

英译汉（English-Chinese Translation）

HAIR IN YOUR EYES

By Helen Foster Snow

*Helen Snow in 1978*

It is still a mystery to me – why anyone wants to have hair hanging down into their eyes. I don't like anything in front of my eyes. Even one hair bothers me. I understand shaggy-cut bangs, not too short, and I have had a windblown cap cut off and on since the idea first appeared about 1925. (We used to use soap to make the cheek piece curl up.)

In the 1960's men and boys began to hide behind long feminine haircuts, with the bangs so long, sometimes they actually hung over most of the eyes like a thin curtain. What did this mean? It had to be unkempt looking, even if by the art of studied carelessness. I discovered one reason: both boys and girls constantly made the gesture of pushing their hair back. Then sometimes, they would shake their heads to make sure it had fallen down again, so they could put up a hand to push it back. This gesture is the ultra-feminine one and also it gives you something to do with your hands if nervous and ill at ease.

On television “Cher” was an example of the long, straight, flat hair parted in the middle and hanging down on both sides, always about half way over the eyes. Then the “Cher” panache was to constantly swing the hair back or to put up the hand to keep brushing it out of the eyes. She obviously thought this was the ultimate in charm and style, even though she usually had a little bit of burlesque.

We know the hair fetish is one of the chief expressions of human nature, primitive or any time. Human beings wave it like a banner and a challenge. For unknown generations hair hanging long and unkempt has been the fetish of the artist, musician, actor and other off-beat types, the mark of their exceptionalness. One example is the Japanese conductor of the Boston Pops Orchestra – he waves his shaggy mane from one side to another, peeping out from under the heavy bangs half covering his eyes. All conductors tend to have long leonine manes, but covering the vision and hiding behind it is not quite the same as waving it.

I once had a severe nosebleed and went to the emergency ward of Yale New Haven Hospital. I was assigned to a young Japanese woman, training to be a doctor. Her hair was short and so heavy and bushy, she actually could not see through the overlong heavy bangs and had to keep brushing them out of her eyes right in the middle of using a scalpel and mirror to cut off the artery. In the end, she made such a “hairy” mess of it, she had to call another doctor to do the job – he was a real square, fortunately, with nice neat short hair and good glasses.

When I was in China in 1970’s, I was always bothered by the straight wisps of hair escaping from a bobby pin to hold the bangs back and directly obscuring the vision. I could not understand it at all, but assumed the hair grew in that intractable manner. I well remembered in the 1930’s when the old-fashioned women plucked their foreheads to make a square, then brushed the long hair down like a crow’s wing to be as flat as possible.

When I was a child, my grandmother’s second husband was the superintendent of a big insane asylum. Once or twice I went there and I noticed that unkempt hair was the common denominator, also that the wildest inmates hid behind heavy locks in front and peered out with paranoid fear and hostility. In fact, I am writing this today because last night I watched “Nicholas Nickleby” on television. The retarded boy, Smike, had been hiding behind long unkempt hair over his eyes – a miracle occurred when it was cut short all over.

In the 1960’s one of my aged friends went to visit a family of relatives around Halloween. Their girls appeared in long calico skirts with the long straight hair hanging like witches and covering half their eyes. At first she thought it was a costume party for the holiday – but of course, that was the ne plus ultra of young fashion then all the time.

A few minutes ago I watched a woman author on the Donahue show. Her long bangs were curved, but resting actually on the eyelids. She thought herself most attractive, but this hair problem gave me the “creeps”.

(Madison, 14 January 1983)