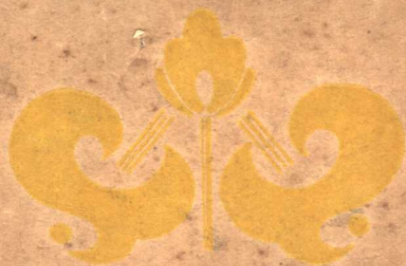


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ESSAYS by LIN YUTUNG

語堂佳作選



林語堂 新編

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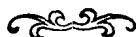
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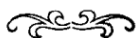
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THE CALISTHENIC VALUE OF KOWTOWING

The Chinese word for "hygiene" must be taken in an entirely different sense from its usual acceptation in English. It, too, may be defined as "anything except sport," which, according to the Chinese, is a gratuitous waste of energy. I think my readers will take for granted the truism that the overexertion and overdevelopment of bodily organs involved in Western athletics is detrimental to one's health. It is all right for a man to be able to swing a golf stick and walk a few miles a day but when a man breaks a hundred yards sprint record, it is a dead certainty—admitting exceptions, of course—that he won't be good for anything else. And there are things like "athlete's heart."

Chinese hygiene, on the other hand, throws its entire emphasis on conservation of energy, and whatever forms of sport are prescribed or recommended, the great principle is always that of moderation. Whatever "exercise" there may be consists of harmonious movements calculated to normalize, but not to excite, one's bodily regimen. It starts out with mental regimen as the basis in which the sole object is to bring about peace and calm of mind and spirit and with this as the basis, it aims at stimulating a normal functioning of the internal processes of respiration and blood circulation. Hence there is the great science known as "sitting still" or *séance*, with such important details as keeping a straight bodily posture, rubbing the palms of the hands and the forehead conscious and systematic swallowing of saliva, regulated respiration and abdominal deep breathing according to a definite number of beats. Such internal regimentation promoting peace of the mind and body is the aim of Chinese hygiene.

In accordance with this theory of hygiene, the Chinese have developed types of movement characterized by slowness and rhythm as all movements of a true gentleman should be. The art of kowtowing is but one of such movements. It is, in fact the best exercise ever invented by the mind of man for the reducing of obesity.

In order to understand the art of kowtowing and its great calisthenic value, one should know first the principle of slow, rhythmic movement. The best example of such movement is perhaps to be found in the Chinese stage gestures, *t'apu*, which are sometimes considered as important as vocal training to a Chinese actor. Now what is *t'apu* except rhythmic regulated, and stylized movement? In a perfect actor, these gestures and steps are timed perfectly with the rhythm of his words, so that we see a complete harmony of rhythmic language and rhythmic action. The rhythm in his speech is as clear and unmistakable as in his hand and leg movements. There is a graceful, punctuated rhythm in his laughter, his snorts, and even in his coughs and sneezes and spittings. I have sometimes tried to measure the beats involved in a Chinese

磕頭運動

中國人的“衛生”和英語中的意義，有完全不同的感覺。依照中文可解釋為“除了運動外的任何事的”。中國人以爲運動是無代價的空耗體力。我想我的讀者將爲說明其真理爲身體各體官的過度奮發和過度發展乃決定個人健康的標準。一個擊着“高而夫”棒球和一天走上幾里是很好的，但是當一個打破百碼賽跑記錄，一定的——當然可以例外——他其餘的事情未必都好的。而且還有叫做“運動家心臟”這件東西呀！

中國人的衛生，完全相反的，完全着重於保重體力，不管什麼遊戲的方式，其最大的原理常爲中庸。不管什麼的“練習”均可具有協調的運動而使正常，但不是興奮，這是身體上的衛生之道。那是以意志的衛生法爲基礎而出發的，所以唯一的目標是使意志和精神得能平靜非安寧，基此而使內部的呼吸和血液的循環發展起正常的功用。由是有一種大科學名之爲“靜坐”那有重要的細目譬如使身體姿勢坐直，擦着手掌和前額，自覺而有序地嚥着唾沫，規律地呼吸，腹部的深呼吸依照着心跳的次數。這種內在的衛生術創造出心身的平靜便是中國衛生之目的。

依照着這種衛生原理，中國人發展着徐緩韻律的運動典型，這些運動都是正真的紳士當爲的。叩頭的藝術但只是這樣的一種運動。其或，這是人類意志中發明出來減除肥胖的最好練習。

爲要明瞭叩頭的藝術和其最大的柔軟體育上的價值，應先知道這徐緩而韻律的運動。這種運動最好的例子或可在中國舞台姿態中找到，在中國戲子有時認爲最重要的訓練爲“台步”。現在除了韻律和有序的運動外“台步”是什麼呢？在一個完全的戲子中，他的姿勢和脚步完全和他的呼唱詞句的韻律相合拍的，所以我們可以見到韻律的詞句和韻律的動作完全和諧的。在他詞句中的韻律正如在他的手和腿上運動的韻律一樣的清晰無誤。在他的歡笑和怒號中都有優美和準備的韻節，即使在他的咳嗽，噴嚏，吐唾中都有。我有時想在中國紳士的吐唾中測度其脈搏，而見到常是不變的節奏一二三。前二步爲代表鼻孔中內在的運動而準備吐出，這吐時僅佔第三節的二分之一。內呼吸的響亮和閒逸正在吐出時的迅速和精細一樣的優美。假使一個人把這一二三。三部運動順利

gentleman's spitting, and found it almost invariably to be as follows: 1: 2: 3. The first two beats represent two perfectly timed inward movements of the nostrils in preparation for the spitting out, which occupies one half of the third beat. The drawing in is as sonorous and leisurely as the spitting out is quick and decisive. Now if one repeats this 1: 2: 3. movement successively, it could be aesthetically very satisfying. And try to transcribe the punctuated beats of a Chinese gentleman's laughter. The "attack" of the successive "ha! ha! ha's!" is extremely artistic and ingratiating, and there is usually a perfectly executed *crescendo*, losing itself in a generous broadening volume. And when a gentleman is displeased and leaves the room, it is generally preceded by that movement of jerking his sleeves, known in literature as *fohsiu*. The Chinese gentleman's sleeves are often rolled up once for work, resulting in the so-called "horse-hoof sleeves." When a gentleman is displeased, he generally gives his right-hand sleeve an energetic jerk downwards, which makes the folding come down, and with a rhythmic sweeping gesture of his arm, he waddles out of the room. No doubt his long gown helps to convert the jerky movements of his legs into a series of rounded and continuous hyperbolic movements. This is known as *tu fangpu*. In comparison with this gait, a foreigner's pantalooned movement is rough and vulgar.

Sufficient has been said to illustrate the aesthetic appreciation of slow rhythmic movements among the Chinese and enable foreign readers to understand what I mean by the calisthenic value of kowtowing. Kowtowing is but one form of greeting, only much more developed and dignified than other forms. There is, for instance, as much rhythm in the "curtsying" of eighteenth-century ladies and a modern German gentleman's clicking of heels and graceful bow. These things are always beautiful to look at. There is also beautiful rhythm in the *tach'ien* movement of a Manchu lady in Peiping. Sometimes she bends one of her knees and in that posture swings her body round on one heel and in this way gives her greeting to the entire company present in one graceful turn.

But let us come to kowtowing, the highest and most unique are of Chinese culture. Lord MacCartney, or whoever it was, refused to kowtow to Emperor Ch'ienlung because he was not aware that it was the most dignified and most hygienic posture a Chinese gentleman could possibly take. Different exercises have, of course, been invented by beauty experts for reducing ladies' obesity, but still I am quite sure none is quite so effective as kowtowing. Like rowing, it involves the muscles of the entire body. The placing of the body in a restful kneeling posture at once brings about peace of mind and banishes all worries. Then hold your chest erect with the two palms pressed against each other, as in the usual posture for saying "Paternoster" or singing "Ave Maria." Then, with a breast stroke, simulating the paddle movement, throw the arms apart and downwards, while you bring your body forward and downward until your head reaches the ground. Make three kowtows and raise yourself again to the erect posture as far as the upper part

的演習，這可以得到體育上的美滿。試去記錄一個中國紳士笑聲的準確脈搏。那連接的“‘哈！哈！哈！’完全是藝術的和取悅於人的，這慣常地完全實行音樂上的“漸次強音”，發揚成優美洪大的聲調。當一個紳士不悅而離室時，大概先有移動他衣袖的動作，在文學上是有名的“拂袖”。中國紳士的衣袖在工作時常時捲起的，結果成為“馬蹄袖”。當一個紳士不快樂時，他大概使右手的袖子有力地向下擲那使摺着的垂下來帶着他手臂韻律地橫掃的姿態，他走出了這房間。無疑的他的長袍是有助於他的急投的動作而使步趨環着連續的變曲線而前進。這所謂“踱方步”。一個外國人龍種的步態和其相比真是徒顯其粗笨和庸俗而已。

中國人中徐緩韻節的動作在體育認識上，所舉例證已夠明顯，而將有助於外國讀者得能明瞭我可指叩頭之在韻軟運動上的價值。叩頭僅只是敬禮的方式，不過比之其他方式更為發展而莊嚴些而已。譬如在十八世紀貴婦的“屈膝禮”和現代德國紳士的踢着腳後跟優美地一鞠躬同一的具有韻節。這些事情外表常是美麗的。

但讓我們來談這在中國文化上最崇高和一致的藝術，叩頭。馬克卡尼爵士，或是其他的任何人，拒絕向乾隆皇帝叩頭，因為他了解這是一種最莊嚴和最衛生的動態，這是中國人早已習之已稔了。當然，為減除婦女肥胖的美觀運動已發明了不少，但是我認為總沒有一件及得上叩頭這樣的有效。像划船一樣，那是影響着全

of the body is concerned. This act of raising and bending one's body gives a wonderfully beneficial exercise to the abdominal muscles and helps better than any massage to dissolve excessive fat around the belly. If done to careful timing, it encourages deep breathing and stimulates the blood circulation.

It is a pity that such a cultivated art should go to the dogs now. But there is a hopeful sign that along with other movements for the restoration of Chinese culture, like the encouragement of "chaste widows," this art will again be generally cultivated in a very short time, both among the high and low.

部身體的肌肉。使身體安置在平靜跪着的姿態中即刻能使意志和順而摺除煩惱。然後使你的胸部豎直二手相合。於是胸部震動，激勵着划槳的動態，兩脅分開而放下，把你的身軀向前向後直到你的頭部到達了地上。叩了三個頭他再自己起來豎直你的姿態。這種升起和彎曲的能作使人的身體上，尤其是腹部的肌肉得有一種奇異有益的練習，假使做得小心，那可加強深呼吸而刺激血液循環。

這是可惜的這樣有教養的藝術現在降到了狗羣中去了。但是還有一線希望的在各種運動在中國文化的復古中，像“節婦”的鼓勵等，這種藝術將在最短期中又將普遍地，不論高級和下級一致奉行的吧？

FUNERAL NOTICES

"Are you popular, Mr. Lin?" once a great, big American-returned friend asked me. Any one can see that only a great, big American-returned friend can ask such a question. Having received some sort of American education myself, I did not reply in the negative. "Why, yes, certainly, considering the number of funeral notices and letters soliciting contributions I receive every month. I had no idea I was so-well-known until last month when I received a funeral notice from somebody I did not know from Kweichow, followed by another from Szechuen."

Now, I am a very bad correspondent. All my friends will testify that my typewriter does not click for messages of good will and remembrance to the best and oldest friends. There are many ways of killing correspondence, and my favorite way is to keep them on the file for "Letters to be answered" until your conscience tells you that there is really no point in answering that particular one *now*—and down it goes to your right-hand drawer where you keep all your old correspondence safe under lock and key. And yet, with the best of precautions, it seems no one is safe from funeral notices nowadays. Of course, there are other things which are just as provoking, such as one of those chain letters from one of your most esteemed friends, promising you good luck if you copy them nine times and continue the chain started by some U.S. Colonel, but threatening you with bad luck on the ninth day, if you break it. I have received such chain letters from the most respectable quarters—one even from that citadel of Chinese learning, the Central University. Who on earth in that learned institution should have the audacity of threatening me with bad luck behind his initials is one of life's mysteries that I don't try to solve. The chain usually ends in a waste-paper basket so far as I am concerned.

Funeral notices are one of the finest fruits of this civilization of ours. They are the best proof in China that many of those who died have not died in vain, if they are survived by somebody who can write a good funeral notice. Not only does the career of the deceased receive thereby an immortal record, but those of his living sons and relatives get a chance of detailed description and enumeration also, i.e., those who send you the funeral notice without regard for a four-cent stamp. A man who dies not only with such an illustrious career, but also with the several illustrious careers of so many illustrious relatives, cannot fail to make you feel that life is worth living in China, and death worth dying also. Any one who reads through the following sample of the last funeral notice I received will readily understand why a funeral notice is one of the things one actually lives for and looks forward to in one's old age. It runs as follows (for full effect, imagine that Mrs. Jiggs stands by while we read):—

訃文

“林先生，你是出名了吧”。有一次一個留學美國回來的朋友問我。任何人可以知道只有留學美國的朋友，會問這樣的問句。我自己也受到了些美國的教育，我不願去否認他。“爲什麼？這是當然的，可由我每月所收到這樣多的訃文和募捐信上知道的。但我並不知道已經這樣的出名，直到上一個月從貴州接着是四川寄來我並不認識的人的訃文，剛才明白了。”

我是最不喜歡通信的。我的朋友都可證明我的打字機並不是用來給老朋友打問安的信。阻斷通信的方法有許多，我所愛好的方法是拿來放在“來信待覆”的夾子中，直到你的直覺告訴你，那確實沒有什麼值得答覆的要答時，便把它們放在右手的抽屜中和你的舊書信一起平安地鎖在裏面了。現在似乎只有訃文是最安全的。其中有一件是惹麻煩的事，譬如從尊貴的朋友那裏寄來的連索信時，我總是把它結束在廢紙簍中的了。

訃文是我們文化上的最佳產物。這也是在中國最好的明證，證明有許多人雖然死了，但並不是白死的，正如是他們由從能寫好訃文的手筆中，依然存在。非但這是死去了的受到了一種不朽的記載，並且活着的子女和親戚也得到了評述和被列名的機會。他們遞送給你訃文，於是毫不吝惜四分郵票的價值了。一個人死了非但有了這種顯揚的事業，還有許多親戚的尊榮事件的表揚，那使你覺得活在中國的生命是有價值的，而死了也並不是白死。但何人讀了我下面的訃文便會明瞭爲什麼一張訃文是值得分發的東西了。其文如下：（爲使其文字效用完美起見，因此假定與我們讀牠時，吉格士夫人是站在旁邊傾聽着的。）

"The unfilial sons undersigned, by neglecting to destroy themselves, have brought disaster upon their illustrious deceased father. The said deceased *fu-chun* was—a second-rank official of the former Manchu Dynasty, once a secretary of the Ministry of Finance, Tupan of Hwai Conservancy, Imperial Educational Inspector of the Two Kwang Provinces, Courier of the Imperial Southern Study, with Special Privilege of Wearing Flowery Plumes. (*Mrs. Jiggs, I am sure, is feeling exhilarated.*) . . . His brother was a Hanlin scholar and Tutor before His Imperial Presence, with the Special Honour of Drinking Wine with, and Receiving a Poem, from His Majesty. (*Mrs. Jiggs is inspired.*) This brother married the daughter of the Governor of the Two Hu Provinces, So-and-So, who was a Cabinet Scholar, once a Vice-Minister of the Ministry of Army, with the Special Privilege of Wearing the Yellow Jacket, Posthumous Title Loyal-Determined. (*Mrs. Jiggs' head is getting dizzy.*) . . . His eldest son is a Chin-shih of the year *chia-tz*, Taotai of Li-cheng, Examiner of the Shantung Province, and married the daughter of an Official of the Fourth Rank, the Taotai of Hweichow. (*Mrs. Jiggs falls into a swoon; hence unaware of what follows hereafter.*) His second son is a graduate of the Military Academy of Paoting, Quartermaster of the Kansu Army, went abroad on a tour of Industrial Inspection through the countries of the United States, England, Germany, Denmark, Belgium, France, Italy, Austria-Hungary, and is now the President of the S—Exchange Bank, decorated the Order of the Literary Tiger. His third son is a graduate of Cornell University; studied in the Harvard Post-Graduate Summer School; A.M. from Wisconsin, and Ph.D. from Columbia; Chairman of the Shantung Educational Association; Delegate to the 7th Industrial Conference at Tokyo in 1909; served on the Board of Directors of the P—University; Dean of the Political Science Department of S—University; Vice-Chairman of the Society for Promoting Confucianism; Delegate to the Educational Conference at Peking, 1913; and now President of the Tsung-chih University; Order of Auspicious Corn. The fourth son is . . ." But it is time to sprinkle water on Mrs. Jigg's head. All one can do is to gasp for breath.

It is not difficult to understand my popularity in receiving funeral notices now. If I were to base an estimate of my popularity on the funeral notices I have received, I can safely be said to enjoy a national reputation.

But it is also easy to understand why such funeral notices exercise such a powerful influence on high politics in the Orient. It is, for instance, a universally accepted fact that dear, old Tsao Kun bribed his way into Presidency of the Chinese Republic for no other reason than the anticipated pleasure of having the three characters *Ta Tsung Tung* incorporated in his funeral notice. It is equally certain that Chang TsoLin was tantalizingly seduced by the same idea of making himself the President of the Chinese Republic, shortly before the end of his regime in Peking, also from

“不孝子某某等，不自隕滅罪及先考。先君曾在遜清爲戶部大臣、兩廣督學，南書房行走欽賜羽領。（我就可確定吉格士夫人，是很興奮的。）……長兄爲翰林，皇室侍講官，皇上欽賜御詩。（吉格士夫人興奮極了。）長兄娶兩湖總督某某之女，某某兵部大臣內閣學士欽賜黃馬褂。（吉格士夫人的頭腦有點暈眩了。）……長子某某爲某年進士，歷城道台，山東省監察，娶徽州道台某某之女。（吉格士夫人暈厥了因此注意不到下面是些什麼了。）次子某某畢業於保定軍官學校，曾任甘肅軍統領。出洋考察實業經英美法德奧意丹比八國，現任某某銀行總裁。三子畢業於康納爾大學，得威士康辛文學士，哥倫比亞大學哲學博士，山東教育會會長，一九〇九年東京第幾次工業會議代表，某大學政治經濟院院長，尊孔委員會副會長，一九一三年出席北京教育會議代表，現任某某大學校長。四子……”這時吉格士夫人的頭上是需要潑水了。各人所能做的只是屏息地哮喘着。

現在從收到這樣的訃文上更不難知道我是多麼出名。假使根據訃文而估計我的出名，我可說安全地享受着全國的名望。

但是還可容易地明瞭爲什麼這種的訃文在東方政治上有這黨強大的勢力。譬如舉世周知的賄選曹琨是做中華民國的大總統，除了想在訃文上寫上“大總統”三字外也沒有別的多大理由。相同的張作霖在統治北平的時候也有同一的動機，想使自己成爲中華

the same motive. One is not so sure but that Yen Hsishan was a victim of the same psychology in starting the Northern Rebellion. It would be difficult to account for it from any other standpoint so far as his personal interest is concerned. Had this custom prevailed on Mount Olympus, Zeus himself would not be satisfied with his blessed state and his occasional love affairs, but would raise a rebellion in high heaven until he added to himself the title of the Primeval Spirit of the Sea and Earth, and re-established his abode on the Himalayas and his summer garden on the Andes. It would read so much better on his funeral notice.

Such are the motives of the gods who guide and determine our human affairs. It seems after all the most difficult thing in this country is to die like a gentleman.

民國的大總統。這種習尚盛行到了奧林匹克山，宙斯自己也將不滿現在的地位，要在天上叛變要求“海陸始祖”的名位，而在喜馬拉雅山重建其神位在安第斯造他的避暑山莊。這樣的在他訃文上讀起來方覺好聽些吧。

這些是上帝的動機，他是用以指導和決定我們人類的事業。總之這似乎在這國家中最困難的事情是得像君子一般的死。

AH FONG, MY HOUSEBOY

My houseboy was a real "boy," not only in the colonial, but also in the physiological sense of the word. He was just a kid, but an unusually brilliant kid. When I picked him up at a small exchange shop where I used to change my money, he was but fifteen, or at most sixteen. When he was eighteen, his voice had so changed that it reminded me of a young rooster that has just learned to crow in the morning. But in spirit he still remained a kid, and his kiddish spirit, plus his brilliance, formed a combination which made all discipline impossible in the household, and successfully baffled all my attempts at establishing a master's dignity.

He was so brilliantly good that he was almost indispensable, but he was about the most delightfully chaotic, poetically forgetful, and charmingly unbusinesslike servant I ever had, and he broke more bowls, cups, and tumblers in a week than all my other servants did in six months. And yet he was lionized in the kitchen, and compelled something like involuntary admiration from us for his genius. Perhaps it was because of the realization that he was too good a fellow creature for a servant. I have no doubt he would have made a splendid master, judging by the way he scolded midnight callers over the telephone. He did not read English, but who can tell but some day he may (so many things about him have surprised me), so we will call him Ah Fong because this isn't his name.

I have to explain just why I allowed Ah Fong to break down the moral discipline of the household and do many things that I would not stand for from other servants. Before he came, the job of repairing electric bells or burned-up fuses, adjusting mechanisms in the flush toilet, or seeing to the proper way of hanging a picture used to fall on my hands. After he came I simply let him do it, and I could go on with my reading of Plato's *Republic* without being called upon to fix the flush toilet, and do my writing without somebody shouting to me from the kitchen: "Hey, the water tap is leaking!" That feeling of security alone was worth all the troubles I suffered at Ah Fong's hands. He was a genius in providing unthought of and happy makeshifts for all sorts of mechanical devices, and for thinking up fairy tales to keep my children in the garden.

There was an incident which endeared him to me. Ever since the first day he came, he had his eye on my typewriter. He pretended to take two hours to clean my study every day in the morning while I was still in bed, whereas I knew he was peering into and monkeying with this marvelous writing machine, which he evidently had seen for the first time in his life. Strange sounds used to come from the study at such hours. Then one day the typewriter went out of commission. I spent two hours repairing it but failed. I scolded him for monkeying with it. He did not reply. But in the afternoon I was out, and when I came back, he told me quietly,