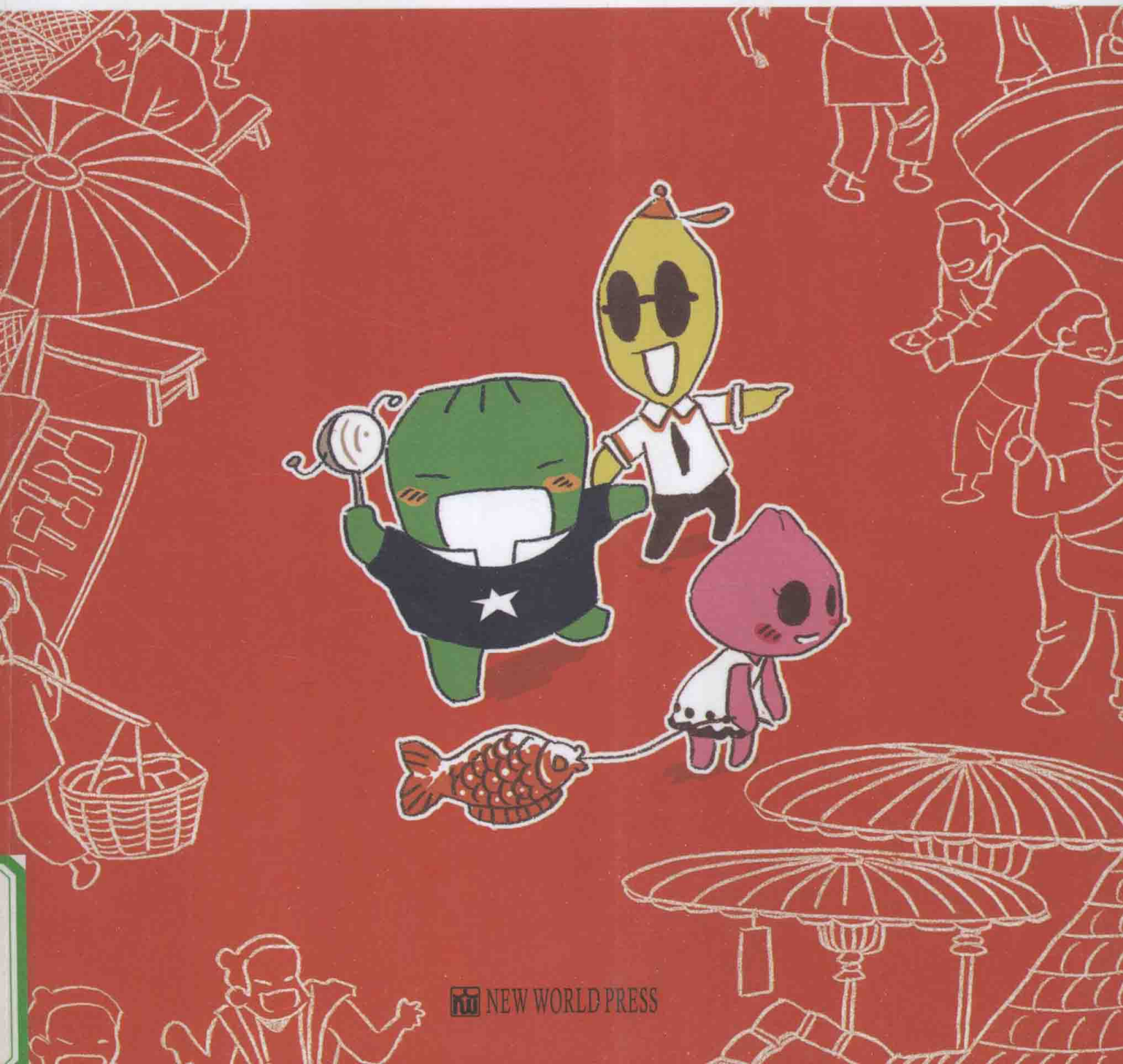


The Big Picture Book of Chinese Culture

Style of Life

Written by Ye Lang and Zhu Liangzhi

Illustrated by Sunki and Leftleft



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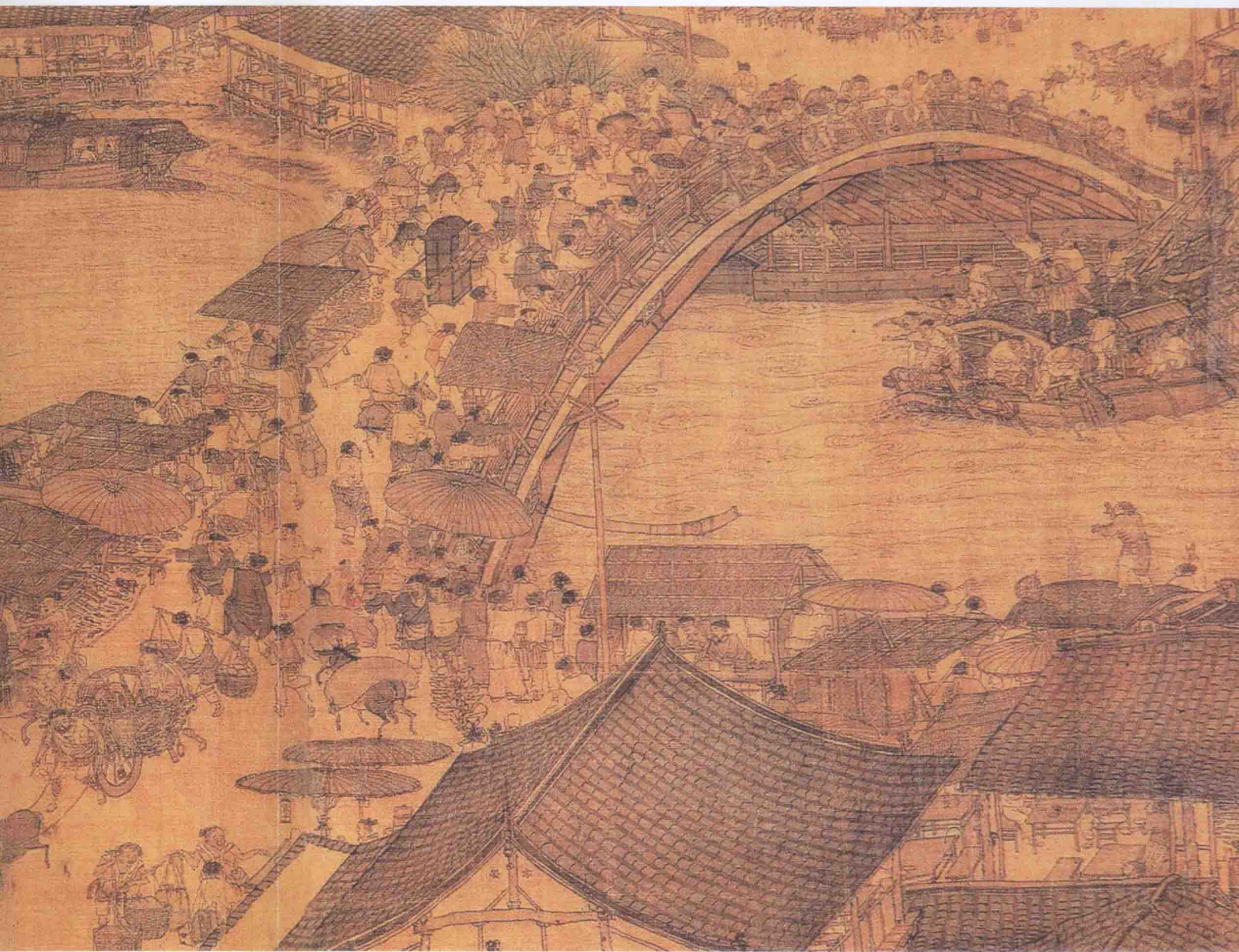
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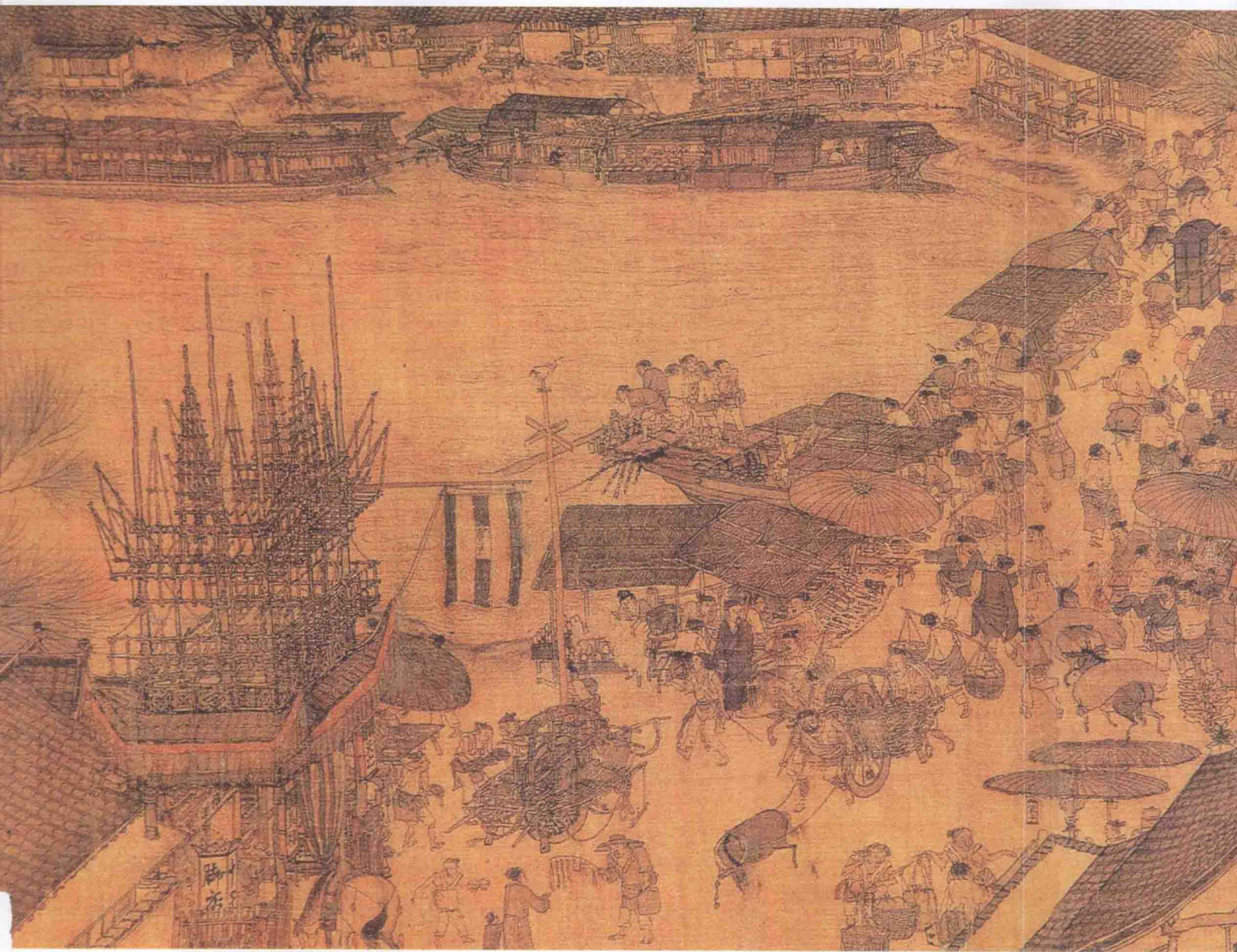
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Riverside Scene at Qingming Festival (Rainbow Bridge section)

Preface

This book introduces Chinese culture in an amusing way. We hope that readers can feel the “living” Chinese culture. Through the book, readers will not only gain knowledge of Chinese culture, but also understand the Chinese spirit, the vitality and creation of the nation, and the character, national spirit, and aesthetic pursuits of the Chinese people.

The Analects and the Temple of Heaven explain that the Chinese people hold nature in awe and gratitude;

Confucian thought and Chinese paintings show that Chinese people cherish life and that they have a holistic concept of life in which man is part of a unitary force with other living creatures;

From Laozi, *Book of Changes*, Zen philosophy, traditional Chinese medicine, shadow boxing and the game of Go, we can understand the Chinese wisdom of living in harmony with the way of nature;

With Sunzi's *Art of War*, the Great Wall and Zheng He's voyages to the Western seas, it becomes apparent that Chinese people hope for eternal peace;

The “Minority Folk Fashions,” which is highly popular in Chang'an, and the Western fashion in old Shanghai offer strong evidence of the open and inclusive spirit of Chinese culture;

The long travel of Xuanzang and Yijing to South Asia and the large-scale translation team demonstrates the openness of Chinese people to foreign cultures;

From the smiling Buddha in the Maiji Mountain Grottoes and the indomitable character of Monkey King in *Journey to the West*, we can see that Chinese people always keep an optimistic and easy-going

spirit. They never lose hope despite the hardships of life and find ways of coping with the normal vicissitudes of human existence;

Riverside Scene at Qingming Festival depicts the joyful and harmonious atmosphere of the capital Bianliang of the Northern Song Dynasty, exemplifying the Chinese soulful contentment of a peaceful and harmonious life;

From the pigeons soaring across the blue sky in Beijing and the leisure in tea-drinking, it is hardly arguable that the common Chinese people enjoy a sense of self-worth and find meaning and happiness in their everyday life;

The New Year Pictures of Yangliuqing in Tianjin and Taohuawu in Suzhou express the Chinese people's strong wishes for peaceful and affluent life;

The bronzeware of the Spring and Autumn Period, the calligraphy of Wang Xizhi and the poems of Li Bai all demonstrate the Chinese dynamic and graceful artistic pursuit;

The pure porcelain, fascinating gardens and women's graceful cheongsam provide stunning evidence of the Chinese aesthetic tastes;

From the delicate romantic atmosphere created by the Chinese zither (a traditional Chinese musical instrument) to the art of tea-drinking, we can clearly see the aesthetic appreciation of beauty.

The Big Picturebook of Chinese Culture is adapted from the earlier published *Insights into Chinese Culture* (Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press, 2008). In a more vivid comic way, the readers soon understand the inner world and aesthetic tastes of Chinese people and get a better understanding of Chinese culture.

Ye Lang and Zhu Liangzhi

August 8, 2009

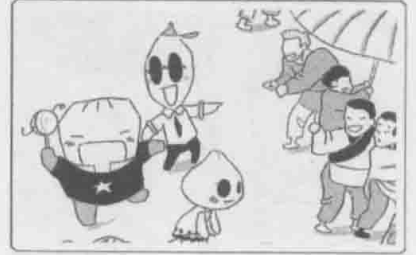
Introduction

The clothing, food, housing, transportation and folk customs of Chinese people reflect their peaceful, optimistic and open-minded inner world. *Riverside Scene at Qingming Festival* depicts the hustle and bustle of the capital Bianliang of the Northern Song Dynasty. The busy Tianqiao area in Beijing, the hawking of peddlers in the alleys, the pigeons soaring in the blue sky, the leisurely life at the taverns, the openness, fashion and vitality of Old Shanghai, and the romantic atmosphere exquisitely created in tea-drinking, shadow boxing, a game of Go all show the optimism and peace of Chinese people and their aesthetic tastes, pursuit of soulful contentment and endeavor to find joy and happiness in life.



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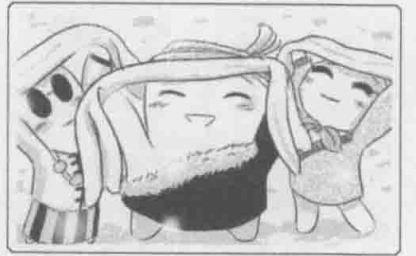
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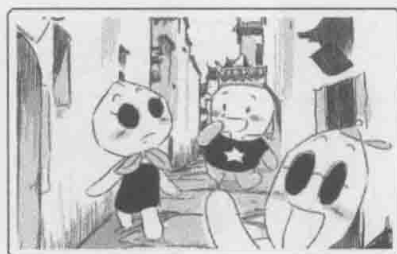
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The Beauty of *Riverside* *Scene at Qingming Festival*

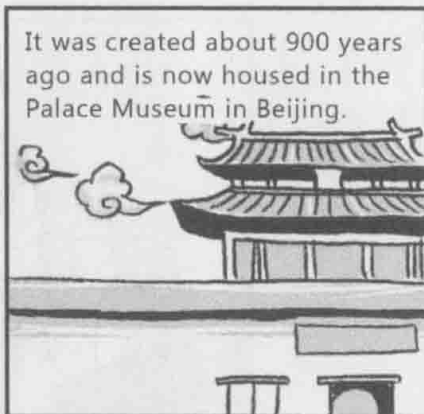




Riverside Scene at Qingming Festival is a painting from the Northern Song Dynasty (960-1127).



It was created about 900 years ago and is now housed in the Palace Museum in Beijing.



Five Trips to the Capital

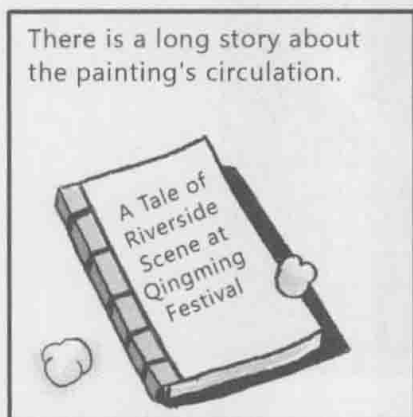
The painting was created by the court artist Zhang Zeduan at the end of the Northern Song Dynasty.



When the painting was completed, Emperor Huizong wrote its title onto it: Riverside Scene at Qingming Festival.



There is a long story about the painting's circulation.



Emperor, please wash your hands before looking.

It was first collected by the Northern Song's royal court.



When the army of Jin State conquered the capital of Song, they took away everything in the palace.



After the takeover of the Jin State (1115-1234), for some time the painting was lost.

Then it was recollected into the court again after the Mongolians set up the Yuan Dynasty (1279-1368).

Great King, I have stolen a treasured object!

A picture-mounting craftsman recognized the painting.

Nice!

Using a counterfeit painting, he stole the original out of the palace.

Get this, it's painted by me.

From the Yuan Dynasty to the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644), it was handed from collectors, curio dealers to scholars.

Five thousand taels of silver, deal!

Ha, it's a priceless treasure.

It entered the royal palace for the third time at the end of the Ming Dynasty.

But it was soon stolen again by an eunuch who had knowledge of the painting.

Resold many times, it was collected by the Qing Court around the early 19th century.

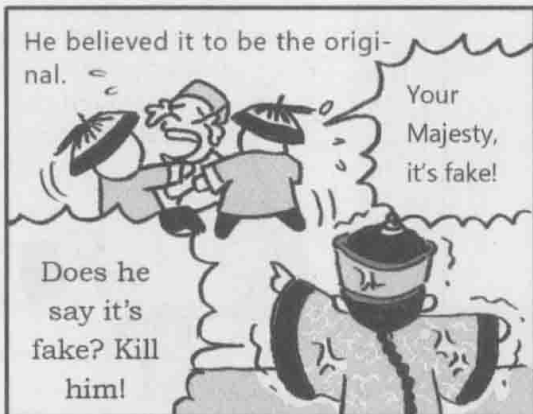
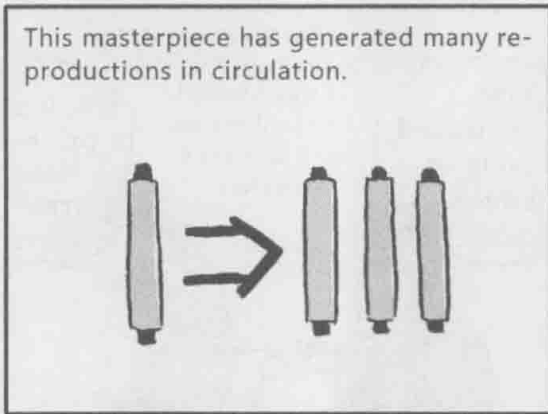
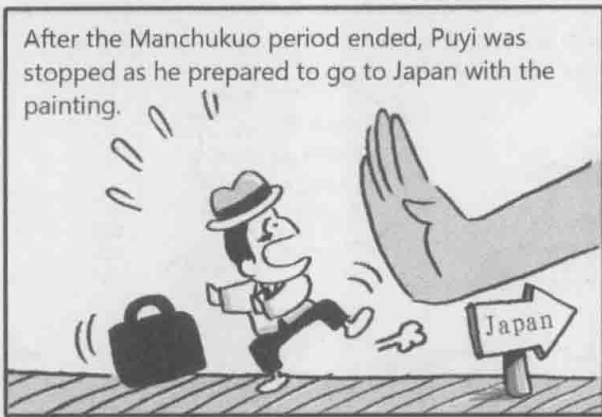
Haha, finally it has been returned to the court again!

This was the fourth time that the painting entered royal courts.

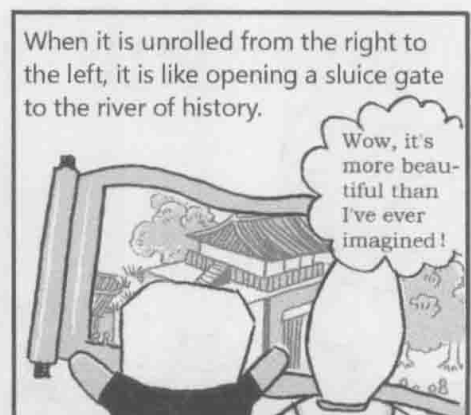
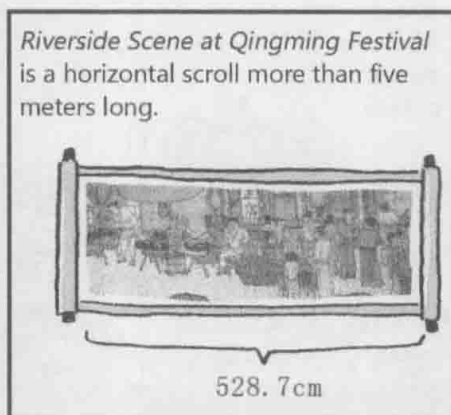
Hurry up! I have washed my hands.

After the 1911 Revolution, the last emperor Puyi took it out of the palace.

He first saved it in Tianjin, then brought it to Changchun after the establishment of the so-called Manchukuo.



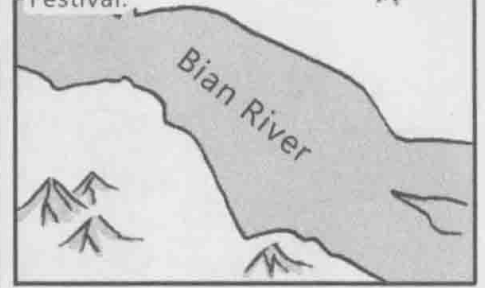
A Horizontal Scroll of the Scenery along the Bian River



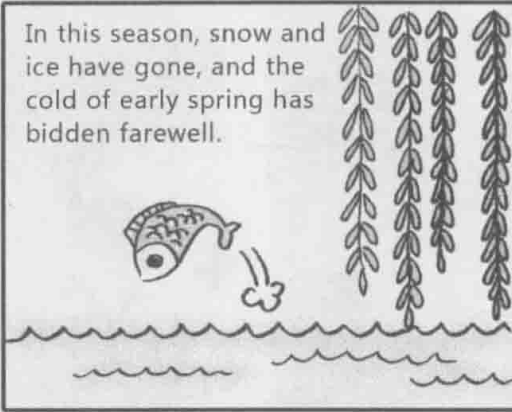
The scenery of prosperous Bianliang, capital of the Northern Song Dynasty, unveils before the viewer.



The painting depicts the hustle and bustle along the banks of the Bian River during the Qingming Festival.



In this season, snow and ice have gone, and the cold of early spring has bidden farewell.



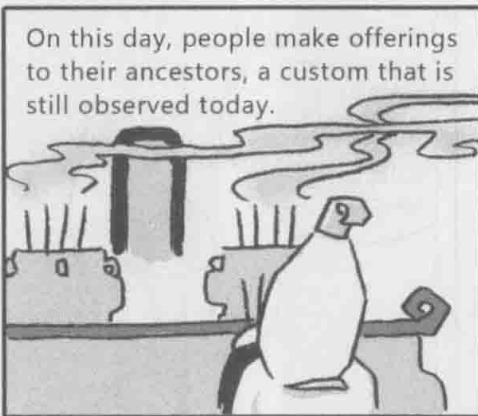
People welcome the most important festival of spring – the Qingming Festival.



It is one of the 24 solar terms and a day for remembrance.



On this day, people make offerings to their ancestors, a custom that is still observed today.



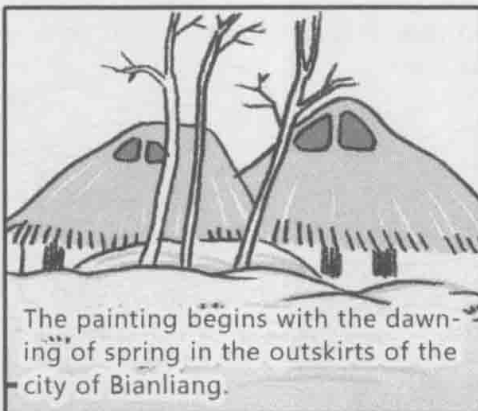
The Qingming Festival is also a day to celebrate the arrival of spring!



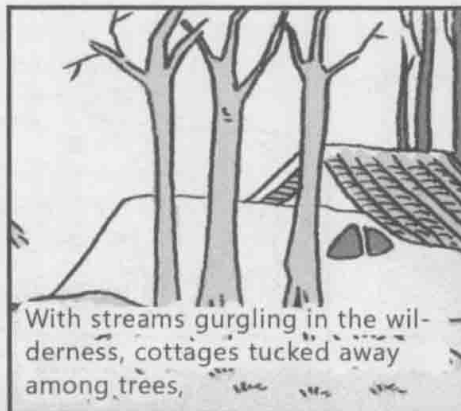
During that time, the warm sunshine and the gentle breeze turn the grass into enchanting green.



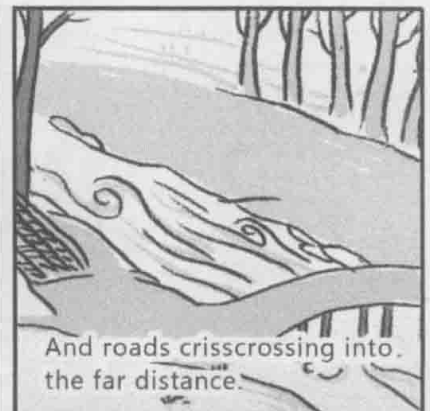
The painting begins with the dawning of spring in the outskirts of the city of Bianliang.



With streams gurgling in the wilderness, cottages tucked away among trees,



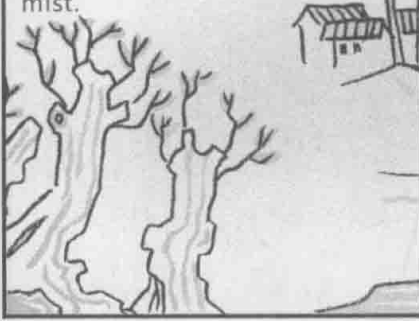
And roads crisscrossing into the far distance.



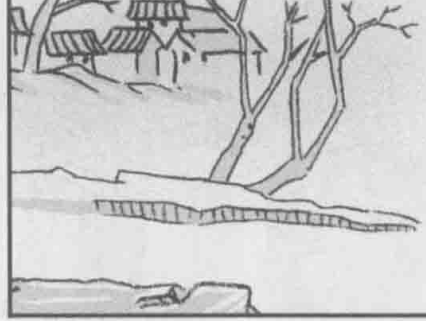
Old trees greet the breeze, and their branches and twigs are already tinged with light green.



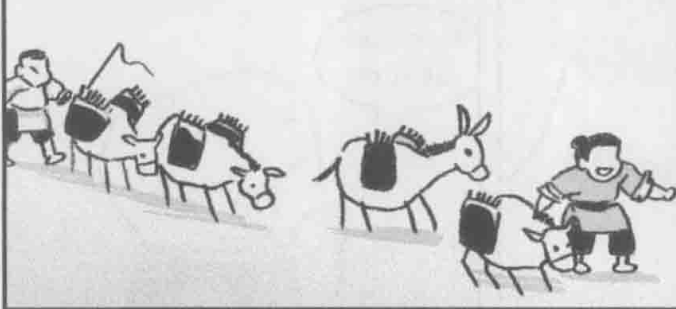
In the distance, boundless fields are enveloped in hazy mist.



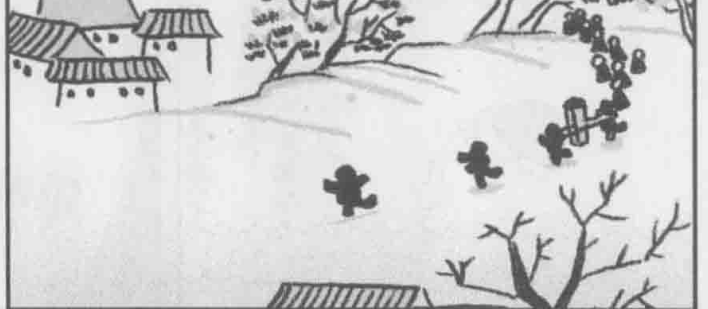
The scene is just like a poem by the famous poet Liu Yong.



Suddenly a group of people appear leading several donkeys on their way to the city.



There is a line of travelers.



Some are perhaps on their way to the cemetery to make offerings.



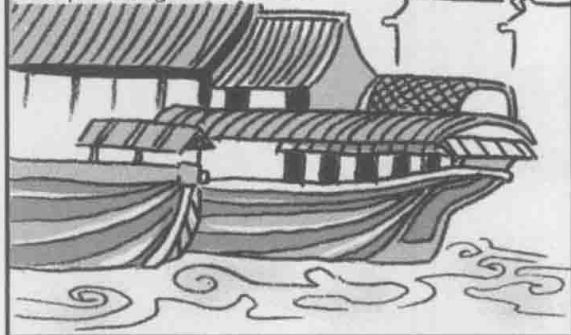
Others are sightseers returning from the city.



Donkeys and horses are neighing, and people are talking and laughing.



As the scroll unrolls, the second section of the painting is featured.



The Bian River comes into view. It is an important river connecting the south and the north.

