



A Bridge for Passing

Pearl S. Buck

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A Bridge for Passing Pearl S. Buck

While in Japan to observe the filming of one of her novels, Pearl Buck was informed that her husband had died. This book is the deeply affecting story of the period that immediately followed - the grief, fears, doubts, and readjustments that a woman must make before crossing the bridge that spans marriage and widowhood.

A Bridge for Passing Details

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Cora says

I think this was more of a therapeutic write for Pearl S Buck. She had watched her husband's mind deteriorate for some time, slowly losing him to Alzheimer's. While she was in Japan for filming of one of her novels turned movie, he passed. She returned home for the funeral and to put things in order. Then she had to proceed forward with her life, which meant returning to Japan for the filming of *The Big Wave*. I think that writing this book was her way of dealing with the reality of her life transitioning and accepting that her husband was gone.

Although I have not read *The Big Wave*, nor watched the movie which released in 1961, reading this made me curious. So I might add it to my Pearl S. Buck's list of books to read.

Jade says

Pearl S. Buck travels to Japan to observe the filming of the movie based on her children's book, *The Big Wave*, when she receives a phone call that her dying husband has passed away. This book tells with calm poignancy the people she meets in Asia, her experiences, and reflections she has during this time of grief and exploration.

The strongest parts of the book, for me, were Buck's observations and insights into other people. I couldn't agree with her agnosticism, although I might have during an earlier time in my life. She's opinionated, but in a detached, wise sort of way, and I enjoyed her thoughts on love as well as the way she views her own self and the kind words she writes about her husband.

The many threads of narrative, from the differences between the modern Japanese and traditional Japanese, the difficulties during the filming of *The Big Wave*, to Buck's own personal memories living in China and other family memories, visiting Japan, and her happy (but not perfect) marriage, play upon each other well. The style of writing is calm and associative, and her dry sense of humor is amusing. I kept wanting to read on and completed the book with satisfaction.

Anne says

Touching account of her husband's death and her work in filming her children's book, *The Big Wave*. Interesting comparisons between West and East.

Mary Dayhoff says

Having just lost a loved one I was curious to read about the author's experience of the passing of her husband. While most of the narrative surrounds the making of her movie in Japan, which I enjoyed

immensely, her memories of life with "him" on their Pennsylvania farm, their family, and other memories were much different than my experience of losing my husband nearly ten years ago and also my recent loss. She didn't delve deeply into her emotions which she did have and yet her description was very inward, private, almost serene or even placid. It could be in part that she was a woman of her time, early 1960's when "he" died. Pearl S. Buck was not avant-garde nor thrilling as a writer. She wrote as she was: mild-mannered with no ambition for adventure but somehow in the midst of it. The last page ties all the previous pages together and tells how she survived her husband death. I await reading more of Pearl S. Buck.

Jill says

I will admit I did not finish this book because it was about her recovery from grief and after about half of the book I felt I wanted to move on. I am into reading about Pearl Buck and her accomplishments so I'm now reading another of her books of short stories.

Debbie says

I really loved it. It's about making a film of her book *The Big Wave*, and her husband's death, and her passage to peace. She is a really great writer...the way she uses words is lovely

Dawn Weaver says

This 'beloved writer's testament of faith which tell how, after a great sorrow she found her way back to life' is bound to be enjoyed most by those who have read her more noteworthy books. This one is more of a journal of the first year of widowhood in which Mrs. Buck distracted herself by overseeing the filming of her book *The Big Wave* in Japan. It has some cultural interest, showing the changes underway in Japan at its writing (1962), changes which have intensified since. And still there are tsunamis... But it does not really offer much solid comfort or advice for dealing with grief.

Manish says

While scouting in Japan for locations and characters to bring alive one of her works on the silver screen, Buck gets informed of the passing away of her ailing husband. This work chronicles the days, emotions and memories that haunted her during this period. Memorable for the vivid descriptions of the Japanese - their changing values and the geography of the islands.

Andrea Tome says

3'5/5

La prosa de Pearl S. Buck es maravillosa

Robert Beveridge says

Pearl S. Buck, *A Bridge for Passing* (Pocket, 1962)

The strength of Pearl Buck's writing, it becomes evident from page one, is in her ability to tell a story as if she were sitting next to you sipping lemonade on an unseasonably cool August day. Her observations are flowery, well-described, and often at least a touch naïve; one wonders, had she written the book ten years later, if it would have had the same tone it does.

A Bridge for Passing intertwines the filming of her novel *The Big Wave*, the first major collaboration between Japanese and American filmmakers (and now unforgivably obscure), with the death of her husband of twenty-five years. And oddly, though the ratio of the two in page real estate is about 90/10, the reviews, the blurbs, and the cover reverse the ratio when talking about the book. To the rest of the world, it seems, *A Bridge for Passing* was a precursor to the spate of books that started appearing roughly a decade later about how to handle major life crises. The movie was just an afterthought.

Not so, *Othello*. The movie is the mechanism by which Buck learns to deal with her grief, true, but there is much more to it than that. This is no fictional memoir; we are treated to the lives of real people, most of whom have remained obscure from the American perspective, but some of whom are not (*Big Wave* director Ted Danielewski, for example, has a pair of kids well known to media critics, *House of Leaves* author Mark Danielewski and his sister, the singer known as Poe). And when one keeps one's mind on the idea that these are real people, one starts to realize the enormity of the task Buck and her cohorts have set themselves. This is not just an on location shoot, this is politics of the highest order (and only fifteen years after the unpleasantness at the end of World War II).

There is much to be said for the way in which her husband's death pervades the book, but any Buck fans who have avoided this, fearing it to be nothing but a celebrity-penned self-help tome, put your fears at ease. This one's a keeper. *** ½

Robin_R says

A very interesting memoir of the year Pearl S. Buck lost her husband. At that same time, she was spending time in Japan for the filming of her beautiful children's book, *The Big Wave*. Her experiences in Japan at such a sad and difficult time provided solace and perspective, and became a "bridge" into her new life alone without her beloved husband.

Gail says

This 1961 memoir tells two stories. The deeper story is of Pearl Buck's loss of her husband to dementia, and then while she was in Japan during the filming of a movie based on her book *The Big Wave*, her loss of her husband to death. I felt very simpatico with Pearl as she and I share a fascination with, and a wish for, life after death. She was way ahead of her time in her understanding the possibility of the soul existing separately from the body and how science had already advanced to the point of beginning to support that idea - much

more commonly known now, since quantum physics has become more mainstream and the intelligent observer phenomenon more well-known.

Pearl's remembrances of the love she and her husband shared, as well as honest memories of his foibles and flaws, were interesting and touching.

The bulk of the writing, however, pertained to the making of the film and was interesting in and of itself. I learned fascinating bits about Japanese culture before and since WWII. One memorable fact is that the Japanese don't have the equivalent of the words, "I love you." For them, the love between husband and wife is too deep for words and can only be expressed through attitude and behavior.

Recommended for Pearl Buck fans, as well as anyone struggling with the loss of a partner to dementia or death, interested in spirituality, or a fan of cinematography. Eclectic, eh? Pearl was one complex, generous, and deep-thinking person with interests that span all of creation, particularly communication between conscious beings. My one nitpick is that she is a bit overly-impressed with physical beauty and expressive intelligence in her response to individuals, although that exists, a bit uncomfortably for me, alongside an appreciation of all people.

Dr.J.G. says

I wonder if this one deals with the unrest and changing times in China.

I remember reading about Pearl Buck going through the same incident as a child and as a mother with a child, and the reactions she and her mother before her faced from the Chinese person (different each time of course) the child had offended and the mother placated by speaking the Chinese way.

Towards the end she makes it clear she thought it was a mistake for US to break diplomatic relations with China when they went communist.

Monday, September 13, 2010

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That might have been a part of My Several Worlds, after all, but this one is definitely autobiographical.

Yv says

Hope says

In spite of the fluffy theology, I found this book strangely compelling. Buck's perception of post-war Japan was especially interesting.

Nancy Brady says

Mixing the story of the filming of the adaptation of her book *The Big Wave* and her journey of grief after her husband died, Buck tells a flowing story of the beauty of Japan and its people. Introspection abounds in this small volume and the section about love at the beginning of Chapter 2 is particularly eloquent and poignant (at least I felt that way).

Irene Azuaje says

Es un poco lento de leer, pero nos da a conocer un poco más sobre esta fantástica autora.

Atharva Bhingare says

Pearl Buck is fantastic at describing beauty of masses through few words. She expressed the most intricate & intimate thoughts & ideas she had, via the immersed strength of her art.

Linore says

I didn't realize this book was autobiographical when I picked it up, but the fact that it was, made it all the more enjoyable for me. Pearl S. Buck has been a favorite author of mine since I read *The Good Earth* when I was a kid. I've read other of her books, but not for many years. Reading this one reminded me why I love her writing so much. She is uniquely gifted in the description of people and places, giving you just enough to fascinate you but never bore. I love the calmness in her tone; even when she describes the most amazing, adventurous events, such as when she once stayed outside, hiding in a cleft of rocks to watch a typhoon in Japan, the writing is calm. She doesn't waste a word, either. Her dry humour is so funny, too. This book, while some of the content was sad, was truly a delight to read. Some of the vignettes of the sweet Japanese people she encounters and worked with in this book are great entertainment. My only regret is that Ms. Buck did not seem to internalize the Christian truths regarding creation and eternity that her parents (Christian missionaries) certainly believed. She knows a scripture for a good analogy when she needs it, but the soul-searching questions she asks are evidence of deep gaps in her theology. Nevertheless, a great read by a great lady. I'm joining the Pearl S. Buck Foundation, which I never knew existed until now.

Jasmine Blanchard says

She...is amazing. In this book, she discusses her grief over her husband's death, with both memory and relation to her present moment in life. It is well written, and reflects cultural values, norms and her keen observational skills in dealing with grief in an entirely different culture.

