

# **Student Essay on A Biography on the Author Katherine Paterson**

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# Essay

## The Life of Katherine Paterson

The life of Katherine Paterson was filled with both sadness and success. On October 31, 1932 she was born in Qing Jiang, China. Because her mother and father were missionaries, her family moved many times, causing her to have a lonely childhood. Her misery, as a child, influenced her writings.

After her childhood, Katherine Paterson began her studies, by attending King College in Bristol, Tennessee. This was where she happily studied English and American Literature. After four years of studying, she received her bachelor's degree in 1954. Later, she attended the Presbyterian School of Christian Education in Richmond, Virginia. She then received her master's degree in 1957. After her studies, she became a missionary to Japan. Many of Paterson's stories were influenced by the Chinese and Japanese cultures. She returned to the United States in 1961 to earn her second master's degree at the Union Theological seminary in New York, New York.

One of the most important event in her life, was when she met John Barstow, a Presbyterian Minister. They fell in love and were married on July 14, 1962. This changed Paterson's life completely.

A terrible tragedy occurred when Katherine's son's best friend, Lisa Hill, was struck by lightning and killed. This misfortune influenced her to write, *Bridge to Terabithia*, which was granted the novel a Newbery Medal Award, in 1978.

Given that Paterson had lived in Japan as a missionary, her first three novels were all set in Japan. These novels were, *The Sign of the Chrysanthemum*, *Of Nightingales That Weep*, and *The Master Puppeteer*. Her unique sense of imagination led her to be successful in writing. Her religious faith and experiences in China and Japan were contributed to her writing style.