

NONFICITION

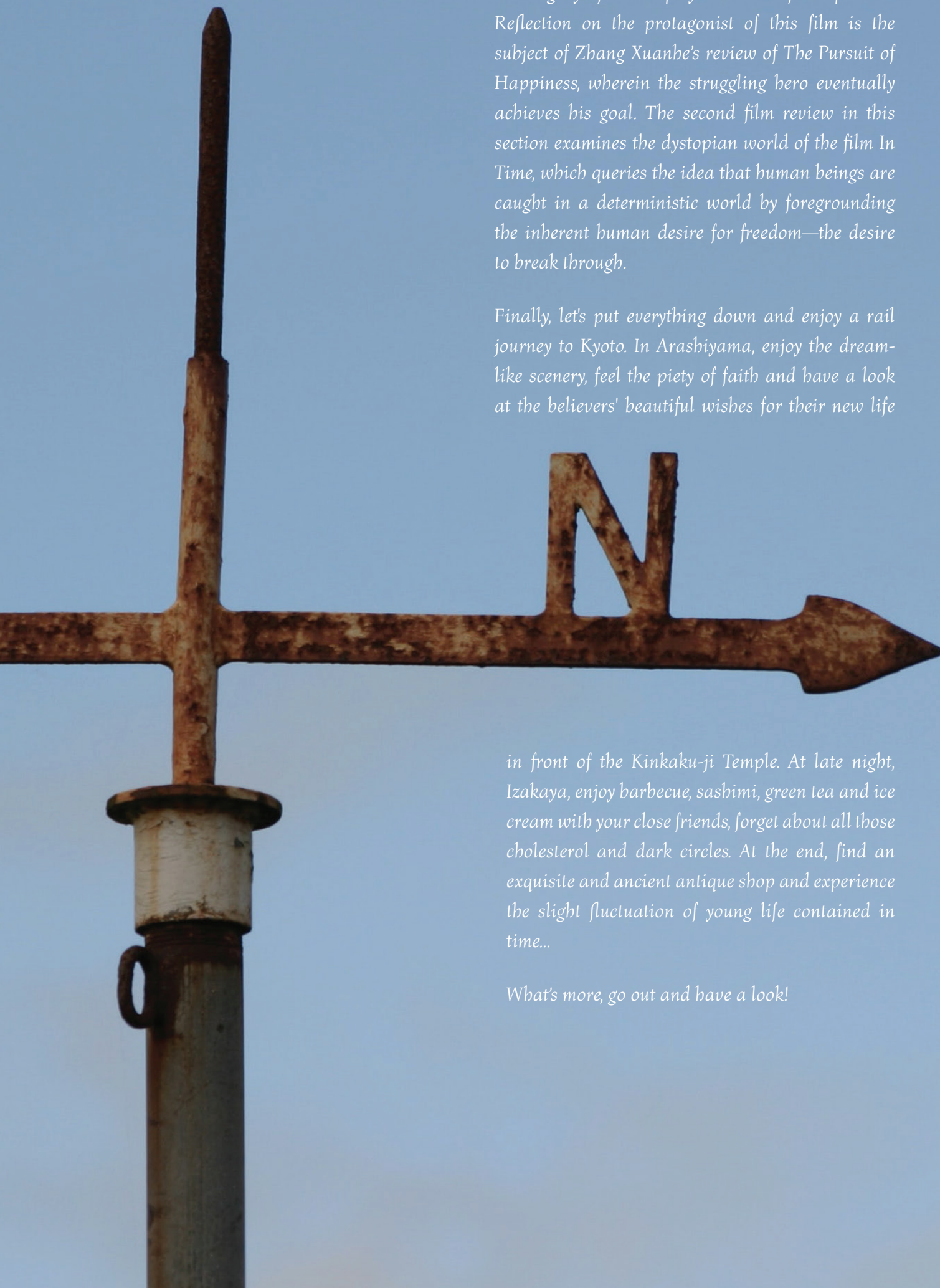
In the past, women were regarded as the appendages of men under the patriarchal system, and their voice and social status were always ignored. This is the concern of Wu Kunchi's study in his "Self and Modernity: The Presentation of Modern Women in a Comparison of Eileen Chang 'Love in a Fallen City' and Ding Ling 'When I was in Xia Village.'" This analysis reflects the fact that more and more literary works are beginning to pay attention to women's personalities and describe the historical discourse of developing gender equality in modern Chinese society. As the article's reading of Ding Ling demonstrates, women can not only show their independence in social communication, but also awaken their self-consciousness in the process of socialist development.

Wu Mengdie's "Gregor Samsa as a Hysteria Sufferer: Considering Franz Kafka's Metamorphosis from



Freudian a Freudian Perspective" examines Kafka's ill-fated protagonist as the once respected eldest son of his family, who suffers as a repressed man in a moralistic twentieth-century society. The pressures that he struggles under lead to his unfortunate transformation into a hysteric. However, the possibility of understanding how this process unfolds suggest a strategy for breaking through societal pressures and discovering the source of one's pain.

In a film made roughly a century after Kafka's Metamorphosis appeared, a salesman who is also under great pressure struggles to perform his fatherly duties and make progress after experiencing



the tragedy of bankruptcy and his wife's departure. Reflection on the protagonist of this film is the subject of Zhang Xuanhe's review of *The Pursuit of Happiness*, wherein the struggling hero eventually achieves his goal. The second film review in this section examines the dystopian world of the film *In Time*, which queries the idea that human beings are caught in a deterministic world by foregrounding the inherent human desire for freedom—the desire to break through.

Finally, let's put everything down and enjoy a rail journey to Kyoto. In Arashiyama, enjoy the dream-like scenery, feel the piety of faith and have a look at the believers' beautiful wishes for their new life

in front of the Kinkaku-ji Temple. At late night, Izakaya, enjoy barbecue, sashimi, green tea and ice cream with your close friends, forget about all those cholesterol and dark circles. At the end, find an exquisite and ancient antique shop and experience the slight fluctuation of young life contained in time...

What's more, go out and have a look!

A Review of *In Time*

Directed by Andrew Niccol

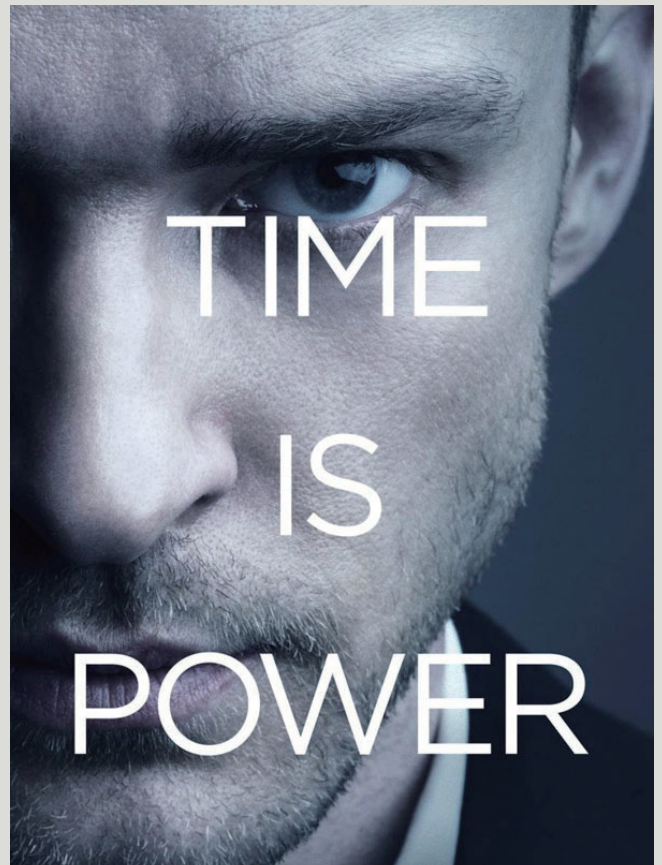
Zeekin Zhou

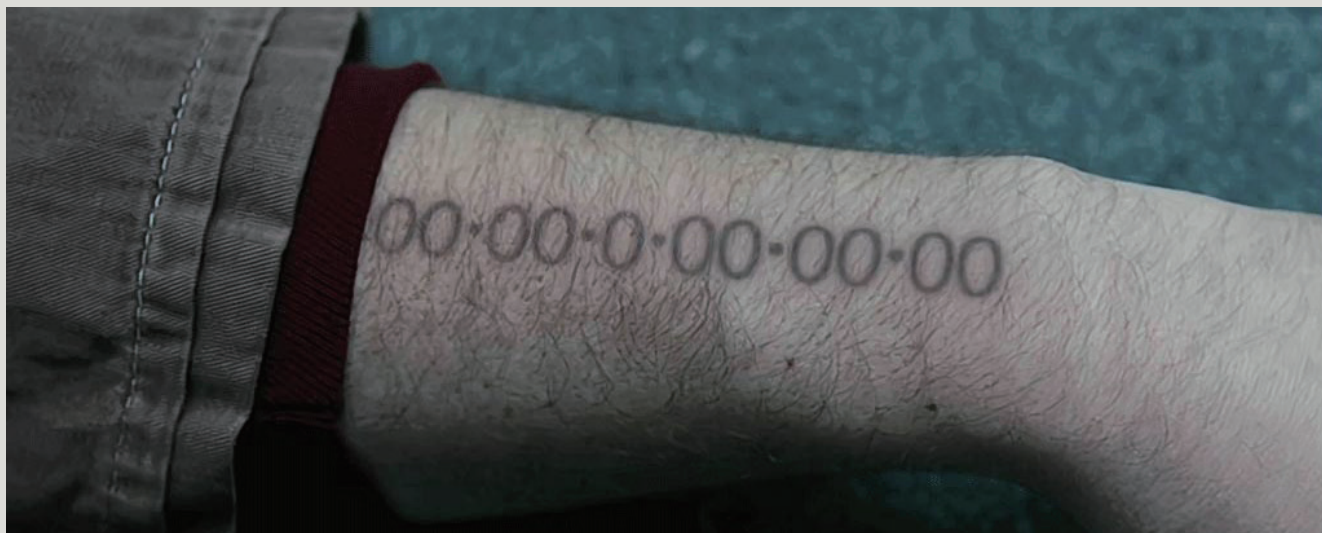
In Time is a movie, set in a dystopian future world. People's lives are determined by a timer in their body, and the amount of time people possess plays the role of currency there. The gap between the rich and the poor emerges through the numbers on their timers.

Will, the protagonist, is a young man whose father died many years ago. Life is difficult and he barely manages to survive with his mother. They have few accumulated hours, must work hard, and are paid poorly in the time-currency for their work. In the setting, people can transfer time to others through touch. Accidentally, Will met a dying rich person and unexpectedly inherited his wealth: one hundred years. Will came back and hurried to transfer time to his mother, who was going to run out of her time. Unfortunately, he was a few seconds late and his mother died right before they touched each other. This tragedy leads to Will being extremely desperate. He makes up his mind to do something that can benefit the poor who have been suppressed for a long time in the country. He decides to steal from the rich and rob banks, after which he distributes all the time-money he gained to the poor. Gradually, Will becomes a hero of the poor, but also an enemy of the rich.

For the whole movie, the biggest question should be: Is Will worthy of praise or criticism?

An economist would say that he has broken the economic system, resulting in chaos for the whole society, which definitely could not be a long-term strategy. Whereas from the perspective of the poor, Will is the never-seen savior who saved millions of lives. In my view, even though he will definitely end up being





completely suppressed by the government, he should be praised.

In most cases, suppression leads to revolt; revolt results in revolution, and revolution ends up with progress. To some extent, what Will does is similar to those Chinese ancient peasant uprisings, and see Will as the leader of a future peasant uprising in the films dystopian world. His revolt announced to the world that even if the people are at the bottom of the society, they could never be exploited. Poorness can never be a reason for losing a soul, or losing the will for better lives. I firmly believe that in this movie, the upper class's experience of being robbed would lead to either a downfall of the regime, or a better outcome: a reform from the government itself.

Furthermore, even though the movie described capitalism as a thoroughly evil and an unreasonable system, it still has the rationality in its very existence—its own logic, or as Hegel says, “existence in possible.”

In reality, it is almost impossible to have rules which are absolutely fair to everyone, and absolute fairness is not the evolution of mankind's needs as Darwin says of the survival of the fittest in natural selection. There has to be both the powerhouse and the weak

at the same time in a world. A deer is killed by wolf. Grass is eaten by deer, but we have no right to criticize the wolf or deer because they only behave under their natural instincts. Humans have a hearts filled with sympathy, whereas the law of nature has nothing to do with sympathy. Survival of the fittest in natural selection not only describes a natural chain, but also human society. That's what we called Social Darwinism. Will's revolt can either win a reform or bring a crueler suppression, but it will never challenge the law of nature.

In Time is not a perfect scientific fiction movie. A number of logical or technical bugs emerge if we analyze them seriously. For example, people who have an abundant amount of time on their body-timer can live forever and never appear to age. However, it cannot make sense biologically and scientifically unless they are robots. Thus, distinct from other science fiction film's representations of technology, *In Time* can't be supported by the basics of natural science. Nonetheless, the strong reflection on what the real world is experiencing has already made it a film worthy of watching. Every choice the characters make and every free soul in the movie is powerful enough to force us to rethink our human societies.

A Review of *The Pursuit of Happyness*, Directed by Gabriele Muccino

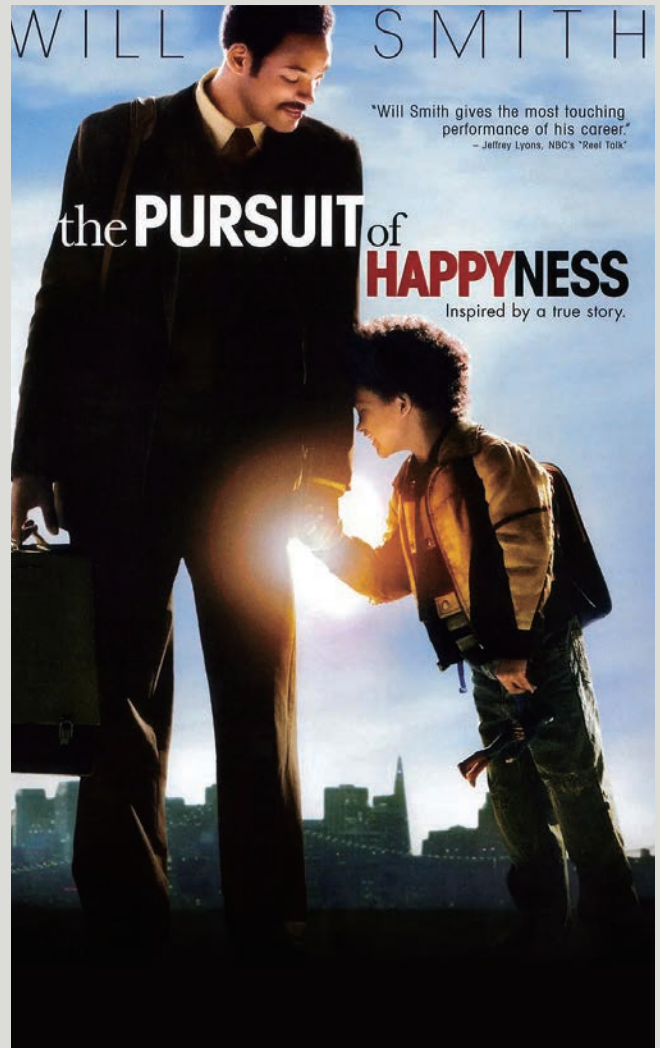
Dylan Zhang

—Every cloud has a silver lining

The world is full of opportunities. We enjoy and long for the beautiful scenery that the goddess of fate brings us when she smiles, but what we really can't forget is everything what we have paid to welcome this exalted guest. One of my favorite lines from the film *The Pursuit of Happyness* is: "If you have a dream, defend it, don't let anyone else decide whether you can do anything or not, not even me". The father in the film (played by Will Smith), after getting through the trials and tribulations of life, still chose to let his son believe in his hopes and dreams, with determination. This is the experience of a man who could not have been more ordinary. However, his words are a light that has illuminated the lives of many people.

There are four most memorable moments for me. They show us a profound demonstration of what makes the main character so important.

The first one is his desire to change his current life rather than muddling through. Perhaps for the most of us, the stories of successful people would be more familiar. We look up to them, respect them, and occasionally think that one day in the future we may be able to rapidly move up in the world. However, we fail to take that crucial step of asking questions when we don't understand and we fail to learn from the experiences of those who have gone



before us patiently. Many young people think that the older generation may be backward in their thinking and do not know how to innovate, but what is overlooked is the fact that the successful businesses we now know, have all taken their first big steps, betting on their dignity, their fortunes, and their dreams. We should roll out the red carpet for the arrival of "happiness" instead of doing nothing and just

waiting for it to come.

The second is that the central character believed in his own ability and he was convinced that he could succeed. When we are capable enough to carry ourselves far away, we will just paddle bravely and sail. When we are faced with difficult setbacks or complexities, we can imitate and learn slowly, accumulating not only knowledge but also confidence. The hero didn't know about Rubik's Cube, but he watched the TV very carefully to learn. He didn't understand stock investors, but he was willing to find a light and read at night, and he was willing to pay attention to the lectures he attended. Perhaps it was because life is not easy and he was forced to learn by oppression, but this spirit is a unique quality that belongs exclusively to that group of people who do not give in to defeat. We should cherish it and let it help us shine.

The third important reason is that he didn't given up on his family and his sense of responsibility. I believe that everyone has a different opinion about the hero's sense of responsibility. The hero failed to give his wife a safe and secure home, forced her to do two extra jobs, which was very tiring. However, we must not forget that in the beginning, the man gave his wife a warm home full of hope. The fact of his investments failing did not mean that the love he gave to his wife was dimmed, as life forces everyone to bow down at some point. The man was late in paying his taxes, and he did not pay for his taxi rides. He was repeatedly late in paying his rent, and was late in paying his childcare fees. All of these may show a lack of responsibility on the part of the hero, and indeed, from our points of view, he does. However, for him, living means more than just not starving to death, he wanted to carry his son's dreams and still chooses to give him a

birthday present when times are so difficult. One cannot say that he is a good father, but his love for his son is genuine. "I will do my best to be by your side," he says, yet his the son could feel the cheapness of his father's love.

The fourth is that he has preserved the most precious of human qualities—kindness. The five dollars was his fate and his opportunity. The boss might not have realized that at that time, that the five dollars were the most valuable thing in his wallet, and it was also the key in deciding whether the father and son would starve to death. The hero understood that clearly, but he still chose to lend it to the boss. We might consider that he did so because the man was the boss, but we also cannot ignore that life kept whipping him, and the qualities he could retain must come from an innocent heart. He also created opportunities for himself, and after the boss knew the situation, he would have been touched by him too, I think.

The magic of the film is that it will magnify all kinds of life, and in the process of magnification, it helps us to see more clearly of the various flavours of life, both the sweet and sour. Many people are knocked down, but they still choose to stand up. Perhaps it is because they do not want to live a life of mediocrity.

Life is not easy. Not easy in satisfying the need of daily necessities. It's not easy to dream for three decades. Everyone of us is troubled by a situation, as if it is generated specifically for us—we wander in it, looking for a way out of hustle and bustle, yet this life may slowly pass. In fact, sometimes we may begin again, slowly teasing out answers to lay new foundations by developing integrity and virtue. perhaps in the near future, the honoured guest is coming. Don't forget to applaud yourself. Pain is merely the breaking of the shell that encloses your understanding.

Self and Modernity:

The Presentation of Modern Women in a Comparison of Eileen Chang's
"Love in a Fallen City" and Ding Ling's *"When I was in Xia Village"*

Humphrey Wu

Introduction: Construction of gendered identity in modern Chinese literature

Ever since the First Opium War, Chinese intellectuals have been trying to reconstruct social values by introducing Western modernity through their literary works. Fiction was identified as a way to influence the public. As Liang Qichao (1873-1929) wrote in 1902, "to renew people's hearts and remold their character, we must first renovate fiction." Litterateurs' attention to fiction made it an arena for political debates. Among the various debates and agendas, gender is gradually being recognized as one of the key aspects of the renovation of cultural values.

During the New Culture Movement, the role of women in society was addressed by many well-known thinkers. Lu Xun (1881-1936) harshly criticized the brutality of traditional ethics' suppression of women in his work "The New Year's Sacrifice" (1924), Hu Shi's (1891-1962) "Zhencao Wenti" (The Matter of Virginity) (1918) discussed the relationship between gender equality and modernity. Intellectuals like Chen Duxiu also contributed to this agenda. However, most of the male writers did not thoroughly consider gender's characteristic as a form of social identity. The main target of their criticism was the traditional Confucian ethical codes. The perspective of sexuality and feminine individuality was not seriously stated either (Zhu, 2009). I will argue that female

writers' assessments should be included in the analysis.

This essay will analyze two representative works, "Love in a Fallen City" (1943) and "When I was in Xia Village" (1941), by the female authors Eileen Chang (1920-1995) and Ding Ling (1904-1986) respectively. My analysis will schematize the formation of the modern gendered identity of women, and examine females' individuality in historical discourses.

Possibility for the pursuit of "true self" and feminine self-presentation

In discussing women's emotionality, May Fourth writers tended to unconsciously turn males' intellectual "self" into the emotional "other" of females (Barlow, 1998). Consequently, the discovery of women's "true self" was not considered.

Although debates about gender are still subjected to the matter of expectations of women's roles in the family, scholars already accept the sociological sexual differences during the New Culture Movement. The Western perspective of femininity was viewed as an important perspective in academia, along with the increasing use of the word "nü xing 女性".

When Ding Ling and Eileen Chang joined the world of literature in the 1920s, the discovery of self and pursuit of a "true self" was no longer seen as taboo, though it still lacks presentation of a feminine "self" in fiction.



The views of female intellectuals: Eileen Chang and Ding Ling's feminine self

Born to a wealthy aristocratic family, Eileen Chang spent her childhood in the international settlement in Shanghai and later studied in Hong Kong, which enabled her to adopt Western ideologies of modernity at a very young age. Her affluent family allowed her to experience various cultural activities and pursue her desire to a very great extent. One can easily identify the influence of her personal background from her works. Chang put individuality as a very high priority in her fiction. Her representation of femininity is highly personalized and keen on describing the obsession of love and women's sentimentality (Chow, 1990). In Chang's works, the discussion of domesticity is central, while political issues are not her concern (Zhu, 2009).

Unlike Chang, Ding Ling is recognized as an important figure in the history of modern Chinese politics. Similar to Chang, Ding Ling also grew up in a wealthy family and received a Western education, laying the ground for her liberal political leaning. The themes of her early works are mostly romance and love. However, when she moved to Leftist literary ideology and became closely connected with the Communist Party of China, Ding fundamentally reconsidered the function of literature and shifted to "revolutionary literature" (Zhu, 2009). She started to change the representation of femininity from merely internal personal development to a larger discourse of political revolution. In her story "When I was in Xia Village", she intertwined the pursuit of gender equality with the ideology of socialism. She wished to combine her understanding of modernity in gender issues with the communist cause of enlightening Chinese women.

I will thoroughly discuss Eileen Chang and

Ding Ling's representation of modern women in the following parts of this essay by comparing Chang's "Love in a Fallen City" and Ding's "When I was in Xia Village".

Conflicts between individual freedom and traditional moral codes in Eileen Chang's "Love in a Fallen City"

Eileen Chang likes to discuss the issue of love and individuality in her fiction. For Chang, the independence of women is tightly related to their freedom with regard to love and marriage. To a great extent, her representation of femininity is connected to modern women's individualism against traditional ethics. Chang highly values emotional independence, which is reflected in her most famous work, "Love in a Fallen City".

In this novella, Chang portrays a highly representative divorced woman's image in a typical traditional Chinese extended family. The female protagonist, Bai Liusu, is a beautiful 28 year-old lady. She divorces her terrible ex-husband and returns her original family. However, instead of supporting her, her family misappropriates her money in order to invest. Whenever bad things happen, they blame Liusu as a jinx. These relatives accuse Liusu of being "a real bad-luck comet" (Chang, 1943), who brings doom to the family. Being a divorced woman, Liusu is not in the position to resist. She is not treated as a person with integrity, not to mention finding her love. Ultimately, she is viewed as a burden and shame of the family. The senior relatives, including her mother, wish to arrange a second marriage in exchange for her dowry. Even on the matter of arranging the marriage, Liusu is ranked behind her younger sister Baoluo, who has a high value in the marriage market as a young virgin.

By characterizing the protagonist Bai Liusu,

Chang wants to show how women are objectified as the property of senior family members under the traditional patriarchal structure. Liusu never has the opportunity to be educated, to work on her own career, or to find her love. Even on the matter of marriage, she is at the mercy of the matchmaker, Mrs. Xu. Thus, when she meets Fan Liuyuan, a British born Chinese man, she eagerly wants to seize the chance. Because for her, marrying such a man means a respected social position and stable financial income, though she knows very well that Fan is not a loyal husband.

By portraying the struggle of Liusu's marriage, Chang wishes to convey how women's individuality is undermined in the traditional cultural system. Even though Liusu does not trust Fan, she has to marry him to acquire social status and escape her original family. The title of Mrs. Fan, "the wife of a wealthy man," is the only possible way for women to move to the upper classes—from a nobody to a bourgeois. Under this value system, women's selfhood is strictly bonded with social status.

In "Love in a Fallen City", Chang offers Liusu a way to self-determination. Despite the fact that Liusu's ultimate goal is climbing up within the traditional social evaluation system, she succeeded in maintaining dignity in her and Fan's courtship (Zhu, 2009). She wisely uses her most valuable asset, her beauty, to shine on social occasions. Rather than passively responding to Fan's acts, she actively takes charge in developing the relationship. For Chang, Liusu's "victory" is not "true love" in conventional context, but she does grab the wheel of her own fate (Liu, 1998). Through this protagonist, Chang completes her representation of feminine individuality in the male-dominant world.

Revolution and female's awakened self-consciousness in Ding Ling's "When I was in Xia Village"

Having similar family and educational backgrounds with Eileen Chang, Ding Ling's literary path goes in a totally different direction. In her early publications like the famous "Miss Sophie's Diary," the main focus is love and female's psychological struggle (Zhu, 2009). Nevertheless, after shifting to Leftist literary ideology, her works always represent females' role in political revolution, and discuss the importance of women's awakened consciousness.

In "When I was in Xia Village," Ding Ling tells the story of Zhenzhen who went to a communist-governed village. Zhenzhen, whose name literally means zhen 贞 (virginity or purity), is captured by Japanese soldiers twice to serve as a "comfort woman" (a sex slave for Japanese soldiers). During her time of capture, she also voluntarily spies for the CCP's intelligent service to fight against Japanese invaders. However, rather than being honored as a heroine of Chinese people, Zhenzhen is accused as a slut and a fallen woman. Rumors about her lewdness are extravagantly transmitted in the community. Even her family sees her as a shame. As a result, almost everyone in the village believes she is a slut.

The most apparent irony of this story is the protagonist's name. The name "purity" itself indicates that the cultural value system in Xia village is predominantly conservative. The assessment of women's morality is still based on a hegemonic masculinity perspective, which bonds women's sexual experience with ethics (Swanson, 2019). Male possession of women remains a prominent feature in the Chinese patriarchal society. Though Zhenzhen's capture is an inevitable consequence of the war, a typical fate for many Chinese women at the time,

the accusation of being a criminal is forced upon her. She is scapegoated. We can see that the rumor of Zhenzhen's impurity is actually the villagers' justification of their moral codes. The false accusation against Zhenzhen displays the moral vanity of the hypocritical villagers. By accusing Zhenzhen of being a slut and a fallen woman, they complete the logic of their discrimination toward a supposed heretic.

Interestingly, "When I was in Xia Village" itself was taken as the proof to accuse Ding Ling of being an "anti-communist criminal" during the "anti-rightists" movement in the 1950s (Dong, 2005). She was criticized as an enemy of the Chinese people and the party because she did not harshly attack the Japanese and "show[ed] sympathy to capitalists" in some of her works. Perhaps the possibility of these accusations never occurred to Ding Ling when she was writing this story to speak of the importance of women's impendence and the necessity of the socialist movement.

Conclusion

As two extraordinary authors in modern Chinese literature, Eileen Chang and Ding Ling apply different approaches to address the feminine self. The presentation of modern women in their stories represents two directions of modernization. By comparing "Love in a Fallen City" and "When I was in Xia Village," we can see that while Chang focuses on the individuality of females and women's independence in social interactions, Ding concentrates on awakening modern women's self-conscience in revolutionary politics (Zhu, 2009).

Differences aside, their excellent presentations of gender through their literature works marvelously showcases the historical discourse in the development of gender equality in modern Chinese society. Their narratives of the feminine-self provide revolutionary perspectives in the male-dominated literary world.





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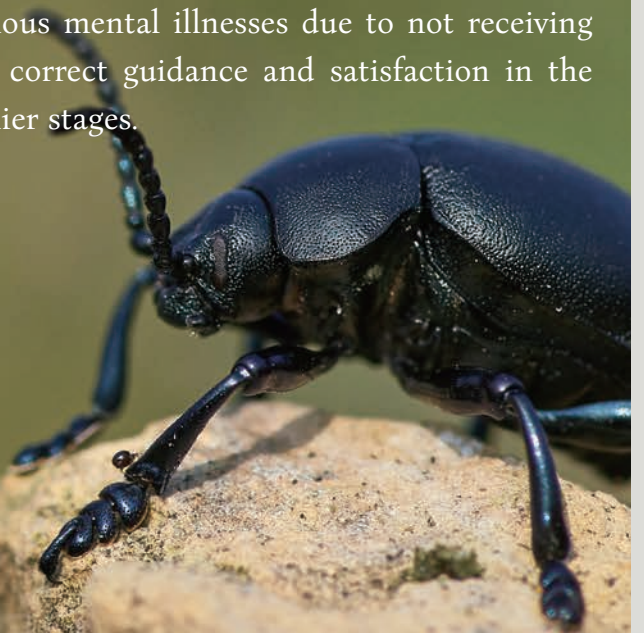
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Introduction of *Metamorphosis*

Metamorphosis is one of the most famous short stories written by the German-speaking Bohemian writer Franz Kafka. The story begins when traveling salesman Gregor Samsa wakes up to find himself transformed into huge and ugly vermin. Since his salary is the main source of income for the family, Gregor has to face enormous pressures in his work life — including being ridiculed and bullied by the office assistant and boss. However, after becoming a vermin that resembles a large insect, he loses the ability to work, and his family, who at first were friendly to him, begin to be unable to bear what he does as vermin. Eventually, he dies in his room.

To analyze *Metamorphosis* with Freudian ideas, we need to introduce some key terms of Freud's psychoanalysis. In the *Interpretation of Dreams* published in 1899, Freud proposes that dreams have several ways to hide and suppress inner desire: displacement is the transformation of abstract concepts into familiar scenes. Condensation is the combination of several different factors into a complex image. Transference is the transformation of a dreamer's feelings into seemingly unrelated situations. In *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* published in 1905, Freud further proposes the existence of a mental illness, "hysteria." He believes that the cause of hysteria is excessive sexual demands and extreme sexual repression.

In order to illustrate the process of human sexual development, he comes up with five stages of psycho-sexual development that manifest in fixations on erogenous zones: the oral stage, the anal stage, the phallic stage, the latency stage, and the genital stage. The oral stage represents the pleasure that is associated with the mouth (such as sucking fingers, using pacifiers, etc.) In the anal stage, parents start toilet training their children. In the phallic stage, children enter the famous "Oedipus complex," where boys have castration anxiety and girls have penis envy. When it comes to the latency stage, people's libido is suppressed, and they begin to sublimate sexual desire into learning life skills. At the genital stage, if people successfully get through the former four stages smoothly, they are well on their way to healthy adult life. Otherwise, they will have various mental illnesses due to not receiving the correct guidance and satisfaction in the earlier stages.



Gregor Samsa as a Hysteria Sufferer:

Considering Franz Kafka's *Metamorphosis* from a Freudian Perspective

Mathilda Wu

M*etamorphosis*, a story that is told in a “proper human being’s narrative,” has one of the most striking beginnings in the history of literature: “One morning, when Gregor Samsa woke from troubled dreams, he found himself transformed in his bed into a horrible vermin” (Kafka 1). Not a heroic tiger, not an astute rabbit — but a giant vermin that raises unbearable discomfort and nausea in a civilized society. To interpret this metonymy inherent to Kafka’s vision, Zahra Barfi and other scholars incorporate the discussion of the topic into Freudian contexts and emphasize that *Metamorphosis* is “a symbolic presentation of Gregor’s unconscious world,” and “he transfers [his impressions] from the conscious to the unconscious world which is the world of dream” (107). In comparison, Meg Williams examines *Metamorphosis* as Kafka’s own Oedipus complex and wound as a personal myth (120). However, this Freudian analysis of *Metamorphosis* mainly focuses on the brief interpretation of dreams—the triadic theory of mind and Oedipus complex. In this essay, I will argue that Gregor is a patient of hysteria. He has never really becomes a vermin. The vermin is the embodiment of himself in his dreams and hallucinations as a hysteric. Furthermore, the illness causes him to retreat to a child-like and even inhuman state, as he seeks sexual devel-

opment and supplementation from the family space.

Throughout Gregor’s life, both sexual wishes and social constraints are torturing him day and night. In *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*, Freud explains that the causation of hysteria is the contradiction of “exaggerated sexual craving and excessive aversion to sexuality” (31). As a weak and inferior creature, vermin are not a containers of sexual libido as humans are. Copulation, in all conditions, is not for pleasure but for survival. As the dream is “the (disguised) fulfillment of a (suppressed, repressed) wish” (55), becoming a vermin is the manifestation of dream-content, and the vermin itself is a displacement of Gregor’s repressed sexual desires. However, the depression of work and the failure of interpersonal relationships make Gregor accustomed to suppressing “emotionally cathected mental processes, wishes and desires” (30). When Gregor ruminates over his life in his bed, he complains about his strenuous occupation as a traveling salesman. Concern for the train schedules deprives him of his free will. He misses the pleasure of not controlling bowel movements in the anal stage. Ultimately, Gregor’s desire for cuisine is connected with the satisfaction of baby’s erotogenic zone. But as a “mature and decent” workman in the family,

the need for food has to be separated from sexual desires. The worse social relationship forces him to chase the happiness of being taken care of during the phallic stage. The nostalgia for returning to childhood is evident in Gregor's unconscious mind. To elaborate on my argument, I will follow the sequence of *Metamorphosis* to examine how Gregor goes through five states (dream and reality, the oral stage, the anal stage, the phallic stage, and his final collapse) of sexual development as a hysteric and what conflicts he meets between deviant desire and moral strictures.

In the first scene, Gregor is stuck between dreams and reality as he is unfamiliar with his alienation. As he is already suffering from hysteria, the dream at the beginning reveals his internal displacement and condensation of deviant sexual desire as well as his struggle with morality. To raise the problem of Gregor's sexual repression, Kafka describes a picture of a beautiful lady on Gregor's wall. Gregor's perspective, as a voyeur, longs for the woman in the illustrated magazine. Condensation plays a role at this time. Fur is the representative of female reproductive organs. The muff in the woman's hand can be interpreted as genitals, showing Gregor's desire to spy on women's private parts. Further, warm fur covers the woman's head, neck and forearms, keeping her warm in the cold winter. This image elaborates his inner yearning for maternal care. Nevertheless, Gregor is soon tortured by his knowledge of morality. When he tries to fall asleep again (even when he is still dreaming), he finds it impossible to turn over. No matter how hard he leans to his right, he always returns to the lying position. Gregor is castigated by social mores, and his inability to defeat his lust causes him to have the illusion of back pain in his dreams. What's more, Kafka's description of

Gregor leaving the bed is interesting. Gregor wants to get his lower body off the bed first. This again shows the displacement of dreams, as it is the struggle between desire and reality. The lower body contains the sexual organs, representing his sexual needs. His sense of morality makes him want to suppress sexual energy first from a physical point of view. But this process of getting out of bed causes him to suffer severe pain. Williams points out that this sensitivity is like "a newborn baby adjusting to a harsh gaseous environment" (123).

Due to the oppression of authority (his father and office assistant), he wakes up from his dream, but the severe illness makes him continue to have the illusion that "his body is still vermin." For the first time, Gregor learns to walk as a vermin. The posture of a walking vermin refers to the infant's state and the infant's crawling action. A baby should seek his parents' help, but Gregor believes his priority is to stop the office assistant. Although his spirit is trying to return to the state of an infant, his surviving rationality is still torturing him to complete the errand. After seeing Gregor, his parents, sister and office assistant fall into horror because Gregor has a mental health condition which cause him to undertake terrible actions and speak in a distorted voice. However, Gregor misunderstands their reactions as he still fantasizes of himself as having a worm-like body. Out of disgust with Gregor's shameful image, his father drives Gregor away and makes him return to his room. Barfi believes that Gregor's father represents a superego, who suppresses Gregor's inner wishes (108). On this basis, I think what really suppresses Gregor is the patriarchal power group composed of his father, the office assistant, and his boss, whose oppression of employees symbolizes power and threats in the real

world. At this time, the expulsion of the father also makes the patriarchal authority come into play, urging Gregor to enter his childhood and not to wander in the adult world. The father's guidance is full of impatience and violence. Barfi also points out: "Gregor's legs are symbol of phallus" (108). However, at this stage, Gregor has not yet transitioned to the phallic stage. The injury to the leg is an essential manifestation of the father's lack of love for him.

After his family accepts the reality of his condition, Gregor begins to enter psycho sexual development through erogenous zones as a child and attempts to heal himself in this way. First, he comes to the door and finds the food that his sister prepares for him. Thus, the oral stage comes into being. With excitement, he "immediately dipped his head into the milk, nearly covering his eyes with it" (Kafka 10). This is exactly what babies do when they drink milk without self-control. Nevertheless, the strange thing is that Gregor no longer feels that milk is delicious at all, even though milk is his favorite drink when he is a decent "human." Blending his spirit with that of animals, Gregor's sense of taste also becomes problematic. Crazy lust makes him dehumanized. Later, he gradually learns to crawl around in the room. The mucus that is produced when he crawls represents the beginning of the anal stage, showing that he cannot control excretion. His mother and sister do not guide him to use the toilet, but even plan to remove the furniture in his room. As the furniture disappears, Gregor realizes that he is losing his humanity. When he finally chooses to fight back, ironically, he does not protect objects that symbolize his life as a business trainee, but, instead, covers his body in the picture of the beautiful lady. The warmth he feels in his belly when he holds the picture suggests an experience of mastur-

bation. However, no matter what disgusting things he prefers in the oral and anal stage, strong guilt is raised in his heart whenever his family talks about financial situation. Ironically, even as he tries to retreat to his childhood, his shame and morality still torture him. This also confirms what Freud says: "the character of hysterics shows a degree of sexual repression in excess of the normal quantity and an intensification of resistance against the sexual instinct" (30).

After finishing these two stages, Gregor comes to the phallic stage through his father's authority and "apple's attack." Because of the misunderstanding of Gregor's reactions towards his mother and sister, his father conceives of the idea of killing Gregor. When Gregor recalls his father in the past, his father's image is a kind, old gentleman. However, when Gregor returns to his infancy, the father suddenly becomes energetic and cruel in his eyes. The father is a great threat to Gregor. Barfi believes that the father's image is the same as God's (109). Adam and Eve are driven out of the Garden of Eden because of the apple, which embodies the unkind image of the father. However, Barfi does not mention that there can be many other explanations for the image of apple. For example, it is the fruit that represents the knowledge of good and evil. It can also be a symbol of desire and sin. Kafka's description of the apple reflects the patriarchal society's backlash against men. Gregor carries the apple in his body, like a child who gradually wants to learn to speak, recognize words, and think. However, for children, "they behave from an early age as though their dependence on the people looking after them were in the nature of sexual love" (90). When his sister plays the violin, Gregor's heart raises the most "inhuman" idea in the whole story.

Initially, although the violin's sound produced by his sister is not that touching, the music is Gregor's longing for humanity. He experiences fear of castration during the phallic stage, but he cannot help projecting his libido onto the person that is closest to him. The younger sister becomes a substitute for motherhood. The feeling he shows is not a brother's affection for his sister, but a man's desire and possession of a woman. He even wants to imprison his sister, making her play the violin for him alone. While he longs for human culture, he is ultimately reduced to an animal because of his incestuous ideation.

At the end of the story, his sister chooses to abandon him and drives him out of the house. She may have been irritated with the trouble of taking care of Gregor and the burden of housework and the heavy workload of the family, or she may have noticed Gregor's perverse affection for her. Gregor does not really become a vermin, but his sickness has made his family disgusted with him, thinking that he is no different from an animal without the

ability to work. While Gregor is thinking about leaving this home, he senses that the burden on his shoulders is removed for the first time. His hallucinations are gradually disappearing, and he can return to the form of a human.

Did Gregor really die in the end? Or did he never die in the room as a vermin, and his family's reaction is just his fantasy, while the reality is he leaves home crying? These questions are of no importance. Even if he tries to heal himself and return to his childhood to pray for love again, the response to him is only a strong sense of guilt, repressed sexual desires and extremely terrifying alienation. His family still neglects to guide and help at each stage and eventually decides to kill him. As Williams points out: "Kafka read Freud and was interested in psychoanalysis but believed there was no 'cure' for what was essentially the problem of living" (120). Gregor's path of self-healing, different from Freudian ideas, has become a path of tragic destruction.

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Yesterdays in Kyoto

Carol Zhong

Chapter 1

ARASHIYAMA, GOLDEN PAVILION, AND RESI- DENCE

Geographically, Arashiyama (あらしやま) lies north of Kyoto, but it was perfectly embedded into our mindset as to how the journey would unfold. It was an extremely sunny weekday, the ticket office was full of huge crowds of tourists. It seemed like hundreds of kids poured into the famous facility the name of which was Forest Puddle Jumper. It was a station for an old forest train that conveyed thousands of visitors from around the world from the station into the heart of the scenic district of Arashiyama. The train worked like an esophagus that transports thousands of food molecules from the mouth to the stomach. Four tickets for standing rooms were the

best we could get, especially as we were competing with families with hyper-excitable children and noisy parents.

The train journey took about twenty minutes. It was an extremely pure and novel experience because none of us had ever explored the mountains on a wooden train, nor been in a new country where everyone spoke a language we had only ever heard in Japanese anime.

We were kind of exhausted after finding a place to stand on the train's wooden floor. The entrance to the district was a cave tunnel, so dark we could barely see its end-point. The splendid scenery outside the train already took our breath away, so we didn't pay any attention to the soft and gentle tour guide's narrative. Further, we were not familiar with the English tour explanations given the guide's Japanese accent.

There were so many tiny, insignificant things that rendered the trip memorable and perfect. The sparse bushes beside the train track, the vast fields in the distance, and the simple schematic diagram of the scenic spot with wooden road signs suddenly somehow made me recall a classic Japanese film, but, somehow, I couldn't name it. I shall probably forget the roads, the mountains, and the fields years later—they were too dreamy to be real. Dreams are easy to have but hard to keep in memory.

Then we walked for half an hour to reach the Golden Pavilion. Interestingly, there was a huge deserted open space in front of the temple which had a magnificent architectural appearance. This created a very sharp contrast. We did have questions: how do people find peace by visiting temples? How does it feel having faith? Do believers believe simply out of tradition? Do belief holders always come to

temples to reflect and heal themselves?

Lai and I guessed that faith dwells in hearts of the believers' both at home and abroad, rather than residing in the premium Golden Pavilion itself. We passed through the walkway and saw tons of small wooden boards with red bow knots and written words. Most of them could be translated into plain English. Many of the blessings read: "Eat better. Run more. Sleep earlier. Make a good breakfast. Drink water. Read books. Talk less. Listen more. Feel more deeply. Love better. Experience life. Be happy." We could obviously tell some authors might have gone through some desperate breakups, relatives' passing, and felt the great pressure on life.

But above all, most of them had nascent hopes.

Whatever else in our lives might be open to doubt, this giant hierarchy provided us with a glimpse into a world of similar absolutes in which we, spectators on the stony path, were such imperfect and puny individuals. We sat there for hours, waiting for the approaching sunset. And as time passed, the magical spell cast by the temple began to dissipate. It was a huge, ornate piece of architecture. There was nothing morbid about this, because this Golden Pavilion was still alive for us. Indeed, more alive than many of the visitors around us. We saw people of different ages and in different dress come and leave. Some bought their whole families, some came with their lovers, and some came alone. Some people burnt incense in front of the temple, some brought amulets to light up, and some took off their hats and sunglasses at the entrance. But it's not matter what they brought or how they came—faith was the belief in what they couldn't see or prove or touch. Faith is like the oxygen we breath in and out.

As one line from the Upanishads suggests: "People follow different paths, straight or crooked, according to their temperament, depending on which they consider best, or most appropriate—and all reach You, just as rivers enter the ocean." These rivers do not indicate that the world is chaotic but suggest that it may only appear so to us because of our limited vision. Admittedly, the newest things are also the most attractive ones. We always talk about exploring the world, and constantly reinforce the idea of "the outside being wonderful" in our minds. But when we are really in a strange country, we will return our vision and ideas to the original place. Although we are staying in a foreign country, we still feel farther away from where we are because of our different mentalities.

Though we were exhausted on our way back to hostel, we still felt obliged to give compliments to the landlord, who possesses a truly enchanting garden that made me jealous. While I washed my hair, I could watch the frogs jumping in and out from the small pond in the yard. In the early morning, we heard paper windows opening in Japanese traditional houses, alternating from far to near. We saw our middle-aged neighbor, a well-dressed housewife, going out with shopping bags made of bamboo and loose linen clothes. Her noble face, possessed of an ornate charm and suggested that she had been a young lady of discreet and modest temper. She keeps her well-organized hut with her patience and endurance, and she's not afraid of any threat or time passing or the wrinkles caused by the loss of collagen. She looked elegant and wise, like Virginia Woolf who wrote *A Room of One's Own* on her Japanese vacation.



Chapter 2

GARDENS, IZAKAYA, AND GASTROPUB

The most adorable things in Kyoto were Japanese gardens and courtyards. Every plant was so lovely, understated, and indispensable. We had a strong feeling that these living creatures, such as flowers and leaves, must have won a lottery put on by God. Suddenly, we sensed, rather than saw it, that these things would be less unique and gorgeous if they were just wild flowers in the field, or goods sold in the flower shop. Same with us—we are unambitious flowers in most people's eyes, but the opposite is true for the people who care about us.

We had no choice but to cancel our plan to rent a kimono to take pictures in the field. We were not in the mood on such a rainy afternoon. So instead, we popped into a medium size shuttle heading to downtown Kyoto. To

be specific, we planned to hunt for something special to eat. Still, we had no idea what's our ideal goal was.

The restaurant hunting lasted half an hour.

“所以我们到底要吃什么？[So, what kinda foods are we exactly looking for?]” Lee asked.

“日式居酒屋怎么样？我在宫崎骏的动画片《千与千寻》里看到过，应该很不错，[How about the Japanese style izakaya? I noticed that in Hayao Miyazaki's Anime Spirited Away. That should be nice,]” Zhao suggested.

“好啊，走！[Great, let's go gals!]” The rest of us blurted out.

Admittedly, though we were so pleased with the expected diner, the rainy, humid weather was way too harsh on the vibe. Looking out of the bus window, we did notice there would always be a few who remembered to take a moment, to appreciate what the drizzle has given them. Teenage girls in their small yellow peaked caps were frolicking in the rain. It seemed that embracing what's happening

around them was the best cosmetics for these very young ladies.

Night fell. It is a sin not to tell Kyoto she's beautiful, especially when she's wrapped in a star-studded robe. On one side of us was the bustling street where the lights were on and the cars come and went, and the other side was the quiet and clean alley of small residences, leading to the izakaya, with its rich aroma of wine and meat, and the sound of faint jazz music. We had googled the name of the restaurant in Japanese. A very local gastropub appeared. This little swanky izakaya contained the taste of region. Though it has hidden in a dim alleyway, locals and tourists were so keen to eat there that we had to wait for seats. We were starving while browsing the cuisine in the crinkled, brown handwritten menu. It was not a thin booklet.

“我估计有上百道菜。[Give or take, they've must contain hundreds of dishes.]” Lai talk-



ed to herself when reading the menu. Surprisingly, English names were written on the food list. At this point a busy restaurant employee came to introduce the hot-sale dishes to us. On offer was, sushi with sashimi, raw fish (akami, toro salmon, and sannma, etc). Hosomaki with nattou, tekka, and shinnko, etc. Apologies for not listing all of them—the word account would double. I was certainly delighted at having chosen such a place, just the thought of the coming dinner got my mouth watering.

Instead of taking in the vast array of delicacies, this sweaty workaholic caught my attention. I could see, though she was getting older, beauty poured out along the silver silk of her hair, and her grace broke over her dried skin. I have heard before that women here were labeled with “housewives.” They worked, competing with other women in a role model match, working diligently on almost every single detail of family life. When children were sick, she nursed. When the family was low in money, she stayed within a budget. She also cooked each meal, and mended clothes. Even when it came to the least of her responsibilities, she still helped her husband run the restaurant. I wondered if any women had been accused by taking men's job, and leaving them with nothing to do. Anyway, she was suave and urbane for her age. I mean, she could be 35 or 65, it was impossible to judge her age.

It would not be a perfect night without some imperfections. Owing to the long queuing time, me and Zhao decided to skip to dessert. So we went to 辻利茶舗 TSUJI for green tea ice cream (thanks to the Chinese that I remembered its name easily). Unfortunately, we started queuing again because people had just finished their scheduled dinner and headed for dessert. At the same time, our other two companions had to postpone their meals un-



til, finally, it was our turn. To make matters worse, we accidentally stained the paper menu with melted ice cream (the pamphlet looked like an antique). It gave us a fairly toe-curling embarrassment.

After struggling with hunger, all the new guests around us seemed to be guzzling their go-to soft drink, a beverage called Colpis, which was a yogurt-flavored milky soda. Eating is always amusing, and feels a bit naughty. We all remarked that anything that's this good has got to be sinful. Just by looking at the luster of the sushi and grill marks, we knew that this meal was fatty and delicious.

We ordered half-table sashimi and half-table barbecue. Instead of being fishy, these scrumptious dishes were tender, springy, and beyond succulent. The chef who was slicing sashimi was like an E.R. Doctor, busy working on living beings. I dare say this old man had skills in handling other ingredients such

as ginger, spring onions, and radishes. It was clear we had had a very desirable meal in an inconspicuous little shop that hadn't been promoted and polished too much, and, for most diners, taste trumps fame.

That night, we threw caution and concern with our appearance to the wind.

Chapter 3

VINTAGE STORE AND SHADES

Given that Kyoto is one of the most privileged, fashionable megacities in the world, we weren't expecting to discover any vintage stores here. In the first instance, Lai found out the residential area was next to the city center, which meant the people here led a convenient life, and the level of development of the city was also very high. To some extent, everything's new and well developed in Kyoto. We assumed that old-fashion collectors had become persona non grata, so being able to discover a vintage store on these cyberpunk streets was growing dimmer and dimmer. However, there was a silver lining, as, for new visitors and this place, there's always been this magnetism.

Lai got her first Chanel handbag. It was second-hand but exquisite. It was a long lady's handbag in black nylon fabric, which could just fit a folding umbrella, or some odds and ends. Produced in 1995, it was as old as time itself. This Chanel bag was well placed in the counter window. At first, I viewed it as for a lady who's a little older than us, with elegant manners, wearing a black vesture, and walking alone on a quiet and dark night. However, it was less flawless but more attractive when exposed in a well-lit place. We could clearly

see the bag's wrinkles from years of use. It was swell though. It was like a lady who appeared barely out of her teens, yet who had already experienced the charm of life and suffered from the pain of growth. It looked like Coco Chanel in her elegant couture. It might also have been a little black dress from a runway in Milan, but Coco was the representative of the elegance in those times. Though she had lovely crow's-feet, she was still so fine. Those perfect imperfections are the value of a vintage.

The darkness here was pretty as a picture, aging like an antique, without no imperfection. It was as precious as our memory.

We looked under the tranquil stars and felt the subtle waves of young life radiating from them. We learned that there were more than 20 billion shooting stars that travel across Kyoto a year. As their speed is faster than the blink of an eye, people barely had the chance to witness them. But magically, we got such dumb luck that became the chosen four who got to see close to ten million. But we were all too excited to make any wishes. Even so, we were overwhelmed with joy, happiness, and contentment. It was an extremely ecstatic life experience, and I hope it may happen once again. Would that be another shooting start on the other side of the world? Or would it come back later? No one knows, and then it hit me, what worked today might not always work tomorrow. A sense of loss was born. Such is life. I glanced at my watch. Two watch hands would overlap in ten minutes or so. It was a unique night, indeed.

Tomorrow, our story would resume with all these jovial memories of yesterdays in Kyoto.





Photograph by Carina

Photograph by Carina





Photograph by Carina



Edinburgh United Kingdom

*When the world is at odds
And the mind is all at sea
The cease the useless tedium
And brew a cup of tea.
There is a magic in its fragrance,
There is solace in its taste;
And the laden moments vanish
Somehow into space.
The world becomes a lovely thing!
There's beauty as you'll see;
All because you briefly stopped
To brew a cup*

Photograph by Carina





Photograph by Carina

Photograph by Jialin Yan



*Friends, sun, sand and sea
That sounds like a summer to me*

Everything is fine when there is sunshine



Photograph by Jialin Yan



Photograph by Carina

