

书摘 Excerpts

The Importance of Living (生活的艺术)

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FOREWORD (by Lin Taiyi)

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1. It is evident anyway that the Chinese as a nation are more philosophic than efficient, and that if it were otherwise, no nation could have survived the high blood pressure of an efficient life for four thousand years.
2. Again, and here is a significant result, the end of living is not some metaphysical entity – but just living itself.
3. The mature Chinese is always a person who refuses to think too hard or to believe in any single idea or faith or school of philosophy whole-heartedly.
4. Speaking as a Chinese, I do not think that any civilization can be called complete until it has progressed from sophistication to unsophistication, and made a conscious return to simplicity of thinking and living, and I call no man wise until he has made the progress from the wisdom of knowledge to the wisdom of foolishness, and become a laughing philosopher, feeling first life’s tragedy and then life’s comedy.
5. What strikes me most is that the Greeks made their gods like men, while the Christians desired to make men like the gods.
6. The reason I don’t trust Chinese surgeons is that I am afraid that when a Chinese surgeon cuts



up my liver in search of a gall-stone, he may forget about the stone and put my liver in a frying pan. For I see a Chinese cannot look at a porcupine without immediately thinking of ways and means of cooking and eating its flesh without being poisoned.

7. Human fallibility is the very essence of the color of life, as the upsets are the very color and interest of a steeplechase.
8. This human dignity, as I have already hinted at the beginning of this book, consists of four characteristics of the scamp, who has been glorified by Chinese literature. They are: a playful curiosity, a capacity for dreams, a sense of humor to correct those dreams, and finally a certain waywardness and incalculability of behavior.
9. Germany lost the war because Wilhelm Hohenzollern did not know when to laugh, or what to laugh at. His dreams were not restrained by laughter.
10. Perhaps I don't understand economics, but economics does not understand me, either. That is why economics is still floundering today and hardly dares pop up its head as a science. The sad thing about economics is that it is no science, if it stops at commodities and does not go beyond to human motives, and if it does go beyond to human motives, it is still no science, or at best a pseudo-science, if it tries to reach human motives by statistical averages.
11. When the knowledge of things is gained, then understanding is reached; when understanding is reached, then the will is sincere; when the will is sincere, then the heart is set right; when the heart is set right, then the personal life is cultivated; when the personal life is cultivated, then the home life is regulated; when the home life is regulated, then the national life is orderly; and when the national life is orderly, then the world is at peace.
12. There is a wealth of humbug in this life, but the multitudinous little humbugs have been classified by Chinese Buddhists under two big humbugs: fame and wealth.
13. From my own observation of life, this Buddhist classification of life's humbugs is not complete, and the great humbugs of life are three, instead of two: Fame, Wealth and Power. There is a convenient American word which again combines these three humbugs into the One Great Humbug: Success.
14. Against the desire of Julius Caesar to be the first man in a village, Laotse gives the opposite counsel of "Never be the first in the world."
15. I have made a poem which sums up for me the message of Taoistic thought:
 There is the wisdom of the foolish,
 The gracefulness of the slow,
 The subtlety of stupidity,
 The advantage of lying low.
16. Cheng Panch'iao in the eighteenth century made the famous remark: "It is difficult to be muddle-headed. It is difficult to be clever, but still more difficult to graduate from cleverness into muddle-headedness."
17. No, the Chinese are cynics and poets only when they have failed; most of my countrymen are still very good showmen.
18. What can be the end of human life except the enjoyment of it?
19. The love of mankind which requires reasons is no true love. This love should be perfectly natural, as natural for man as for the birds to flap their wings. It should be a direct feeling, springing naturally from a healthy soul, living in touch with Nature. No man who loves the



- trees truly can be cruel to animals or to his fellowmen.
20. Art should be a satire and a warning against our paralyzed emotions, our devitalized thinking and our denaturalized living. It teaches us unsophistication in a sophisticated world. It should restore to us health and sanity of living and enable us to recover from the fever and delirium caused by too much mental activity. It should sharpen our senses, re-establish the connection between our reason and our human nature, and assemble the ruined parts of a dislocated life again into a whole, by restoring our original nature.
 21. The highest conception of human dignity, according to the Chinese Confucianists, is when man reaches ultimately his greatest height, an equal of heaven and earth, by living in accordance with nature.
 22. But the essential fact remains that human life has got too complicated and the matter of merely feeding ourselves, directly or indirectly, is occupying well over ninety percent of our human activities.
 23. Culture, as I understand it, is essentially a product of leisure. The art of culture is therefore essentially the art of loafing. From the Chinese point of view, the man who is wisely idle is the most cultured man.
 24. On the whole, the enjoyment of leisure is something which decidedly costs less than the enjoyment of luxury. All it requires is an artistic temperament which is bent on seeking a perfectly useless afternoon spent in a perfectly useless manner.
 25. The Chinese romanticists were, on the whole, men gifted with a high sensibility and a vagabond nature, poor in their worldly possessions, but rich in sentiment.
 26. In America it might bring the roof down on the editors but in China *it doesn't matter, simply because it doesn't matter.*
 27. My point of view is, whatever the reason may be, the fact of a man or woman leaving this world without children is the greatest crime he or she can commit against himself or herself.
 28. God took of the beauty of the flowers, the song of the birds, the colors of the rainbow, the kiss of the breeze, the laughter of the waves, the gentleness of the lamb, the cunning of the fox, the waywardness of the clouds and the fickleness of the shower, and wove them into a female being and presented her to man as his wife.
 29. I have no doubt that nature conceives of woman chiefly as a mother, even more than as a mate, and has endowed her with mental and moral characteristics which are conducive to her role as mother, and which find their true explanation and unity in the maternal instinct – realism, judgment, patience with details, love of the small and helpless, desire to take care of somebody, strong animal love and hatred, great personal and emotional bias and a generally personal outlook on things.
 30. To look at it from another aspect, happiness is largely a matter of finding one's life work, the work that one loves. I question whether ninety per cent of the men and women occupied in a profession have found the work that they really love.
 31. What real authority the American woman does exercise is still from her traditional old throne – the hearth – over which she presides as the happy ministering angel. I have seen such angels, but only in the sanctity of a private home, where a woman glides along in the kitchen or in the parlor, true mistress of a home consecrated to family love. Somehow she suffuses a radiance which would be unthinkable or out of place in an office.



32. Art has made the modern man sex conscious. I have no doubt about it.
33. On the stage, one sees women nearly undressed, while the men still keep their morning coats and black ties; in a woman-ruled world, one would certainly see the man half undressed, while the women kept their skirts.
34. The amorous instinct has its proper contribution to make to the enrichment of life, yet it can be overdone to the detriment of woman herself.
35. The ideal woman, then, becomes a young woman with perfect physical proportions and physical charm, whereas for me, woman is never more beautiful than when she is standing over a cradle, never more serious and dignified than when she is holding a baby in her breast and leading a child of four or five years by the hand, and never more happy than, as I have seen in a Western painting, when she is lying in bed against a pillow and playing with a baby at her breast.
36. It is a well-known fact that Chinese society and Chinese life are organized on the basis of the family system. This system determines and colors the entire Chinese pattern of life.
37. As it is, I do not think the respect paid to square wooden tablets about fifteen inches long, inscribed with the names of ancestors, is more religious or less so than the use of the picture of the King on a British postage stamp.
38. The ideal of the family system is necessarily dead set against the ideal of personal individualism. No man, after all, lives as an individual completely alone, and the idea of such an individual has no reality to it.
39. In place of this individualism and nationalism of the West, there is then the family ideal in which man is not regarded as an individual but as a member of a family and an essential part of the great stream of family life.
40. This sense of family consciousness and family honor is probably the only form of team spirit or group consciousness in Chinese life.
41. The worst thing that can happen to a man, probably, is to have unworthy sons who cannot “maintain the family glory” or even the family fortune.
42. If the early Chinese people had any chivalry, it was manifested not toward women and children, but toward the old people.
43. The greatest regret as Chinese gentleman could have was the eternally lost opportunity of serving his old parents with medicine and soup on their deathbed, or not to be present when they died.
44. It seems a linguistic misfortune that hale and hearty old men in America tell people that they are “young”, or are told that they are “young” when really what is meant is that they are healthy. To enjoy health in old age, or to be “old and healthy”, is the greatest of human luck, but to call it “healthy and young” is but to detract from that glamour and impute imperfection to what is really perfect.
45. How can any one deny that parents who have toiled for their children in their youth, have lost many a good night’s sleep when they were ill, have washed their diapers long before they could talk and have spent about a quarter of a century bringing them up and fitting them for life, have the right to be fed by them and loved and respected when they are old?
46. The important point is the *every man grows old in time*, if he lives long enough, as he certainly desires to.



47. Philosophy therefore has become a science by means of which we begin more and more to understand less and less about ourselves. What the philosophers have succeeded in is this: the more they talk about it, the more confused we become.
48. It is amazing how few people are conscious of the importance of the art of lying in bed, although actually in my opinion nine-tenths of the world's most important discoveries, both scientific and philosophical, are come upon when the scientist or philosopher is curled up in bed at two or five o'clock in the morning.
49. I find that those people who agree with me in believing in lying in bed as one of the greatest pleasures of life are the honest men, while those who do not believe in lying in bed are liars and actually lie a lot in the daytime, morally and physically.
50. What are armchairs for anyway, except for people to loll in?
51. If we admit that comfort is not a sin, then we must also admit that the more comfortably a man arranges himself in an armchair in a friend's drawing-room, the greater respect he is showing to his host.
52. Now I have discovered a formula regarding the comparative comfort of furniture. This formula may be stated in very simple terms: the lower a chair is, the more comfortable it becomes.
53. A word to the ladies: when there is nothing in the immediate foreground on which you can rest your feet, you can always curl up your legs on a sofa. You never look more charming than when you are in that attitude.
54. Of course, night is the best time for conversation, because there is a certain lack of glamour in conversations during the daytime. The place of conversation seems to me entirely unimportant.
55. As a rule, a good conversation is always like a good familiar essay. Both its style and its contents are similar to that of the essay.
56. But it seems to me, even if there are no ladies around who can debate with me on Karl Marx and Engels, conversation is always pleasantly stimulated when there are a few ladies who know how to listen and look sweetly pensive. I always find it more delightful than talking to stupid-looking men.
57. I do not think that, considered from the point of view of human culture and happiness, there have been more significant inventions in the history of mankind, more vitally important and more directly contributing to our enjoyment of leisure, friendship, sociability and conversation, than the inventions of smoking, drinking and tea.
58. The proper enjoyment of tobacco, drink and tea can only be developed in an atmosphere of leisure, friendship and sociability.
59. It is true that the smokers cause some nuisance to the non-smokers, but this nuisance is physical, while the nuisance that the non-smokers cause the smokers is spiritual.
60. It is sometimes assumed, however, that the non-smokers are morally superior, and that they have something to be proud of, not realizing that they have missed one of the greatest pleasures of mankind.
61. And most important of all, a man with a pipe in his mouth is always happy, and after all, happiness is the greatest of all moral virtues. W. Maggin says that "no cigar smoker ever committed suicide," and it is still truer that no pipe smoker ever quarrels with his wife. The



reason is perfectly plain: one cannot hold a pipe between one's teeth and at the same time shout at the top of one's voice.

62. A wife may fail, but a pipe never.
63. The fact that they could stop such a habit as easily as they could throw away an old toothbrush shows that they have never really learned to smoke at all.
64. In contrast with wine, there is comparatively little praise of tobacco in Chinese literature, because smoking as a habit was introduced by Portuguese sailors as late as sixteenth century.
65. When a lady in red pyjamas is standing by your side, and you are holding her hand around the incense burner and whispering secrets to each other, it warms your heart and intensifies your love. You may therefore call it "the ancient stimulant of passion."
66. This is evidently a matter of natural gift, and the gifts of drinking tea and wine and smoking do not seem to go together.
67. Anyway, Li Liweng has put down on record his sworn opinion that great drinkers of tea are not fond of wine, and vice versa.
68. In spite of my disqualification, I still cannot ignore this topic, because more than anything else, it has made an important contribution to literature, and in the same measure as smoking, wherever the custom of smoking was known, it has greatly helped man's creative power, with considerable lasting results.
69. There is a wise thought in the suggestion that the modern dictators of Europe are so dangerous to humanity because they don't drink.
70. The reason I don't like dictators is that they are inhuman, and anything which is inhuman is bad. An inhuman religion is no religion, inhuman politics is foolish politics, inhuman art is just bad art, and the inhuman way of life is the beast's way of life.
71. The contrast between wine and tea is expressed in the form that "tea resembles the recluse, and wine resembles the cavalier; wine is for good comradeship, and tea is for the man of quiet virtue."
72. If the Chinaman does not have a good time when he is eating, when does he have a good time?
73. Nevertheless, it is a pretty crazy life when one eats in order to work and does not work in order to eat.
74. The spirit of T'aot'ieh is in us. It makes our pharmacopoeias resemble our cook books and our cook books resemble a pharmacopoeia, and it makes the rise of botany and zoology as branches of the natural science impossible, for the Chinese scientists are thinking all the time of how a snake, a monkey, or a crocodile's flesh or a camel's hump would taste. True scientific curiosity in China is a gastronomic curiosity.
75. Every food is good when cooked and tasted in its own country and in its proper season.
76. The reason that Li finally gave for his appreciation of crab was that it was perfect in the three requisites of food – *color*, *fragrance* and *flavor*.
77. For me, the philosophy of food seems to boil down to three things: freshness, flavor and texture.
78. The three necessary characteristics of the most expensive Chinese delicacies are that they must be *colorless*, *odorless*, and *flavorless*.
79. The reason why they taste so wonderful is because they are always prepared in the most



expensive soup possible.

80. One great difference between Oriental and Occidental civilizations is that the Westerners shake each other's hands, while we shake our own. Of all the ridiculous Western customs, I think that of shaking hands is one of the worst.
81. After all, we see human stupidity around us everywhere, from the stupidity of modern international relations to that of the modern educational system. Mankind may be intelligent enough to invent the radio and wireless telephones, but mankind is simply not intelligent enough to stop wars, nor will ever be. So I am willing to let stupidity in the more trivial things go by, and content merely to be amused.
82. Now the philosophy behind Chinese and Western dress is that the latter tries to reveal the human form, while the former tries to conceal it. But as the human body is essentially like the monkeys', usually the less of it revealed the better.
83. Only in a world of people blind in sense of beauty is the foreign dress tolerable. It is a platitude that the perfect human figure rarely exists.
84. But the western dress is so designed that any man in the street can tell whether your waistline is thirty-two or thirty-eight.
85. That is why I also believe in the foreign dress for young women of good figure between twenty and forty and for all children whose natural bodily rhythm has not yet been subjected to our uncivilized form of living. But to demand that all men and women reveal their figure to the eyes of the world is another story.
86. While the Western female dress has achieved a large measure of comfort in this respect formerly denied to the fair sex, the male human neck is still considered by the Western educated public as so ugly and immoral and socially unrepresentable that it must be concealed as much as his waistline must be revealed.
87. Western men are paying a severe penalty for their conservatism in this matter of dress and for their fear of innovation, while Western women long ago achieved simplicity and common sense in their dress.
88. It requires no imagination to see that for adjustment to varying climatic conditions, the Chinese dress is also the only logical mode. While the Westerner is compelled to wear underwear, on shirt, perhaps one vest and one coat, whether the weather temperature is below zero or above a hundred, the Chinese dress is infinitely flexible.
89. The word "house" should include all the living conditions or the physical environment of one's house.
90. The Chinese conception of house and garden is therefore determined by the central idea that the house itself is only a detail forming a part of the surrounding country, like a jewel in its setting, and harmonizing with it.
91. The charm of a house lies in its individuality. Li Liweng has several chapters on houses and interiors in his book on the *Art of Living*, and in the introductory remarks he emphasizes the two points of *familiarity* and *individuality*. Familiarity, I feel, is more important than individuality.
92. Luxury and expensiveness are the things most to be avoided in architecture.
93. The ideal of Chinese interiors seems to consist of the two ideas, simplicity and space.
94. There are both a scientific and a moral attitude toward the universe.



95. Nature is itself always a sanatorium. If it can cure nothing else, it can cure man of megalomania.
96. A disbeliever in Christian Science, I do believe in the spiritual, healing properties of grand, old trees and mountain resorts, not for curing a fractured shoulder-bone or an infected skin, but for curing the ambitions of the flesh and diseases of the soul.
97. The enjoyment of Nature is an art, depending so much on one's mood and personality, and like all art, it is difficult to explain its technique. Everything must be spontaneous and rise spontaneously from an artistic temperament. It is therefore difficult to lay down rules for the enjoyment of this or that tree, this or that rock and this or that landscape in a particular moment, for no landscapes are exactly alike. He who understands will know how to enjoy Nature without being told.
98. The feeling for Nature, one's dreams of a beautiful landscape seen a year ago, and one's sudden desire to visit a certain place – these things come in at the most unexpected moments. One who has the artistic temperament shows it descriptions of a beautiful snow scene or a spring evening, forgetting entirely about the story or the plot.
99. The reminiscences of Chinese literary men, and also their letters, differ in this respect. The important thing is to tell a friend in one's letter about a night on the lake, or to record in one's autobiography a perfectly happy day and how it was passed.
100. No one should aim at writing immortal poetry; one should learn the writing of poems merely as a way to record a meaningful moment, a personal mood, or to help the enjoyment of Nature.
101. I don't know what we are going to do now. We are building houses square and are building them in a row, and we are having straight roads without trees. There are no more crooked streets, no more old houses, no more wells in one's garden, and whatever private garden there is in the city is usually a caricature.
102. Looking at these skyscrapers and these lighted windows in a row at night, one gets more and more conceited about the power of human civilization and forgets what puny little creatures human beings are.
103. No matter what the excuse, a civilization that deprives man of land is wrong.
104. As one cannot visit the mountains every day, it is necessary to have rocks brought to the home.
105. A really artistic rockery should have the composition and contrast of a painting.
106. Side by side with this appreciation of the grandeur of rocks on mountain peaks, there developed then a different appreciation of rocks in gardens, emphasizing their color, texture, surface, grains and sometimes the sounds they produced when struck. The smaller the stones, the more emphasis was laid on quality of texture and color of grains.
107. For the fullest appreciation of all uses of stone in the house and gardens, however, one has to go back to Chinese calligraphy. For calligraphy is nothing but a study of rhythm and line and composition in the abstract.
108. The feeling for trees is easier to understand, and is, of course, universal. Houses without trees around them are naked, like men and women without clothing. The difference between trees and houses is that houses are built but trees grow, and anything which grows is always more beautiful to look at than anything which is built.



109. Therefore Governor Yuan's Islet is in perfect harmony with nature. It is not obtrusive to the eye, like the lighthouse-shaped monument next to it built by a student returned from America, which gives me inflammation of the eyelids every time I look at it. I have made a public promise that if one day I should emerge as a bandit general and capture Hangchow, my first official act would be to direct a cannon and blow that lighthouse-shaped thing to pieces.
110. Out of the myriad variety of trees, Chinese critics and poets have come to feel that there are a few which are particularly good for artistic enjoyment, due to their special lines and contours which are aesthetically beautiful from a calligrapher's point of view. The point is, that while all trees are beautiful, certain trees have a particular gesture or strength or gracefulness. These trees are therefore picked out from among the others and associated with definite sentiments.
111. Of these the most outstanding are the pine tree, enjoyed for its grand manner, the plum tree, enjoyed for its romantic manner, the bamboo tree, enjoyed for its delicacy of line and the suggestion of the home, and the willow tree, enjoyed for its gracefulness and its suggestion of slender women.
112. Above all, the enjoyment of trees is not only in and for themselves, but in association with other elements of nature, such as rocks, clouds, birds, insects and human beings.
113. There seems to be a certain randomness about the enjoyment of flowers and flower arrangements, as we know it today. The enjoyment of flowers, like the enjoyment of trees, must begin with the selection of certain noble varieties, with a sense of grading of their relative standing, and with the association of definite sentiments and surroundings with definite flowers.
114. Like the pine tree and the bamboo, the orchid, the chrysanthemum and the lotus are selected for certain definite qualities and stand in Chinese literature as symbols for the gentleman, the orchid more particularly for an exotic beauty. The plum flower is probably most beloved by Chinese poets among all flowers, and has been partly dealt with already in the previous section.
115. Opinions differ, of course, and the peony has been traditionally regarded as the "king of flowers," particularly in the T'ang Dynasty.
116. Unlike the peony, the orchid stands as the symbol of secluded charm because it is often found in a deserted shady valley.
117. The chrysanthemum is the flower of the poet T'ao Yuanmng, as the plum flower was the flower of the poet Lin Hoching, and the lotus was the flower of the Confucian doctrinaire, Chou Liench'i.
118. The lotus or water lily is in a class by itself and seems to me personally the most beautiful of all flowers, when we consider the flower, including its stem and its leaves floating on the water, as a whole.
119. The *hait'ang* pyrus, resembling apple-blossoms, enjoys as great a popularity among poets as any other flower, although Tu Fu failed to make a single mention of this flower which grew in his native province, Szechuen.
120. There are only two flowers for whose fragrance I am willing to forego the orchid, and they are the cassia and the narcissus.
121. The azalea is supposed to be a tragic flower, in spite of its smiling beauty, because it was supposed to spring from the tears of blood of the cuckoo, who was formerly a boy in search of



- his lost brother persecuted out of home by a stepmother.
122. Quite as important as the selection and grading of the flowers themselves is their arrangement in vases. This was an art that could be traced back at least as far as the eleventh century.
 123. We have seen that the enjoyment of nature does not lie merely in art and painting. Nature enters into our life as a whole. It is all sound and color and shape and mood and atmosphere, and man as the perceiving artist of life begins to select the proper moods of nature and harmonize them with his own.
 124. Travel used to be a pleasure, now it has become an industry.
 125. Nevertheless travel seems to have become a lost art.
 126. The first kind of false travel is travel to improve one's mind.
 127. The second kind of false travel is travel for conversation, in order that one may talk about it afterwards.
 128. As these historical places become places to be talked about afterwards instead of places to be looked at, it is natural that the more places one visits, the richer the memory will be, and the more places there will be to talk about. This urge for learning and scholarship therefore impels the tourist to cover as many points as possible in a day.
 129. This sort of foolish travel necessarily produces the third type of false travelers, who travel by schedule, knowing beforehand exactly how many hours they are going to spend in Vienna or Budapest.
 130. In place of these false types of travel, I propose that the true motives of travel are, or should be, otherwise. In the first place, the true motive of travel should be travel to become lost and unknown. More poetically, we may describe it as travel to forget.
 131. A true traveler is always a vagabond, with the joys, temptations and sense of adventure of the vagabond. Either travel is "vagabonding" or it is no travel at all. The essence of travel is to have no duties, no fixed hours, no mail, no inquisitive neighbors, no receiving delegations, and no destination.
 132. The spirit of vagabondage makes it possible for people taking a vacation to get closer to Nature.
 133. I may suggest that there is a different kind of travel, travel to see nothing and to see nobody, but the squirrels and muskrats and woodchucks and clouds and trees.
 134. The aim of education or culture is merely the development of good taste in knowledge and good form in conduct. The cultured man or the ideal educated man is not necessarily one who is well-read or learned, but one who likes and dislikes the right things. To know what to love and what to hate is to have taste in knowledge.
 135. There are many facts in a given historical period that can be easily crammed into our mind, but discernment in the selection of significant facts is a vastly more difficult thing and depends upon one's point of view.
 136. An educated man, therefore, is one who has the right loves and hatreds. This we call taste, and with taste comes charm. Now to have taste or discernment requires a capacity for thinking things through to the bottom, an independence of judgment, and an unwillingness to be bulldozed by any form of humbug, social, political, literary, artistic, or academic.
 137. Taste then is closely associated with courage, as the Chinese always associate *shih* with *tan*, and courage or independence of judgment, as we know, is such a rare virtue among mankind.



138. Confucius seemed to have felt that scholarship without thinking was more dangerous than thinking unbacked by scholarship; he said, “Thinking without learning makes one flighty, and learning without thinking is a disaster.”
139. The pursuit of knowledge should remain nobody else’s business but one’s own, and only then can education become a pleasure and become positive.
140. Art is both creation and recreation.
141. It is only when the spirit of play is kept that art can escape being commercialized.
142. In order to understand the essence of art at all, we have to go back to the physical basis of art as an overflow of energy. This is known as an artistic or creative impulse.
143. Beauty is merely good form, and there is good form in conduct as well as in good painting or a beautiful bridge. Art is very much broader than painting and music and dancing, because there is good form in everything.
144. The Chinese notion of *p’in* in art is extremely interesting, sometimes spoken of as *jenp’in* (“personality of the man”) or *p’inkeh* (“personality of character”).
145. Connected with this idea of *p’in*, therefore, there is the generally accepted belief that an artist’s work is strictly determined by his personality. This “personality” is both moral and artistic.
146. We require that all art must have *character*, and character is nothing but what the work of art suggests or reveals concerning the artist’s personality or soul or heart or, as Chinese put it, “breast.”
147. The cultivation of personality is both moral and aesthetic, and it requires both scholarship and refinement.
148. Reading or the enjoyment of books has always been regarded among the charms of a cultured life and is respected and envied by those who rarely give themselves that privilege.
149. The best reading is therefore that which leads us into this contemplative mood, and not that which is merely occupied with the report of events.
150. One doesn’t read to “improve one’s mind,” because when one begins to think of improving his mind, all the pleasure of reading is gone.
151. There are no books in this world that everybody must read, but only books that a person must read at a certain time in a give place under given circumstances and at a given period of his life. I rather think that reading, like matrimony is determined by fate or *yinyüan*. Even if there is a certain book that every one must read, like the *Bible*, there is a time for it.
152. The art of writing is very much broader than the art of writing itself, or of the writing technique.
153. Style is not a method, a system or even a decoration for one’s writing; it is but the total impression that the reader gets of the quality of the writer’s mind, his depth or superficiality, his insight or lack of insight and other qualities like wit, humor, biting sarcasm, genial understanding, tenderness, delicacy of understanding, kindly cynicism or cynical kindness, hardheadedness, practical common sense, and general attitude toward things.
154. Professors of composition talk about literature as carpenters talk about art.
155. There is no such thing as the technique of writing.
156. The best flavor is mildness and mellowness, but is most difficult for a writer to attain. Between mildness and mere flatness there is only a very thin margin.



157. Style is a compound of language, thought and personality.
158. Very rarely does one find clear thoughts clothed in unclear language. Much more often does one find unclear thoughts expressed clearly. Such a style is clearly unclear.
159. The wise man reads both books and life itself. The universe is one big book, and life is one big school.
160. Writing is but the expression of one's own nature or character and the play of his vital spirit.
161. Literary beauty is only expressiveness.
162. The indiscreet fool is a nation's best diplomat. He wins people's hearts.
163. The thing called beauty in literature and beauty in things depends so much on change and movement and is based on life. What lives always has change and movement, and what has change and movement naturally has beauty.
164. Religion should, and will confine itself to the moral realm, the realm of the moral conscience, which has a dignity of its own comparable in every sense to the study of flowers, the fishes and the stars.
165. Religion must cease to be a dabbler in astronomy and geology and a preserver of ancient folkways. Let religion respectfully keep its mouth shut when teachers of biology are talking, and it will seem infinitely less silly and gain immeasurably in the respect of mankind.
166. Religion is always an individual, personal thing. Every person must work out his own views of religion, and if he is sincere, God will not blame him, however it turns out.
167. To me, being a pagan is just being natural.
168. Peace of mind is that mental condition in which you have accepted the worst.
169. Thinking is an art, and not a science. One of the greatest contrasts between Chinese and Western scholarship is the fact that in the West there is so much specialized knowledge, and so little humanized knowledge, while in China there is so much more concern with the problems of living, while there are no specialized science.
170. I am speaking of "scientific" thinking in its everyday sense, and not of true scientific thinking, which cannot be divorced from common sense on the one hand, and imagination on the other. In its everyday sense, this "scientific" thinking is strictly logical, objective, highly specialized and "atomic" in its method and vision. The contrast in the two types of scholarship, Oriental and Occidental, ultimately goes back to the opposition between logic and common sense. Logic, deprived of common sense, becomes inhuman, and common sense, deprived of logic, is incapable of penetrating into the nature's mysteries.
171. What does one find as he goes through the field of Chinese literature and philosophy? One finds there are no sciences, no extreme theories, no dogmas, and really no great divergent schools of philosophy. Common sense and the reasonable spirit have crushed out all theories and all dogmas. Like the poet Po Chüyi, the Chinese scholar "utilized Confucianism to order his conduct, utilized Buddhism to cleanse his mind, and then utilized history, paintings, mountains, rivers, wine, music and song to soothe his spirit."
172. China, therefore, becomes a land where no one is trying very hard to think and everyone is trying very hard to live. It becomes a land where philosophy itself is a pretty simple and common sense affair that can be as conveniently put in two lines of verse as in a heavy volume. It becomes a land where there is no system of philosophy, broadly speaking, no logic, no metaphysics, no academic jargon; where there is much less academic dogmatism, less



intellectual or practical fanaticism, and fewer abstract terms and long words. No sort of mechanistic rationalism is ever possible and there is a strong hatred of the idea of logical necessity. It becomes also a land where there are no lawyers in business life, as there are no logicians in philosophy. In place of well thought out systems of philosophy, they have only an intimate feeling of life, and instead of a Kant or a Hegel, they have only essayists, epigram writers and propounders of Buddhist conundrums and Taoist parables.

173. It is hardly necessary to point out that the logical faculty is a very powerful weapon of the human mind, making the conquests of science possible.
174. The outstanding characteristic of Western scholarship is its specialization, and cutting up of knowledge into different departments.
175. Either the modern man is not interested in the problems of living, which are the proper subject of philosophy, or we have gone a long way from the original conception of philosophy.
176. For we have now come to a stage of human culture in which we have compartments of knowledge but not knowledge itself; specialization, but no integration; specialists but no philosophers of human wisdom.
177. There is clearly a distinction between logical thinking and reasonable thinking, which may be also expressed as the difference between academic thinking and poetic thinking.
178. We have today a philosophy that has become stranger to life itself, that has almost half disclaimed any intention to teach us the meaning of life and the wisdom of living, a philosophy that has lost that intimate feeling of life or awareness of living which we spoke of as the very essence of philosophy.
179. We have to get back to a way of thinking which is more impatient to be in touch with reality, with life, and above all with human nature, than to be merely correct, logical and consistent.
180. Life or existence does not have to go down on its knees and beg logic to prove that it exists or that it is there.
181. It seems what the Western logicians need is just a little humility; their salvation lies in some one curing them of their Hegelian swelled-heads.
182. In contrast to logic, there is common sense, or still better, the Spirit of Reasonableness. I think of the Spirit of Reasonableness as the highest and sanest ideal of human culture, and the reasonable man as the highest type of cultivated human being. No one can be perfect; he can only aim at being a likeable, reasonable being.
183. Reasonable nations live in peace and reasonable husbands and wives live in happiness.
184. In human affairs, it is often the illogical course of conduct that is the most convincing.
185. Humanized thinking is just reasonable thinking. The logical man is always self-righteous and therefore inhuman and therefore wrong, while the reasonable man suspects that perhaps he is wrong and is therefore always right.

