

Defying the Fate:

A Book-Made Bridge
Across the Pacific



Defying the Fate: A Book-Made Bridge Across the Pacific



Table of Contents

The Weight of a Name	9
Hunger's Memory: The Bamboo Chair	15
Five Yuan and a Vanished Dream	19
Summer 1968: Chairman Mao's Shortest Essay	23
Witnessing China's Transformation	27
Neighborhood Matters: Village Wisdom in Action	35
A Tribute to My Uncle: A Connection Lost Too Soon	43
Friends and Bonds in High School	49
Political Exclusion in My School Years	53
The Friend Who Taught Me to Fish	59
Lessons from My First Teaching Job	65
Three Theses, Three Turning Points	69
Nanjing: The Most Beautiful Place in My Memory	73
Three Theses That Shaped My Career	81
The IEA Project: China Meets the World	89
Measuring Wealth Across Time	95
National Day 1984	99
Landing at CSUB	105
Aging and the Younger Self	111

Table of Contents

From Complacency to Resolve	117
The Only Lesson That Matters	123
My Grandmother's Gift	127
Earning Recognition	133
Breaking the Cycle	137
Marriage Without Courtship	141
Dreams in Motion	145
The Joy I Missed	151
Looking Ahead: A 30-Year Perspective on Nature, Society, and Family	155
Five Advisors, Five Lessons	159
Humanity's Uncertain Future	167
Language, Parenting, and Mutual Growth	171
January 8, 1990	173
The Transformative Power of Reading	177
Childhood Heroes and the Meaning of Integrity	181
A Bowl of Rice	183
Guiding, Not Molding: A Philosophy of Parenting	187
The Kindness of My Third Uncle	191

Table of Contents

Age Twenty: The Crossroads	195
Initial Conditions	199
Growing Up with Purpose and Perspective	203
My Twenties: A Decade of Determination	205
Tracing the Family Tree	209
Thinking Beyond the Crowd	213
Transforming Habits, Finding Meaning: A Journey of Self-Discovery	217
Faith and the Unknown	221
Markers of Growth	225
Parenting, Expectations, and the Unpredictable Journey of Growth	229
Legacy in Ink: Quiet Resilience	233
Memories of My Mother	239
China's Transformation: A Lifetime of Witness	243
Lifelong Companions: The Friends Who Shaped My Journey	247
The Best Advice That Changed My Life	253
Loneliness and the Strength to Endure	257
Navigating Work and Career: A Personal Journey	261

Table of Contents

The Gifts We Wish For	269
Health Decisions: Lessons from a Lifelong Journey	273
Immigration and Renewal	277
A Life in Five Acts	283
Reframing Expectations	289
The 1990s: Parenthood and Tenure	293
April 1, 1990: Libing's Birthday	297
On Good Bosses and the Lessons They Teach	301
Happiness: A Personal Journey of Achievement and Adventure	303
Reflections on My Least Favorite College Course	307
Childhood Dreams and the Rule of “No Pain, No Gain”	311
Family Secrets and the Weight of Legacy	315
Staying Connected: Social Bonds in Later Life	319
Echoes of My Childhood	323
The Best Job I Ever Had: A Rural School That Shaped My Life	325
Traveling Upward: Seeking Meaning Through Movement . .	329
Books That Built Me	333

Table of Contents

Navigating Academic Disputes	341
Evolving Beliefs: A Journey Beyond Tradition	345
Shifting Generations: How Delayed Marriage Is Reshaping Family Structures	351
What Friendship Means	355
The Seasons of Family: How Love Endures Through Role Transformation	363
Three Criteria for Love	369
Adaptability, Trade-offs, and Resilience	375
Choosing a New Home: A Decision That Shapes Life	379
The Hostile Dean	383
Memorable Moments with Summer Wang	387
Morning Rituals	391
Teresa Teng: The Voice of Transformation	395
Teresa Teng: Music as a Time Capsule	399
The Stupidest Thing I Ever Did	403
A Dream Dinner with A BNU Classmate	407
The Inner Critic and the Journey Toward Self-Compassion	411
Talent, Trust, and the Probabilities of Progress	415

Table of Contents

Citizenship, Global Shifts, and Personal Experience	419
The Best Day: A Moment of Practical Clarity	423
Music and Endurance: A Soundtrack to My Life	427
Parenthood: Shaping Values Across Generations	431
On Being Remembered	435
The Right Time to Retire	439
Faith, Physics, and the Unknown	443
The Soul's Reflection: A Dream of Reconnection	449
Parents and Children Share a Chapter of Life Together	453
Season's Greetings: Reflections from the Wang Family	459
A Reflection on Gratitude — Christmas Day, 2024	461
Peace of Mind: A Personal Reflection	465
Choosing Home: A Seasonal Philosophy	467
Chives: A Garden Success	469
If Wealth Were Unlimited: A Vision for Impact	471
Attempts on College Application Essay	473