

## 王羲之：蘭亭序 Wang Xizhi's Lanting Preface

as set for *qin* in 臨河修禊 *Lin He Xiuxi* (琴學心聲 *Qinxue Xinsheng*, 1664)

1. 永和九年，歲在癸丑，暮春之初，  
*Yǒnghé jiǔ nián, suì zài guǐ chǒu, mùchūn zhī chū,*  
In Eternal Peace 9<sup>th</sup> year, 60 year cycle's 50<sup>th</sup> year, spring end's start (3<sup>rd</sup> month of 353),  
會於會稽山陰之蘭亭，脩禊事也。  
*Huì yú Kuaijī shān yīn zhī Lántíng, xiū xì shì yě.*  
We have met by Kuaiji mountain's south side at Lanting for the *xiuxi* events.  
羣賢畢至，少長咸集，此地有崇山峻嶺。  
*Qún xián bì zhì, shǎo zhǎng xián jí; cǐ dì yǒu chóng shān jùn lǐng,*  
All the worthies have finally arrived, young and old all gathered;  
this place has lofty mountains and steep peaks.  
茂林脩竹；又有清流激湍，  
*Mào lín xiū zhú; yòu yǒu qīng liú jī tuān,*  
Luxuriant woods with slim bamboo, also having clear flowing strong torrents,  
映帶左右，引以為流觴曲水，列坐其次。  
*Yǐng dài zuǒ yòu, yǐn yǐ wéi liú shāng qū shuǐ, liè zuò qí cì.*  
(And) shining ribbons (of water twisting) left and right, drawing along floating  
wine cups in a winding stream, while in order we are seated one by one.  
雖無絲竹管絃之盛，  
*Suī wú sīzhú guǎnxián zhī shèng,*  
Although there is no silk and bamboo or wind and string's grandeur,  
一觴一詠，亦足以暢敘幽情。  
*yī shāng yī yǒng, yì zú yǐ chàng xù yōu qíng.*  
One wine cup means one poem, and this is sufficient for cheerful talk and profound feelings.
2. 是日也，天朗氣清，  
*Shì rì yě, tiān lǎng qì qīng,*  
This day, actually, the sky is bright, the air clear,  
惠風和暢，仰觀宇宙之大，  
*Huì fēng hé chàng, yǎng guān yǔ zhòu zhī dà,*  
Pleasant breezes harmonizing our joy, looking up we see the world's vastness,  
俯察品類之盛，所以遊目騁懷，  
*Fǔ chá pǐn lèi zhī shèng. suǒ yǐ yóu mù chǒng huái,*  
Looking down we examine all types in abundance, allowing our wandering eyes to open our hearts,  
足以極視聽之娛，信可樂也。  
*Zú yǐ jí shì tīng zhī yú, xìn kě lè yě.*  
And this was enough to cause great viewing & listening pleasure; trusting this we could really enjoy it.
3. 夫人之相與，俯仰一世，  
*Fū rén zhī xiāng yǔ, fǔ yǎng yī shì,*  
In all people's relationships, if you look through an entire generation,  
或取諸懷抱，悟言一室之內；  
*Huò qǔ zhū huái bào, wù yán yī shì zhī nèi;*  
Some choose various emotional connections, getting meaning within just private conversation;  
或因寄所託，放浪形骸之外。  
*Huò yīn jì suǒ tuō, fàng làng xíng hái zhī wài.*  
Some give over to inclinations, giving way beyond wildness and objective existence.  
雖趣舍萬殊，靜躁不同，  
*Suī qù shě wàn shū, jìng zào bù tóng,*  
Although in (people's) interests reside myriad differences,  
(in degrees of) calmness or impatience not the same,

- 當其欣於所遇，暫得於己，快然自足，  
*Dāng qí xīn yú suǒ yù, zàn dé yú jǐ, yàng rán zì zú,*  
When in delight about what is occurring, at that moment they gain within themselves  
arrogance about their own self-sufficiency,  
(泛起) 不知老之將(泛終)至；  
*bù zhī lǎo zhī jiàng zhì;*  
(Harmonics) And they have no awareness of old age (harmonics end) about to arrive.  
及其所之既倦，情隨事遷，感慨係之矣。  
*Jí qí suǒ zhī jì juǎn, qíng suí shì qiān, gǎn kǎi xì zhī yǐ.*  
As for what they have been so earnest about, their emotions in accord  
with their affairs change, and then feelings of regret tie them down.
4. 向之所欣，俛仰之間，  
*Xiàng zhī suǒ xīn, fǔ yǎng zhī jiān,*  
As for what was appreciated before, within the blink of an eye,  
已為陳跡，猶不能不以之興懷；  
*Yǐ wéi chén jì, yóu bù néng bù yǐ zhī xìng huái;*  
Already it is (just) a past vestige, (but) even now it cannot but arouse feelings (of regret).  
況脩短隨化，終期於盡。  
*Kuàng xiū duǎn suí huà, zhōng qī yú jìn.*  
Moreover the rising and cutting off (of life) always changes, but finally it always ends (in death).  
古人云：「死生亦大矣。」豈不痛哉！（泛終）  
*Gǔ rén yún: "Sǐ shēng yì dà yǐ." Qǐ bù tòng zāi! (harmonics end)*  
The ancients say, "Death and life are both momentous". How is that not agony!
5. 每攬昔人興感之由，若合一契。  
*Měi lǎn xī rén xìng gǎn zhī yóu, ruò hé yī qì.*  
If one considers past people's deep (sad) feelings's sources, it accords with all their writings.  
未嘗不臨文嗟悼，不能喻之於懷。  
*Wèi cháng bù lín wén zāi dào, bù néng yù zhī yú huái.*  
It is not that I don't share their writings' laments: I cannot explain them in terms of (my own) feelings.  
固知一死生為虛誕，齊彭殤為妄作。  
*Gù zhī yī sǐ shēng wéi xū dàn, qí péng shāng wéi wàng zuò.*  
I certainly know (the idea of the) oneness of death and life is empty and absurd,  
similarly, for a someone strong to die prematurely (as though old) is against nature.  
後之視今，亦猶今之視昔：悲夫！  
*Hòu zhī shì jīn, yì yóu jīn zhī shì xī: bēi fū!*  
When later (generations) look back on today, it will still be as today's looking at the past:  
How tragic!  
故列敘時人，錄其所述，  
*Gù liè xù shí rén, lù qí suǒ shù,*  
Therefore I am setting out this account of contemporaries, recording what they have written,  
雖世殊事異，所以興懷，其致一也。  
*Suī shì shū shì yì, suǒ yǐ xìng huái, qí zhì yī yě.*  
Although generations change and matters differ,  
the things that move us (to sadness): they amount to the same.  
(泛終) 後之攬者，亦將有感於斯文。  
*Hòu zhī lǎn zhě, yì jiāng yǒu gǎn yú sī wén.*  
(Harmonic coda) As for people who later seize upon (them):  
(may they) also in future also be moved by these writings.