

A Translation of Four Chinese Shi-Poems

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A morning visit to the Master Chao's temple to read the Buddhist Scriptures (Liu Zongyuan) 晨詣超師院讀禪經 (柳宗元)

汲井漱寒齒，清心拂塵服。

Draw the cold well-water to rinse my teeth and mouth.

Make my mind calm before whisking the dust on clothes.

閒持貝葉書，步出東齋讀。

Hold a roll of the Buddhist Scriptures with carefree leisure.

Read it carefully after walking out of the east dining room.

真源了無取，妄跡世所逐。

No one really understands the truth of the Buddhist Scriptures.

All people in this world just chase after those absurd things.

遺言冀可冥，繕性何由熟。

The essence of the Buddhist Scriptures is meant to be understood.

But how could I cultivate my nature and self-cultivation to be a master.

A morning visit to the Master Shi's temple to read the Buddhist Scriptures (Liu Zongyuan) 晨詣超師院讀禪經 (柳宗元)

道人庭宇靜，苔色連深竹。

It's a very peaceful and quiet yard belonging to the Master.

Green mosses have extended to the deep place of a bamboo grove.

日出霧露餘，青松如膏沐。

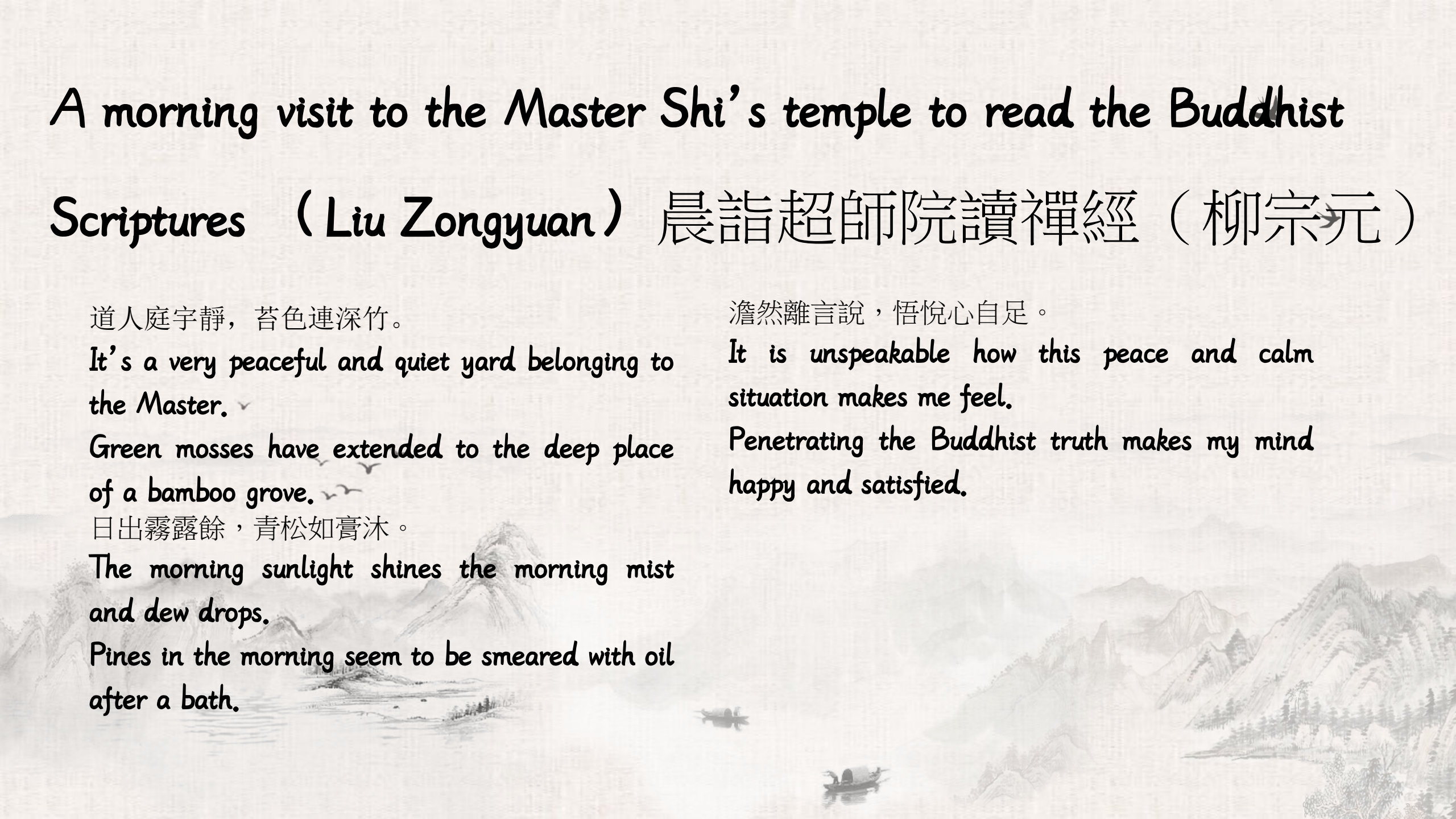
The morning sunlight shines the morning mist and dew drops.

Pines in the morning seem to be smeared with oil after a bath.

澹然離言說，悟悅心自足。

It is unspeakable how this peace and calm situation makes me feel.

Penetrating the Buddhist truth makes my mind happy and satisfied.



Life is hard (Li Bai) 行路難(李白)

金樽清酒鬥十千，

The good liquor in this golden vessel is worth a lot of money.

玉盤珍羞直萬錢。

The rare delicacies in this jade plate are worth much more.

停杯投箸不能食，

Dropping down the vessel and chopsticks, I can't eat anything.

拔劍四顧心茫然。

Drawing my sword and looking around, my mind is so vacant.

欲渡黃河冰塞川，

I want to cross the Yellow River, but it is blocked by giant ice.

將登太行雪滿山。

I want to climb the Taihang Mountain, but it is covered by snow.

閒來垂釣碧溪上，

Fishing beside the Bixi stream in my spare time.

Suddenly dreaming about passing by the sun by a boat.

Life is hard (Li Bai) 行路難(李白)

行路難！行路難！

Life is hard! Life is hard!

多歧路，今安在？

So many branch roads, which one is the best choice?

長風破浪會有時，

One day, I will ride the wind and waves.

直掛雲帆濟滄海。

Sailing my boat to the real wide world.

A travel to the fierce heat (Wang Wei) 苦熱行(王維)

赤日滿天地，火雲成山嶽。

The hot sun burns every inch of the world.

Orange clouds look like burning mountains.

草木盡焦卷，川澤皆竭涸。

All the grass and trees are scorched and rolled up.

All the rivers and lakes dry up and leave no water.

輕紉覺衣重，密樹苦陰薄。

Even very thin silk clothes, you will feel it is too heavy to wear.

Even under a dense mass of trees, you can not feel any cool.

莞簟不可近，絺綌再三濯。

The bamboo mat and cattail mat become too hot to touch.

The ko-hemp cloth must be washed again and again.

A travel to the fierce heat (Wang Wei) 苦熱行(王維)

思出宇宙外，曠然在寥廓。

My mind is flying away to places far beyond the universe.

A wider space where you can find the feeling of cool and openness.

長風萬里來，江海蕩煩濁。

The remote wind will come from ten thousand miles away.

The river and sea will dispel all the sorrow and worry.

卻顧身爲患，始知心未覺。

Only focus on and worry about the current body feeling.

Then I realized that I have not felt it with my mind.

忽入甘露門，宛然清涼樂。

Walking into the Ganlu Gate out of expectation. I suddenly find a pleasant feeling of coolness.

Eight poems about autumn—the third (Du Fu)

秋興八首・其三(杜甫)

千家山郭靜朝暉，日日江樓坐翠微。

All families in this city are bathing in the morning sunlight.

Sitting in the building beside the river everyday, to see the green mountains.

信宿漁人還泛泛，清秋燕子故飛飛。

The fisherman sleeping in a boat for two days is still boating in the river.

There are still swallows flying around though it is a cool autumn now.

匡衡抗疏功名薄，劉向傳經心事違。

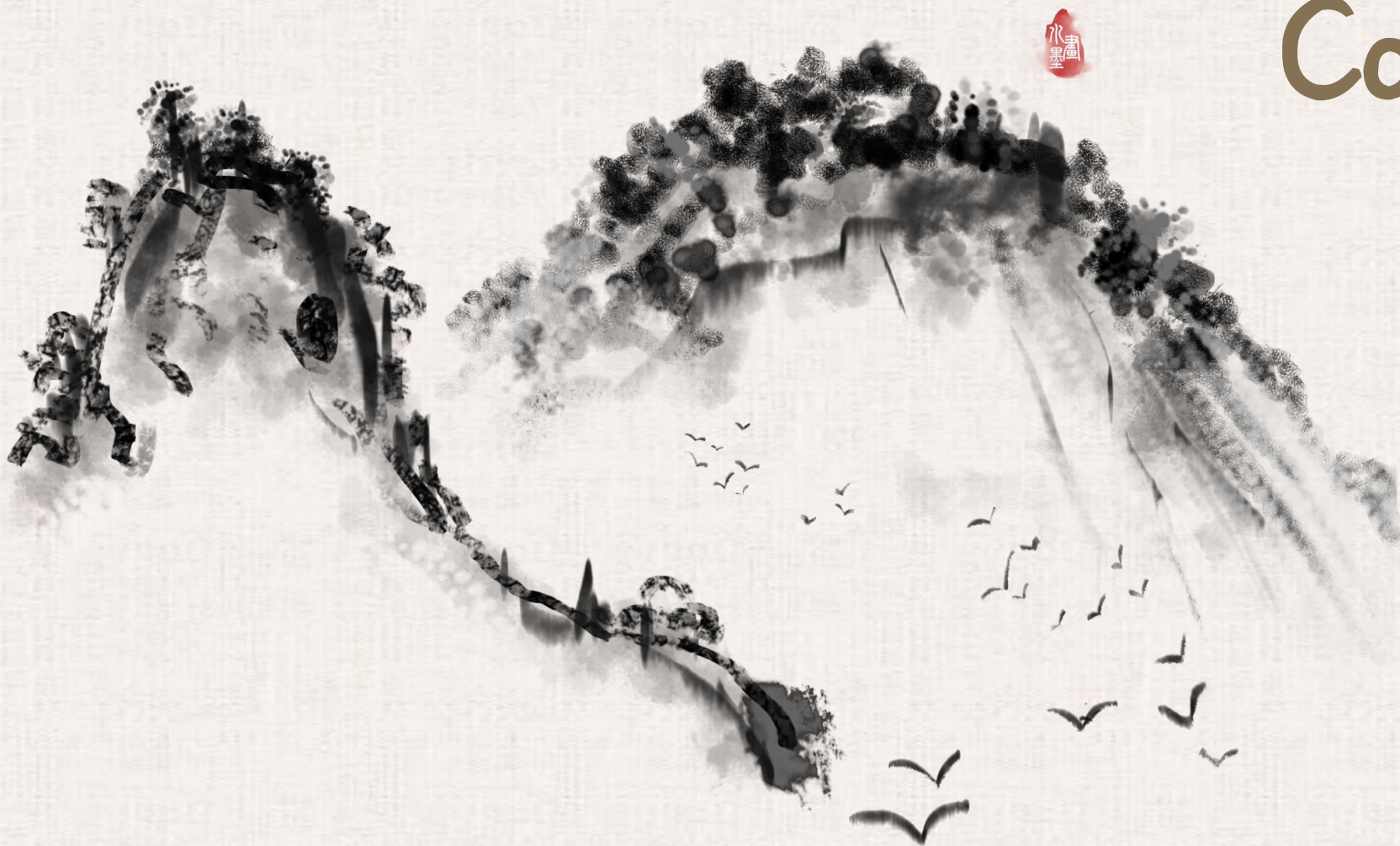
Kuang Heng advised frankly to the emperor and ignored fame and gain.

Liu Xiang devoted himself to teach scriptures, though his life didn't go well.

同學少年多不賤，五陵衣馬自輕肥。

All schoolfellows in early youth have made their own successes.

They live in Wuling, wearing expensive clothes, riding strong horses.



Commentary