

《义丐武训传》

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Biography of The Chivalrous Beggar, Wu Xun

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1

The Chivalrous Beggar Wu Xun is a miracle to the universe. He came to the stage as a mendicant playing the clown. Through begging, running temporary errands and performing trivial spectacles, he wanted to achieve nothing but one goal in his life, opening his own charity schools. Dorky and crazy a person he was, he was haunted by this disease-like School Complex for over forty years, worsened over time until his death. In the end, he established three schools that benefited countless children of low-income households. It is a shame that he passed away too early, as he surely would have accomplished more if he was still alive. In order to open his schools, Wu Xun endured all kinds of detest, mockery and humiliations among other ineffable adversities. Yet he made it, while those who neglected, slighted and made fun of him had rotted away. His spirit lives on till the edge of the universe. He shattered hardship into pieces and brought hopeful boon to the people. Now is an opportunity for those who had previously doubted him to redeem themselves by picking up his torch. Light or heavy, the weight of the torch is proportional to the degree one contracts himself with the same disease. By following a chronological order, I present you the *Biography of The Chivalrous Beggar, Wu Xun*.

2.

Wu Xun was born on lunar October 19 of the 18th year of Emperor Daoguang of Qing Dynasty, or December 5, 1838 of Christian calendar, so annual celebration for his birthday is held on every 5th of December. He was a local of the Wu Village, Tangyi County of Shandong Province. His forefathers were impoverished farmers. When it came to his parents who owned a few plots of land, there were continuous years of famine that barred them from sustenance farming. He had an older sister who was married, and an older brother named Wu Rang. The family of four depended their livelihoods on the father Zongyu alone. At the age of five, Wu Xun's father passed away. As his brother grew older and went away to eke out a living by himself, Wu Xun followed his mother begging for a living. Whenever he obtained alms food, Wu Xun would consume the scrap and save the good ones for his mother. Touched by the son's filial duty, Mrs Wu's eyes often welled up in silence, to which Wu Xun would sometimes weep along. Other times he would break out a folk tune, turning her tears into laughter.

3.

When he was begging on the street and he heard the school students reciting paragraphs, he would pause and a smile would be caught on his face. He would wistfully follow the village kids to and fro until they grew annoyed and chided him to leave them along. Wearing a pensive, disappointed smile, he would see them leaving with a high spirit that only rendered his desire for school stronger. One day as he mustered enough courage to ask for permission to attend the class, the teacher was outraged, couldn't believe that a young beggar just baldly demanded to sit in his class. The teacher took a ferule and lashed fits of scolding on Wu Xun. As the rest of the students found it funny, they coupled their teacher's effort in chasing him out of the school.

Wu Xun was distraught. when he returned home he said to his mom in tears, "Why can other kids go to school but not me?" She also wept, "We barely have food to eat, let alone schools. To go to school you need money! Silly boy, stop your daydream!" Upon hearing this Wu Xun was somewhat consoled, and grew content with being a beggar. Every day, he took in his hands a dog-fending stick and a rugged bamboo basket, begging from door to door in scorching summer and frigid winter, blustering wind and fiery rain. The mother and the son only had each other to count on.

They hung in there for two years until Mrs. Wu passed away when Wu Xun was seven. This marked the even worse turn in the boy's fate. Fortunately, a good-hearted aunt adopted him; though poor, she didn't have to beg for a living, so Wu Xun thought to himself that perhaps he could go to school. He ruminated over this idea but didn't dare to bring it to his aunt; everyday he collected firewood and weeded the fields to pay back her stewardship. Two years later, he made a behest to his aunt to go to school, but was told by her in melancholy, "School is not for poor kids. Focus on getting a manual work when you grow up." Disappointed for the second time, Wu Xun never brought up this idea again.

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To not weigh down his aunt further, Wu Xun went to work menial jobs in the house of an uncle of the same clan. The family however, took no pity on Wu Xun. Giving him no breaks, the assigned very heavy, physically-unfit tasks, and would go ballistic on him at the slightest dissatisfaction. The verbal and physical torture was herculean. Once, while he was asked to feed the pigs, he tripped and spilled the fodder, for which the family punished him hard before kicking him out of the house. Lonely and lost, he wandered hopelessly, because the thought of going back to his auntie put his dignity down, and of finding another employer willing to hire him was unrealistic. Desperate, he meandered around begging for survival, until he finally reached Xuedian Village of Guantao County to work for *juren* Zhang at a yearly wage of six thousand copper coins. At the age of sixteen, Xun was able to take on more arduous tasks, and despite the meager pay, he performed his duty whole-heartedly. He also actively took on assignments which even adult workers found challenging. Therefore, everybody called him a fool.

He worked incessantly for three years until one day he heard of the aunt's sickness and wished to assist her financially with what he earned. To his shock, *juren* Zhang retrieved a fake ledger and said, "You've already been paid; see it for yourself!" He took advantage of the fact that Wu Xun wasn't smart. At this moment, Wu Xun was dumbfounded. He didn't know what to do or say, but cried out loud while thumping his fist on the chest, "God knows, have you lost your heart?" *Juren* Zhang was infuriated by his words. He ordered Wu Xun be taken to the street and manhandled till he was bruised and bleeding. Without any compunction, *Juren* Zhang displayed the ledger to the onlookers and said to them, "This scumbag is trying to fool me!" Although the crowd knew Wu Xun's innocence, nobody stood up against *Juren* Zhang's accusation.

After being beaten up, Wu Xun remained on the ground wailing; blood kept oozing out from his head. No one dared to help for fear of what *Juren* Zhang could do to them, and within a few seconds, the spectators took off. To Wu Xun's luck, nearby lived Mr. and Mrs. Zhao, a philanthropist couple who were very charitable towards mending roads, building bridges and helping the needy. They rushed to the site when they heard Wu Xun was a thread away from dying. Having someone carried the boy to their house, the couple tended to his wounds until he fully recovered and could leave on his own.

5

Before long, Wu Xun started to work for another scholar, who put on a literate and amenable façade but was deep down a penny-pinching and money-hungry miser that would trick everyone he came across. One time, Wu Xun's sister sent someone to deliver Wu Xun a letter and two joints of coins. Because he was absent, the scholar received the items on Wu Xun's behalf, but immediately expropriated the money. When Wu Xun returned, the scholar recited the letter to him but omitted the part about the money. Later the sister sent someone else to inquire if Wu Xun had got the money; that was when he knew what the scholar had done. Angry, he went to confront the scholar who of course rejected the claim, only to be harshly scolded by the same man and charged with, "You're possessed by demon!" At his wit's end, Wu Xun contained all bitter feelings inside: like a mute who couldn't complain about the bitterness of coptis roots, being illiterate made him pay.

On another occasion during the Spring Festival, the scholar composed new year couplets and asked Wu Xun to put them up, for the scholar had to run errands outside the house. When Wu Xun was about to hang them up, a sudden gale of wind blew them away. Unable to distinguish the upper couplets from the lower, or to tell where each phrase belonged, he hung them out of order. Upon returning, the scholar was outraged to find "May Cats and Dogs Be in Peace" above his bed, "May the Entire Household Be Blessed" above the chicken coop, and other countless mistakes of inverted characters or misplaced stanzas. The scholar was consumed with rage; he lashed two strikes on Wu Xun's cheeks, told him to "disappear" before he fired him. The man also reduced his earnings by twenty percent as punishment. Wu Xun couldn't stand it any longer; he bellowed at the scholar, "You bastard! Before, you took advantage of the fact that I couldn't read or write and embezzled my sister's money; now you do that again to cut my salary, do you even have conscience? Your money stinks like crap; take it and go mend your dog house!" He tossed all copper coins at the scholar; they made huge sounds splattered on the floor. He then secured the luggage and took off without turning back.

6

After he left, Wu Xun went to work for his uncle-in-law, who owned a tofu business and several plots of land. Majority of Wu Xun's job composed of milling soy beans, as grinding them up into paste was the first step to making tofu. During harvest seasons, he also helped in the field, none of which he found bitter to do. He said to himself, "The master and I are close relatives. At least I won't be fooled again!" Therefore he toiled relentlessly every day. He thought, "I'll be paid at the end of the year; hopefully he will keep track of the number." To his surprise, when the time came, the uncle-in-law took out a fake ledger and babbled erroneously that certain amounts had been dispensed on certain dates already, only to arrive at the conclusion that he owed Wu Xun nothing. Burning with anger upon hearing such spurious statements, Wu Xun cried, "I was paid nothing so how is that possible?" Before he could explain further, the uncle-in-law called his family members to drive Wu Xun out. During the commotion, a neighbor stopped for detail, and the uncle-in-law showed him the fake account. To Wu Xun's shock, the man sided with his uncle in accusing Wu Xun to be slimy, and disrespectful towards seniors. Wu Xun felt inarticulate in the face of injustice. What can he do? Although he couldn't speak for himself, Wu Xun had the autonomy to leave this place, which he did gallantly.

7.

Outside the door, anger haunted him. He looked around; there was no place for him to be in. In recollection of the past, since he was born he had been a poor boy, losing his father at the age of five and mother at seven. Several times he dreamed of going to school, only to be put down because he had no money, so he ended up illiterate. Because of that reason he was constantly conned by people and almost beaten to death. If it was just strangers who did it to him, it wouldn't have been so bad. But some were his blood relatives. They showed no compunctions whatsoever. The more he thought about it, the angrier he grew. Finally he fell ill.

Wu Xun had been homeless before. Now it's simply a matter of bringing his exhausted body and mind back to that lifestyle again. He returned to the village's deserted temple, covered his head with a blanket, then fell into a sound sleep for three days and nights without eating or drinking. Finally, he came to the enlightenment. While lamenting his own fate, he recognized that the world was full of unfortunate fellows like him. He couldn't go to school because of poverty, so were millions of those similarly impoverished. He was taken advantaged of because he couldn't read or write, so were many of those who were illiterate. He pondered and pondered; eventually, he decided to forget about the past, and help those with similar destiny. He wanted to open his own charity school for the underprivileged, so that they can learn without having to pay, and when they have knowledge, they won't be taken advantage of. With this goal in mind, Wu Xun made peace with himself. Excited about the idea, he recovered immediately. Since that day, he refrained from doing manual work to devote completely to begging. He darted out to the street, crying out feverishly:

As a worker, I was mistreated; as a beggar, it's up to me. See for yourself, a beggar like me can open his own school.

Flabbergasted, people on the street paused to witness his craziness. They laughed and asked each other, “isn’t that Wu The Seventh? What’s wrong with him acting like a walking dead?” Wu Xun didn’t used to have a name, because he ranked number seven in the clan, people called him Wu The Seventh. In addition, because he had a dorky and grotesque look, he was nicknamed “Foam Face”, a title particularly favored by local kids. As he was chanting feverishly on the street, a group of children followed him around, yelling, “Foam Face is mad! Everybody come take a look!” Some mischievous ones even tossed rocks at him. Within a day, the entire Wu Village knew that Wu The Seventh went crazy.

8

Since the mania that day, he gained a new life. To say he knew nothing about the difficulty of opening a charity school was not true, especially as he survived by begging. Yet since he made up his mind he feared no challenges. With a strong faith that he would succeed, Wu Xun transcended his mentality to cheerfully devote to the cause. Besides alms money, he tried all means to increase his earning to prepare for the school. He would let no one down.

Since a new life had begun, he fathomed perhaps he should change his appearance as well. First, he asked a barber, “do you buy back hair?” The barber replied, “certainly, how much is for one joint?” Wu Xun said, “one tael each,” to which the barber responded, “give me all you have.” Wu Xun took his pigtail, said, “I will sell you this one first. Take it now, but be careful that when you shave the left side, leave me a peach-shaped trim. The rest can go.” The barber laughed, “go Foam Face! Don’t mess around with me! The pigtail was mandated by the emperor; who dare to cut it off? Your face is ugly enough. You will drive people crazy if you got that bizarre haircut. What do you want? Just leave me alone and go begging somewhere else!” Wu Xun had to make another earnest behest, “please take my pigtail, no blame, I swear. What use does it do to me since I’m not going to be a government official anyway. Do your job, and take out the price of the haircut from the pigtail.” The barber laughed again, “you are a twenty-year-old; aren’t you ashamed to look like a toddler?” Wu Xun replied, “don’t ask, just do as I said.” Hence the barber followed his precise instruction, and Wu Xun received nine hundred coins back after credited the barber’s technique fee. This served the initial fund for establishing his schools.

Days later, he went back to the barber to shave off the left side, while trimming the right side into the same pattern. He rotated doing so every now and then; until he passed away, he kept this fabulous routine. His goal was to play a clown to make people laugh so that they would be willing to donate to his school. He wrote two songs for this. It goes:

Shave one side, leave the other, a school is built worry-free.

Shave one side, leave the other, a school is built effortlessly.

Wu Xun was born ugly with duck lips and narrow forehead; though his stature was big, he had features of both men and women. When he spoke, the feminine quality came out even more. Now, with his head shaped in such weird pattern, and rugged clothes sewn in colorful patches, he turned himself into a bona-fide clown. He continued begging on the street, while mumbling about his charity school. People believed he caught a disease-like complex towards founding his own school. Before long, he got another nickname “School-complex Patient”. He was also really fond of this title, so he wrote a song about it:

Having School Complex dispelled my anger, so when I see people, I salute to them.

I live off the money I beg, and my charity school would last for years of ten thousands.

9

Normally, stage clowns are playful figures, but this one is tragic and lamentable. Wu Xun wasn't recognized, and he was often laughed at, but being laughing at was all he wanted. Like he anticipated, people bought his tricks. They found him funny, and grew willing to give him money and food. Gradually he was offered more food than he could eat. Regarding the alms money, he saved them; as for the food, he would consume the coarse fractions, and sell the good ones for extra money and save it. People asked him why didn't he eat the good ones first, he replied with a chant:

To eat well is not true wellness; to build a school is true wellness.

Sometimes when he knocked on door of misers who not only refused to make offerings, but also seize the chance to curse him, he would smile and chant calmly:

I'm not mad that you give nothing; there will be good people who take care of me.

I don't force, I don't make; no need to push and no need to be afraid.

And:

I beg for good karma, you gather good merit; together we build a charity school.

For those with short temper who found his babbling, chanting and the sight of him detestable, and who grew impatient and chided him to leave, Wu Xun's performance was even more awe-striking, and the lyrics more captivating:

Papa and uncle don't be annoyed; I won't leave unless you stop being mad.

Upon hearing this, even those on top of their rage would have to quench down, because the angrier they got, the firmer Wu Xun would plant his feet in front of their houses. He wouldn't leave unless their anger disappear. People often had no choice but to give him something and then see him off.

To deter him from disturbing, some family unleashed their fiery dogs on him. None-disquieted, he chanted to the dogs:

Black and white, do not bite, Foam Face is here!

No longer gnashing their teeth barking, the dogs would wage their tails before lowering their bodies on the ground to show submission.

10

It's not just items presentable that he refrained from personal consumption; so long as the object was decent enough, he would trade to other beggars. He himself on the other hand, often filled the stomach with all kinds of scrapes like vegetable roots and taro heads. When being questioned why would he eat things that other people stay away from, he replied by singing:

*Vegetable roots make my belly full, so I do not have to rely on others, so I can save meals for my school.
Taro head, not to be boiled in water, not to be cooked on fire, so I can save money for my school.*

While in other's house, people often gave him clean water to drink. Sometimes he would wash his face first before drinking it, therefore people would ask, "how could you drink dirty water?" To that he chanted:

One drinking dirty water is not dirty; the real dirty is to drown the idea of the school.

For family who make generous offerings, he became so excited to the extent that he would prostrate in front of them to express gratitude, while chanting:

*I beg for money, you gather good deeds; I will build a school for you to see.
You create merits, I act on your behalf; let's help each other in making it come true.
There is no such thing as too much or too little; let's all donate a bit for it.
You gain good names and merits. As God of Culture and Literature takes notice, he will make sure your children score high-ranking official.*

11

Besides begging, he didn't waste any opportunity of earning money. He often worked as a miller. To mill is to take a wooden stick through a loop of mill rope, to which the upper half of the mill plates is attached and forced to rotate. It is the first step to grind wheat, then the milled wheat will be passed through a bamboo sieve which is battered constantly. Whatever comes out becomes the flour. Northern buns were made this way, so were other grain products. To sell his service, Wu Xun would call out "Miller, Miller". If one comes to hire him, he would sing:

Miller in motion: six coins per fifteen kilo. To mill only, not to sift, to sift costs more.

In rural Shandong, families with over ten mu of land utilized milling animals. Donkey was the most common, then it was oxen, coupled with horses and mules. In milling, a collar is mounted on the neck of the animal, to which a stick will be harnessed, so as the animal goes around the mill it rotates the upper plate. This saves human power, but animal feces tend to drop without warning. Therefore to use milling animals, thick layer of soil have to be laid on the path. For fear that animals would take away his business, Wu Xun wrote lyrics lavishing the merit of hiring him over an animal for the job. He sang:

I don't need collar or harness; I don't need layers of soil.

Thereby showing his advantage. Wu Xun did the effort, plus he played no tricks and charged reasonable price, so people were willing to lend him tasks. As a result, he made a decent sum from milling. At the early stage of establishing his school, this was a major support.

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Besides milling, he also made money by rope-making and fiber-tufting. Rope-making consists of rolling scrape fabrics or threads into various objects like cords for binding things or ropes for pulling carts. Fiber-tufting consists of tufting useless fabrics inside a roll of threads with deft techniques; the end result was a thread ball to serve children's toy. All scrape fabrics came from trash, people's giveaway or whatever he found on the road. He could turn waste into valuable products to be sold for money. When he was tufting the fibers he would often sing:

Twitch the thread, roll the ball, it's only a matter of time to build my school.

Roll the ball, twitch the thread, it's a piece of cake to build my school.

13

He also helped people put dung out for sundry, cut grasses and pull rock columns. To sundry dung, he would take the wet feces out of waste pits to a flat ground to be turned over a dozen times a day, until it's dried and therefore can be stored for future use. As dirty as the job was, rarely anyone was willing to do except Wu Xun who showed great enthusiasm. To cut grass is to use a hay cutter to chop up the stalks of grains and vegetables to make animal feeds.

This is a particularly dangerous job: as one person adds content into the cutter, the other person controls the blade; an inch off is a finger chopped. Though it was a risky task, there was such calmness in his demeanor that kept him from getting hurt. What is rock columns? It's a farm tool specific to the northern region. Consisting of a pair of stone wheels on two sides penetrated by a wood beam in the middle, it can be pulled forward by a chest pad and a long rope attached to the ends of the beam. It weighs over hundreds of pounds, and the distance between two columns is roughly a foot depending on the need of the sow. In spring planting of grain and sorghum, immediately following the sowing tool, someone better run the rock columns on the seeded soil. This way the seed will stay firm inside without getting air-dried. This was also a physically demanding task, but Wu Xun worried about nothing. He often sang:

If you pay, I will pull the rocks for you, so that I can build my school trouble-free.

On the street, he was often heard selling all three services in a bundle:

Find me if you need your dung dried, grass chopped and columns pulled. Pay at dark instead of completion, regardless of amount.

As a menial worker he was fooled many times, therefore he requested to be paid by the end of the day; the next day is another story. So in his tune, "*pay at dark instead of completion*" denotes that he must get his money by dusk; whether he could complete all the tasks or not did not matter.

14

From dusk to dawn, Wu Xun had no moment of rest. Things other people scorn and detest, he would do them; things other people don't know how, he could do them. He helped people hoist pulleys to retrieve water from wells for irrigation, use stone mortars to pound the rice, run cotton pressers to remove impurities in raw cotton, and spin wheels to weave. Such tasks were strenuous, demanding and low-paid, yet Wu Xun thought differently. Patient, he could stand labor; he cherished every penny, and believed that by using them frugally they can last a long time, or else on what basis could his school be built? He was always in a good mood. After a day's beg or work, he would return to the deserted temple, organize the alms food, calculate the money, and if it was still early, he would resume tufting fibers or rolling thread balls, until he was hit by drowsiness, on which ground he would simply lie down and pass out. Only then would he enjoy a peace of mind. As he awoke the second day, it would be the same routine again. He didn't like to talk, yet he liked to sing;

he sang what he did and did what he sang. There wasn't a time he wasn't singing, and there wasn't a time he wasn't thinking about his school. Once a roof tile fell and injured his head. Others would bear grudge but Wu Xun merely wrote a song to be sung in high spirit:

My head broke, my rage off; the school counts on me.

15

Wu Xun was a downright funny person. With his interesting vibe, he often performed spectacles to make people laugh and toss him a few copper coins. He could do a stunt called "Inverted Dragonfly", also known as handstand, in which two palms were placed on the ground to support the body while legs were up against the sky. He can last an hour; he can also "walk" during handstand, which he called "Scorpion Creep". Whenever there was a festival or market gathering, he would perform this stunt. He sang at the same time:

One stand one coin, ten stands ten coins; the more stands I do, the more coins I make, therefore it would be strange to not have enough to open my school.

One creep one coin, ten creeps ten coins; with that I open my school effortlessly.

16

He also got paid by crawling on the ground, pretending to be a horse for children to ride on. Sometimes a group of kids would fight for mounting him while their parents were around. As one kid finished riding him, another would come atop; sometimes a few of them would mount him simultaneously. He would jolt around in a serious manner, while chanting:

I am the horse, you are the rider; you offer capital, I offer labor, let's build a school effortlessly.

The ride is smooth, the horse is quick, I'm happy and you relaxed; let's build a school that lasts forever.

17

Besides doing funny spectacles to make money, Wu Xun also performed horrendous stunts. Sometimes he would hold a snake by its tail and act as if he was going to swallow it. People were horrified by this and they would immediately toss him money. He then said, "don't worry, I'm about to eat it," before the little creature was devoured in whole piece. He continued singing:

Snake is edible, don't worry, as the school counts solely on me.

Sometimes he was caught playing with scorpions. When someone asked him, "I dare you eat them," he would do so immediately, and sing:

Scorpion, scorpion, I would eat, as it's my business to open the school.

Other times he was also seen devouring brick fragments and tile crumbs for money. People laughed at him, "Wu The Seventh, you must be crazy! You can't digest bricks and tiles!" upon which he would swallow them nonetheless, and sing:

Broken bricks and shattered tiles, all of which are digestible; not being able to open my school is the only thing detestable.

Preoccupied with raising money for his school, Wu Xun was enticed by a few vicious individuals to consume his own waste for just a few coins, which he accepted without hesitation. He also wrote lyrics for that, and were still sung till today, but I can't bear myself to write them down. He maneuvered around like a laboring animal under society's contempt, derision and insult, living non-humanly. It took him years to save a decent amount. According to some, it was six taels; according to others, it was ninety. Provided his style of hard work, six taels does not sound reasonable to me, so it must be ninety. Plus he sold the two mu of inherited land for one hundred twenty taels, together he must have saved two hundred and ten. He said to himself that he should put this decent amount somewhere to accrue interest so that his school can be built early. Later he heard in Tatou Village of Guantao County, there was a *wujinshi* called Lou Junling who was an honest gentleman to entrust his money. When he imagined that the deposit would generate interest like a snowball, he couldn't be happier, therefore he sang:

Building my school, I'm not concerned, as I already have two hundred and ten.

Depositing the money to make more interest, I seek help from Dr. Lou of Guantao County.

However at Lou's door, his appearance as a crazy beggar became a deterrence as the family servants wanted him away. Without moving his feet, he brought his knees to the ground:

I don't want rice, I don't want flour, I only want to see mister Champion.

Before long Lou heard the noise and came out to see for himself. Then Wu Xun told him what was in his mind. Dr. Lou was greatly touched and immediately accepted Wu Xun's behest. Since then, Wu Xun would keep his money with Lou whenever he made money.

19

A few years later his savings multiplied. Hearing that here in Liulin Town there was a *wenjuren* called Yang Shufang who owned a few plots of land and was known for his justness and candor, Wu Xun believed it would be another safe place to store his money, not to mention they were folks from the same town. Therefore he trudged to Yang's mansion for help. Likewise, servants there were skeptical as they believed there was nothing good coming from a beggar. He pled for days but none of them passed the message, so he kneeled for five more days until finally someone found it strange and reported to the master. When Yang saw him for the first time, he wondered, "Do you want money?" Wu Xun prostrated in front of him and replied, "No, I'm not asking mister to give me money. I'm asking mister to keep my money for me." Of course, Yang was struck with both awe and suspicion. So with sincerity, Wu Xun elucidated how he worked as a beggar to raise money for his charity schools. Yang, a philanthropist at heart, was moved. As he rushed to help Wu Xun get up from the ground, he agreed and pledged to assist Wu Xun in his cause. On his way out of Yang's mansion, a servant caught up and pressed him, "Are you fooling people for money in the guise of charity", to which, he swore an oath to god by singing:

I save money and purchase land to open a school for the poor. If the money is spent on myself, god will strike a lightning on me.

20

Since keeping his money with Lou Junling and Yang Shufang, Wu Xun saw a brighter future for his school. He therefore begged even harder; everyday he would trek hundreds of miles and dozens of villages without feeling tired. He also worked harder at menial jobs; he alone exercised strength equivalent to several heads and never complained about the intensity or hardship. He performed better spectacles as well, attempting all means to please people; so long as he was paid, he let himself be derided to their hearts' content. He continued such hard work for a few more years and his money grew. One day he counted his entire earning and found it to be nine thousand taels. He thought to himself: putting money at banks to accrue interest is certainly a working way, but not the best; maybe I should take out a portion to purchase land on which the school will be built. Because properties won't rot away in rain or wind, plus they can be used for agriculture, this provides the most reliable means to store the value of money. He made up his mind and went to Yang Shufang, to whom he expounded on his plan and made an earnest behest to serve his representative in buying a property. Back then in the Liulin region there were three hundred mu of vacant land, majority of which either had a low altitude and were prone to flood, or were composed of alkaline and grainy, uncultivated soil. Though cheap, they don't serve good agricultural purposes. Yang believed that they better not buy such useless properties, but Wu Xun replied, "Don't worry, let's get them," and chanted:

So long it's for the school, do not worry if the property is made up of salty sand, as the salts will subside, and the sands will break down; in three years they will be gone.

So long it's for the school, do not worry if the property is a big muddy pool, as the water will drain, and the soil will settle; in three years all puddles will be filled.

Recognizing Wu Xun's solid determination, Yang helped purchase the big piece of land in that area.

21

One day when he was begging on the street, he bumped into his older brother whom he hadn't seen for a while. He asked, "Brother, where are you going," and was replied, "I came looking for you!" Wu Xun wondered, "For what?" "I heard that you've been doing really well, like that few hundred plots of land you just bought. Why are you still begging?" He answered, "Those are not mine. They're school properties!" His brother said, "To hell with school property, give me a few plots to farm. I'm having a hard time. Brother, if not the land, give me some money. I owe from gambling; it really can't wait." Upon hearing this, Wu Xun responded:

My business, you don't mind. As brothers we live apart, therefore there's no need to mingle.

Everybody's money is not to help oneself. If we do then the lightning will strike and the fire dragon will haunt us.

Humming the tune, he took flight. And he would sing similar lyrics when he was asked for money by his nephews. Later, he heard the story of a filial woman, Chen, village man Zhang Chunhe's wife from Zhangbazhai, Guan County. Her husband went away for a decade, and to run the impoverished household and support her mother-in-law, she did sewing work relentlessly. In difficult times she had to beg on street. Wu Xun was deeply touched by Chen's filial duty, so he gifted her ten mu of land for free. People were shocked, to which he replied by singing:

For a good person she is, ten plots are not enough.

For a filial person she is, ten plots will pension her old age.

Putting these two scenarios side by side you can see Wu Xun's spirit.

22

At this juncture, he was tricked again. As the savings grew, for big chunks he either stored them with Yang Shufang or bought land with, and for small chunks he would put them with rich families from neighboring villages. Nothing had gone wrong. Therefore he grew bald lending money to various people. As the account book grew thicker, he had a grand-son-generation clansman Wu Maolin manage it for him. Maolin is a loyal and countable man. Since he got this wonderful assistant, Wu Xun became more carefree. He also delegated Maolin to collect debts and interests on his behalf.

There was a man with surname Gao from Guantao County who owed Wu Xun a lot. However, Gao denied the debt. He also swore at Wu Xun, calling Wu Xun a “scum” who came to shamelessly scam him. Wu Xun pled wistfully, “I might be a beggar but I never scam people. You act like you didn’t owe me money! Poor me I begged from coin to coin; it wasn’t easy, so please stop your nonsense.” Gao replied in a fury, “Nonsense? You are the one speaking nonsense. Show me the paper proof, and tell me how much I owe, you despicable beggar!” Because he trusted Gao back then, Wu Xun didn’t have people draft a proof. Now the guy was using it against him, what could he do? He broke out an angry lyrics:

Conscience to human is like roots to trees. Each one acts on his own.

You get rich by impoverishing me. God will be the final judge.

This became an account none-receivable. Not even one penny was collected. Ever since he made up his mind to open a charity school, Wu Xun had been a jolly spirit, but this time, his old wound was hurting again. He thought of how *juren* Zhang pulled out a fake ledger and beat him up, how his uncle-in-law faked the number and compromised the kinship, and how the scholar cut his wage when he put up the wrong couplets. Now he was demanded a paper proof by Gao. He was constantly taken advantage of because he wasn’t bright. Still, his illiteracy was the main thing to blame. He also pondered, is the reason for people to learn reading and writing so that they can fool others? He was aghast and fell sick, lying in the temple mulling over it for days. Fortunately Maolin was taking care of him by his side. He managed recover a few days later.

23

It has been three decades that Wu Xun had been raising fund for his school. His earnest sincerity affected the whole locality. For instance, in the twelfth winter of Emperor Guangxu’s reign, Mr. Guo Fen first donated a piece of land off the east entrance of Liulin town to be used for building the school. Wu Xun was so exhilarated that he prostrated to Guo and called him a good man. Couldn’t wait, he then left for various places to purchase construction materials. Once he had all the capital, he met with Yang Shufang and a few others to discuss the construction plan. The second spring, they began mobilizing. Yang Shufang acted the principal supervisor, and other village men also came for help, and within a few months, two dozen buildings with tiled roofs were erected, marking the completion of the first campus. While building the school, Wu Xun was so excited. He checked the process here and there while often forgot to eat. His role shifted between supervising and field-work, while in his mouth, he hummed a school song that often stirred up laughter. He never felt so happy in his entire life.

Upon completion of the campus, Wu Xun went to discuss school operation with Yang Shufang. He believed that having good teachers was of utmost importance. People said, “Cui Sun, an erudite *wenjuren* from Shouzhang county is an honorable man, but we heard he came from a middle-class family and is not open to external employment. Don’t know if we can invite him over.” Hearing this, Wu Xun said, “I will try,” and trudged to the house of Cui Sun where he brought his knees to the ground begging Cui for his sympathy towards the poor, disfranchised children. Profoundly touched, Cui helped him up and agreed to the request.

Since the teacher candidate was settled, Wu Xun set out to poor households in order to persuade them to send their kids over. Some said, “Our kids are going to work menial jobs when they grow up. What good does school do for poor people like us? They need to help the family out, no time for school, but thanks anyway,” to which Wu Xun would prostrate and reply genuinely, “Going to school is good for them! I was fooled many times as a beggar because I wasn’t educated. Even if they end up working menial jobs in the future, they’d better know some characters. I’m not in any place to push, but the time for poor children to go to school has come, let’s not deter them!” Parents finally agreed due to his earnestness.

It took months of preparation before everything was ready to go. The school was named “Institute for Honoring the Sages”. It opened officially on the 14th spring of Guangxu Emperor, with 50 students and Cui the only teacher. Yang Shufang, Lou Junlin and many local patrons attended the opening ceremony. Everybody found Wu Xun’s spirit heartfelt, therefore you can picture the sacredness and emotion reverberating at the scene. In front of the public, Wu Xun ushered Yang Shufang to be the institute’s director in charge of its entire operation. Everyone commended the decision, and Yang took the duty without moments of hesitation. That particular day marked the initial success of Wu Xun’s thirty-year objective.

On the grand opening, he organized a welcoming feast for the teachers. While Yang and Lou sat in the host seats, Wu Xun planted his feet respectfully at the door. Everyone was distraught by that. They asked him to come to the table, but he wouldn’t do despite their constant behest. He responded, “I don’t have the balls to put myself at the same level with you. I feel more at ease being at the doorway.” Since then, students came to school in high spirit. To Wu Xun, the sound of them reciting texts is superior to any music he had ever listened to. Only till then Wu Xun made peace with himself, and resumed a life begging.

However, he took silent note of both the teacher and students’ efforts at school. When taking breaks from begging, he would pass by without notice, a few times a day, or once in a few days, always wearing a smile. One day as he was dropping by, he found full attendance from the students, but the teacher was missing. He asked, “Where is the teacher,” to which the student replied, “Mister was still sleeping.” As Wu Xun quietly opened the office, inside the teacher was snoring high. Didn’t want to wake him, Wu Xun stood at the bedside but he couldn’t control the tears streaming down his face. As the teacher woke up, he was confounded by what he saw. Wu Xun replied before he could ask what happened, “Mister, students have all arrived.” The teacher was struck with shame, and from then on he was never late. Wu Xun would also prostrate to those students who preferred playing to studying. What he did often moved them to tears, then he would console them, “Good boy, don’t cry. Just follow the instruction and do better in school.” He would also kneel to show his gratitude towards the teacher for spending tremendous effort on students. Therefore, the one teaching and the ones being taught all enjoyed what they were doing. In as short as a year, Wu Xun’s charity school excelled all other private institutes in grades.

24

As Director Yang Shufang, as well as Mr. Lou Junlin were touched by Wu Xun, they presented this bizarre but commendable case to Tangyi county magistrate Guo Chunxu, describing to him how a beggar had raised his own charity school. Magistrate Guo was awestruck, so he personally took a trip to the countryside. Indeed, he found the ethos at Wu Xun’s school different from other institutes, and couldn’t stop giving them his accolades. Meanwhile, Wu Xun came back from begging to check on the school; someone informed him about the magistrate’s presence and positive remarks, so Wu Xun went to the him and prostrated. Magistrate Guo helped him get up and spelled many words of encouragement. Seeing his rugged clothes, the magistrate offered him a piece of silver worth ten *liang* for him to buy a new attire, but Wu Xun was reluctant. It was only upon the magistrate’s constant behest that he accepted this gift. Yet as usual, Wu Xun wasn’t going to spend it but to store it away for his school.

25

Before long, Zhang Yao, the governor of Shandong Province also heard of the story of a beggar doing philanthropy. He ordered the magistrate to summon Wu Xun. Later as the magistrate accompanied him to meet the governor, Wu Xun was in his usual rugged attire, with one hand holding a broken bamboo basket and the other a dog-fending stick; there was nothing special in his look. When being questioned, he was still twitching his thread to make ropes with his fingers. People in the governor's hall were flabbergasted, and everybody wanted to witness this beggar with their own eyes. As governor Zhang figured out the entire story of Wu Xun raising money for his charity school, his stomach was churning with awe, believing it was an auspicious sign for the nation. Since it occurred in the region of his governance, Zhang was proud. He ordered people take out silver worth two hundred *liang* from the storehouse as a reward, and a piece of officially-stamped yellow book to help him continue raising money for the school. Confused, Wu Xun asked the governor, "Are these silvers for me to open more schools, and the yellow book a proof of my legitimacy to do so?" The governor said, "You can't be more correct!" Only then did Wu Xun kneel in front of the governor, and prostrate with his forehead touching the ground several times. Uplifted, he then left the governor's hall.

26

Since he met with Wu Xun, governor Zhang Yao knew such incident came once in a blue moon, and believed such devoted and gallant individual should be commended in public to battle the sickening tendency of society's moral values. Therefore he proposed to erect a monument for Wu Xun in his official letter to the emperor and was given a prompt "yes". Attached here is his original letter of proposition:

(omitted)

September 19, Fourteenth year of Guangxu.

(reply from the emperor omitted)

In Zhang's letter, it was clear that when writing Wu Xun's biography, the nominator was cautious about presenting particular issues in a way that wouldn't disturb the nerves of the ruling monarch. Therefore in the original proposition, they omitted Wu Xun's reason to raise his charity school. And in Zhang Yao's commentary remark, he avoided the part that he had summoned Wu Xun personally, and only talked about the specific amount of donations Wu Xun made, as well as why Wu Xun fit the criteria to be awarded a monument of "Philanthropy". But how is the phrase "philanthropy" enough to embody Wu Xun's spirit? Nonetheless, Wu Xun himself gave no thought to these vanity matters, as he was simply doing his best to fulfil his life wish. The rest was none of his business. Soon, the "Philanthropy" monument erected itself on Liulin town's major avenue. Wu Xun passed by daily without giving it much attention. When people pointed it out for him and said, "The emperor made this for you," he replied, "Certainly not for me, perhaps it's for our charity school." Didn't want to waste more breath on that matter, he disappeared before finishing the last word of the sentence.

27

Upon turning fifty, Wu Xun rarely took on manual labor any more. Even if he was willing to, people would be reluctant to hire him, except in unfamiliar places where he would occasionally take on tasks to pull carts or carry water. Neither was he able to continue performing spectacles, because parents would not allow their children to play tricks on him as he had become a local celebrity. Nevertheless, Wu Xun continued begging, making ropes, residing at the deserted temple and eating unrefined food as usual. Like a yogi practicing stoicism, he kept going around asking for donation, making deposit and lending to others to collect interest, or purchasing property for future schools to be built. There wasn't a moment he had slacked off. Because students benefited so much from him, when they witnessed his endless toiling, they couldn't make peace with themselves. They constantly pleaded for him to move to the institute, but he disregarded all such requests. One day, the entire body of attendants prostrated in front of him to make their point, to which Wu Xun replied, "I was given money by good people to build school for the poor. If I enjoy it myself, I am deceiving them. I would never do such a thing. On the other hand, I feel very happy, not even the slightest reluctance. Do well in school and don't worry

about me.” Many local gentlemen also urged him to stop abusing his health, to which he often responded, “No abuse. I enjoy being this way and will continue be like this.”

28

Although he was still beggar, Wu Xun was understood better by the society since the opening of the charity school in Liulin Town. The governor’s yellow book and the Qing emperor’s monument also helped him a lot. Therefore, those from higher socioeconomic classes gave more generously when they saw Wu Xun. As he went to other private institutes to raise fund, students there were also very active in giving. Sometimes he would photocopy sanguine classic titles to be distributed on festivals or market days. Though his books were free, people would chime in a considerable amount because they found Wu Xun respectable.

Then Wu Xun turned fifty-three. His dream to open charity schools was largely accomplished. He also cleared barriers for another campus to be built in the future. His parents passed away early; all he had was a brother but they had different dreams. In people’s eyes, he was a lonely man, so he got many suggestions to marry and have children, the thought of which often threw him into a craze of laughter. He would reply while stroking his own head, “A person as ugly as me can marry?” Then he would chant:

No wife, no child. Charity school is my livelihood.

No wife, no child. Charity school needs selflessness.

One day the county magistrate, together with local gentlemen invited him for dinner, where they brought up the topic of marriage and offspring again. They even reasoned with Confucius’ mandates. But Wu Xun smiled and simply sang:

It’s rare to live till the age of seventy; so at fifty-three I will not marry a lady.

Let friends and relatives be gone with the wind; at my deathbed left only my School Complex disease.

Determined that he will not marry, Wu Xun however, liked to be the middleman for others. At the age of forty he was known for the charity school; he also gained a reputation in the community. For this reason, he was given freedom to walk in and out many households. Ladies were especially fond of talking to him. The presence of maidens or lads around the suitable ages for marriage often prompted him to bring to their parents, “I have a proposal for your son,” “May I be the matchmaker for your daughter!” Knowing he never spoke lies, people trusted him. As he swung between two families, a match was made effortlessly. He was often heard chanting proudly:

School Complex and a popular matchmaker, I guarantee that this marriage will work out fine.

Matchmaking also consists of a part of his earning for the school. Upon a successful match, the families of the groom and bride would each give him one or few joints of coin. On the wedding day, he would present himself at the venue as the matchmaker, but he wouldn’t dine there. Instead, he would ask for some buns and cooked dishes to be brought back and sold later. At the age of fifty, he gained almost complete monopoly over the region’s matchmaking business and turned himself into a bona-fide God of Marriage.

29

Begging at old age was a complete different story. Before, he would go from door to door, only to be refused constantly. Nowadays when people heard him chanting the school song, they would summon their kids to draw him inside the house before others could do it. It's said that to extort him, the children would argue with each other whose families cooked the best dishes, and often times they ran into fights. When that happened, Wu Xun had to be the peacemaker. It was indescribable how he was hospitably cajoled to each house to be served seats and meals. As a result, every day he was inundated with a cornucopia of food, more than he could consume. At departure, he would also be given other cherished items from the families.

30

As it became easier to raise funds, his institute grew larger in size and more prominent in reputation. His name was heard in several nearby counties. Abbot Liao zheng of the Thousand Buddha Temple in Ya Village, Guantao Vounty had a strong reverence for Wu Xun, therefore the Abbot opened his own charity school at the foot of the temple, but because there was little funding, it couldn't operate. Upon hearing the news, Wu Xun believed he found another comrade, so he immediately trudged to meet Liao zheng. The two clicked a great deal in their discourse, and formed a close bond. Wu Xun then took out a portion of his savings, three hundred taels, to be gifted to Abbot Liao zheng for expanding the temple school, so that it can take in more poor kids for education. This marked the running of another school branch. Located to the side of the temple, the campus ground was enlarged, and was named after "Ya Village Institute", but the teacher-in-chief couldn't be determined. At that time, besides Cui Sun, Wu Xun also hired talented instructors like Gu Zhong'an from Liaocheng County, Cao Lianzhi from Boping County and Xi Xiufeng from Qinghe County. Despite so, the candidate for Ya Village remained undecided.

31

The legend also said that at this moment, the emperor made an official declaration to pay "tribute to charity schools", and bestowed upon Wu Xun an Imperial Yellow Jacket, which he was supposed to receive at the magistrate's office. As he went there, he objected to the mandatory prostration to the royal decree, as well as the order for him to wear the yellow jacket to show his gratitude. The magistrate explained, "They all relate to the schools!" Only then did Wu Xun put on the jacket and make several prostrates. Yet he always seemed nonchalant about this, to which he sang:

"Tribute to charity school" is not something to be awarded. Yellow jacket also does me no use. No one can shake my institute for ten thousand years.

We can reenact the scene in which he put on the yellow jacket. His patched clothes, the half-shaved head, and his ugly, contorted face all made Yellow Jacket a big laughingstock! The Qing emperor successfully made a joke of him, the biggest one in history.

32

A gentleman of Linqing County named Shi Shanzheng longed to meet Wu Xun after hearing so much about him. On one occasion Wu Xun happened to pass by Linqing, so Shi invited him to the house to dine and rest. They conversed for several days and found great rapport with each other. As their became good friends, Shi became a patron for Wu Xun's third charity school to be built in Yushi Lane. It took a few years for the third institute to be ready, and it was named after "Yushi Lane Institute". To find teacher, Wu Xun again prostrated, and managed to have Mr. Wang Pixiang on board. Wang did not score any civil title, but he was highly erudite and had high moral compass. Influenced by Wu Xun, he made teaching his life. He followed Wu Xun throughout and devoted everything to the institute. His love for the school continued even after Wu Xun's death. At the onset, this campus was the smallest, but upon years of prostrating and fundraising he expanded it every year; eventually this one become the largest campus out of the three. Mr. Wang lived over eighty years; he died on the twenty-second year of the republic period. For the reason that he never for once used the institute's money on himself, he couldn't get understanding from his wife, therefore, all ties were cut from his family. His

sole livelihood depended on an herbal formula inherited from his ancestors. He would make the drug himself and sell every pouch for three *jiao*. It was this meager amount that he relied on for the rest of his life, before he was seen passing away wearing a smile. People called him “Wu Xun The Second”. It was Wang Pixiang who carried on Wu Xun’s spirit to eternity, another great example of Wu Xun’s resonating influence.

For Yushi Lane Institute, Wu Xun beseeched Shi Shanzheng to be the director, and Wang Pixian in charge of all teaching-related matters. He was fifty-seven then, but didn’t cease looking for alms to fundraise for more schools. He was seen frequenting the three campuses many times in a month. Many suggested to him, “You are no longer young, it’s time to think about the after-life matter. Do not wear yourself off in those hard work.” To answer that, he sang:

Let it be street or road, I can be buried on sight, and a coffin will avail itself to lay my body.

33

In the April of the 22nd year of Guangxu, Wu Xun became sick upon returning to Linqing. He first stayed in Shi Shanzheng’s house, but as his condition worsened, he asked to be transported to Yushi Lane Institute for fear that he would die in Shi’s house. Wu Maolin and several older disciples took turns caring for his illness. At the height of the sickness, he would be seen opening his eyes, wearing a smile when he heard the sound of his pupils reciting paragraphs. In the end, drugs couldn’t save him. On the morning of April 23rd of the twenty-third year of Guangxu, this legendary figure passed away at the age of 59.

After death, his nephew Kexin hosted his funeral. Gentlemen of Tangyi, Guantao, Linqing unanimously gathered at the place to send his casket off. Starting from Yushi Lane Institute in Linqing county, they marched all the way to his grave site to the east of “Institute for Honoring the Sages” in Liulin County. The number of civilians attending this event exceeded ten thousands; waves of crowds blocked the streets while the grief-stricken students couldn’t refrain themselves from weeping. Someone murmured:

Who said Wu Xun had no son?

Eight years after his death, the then Shandong governor Yuan Shuxun presented Wu Xun’s chivalrous and herculean story to the emperor, making a proposition that the National Archive shall write this person into history. As the proposal was accepted, Wu Xun’s name was written into the Memorial of Country Sages, in particular, the Hall For The Loyal And Chivalrous to be remembered forever. The letter by Yuan Shuxun is attached here for your review:

(omitted)

Wu Xun’s life was preserved in the National Archive. Meanwhile, Mr. Liang Qichao also did an original piece to commemorate him. Besides, in the republic period, thanks to a few education reformers, his story was adopted by school textbooks. In another example, Nantong Normal University put his portrait side by side with Confucius, turning “Wu Xun” into a worldwide name. Someone wrote a poem:

Do not say that beggar doesn’t end up well. Wu Xun’s name has spread far and wide.

His threads had woven historical institutes, leaving Foam Face’s impact spread around the world.

义丐武训传

张默生《异形传》

翻译：钱楚

一

义丐武训的在世，是宇宙间的一个大奇迹。他以乞丐的身份，扮演了人类舞台上的丑角出场，讨饭，做短工，耍把戏，以及作践自己供人开心，只为一件事，就是办义学。他如此的傻里傻气，疯疯癫癫，患了将近40年的“义学症”；而且这症越患越重，以至于死。结果，他创办了三处义塾，教育了无数的穷家子弟，可惜他死的太早，否则他的成绩更大。他为创办义学，受尽了人间的轻视、讥笑、侮辱和难以想象的困苦艰难。但是他成功了。当年轻视他的人，讥笑他的人，和想出种种方法侮辱他的人，早已与草木同腐；而他的精神，却与宇宙同存。他把人间的一切困难打得粉碎，他为世界人类带来了最有希望的福音。现在，正是所有怀疑这个奇迹的人们，应该背起他当年所背的担子，向他赎罪的时候了。他的担子是沉重的，也是轻省的。只看有没有他那种大发“义学症”的精神。我今把他生平事迹，按其先后，作《义丐武训传》。

二

武训，是前清道光十八年十月十九日降生的。那一天，正是西历1838年12月5日。所以现在就按每年的国历12月5日，来纪念他的诞辰。他是山东堂邑县武家庄人。前世，都是穷苦的农民。传到他父母一代，仅有薄田数亩，因着连年灾荒，就更不能自给了。他有一位胞姐，早年出嫁；一位胞兄，名叫武让。这一家四口的生活，全赖他父亲宗禹操作维持。五岁时，父亲死了。哥哥因为年纪稍长，便自去谋生。他只得随着母亲，向各处讨饭度日，每天讨得的食物，他先捡坏的来吃，留下好的给母亲。母亲被他的孝心所感，往往暗中流泪。他有时陪着母亲哭泣，也有时唱起歌谣，使母亲破涕为笑。

三

当他讨饭的时候，遇到学房里传出琅琅的书声，他便笑咪咪的伫足而听。每见村童入学放学，他就尾随着他们，非常羡慕，常常惹得村童们讨厌他，呵斥他，他才停住脚步，苦笑着，失望着，仍是目送村童们欢忭而去。他那种羡慕上学的心思，越来越切。有一天他猛然跑到学房中去，请求先生允许他上学读书。那位教书先生，看他是个小叫花子，竟自异想天开，就勃然大怒，提着戒尺把他打骂起来。引得学生哄堂大笑，也都随着先生赶出来斥逐他。

武训感到苦痛了。回来时对母亲哭着道：“人家的孩子都上学，我为什么不能上学呢？”母亲含泪说：“咱家穷得没饭吃，还有钱让你上学吗？上学，是要用钱的呀！傻孩子，不要再胡思乱想了。”经过这一解说，他才明白一些，只好安心的讨饭为生。天天拿了打狗棍，提了破篮子，东门出来，西门进去，不是求爹爹，就是告奶奶。酷暑严寒，狂风暴雨，也得沿门乞食，母子二人，相依为命。

这样的生活，过了两年。七岁时，母亲又死了。他的命运，就愈来愈苦。幸而有一位善心的伯母，把他领到家中去抚养，伯母家虽然是穷，尚未到讨饭的地步。武训在想：“不讨饭，就该可以上学了吧？”心中天天记挂着这件事，可是不敢向伯母明说。只得压在心头，终日拾柴拔草，帮助伯母操作，以报养育之恩。一直过了两年，终于又提出上学的请求。他的伯母很悲惨地说：“书，不是穷孩子念的，还是长大了扛活换饭吃罢！”他听了这话，又是一次失望。但从此以后，他便再不提起上学的事了。

四

武训不愿长此连累他的伯母，14岁时，就到另一个族伯家里充小工。那个人家，并不可怜武训的命苦；每天从早到晚，都不肯许他喘息；做不动的重工作，也强令他做；少不当事，非打即骂；种种的虐待，一言难尽。一次，叫他去喂猪，不料滑了一跤，把猪食倾倒地上；立刻挨了一顿毒打，并逐出大门之外。他孤苦彷徨，无以为计。想要回到伯母家里，自己又觉得太没志气，想要另外找工作，一时又无人雇用；不得已，还是讨饭度日，辗转乞食到馆陶县薛店村里，才得在张举人家里佣工，每年工钱说定6000文。这时他已16岁了，笨重的工作，已能负担起来。工钱虽少，做事却十分认真。壮年工人不肯做的事，就私下派他去做，他也毫不推辞。因此，人人都说他是个傻子。

他这样的工作着，接连干了三年。后来听说伯母病了，想支点工钱捎去孝敬她。不料那位张举人见他愚诚可欺，就拿出一本假账来，对他指着说：“你的工钱早已支完了，你看这不是账吗？”武训当时惊骇万分，急得无法，而又有口难辩，只得拍着胸膛，哭声地道：“上天知道，我们要凭良心啊！”张举人听他说出“凭良心”的话，立时恼羞成怒，指使他如狼似虎的家丁，把武训拖到街上，打得他遍身青紫，头破血流。张举人还昧着良心，拿出假账，指给街上围观的人看：“你们说，这个小子是不是故意混账呢？”那些围观的人，虽然知道武训的冤枉，但谁也不肯说一句公平话。

武训挨打以后，乡人们多怕张举人的势力，眼见武训躺在街上，哭泣哀号，头上的血仍是大流不止，也无人敢去救他，就一哄而散了。幸亏那街上住着一位赵善人，夫妇两个，专意愿做修桥补路，救孤施贫的事。听说武训含冤被打，性命难保，就急忙出来，令人将可怜的孩子抬到自己家中，等伤养好了，才让他出去另寻生路。

五

不久，武训又到一位秀才家里当佣工。这位秀才，虽然外表上是文绉绉的，看来怪和善的样子；但骨子里头，却是一副鄙吝心肠，惟利是视，无时无刻不在盘算人，坑骗人。一天，武训的姐姐托人捎给他一封信，两串钱；适逢武训不在，那位秀才就替他收下，把钱吞没了。等到武训回来，就念信给他听，关于捎钱的话完全略去。后来他的姐姐又托人来问捎钱的事，武训才知道钱被主人吞没了。心中非常气忿，就去质问他的主人。谁知道那位秀才，不仅不认账，反把武训痛骂一顿，说他是穷迷了心窍。武训奈何不得，只好“哑巴吃黄连”，苦在心里，深深感到不识字的害处。

又一次，正当过年的时候，秀才写好春联，自己因为有事要出门，就吩咐武训替他张贴。正要张贴，被一阵风把春联吹乱了。武训自然分不出哪是上联，哪是下联；更分不出某处应贴某些字样的联语，只得胡乱贴去。秀才回来一看，自己的床头上贴了“猫狗平安”，鸡窠上贴了“阖家吉祥”，其余贴倒得贴错的不一而足。秀才看了大怒，打了武训两个耳光，当下算账，叫他滚蛋。还将工资打了八折，以示惩罚。到时候，武训实在忍不住了，指着秀才骂道：“你这个坏种！当初欺负我不识字，吞吃了我姐姐捎来的钱；如今又怨我不识字贴错对联，克扣我的工钱。你还有点良心吗？这几个臭钱，我嫌肮脏，留给你塞狗洞去吧！”迎头就向秀才的脸上掷去，哗啦一声，铜钱撒满遍地，武训把包袱一挟，昂然地走了。

六

武训从秀才家出来以后，又到他姨丈张老板家去当长工。姨丈是个买豆腐的，也有几亩田产。他在姨丈家的工作，经常是帮着推磨，因为做豆腐是需要先用磨磨成豆糊的。此外，农忙的时候，就到野外去劳作。这在武训看来，都不以为苦。并且他心里还想：“姨丈家，总算是至亲，不会再受欺骗了罢。”于是他努力工作，终日汗如雨下，也不肯偷懒。他心里又想：“一年一支工钱，可不至记错罢。”哪知年底算工钱的时候，他的姨丈照样拿本假账来骗他，说某月某日支若干，某月某日又支若干，……现在支净无余。这种“莫须有”的事，武训真是气极了，即大声嚷着说：“我实在没有用过一文钱，怎么就会支用完了呢？”他的姨丈不许他强辩，就要呼唤家人把他驱逐出去。正吵闹间，来了一位邻人问其缘由，他姨丈就拿出账本指给他看。那位邻人竟自帮助他的姨丈说话，反把武训批评一顿，说他不知尊重长辈，只知赖钱。这时，真是喊冤莫诉，又有什么办法呢？但他很难忍下这口气。虽是不敢讲理，却气愤填膺，即悻悻出门而去。

七

武训出得门来，又是气，又是恼，四顾茫茫，无处归宿。想到自己的身世，落地为人，就是一个穷孩子，五岁丧父，七岁丧母，几次想读书，无钱读不起，落得个目不识丁，一再受人欺骗，并且几乎被人打死。受别人欺骗，那还是无关痛痒的事，犹可以说；想不到至亲至戚，也忍得昧着天良来欺骗他。这使他太伤心了，他越想越气，越想越恼，不由得气恼成病，无力挣扎了。

武训早已是无家可归的人。这时只得拖着疲惫的身子，带着伤痛的灵魂，回到本村的破庙中，把仅有的一条破被子蒙头大睡，三天三夜，不饮不食，昏昏沉沉，不省人事，最后，他大彻大悟了。他因着感叹自己的命运，又想到天下和他同命运的人，正不知有多少？自己因着贫穷念不起书，天下因着贫穷念不起书的人，正不知有多少？自己因着不识字到处被人欺，天下不识字同样被人欺的人，正不知有多少？他想来想去，就决定把自身的不幸，丢在脑后；立誓要拯救后一辈和他同命运的人。他要兴办义学，使他们无钱也能读书，使他们读了书不再被人欺。他立定此志，他兴奋了！他快乐了！他不再气恼了！他的病豁然痊愈了。自那一天起，就抛弃了他的佣工生活，仍然度着他的乞丐岁月。当日，他从破庙中，忽然跑出来，满街上跳跃欢呼，若疯若狂。并且高唱道：

扛活受人欺，不如讨饭随自己；别看我讨饭，早晚修个义学院。

一时惊动了街上的人都伫足看他。并且彼此笑问道：“那不是武七吗？看他像走尸般的得了什么病呢？”武训原来没有名字，因为他排行第七，人都喊他武七。又因他生的丑陋，看样子糊里糊涂，就给他起了一个绰号，叫“豆沫儿”。这个绰号，小孩子最喜欢喊叫他。当他在街上狂高歌的时候，一群小孩子都跟在他身后喊道：“豆沫儿疯了！快来看疯子呀！”也有顽皮的孩子，就用瓦石追着掷打他。当天的工夫，全武家庄的人，都知道武七疯颠了。

八

武训自从那日狂欢以后，他的新生命就开始了。他并非不知道办义学是件难事，尤其是一个叫花子来办义学，更是难上加难。但他既然下了决心，无论怎样困难，他也不怕。他有极大的信念，相信他的义学必能办成。他完全换了一副快乐的精神，去献身他理想的事业。他除了乞讨积蓄以外，又想尽了种种弄钱的方法，作他办学的准备。他心里想：走着瞧吧！

武训既然要做一个新人，他的面貌装扮也要改换一下。他首先找到一位剃头匠，问道：“你要收买发辫吗？”剃头匠说：“自然收买，多少钱一条？”答道：“一串钱一条。”剃头匠说：“你有好多发辫呢？统统拿来好了，我都不要。”武训顺手撂过他的发辫道：“我就先卖这条给你，你就剃它走罢。不过剃时要当心：头顶左边，请你为我留下一撮毛，修理得像桃形一般，其余统统剃光。”说得那位剃头匠笑起来，就说：“豆沫八儿，去你的！不要来捣蛋！辫子是当今皇上叫留的，谁敢给你剃去？而且像你这丑怪的样子，已经够人看的了；若再照你出的花样一修理，那不是活要人命吗？我问你，你想干什么？快去讨你的饭罢！”武训又恳求道：“你尽管把我的发辫剃去，我决不怨你，我可以向你发誓！反正我又做不了官，要辫子干啥用呢？你给我照样修理，就从辫子的价目中扣下手艺钱好了。”剃头匠笑着说：“你已是二十多岁的人了，还作小孩子打扮，不怕人笑话吗？”武训说：“你不要管，照着我的样子剃就是。”那位剃头匠也只得如法炮制了。当时，卖发辫、剃头，找回来的钱还有九百余文。这便是他办义学最初的基金。

这些日子，他又去找剃头匠，为他剃去左边的一撮，又在右边同样留起一撮来。如此交换着留留剃剃，一直到死。这是他精彩的改装。他的意思，是要从此改装成一个丑角，叫人看了开心，容易乞讨，容易筹集义学经费。他当时有两只歌，纪念这事。唱道：

这边剃，那边留，修个义学不犯愁；

这边留，那边剃，修个义学不费力。

武训的样子，本来生得丑陋：扁嘴，狭额，身材虽然高大，却是不男不女的样子。而且说起话来，也带有几分女人的声音。如今又把自己的头颅作践成奇型怪状，身上的衣服自然是各色的补丁，真是一位活现的丑角了。他每天沿街乞讨，口里只是喃喃不休地“义学长”“义学短”。人人都这样说：“武七恐怕是害了义学症罢？”从此，“义学症”一名，又成了他的第二绰号。他自己也很喜欢这个名字，还为这个名字编了一个歌，到处歌唱。

义学症，没火性；见了人，把礼敬；赏了钱，活了命；修个义学，万年不能动。

九

舞台上的丑角，多半是游戏人生，他这个丑角，是悲悯的人生。不过人们不认识他，反而常常要笑这位悲悯的人。武训并无奢望，他所希求的，就是人家肯来要笑他。果然自他登场以后，人人觉得他怪好玩，怪开心；也就乐意给他东西，或是铜钱，或是食物。因此他每天乞讨的，总是吃不完。讨来的钱，自然是好好的积藏起来。食物呢，拣零碎的粗糙的自己吃，留下完整的较好的出卖，变成钱积蓄起来。有人问他：“为什么不拣好的吃，偏吃坏的呢？他就唱着答道：

吃好的，不算好，修个义学才算好。

有时到人家中乞讨，遇到吝啬的人家，不但不给他，甚至骂他一顿。他也不生气，还是笑嘻嘻地唱道：

不给俺，俺不怨，只有善人管俺饭。

不强要，不强化，不用着急不用怕。

接着又唱：

俺化缘，你行善，大家修个义学院。

也有脾性不好的人家，讨厌他的啰唣，不耐烦看他的傻模样，不耐烦听他的“义学歌”，就动起气来呵斥他出去。这时他却有更惊人地表演，更精彩的唱词。

太爷大叔别生气，你几时不生气，俺几时就出去。

大家听了这歌，要生气也不敢生气了。因为你越生气，他越不出去，他正在等着给你老人家消气呢。也只好给他东西，让他好好的走出门外。

有的人家讨厌他上门来麻烦，往往纵使恶犬去咬他。但他对于这恶犬的来袭，似乎并不在意。而且还同样的唱歌给它听：

黑狗白狗你别咬，豆沫来到了！

那些恶犬听了，也就不再露牙狂吠，反而摇着尾巴，俯首贴耳的不作声了。

十

武训不但讨来的好饭舍不得吃，甚至把坏一点的也卖给别的叫花子，自己拣菜根芋尾来充饥。有人问他为什么这样的贱骨头，专拣人不吃的东西来吃呢？他唱道：

食菜根，食菜根，我吃饱，不求人；省下饭，修改义学院。

吃芋尾，吃芋尾，不用火，不用水；省下钱，修个义学不费难。

他到人家讨饭时，人家常常给他清水喝。他有时先洗脸，后喝水。人家问他：“这脏水哪里能喝呢？”他又唱道：

喝脏水，不算脏，不办义学真肮脏。

如果遇到乐善好施的人家，多给他一些钱或食物，他便喜欢得打跪叩头，唱出以下的颂扬歌词：

我要饭，你行善，修个义学你看看。

你们行善俺代劳，大家帮着修义学。

不嫌多，不嫌少，舍些金钱修义学。又有名，又行好，文昌帝君知道了，准教你子子孙孙坐八抬大轿。

十一

武训除了乞讨以外，更随时随地想出方法弄钱。他常常给人家推磨。推磨，就是用一根长棍，穿到磨绳上，推动上层磨石旋转。先把麦子磨碎，再把磨碎的糁子，收到箩里去来回筛打，漏下来的，就是面粉。北方的馒头，都须经过这遍手续，其他杂粮面的食物，也是如此。武训为招揽这宗生意，就常常在街上高叫：“推磨了！推磨了！”若是有人出来雇佣他，他便唱着讲价道：

推磨，推磨，一斗麦子六十个（60文制钱）。管推不管箩（筛面），管箩钱还多。

不过山东的乡间，只要有十亩田以上的人家，磨面多半是用牲畜。最普通的是用驴，其次用牛，间或也用骡马。牲畜的用法，是先用“格拉”（即是套在牲畜项间的工具）圈在它的项间，再用套套在磨棍和“格拉”上，就可让它拉起磨棍走。这样上层的磨石，即可旋转起来。这虽然省了人力，但是牲畜的粪便，却不知何时遗泄，因此用牲畜拉磨，是必须预备下干土垫磨道的。武训恐怕牲畜夺了他的生意，抓到这个弱点，又编造了一个歌词，极力表白雇用他推磨的好处。他唱的那歌词道：

不用格拉不用套，不用干土垫磨道。

可见雇他推磨，比使用牲畜拉磨好多了。反正力气是他自己的，他既不知奸猾，又索价不多，所以人家都乐意雇用他，他也因此得了不少的钱。在他立志办学的初期，这一项实是他收入的大宗。

十二

武训不但推磨赚钱，还会捻线缠线。捻线，就是把破布断线，或是捻成捆物的绳子，或是捻成推车的绊带，用途不一。缠线，就是用废絮烂线，经过一番技巧的心思，把废絮团在里头，再把烂线理清或接起，缠成线蛋，也叫线球，可以作儿童的玩具。这些布絮烂线，都是人家弃了不用的，或是人家送给他的，或是在路上捡来的。他都能废物利用，制成他的货品，出售赚钱。每当他捻线绳缠线蛋的时候，他便反过来复去地唱道：

捻线头，缠线蛋，早晚修个义学院。

缠线蛋，捻线头，修个义学不犯愁。

他的手工很好，价钱又便宜，所以每一线绳捻成了，人人争着购买。每一线蛋缠好了，儿童们也是恐怕买不到手。最有趣的，他一面唱着歌，一面玩弄线蛋给小孩们看，因此，每个儿童都喜欢他。

十三

武训不但捻线绳缠线蛋，他还到处给人家晒粪、铡草、拉砘子。晒粪，是从粪坑里把湿粪弄出来，再摊到广场里。一天翻腾几十遍，晒干收起，预备肥田用的。这种又脏又臭的工作，谁也不乐意去干，而武训干得却是很带精神。铡草，是用一具铡刀，把谷草铡碎了，预备喂牲畜用的。这是一种很危险的工种，一人持草向刀口里填，一人握着刀柄抬起落下的切，稍不留心，就可切断手指。武训常是为人填草，但他很坦然的做去，也未受过什么伤害。什么是拉砘子呢？这是北方独有的农作方法。砘子的制造，是用一对小石轮，中间贯穿木轴而成的。再由木轴的两端用绳子拴好，接上一条长绳和绊带，斜套胸前，就可拉着走。砘子的重量，约有百余斤。两个石轮的距离，约有一尺宽，是要配合双耧畦陇的。当春天种谷子和高粱时，耧在前头下种，最好随后有人拉着绳子砘去，这是为的种子入土实在，又不至风干的缘故。拉砘子，也是一种耗费力气的工作，但武训绝不怕劳苦。并唱道：

给我钱，我砘田，修个义学不费难。

有时他在街上把三件工作，合拢在一气，高唱叫卖道：

晒粪、铡草、拉砘子，来找。管黑不管了，不论钱多少。

他自从当长工数次受骗，就再不上当了。当天的气力当天卖，明天再说明天的。所以他的歌唱中，才有“管黑不管了”的话。这就是说不管工作完不完，天黑了就得住工算账。

十四

武训一天到晚，没有片刻的休息。别人不屑干的事，他干；别人不肯做的事，他做；更有别人不会做的事，他会。他为人家打轱辘灌田，为人家用石臼舂米。他会用轧车轧棉花，也会用纺车纺线。这些工作，又劳苦，又烦心，得的钱又少；但武训却不是如此看法，他愿受劳苦，他最有耐性，他以为得一钱多一钱，细水不怕长流，否则他的义学何日办成？他永远是快乐的，他讨一天饭，或是作一天工，晚间回到破庙里，把讨来的食物一清理，把赚来的工钱一结算，若是时间还早，再从事他捻线绳缠线蛋的工作，待得瞌睡来了，他就一躺，便呼呼入睡。他觉得必须如此，才可心安理得。第二天醒来，又是照旧如此。他不好说话，又爱唱歌。他所唱的，就是他所行的；他所行的，也就是他所唱的。他无时无事不在唱歌，无思无想不在义学。有一次，庙殿上的瓦忽然掉下来，打得他头破血流，这在别人必是极难忍受的，而武训反因此又编了一支歌。欢欢喜喜的唱道：

打破头，出出火，办个义学全在我。

十五

武训周身都充满了兴趣。他凭着这种兴趣，也常常要把戏给人看，博得人家的笑乐，借此也可赚到几文钱。他有一种“竖蜻蜓”的本领，也叫“拿大顶”，就是两手扶地，两脚朝天的一种姿势。他竖起蜻蜓来，能支持半个时辰不倒。他并能一面竖起，一面爬行，这叫做“蝎子爬”。每当庙会和集场的时候，他就前去耍这套把戏了。他一面表演一面唱：

竖一个，一个钱；竖十个，十个钱；竖得多，钱也多；谁说不能兴义学？

爬一遭，一个钱；爬十遭，十个钱；修个义学不费难。

十六

武训还有时在地下学马爬，供小孩们骑弄，也可得钱。往往一群小孩，都争着去骑他，让他爬行，做父母的也在旁观看。这个下来，那个上去，也许二三小孩同时骑上。他很认真地爬来爬去。也是一面爬着一面唱道：

我作马，让你骑；你出钱，俺出力，办个义学不费事。

骑的稳，爬的快；俺高兴，你自在，修个义学永不坏。

十七

武训不但作出可笑的把戏向人讨钱，他更作出可怕的举动求人施舍。他有时倒提着一条蛇作吞食的样子，人多惊畏，立时就掷钱给他。他说：“不要怕，看我吃了它！”眼看着一条小蛇就被他吃到肚子里了。他接着唱道：

蛇可食，不要怕，修个义学全在我自家。

他有时拿蝎子玩耍来讨钱。人或问他道：“你敢吃蝎子吗？”他立时把蝎子吃了。并且唱道：

吃蝎子，吃蝎子，修个义学我的事。

他有时拿破砖碎瓦来吃，向人讨钱。人人都笑他说：“武七，你真是疯了！砖瓦可不能吃罢？”他立时把碎瓦片吃下去。接着唱道：

破砖碎瓦，都能消化；不能修义学，才惹人笑话！

十八

武训因为急于筹措义学的款项，甚至竟有毫无心肝的人，拿出几文钱来，引诱他吃屎喝尿，他也坦然地接受了。并且他为这件事，当时也有唱的歌儿，至今还流传着；但是我不忍写下去了！他在世人的轻视、讥笑和种种侮辱之下，辛辛苦苦，牛马一般地操作着，度着非人的生活，好几年的功夫，才积了一宗钱。那一宗钱的数目，有人说六串的，有人说90串的。我想他那样想尽方法来乞讨，几年的努力，断不至仅存六串的数目，也许90串的说法可靠些。再加上那承分的祖产二亩，卖了120串。两下合起来，共有210串。他心里想，这些钱也算得一个数目了，总得存放一处妥善的地方，让它年年生息，义学才可以早日办成。后来他访得馆陶县塔头村有一位武进士，姓娄名峻岭，是一个诚笃君子，就想请他代为存放。他想到将来本钱生利息，利息加入本钱，本钱再生利息，如此滚下去，钱便越积越多了。那时他真是有说不出来的快乐。顺口唱道：

兴义学，没心烦，现在已有二百一十串。

存本钱，生利息，求求馆陶的娄进士。

哪想到了娄进士的门前求见时，娄家的仆人见他是个疯疯颠颠的叫花子，要赶他走，他死也不走。只是双膝跪着唱道：

不要米，不要面，只求进士老爷见一见。

后来闹到了娄进士知道了，就亲自出来问他是干什么的，他才把来意说明。娄进士很受感动，立刻答应了他的请求。从此，武训积下钱，就存到娄进士家里。

十九

又过了几年，他的钱越积越多了。听说本县柳林镇有一位文举人，姓杨名树坊，家中有田数顷，为人公正廉明。武训觉得这又是存放钱的一个好地方，并且还是同县，那就更方便了。于是他又跑到杨府求见，杨家的差人，也以为他是个叫花子，求见主人，必无好事。哀求数日，也不给他传达。他一直在杨府门前跪了五天，差人才觉得有些奇异，终于为他通报引见了。杨树坊初见他时，当然也是问：“你要钱吗？”武训跪下答道：“我不向老爷要钱，我是特来恳求老爷替我存钱的。”杨树坊猛然听了这话，自然惊疑不定。他便很诚恳的把讨饭积钱，要兴义学的原原本本，述说一遍。立时感动了乐善好施的杨树坊，急忙拉他起来，不但答应了替他存钱，并且极愿帮助他的义学成功。当他辞别杨府出来时，杨家另一差人追问他道：“你想假借善名来骗钱发财吗？”他便对天盟誓，唱道：

我积钱，我买田，修个义学为贫寒。谁养家，谁肥己，准备上天雷神击！

二十

武训自从娄峻岭、杨树坊为他存钱生息，他觉得前途放了光明，办义学院就更有希望了。因此，他讨饭愈认真，一天跑百余里路，乞讨几十个村庄，也不觉疲倦。做短工愈加努力，一人能干数人的工作，纵然累得汗流浃背，也不嫌劳苦。要把戏愈加出色，想出种种的方法使人开心，只要肯给他钱，怎样被玩弄，也是甘心情愿。他这样的勤勤恳恳，又过了几年，钱就越积越多。有一天，武训为他的钱算了一笔总账，已有9000吊了。他心里想：放钱生息，固然是个办法，但不是最可靠地办法，不如把现在所有的钱提出一大部分来，购置一些田产，作为将来的学田，风又吹不去，雨也淋不走，而且年年还可以生产，这才是最稳妥的打算哩。他的意思一决定，就跑到杨树坊的家里，把他的计划报告了杨树坊，请他出来主持购买学田。当时柳林庄附近一带，有地三百余亩，不过其中有许多地，有的低洼怕涝，有的且多碱沙，未经开垦成熟，价值虽是便宜，生产却很细微。杨树坊觉得这种没有多大生产的地，还是不买的好。武训说：“不要紧，咱们可以买下来。”并且还唱道：

只要该着义学发，置地不怕置碱沙。碱也退，沙也刮，三年以后无碱沙。

只要该着义学兴，置地不怕置大坑。水也流，土也壅，三年以后平了坑。

杨树坊见他意志坚决，也就帮他把那一带的地大半买下；了。

二十一

一天，武训在街上讨饭，忽然遇见多年不见的哥哥，就问道：“哥哥，要到哪里去呢？”他哥哥说：“我正是来找你呀！”他问：“找我做什么？”他哥哥说：“我听说你这几年情形很好，田地就买了数百亩，你何必还讨饭呢？”他说：“那不是我的地，那是学田啦！”他哥哥说：“什么学田不学田，分我几亩种种罢。这几年，我真是穷得可怜！兄弟呀，你不给我地，也得给我钱。老刘的赌债，真是逼死人了！”武训听了这话，立时对他哥哥唱道：

我的事，你别管，兄弟析居不相干。

众人钱，不养家，养家雷霹火龙抓。

他一面唱着，一面扬长而去。他的侄子们又向他要钱，也是分文不给，只是唱这类的歌给他们听。可是后来，他听说冠县张八寨有位孝妇，是张春和的妻子陈氏，只因丈夫出外十年，家贫如洗，终日靠着十指针线，孝养婆母，有时接济不上，即乞食度日。武训听得陈氏的贤孝，非常感动，慨赠良田十亩。当时的人无不诧异。武训便唱道：

这人好，这人好，给他十亩还嫌少。

这人孝，这人孝，给他十亩为养老。

这两件事作一对比，就可见到武训的精神了。

二十二

当这时候，武训又受了一次欺骗。他积钱日多，大的数目，或是仍请杨树坊代为存放，或是继续的购买学田；较小的数目，便在邻村的富家存放，也并没有出过差错。于是他的胆子便大起来，东也放宽，西也放宽。因为他的账目，愈来愈复杂了，就请他的一位族孙名叫武茂林的替他管账。茂林为人忠诚，这是武训信得过的。自他得到这个好助手，他就更放心了。放债讨息，差不多也是茂林去替他办理。

不料馆陶县有位姓郜的，欠了武训许多钱，郜某不但不还债，更对他大骂起来，反说武训无赖，说他不要脸的来敲诈钱。武训当时哀求道：“我虽是讨饭的，却从没有敲诈人家的钱。你真是想赖我的钱吗？可怜我的钱都是向人家一文一文乞求来的，不是轻易可以积存的呀！请你不要再说没理的话了。”郜某气冲冲地说：“没理，谁没理？你自己才没理呢！你要是有理，拿字据来给我看，看姓郜的欠你穷叫花子多少钱！”原来武训以为郜某是可靠的，就是没有请人立字据；这时竟提出字据的话，又叫他有什么法子呢？只得气愤地唱道：

人凭良心树凭根，各人只凭各人心。

你有钱，我受贫，准备上天有真神。

这笔账，竟成了坏账。后来连一文钱也未得收取。武训自立志兴学以来，终天都是快乐的。这一次，又触着他的隐痛了。他想到张举人造假账来骗他遭到毒打的事，想到姨丈也造假账来骗他伤了亲谊的事，更想到为那位秀才贴错春联克扣工钱的事。如今这位姓郜的又逼他拿字据来看。这种种吃亏上当，固然是因为自己愚蠢可欺；但自己不曾读书识字，实在是唯一的大原因。他转而又想，读书识字，就是为的欺骗人吗？因此气郁成病，又躺在破庙中千思万虑。幸而有茂林亲为服侍，过了几天病才好了。

二十三

武训筹办义学已有30年的努力了。因为他的一片至诚，乡邻多受感动。有一位郭芬先生，于光绪十二年的冬天，首先捐出柳林镇东门外的一块地，作为义学的基地。这事使武训高兴极了，就对那位郭先生叩头致谢，称他是大善人。他立时亲到各处，购买砖瓦木料。材料买齐了，就和杨树坊等，计划兴建学舍的办法。第二年春天，即开始建筑柳林镇的义学，杨树坊亲为督工，村人也乐与相助，不到几个月的工夫，二十余间的高大瓦房，即告落成。在这建筑的期间，武训真是从心里喜欢，忙得连饭都顾不得吃，这里看看，那里瞧瞧，一时当监工，一时又充小工，嘴里不住地唱着他的“义学歌”，往往惹得人家都笑起来。这是武训有生以来的第一次大快乐。学舍落成以后，武训便和杨树坊及当地热心的人商量筹备开学。武训以为最重要的是请好老师。当时他们都说：“寿张县有一位文举人崔隼先生，是最有学问最有道德的，但听说他家小康，不肯出来作事，可不知能请到不能请到？”武训听了这话，就说：“我去试试看。”立时跑到寿张县崔先生家里，长跪不起，请他可怜可怜不识字的穷孩子。崔隼为他精诚所动，急忙拉起他来，慨然答应去为他教学。

老师请妥了，武训又到各村的穷人家里劝他们送子弟到他的义塾中去读书。有的人家说：“我们的孩子打算叫他们长大了，扛活挣饭吃哩。像我家这样穷，读了书又有什么用呢？现在他们已能帮着在家做事了，实在也没有功夫去上学，多谢你的好意吧！”武训也是长跪乞求，很诚恳地说道：“上学是好事呀！我因为讨饭吃，上不起学，才屡次受人欺骗。就是将来打算叫他们扛活，也必须要认得一些字才好。我不能多说什么，穷孩子上学的日子到了，不要再耽误他们的终身吧！”人家见他来意诚恳，被他感动了，才允许孩子们去上学。

武训把开学的事，忙了数月，才算筹备妥当了。义塾的名字，公议为“崇贤义塾”。光绪十四年的春天，遂正式开学上课。学生五十多名。教师就是那位崔先生。当时杨树坊、娄峻岭，还有地方上的热心人士，都来参加这个隆重的典礼。大家深为武训的精神所感动，其情绪的严肃热烈，就可以想象而知了。武训当众敦请杨树坊为学董，主持义塾的一切，众人一致赞同，自然杨先生也是义不容辞的。从那一天起，武训三十多年的伟大志愿，才算达到了初步的实现。

就在开学的那一天，武训预备了丰盛的筵席，来款待老师，请杨、娄诸绅士作陪，而他自己，却恭恭敬敬地鹄立门外。在座的人很觉不安，自然请他进来同坐。再三请他，他也不肯。并且说：“我决不敢和诸位老爷们同坐，我必须在门外站着，才觉得心安，才觉得快乐。”武训眼见他的义塾开了学，一群学生们，天天都兴高采烈地来上学，一片书声琅琅，他听着比什么音乐都好听。这时他才略为放心。每天仍过着他的乞丐生活。

但武训对于老师的授课，是否勤惰；对于学生的读书，是否用心；他总是时刻不断地暗中察听。每当讨饭的余暇，就到义塾里去看看，也说不定他是什么时候来，或是一天来几次，或者几天来一次，来时总是笑咪咪的十分快乐。有一天，他来到义塾，看见学生都到齐了，只是看不见先生。他便问道：“老师呢？”学生说：“老师睡觉还没起来哩。”武训便悄悄地推开老师的门，正见老师尚在呼呼大睡，他不敢惊动老师，却恭恭敬敬地跪在他的床前不住地流泪。等老师醒来，忽然见到这种情景，心中还不知因着何事。正要问他的时候，武训才说：“老师，学生早已到齐了。”这句话，说得老师惊恐惭愧，从此再也不忍晚起了。他见到顽皮不用功的学生，也是长跪不起来规劝他。往往把学生感动得哭了，他才慢慢地起来道：“好孩子，不要哭！以后谨守规矩，专心读书就是。”他如果看出老师勤苦的教诲学生，便前去长跪致谢。有位学生，名叫赵光远，非常用功，据老师说，每次考试，都名列第一，他就当众跪下奖励他。因此，义塾的师生，教的热心教，学的喜欢学，一年的成绩，就胜过其他的私塾几年。

二十四

学董杨树坊和娄峻岭两先生，因深受武训的感召，以为此等异人，不可不为表彰，就相偕去见唐邑县知县郭春熙，禀明武训讨饭兴学的始末。郭知县大为敬佩，并且亲到乡间去视察。果然见到义塾的精神与别的私塾大大不同，就赞美不止。适逢武训讨饭归来，他也是暗中来视察的。别人就告诉他知县在此，并且对他办的义学大加称赞。武训遂去见知县，叩头致谢。郭知县亲自扶他起来，和他谈话，对他倍加奖励。并见他衣服褴褛，即赠给银锞十两，叫他换换衣服，武训不受。知县一定请他收留，他才很恭敬的接过来。但他决不使用这钱，仍存放起来，作为办学之用。

二十五

不久，山东巡抚张曜也听说武训讨饭兴学的事了。就下令堂邑县，说要传见武训。后来知县亲自陪往去见巡抚，他仍是穿着褴褛衣服，一手提着破篮子，一手拿着打狗棒，态度非常自然。当问话的时候，他一面答话，一面还不住的捻线绳。这事惊动了所有巡抚衙门的人，都在等着想一见这位兴学的异丐。张巡抚问明他兴学的经过，也不禁肃然动容，认为是国家的祥瑞；而偏偏又出在他的治属，自己也觉得无上光荣。即吩咐管库房的拿出200两银子奖励他。又赐给他一种黄布钤印的绿薄，让他容易募化，续办义学。当时武训不甚明白，就问巡抚道：“这些银子，是不是叫我拿去办义学的？这种黄薄子，是不是准我拿去捐钱办义学的？”巡抚说：“极是！极是！”到这时，武训才跪下连连向巡抚叩了许多头，很高兴地离了巡抚衙门。

二十六

巡抚张曜自从传见武训以后，认为乞丐兴学，实是千古奇迹。这样志行卓绝的人，理应极力表扬，以厉薄俗。当即奏请皇上恩赐建坊，旋蒙清廷批准了。今将奏请及御批原文录于下：

再据署堂邑县知县郭春熙详称绅士选用训导杨树坊等公呈：县民武宗禹之子武训，自幼失怙，其家极贫。事母崔氏，曲尽孝谨，与兄武让，亦极友爱。质朴勤俭，每年佣值余资，积蓄生息，陆续置地二百三十亩有奇，计地价京钱四千二百六十三串八百七十四文，全数捐为创造义学经费。适有乡人郭芬捐助柳林集东门外基地一亩八分七厘，遂建义学瓦房二十间。所需工料，武训又独捐京钱二千八百串，邻村公捐京钱一千五百七十八串。已于本年春间落成，廷师课读。生童三十余人，外课生等二十余人。穷观乡里义学，身登贵仕家拥厚资者，尚不肯倡捐办理；武训从贫苦小民，节衣缩食，罄半生之积蓄，以成义学，洵属急公好义，行谊可风。呈请详报奏奖前来。臣查武训捐助义学经费，统计七千余串，合银二千两以上，核与建坊之例相符，仰恩天恩，俯准堂邑县民武训自行建坊，给与“乐善好施”字样，以示旌奖。谨附片呈陈，伏乞圣鉴训示。山东巡抚张曜谨奏。

光绪十四年九月十九日奏。奉朱批：

着照所请，礼部知道，钦此。

我们看了张曜的奏片，他所根据的原呈请人，对了武训的生平事迹，是恐怕言过其实，耸动天听，反招罪尤；所以他们的原呈中，未敢将他讨饭兴学的始末如实呈报。而张曜的案语，也把亲自传见一层省略不言，只按他捐钱的数目，为一合于建坊之例奏请给予“乐善好施”字样了事。其实这“乐善好施”四字，就能包括了武训的精神吗？但武训是全然不管这些虚荣的，他只知尽上他的心力。去完成他的志愿，此外他什么都不管。不久，“乐善好施”的牌坊也巍立在柳林镇的大街上了。他天天走来走去，如同没有看见一样。有人指着对武训道：“这是当今皇帝为你竖的牌坊呀！”他说：“决不是为我，大概是让我们好好的办义学吧。”说完就急急忙忙地跑过去，恐怕人家尽着和他罗唣。

二十七

50岁以后的武训，就不大卖苦力了，即便他肯卖苦力，人家也不好意思再雇佣他，除非在生疏的地方，间或为人拉拉车，挑挑水。要把戏的方法，也不采用了。采用也无效，因为他的名气已大，做父母的不许小孩再玩弄他。但是照常讨饭，照常捻线，依然住破庙，依然吃粗粮。还是如苦行头陀，到处募化，设法积钱放钱，或是购买学田，无时无刻不在勤劳者。学生们受了他的恩惠，看他天天这样辛苦，心中十分不安，屡次请他改变生活，请他到塾中居住，他一概不听。一次，全塾的学生跪下向他请求，他才对他们解释道：“善人施钱，是叫我兴办义学，为穷孩子们读书识字的。我若是自己享受，那就是欺骗善人了。这违背良心的事，我是决不干的。而且我只有快乐，毫无苦恼。你们好好地读书吧，不要常是牵挂着我。”当地绅士们，也有劝他不要这样自苦的。他的回答，总是说：“我不苦，我快乐得很，我还要这样的快乐下去！”

二十八

武训虽是照常度着乞丐生活，但自从柳林镇的义学开办以后，社会上已对他有了深深地认识。巡抚赐给他的缘薄，清廷奖许他的牌坊，也有了很大的作用。于是绅士富户见了他，都乐意捐助。他有时到其他私塾去募化，学生们也是争先恐后的来捐钱。他还常常印些善书，遇到庙会集场，就推出赠人，他虽声明不要钱，但大家敬佩他的人格，反倒给他的钱更多。

这时，武训已有53岁了。兴学的事业，可说是成就大半。将来添设义塾，也不会再有何等的困难，他自幼父母俱亡，虽有一位胞兄，也和他志愿不同。在一般人看来，他是一位零丁孤苦的人。于是就有人劝他成家立后，他常是笑得要发疯，一面抚磨他的头颅给人看，就说：“凭我这副头脸，也要讨老婆吗？”接着唱道：

不要老婆不要孩。以修义学为生涯。

不娶妻，不生子，修个义学才无私。

有一天，堂邑知县和当地绅士，公宴他，又劝他娶妻立后，并且责以大义，他又笑着唱道：

人生七十古来稀五十三岁不娶妻；

亲戚朋友断个净，临死落个义学症。

可是他自己虽立志不娶，却惯好替人作媒。他自40岁以后，办义学的名声已经传出，许多人就对他敬重信任了。因此，他到各家讨饭时，多听其自由出入。一般妇女们尤愿和他接谈。他见人家有到成婚年龄的男女，便对他们的父母说：“我给少爷提个媒吧！”或说：“我给小姐提门亲事吧！”人家都知道他向来说谎话，也就乐意信托他。他到男女的两家来回一说，婚姻便告成了。他往往很得意地唱道：

义学症，做媒红，这桩亲事容易成。

靠着替人说媒，也是他义学收入的一宗。每一件亲事说成后，男女两家各给铜钱一串或数串。到结婚时谢媒人，他也前去，但不吃人家的酒席，只要点馍馍和熟菜，拿去卖了，把钱积起来。到他五十多岁的时候，几乎包办了那一方的男女亲事，简直是一个活月老了。

二十九

武训晚年讨饭的情形，和以前大不相同。以前是挨门挨户去讨，有的给他，有的不给他。这时人家一听见武训在街上唱，唱的自然是义学歌，各家便争着出来请，吩咐小孩子硬向家里拉。听说小孩子因争拉武训，便彼此夸称自己的饭菜好，往往因此打起架来，还得武训给他们劝和。因此，他每被拉到一户人家去，搬座的搬座，添饭的添饭，那种受人欢迎的情景，真是无法形容。到这时，他天天吃不了的饱饭，临去时还送些佳美的食物，让他带着走。

三十

武训积钱既是较前容易，他的义塾就日见扩充，日见发达。他的名声，已传遍了临近几县。馆陶县鸦儿庄千佛寺的主持僧人了证，因敬慕武训的人格，也在寺旁成立义塾。但是款项很少，不能维持。武训听得这种消息，以为又得到一位同志，立刻跑到馆陶县去见了证，二人谈得十分投契，即结为好友。武训就把年来继续所积的钱，捐出300串来，请了证主持扩充，好多收一些穷孩子来教育。从此，这个义塾，才算正式成立了。塾址仍就千佛寺的近旁，加以扩充。义塾的名字，就叫“鸦庄义塾”。但那个塾师的姓名，现在不能确定。当时武训聘请的好老师，除崔隼外，还有聊城的顾伸安，博平的曹连枝，清河的膝绣封等。不知鸦庄的塾师，果为何人？

三十一

传说在这时候，清廷又颁封“义学正”的名号，并赏穿“黄马褂”，让他到知县衙门去谢恩。当他去时，叫他跪下聆听圣旨，他不愿跪；叫他穿起黄马褂叩头谢恩，他不愿穿。经过知县解释道：“这都是与义学有关的事呀！”他才赶快穿起黄马褂连连叩头。但他总是对这事不感兴趣，他曾唱道：

义学正，不用封；黄马褂，没得用；办个义学万年不能动。

我们可以想想武训当时穿黄马褂的情形：凭他那身百结衣，那具“这边剃那边留”的头颅，再加上那副丑陋的嘴脸，单是穿上一件黄马褂，真是天大的滑稽！好像满清的皇帝，有意向他开玩笑，使他成为古今独步的丑角。

三十二

临清县有位绅士，名叫施善政，素闻武训兴学的义举，久想与他相识。适逢武训慕化到临清，施善政就请他到家，以盛馔款待。相谈数日，十分投契，并且结为知友。又赞助武训在城内御史巷筹办第三处义塾。经过年余的工夫，那处义塾又成立了，就称为“史巷义塾”。这次武训又是跪请老师，请到的是王丕显先生。王先生在前清并无什么功名，可是学问极好，道德最高。自受武训感动后，即立定志愿，不但与武训相始终，更愿把毕生精力献身义学的事业。武训死后，他更爱护那个义塾。起初规模最小，经他叩头募款，年年扩充，到后来成为三塾中最大得一个。他活到八十余岁、民国二十二年才去世。从来没有用过义塾的一文钱，因此得不到妻子的谅解，竟与家庭脱离关系。他所赖以为生的，据说有个祖传的药方，自己制成药料，每包售三角，他的后半世全靠这点收入，维持生活。病笃时含笑而逝。后人都称他为“武训第二”。武训自得到这位同志，他的精神，才永传不朽了。也可见武训感召的力量，是何等的深厚呢！