

Selection of Translations of Feng Zikai

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Edward Cai
Vassar College

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Professor Liu Haoming
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Introduction

Feng Zikai was a significant and influential Chinese artist and literary figure of the 20th century. Feng is most remembered as being the founder and pioneer of *manhua* comics, however he also frequently wrote essays, proses, and commentaries, as well as translated literature from Japan and Russia. His illustrations and writings are admired for masterfully capturing the simple, mundane, yet charming scenes of everyday life.

The variety of writings selected here for translation offer different insights into Feng's life. Some are travel commentaries and diaries, such as *Recollections of Sesshū Tōyō at Tiantong Temple* and *A Spring Excursion To West Lake*. Others such as *Private School Life* or *Marshal Bodhisattva* show cultural anecdotes experienced by Feng when he was a child. Works such as *Neighbors*, *Anan*, *A Spring Excursion To West Lake*, and *Spring* reveal the philosophy and keen observations Feng had on life and society. In particular *Neighbors* and *A Spring Excursion To West* touch upon Feng's criticisms of society and his hopes for an ideal and harmonious China. *A Spring Excursion To West* was written during the Great Leap Forward after the Hundred Flowers Campaign, and has propagandic and patriotic features. The essay *Neighbors* had an accompanying comic, which Feng redrew during the Communist period, to showcase the contrast between old society and new society. The new version of the comic removes the iron-rodded fan separating the two neighbors who are faced apart from each other, and instead portrays them happily sharing and discussing newspaper articles. *Recollections of Sesshū Tōyō at Tiantong Temple* and *Spring* showcase Feng's appreciation for historical art and poetry, a representation of his scholarly and intellectual background. *Anan* is a deeply personal piece that touches upon philosophical and religious matters, a mainstay feature prominent in Feng's illustrations.

天童寺憶雪舟

Recollections of Sesshū Tōyō at Tiantong Temple

春到江南，百花齐放。我动了游兴，就在三月中风和日暖的一天，乘轮船到宁波去作旅行写生了。

A multitude of flowers blossomed as spring arrived on the southern reaches of the Yangtze River. I was stirred to travel, so on a breezy and warm day, I rode a steamship headed to Ningbo with the intent to tour around and make some sketches.

宁波是我旧游之地，然而一别已有二十多年，走入市区，但觉面目一新，完全不可复识了。从前的木造老江桥现在已变成钢架大桥，从前的小屋现已变成层楼，从前的石子路现已变成柏油马路……街上车水马龙，商店百货山积。二十多年不见，这老朋友已经返老还童了！

Though I had visited Ningbo in the past, it had already been some 20 odd years since I last undertook the trip. Making my way to the city center, I felt as if I had entered a completely new place, one that was entirely unrecognizable. What was once the old wooden bridge was now a great steel behemoth, the cottages had transformed into multi-storied lofts, the gravel paths were now paved asphalt roads... moreover they were completely brimming with all manner of traffic, shops, and storefronts. It was as if this old acquaintance I had not set my eyes upon for twenty years had rejuvenated their youthful spirit!

我是来作旅行写生的，希望看看风景，首先想起有名的天童寺。这千年古刹除风景优胜之外，对我还有一点吸引力；这是日本有名的画僧雪舟等杨驻锡之处，因此天童二字带着美术的香气。我看过宁波市后，次日即驱车赴天童寺。

As I was here to do some travel sketches, I had hoped to survey the scenery, and what came to mind foremost was the famous Tiantong Temple. This thousand year old monastery not only boasted unparalleled beauty, it drew some personal interest from me; this was where the prominent Japanese painter-monk Sesshū Tōyō lodged. Thus the two words “Tiantong, Heavenly Child” carry with it an atmosphere of artistic allure. After having a good look at the city, I promptly drove to Tiantong Temple the next day.

天童寺离市区约五十里，小汽车一小时即到。将近寺院，一路上长松夹道，荫庇天日；松风之声，有如海潮。走进山门，但见殿宇巍峨，金碧辉煌；庄严七宝，香气氤氲。寺屋大小不下数百间，都布置得清楚齐整，了无纤尘。寺址在山坡上，层层而上，从最高的罗汉堂中可以望见寺院全景。我凭栏俯瞰，想象五百年前曾有一位日本高僧兼大画家住在这里，不知哪一个房间是他的起居坐卧作画之处。古人云：“登高望远，令人心悲。”我现在是登高怀古，不胜憧憬！

Tiantong Temple lies some 50 li away from the city, and a car can reach it in one hour. Nearing the temple, tall pine trees align the road, shading the path from daylight, the sound of the breeze flowing through the branches mirroring a sea tide. Walking through the Triple Gate¹, one notices the lofty majestic halls, their interiors dazzling like gold and jade, the august Seven Holy Treasures, and the perfumed air thick with incense. There are no less than a few hundred rooms of varying sizes in the temple, all arranged neatly and orderly, devoid of any dust. The temple is located on a hillslope, by climbing section upon section, one reaches the summit where the Arhat Hall stands. There, one can gaze over the entire monastery premises. Leaning on the parapet and staring down from above, I imagine the eminent Japanese painter-monk of 500 years past must have dwelled here, but who is to know which rooms he carried about his everyday routines, rising, residing, relaxing, sleeping, and

¹ A Triple Gate, also known as Gate of Three Liberations, is the main gate to a Buddhist Monastery.

painting. So said the ancients: "To scale heights and gaze afar is to have acute foresight, overwhelming them with great sorrow." Yet here I am ascended so high, reminiscing on the past, where I cannot contain my anticipation for the future!

在寺吃素斋后，与同游诸人及僧众闲谈，始知此寺已有千余年历史，其间两次遭大火，一次遭山洪，因此文物损失殆尽，现在已经没有雪舟的纪念物了。但同游诸人都知道雪舟之名，因为一九五六年雪舟逝世四百五十年纪念，上海曾经开过雪舟遗作展览会，我曾经作文在报上介绍。我们就闲谈雪舟的往事。僧众听了，都很高兴，庆幸他们远古时具有这一段美术胜缘。

After we finished the vegetarian meal, I chatted with the fellow travelers and monks, when only then was I made aware of this temple's thousand year long history. Throughout these years, the temple had endured two tremendous fires as well as a flash flood. Consequently, the relics were damaged or destroyed so that practically none remained, and the works and materials left behind by Sesshū may be lost forever. Yet my fellow travelers all knew Sesshū's name, as 1956 marked the 450th anniversary of his departure from this earth. A posthumous exhibition for Sesshū was previously held in Shanghai, where I had composed a piece explaining the matter for the periodical. We engaged in casual conversation on Sesshū's distant life, and the assembly of monks were quite pleased to hear our discourse, rejoicing in having had this artistic karmic connection from ancient times.

我所知道的雪舟是这样：雪舟姓小田，名等杨，是十五世纪日本有名画僧，是日本“宋元水墨画派”的代表作家。日本人所宗奉的中国水墨画家，是宋朝的马远与夏圭。雪舟要探访这画派的发源地，曾随日本的遣唐使来华，其时正是明朝宪宗年间。明朝宫廷办有画院，画家都封官职。

My understanding of Sesshū is as follows: His surname was Oda, and his given name Tōyō. A famed painter of 15th century Japan, he represented the Song-Yuan school of Ink-wash Painting. The Chinese painters most modeled and favored upon by the Japanese were Ma Yuan and Xia Gui of the Song Dynasty. During the Xianzong reign of the Ming Dynasty, Sesshū himself had visited the birthplace of this school of painting, which past emissaries of Japan had voyaged to as well in the days of Tang China. By the Ming, the court of the Emperor was hosting an art academy, where successful artists would be conferred to honored posts in the bureaucracy.

明代名画家戴文进、倪端、李在、王谔等，都是画院里的人。李在是马远、夏圭的嫡派，雪舟一到北京，就拜李在为师，专心学习水墨画。他一方面临摹古画，一方面自己创作。经过若干时之后，他忽然悟到：作画不能专看古人及别人之作，必须师法大自然，从现实中汲取画材。于是离开北京，遍游中国名山大川。

The esteemed painters of the Ming Dynasty were all attendees of the academy, including Dai Wenjin, Ni Duan, Li Zai, and Wang E. Li Zai was apprenticed to Ma Yuan and Xia Gui, and when Sesshū sojourned to Beijing he hailed Li Zai as his master, committing himself to ink-wash painting. At times he would copy the ancient masterworks, at times he would inspire to make his own creations. After a certain period of study, a sudden epiphany fell upon him: One cannot simply focus on the works of masters and established painters, one must take the vast natural world as a teacher, drawing upon reality to garner proficiency. Thereupon he departed the capital, traveling about China's marveled mountains and voluminous waterways.

后来到了浙江宁波，看见这天童寺地势佳胜，风景优美，就在这寺里当了和尚。僧众尊崇他，称他为“天童第一座”。他在天童寺一面礼佛，一面研究绘画，若干时之后，画道大进。明宪宗闻知了，就召他进宫，请他为礼部院作壁画。这壁画画得极好，见

者无不赞叹。于是求雪舟作画的人越来越多，使得他应接不暇。他在中国住了约四年，然后回国。他在这四年间与中国人结了不少翰墨因缘。

When Sessho finally reached Ningbo, Zhejiang, he was so enchanted by the majestic landscape and scenery of Tiantong Temple that he determined himself to monastic life. The monks admired his diligence, praising him as “the paramount of Tiantong”. While he dedicated himself to the Buddha, he concurrently poured his spirit towards painting, and in due course accomplished great progress. When the Xianzong Emperor of the Ming Dynasty came to hear of Sesshū, he summoned the monk to the palace to paint a mural for the Court of Rites. Thus was a mural illustrated in such remarkable standard that whoever set their eyes upon it would, without exception, cry out in admiration and praise. Henceforth Sesshū was increasingly sought after for commissions and paintings, deluged by so many requests he could not keep pace. After residing in China for four years, he returned home. During his extended residence here, he formed a great many connections with fellow scholars through brush and ink.

我又想起了雪舟的两种逸话，乘兴也讲给大家听。

Two more anecdotes regarding Sesshū come to mind, while in high spirits I'll oblige to share with everyone.

有一箇中国人求雪舟一幅画，要求他画日本风景。雪舟就画日本田之浦地方的清见寺的风景，其中有个宝塔，亭亭独立，非常美观。后来雪舟返国，来到田之浦，一看，清见寺旁边并没有宝塔。大约是原来有塔，后来坍倒了。雪舟想起了在中国应嘱所写的那幅画，觉得不符现实，很不称心。他就自己拿出钱来，在清见寺旁边新造一个宝塔，使实景和他的画相符合。于此可见他作画非常注重反映现实。

Once there was a Chinese man who beseeched Sesshū for a painting, fancying the piece to portray the scenery of Japan. Accordingly, Sesshū drew up a magnificent landscape of Seiken-ji² in the Tanoura region, graced by a depiction of the temple's adjacent pagoda, standing grand and tall. Later on Sesshū returned to Japan, eventually making his way back to Tanoura. As he trekked towards Seiken-ji, it became quite apparent that beside the temple stood no such pagoda. It was likely the case that originally there was a pagoda, which only later collapsed away. Sesshū recalled the painting he had commissioned and lamented the inconsistency with reality. Such an error perturbed him greatly, and he became rather agitated and displeased. As such, he laid out some money and had an entirely new pagoda constructed beside the temple, allowing the painting to correspond with the real scene of Seiken-ji. In this way, it is quite evident that Sesshū values his paintings to reflect and capture reality.

雪舟十二三岁就做和尚。但他不喜诵经念佛，专爱描画。他的师父命令他诵经，他等师父去了，便把经书丢开，偷偷地拿出画具来描画。有一次他正在描画，师父忽然来了。师父大怒，拉住他的耳朵，到大殿里，用绳子把他绑在柱子上，不许他行动和吃饭。

Sesshū at the young age of 12 or 13 became a monk. However, he was not fond of sutra recitations and prayers, instead favoring artistic endeavours. If his master commanded him to chant the sutras, he would wait for him to leave, cast aside the scriptures, and covertly take out his art materials and sketch away. Once, as Sesshū was in the midst of painting, the master suddenly walked in on his session. Infuriated, the master dragged Sesshū by his ears to the temple hall, fastened him with rope around the pillar, and forbade him from moving and eating.

² Feng mentions a temple named “清见寺”, which may be rendered as Seiken-ji or Kiyomi-ji. Both are not found in the historical record, however.

雪舟很苦痛，呜咽地哭泣，眼泪滴在面前的地上。滴得多了，形状约略像个动物。雪舟使用脚趾蘸眼泪作画，画一只老鼠。即将画成的时候，师父悄悄地走来了。他站在雪舟背后，看见地上一只老鼠正在咬雪舟的脚趾。仔细一看，原来是画。因为画得很好，师父以为是真的老鼠。这时候师父才认识了他的绘画天才，便释放他，从此任凭他自由学画。这便是这大画家发迹的第一步。

In great pain, whimpering and weeping, tears dripped from his face onto the floor before him. As more tears flowed, the small pool that was forming roughly began to resemble that of some animal. Sesshū nudged his toe forward, dipped it in the tears, and painted up a little mouse. On the verge of finishing this little sketch, the master was quietly walking back. Standing behind Sesshū, the master noticed on the ground a mouse was nibbling away at his young disciple's toe. With a more discerning gaze, he realized the creature was merely a drawing. As it was so skillfully drawn, the master had nearly mistaken it for a real mouse. Only then did he realize the child before him possessed a genius for painting. Setting bound Sesshū free, from then on the master allowed his young disciple to study art freely, regardless of the circumstance. This episode was precisely the moment renowned Sesshū made his first mark on the world.

我们谈了许多旧话之后，就由寺僧引导，攀登寺旁的玲珑岩，欣赏松涛。那里有老松千百株，郁郁苍苍，犹似一片绿海。松风之声，时起时伏，亦与海涛相似。有亭翼然，署曰“听涛”，是我所手书的。寺僧告我，某树是宋代之物，某树是元代之物。我想：某些树一定是曾经见过雪舟，可惜它们不肯说话，不然，关于这位画僧我们可以得知更多的史实。

After we chatted for a while on various tales of past things, the monks led us from the temple to climb Linglong Rock, where we could from atop the cliff admire the sea of swaying pines. There were thousands of ancient pines, lush and dense, as if it were a vast verdant

ocean. The sound of the windswept trees, fluctuating on and off, resembled too the ocean waves. There is a pavilion, with the four corners of its roof upturned and spread like a bird's wingspan. It is inscribed "Tingtao, Hearken the Billows", which I wrote myself. The monks told me, certain trees date to the Song Dynasty, certain trees date to the Yuan. I supposed to myself: Some certain trees in distant times surely encountered our Sesshū. Oh how they are unable to speak, for if they could, may we not know so much more about this painter-monk?

私塾生活

Private School Life

我的学童时代，就是六十年前的时代。那时候，我国还没有学校，儿童上学，进的是私塾。怎么叫做私塾呢？就是一个先生在自己家里开办一个学堂，让亲戚、朋友、邻居家的小孩子来上学。有的只有七八个学生，有的十几个，至多也不过二三十个，不能再多了。因为家里屋子有限，先生只有一人。这位先生大都是想考官还没有考取的人，或者一辈子考不取的老人。那时候要做官，必须去考。小考一年一次，大考三年一次。考不取的，就在家开私塾，教学生。学生每逢过年，送几块银洋给先生，作为学费，称为“修敬”。每逢端午、中秋，也必须送些礼物给先生，例如鱼、肉、粽子、月饼之类。私塾没有星期天，也没有暑假；只有年假，放一个多月。倘先生有事，随时可以放假。

The period of my life spent as a schoolboy was 60 years ago. In those days, there were no schools in our country, so if one wished to attend school, children had to enroll in a private tutorage known as *sisshu*. Why were they called *sisshu*? It was because teachers would set up a school in their own homes, inviting the children of their relatives, friends, and neighbors to come attend. Some of them might have had only seven or eight students, some might have a dozen or so, and the largest wouldn't exceed 20-30, any more would be unfeasible. This was because their homes had limited space, and there was only one teacher. These teachers would for the most part be aspiring examinees that had not yet passed the official exams, or old men who had never passed the exams in their lives. In those days, in order to be employed as a government official, one had to pass the exams. The local exams were held once a year, while the provincial exams were only offered once every three years. For those that were unable to pass, opening a private school and teaching students was the way to go. When it came to the New Year, every student would present a couple foreign silver dollars to the teacher as tuition,

dubbed *xiujing*, “honorarium bacon”. Each year on the Dragon Boat Festival and Mid-Autumn Festival, one also was obligated to present to the teacher some gifts. This would be for example, some fish, meat, zongzi wrapped rice treats, mooncakes, and so on. Private schools had no Sunday breaks nor summer vacations, instead only pausing for the New Year holidays when students were let off for a month. In the case that the teacher had something to take care of, he could at any time simply call the day off.

私塾里不讲时间，因为那时绝大多数人家没有自鸣钟。学生早上入学，中午“放饭学”，下午再入学，傍晚“放夜学”，这些时间都没有一定，全看先生的生活情况。先生起得迟的，学生早上不妨迟到。先生有了事情，晚快就早点“放夜学”。学生早上入学，先生大都尚未起身，学生挟了书包走进学堂，先双手捧了书包向堂前的孔夫子牌位拜三拜，然后坐在规定的坐位里。倘先生已经起来了，坐在学堂里，那么学生拜过孔夫子之后，须得再向先生拜一拜，然后归座。座位并不是课桌，就是先生家里的普通桌子，或者是自己家里搬来的桌子。座位并不排成一列，零零星星地安排，就同普通人家的房间布置一样。课堂里没有黑板，实际上也用不到黑板。因为先生教书是一个一个教的。先生叫声“张三”，张三便拿了书走到先生的书桌旁边，站着听先生教。教毕，先生再叫“李四”，李四便也拿了书走过去受教。……每天每人教多少时光，教多少书，没有一定，全看先生高兴。他高兴时，多教点，不高兴时，少教点。这些先生家里大都是穷的，有的全靠学生年终送的“修敬”过日子。因此做教书先生，人们称为“坐冷板凳”，意思是说这种职业是很清苦的。因此先生家里柴米成问题的时候，先生就不高兴，教书也很懒。

Our schools followed no particular timetables, as back then the majority of households did not own striking clocks. In the mornings students would arrive at school, around noon have “lunch break”, in the afternoon resume classes, and with nightfall be let go. All of these periods had no fixed schedule, it was entirely up to the teacher’s discretion and daily

circumstances. Should the teacher wake up or arrive late, there was no real harm for the students to arrive late too. If the teacher had errands to run, students could be released early for the evening. When students went to class in the morning, the teacher often did not get up yet. When students lugged their backpacks into the classroom, they would first hold their schoolbags with both hands, turn and face the Confucious tablet, bow three times, then sit down in their assigned seats. If the teacher had already gone to the classroom on a given day and seated himself early, then the students would follow their respects to Confucious by bowing to the teacher before returning to their seats. The seats were not necessarily school desks, rather they were ordinary home tables, or perhaps desks brought from the students' homes. These seats were also not set up in any particular row, instead they were arranged in irregular layouts, ordered like any ordinary home. Classrooms had no blackboards, in fact blackboards would not have been needed anyways. Since the teacher taught individually, one by one, if the teacher called on anyone, say, "Zhangsan"³, then Zhangsan would take his book and walk to the side of the teacher's desk, standing attentively in front of the teacher. Upon finishing, the teacher would then call on, say, "Lisi", and so Lisi would then take his book and have his turn in receiving the lesson. On a daily basis, how much time was spent on one student, or how much was taught for that student, was never really defined, it really came down to the teacher's mood and contentment. When he was in a good mood, he'd teach a little more, when he was in a poor mood, he'd teach a little less. These teachers usually came from poorer backgrounds and households, and many would rely entirely on the year end honorarium bacon to get by. As a result, to be a teacher was "left to sit out on a cold bench", meaning the job was fairly unprofitable. The point is that this manner of profession was rather destitute, if honest and straightforward. Consequently, if the teacher found themselves lacking daily essentials such as firewood or rice, well, they'd be in a rather unpleasant mood, and be lacking in their teaching.

³ Names such as "Zhangsan", "Lisi", "Wangwu", are generic filler names for lists, equivalent to the phrase "Tom, Dick, and Harry".

还有，私塾先生大都是吸鸦片的。小朋友们，你们知道什么叫做鸦片？待我告诉你们：鸦片是一种烟，是躺在床上吸的。吸得久了，天天非吸几次不可，不吸就要打呵欠，流鼻涕，头晕眼花，同生病一样。这叫做“鸦片上瘾”。上了瘾的人很苦：又费钱，又费时间，又伤身体。那么你要问：他们为什么要吸呢？只因那时外国帝国主义欺侮我们中国人，贩进这种毒品来教大家吃，好让中国一天一天弱起来。那时中国政府怕外国人，不爱人民，就让大家去吸，便害了許多人。而读书人受害的最多。因为吸了鸦片，精神一时很好，读得进书，但不吸就读不进。因此不少读书人都上了当。

In addition, most private school teachers smoked opium. Young friends, do you know what opium is? Allow me to tell you, opium is like a kind of cigar, which you smoke as you lie on the couch. When you have smoked it for a while, you'll find yourself smoking it several times a day, and if you don't smoke it, you'll yawn, have a runny nose, and become dizzy eyed, as if your body had fallen ill. This is what "opium addiction" is. Those that have become addicted suffer greatly, wasting both money and time, to the great detriment of their health. So you might ask the obvious question: Why would they smoke such a thing? It was only because back then, the foreign imperial powers oppressed and took advantage of us Chinese, dealing these kinds of drugs to get everyone hooked, letting China become weaker and weaker by the day. In those days the Chinese government cowered before the Foreign Powers and did not care for the people, allowing everyone to become addicted, even if it harmed the masses. Moreover the scholars suffered the most. Since smoking opium momentarily boosted one's mental state, and scholars wished to progress their studies, not smoking could mean they would not be able to read. As such a great deal of scholars would in this way fall victim to opium.

私塾没有课程表。但大都有个规定：早上“习字”，上午“背旧书”，下午“上新书”，放夜学之前“对课”。

Private schools had no class schedules. But for the most part we had guidelines: in the early morning we would start with practicing writing characters, during the rest of the morning we would continue with reciting and memorizing the lessons taught previously, in the afternoon we would go over new teachings, and before nightly dismissal we would conclude with question and answer exercises.

私塾里读的书只有一种，是语文。像现在学校里的算术、图画、音乐、体操……那时一概没有。语文之外，只有两种小课，即“习字”和“对课”。而这两种小课都和语文有关的，只算是语文中的一部分。而所谓“语文”，也并不是现在那种教科书，却是一种古代的文言文章，那书名叫做《大学》、《中庸》、《论语》、《孟子》……。这种书都很难读，就是现在的青年人、壮年人，也不容易懂得，何况小朋友。但先生不管小朋友懂不懂，硬要他们读，而且必须读熟，能背。小朋友读的时候很苦，不懂得意思，照先生教的念，好比教不懂外语的人说外语。然而那时的小朋友苦得很，非硬记、硬读、硬背不可。因为背不出先生要用“戒尺”打手心，或者打后脑。戒尺就是一尺长的一条方木棍。

The only kind of books we would read in private schools were about literature and language. The things taught in school these days, arithmetic, art, music, gymnastics, we had nothing of the sort back in those days. Other than literature and language, there were only two other secondary lessons, that is practicing writing characters and answering practice. Since these lessons were related to literature and language anyways, they were really just an extension of the main classes. Moreover, although it's called "literature and language", the materials are not like what is taught in textbooks these days. Instead, we had ancient texts written in classical language. The titles of those books included the *Great Learning*, *Doctrine of the Mean*, *The Analects*, *Mencius*, among others. These kinds of texts were rather difficult to comprehend, neither teenagers nor mature adults could easily understand them, let alone children. But our teacher did not care if we understood the meanings or not, insisting we

study the classics, forcing us to familiarize and memorize them. When we children had to read the texts it was awfully agonizing, we wouldn't understand the meaning, we would just follow the teacher's reading, it was akin to having someone who cannot speak another language recite something foreign. Yet as children back then we had to endure being forced to remember, recite, and memorize the texts, because the teacher used the ferule to strike our hands or our heads whenever we failed. What is a ferule? Why, it was a one-third meter long wooden stick meant to admonish students.

上午, 先生起来了, 捧了水烟管走进学堂里, 学生便一齐大声念书, 比小菜场里还要嘈杂。因为就要“背旧书”了, 大家便临时“抱佛脚”。先生坐下来, 叫声“张三”, 张三就拿了书走到先生书桌面前, 把书放在桌上了, 背转身子, 一摇一摆地背诵昨天、前天和大前天读过的书。倘背错了, 或者背不下去了, 先生就用戒尺在他后脑上打一下, 然后把书丢在地上。这个张三只得摸摸后脑, 拾了书, 回到座位里去再读, 明天再背。于是先生再叫“李四”……一个一个地来背旧书。背旧书时, 多数人挨打, 但是也有背不出而不挨打的, 那是先生自己的儿子或者亲戚。背好旧书, 一个上午差不多了, 就放饭学, 学生大家回家吃饭。

In the morning, our teacher would rouse himself and walk into the classroom clinging his water pipe, whereupon all the students would simultaneously recite the books loudly, surpassing even the clamor of an open market. Since it was now time to memorize the previous readings, everyone would panic and start to prepare at the very last moment, like the undevoted zealously begging before Lord Buddha's feet for help as their last resort. When the teacher sat himself down, calling on someone, say, “Zhangsan”, Zhangsan would take his book and walk upfront to the teacher's desk, placing the book onto the table, turn his back away, and swagger in place as he recited from memory the passages from yesterday, the day before, and the day before that. If he quoted something incorrectly, or was unable to finish, the teacher would smack the ferule against the back of Zhangsan's head and throw the book

off the table onto the ground. Poor Zhangsan had no alternative but to pick up the book as he rubbed his head, returning to his seat to once again read and review, trying again tomorrow. Hence the teacher would then call “Lisi”, then the next student, then the next one, and so forth, one by one to come up and recite the texts from memory. When we recited the old lessons, the majority of students would take a thrashing, though there were a few that could not memorize the classics yet would not be struck. These lucky minorities would be the children or relatives of the teacher. After these recitation sessions concluded it would roughly have reached midday, and we’d be let out for lunch, with students returning home for their meals.

下午，先生倘是吸鸦片的，要三点多钟才进学堂来。“上新书”也是一个一个上的。上的办法：先生教你读两遍或三遍，即先生读一句，你顺一句。教过之后，要你自已当场读一遍给先生听。但那些书是很难读的，难字很多，先生完全不讲解意义，只是教你跟了他“唱”。所以唱过二三遍之后，自己不一定读得出。越是读不出，后脑上挨打越多，后脑上打得越多，越是读不出。先生书桌前的地上，眼泪是经常不干的！因此有的学生，上一天晚上请父亲或哥哥等先把明天的生书教会，免得挨打。

In the afternoons, whenever the teacher was smoking opium, we would not have resumed classes until three or later. Like when taught the previous lessons, the new lessons would also be taught one by one. The way this class was held was that the teacher would teach you to read a section two or three times, namely the teacher read a line and you would need to follow with the proceeding one. After he taught the whole section, the teacher would have you read it all the way through, on the spot. Yet these texts were still considerably difficult, with difficult terms that the teacher would never explain the meanings of, only requiring you to “chant” the passages after him. So despite having chanted a passage two or so times, one still wouldn’t necessarily be able to recite it. The more you left out or got wrong, the greater and heavier the beating, the more your head had been beaten, the more difficult your ability

to read and recite. The floor in front of the teacher's desk was scarcely dry from tears! Because of this, some students would, the night before, trouble their father, brother, or whoever to help them with the next day's lessons, so as to avoid a smacking.

新书上完后，将近放学，先生把早上交来的习字簿用红笔加批，发给学生。批有两种：写得好的，圈一圈；写得不好的，直一直；写错的，打个叉。直的叫作“吃烂木头”，叉的叫作“吃洋钢叉”。有的学生，家长发给零用钱，以习字簿为标准：一圈一个铜钱，一个烂木头抵消一个铜钱，一个洋钢叉抵消两个铜钱。

When the new text sessions were completed, it would be close to dismissal, and the teacher would grade with red ink, returning to the students the writing practice books handed out in the morning. There were a few different types of marks, if written well they were circled, if written poorly they were striked vertically, and if written incorrectly they were crossed. We called the vertical marks “hit by rotten logs”, and the crosses were called “suffer foreign pitchforks”. There were some students who had parents dispense pocket money, according to the criteria of the writing book scores: a copper coin for each circle, a deduction of a coin for each rotten log, and a deduction of two coins for each foreign pitchfork.

发完习字簿，最后一件事是“对课”。先生昨天在你的“课簿”上写两个或三个字，你拿回家去，对他两个或三个字，第二天早上缴在先生桌上。此时先生逐一翻开来看，对得好的，圈一圈；对得不好的，他替你改一改。然后再出一个新课，让你拿回去对好了，明天来缴卷。什么叫对课呢？譬如先生出“红花”两字，你对“绿叶”，先生出“春风”，你对“秋雨”；先生出“明月夜”，你对“艳阳天”……对课要讲词性，要讲平仄。（怎么叫做词性和平仄，说来话多，我暂时不讲了。）这算是私塾里最有兴味的一课。然而对得太坏，也不免挨打手心。对过课之后，先生喊一声：“去！”学生就打好书包，向孔夫子牌位拜三拜，再向先生拜一拜，一缕烟跑出学堂去了。这时候个个学生很开心，一

路上手挽着手，跳跳蹦蹦，乱叫乱嚷，欢天喜地地回家去，犹如牢狱里释放的犯人一般。

After distributing all the writing books, one last task remained which was the “answering exercises”. The teacher write two or three words from the day before in the students’ exercise books. Students had to bring them home, and on the next morning, hand it over to the teacher’s desk. At this time the teacher would one by one open up and inspect the words, circling the well written ones and correcting the poorly written ones. He would then take out a new lesson, having you take the words back for you to come up with their parallels and submit them the next day. Why was it called “answering exercise” then? Well, for example, if the teacher listed as questions the two characters *honghua*, “red flower”, you would pair it with *luye*, “green leaf”, or *chunfeng*, “spring wind”, would be paired with *qiuyu*, “autumn rain”, *mingyueye*, “bright moon night”, would be paired with *yanyangtian*, “blazing sunny day”. Answering exercises should observe the principle of correspondence as regards to their lexical categories and sonorous harmony between flat and oblique tones. (What exactly lexical categories or flat and oblique tones are would take too much explanation, I’ll for the time being hold off on it.) These were considered the most interesting aspects taught at private schools. However, if you paired the phrases improperly, you would still inevitably be struck on the palms by the ferule. After this final exercise, the teacher would shout out “go!”, and the students would pack their school bags, salute their respects to the Confucious memorial tablet, salute their respects to the teacher, and scatter from out the school like a great wisp of smoke. This was the happiest time for each student, merrily clinging to each other’s arms, skipping and hopping, hollering and shouting, returning home in high spirits, as if convicts set free from prison.

今天讲得太多了。下次有机会再和小朋友谈旧话吧。

Well, I've gone on for quite some time today. Whenever the opportunity arises, I'll share more stories of old with you young friends.

元帅菩萨

Marshal Bodhisattva

石门湾南市稍有一座庙，叫做元帅庙。香火很盛。正月初一日烧头香的人，半夜里拿了香烛，站在庙门口等开门。据说烧得到头香，菩萨会保佑的。每年五月十四日，元帅菩萨迎会。排场非常盛大！长长的行列，开头是夜叉队，七八个人脸上涂青色，身穿青衣，手持钢叉，锵锵振响。随后是一盆炭火，由两人扛着，不时地浇上烧酒，发出青色的光，好似鬼火。随后是臂香队和肉身灯队。臂香者，一只锋利的铁钩挂在左臂的皮肉上，底下挂一只二十几斤重的锡香炉，皮肉居然不断。肉身灯者，一个赤膊的人，腰间前后左右插七八根竹子，每根竹子上挂一盏油灯，竹子的一端用钩子钉在人的身体上。据说这样做，是为了“报娘恩”。随后是犯人队。

On the southern tip of Shimenwan town stands a temple known as Yuanshuaimiao, Marshal Temple. The temple is popular with pilgrims, who burn incense extensively. On the first day of the lunar calendar's first month, the people that burned the first incense in the censer would in the middle of the night take joss sticks and candles and stand in front of the temple gate to wait for it to open. It is said that the person who got to burn the incense on the first day would be blessed and protected by the Bodhisattva. Every year on the 14th day of the fifth lunar month, the Marshal Bodhisattva Welcoming Gathering Festival was held. It was very much a majestic spectacle! There were long processions, at the head of the ranks was the yaksha team, with seven or eight people face-painted in blue, garmented in blue clothes, and grasping in their hands pitchforks, the clanking of their steel pitchforks resonating loudly. Soon after came a basin of fiery charcoals carried by two people, who would from time to time pour some distilled liquor over the fire to kindle forth blue flames, appearing like will-o'-the-wisp phantoms. Following that were the Fragrant Arm Team and the Corporeal Bodied Lantern Team. The Fragrant Arm members had a sharp iron hook hanging from their

left arms, below that hung a twenty something *jin*⁴ heavy pewter incense censer, surprisingly their flesh somehow would not be slashed. The Corporeal Bodied Lantern members had one bare-chested individual, who all around his waist was inserted approximately seven or eight bamboo sticks, with each stick suspending a small oil lamp. The end of the bamboo sticks were hooked to cling onto the person's body. It is said that this way of doing things was to "recompense the kindness of their mothers." Next came the Convict Team.

许多人穿着犯人衣服，背上插一白旗，上写“斩犯一名”。再后面是拈香队，许多穿长衫的人士，捧着长香，踱着方步。然后是元帅菩萨的轿子，八人扛着，慢慢地走。

Many members wore prisoner clothes, inserted on each of their backs was a white banner that read "A Prisoner to Be Beheaded." Behind them was the Incense Burning Team, with many people in traditional long gowns, clasping in their hands the long incense, pacing in measured steps. Then there was the palanquin of the Marshal Bodhisattva, carried by eight people, walking slowly.

后面是细乐队，香亭。众人望见菩萨轿子，大家合掌作揖。我五六岁时，看见菩萨，不懂得作揖，却喊道：“元帅菩萨的眼睛会动的！”大人们连忙掩住我的口，教我作揖。第二天，我生病了，眼睛转动。大家说这是昨天喊了那句话的原故。我的母亲连忙到元帅庙里去上香叩头，并且许愿。父亲请医生来看病，医生说我是发惊风。吃了一颗丸药就好了。但店里的人大家说不是丸药之功，是母亲去许愿，菩萨原谅了之故。

Behind was the orchestral band, as well as the incense pavilion. When the whole crowd saw the Bodhisattva palanquin, everyone clasped their palms together and bowed. When I was five or six years old, I saw the Bodhisattva but didn't know about the bowing,

⁴ A unit of Chinese measurement, 1 *jin* is equivalent to half a kilogram.

instead yelling, “The eyes of the Marshal Bodhisattva are moving!” The adults quickly came to cover my mouth, telling me I had to bow. The next day, I fell ill and my eyes spun. Everyone said that this was due to what I had yelled out on the previous day. My mother hurriedly went to the Marshal Temple to light incense and prostrate, moreover praying and making vows. My father requested for a doctor to come and inspect me, and the doctor diagnosed me with infantile convulsion. Taking a small medicine pill was enough to make a recovery. But the people in the shop said that I recovered not because of the medicine, but from my mother going to make the vows that granted the Bodhisattva to pardon me.

后来办了猪头三牲，去请菩萨。

Later a ceremony was held with sacrificial pig, cattle, and sheep, to invite the Bodhisattva.

为此，这元帅庙里香火极盛，每年收入甚丰。庙里有两个庙祝，贪得无厌，想出一个奸计来扩大做生意。某年迎会前一天，照例祭神。庙祝预先买嘱一流氓，教他在祭时大骂“菩萨无灵，泥塑木雕”，同时取食神前的酒肉，然后假装肚痛，伏地求饶。如此，每月来领银洋若干元。流氓同意了，一切照办。岂知酒一下肚，立刻七孔流血，死在神前。原来庙祝已在酒中放入砒霜，有意毒死这流氓来大做广告。远近闻讯，都来看视，大家宣传菩萨的威灵。于是元帅庙的香火大盛，两个庙祝大发其财。后来为了分赃不均，两人争执起来，泄露了这阴谋，被官警捉去法办，两人都杀头。我后来在某笔记小说中看到一个小故事，与此相似。

Because of things like this, the incense in front of Marshal Temple burns vigorously and magnificently, bringing in abundant revenue every year. The temple had two acolytes in charge of the incense who were avaricious and insatiable, and they had come up with a wicked plan to expand their business. One year, on the eve of the Welcoming Gathering, the

customary sacrifices were offered to the gods. The acolytes had beforehand hired a ruffian, instructing him during the sacrifice ceremony to rain curses and shout out, "There's no efficacy to the Bodhisattva, it's nothing but modeled clay and wood carvings!" At the same time, he was to drink and eat the wine and meat displayed as offerings before the gods, feign a stomachache, then fall down on the ground to prostrate and beg for forgiveness. In this way, the ruffian could get a certain amount of silver dollars from the temple every month. The gangster agreed, and followed the instructions exactly. Who could have known that once he drank the wine and it entered his belly, he would suddenly bleed from out his eyes, ears, nose, and mouth, dying before the gods. It turned out that the acolytes had beforehand put arsenic in the wine, deliberately poisoning the ruffian as a way to advertise the temple. People from near and far heard of this news, and all came to see it, with everyone promulgating the supernatural power of the Bodhisattvas. As a result, the incense of the Marshal's Temple was in full bloom, and the two acolytes amassed great fortune. Later on, due to a dispute over the distribution of the ill-gotten riches, the two quarreled, somehow leaking their scheme, and they were arrested by the officials and police who brought them to justice, with both of them being beheaded. I later in an old collection of literary Chinese stories read a story quite similar to this.

有一农民入市归来，在一古墓前石凳上小坐休息。他把手中的两个馒头放在一个石翁仲的头上，以免蚂蚁侵食。临走时，忘记了这两个馒头。附近有两个老婆子，发见了这馒头，便大肆宣传，说石菩萨有灵，头上会生出馒头来。就在当地搭一草棚，摆设神案香烛，叩头礼拜。远近闻讯，都来拜祷。老婆子将香灰当作仙方，卖给病人。偶然病愈了，求仙方的人越来越多，老婆子大发其财。有一流氓看了垂涎，向老婆子敲竹杠。老婆子教他明日当众人来求仙方时，大骂石菩萨无灵，取食酒肉，然后假装肚痛，倒在神前。如此，每月分送银洋若干。流氓照办。岂知酒中有毒，流氓当场死在神前。此讯传出，石菩萨威名大震，仙方生意兴隆，老婆子大发其财。后来为了分赃

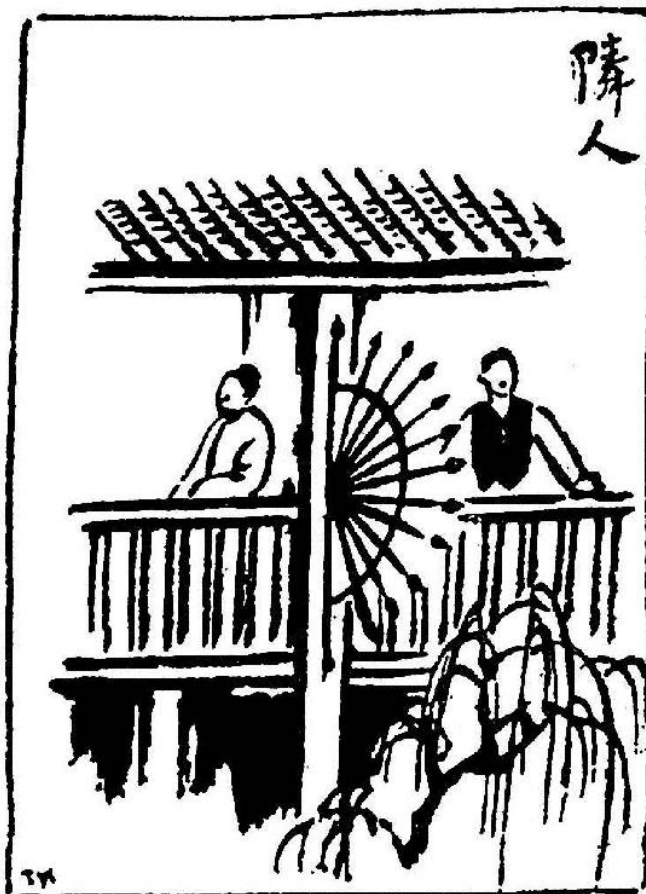
不均, 两个老婆子闹翻了, 泄露阴谋, 被官警捉去正法。元帅庙的事件, 与此事完全相似, 也可谓“智者所见皆同”。

There was a farmer who went through the city to return home, sitting on a stone bench in front of an ancient tomb for a brief rest. He took the two steamed buns from his hand and placed them on one of the heads of the stone figure, so as to prevent ants from crawling onto his food. Upon leaving, he forgot to take the two steamed buns. There happened to be two elderly ladies nearby, and when they saw the steamed buns, they diligently spread the news of their discovery, saying that the stone Bodhisattva figure had shown its power and it would produce steamed buns atop its head. The old ladies erected a thatched hut in the vicinity, arranged and decorated a table for the gods with incense and candles, and prostrated and worshiped there. The news was heard all over, and everyone came to worship and pray. The old ladies took the ash from the incense and proclaimed it as a magic remedy, selling it to sickly people. By chance, some recovered from their illnesses, and more and more people came to seek this potion, and the old ladies accumulated great wealth. There was a ruffian who saw this and drooled after their fortune, so he went to use extortion on the fragile old ladies. They told him that on the next day when everyone came to buy the remedy, he should in front of the crowd decry the stone Bodhisattva figure as spiritless superstition, drink and eat the offerings of wine and meat, then pretend to have a stomachache and collapse before the gods. In this way, every month a certain amount of silver dollars could be distributed for the ruffian. The ruffian followed everything exactly. Who knew there was poison inside the wine, and the ruffian died right there in front of the gods. When this news spread out, the Stone Bodhisattva's prestige and fame was jolted greatly, and the potion business thrived and prospered, yielding the old ladies even greater riches. Later on, due to a dispute over the distribution of the ill-gotten riches, the two quarreled, somehow their scheme was leaked, which led to the officials and police capturing and executing them

in the name of the law. The incident that occurred at Marshal Temple is completely the same as this incident, and it may even be said “the sageous regard everything as one and the same.”

邻人

Neighbors



前年我曾画了这样的一幅画：两间相邻的都市式的住家楼屋，前楼外面是走廊和栏杆。栏杆交界处，装着一把很大的铁条制的扇骨，仿佛一个大车轮，半个埋在两屋交界的墙里，半个露出在檐下。两屋的栏杆内各有一个男子，隔着那铁扇骨一坐一立，各不相干。画题叫做“邻人”。

The year before last, I had sketched a drawing like this: There are two residential townhouses adjacent to each other, and outside the front of the building is a veranda with handrails. Installed at the junction of the railing is a large iron-rodded fan, as if it were a big wheel, with half of it buried inside the partition wall that divides the two houses, half of it protruding out from beneath the eaves. Behind the railing of each of the two houses is a man,

one sitting and one standing, separated by the iron-rodded fan, with both of them having nothing to do with the other. The title of the drawing is “Neighbors”.

这是我从上海回江湾时，在天通庵附近所见的实景。这铁扇骨每根头上尖锐，好像一把枪。这是预防邻人的逾墙而设的。若在邻人面前，可说这是预防窃贼的蔓延而设的。譬如一个窃贼钻进了张家的楼上，界墙外有了这把尖头的铁扇骨，他就无法逾墙到隔壁的李家去行窃。但在五方杂处，良莠不齐的上海地方，它的作用一半原可说是防邻人的。住在上海的人有些儿太古风，“打牌猜拳之声相闻，至老死不相往来。”这样，邻人的身家性行全不知道，这铁扇骨的防备原是必要的了。

This was a real scene I saw when I was returning from Shanghai to Jiangwan, around Tiantong'an. The tips of iron fan's rods were sharpened, almost like a spear. This was set up to prevent the neighbors from crossing beyond the wall. If you were to face these neighbors from the front, it could be said that this was erected to prevent thieves from entering inside. For instance if a thief snuck onto person A's house, because the outside of the wall had the pointed tips of the iron fan, they would be unable to cross over and rob neighboring person B's house. But in Shanghai where various people from all over China live and coexist together, good and bad intermingling here, it may be said that half of its function is to guard against the neighbors. The people who reside in Shanghai somewhat retain ancient customs, “the noise of mahjong and finger-guessing games may be within hearing from one another, yet all their lives they may never cross paths.”⁵ In this way, neighbors are completely unaware of each other's welfare and conduct, so it's necessary to have this iron-rodded fan as a layer of defense.

我经过天通庵的时候，觉得眼前一片形形色色的都市的光景中，这把铁扇骨最为触目惊心。这是人类社会的丑恶的最具体，最明显，最庞大的表象。人类社会的设

⁵ This couplet is a parody/allusion from a section of Tao Yuanming's 桃花源记

备中，像法律，刑罚等，都是为了防范人的罪恶而设的；但那种都不显露形迹。从社会的表面上看，我们只见锦绣河山，衣冠文物之邦，一时不会想到其间包藏着人类的种种丑恶。又如城、郭、门、墙，也是为防盗贼而设的。这虽然是具体而又庞大的东西，但形状还文雅，暗藏。

When I passed through Tiantong'an, I felt that of all the various urban scenes I saw before my eyes, this iron-rodded fan was the most ghastly and shocking sight. This was the most concrete, most obvious, and most enormous representation of the horridness of human society. Among the facilities of human society, such as laws, penalties, and so on, all are for the sake of preventing human crimes and sins; but none of them makes its mark visible. Looking from the surface of society, we only see beautiful rivers and mountains, nations of splendid garments and well-crafted vessels, not for a second giving thought that the myriad repulsiveness of humanity may be hidden within it. Or take the city fortifications, the bulwarks, the gates, the walls, which are also set up to guard against bandits and plunderers. Although they are concrete and enormous things, their forms are still refined and unapparent.

我们看了似觉这是与山岭、树木等同类的东西，不会明显地想见人类中的盗贼。更进一步，例如锁，具体而又明显地表示着人类互相防备的用意，可说是人类的丑恶的证据，羞耻的象征了。但它的形象太小，不容易使人注意；用处太多，混迹在箱笼门窗的装饰纹样中，看惯了一时还不容易使人明显地联想到偷窃。只有那把铁扇骨，又具体，又明显，又庞大地表示着它的用意，赤裸裸地宣示着人类的丑恶与羞耻。所以我每次经过天通庵，这件东西总是强力地牵惹我的注意，使我发生种种的感想。

When we look at them we feel as if they are like mountain ranges, trees, or similar things, without clearly reminding us of bandits and thieves existing within humanity. Another comparison that is closer, locks for example, which are concrete and obvious

indications of mankind's intentions to guard themselves from one another. It may be said they are evidence of humanity's ugliness, a symbol of shame. But its form is too small, not easily attracting people's attention; its usefulness is too great, mixed in the decorative patterns of chests, cages, doors, and windows, being so accustomed to this sight that after a while one that it is not easy for people to clearly associate it with matters of theft and robbery. There is only that iron-rodged fan, which is such a concrete, such an obvious, such an enormous indication of its purpose, nakedly declaring the ugliness and shame of humanity. So every time I pass through Tiantong'an, this thing always strongly pulls and provokes my attention, making me feel all kinds of feelings.

造物主赋人类以最高的智慧，使他们做了万物之灵，而建设这庄严灿烂的世界。在自称文明进步的今日，假如造物主降临世间，一一地检点人类的建设，看到锁和那把铁扇骨而查问它们的用途与来历时，人类的回答将何以为颜？对称的形状，均齐的角度，秀美的曲线，是人类文化最上乘的艺术的样式。把这等样式应用在建筑上，家具上，汽车上，飞机上，原足以夸耀现代人生活的进步；但应用在锁和这铁扇骨上，真有些儿可惜。上海的五金店里，陈列着各式各样的“四不灵”锁。有德国制的，有美国制的；有几块钱一把的，有几十块钱一把的；有方的，有圆的，有作各种玲珑的形状的。工料都很精，形式都很美，好像一种徽章。这确是一种徽章，这是人类的丑恶与羞耻的徽章！人类似嫌这种徽章太小，所以又在屋上装起很大的铁扇骨来，以表扬其羞耻。使人一见就可想起世间有着须用这大铁扇骨来防御的人，以及这种人的产生的原因。

The Creator bestowed unto mankind the highest wisdom, enabling them to act as the most intelligent beings in the whole universe, so that they could build such a majestic and brilliant world. In today's self-proclaimed progress of civilization, if the Creator was to descend to the world, one by one inspecting the constructions of mankind, when He sees the

locks and the iron-rodded fan and inquires about their use and origin, how might humanity give a dignified response? Symmetrical shapes, uniform angles, and graceful curves are the highest artistic styles of human culture. Applying these styles onto buildings, furniture, automobiles, and airplanes is enough to flaunt the progress of modern life; but to apply these styles to locks or this iron-rodded fan, it really somewhat a pity. Within the hardware stores of Shanghai, all manner and sorts of spring locks are displayed. Some are manufactured in Germany, some are manufactured in the United States; some go for only a few dollars, some go for tens of dollars; some are square, some are round, and some are designed in various exquisite shapes. The labor and materials are all refined, and the form is beautiful, as if a kind of badge. Indeed, this is a kind of badge, this is humanity's badge of repulsiveness and shame! People seem to dislike how this badge is too small, so they installed a large iron-rodded fan on the house, in order to make conspicuous their shameful, as soon as they see them, one can ponder how there are people in this world who find it necessary to use this big defensive iron-rodded fan, as well as the reasons for why such people came into being.

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阿难

Anan

往年我妻曾经遭逢小产的苦难。在半夜里，六寸长的小孩辞了母体而默默地出世了。医生把他裹在纱布里，托出来给我看，说着：

In the bygone year, my wife underwent the hardship of a miscarriage. In the middle of the night, a six-inch-long child departed from his mother's body and silently came into this world. The doctor wrapped him in gauze, holding him out for me to see and said:

“很端正的一个男孩！指爪都已完全了，可惜来得早了一点！”我正在惊奇地从医生手里窥看的时候，这块肉忽然动起来，胸部一跳，四肢同时一撑，宛如垂死的青蛙的挣扎。我与医生大家吃惊，屏息守视了良久，这块肉不再跳动，后来渐渐发冷了。

“What a handsome boy! Fingers and toes already formed completely, just a pity he came out a little early!” Just as I was peering in astonishment into the doctor's hand, this lump of flesh all of a sudden began to move, and with a quiver in the chest, the four limbs at the same time unfurled, almost like the struggle of a dying frog. I, like the doctor and everyone else, was in shock and amazement, holding our breaths and observing for some time, when this lump of flesh wriggled no more, and it gradually grew cold.

唉！这不是一块肉，这是一个生灵，一个人。他是我的一个儿子，我要给他起名字：因为在前有阿宝，阿先，阿瞻，又他母亲为他而受难，故名曰“阿难”。阿难的尸体给医生拿去装在防腐剂的玻璃瓶中；阿难的一跳印在我的心头。

Alas! This was not a mere lump of flesh, this was a living creature, a human being. He was one of my sons, and I would like to give him a name: because before him I already had children named Abao, Axian, and Azhan, and then his mother had to suffer for him, I thus

named him “Anan”.⁶ The remains of Anan were given to the doctor to store inside a preservative glass jar; but Anan’s quivering had left a mark on my mind.

阿难！一跳是你的一生！你的一生何其草草？你的寿命何其短促？我与你的父子的情缘何其浅薄呢？

Anan! One quiver was your whole life! How hasty was your whole existence? How fleeting was your whole life-span? How shallow and insubstantial was this fateful love from me as your father?

然而这等都是我的妄念。我比起你来，没有什么大差异。数千万光年中的七尺之躯，与无穷的浩劫中的数十年，叫做“人生”。自有生以来，这“人生”已被反复了数千万遍，都像昙花泡影地倏现倏灭，现在轮到我在反复了。所以我即使活了百岁，在浩劫中，与你的一跳没有什么差异。今我嗟伤你的短命，真是九十九步的笑百步！

Yet all this and more are only my absurd delusions. When I am compared with you, there are no real differences. A seven-foot human body among the endless light years, a span of a few decades within boundless kalpas, this is what is known as “life”. Since life appearance in the universe, this “human life” has been repeated countless times, all abruptly appearing and abruptly disappearing like the udumbara flower and a bubble floating in a stream⁷, and now it is my turn to repeat it. Therefore, even if I were to live a hundred years, among kalpas, my life is no different from your one single quiver. Today I am lamenting your brief fate, oh how indeed the one who retreats 99 steps laughs at the one who retreats 100!⁸

⁶ Note: The “A” (阿) prefix is often used before names or words to denote affection and familiarity. For example, for 阿宝, “Bao” (宝) is the name, and “Abao” (阿宝) would mean “Dear Bao”. “Nan” (难) means suffering, and so Feng chose to combine these two characters and name his son “Anan”, “Dear Nan”, which also alludes to the Chinese transliteration for the Buddhist figure Ananda. Anan or Ananda was the attendant and a primary disciple of the Buddha, and he was well loved for his memory and erudition of the Buddha’s teachings.

⁷ These are two references to Buddhist metaphors. The flower is mentioned in the second chapter of the Lotus Sutra; the bubble is mentioned in the thirty-second chapter of the Diamond Sutra.

⁸ This is a reference to the ancient text《寡人之于国也》from Mencius.

阿难！我不再为你嗟伤，我反要赞美你的一生的天真与明慧。原来这个我，早已不是真的我了。人类所造作的世间的种种现象，迷塞了我的心眼，隐蔽了我的本性，使我对于扰攘奔逐的地球上的生活，渐渐习惯，视为人生的当然而恬不为怪。实则坠地时的我的本性，已经斲丧无余了。《西青散记》里史震林的《自序》中有这样的话：

Anan! I will no longer lament for you, rather I shall eulogize you for your lifetime of innocence and wisdom. As it has turned out with this “self” of mine, for a long time it has not truly been me. Humanity’s artificial creation of the world’s myriad phenomena have blinded and confused my mind’s eye, confounded my inherent nature, it has made me grow gradually accustomed to the turbulence and hurried pursuits of life on this earth, and regard them as the natural course of life without ever finding them strange. In fact, the nature I had when I fell onto earth was already chiseled up without a trace. Within the preface of Shi Zhenlin's *Random Records of West-Green*, there contains these following words:

“余初生时，怖夫天之乍明乍暗，家人曰：昼夜也。怪夫人之乍有乍无，曰：生死也。教余别星，曰：孰箕斗；别禽，曰：孰鸟鹊，识所始也。生以长，乍暗乍明乍有乍无者，渐不为异。间于纷纷混混之时，自提其神于太虚而俯之，觉明暗有无之乍乍者，微可悲也。”

“When I was a toddler, I was frightened by the sudden alternations of light and darkness and was told that it was night and day. I was mystified by the sudden appearance and disappearance of beings and was told that it was birth and death. People told me to distinguish the stars and said, “That one is the Sieve, and that one the Dipper.” I learned to distinguish the birds and was told this one was a raven and that one a magpie. This was how my knowledge began. When I grew older, I gradually lost the wonder at the sudden alternations of light and darkness and appearance and disappearance of beings. Sometimes in

the maze of confusions I let my spirit soar upward towards the vast heavens. Looking down at the sudden changes of light and darkness as well as the birth and death of things, I felt a twinge of sorrow.”⁹

我读到这一段，非常感动，为之掩卷悲伤，仰天太息。以前我常常赞美你的宝姐姐与瞻哥哥，说他们的儿童生活何等的天真，自然，他们的心眼何等的清白，明净，为我所万不敢望。然而他们哪里比得上你？他们的视你，亦犹我的视他们。他们的生活虽说天真，自然，他们的眼虽说清白，明净；然他们终究已经有了这世间的知识，受了这世界的种种诱惑，染了这世间的色彩，一层薄薄的雾障已经笼罩了他们的天真与明净了。你的一生完全不着这世间的尘埃。你是完全的天真，自然，清白，明净的生命。世间的人，本来都有像你那样的天真明净的生命，一入人世，便如入了乱梦，得了狂疾，颠倒迷离，直到困顿疲毙，始仓皇地逃回生命的故乡。这是何等昏昧的痴态！你的一生只有一跳，你在一瞬间干净地了结你在人世间的一生，你坠地立刻解脱。正在中风狂走的我，更何敢企望你的天真与明慧呢？

When I read this section, I was so profoundly touched, closing the book in sorrows¹⁰, I looked upwards towards the sky and let out a great sigh. In the past I would often praise your big sister Bao and big brother Zhan, exclaiming how innocent and natural their childhoods seemed, how pure and radiant their hearts glowed, which I would never have dared for myself. Yet how may they even compare to you? The way they look at you is just as I look at them. Though their lives are innocent and natural, though their eyes pure and radiant; in the end they already bear the knowledge of this world, they have been subject to this world's various temptations and enticements, dyed by this world's tints and colorations, a thin layer of fog that has already shrouded their innocence and radiance. Your life has been wholly untainted by the dust of this world. You had a wholly innocent, natural, pure, and radiant life.

⁹ This is a modified translation of the preface of Shi Zhenlin's *Random Records of West-Green*, the original English translation from the writer Lin Yutang (林語堂)

¹⁰ The original text uses the term “掩卷”，which is an idiom meaning “closing the book and sighing upon reading a touching book”

The people of this world, originally all had like you that manner of innocence and radiance, but once having entered this mortal world were all like having entered some confused dream, where they succumbed to some lunacy, became deranged and lost¹¹, until exhausted and deteriorated, only then in a flurry and panic fled back to life's origin. What kind of muddled foolishness this is! Though your life only had one quiver, you in one second aptly concluded your existence on this earth, as soon as you dropped down you then forthwith became free. How can I, who currently am walking wildly in a daze, dare to hope to reach your innocence and wisdom?

我以前看了你的宝姐姐瞻哥哥的天真烂漫的儿童生活，惋惜他们的黄金时代的将逝，常常作这样的异想：“小孩子长到十岁左右无病地自己死去，岂不完成了极有意义与价值的一生呢？”但现在想想，所谓“儿童的天国”，“儿童的乐园”，其实贫乏而低小得很，只值得颠倒困疲的浮世苦者的艳羨而已，又何足挂齿？像你的以一跳了生死，绝不撻浮生之苦，不更好吗？在浩劫中，人生原只是一跳。我在你的一跳中，瞥见一切的人生了。

I used to look at your sister Bao and your brother Zhan's innocent, unaffected, and beaming childhood lives, pitying that their golden age was about to end, and often had these thoughts: "If children can grow to ten or so years of age and without illness die a natural death, wouldn't they have completed a life of utmost meaning and value?" But now that I ponder it, the so-called "children's heaven" and "children's paradise" are actually quite destitute and meagre, only worthy of envy from the confused and stranded sufferers who float in the world, and not worthy of mention. To be like you who ends life and death with a quiver, never partaking in the sufferings resulting from floating in the world, is this not so much better? In the midst of the vast kalpas, life is just one quiver. In your quiver, I gained a glimpse at the entirety of life.

¹¹ This is a quote from the Heart Sutra.

然而这仍是我的妄念。宇宙间人的生灭，犹如大海中的波涛的起伏。大波小波，无非海的变幻，无不归元于海，世间一切现象，皆是宇宙的大生命的显示。阿难！我的情缘并不淡薄，你就是我，我就是你；无所谓你我了！

However, this remains only as my absurd delusions. The birth and death of people in the universe are like the ebb and flow of great waves in a vast ocean. Great waves or small waves are nothing but fluctuations of the sea, none of them do not return to the deep, the entirety of phenomena of the world are all demonstrations of the great life of the universe. Anan! The fateful love between you and me is not at all frail, you are simply me, I am simply you; there is no such thing as you and me!

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西湖春游

A Spring Excursion To West Lake



我住在上海，离开杭州西湖很近，火车五六小时可到，每天火车有好几班。因此，我每年有游西湖的机会，而时间大都是春天。因为春天是西湖最美丽的季节。我很小的时候在家乡从乳母口中听到西湖的赞美歌：“西湖景致六条桥，间株杨柳间株桃。……”就觉得神往。长大后曾经在西湖旁边求学，在西湖上作客，经过数十寒暑，觉得西湖上的春天真正可爱，无怪远离西湖的穷乡僻壤的人都会唱西湖的赞美歌了。

I live in Shanghai, which is very close to West Lake in Hangzhou. It may be reached by train in five or six hours, as several trains travel daily between the two places. Therefore, I have the opportunity to visit West Lake every year, which would often occur in the springtime. This is because spring is the most beautiful season of West Lake. When I was a very young boy back in my hometown, I heard coming from my wet nurse's lips a song sung in praise of West Lake: "West Lake's scenery of six bridges, between some planted trees of

willows, between some planted trees of peaches....." and so I longed for it in my fantasies. Later when I grew up, I used to study beside West Lake, or sojourn and reside in the area, and after the passing of dozens of winters and summers, I felt that spring on the West Lake was genuinely lovely, it was no wonder that people even from remote and desolate places afar will sing praises of admiration for West Lake.

然而西湖的最美丽的姿态，直到解放之后方才充分地表现出来。解放后每年春天到西湖，觉得它一年美丽一年，一年漂亮一年，一年可爱一年。到了解放第九年的春天，就是现在，它一定长得十分美丽，十分漂亮，十分可爱。可惜我刚从病院出来，不能随众人到西湖去游春；但在这里和读者作笔谈，亦是“画饼充饥”，聊胜于无。

However, the most beautiful features of West Lake were not until after liberation fully shown. When I went to West Lake every spring after liberation, I felt that it became more beautiful, more charming, and more lovely every year. In the spring of the ninth year of liberation, which is now, it must have grown tenfold in beauty, charm, and loveliness. What a pity that I was only just discharged from the hospital, so I am unable to follow everyone to take a spring tour of West Lake; but here I am chatting with you readers in correspondence, feeding off illusions as if looking at pictures of pastries to stave off one's hunger, suppose it is better than nothing.

西湖的最美丽的姿态，为什么直到解放后才充分表现出来呢？这是因为旧时代的西湖，只能看表面（山水风景），不能想内容（人事社会）。换言之，旧时代西湖的美只是形式美丽，而内容是丑恶不堪设想的。

Why did the most beautiful features of West Lake get revealed only after liberation, only then could it be fully expressed? This is because the West Lake of former days could only

be seen superficially (landscapes and scenery), but could not inspire thought for its content (human affairs and society). In other words, the beauty of West Lake in the old era was only beautiful in outward form, while its inner contents were repulsive and too unbearable to contemplate.

譬如说，你悠闲地坐在西湖船里，远望湖边楼台亭阁，或者精巧玲珑，或者金碧辉煌，掩映出没于杨柳桃花之中，青山绿水之间。这光景多么美丽，真好比“海上仙山”！然而你只能用眼睛来看，却切不可用嘴巴来问，或者用头脑来想。你倘使问船老大“这是什么建筑？”“这是谁的别庄？”因而想起了它们的主人，那么你一定大感不快，你一定会叹气或愤怒，你眼前的“美”不但完全消失，竟变成了“丑”！因为这些楼台亭阁的所有者，不是军阀，就是财阀；建造这些楼台亭阁的钱，不是贪污来的，便是敲诈来的，剥削来的！于是你坐在船里远远地望去，就会隐约地看见这些楼台亭阁上都有血迹！隐约地听见这些楼台亭阁上都有被压迫者的呻吟声——这真是大杀风景！这样的西湖有什么美？这样的西湖不值得游！西湖游春，谁能仅用眼睛看看而完全不想呢？

For example, you may be leisurely sitting in a boat in West Lake, gazing afar at the lakeside terraces and pavilions, some are delicately elaborate and exquisite, some are brilliantly gold and jade, at times hidden at times visible in the midst of willow trees and peach blossoms, among the pleasant green hills and clear water. How beautiful this scene, it would be just like the "mountain of immortals over the ocean"! However, you could only use your eyes to come view this, while you should never use your mouth to make inquiries or your mind to ponder thoughts. Suppose you were to ask the boatman, "What is this building?" "Whose villa is this?" This would therefore remind you of their owners and proprietors, then you must certainly be in low spirits, you will certainly sigh or grow angry. Before your eyes the "beauty" not only has completely disappeared, indeed it has turned into "ugliness"! Because

the owners of these buildings and pavilions were either warlords or oligarchs or tycoons; the money to construct these buildings and pavilions came from, if not through embezzlement, precisely through extortion, exploitation! So as you sit on the boat and gaze far away, you will see residues of bloodstains on all these pavilions and terraces, you can hear the faint sounds of moans of the oppressed from these buildings and towers - how this truly blots the landscape and dampens the spirits! A West Lake like this has what manner of beauty? Such a West Lake is unworthy of touring! A spring excursion to West Lake, who can look with merely their eyes and not think about this at all?

旧时代的好人真可怜！他们为了要欣赏西湖的美，只得勉强屏除一切思想，而仅看西湖的表面，仿佛麻醉了自己，聊以满足自己的美欲。记得古人有诗句云：“小亭闲可坐，不必问谁家。”我初读这诗句时，认为这位诗人过于浪漫疏狂。后来仔细想想，觉得他也许怀着一片苦心：如果问起这小亭是谁家的，说不定这主人是个坏蛋，因而引起诗人的恶感，不屑坐他的亭子。旧时代的人欣赏西湖，就用这诗人的办法，不问谁家，但享美景。我小时候的音乐老师李叔同先生曾经为西湖作一首歌曲。且不说音乐，光就歌词而论，描写得真是美丽动人！让我抄录些在这里：

The good people in the old days were so pitiful! In order to appreciate the beauty of the West Lake, they were obliged to, with difficulty and reluctance, screen all thoughts, only looking at the surface of West Lake, as if they had anesthetized themselves for the sake of satisfying their desire for beauty. I remember an ancient poem: "A small pavilion can sit idly, no need to ask whose home it is."¹² When I first read this verse, I thought this poet was too romantic and unrestrained. Later upon careful reflection, I felt he may have harbored a bitter heart: if one asks whose home this pavilion was a part of, the case could be that the owner is some scoundrel, thus causing the poet's malice and disdain to sit in his pavilion. In days past

¹² The poem refers to Ming philosopher and politician Wang Yangming's (王阳明) fourth piece in《山中示诸生五首》

when people were to appreciate West Lake, they would use this poet's method, not ask whose home it was, only enjoying the beauty and scenery. My childhood music teacher, Mr. Li Shutong, once composed a song for West Lake. Leaving aside the music to discuss only the lyrics, the description is truly beautiful and moving! Let me transcribe some of it here:

看明湖一碧，六桥锁烟水。

Regard the bright jade-like lake, six bridges locking mist and water.

塔影参差，有画船自来去。

Traces of pagodas jagged, decorated cruises freely coming and going.

垂杨柳两行，绿染长堤。

Two lines of weeping willows dyed the long embankments green.

飏晴风，又笛韵悠扬起。

Gales scattered in clear skies, a pleasant flute melody rises.

看青山四围，高峰南北齐。

Regard all around the green hills, lofty summits from north to south matched in height.

山色自空濛，有竹木媚幽姿。

Mountains colored by vast brume, bamboo trees charming with serene beauty.

探古洞烟霞，翠扑须眉。

Scour haze-covered ancient caves, beryl dabbed beards and brows.

霁暮雨，又钟声林外起。

A sunset rush of rain, a bell ring rises from out the forest.

大好湖山如此，独擅天然美。

Great lakes and mountains such as these, alone command natural beauty.

明湖碧，又青山绿作堆。

Bright jade-like lake, greeneries on verdant hills amass.

漾晴光潋潋，带雨色幽奇。¹³

Sunlights waver in ripples, wonderous the colors [of the greeneries] darkened with rain.

靓妆比西子，尽浓淡总相宜。

The beauty here likened to maquillage of Xishi¹⁴, always proper regardless its shade.

这歌曲全部，刊载在最近出版的《李叔同歌曲集》中。我小时候求学于杭州西湖边的师范学校时，曾经在李先生亲自指挥之下唱这歌曲的高音部（这歌曲是四部合唱）。当时我年幼无知，只觉得这歌词描写西湖景致，曲尽其美，唱起来比看图画更美，比实地游玩更美。现在重唱一遍，回味一下，才感到前人的片苦心：李先生在这长长的歌曲中，几乎全部是描写风景，绝不提及人事。因为那时候西湖上盘踞着许多贪官污吏，市侩流氓；风景最好的地位都被这些人的私人公馆、别庄所占据。所以倘使提及人事，这西湖的美景势必完全消失，而变成种种丑恶的印象。所以李先生作这歌词的时候，掩住了耳朵，停止了思索，而单用眼睛来观看，仅仅描写眼睛所看见的部分。这样，六桥烟水、塔影垂杨、竹木幽姿、古洞烟霞、晴光雨色，就形成一种美丽的姿态，好比靓妆的西施活美人了。这仿佛是自己麻醉，自己欺骗。采用这种办法，虽然是李先生的一片苦心，但在今天看来，实在是不足为训的！

¹³ This alludes to a passage from the famous Song Dynasty poet Su Shi, “水光潋潋晴方好，山色空蒙雨亦奇”

¹⁴ One of the renowned Four Beauties of ancient China

This song is published in its entirety in the recently published "Collection of Songs by Li Shutong". In my youth when I was studying at the normal school by West Lake in Hangzhou, I used to sing the soprano part of this song under the personal conduction of Mr. Li (the song has a four-part chorus). At that time I was young and ignorant, I was only able to feel that the lyrics of this song expressed the beauty of West Lake, that singing it was more beautiful than looking at the paintings, and that it was more beautiful than going sightseeing in person. Now when I sing it again, pondering back on it, I feel the deliberate intention of the elders: Mr. Li, in this long song, was almost completely devoted to descriptions of the scenery, in no way mentioning human affairs. This is because at that time, West Lake was seized by many corrupt and abusive officials, unscrupulous profiteers, and hoodlums and gangsters; the best areas of the landscape were all occupied by these people's private mansions and manor houses. Therefore, had he mentioned the people, the beauty of West Lake would have undoubtedly disappeared completely, it would have turned into all kinds of abhorrent impressions. Therefore, when Mr. Li wrote the lyrics, he covered up his ears, ceased any critical thinking, and used solely his eyes to behold, describing merely the parts he saw with his eyes. In this way, the mist and water of the six bridges, the shadows of the pagodas and the dangling of the weeping willows, the serene beauty of the bamboo and woods, the haze of the ancient caves, the clear light and vibrant rain, will all coalesce into a beautiful shape, like the living beauty of Xishi graced in elaborate maquillage. It is as if he had anesthetized himself, deceived himself. To adopt this approach, though a part of Mr. Li's deliberate intentions, in today's views however, it is indeed not an example to be followed!

然而李先生在这歌曲中，不能说绝不提及人事。其中有两处不免与人事有关：即“有画船自来去”，“笛韵悠扬起”。坐在这画船里面的是何等样人？吹出这悠扬的笛声的是何等样人？这不可穷究了。李先生只能主观地假定坐在画船里的是一群同他一样风流潇洒的艺术家，吹笛的是同他一样知音善感的音乐家；或者坐在画船里的是是一群天真烂漫的游客，吹笛的是一位冰清玉洁的美人。这样，才可以符合主观的意旨

，才可以增加西湖的美丽。然而说起画船和笛，在我回忆中的印象很不好。记得有一次我和几个朋友买舟游湖。天朗气清，山明水秀，心情十分舒适。忽然邻近的一只船上吹起笛来，声音悠扬悦耳，使得我们满船的人都停止了说话而倾听笛韵。后来这只船载着笛声远去，消失在烟波云水之间了。我们都不胜惋惜。船老大告诉我们：这船里载着的是上海来的某阔少和本地的某闻人，他们都会弄丝弦，都会唱戏，他们天天在湖上游玩……原来这些阔少和闻人，都是我们所“久闻大名”的。我听到这些人的“大名”，觉得眼前这“独擅天然美”的“大好湖山”忽然减色；而那笛声忽然难听起来，丑恶起来，终于变成了恶魔的呼啸声。这笛声褻渎了这“大好湖山”，污辱了我的耳朵！我用手撩起些西湖水来洗一洗我的耳朵。——这是我回忆旧时代西湖上的“画船”和“笛韵”时所得的印象。

However, within this song it cannot be said that Mr. Li never mentions human affairs. Among these lines two of them inevitably concern humans: that is "decorated cruises freely coming and going" and "a pleasant flute melody rises." What kind of people are sitting in this fanciful boat? What kind of person is blowing out this melodious flute tune? This cannot be thoroughly investigated. Mr. Li could only subjectively assume that those who sat in the boat were a group of artists as distinguished and romantic as he was, whoever played the flute was like him a sensitive musician and a connoisseur; or perhaps those who sat in the boat were a group of innocent and carefree tourists, the person who played the flute was a beauty clear as ice and pure as jade. In this way, only then is it able to accord with the sightseer's subjective intentions, only then can it increase the beauty of West Lake. However, with regard to decorated barges and flutes, from my memories I have rather poor impressions. I remember once I and a few friends rented a boat to tour the lake. The sky was clear and air crisp, the mountains verdant and waters pellucid, our moods altogether mellow and pleasant. All of a sudden the playing of a flute emerged from a boat in our vicinity, the sound mellifluous and sweet, causing our boatful of voyagers to cease conversation and listen attentively to the

melodies of the flute. Then, carrying away the tunes the boat floated far away from us, fading into the mist covered waves between fog and water. We all couldn't help but feel a great pity. The ferryman told us: the boats carry some posh young men from Shanghai and local big names, they can all play stringed instruments, sing operas, they visit the lake daily for recreation and leisure..... as it turned out these pampered boys and local celebrities, are for us all "big names known for some time". Hearing about these individuals and their "big names", I felt that the "unique natural beauty" of the "great lakes and mountains" in front of me all of a sudden faded and was debased; and that the sound of the flute suddenly grew to be unpleasant and ugly, finally transforming into the squall of a devil's wail. The sound of the flute desecrated the "great lakes and mountains", it insulted my ears! I reached my hand down to cup up some water from the lake to rinse out my ears. --These are the impressions I acquired when I recall the "decorated cruises" and "flute melodies" on the West Lake of old days.

我疏忽了，李先生的西湖歌中涉及人事的，不止上述两处，还有一处呢，即“又钟声林外起”。打钟的是谁？在李先生的主观中大约是一位大慈大悲、大智大慧的高僧，或者面壁十年的苦行头陀，或者三戒具足的比丘。然而事实上恐怕不见得如此。在那时候，上述的那些高僧、头陀和比丘极少住在西湖上的寺院里。撞钟的可能是以做和尚为业的和尚，或者是公然不守清规的和尚。

I neglected to mention, the human affairs Mr. Li's song involves are not limited to these two mentioned above, there is one more passage, that is "a bell ring rises from out the forest." Who is the bell-ringer? In Mr. Li's subjective view, it is probably a monk of great compassion and mercy, great wisdom and sagacity, or an ascetic itinerant who has been facing the wall for ten years¹⁵, or perhaps a bhikkhu who has undertaken the full renunciation

¹⁵ A reference to Zen Buddhist patriarch Bodhidharma (菩提達摩) and his practice of contemplating and starting at cave walls.

precepts. However, I am afraid that in actuality this is not likely to be the case. At that time, those aforementioned esteemed monks, itinerants, and bhikkhus rarely lived in the monastery by West Lake. Those who rang the bell would thus likely be monks who made a career of being monks, or perhaps monks who openly failed to honestly observe the rules.

李先生作那首西湖歌时，这些人事社会的内情是不想的，是不敢想的。因为一想就破坏西湖风景的美，一想就杀风景。李先生只得屏绝了思索和分辨，而仅用眼睛来看；不谈西湖的内容情状，而仅仅赞美西湖的表面形式。我同情李先生的苦心。我想，如果李先生迟生三十年，能够躬逢解放后的新时代，能够看到人民的西湖，那么他所作的西湖歌一定还要动人得多！

When Mr. Li composed that song on West Lake, these inside stories on human and social matters were not pondered over, he dared not to have thought of them. Because as soon as he thought about it, the beauty of West Lake's scenery would be destroyed, it would kill the scenery. Mr. Li had no alternative but to stop pondering and discerning, instead only using his eyes to see; making no mention of the content and circumstances of West Lake, rather merely praising the surface form of West Lake. I sympathize with the deliberate intentions of Mr. Li. I wonder, had Mr. Li delayed his birth by thirty years, he would have personally met the new era following liberation, he would have been able to see the people's West Lake, if that had been the case then his song on West Lake would have been even more touching!

在这里我不免要讲几句题外的话：我记得资本主义社会的美学中，有一个术语叫做“绝缘”，英文是isolation。所谓绝缘，就是说看到一个物象的时候，断绝了这物象对外界（人事社会）的一切关系，而孤零零地欣赏这物象本身的姿态（形状色彩）。他们认为“美感”是由于“绝缘”而发生的。他们认为：看见一个物象时，倘使想起这物象的内

容意义，想起这物象对人类社会的关系、作用和意义，就看不清楚物象本身的姿态，就看不到物象的“美”。必须完全不想物象对人类社会的关系、作用和意义，而仅用视觉来欣赏它的形状和色彩，这才能够从物象获得“美感”。——这种美学学说的由来，现在我明白了：只因为在旧社会中，追究起事物的内容意义来，大都是卑鄙龌龊、不堪闻问的，因此有些御用的学者就造出这种学说来，教人屏绝思索，不论好坏，不分皂白，一味欣赏事物的外表，聊以满足美欲，这实在是可笑、可怜的美学！

It is here that I cannot avoid discussing a few off topic matters: I remember that in the aesthetics of capitalist societies, there is a term called "绝缘 juéyuán", the English is "isolation". What is called isolation is that when one sees an object, one cuts all relations of the object from the outside world (people and society), so as to appreciate the object's appearance (form and coloring) by itself in isolation. They believe that the "sense of beauty" occurs thanks to "isolation". According to them: in seeing an object, if one calls to mind the substance and meaning of the object, thinking about the relation to human affairs and society, function and significance, one cannot see clearly the appearance of the object itself, so one cannot see the "beauty" of the object. It is necessary to completely ignore the object's relation, function, and meaning to human society, rather only using sight to appreciate its form and coloration, only in this way can one acquire the "sense of beauty" from the object. --The origin of this sort of aesthetic doctrine, now it becomes clear to me: only because within the old society, when looking into the substance and meaning of an object, it was usually the case that they were sordid and contemptible, base and vile, unbearable to know or inquire about, and so as a result some toadying scholars fabricated this type of doctrine, teaching people to rid aside critical thinking, to not investigate if it is good or bad, to not distinguish right from wrong, black from white, to blindly admire the outward appearance of things, so as to satisfy the lust for beauty. This is truly a ridiculous and pathetic aesthetic!

闲话少说，言归本题。旧时代的西湖春游，还有一种更切身的苦痛呢。上述那种苦痛还可以用主观强调、自己麻醉等方法来暂时避免，而另有一种苦痛则直接袭击过来，使你身心不安，伤情扫兴，游兴大打折扣。这便是西湖上的社会秩序的混乱。游西湖的主要交通工具是游船，即杭州人所谓“划子”。这种划子一向入诗、入词、入画，真是风雅不过的东西；从红尘万丈的都市里来的人，坐在这种划子里荡漾湖中，真有“春水船如天上坐”的胜概。于是划划子的人就奇货可居，即杭州人所谓“刨黄瓜儿”。你要坐划子游西湖，先得鼓起勇气来，同划划子的人作一场斗争，然后怀着余怒坐到划子里去“欣赏”西湖景致。划划子的人本来都是清白的劳动者，但因受当时环境的压迫和恶劣作风的影响，一时不得不如此以求生存了。上船之后，照例是在各名胜古迹地点停船：平湖秋月、中山公园、西泠印社、岳坟、三潭印月、雷峰夕照、刘庄、汪庄……这些名胜古迹的确是环肥燕瘦，各有其美，然而往往不能畅游，不能放心地欣赏。因为这些地方的管理者都特别“客气”，一看到游客，立刻端出茶盘来；倘使看到派头阔绰的游客，就端出果盒来。这种“盛情”，最初领受一二，也还可以；然而再而三，三而四，甚至而五、而六、而七……游客便受宠若惊，看见茶盘连忙逃走，不管后面传来奚落的、讥讽的叫声。若是陪着老年人游玩，处处要坐下来休息，而且逃不快，那就是他们所最欢迎的游客了，便是最倒霉的游客了。

This gossip and chatter aside, let us return the discussion back to the subject at hand. In the spring outings to West Lake of periods past, there was still more of a kind of acute pain. The kind of pain mentioned before can still be avoided by means of subjective concentration or self-anesthesia, yet there is another kind of pain that directly attacks you, causing physical and mental unease, injury, and disappointment, and the pleasure of the trip is greatly reduced than originally anticipated. This was the chaos of the social order of West Lake. The principal means of transportation for touring West Lake is the cruise boat, which Hangzhou locals call “划子 huázi” or “paddle boat”. This kind of paddle boat has always been a part of lyrics, poetry, and painting, indeed it cannot be a more cultured and sophisticated thing; from the

bottomless world of mortals comes cityfolk, sitting in this kind of paddle boat on the rippling lake, it has a genuine enchanting view of "spring waters – the boat seems to sit aloft the sky"¹⁶. Thus the people rowing the paddle boat will hoard rare commodities for profiteering, which Hangzhou folk call “刨黄瓜儿 Páo huángguā er”, “peeled cucumber.” Should you wish to take the paddle boat to tour West Lake, first you must summon your courage to do battle with the paddlers of the paddle boats, and then with your remaining anger sit in the paddle to "enjoy" the scenery of West Lake. The paddlers were originally all decent and honest workers, but because at that time they fell under the influence of the oppressive environment and vile practices, they for some time had no choice but to be like this in order to make do and survive. After boarding the boat, the boat will usually make a stop at each historical and scenic spot: Autumn Moon Over the Calm Lake¹⁷, Sun Yat-sen Memorial Park, Xiling Seal Engraving Society, Yue Fei Mausoleum, Three Pools Mirroring the Moon islet, Leifeng Pagoda, Liu Villa, Wang Villa¹⁸..... these places of interest are indeed, like the plumpness of Yang Guifei or the slenderness of Zhao Feiyan, varied in beauty, each with its own allure, yet often one may not freely tour about, may not leisurely admire them. It is because the managers of these places are particularly "courteous", as soon as they see the tourists, they will immediately bring out trays of tea; if they see ostentatious and profligating guests, they will bring out cases of fruits. This "hospitality", the initial acceptance of one or two, is still acceptable; however, upon the third, the third becoming the fourth, the fourth becoming the fifth, the sixth, the seventh the tourists will be overwhelmed by flattery, catching sight of the tea tray they will at once flee away, regardless of the taunting and ridicule heard from behind. If one accompanied an elder when sightseeing, everywhere one has to sit down to rest, and as they cannot dash away quickly, they are the most welcomed guests, precisely in the same way they are the most unlucky guests.

¹⁶ This is a line from Tang Dynasty poet Du Fu's 《小寒食舟中作》 *Written from a Boat during Lesser Cold Food Festival*.

¹⁷ Refers to a popular song composed by Lü Wencheng in the 1930's song

¹⁸ Liu and Wang Villas were important revolutionary retreats frequented by Mao Zedong during his visits to Hangzhou.

游西湖要会斗争，会逃走——这是我数十年来的“宝贵”经验。直到最近几年，解放后几年，这“宝贵”经验忽然失却了效用。解放后有一年我到杭州，突然觉得西湖有些异样：湖滨栏杆旁边那些馋涎欲滴的划子手忽然不见了，讨价还价的斗争也没有了，只看见秩序井然的买票处和和颜悦色的舟子。名胜古迹中逐客的茶盘也不见了，到处明山秀水，任你逍遥盘桓。这一次我才十足地享受了西湖春游的快美之感！

To tour West Lake one must be able to do battle, to flee - this is my decades of "valuable" experience. Until these recent years, a few years after liberation, this "valuable" experience suddenly lost its usefulness. One year after the liberation I had gone to Hangzhou, where I unexpectedly felt that there was something peculiar, different about West Lake: By the lake front beside the banisters those greedy and drooling with desire rowers of the paddler boats suddenly were nowhere to be found, the fights over haggling and bargaining were also gone, only the orderly ticket offices and the amicably mannered boats were seen. The tea plates that chased after visitors by the historical and scenic areas were also gone, everywhere there are bright mountains and elegant waters, allowing you to freely and leisurely linger awhile. It was only this visit that I then fully indulged in the joy and beauty of a spring excursion to West Lake!

“西子蒙不洁，则人皆掩鼻而过之。”解放前数十年间，我每逢游湖，就想起这两句话。路过湖滨的船埠头时，那种乌烟瘴气竟可使人“掩鼻”。解放之后，这西子“斋戒沐浴”过了。“大好湖山如此”，不但“独擅天然美”，又独擅“人事美”，真可谓尽善尽美了！写到这里，我的心已经飞驰到六桥三竺之间，神游于山明水秀、桃红柳绿之乡，不能再写下去了。

"If the beauty Xishi is soiled, then people all cover their noses and pass by."¹⁹ During the decades before liberation, whenever I swim in the lake, these two lines would come to my mind. Passing the end of the wharf by the lakefront, the foul atmosphere indeed can cause people to "cover their noses". After liberation, this beauty "cleansed itself for the fast"²⁰. "Great lakes and mountains such as these", not only "alone command natural beauty", but also alone command "human beauty", it really can be described as perfect, as sublime as it gets! Having written to here, my heart has already rushed to the Six Bridges between the Three Zhu²¹, my soul has gone on a journey to verdure hills and crystal waters, the country of roseate peaches and viridescent willows, I am unable to write any further.

一九五八年春日作

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¹⁹ This is a quote from Mencius in 离娄下, the second collections of Li Lou.

²⁰ 斋戒沐浴 is a line by Mencius that directly follows the initial quote. It refers to the ceremonial bathing one performs before offering sacrifices as a sign of reverence.

²¹ 三竺 sān zhú or Three Zhu refers to the three monasteries on Mount Tianzhu, located near Hangzhou. The term appears to have literary origins from Song poet Lin Jingxi's poem:《西湖》诗:“断猿三竺晓,残柳六桥春。” Qing poet Zhao Yi also references the term in《西湖咏古》诗之四:“三竺峰峦非艮岳,两堤灯火似樊楼。”

春

Spring

春是多么可爱的一个名词！自古以来的人都赞美它，希望它长在人间。诗人，特别是词客，对春爱慕尤深。试翻词选，差不多每一页上都可以找到一个春字。后人听惯了这种话，自然地随喜附和，即使实际上没有理解春的可爱的人，一说起春也会觉得欢喜。这一半是春这个字的音容所暗示的。“春！”你听，这个音读起来何等铿锵而惺忪可爱！这个字的形状何等齐整妥帖而具足对称的美！这么美的名字所隶属的时节，想起来一定很可爱。好比听见名叫“丽华”的女子，想来一定是个美人。

How lovely the term Spring is! Since ancient times people have admired it, wished for it to always be in the world. Poets, especially lyricists, are especially fond of spring. If you flip through the selection of poems, you may on almost every page find a word for spring. Later generations, having become accustomed to hearing such words, naturally echoed them with joy, even if in reality they did not actually understand the loveliness of spring, those people

would feel joyous upon regarding it. This is half of what is suggested by the sound and appearance of the word spring. "Spring!" Listen, how sonorous and tranquil this lovely sound is pronounced! How properly neat and amply symmetrical the shape of this beautiful character is! The season such a lovely word must belong to, thinking about it it must be enchanting. It is like hearing a woman named "Lihua"²², meaning Splendid Flower, it must be assumed she is a beauty.

然而实际上春不是那么可喜的一个时节。我积三十六年之经验，深知暮春以前的春天，生活上是很不愉快的。

In reality however, spring is not such a pleasant time of year. I have amassed 36 years of experience, knowing deeply well that the time before late spring is not a delightful time to live.

梅花带雪开了，说道是漏泄春的消息。但这完全是精神上的春，实际上雨雪霏霏，北风烈烈，与严冬何异？所谓迎春的人，也只是瑟缩地躲在房椽内，战栗地站在屋檐下，望望枯枝一般的梅花罢了！

The plum blossom brings with it the breaking of snow, it is said to be the welling of spring's announcement. But this is completely the spring of the mind, in fact the falling of the rain and snow, the fierceness of the north wind, and the severity of winter, what difference is there? Those so-called spring-welcoming people, are also merely stowed away in their homes, shuddering under the eaves, gazing at the unremarkable dead branches of the plum blossoms, that's all there is to it!

²² Refers to Han Dynasty Empress Yin Lihua (陰麗華), famous for her beauty

再迟个把月吧，就像现在：惊蛰已过，所谓春将半了。住在都会里的朋友想象此刻的乡村，足有画图一般美丽，连忙写信来催我写春的随笔。好像因为我偎傍着春，惹他们妒忌似的。其实我们住在乡村间的人，并没有感到快乐，却生受了种种的不舒服：寒暑表激烈地升降于三十六度至六十二度之间。一日之内，乍暖乍寒。暖起来可以想起都会里的冰淇淋，寒起来几乎可见天然冰，饱尝了所谓“料峭”的滋味。天气又忽晴忽雨，偶一出门，干燥的鞋子往往拖泥带水归来。“一春能有几番晴”是真的；“小楼一夜听春雨”其实没有什么好听，单调得很，远不及你们都会里的无线电的花样繁多呢。春将半了，但它并没有给我们一点舒服，只教我们天天愁寒，愁暖，愁风，愁雨。正是“三分春色二分愁，更一分风雨”！

After delaying by a month or so, it will be just like now: After the passing of Insects Wake²³, half of the so-called spring will already be over. My friends who live in the city imagine during this time that the countryside is full of widespread picturesque beauty, promptly sending letters to me urging me to write essays about spring. Perhaps because I am cuddled all around by spring, some jealousy towards them has been provoked. In truth, we who live in the countryside do not necessarily feel delighted, indeed we suffer from all kinds of discomfort: the temperature table rises and falls drastically between thirty-six and sixty-two degrees. Within a day, it flashes between sudden warmth and sudden cold.²⁴ When it is warm one can think of ice cream in the city, and when it is cold you can practically see natural ice, tasting fully the so-called flavor of "sharp wind"²⁵. The weather can be both suddenly sunny and suddenly rainy, and occasionally when you go outside, your dry shoes often come back dripping from wading in mud and water. "A spring may have a few clear days" is true; "From my small room all night I hear the rustle of spring rain"²⁶ in fact has no

²³ Jingzhe, or Insects Wake, is the 3rd of the 24 solar terms of the traditional Chinese calendar, occurring typically in early-mid March

²⁴ The phrase "Sudden warmth and sudden cold" or "乍暖乍寒" in the original is a reference to Song Poet Chai Wang's (柴望)《念奴娇》

²⁵ In the original text Feng has quoted "料峭", a term originating from the poem "Jingkou"《京口》by Tang Dynasty poet Lu Guimeng

²⁶ A line from the poem "Lin'an at the beginning of the spring rain"《临安春雨初霁》by Song Dynasty poet Lu You (陆游)

good sound to it, terribly monotonous, nowhere near the many varied patterns of your wireless broadcasts in the city. Half of spring has passed, but it has not given us a trace of comfort, only causing us to worry daily the cold, the warmth, the wind, the rain. It truly is "three parts spring scenes two parts distress, still one part gales and storms"²⁷!

春的景象, 只有乍寒、乍暖、忽晴、忽雨是实际而明确的。此外虽有春的美景, 但都隐约模糊, 要仔细探寻, 才可依稀仿佛地见到, 这就是所谓“寻春”吧? 有的说“春在卖花声里”, 有的说“春在梨花”, 又有的说“红杏枝头春意闹”, 但这种景象在我们这枯寂的乡村里都不易见到。即使见到了, 肉眼也不易认识。总之, 春所带来的美, 少而隐; 春所带来的不快, 多而确。诗人词客似乎也承认这一点, 春寒、春困、春愁、春怨, 不是诗词中的常谈吗? 不但现在如此, 就是再过个把月, 到了清明时节, 也不见得一定春光明媚, 令人极乐。倘又是落雨, 路上的行人将要“断魂”呢。

At the sight of spring, there is only the abrupt cold, abrupt warmth, sudden sunshine, and sudden rain are real and definite. In addition, although there are beautiful scenes of spring, they are but vague and indistinct, you have to carefully seek them out, only then can one vaguely seem to see it, this is the so-called "search of spring"²⁸, I presume? Some say "spring is in the sound of selling flowers", some say "spring is in the pear blossom"²⁹, and some say "on apricot branches burst vernal vitality"³⁰, but these kinds of scenes are not easy to come upon in our dull and silent countryside. Even if one sees it, the naked eye cannot easily recognize it. In brief, the beauty brought by spring is scarce and hidden; the unhappiness brought by spring is abundant and definite. The poets and lyricists seem to recognize this

²⁷ A line from the poem "Congratulating the Dynasty"《贺圣朝》by Song Dynasty poet Ye Qingchen (叶清臣). The line means in three parts of winter, two have already passed full of worry and anxiety, but there still remains one part of bleak winds and icy rains, misery and hardship.

²⁸ "Search of spring" or 寻春 is a literary term often used in historical poetry, included in 陈子昂's 《晦日宴高氏林亭》, 惠洪's 《意行入古寺》, 梁辰鱼's 《浣纱记·游春》, and 徐元正's 《广陵怀古》

²⁹ From the Song Dynasty monk-poet Zhongshu's (仲殊) poem《柳梢青·吴中》

³⁰ From the Song Dynasty poet Song Qi (宋祁) poem《玉楼春·春景》

point, spring chills, spring fever, spring blues, spring sorrows, spring grievances, are these not common phrases in poems and verses? Not only as it is now, in the passing of a few months, during Tomb-Sweeping³¹ period, it will not necessarily bring radiant spring sunshine, bring joy to the people. If it is raining again, won't the pedestrians on the road have "broken souls"³².

可知春徒有其名，在实际生活上是很不愉快的。实际，一年中最愉快的时节，是从暮春开始的。就气候上说，暮春以前虽然大体逐渐由寒向暖，但变化多端，始终是乍寒，乍暖，最难将息的时候，到了暮春，方才冬天的影响完全消灭，而一路向暖。寒暑表上的水银爬到temperate[温和]上，正是气候最temperate的时节。就景色上说，春色不须寻找，有广大的绿野青山，慰人心目。古人词云：“杜宇一声春去，树头无数青山。”原来山要到春去的时候方才全青，而惹人注目。我觉得自然景色中，青草与白雪是最伟大的现象。造物者描写“自然”这幅大画图时，对于春红、秋艳，都只是略蘸些胭脂、朱磬，轻描淡写。

One can see that spring is unwarranted in its reputation, in real life it is very unpleasant. In reality, within a year the most pleasing time begins in late spring. In terms of climate, before late spring though there is gradual change from cold to warm, the change is varied and multifarious, from beginning to end it is abrupt cold, abrupt warmth, and it the most difficult time to rest. Reaching late spring, only then the effects of winter are completely eliminated, and it is warm all the way. The mercury on the thermometer climbs to *temperate*³³ (lukewarm) degrees, the climate truly is at its most temperate season. As far as the scenery is concerned, there is no need to look for spring colors, there are vast verdant valleys and green hills to comfort people's minds. As the ancient classic saying goes, "The cuckoos

³¹ Tomb Sweeping Day corresponds with Qingming, the 5th of the 24 solar terms of the traditional Chinese calendar, usually early April

³² "Broken souls" or 断魂 is a literary term often used in poetry, included in 宋之问's 《江亭晚望》，梁辰鱼's 《浣纱记·演舞》，龚自珍's 《摸鱼儿·乙亥六月留别新安作》，洪昇's 《长生殿·冥追》，and 何其芳's 《忆昔》

³³ In the original Chinese essay, the English "temperate" is used.

coo sends off spring, multitude treetops amass the hills green."³⁴ It turns out that only when spring is departing that the mountains turn fully green, then they may attract the eyes and attention of the people. I think that among natural scenery, green grass and white snow are the phenomena worthy of greatest admiration. When the Creator depicted the great painting of "nature", for springrose, autumn carnelian, he only dipped lightly in rouge, with vermilion cinnabar, gentle restrained traces.

到了描写白雪与青草，他就毫不吝惜颜料，用刷子蘸了铅粉、藤黄和花青而大块地涂抹，使屋屋皆白，山山皆青。这仿佛是米派山水的点染法，又好像是Cézanne [塞尚]风景画的“色的块”，何等泼辣的画风！而草色青青，连天遍野，尤为和平可亲、大公无私的春色。花木有时被关闭在私人的庭园里，吃了园丁的私刑而献媚于绅士淑女之前。草则到处自生自长，不择贵贱高下。人都以为花是春的作品，其实春工不在花枝，而在于草。看花的能有几人？草则广泛地生长在大地的表面，普遍地受大众的欣赏。这种美景，是早春所见不到的。那时候山野中枯草遍地，满目憔悴之色，看了令人不快。必须到了暮春，枯草尽去，才有真的青山绿野的出现，而天地为之一新。一年好景，无过于此时。自然对人的恩宠，也以此时为最深厚了。

When it came to the white snow and green grass, he was not at all sparing in pigments, dipping his brush in ceruse, gamboge, and beryl, blotting great lumps of earth, making each gable white and each mount green. This is like the dabbing method of the Mi School of landscape painting³⁵, or the "clumps of color" of Cézanne's landscape painting³⁶, how bold and vigorous a painting style! The grass green is verdure, the boundless horizons all over, especially peaceful and affable the selfless and open minded colors of spring. Flowers and

³⁴ This is an excerpt from Jin Dynasty poet Yuan Haowen's (元好问)《清平乐》

³⁵ A style developed in the Song Dynasty by Mi Fu (米黻), known for its moist washes and horizontal texture strokes depicting misty and rainy landscapes.

³⁶ Cézanne was a French painter, his style was considered post-Impressionist and a precursor to Cubism. His landscape paintings are characterized by bold streaks and broken brushwork.

trees are sometimes enclosed away in private gardens, suffering the lynching of gardeners to pander before gentlemen and ladies. Grass, on the other hand, grows long and flourishes everywhere on its own, without distinctions of nobleness or worthlessness, loftiness or lowliness. People all think that flowers are the opus of spring, but in actuality spring toils not on blossoming branches, but on the grasses. How many people are able to see the flowers? Grass, rather, grows widely on the surface of earth, it is universally appreciated by the masses. This kind of beautiful scenery is not seen in early spring. At that time, the mountains and fields are full of withered grass, filling the eyes of pallid and sallow colors, a sight which makes man despondent. One must arrive in late spring, when the withered grasses have gone, is there the true emergence of green hills and verdant valleys, and the world becomes anew. Of the splendid sights of the year, none surpass this time. The generosity and favor nature bestows to people, is at this time as well the most deep and profound.

讲求实利的西洋人，向来重视这季节，称之为May(五月)。May是一年中最为愉快的时节，人间有种种的娱乐，即所谓May-queen(五月美人)、May-pole(五月彩柱)、May-games(五月游艺)等。May这一个字，原是“青春”、“盛年”的意思。可知西洋人视一年中的五月，犹如人生中的青年，为最快乐、最幸福、最精彩的时期。这确是名符其实的。但东洋人的看法就与他们不同：东洋人称这时期为暮春，正是留春、送春、惜春、伤春，而感慨、悲叹、流泪的时候，全然说不到乐。东洋人之乐，乃在“绿柳才黄半未匀”的新春，便是那忽晴、忽雨、乍暖、乍寒、最难将息的时候。这时候实际生活上虽然并不舒服，但默察花柳的萌动，静观天地的回春，在精神上是最愉快的。故西洋的“May”相当于东洋的“春”。这两个字读起来声音都很好听，看起来样子都很美丽。不过May是物质的、实利的，而春是精神的、艺术的。东西洋文化的判别，在这里也可窥见。

Say, for Westerners who seek practical benefits, always attaching importance to this season, they call it May³⁷. May is the most cheerful time of the year, with there being around the world various kinds of recreation, namely, what's called May-queen, May-pole, May-games, etc³⁸. This word May originally had the meaning of "youthfulness" and "youthful prime". "in the prime of life" means. It is evident that when Westerners look at the whole year, May is likened to the youthful years of life, being the most happy, the most joyous, the most wonderful period. This is indeed true to its name. But the view of the Easterners differs from theirs: the Easterners call this moment the twilight of spring, which is a time to reside in spring, see off spring, regret³⁹ spring, mourn spring, and a time to lament, begrieve, and shed tears, without any hearkening of happiness. The joy of Easterners lies only in the new spring, when "green willows have turned half yellow"⁴⁰, precisely when it becomes suddenly sunny, suddenly rainy, abruptly warm, abruptly cold, the time most difficult to rest and recuperate. Though it is not at all comfortable to actually live during this time, to silently observe the budding of the flowers and willows, to quietly behold the return of spring to heaven and earth, that is most pleasant to spirit and mind. Therefore, the Western "May" is equivalent to the Eastern "Spring". When one reads aloud these words the sounds both are pleasant to hear, when one looks at their appearances both are rather beautiful. However, May is material, is practical in value, while spring is spiritual, is artistic. The distinctions between the cultures of East and West, here too they may be peered into.

³⁷ The original Chinese text uses the English "May".

³⁸ The original Chinese text lists these terms in English as well.

³⁹ The original Chinese text uses "惜春", which may be translated to "cherish spring" or "regret spring", as in 珍惜 or 惋惜. 惜 has both the meaning of "to value" and "to pity". The meaning of "惜春" is ambivalent, poetically, it can mean both cherish and pity its passing.

⁴⁰ A quote from Tang Dynasty poet Yang Juyuan's (杨巨源) 《城东早春》