

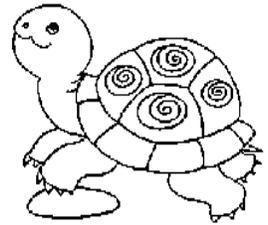


烏龜的故事

A Turtle Story

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烏龜，在我們中華文化裏名聲不大好；然而，我和牠卻有一段緣。

九八年夏天，我正在喬治亞州的瓦利堡州立大學讀書。讀了一個學期，由於交的學費是外州費，我從國內帶來的三千美元已交掉兩千多，剩下的交了頭幾個月的房租；如果沒有後續補充，下學期我將無法註冊。房東老頭已發出最後通牒：我若再拖欠房租費，他將打電話報告警察。這對一個簽證早已過期，還沒有正式學生身份的外國人來說，後果不堪設想；那古怪老頭早就懷疑我，說我一件行李都沒有，根本不像留學生，很可能是越獄逃犯。

我曾多次到學校申請各種類型的工作，由於沒有社會安全卡，校方愛莫能助；他們許諾，一旦我拿到社安卡，立即給我安排工作。他們哪裡知道，我九七年年底獲得學校的錄取通知書後，立即向移民局申請改變身份，由B1轉F1；但申請被拒，理由是：我來美國後入學手續辦得如此之快，說明我早有預謀，移民傾向很明顯。雖然我隨後上訴，但不知猴年馬月，才有結果下來。

我也曾去餐館試著找份活幹，但學校附近的兩家小中餐館都是夫妻店，男的掌勺，女的收錢兼做招待，各自雇了一位壯實的墨西哥小夥子打雜。他們異口同聲地說暫時沒有空缺，即使有，看我這個樣子，也不像能幹好打雜的活。

最後實在沒有辦法，硬著頭皮給國內打電話，叫妻子寄些錢來。妻子口頭上答應，但錢

The turtle does not have a good reputation in Chinese culture. However, I did have a friendly encounter with one.

It was during the summer in the year of 1998. I had just finished a semester studying at a state university in Georgia. Since I paid out-of-state tuition, I had already used more than two thousand of the three thousand dollars that I brought from my country. What was left was spent to pay several months' rent. If I could not find additional income to continue my study, then I would not be able to register for the next semester. My landlord had already sent his last notification: If I failed to pay the rent again, he would call the police to have me evicted. For a foreign student with an expired student visa, the outcome would be devastating. My landlord had long been suspicious of me: He said I didn't even have a suitcase. To him, I did not have the demeanor of a foreign student, but more likely, a prisoner-at-large.

I had tried to apply for different kinds of work at the university. As I did not have a social security card, there was nothing they could do to help. They did promise that once I got my social security card, they would immediately arrange work for me. Little did they know that in 1997, after I had received the registration acceptance letter from the university, I immediately went to the INS Department to change my visa from a B-1 to a F-1 and was denied. The reason: After I arrived in the U.S., I immediately applied for admission at a university. That proved that it was a premeditated action. It was obvious that I had the inclination to immigrate to this country. Although I had appealed, I had no idea when my case would be heard.

I had also tried to find work in a restaurant. However, the two small Chinese restaurants nearby the university were "Ma and Pa" shops. The husband was the cook, and the wife managed the cash register and she was also the waitress. Both restaurants hired a strong Mexican young man to run errands. Both said that they did not have any job available at the time. But even if there were any, they both didn't think I was the type that could do the job well.

Running out of options, I reluctantly made a call to my wife back



一直沒有匯過來。想想也是，單位上已開除我公職，這邊我轉身份的申請被拒，回不去，老婆孩子也來不了。把錢匯過來，豈不是肉包子打狗？我在思想上做好了最壞的準備，看來老婆高我一籌，物質上也做好了準備。後來她來了一封信，說許多留學生來美國時，身上只帶幾十美元；我比他們當時的條件好多了，應向他們學習，要能吃苦耐勞。

但是，我是持公務簽證來美，不是學生簽證。身份沒轉成，我不能考駕照，拿不到社安卡，不能在校園打工；再說我四十歲了，怎麼向那些年輕力壯的學生學習？都是不知足惹的禍！國內的鐵飯碗丟了，家庭即將解體，這邊沒了身份，世界末日彷彿降臨。在我最艱難、最痛苦的時候，我獨自在房間裏大聲唱歌；唱累了，我就出去散步，天天如此。至於下一步，我腦子裏隱隱約約有個念頭：去舊金山金門大橋！在那景色宏偉壯觀的地方，用一瞬間了結所有的煩惱。

一天傍晚，我正在痛苦的絕望中獨自散步，忽然看到一隻大烏龜橫穿柏油馬路。「高蛋白」！這是在我腦子裏的第一閃念。好多天沒吃肉，我太需要補充營養了！出於本能，我毫不猶豫地把烏龜拎起來，轉身往回走。

回到房間，我把烏龜放在桌上，思忖著是紅燒、還是清燉？坐在桌旁，我兩眼緊盯著這只碩大的烏龜。牠知道我很快就要把牠宰了嗎？牠在想什麼呢？牠後悔，不該過馬路？牠緊張，血壓升高、心跳加快？還是不屑一顧，視死如歸？牠一動不動，一聲不響，好像睡著了；死到臨頭了，牠還能安穩入睡？我怎麼遇到點挫折，就坐立不安，像熱鍋上的螞蟻？看來烏龜的長壽不是偶然的，人類沒有資格嘲笑牠。

那麼寬的馬路，路兩邊是草地，草地的邊緣是叢林。牠為什麼不老老實實地待在某一邊的草叢裏，偏要冒著被汽車碾死的風險過馬路？也許牠憑著靈性，在路旁的草地

in my country and asked her to send me some cash. She agreed over the phone but the money never arrived. When I thought about it, it made sense. My unit had already released me from my public service. On this end, I was being denied a transfer of status. I could not go back, and my wife and kids could not come here. If she had transmitted the money to me, it would be like “hitting a dog with meat dumplings” (an investment with no returns). In my mind, I prepared for the worst. It seemed that my wife was much smarter than I. She was fully prepared for her everyday living. Later she sent me a letter. She said many foreign students only had 20 or 30 dollars when they first came to the U.S.. By comparison, I was in a much better position than they were. I should learn from them. I must learn to master and endure suffering and hardship.

However, I was under a business visa when I came to the U.S., not a student visa. Since I was unsuccessful in my attempt to change my status, I could not even take a driving exam to get a driver's license. And since I could not get a social security card, I could not work in the university. Moreover, I was already in my forties; how could I learn from those energetic younger students?

It was all because of my dissatisfaction that I was in this mess. I had lost my secure job in my country. My family was about to fall apart. Here I did not have any legal status. It was as if doomsday had descended. In my most difficult times, I would sing aloud in my room. When I got tired, I would go outside for a walk. I did that every day. As for my next move, in my mind I had a vague thought: To go to the Golden Gate Bridge, to a place where the view of the city was breathtaking and then put an end to all my afflictions.

One day at dusk, I was walking alone feeling agony and despair. All of a sudden, I saw a big turtle crossing an asphalt road. High protein! That was the first thought that flashed through my mind. I had not had meat for many days. I was desperate for nourishment. Out of natural instinct, without any hesitation, I scooped up the turtle, turned and headed back.

After I returned to my room, I put the turtle on my desk. I was thinking of whether to cook and simmer him or braise him in clear soup. Sitting next to the desk, my eyes gazed at this big healthy turtle. Did he know that he would be butchered soon? What was he thinking? Was he thinking that he shouldn't have tried to cross the road? Was his blood pressure rising and his heart beating faster out of nervousness? Or was he unconcerned, seeing death as returning to his origin? He had not moved a bit. He had not made any sound. He looked like he was asleep. He was about to die. Could he still fall asleep in peace? Why did I worry when I encountered adversity, like an ant in a hot pot? It seems like the





上窺測良久，認為萬無一失，才展開行動；牠卻萬萬沒想到，在牠的世界裏，除了汽車，還有我這麼個餓漢，會對牠的生命構成威脅。

牠為什麼要過馬路？外出覓食，養家活口？幽會、求偶、尋歡作樂？還是為將來、為後代開拓新天地？不管怎樣，都是受本能的驅使，在追求幸福，幹著牠認為該幹的事情。啊，勇敢的行動者，孤獨的英雄漢，我應該對牠肅然起敬。

牠知道什麼叫「一失足成千古恨」嗎？可憐的烏龜！到頭來，落得個無援無助、孤苦零丁；這不正和我現在的狀況一樣嗎？我為什麼要放棄工作，穿過浩瀚的太平洋，跑到這人生地不熟的美國來？

突然，我格外同情這隻烏龜的處境，惻隱之心油然而生：我應當幫牠一把，幫助牠過馬路，以便牠能完成牠的事業。無助無望、身處絕境的我，最能體會到幫助的溫暖。

烏龜仍然巋然不動，牠知道我在想什麼嗎？牠知道我已把牠當做患難之交了嗎？我認真地對牠說——或許也是自言自語，像我平時對著空氣禱告一樣：「烏龜啊！烏龜！對不起，讓你受驚了！我佩服你橫穿馬路時的勇氣和膽量，佩服你身陷囹圄後的沈著冷靜，泰然自若。就我現在的處境，我非常同情你、理解你，生活中沒有勇敢就沒有幸福，然而勇敢者有失足的時候，失足之後，你一點不顯得失魂落魄，值得我學習。我打算把你放了，成全你，讓你繼續做你想做的事。我目前正在艱難地奮鬥，在絕望中掙扎；我從你身上，學到了敢於進取、臨危不懼的精神。咱們今後相互幫助吧！」後來一想，這美國烏龜可能聽不懂中國話；於是我又用英文，把心靈獨白說了一遍。

說完之後，我把牠帶到剛才那地方，輕輕放在路上，希望牠照自己的意願穿過馬路；但牠紋絲不動，可能還沒有睡醒，

turtle's longevity is not fortuitous. Humankind is in no position to tease and laugh at him.

It was such a wide road, with green pasture on both sides. On the edge of both pastures were shrubs. Why didn't the turtle settle on either side of the shrubs, but instead risk the danger of being run over by cars in order to cross the road? Perhaps he was drawing on his efficacious nature. He had waited long enough in the pasture, and knew without fail that it was safe to cross over. However, he had probably never thought that in his world, other than cars, there was still a hungry man that could pose a threat to his life.

Why did he cross the road? Looking for food outside to feed his family? Having a date? Seeking for a partner? Going out for a good time and having fun? Or was it for his future, for the sake of his offspring that he was exploring new lands? No matter what it was, he was drawn by his instinct to seek prosperity, to do what he set out to do. Oh, what a courageous action he had undertaken! What a lonely hero! I should show solemn respect to him.

Did he know what's meant by "one pitfall leads to endless misery and regret"? Poor turtle. Ultimately, he could end up with no aid and no help, suffering and all alone. Wasn't he in the same situation as I was? Why did I quit my job and travel across the great Pacific Ocean to America, a land that I knew little about?

Suddenly, I took pity on the turtle's situation. My heart sympathized with him. I should help and take him across the road so he could fulfill his destiny. I was in the same situation of being helpless and in despair; I could fully comprehend the warmth of compassion of giving a lending hand.

The turtle remained still. Did he know what I was thinking? Did he know I was considering him to be like a friend in difficult times? I really mean it when I said, or perhaps I was just talking to myself, like I was addressing air when I said: "Turtle, turtle, I'm sorry that I frightened you. I admire your courage when you tried to cross the road. I admire your calmness while you're in captivity as if nothing had happened. Based on my own present situation, I have to sympathize with you. I understand you. In life, if there is no courage there are no blessings. However, even a courageous person may fall. But when you fell, you did not seem to lose your courage. You are worthy of my learning. I plan to free you, to fulfill your wish so you can continue to do what you want to do. At present, I am striving myself in difficult times. I'm struggling amidst despair. From you, I learn the courage to strive forward, to have an undaunted spirit in the midst of danger. Let's help one another from now on!" On second thought, this American turtle may not understand Chinese, so I repeated my words in English to express my heartfelt sentiment.





也可能牠仍然提防著我，對我的善意進行考察、核實。看來信任確實需要時間！我只好把牠拎過馬路，放在路旁的草地上；然後，我退到遠處，默默地注視著牠，直到牠慢慢挪動，從容不迫地消失在夜幕的草叢中。

新學期的第一天，指導老師告訴我：「職業康復諮詢專業」有獎學金；如果我願意由現在的「心理健康諮詢專業」轉過去，就可以得到那筆獎學金，學雜費也免了。我眼睛都沒來得及眨一下，就同意了！那位老師驚訝地望著我，可能是敬佩我在決定職業生涯時的當機立斷；他可能沒有饑不擇食的經歷，但他應該想像得到：一個在茫茫大海上即將淹死的人，見到一個救生圈，會如何行動。

後來畢業、家庭團聚、找到工作、遷居亞特蘭大。有時黃昏時分，獨自一人在住宅附近的鄉間瀝青馬路上散步，思考著一些人生問題，我會很自然地想到那只遠方的烏龜——那位沈默、勇敢、處變不驚的穿越者。牠行動那麼遲緩，都敢冒險探索未知的彼岸；我有什麼理由，在困難面前畏縮、膽怯？牠也使我明白，只要活著，就有機會；即使山窮水盡，也有轉危為安的可能性。我要是一念之差，去了金門大橋，在橋上一失足，雖然不再有煩惱，但也不再有任何希望；冒著風險，出來闖蕩，不正是為了「希望」嗎？

Having said that, I took the turtle back to where I had picked him up, with the hope that he would cross the road as he wished. However, he remained unmoving. Perhaps he had not yet woke up. Perhaps he was still shielding himself from me, or speculating on my good intention. Looks like trust does indeed take time. So I finally carried him across the road and put him in the pasture. Then I retreated to a distance and silently watched him until he finally moved on. Slowly he disappeared into the darkness of the shrubs.

On the first day of the new semester, the counselor told me that there was a scholarship in the Professional Rehabilitation Counseling program. If I would transfer my current Mental Health Counseling major to that major, then I could obtain the scholarship and also have all miscellaneous fees waived. I immediately agreed. The counselor looked at me with surprise. Perhaps he admired my on-the-spot decisive choice of career. Maybe he had never experienced a situation where “one does not choose what to eat when one is starving.” Nevertheless, anyone would be able to figure out what action to take, if one were about to drown in the big open sea and suddenly saw a life preserver.

Later I graduated and was reunited with my family. I found a job and we all moved to Atlanta. Sometimes when I stroll alone on the country asphalt road nearby my house, reflecting on the problems in life, very naturally, I will think of the turtle from afar. That quiet and courageous being, undaunted in the face of danger. His pace is so slow yet he dares to explore the unknown shore on the other end. What excuse do I have to retreat and fall back in the face of difficulties? It also makes me understand that as long as one lives, there will always be opportunities. Even if it seems that one reaches the end of the mountain and the edge of the water, it is still possible that one can turn danger into safety. If I had gone to Golden Bridge and fallen off, although it would have ended all my afflictions, it would have also thrown away all hope. Going against all odds to roam and explore, isn't that just because there's hope?



《金剛棒喝》

問：為什麼喜歡講話？ 上人：情感太多。

Question: Why do people like to talk?

Venerable Master: They have too much emotion.

— *Vajra Blows*

