

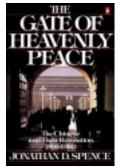
## The Gate of Heavenly Peace: The Chinese and Their Revolution

The book, spanning the years 1895 to 1980, is a splendid study of some prominent Chinese intellectuals during a turbulent period in modern China. Ennobled by literature and philosophy, it presents a century of change through portraits of such historical characters as Kang Youwei (康有為), Chen Duxiu (陳獨秀), Lu Xun (魯迅), Shen Congwen (沈從文), Ding Ling (丁玲) and Lao She (老舍).

Professor Jonathan D. Spence makes a highly literate guide to the Chinese Revolution, approached via the lives and written testimony of its intelligentsia, chiefly men and women of letters.

As befits a narrative in which writers are the principal characters, *The Gate of Heavenly Peace* takes a shape that owes much to the novel. The central figures include Lu Xun, arguably the most brilliant essayist in modern China, and Ding Ling, one of China's best-known literary women. From their interaction with the secondary characters, we come to know other poets, novelists, scholars, political activists and even a few foreign visitors to China. Professor Spence sets forth

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their stories through quotations of their own words as much as possible. Instead of telling the stories of each character one by one, he alternates segments of each biography in a way more of fiction than of history, while at the same time he demonstrates how they crossed in their lives and how their diverse personalities responded to the same challenges.

The Gate of Heavenly Peace employs a method of delicate interweaving and transition. A well-plotted, accurately annotated history, with insightful details and extensive quotations,

gives readers the sights, sounds and emotions of the time. Regarded as a "felt history", the book has a sense of urgency, due to the closeness of the subject to us, morally and in time.

A world-renowned sinologist, Professor Spence is Sterling Professor of History at Yale University. Born in England in 1936, he was educated at Winchester College and Cambridge University. In 1965, he was awarded Ph.D. in history by Yale, which appointed him to a professorship subsequently, and in that esteemed position he has been guiding generations and generations of students of Chinese history.

## 畫蛇添足

歷代詩文也多次引用"畫蛇添足"這個典故,例如韓愈《感春》詩云:"畫蛇著足無處用,兩鬢雪白趨埃塵。"羅貫中《三國演義》:"將軍功績已成,聲威大震,可以止矣;今若前進,倘不如意,正如畫蛇添足也。"

"畫蛇添足"一語也衍生出 多個同義詞語,包括"畫蛇足""添足畫蛇""蛇足""安 蛇足"等等,含意不變。

## 含英 咀華

## Paint the Lily

Lily, in particular white lily, has always been regarded as a symbol of purity, beauty and delicacy.

The Christian *Bible* likens the magnificence of Solomon, the Israelite king renowned for so much his wealth as his wisdom, to a lily and finds it pale in comparison. For it says in the scripture "...see how the lilies of the field grow... I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendour was dressed like one of these." (*Matthew 6:28-29*)

In William Shakespeare's *King John*, the Earl of Salisbury tried to persuade King John that there was no need for him to be crowned again. He argued that:

To gild refined gold, to paint the lily,
To throw a perfume on the violet,
To smooth the ice, or add another hue
Onto the rainbow, or with taper-light

To seek the beauteous eye of heaven to garnish, Is wasteful and ridiculous excess.

(Act 4, scene 2)

Hence we have the phrase "to paint the lily" or "to gild the lily" to describe any effort to make perfection more perfect and end up spoiling the effect. For example: To dress an elegant and understated beauty in loud colours is like gilding the lily, and all it does is turn her into a common pretty girl like many others.