

THE TRACES

Notes of Old Cities and Towns of China / Gavin Wang

古路风痕

王一帆 著

老城游走札记

中国旅游出版社
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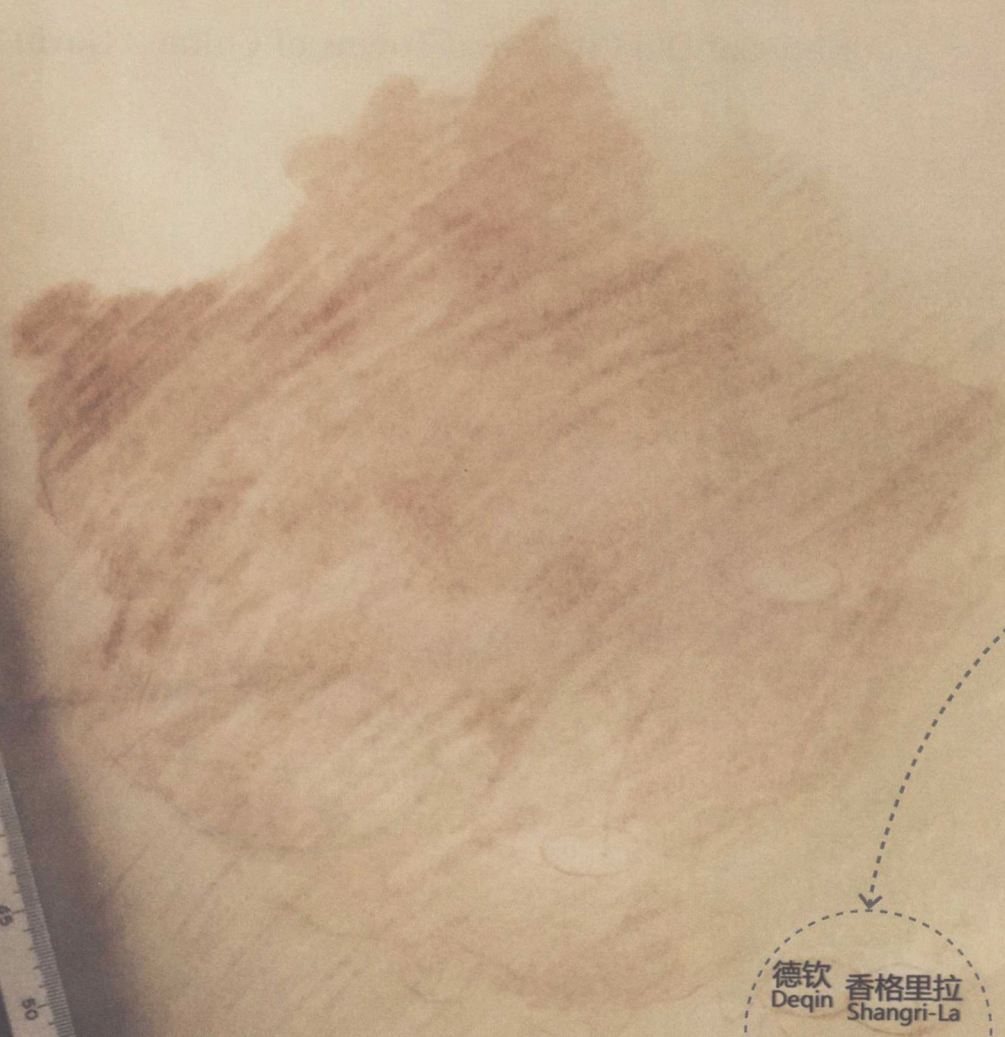
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Author's Footprints: Some Old Cities and Towns in China

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Foreword

It's been around 10 years since I saw Gavin Wang last time. He was a chubby and adorable kid in my memory. To my surprise, the little boy has become a talented student at the College of Design of the University of Minnesota. His father is my cousin, who's also a brilliant artist and entrepreneur. Gavin seems to inherit his father's genes for art. With his enthusiasm for painting and calligraphy, he has won many awards since childhood.

Gavin brought his new travel book *The Traces* and asked me to write the foreword for him. Written in Chinese and English, the book depicts what he has seen and heard during his travels around China in the past few years. It is abundantly illustrated with vivid and artistically appealing photographs taken by himself. Words and pictures are combined to make the book interesting to read.

Gavin is just 21 years old. He was born in Beijing but has left his footprints all over the country, from Bianliang and Luoyang to the Old Town of Lijiang; from Fenghuang villages to Jiangnan water towns. He has braved the winds and rains and backpacked across the country. Therefore, he has a deeper understanding of travel than those on whistle-stop tours.

A Chinese saying goes, "Read ten thousand books, travel ten thousand miles." It probably implies the relationship between reading and traveling. Reading is the cornerstone of traveling and what's been read can be put into practice through traveling. Gavin reads extensively, or else he wouldn't have demonstrated his depth of sensibility in the book. As far as I know, Gavin has been to many countries with his parents since childhood and he's been in America for the past two years. He has accumulated a great knowledge of the world. However, the book is limited to domestic scenery, which is more familiar to him, which I think should be attributed to his pragmatic attitude toward traveling. He is Chinese, and he loves his own country more than any other.

Gavin started to take a keen interest in various aspects of Chinese history and culture when he was a small child, such as calligraphy, poetry, antiques, ancient architecture, food and drink and folk customs. Meanwhile, traveling gives him more to think about. Thus, the book not only

contains what he saw or heard, but also what he thought about things. From the lessons learned from the re-contrustion of ancient cities to the preservation of regional cultures, his thinks beyond his age, which is the most cherishable part of the book. Travel books are easily written because people have different feelings about the same scenery. Gavin is young and his writing may exude a sense of immaturity, but what's behind the words is heavily involved with history and responsibility.

Art takes root in feelings and it is hard to imagine an artist without them. The book shows Gavin's deep feelings for life, nature and humanity. As a student of archietcural design, he has a long way that lies ahead of him. The Traces is his first try in writing, but the feelings and love shown in it will definitely have a profound influence on his future achievements and benefit him for the rest of his life.

I feel extremely happy for being asked to write the foreword for the book because Gavin and I share a lot of similar experiences in life and learning. I envy him because I didn't have such good living and learning conditions back then. But what supprises me is his unaffected, natural and flowing style of writing, which makes the book read smoothly and comfortably. I believe young people will have more to think about after reading it.

Zhao Heng
At Gouwai Bookhouse
In summer, 2015

序

大约有十年没有见到一帆了，在我的印象中，他还是个非常可爱、敦敦实实的大胖小子，真是没有想到，一瞬间变成了留学美国，就读于明尼苏达大学设计学院的青年才俊。一帆的父亲是我的表弟，也是一位优秀的设计艺术家和企业家，而一帆从小天资聪慧，喜欢书画，多次获奖，大概也有乃父的艺术基因。

一帆拿来一本他新写的旅行散记——《古路风痕》，要我给他写篇序言。书是中、英两种文字写的，是他这几年在国内旅行所见所闻的散记，并配有十分丰富的图片，那些照片也是他自己拍摄的，自然真实，非常富有感染力。图文并茂，浑然一体，实在是趣味盎然。

一帆今年才21岁，但是去过的地方不少了，从名都汴洛到丽江古城；从凤凰村寨到江南水乡，更有生于斯长于斯的北京，都留下了他的足迹，许多地方都是他作为一个背包客，栉风沐雨，独自旅行甚至是徒步走过来的。因此，感受之深，思绪之切，也是那种走马观花式的旅游所不能比拟的。

古人说，读万卷书，行万里路，大抵是知与行的关系，旅行是践行所知的踏勘；而读书又是游历的基础。一帆读的书不少，涉猎广泛，非此，不可能有散记中的感悟。据我所知，一帆从小随父母去过世界上不少国家，加上这两年在美国的生活，他的世界历史文化知识也不少。但是，这本散记却仅限于国内的游历见闻，着眼于自己更为熟悉的生活场景，我想，这也是他追求务实厚重的原因。他的根在自己的祖国，他的爱更在这片滋养他的土地。

一帆从小热爱中国历史文化，无论是书法、诗词、骨董（同古董，古代遗

存的有价值器物的统称，涵盖古代各种文化艺术品的遗存）、古建、饮食、民俗，都有着浓厚的兴趣，正是在这种濡润之下度过了他的少年时代。同时，旅行的所见所闻也给了他更多的思考空间，因此，在这本散记中更多融入的不仅是见闻和猎奇，而是有着更多独立的见地和思想。从古都建设的得失到各地文化保护的忧虑，已经超乎他这个年龄的思维范畴，我想，这正是《古路风痕》的可贵之处。游记是可以任意写来的东西，同样的风物在不同人的眼中会有不同的感悟，一帆虽然很年轻，但是可以看出，那些还透着稚嫩的文字中，背负的却是沉甸甸的历史和责任。

情感，是艺术的根，很难想象会有没有丰富情感的艺术家，《古路风痕》的字里行间无处不流露着一帆对生活的热爱，对人的情感，这种情感归纳而言，就是对自然之爱，对人类之爱。一帆是学习建筑艺术设计的学子，他的路还很长，《古路风痕》也不过是他初涉写作的小品，但是这种情感和爱会对他将来的成就有着深刻的影响，使他受益终身。

也许是一帆的生活与读书道路与我有很多相似之处，所以他让我为他的书作序我也很高兴，但是我那时却没有他今天这样好的生活与学习条件，艳羡之余，却也异常欣喜，尤其是他那朴实无华的文字和自然流畅的文笔，读来都非常舒服，也希望更多的年轻人读读这本小书，或许会有自己的更多的感想和启迪。

赵珩

乙未孟夏于穀外书屋

Author's Words

I was walking alone on the mountain road.

It was raining, and the fog was thickening. The world was quiet, and all I could hear was the sound of falling stones from the hills.

It was 7:20 am, more than three hours after my departure. I didn't walk as fast as I had expected. It was always hard marching on a dark rainy night. I tightened my backpack and went on.

That was the trip to Yubeng Village in Yunnan province last year. This place was at the northernmost part of Yunnan province, extremely close to Tibet. I still remembered the day I set off at 3:30 am in the morning and walked 13 hours to reach my destination. The elevation was high, and the cliff was just by my side. It was the first time in my life that I had experienced total darkness by myself in a mountain. The fog was so thick that I could see nothing beyond 20 feet. Challenged by the heavy rain, the falling rocks and my injured leg, the spectacular view of nature made all my efforts worthwhile.

I believe that I am already in love with traveling. As a backpacker, I have been to many places. Observing these cities and towns as an outsider has enabled me to feel them in an objective manner. Not only so, traveling takes me away from the hustle and bustle of cities, helps me introspect and better understand life and brings a real inner peace to my mind.

I love Chinese culture. Today, people are in close contact with modern culture. However, they are tending to neglect the learning of ancient culture. If the situation continues, no one will understand, feel or be moved by ancient culture, which lasted for several thousand years. In my travels, I made special trips to some well-known and less known old cities and towns around China, trying to seek ancient culture that still exists under the cover of modern society. The findings were sometimes surprising, unforgettable, and sometimes saddening.

I barely kept notes during my travels. It was not easy for me to settle down and start

writing in a place that I was not familiar with. However, I realized that many unique feelings and special findings would fade with time, even though they are still etched somewhere in my memory. Therefore, I have chosen some of my most impressive experiences on the road, along with its rich cultural connotations and some photos taken from my cellphone, and compiled them into a collection, which I now present to you.

This book features my explorations into ancient Chinese culture, and I hope the readers will find this humble selection both informing and entertaining.

I am truly thankful to the China Travel & Tourism Press that allowed the publication of my bilingual book, and especially grateful to my uncle, Zhao Heng, who wrote the foreword for me. These mean a lot to me. Meanwhile, I sincerely appreciate Mr. Li Haiyan, who spent days and nights on the text editing, layout and artistic design of my book. They are truly amazing. Last but not least, I want to thank Mr. Billie Feng and the editors of the press for the elaborate revision of the book. Finally, I want to thank you all again, since this small book would not be here without the help and support from any of you.

