

Somehow, I had heard about stories on The Three Kingdoms(San Guo). They said the stories are in the book 三国志. It happened that we had a book of 列国志, i.e. 东周列国志. That is not the right book, and much harder to read. Also not as interesting. I had to wait much later, when I went to Chungking to get the chance to read 三国演义. That was the only thing I can remember about extracurricular children's books. I do not recall ever reading any fairy tales either Chinese or foreign. It is a great contrast to kids' cultural life nowadays. But I do not think I miss or regret much.

I do not recall I ever had toys. I mean the fancy commercial toys. We made our own toys. We used to catch crickets in a nearby hillside, used clay to make cages for crickets, and picked grass to tickle the crickets. The cricket fights were very exciting. We also played marbles. We had no money to buy glass marbles. So we again made use of clay and let it dry. They were as good. Sometimes I think an age of deprivation may be a blessing in disguise. You become more innovative.

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我偶然听说了三国的故事，听人说这些故事是在《三国志》上的。我家刚好有一本《列国志》，就是《东周列国志》。这本书不只不是《三国志》，而且难读多了，也无趣不少。很久以后，到了重庆我才找到机会读《三国演义》。这是我能记得的唯一一本课外儿童读物。我不记得自己读过什么童话，无论中国的还是外国的。这和现在孩子们的文化生活大不一样。不过，我并不觉得有太多失落或者遗憾的。

我不记得有过什么玩具，我是说店里卖的那种花哨的商品玩具。但我们做自己的玩具。我们在旁边的山坡逮蚰蚰儿，用泥巴做笼子，摘草逗弄蚰蚰儿。斗蚰蚰儿非常来劲儿。我们也玩弹珠，因为没钱买玻璃珠，我们就抔土为珠，等它干了来玩，泥珠子玩起来也同样很好。有时候我想，穷困的年代也可能是一种隐蔽着的福分，你因此而更具有创造性。