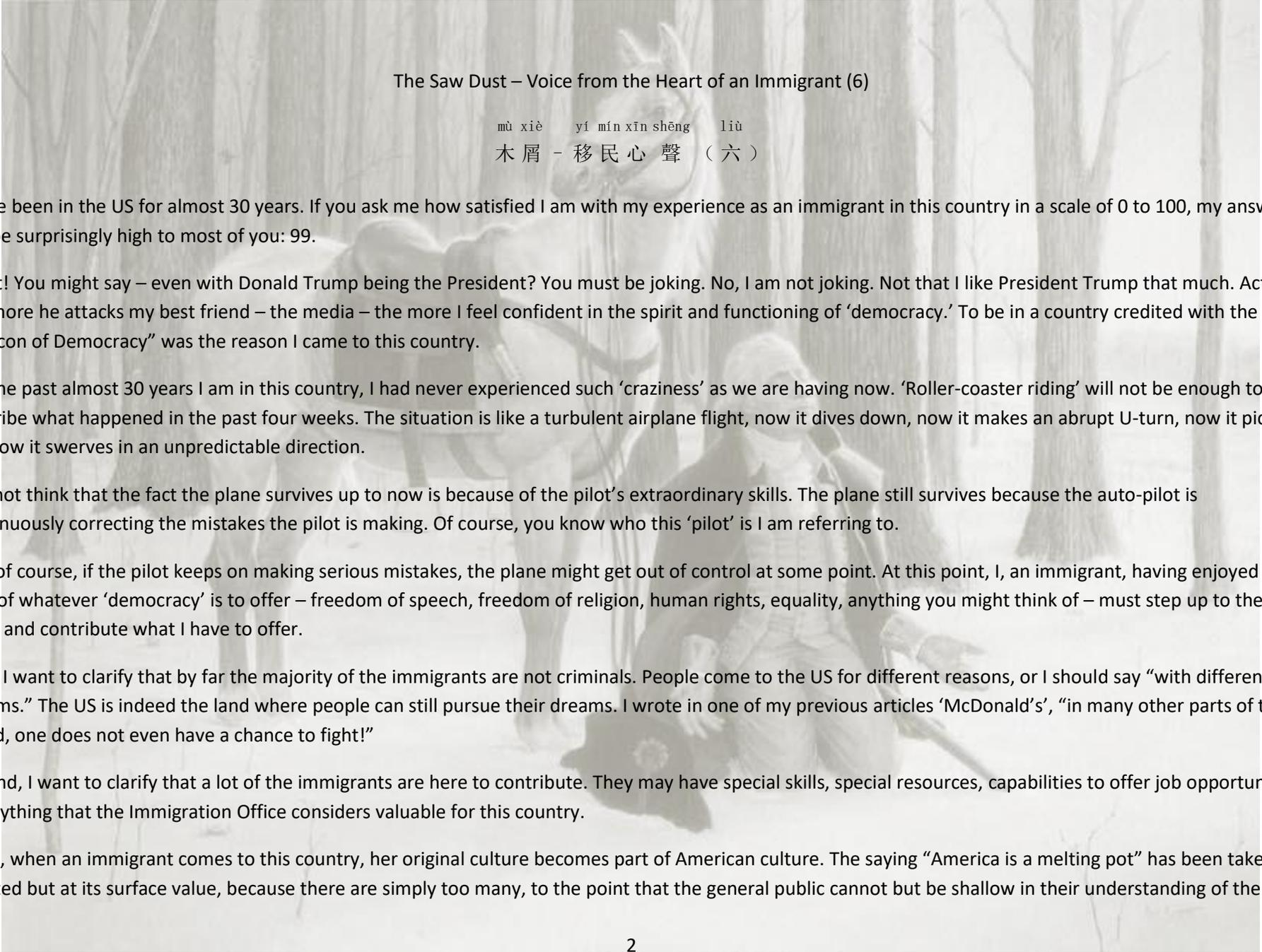
A black and white illustration of a man kneeling in a snowy forest next to a saddled horse. The man is wearing a heavy coat and a hat, and is looking towards the horse. The horse is standing and facing right. The background consists of many thin, bare trees in a snowy landscape.

The Saw Dust – Voice from the Heart of an Immigrant (6)

木屑 – 移民心聲 (六)



The Saw Dust – Voice from the Heart of an Immigrant (6)

mù xiè yí mín xīn shēng liù
木屑 - 移民心聲 (六)

I have been in the US for almost 30 years. If you ask me how satisfied I am with my experience as an immigrant in this country in a scale of 0 to 100, my answer will be surprisingly high to most of you: 99.

What! You might say – even with Donald Trump being the President? You must be joking. No, I am not joking. Not that I like President Trump that much. Actually, the more he attacks my best friend – the media – the more I feel confident in the spirit and functioning of ‘democracy.’ To be in a country credited with the title “Beacon of Democracy” was the reason I came to this country.

For the past almost 30 years I am in this country, I had never experienced such ‘craziness’ as we are having now. ‘Roller-coaster riding’ will not be enough to describe what happened in the past four weeks. The situation is like a turbulent airplane flight, now it dives down, now it makes an abrupt U-turn, now it picks up, now it swerves in an unpredictable direction.

I do not think that the fact the plane survives up to now is because of the pilot’s extraordinary skills. The plane still survives because the auto-pilot is continuously correcting the mistakes the pilot is making. Of course, you know who this ‘pilot’ is I am referring to.

And of course, if the pilot keeps on making serious mistakes, the plane might get out of control at some point. At this point, I, an immigrant, having enjoyed the 99% of whatever ‘democracy’ is to offer – freedom of speech, freedom of religion, human rights, equality, anything you might think of – must step up to the plate and contribute what I have to offer.

First, I want to clarify that by far the majority of the immigrants are not criminals. People come to the US for different reasons, or I should say “with different dreams.” The US is indeed the land where people can still pursue their dreams. I wrote in one of my previous articles ‘McDonald’s’, “in many other parts of the world, one does not even have a chance to fight!”

Second, I want to clarify that a lot of the immigrants are here to contribute. They may have special skills, special resources, capabilities to offer job opportunities, or anything that the Immigration Office considers valuable for this country.

Third, when an immigrant comes to this country, her original culture becomes part of American culture. The saying “America is a melting pot” has been taken for granted but at its surface value, because there are simply too many, to the point that the general public cannot but be shallow in their understanding of the

immigrant cultures. For example, about Chinese, people only know two things: Gong-Fu and Chinese food. President Trump even refers to 'inner city,' where immigrant communities have established themselves for decades - or even centuries - as the breeding grounds for crimes.

No, the immigrants' cultures, woven together beautifully with the mainstream culture, will become the tapestry that will shine for the centuries to come. I had been a teacher, and I know, Mr. President Trump, the students are 'bored.' The teachers are either too busy or clueless to show or encourage any interest in different cultures. Many are actually thwarting the students' by-nature curiosity by their own lack of curiosity. What a pity! Remember, curiosity is one of the prime motivations for a student's learning. Make it a point to incorporate different cultures into this most beautiful tapestry, let the 'incorporated American' culture shine. At the very least, the students in public schools will no longer be bored again, and they will perform much better.

Knowledge in immigrants' original cultures is the most valuable asset when dealing with international conflicts. After WWII, it has become a rule that whenever America gets involved in a foreign conflict, it either becomes ugly or hopeless. Has anybody even asked why? The answer is very simple, because we, Americans, don't know the people. And if we don't know the immigrants who are already in this country, how can we know anything about the people in the countries they came from?

For the sake of the thousands that have died for this country because of our ignorance in the past, let us do it right from now on. Know the different peoples, know their cultures and become the great nation that the world looks up to again.

Fourth, it takes 'good planning' to really know a person. My work experiences include working in a big corporate, in a public school, and in a small business. I can tell you this: people are generally okay at the very least, but what makes the BIGGEST difference between working in a small business and in a large corporate is that the personnel department either 'knows' or 'does not know' the employees.

Many large corporates or school districts are organized in such a way that the personnel department is centralized, and therefore, has hardly any direct contact with the employees. This 'lack' of knowing the employees can be a serious problem for any employees. But, this problem is particularly serious when it pertains to a 'foreigner', because for many Americans, when they handle a conflict involving a foreigner, even before any investigation or communication is made, they already assume they know 'everything about that foreigner' and the decision is made! How ignorant, damaging, and humiliating!

Fifth, the last and not the least, and this is the 1% that I am talking about that I am not satisfied. I remember I wrote about this point in my previous writings. Please "Suspect with Respect."

As an immigrant, I can understand perfectly that the people or the government offices have to be suspicious from time to time, in order to protect this country. But the solution is very simple. If you incorporate respect in your suspicion, everything will be okay. If there is a law that prevents this from happening, modify the law or create a law, so that the people and the government can "suspect graciously." You do that and you will make friends out of your enemies. What a double victory!

It does not take a PH. D. degree to understand this simple fact: people simply need to be respected. Go and ask the Mexican drug cartels and the so-called terrorists this simple question: “Can we solve the problems together if we show each other respect?” I can guarantee you the answer will be a 100% “YES!” Not only that, they will consider giving up drug-trafficking and terrorism once and for all most willingly. Do you think they like to do those things as human beings?

shàng liáng bù zhèng xià liáng wāi

Chinese have a saying 上樑不正下樑歪, which is saying “in the structure of a building, if the beams at the top do not position correctly, do you expect the beams underneath not be inclined?” As the world leaders, do not always blame those ‘down there.’ The origins of the problems might have been your creations.

To end this writing, I will like to refer you to the following incident. It has nothing to do with ‘immigrants’, but has very much to do with ‘respect’ and, for everybody, how to fight for this respect.

I work at a repair shop which I like very much, and I take great joy and pride working there. I have a good system to check my works after I have finished the repairing jobs. I also make my own labels to show that they passed my test. Not only that, I do my test where my colleagues can see.

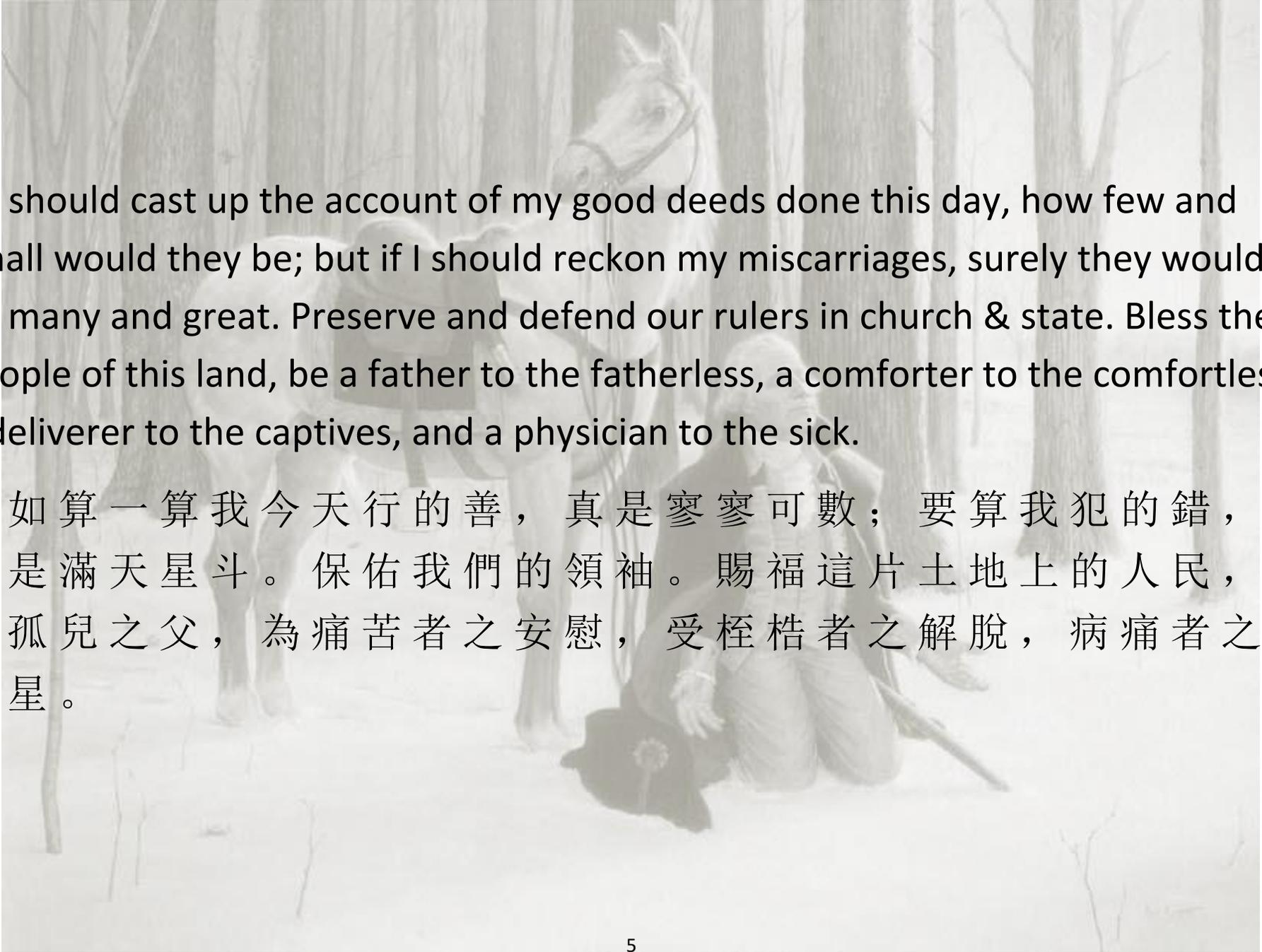
One day, I got to the work place and the service writer offhandedly told me that the chain saw the customer recently picked up wouldn’t even start. The reason she said that was because the customer told her so. I already looked over the engine so I countered, “How could that be? There is saw dust on that engine.”

I cite this incident as one example how an immigrant should do, actually, how everybody should do: take extra care or even build up a system to do and show your work. When lack of balanced information comes into play, you have got your best tools to regain respect.

In conclusion, let’s hear George Washington’s prayer:

If I should cast up the account of my good deeds done this day, how few and small would they be; but if I should reckon my miscarriages, surely they would be many and great. Preserve and defend our rulers in church & state. Bless the people of this land, be a father to the fatherless, a comforter to the comfortless, a deliverer to the captives, and a physician to the sick.

jiǎ rú suàn yī suàn wǒ jīn tiān háng de shàn zhēn shì liáo liáo kě shǔ yào suàn wǒ fàn de cuò yòu shì mǎn tiān xīng dòu bǎo yòu wǒ mén de líng xiù cì fú zhè piàn tǔ dì
假如算一算我今天行的善，真是寥寥可數；要算我犯的錯，又是滿天星斗。保佑我們的領袖。賜福這片土地
shàng de rén mín wéi gū ér zhī fù wéi tòng kǔ zhě zhī ān wèi shòu zhì gù zhě zhī jiě tuō bìng tòng zhě zhī jiù xīng
上的人民，為孤兒之父，為痛苦者之安慰，受桎梏者之解脫，病痛者之救星。

A grayscale illustration of a man kneeling in a forest, with a horse and a pack on its back behind him. The man is wearing a long coat and a hat, and is looking down with a somber expression. The horse is standing behind him, and the pack is resting on its back. The forest is filled with tall, thin trees, and the ground is covered in snow or a light-colored surface.

If I should cast up the account of my good deeds done this day, how few and small would they be; but if I should reckon my miscarriages, surely they would be many and great. Preserve and defend our rulers in church & state. Bless the people of this land, be a father to the fatherless, a comforter to the comfortless, a deliverer to the captives, and a physician to the sick.

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慰。受桎梏
者之解脫。病
痛者之救星。
二〇七年二月十日
於德州 孫