tears and sometimes even blood. Where tears fell upon the brocade, she made patterns of rivers and fishponds; where blood drops fell, she made those of the sun and flowers. Finally, after three years, the splendid piece of brocade was completed. She couldn't take her eyes off it: the tall wooden towers, lively gardens, golden paddy fields, flocks of chickens and ducks...

Suddenly from the window there came a fierce blast of wind, which swept the brocade off the wall and into the sky. When the old woman wanted to go after it, the piece was already sailing across the sky like a shadow towards the east. She was so sad and passed out on the doorstep.



忽然，一阵大风从窗子吹进房间，唰啦一下子卷起壮锦就飞了出去。等老妈妈追出去，只见壮锦飘飘悠悠向着东方飞远了。老妈妈急得两眼一黑，晕倒在门前。

老三把阿妈背到床上。老妈妈醒来后，拉着老大的手说：“儿子，你去东方帮我把壮锦找回来吧！”老大答应了。他收拾了几件衣服背在身上，穿上草鞋就出发了。



The youngest son carried her on his back and put her on the bed. When she woke up, she held the hand of the eldest son and said, "Son, please go to the east and help me find the brocade and bring it home!" He nodded and started off in his straw sandals and with a change of clothes.

He kept walking for a whole month until he met an old woman who said to him, "Your mom's brocade was borrowed by the fairies living on the Sun Mountain. They wanted to use it as an example so they could weave the same thing. I have a stone horse that can carry you to the Sun Mountain. But the conditions are these: when crossing the Mountain of Flames, no matter how hard it burns, you must not scream; when crossing the Sea of Ice, no matter how cold it is, you must not tremble; otherwise you'll die." He was so frightened his face turned pale.

Seeing this, the old woman said with a smile, "If the pains are too much for you, you can choose not to go. I'll give you a pack of gold. You can take it home and support your family." He took the gold and thought, "With this I can enjoy a good life by myself." So he went to the city with the gold.



老大走啊走啊，整整走了一个月，遇到一位老婆婆。老婆婆告诉他：“你阿妈的壮锦被太阳山的仙女借走做样子了。我的石马可以驮你去太阳山。但是，路过大火熊熊的烈焰山时，再热你也不能叫；经过波涛汹涌的冰海时，再冷你也不能打冷战。否则就会死。”老大听了，脸都吓白了。

老婆婆笑着说：“你要是受不了这些苦，可以不去。我送你一包金子，拿回家好好过日子吧！”老大接过金子，想：“有了这些金子，我一个人可以舒舒服服过日子。”于是，他带着金子进城了。





三个月过去了，老妈妈躺在床上，不见老大回来，就对老二说：“孩子，你帮阿妈把壮锦找回来吧。顺便也找找你大哥！”老二点点头，收拾了一下出发了。老二走了一个月，也遇到了那位老婆婆。老婆婆重复了一遍对老大说的话，老二的脸吓绿了。最后，他抱着老婆婆给的金子，也进城去了。

It had been three months since the eldest son left. Lying on the bed and with no idea when he could come back, the mother said to her second son, "Son, please go help me find the brocade and bring it home. On the way please also look for your brother." The second son nodded and started off. Like his brother, he also walked for one month and met the old woman, who repeated what she said to the first young man. His face also turned pale because of fear. In the end he followed the same path of his brother and went to the city with the gift of gold from the old woman.

Another three months passed. The mother was very weak now and had worn out her eyes gazing endlessly to the east waiting for her sons to come home, but they failed to return. The youngest son said to her, "Mom, something must have happened to my brothers. I'll go find you the brocade. I'll also look for them on the way." The mother nodded and saw him off.



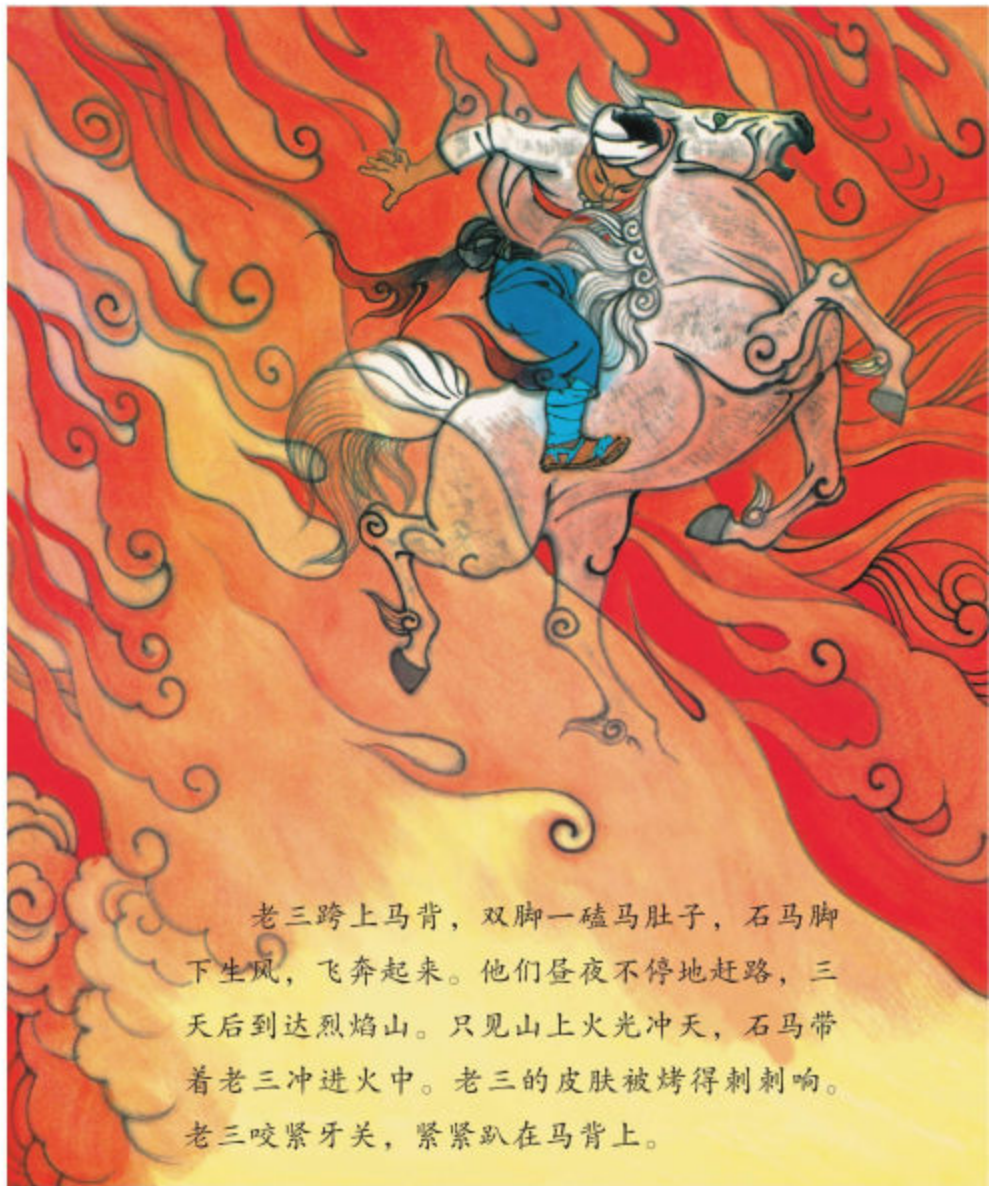
又三个月过去了，老妈妈每天撑着虚弱的身体站在门口张望，可是望不到老大和老二回来。老三说：“阿妈，大哥二哥肯定遇到了什么事儿。我帮您把壮锦找回来吧，顺路也找找大哥和二哥。”老妈妈点点头，送小儿子出了家门。

老三日夜赶路，不到半个月就见到了那位老婆婆。老婆婆把对老大和老二说的话又对老三说了一遍，并掏出一包金子给老三。老三摆摆手说：“我不要金子，壮锦是阿妈的命根子，我要找回壮锦。”



The youngest son walked day and night and it only took him half a month to arrive at the place where the old woman showed up. She repeated what she said to his brothers and also presented him with gold. He shook his head and said, "No, I won't take the gold. The brocade is my mom's life. I must go find it."

He got on the back of the stone horse and kicked its belly to send it galloping. Riding day and night for three days, they arrived at the Mountain of Flames. They braved the flames that were soaring high up into the sky. In the scorching heat the young man could hear the sizzle of his skin burning. He clenched his teeth and held fast to the horseback.



老三跨上马背，双脚一磕马肚子，石马脚下生风，飞奔起来。他们昼夜不停地赶路，三天后到达烈焰山。只见山上火光冲天，石马带着老三冲进火中。老三的皮肤被烤得刺刺响。老三咬紧牙关，紧紧趴在马背上。

穿过了烈焰山，石马驮着老三又跳进了冰海。海水冰凉刺骨，海浪卷着巨大的冰块不时撞到老三身上，又疼又冷。老三咬住嘴唇，死死贴在马背上。



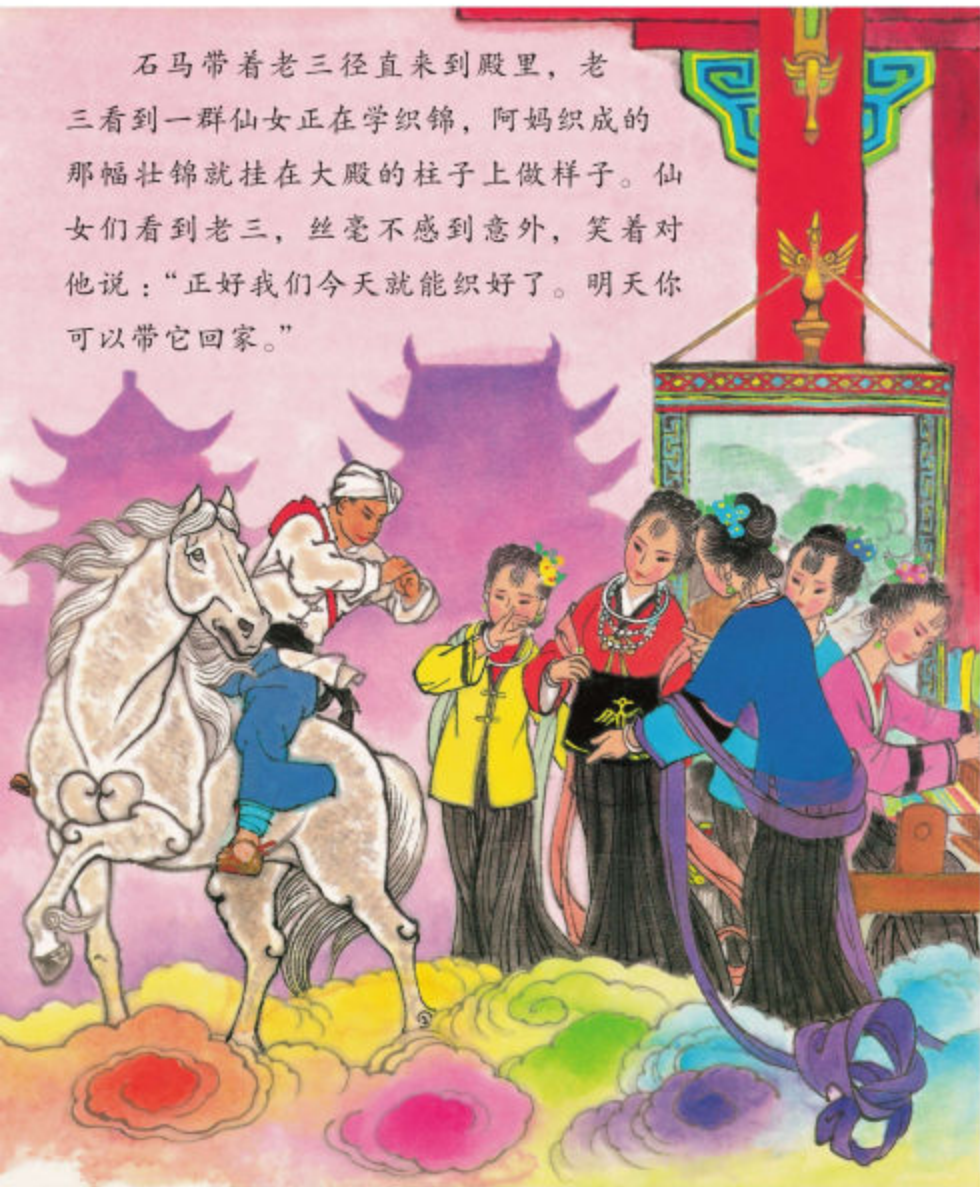
Having survived the Mountain of Flames, they were faced with the Sea of Ice. They jumped into the sea where the water was freezing and giant waves infused with ice beat the young man's body. Chilled to the bone and aching badly, the young man kept a stiff upper lip and held fast to the horseback.

They triumphed through the challenge of the Sea of Ice and kept marching forward. Finally they arrived at the Sun Mountain, a mountain covered with flowers in full bloom and with a magnificent palace standing on its top, glittering in the sun. One could hear girls laughing and singing in the palace.



好不容易过了冰海，他们向前又走了一段路，终于到了太阳山。太阳山上百花盛开，山顶上有一座金碧辉煌的宫殿，在阳光的照耀下，熠熠生辉。殿里面飘出阵阵欢笑声和歌声。

石马带着老三径直来到殿里，老三看到一群仙女正在学织锦，阿妈织成的那幅壮锦就挂在大殿的柱子上做样子。仙女们看到老三，丝毫不感到意外，笑着对他说：“正好我们今天就能织好了。明天你可以带它回家。”



The stone horse took the young man straight to the palace where he saw a group of fairies learning to weave brocade, with his mom's work hanging on a pillar for their reference. The fairies did not seem to be surprised when they saw the young man coming. They smiled to him and said, "It happens that our work can be done today. Tomorrow you can take it home."

深夜，一颗夜明珠把大殿照得像白天一样。一位红衣仙女一边织，一边想，要是能够住在这样的地方该多美。这样想着，不知不觉，她就把自己的像绣到了那幅壮锦上。

Late in the night, with a luminous pearl lighting up the whole palace as if it were daytime, a fairy in a red dress was still weaving. While weaving, she also imagined how wonderful it would be to live in the place depicted in the brocade. With such thoughts, she unwittingly wove a portrait of herself in the brocade.

