萝卜和茄子当奖品的运动会

小豆豆在巴学园的运动会上一路拿第一，最后抱回家的奖品是一堆蔬菜：萝卜、茄子、莴笋。读到这里我笑了很久，也想了好久。

我们的六一儿童节，礼物一般是买来的：玩具、新衣服，或者游乐场的门票，妈妈还会额外奖励一个红包。小豆豆的奖品不一样，每一样都是她在运动会上自己挣来的，既能带回家吃，又是她赢来的，两件好事叠在了一起。

巴学园运动会的项目也很特别。有游泳，孩子们裸着身子比谁游得快；有两人一组跳袋鼠；还有接力跑。校长说，每个人都一样重要，所以输的孩子也没有人笑话。这样的运动会，发萝卜茄子反而顺理成章，因为奖品不是商店里最贵的东西，而是地里长出来的、大家都能分着吃的东西。

书里还写那天晚饭，巴学园的孩子吃自己挣来的菜。小豆豆家晚饭正好也有萝卜和茄子，她吃得特别香，说从来没有这么香过。

我读到这里，想起去年儿童节。我用攒了一学期的零花钱，给妈妈买了一条围巾。妈妈没有马上戴，而是挂在厨房的挂钩上，每天做饭时都能看见。她对邻居说，这是孩子自己攒钱买的。她说这句话的语气，和小豆豆抱着茄子回家时差不多。

花钱买来的礼物，和靠自己挣来的东西，不一样。后者让人觉得自己有本事。小豆豆抱着那堆蔬菜走过校门的时候，一定觉得自己是个了不起的人。

今年儿童节，我打算也挣一样东西。帮爸爸修好那个坏了一年的打气筒，或者把阳台的空花盆种上蒜苗，等它长高，炒肉的时候让妈妈剪一把。它们不值钱，可是和小豆豆那堆萝卜茄子是一个道理：自己挣来的，抱着才沉，抱着才高兴。

A Sports Meet Where Daikon and Eggplant Were the Prizes

Totto-Chan kept winning at the Tomoe sports meet, and the prizes she carried home were armloads of vegetables: daikon, eggplant, lettuce. I laughed for a long time at this part, and then I thought about it for a long time.

Our Children's Day gifts are usually bought: toys, new clothes, or tickets to an amusement park, and my mother adds a red envelope on top. Totto-Chan's prizes were different. Every one of them she had earned at the sports meet herself. They could be eaten at home, and they were also proof that she had won. Two good things stacked into one.

The events at Tomoe were unusual too. There was swimming, where the children raced through the water with nothing on. There was kangaroo jumping in pairs, and there was a relay. The headmaster said every child mattered the same, so nobody teased the ones who lost. A meet like this could naturally give away daikon and

eggplant, because the prize was not the most expensive thing in a shop but something grown from the ground that everyone could share.

The book says that for dinner that day, the Tomoe children ate the vegetables they had earned. Totto-Chan's family happened to have daikon and eggplant for supper too, and she ate better than ever, saying the food had never been this delicious.

Reading that, I remembered last year's Children's Day. With pocket money I had saved all term, I bought my mother a scarf. She did not wear it right away. She hung it on the hook in the kitchen, where she could see it every time she cooked. She told the neighbors that her child had saved up and bought it. The way she said it sounded much the way Totto-Chan must have felt carrying eggplants home.

A bought gift and an earned thing are not the same. The second one makes a person feel capable. When Totto-Chan walked through the school gate with her armload of vegetables, she must have felt like someone remarkable.

This Children's Day, I plan to earn something too. I will fix the air pump that has been broken for a year and belongs to my father, or plant garlic sprouts in the empty flowerpots on the balcony, so that when they grow tall, my mother can snip a handful for stir-fry. They are worth little, but they follow the same rule as Totto-Chan's daikon and eggplant: what you earn yourself feels heavy in your arms, and that is why it feels joyful.