

二. If I could spend a day doing whatever I wanted without regard to money, I would invite my Chinese teacher to accompany me. Being a man of great learning, he would surely be able to provide unique insights on whatever we do. Besides, he has a good sense of humor and is an entertaining conversationalist; it is almost impossible to be bored with him at one's side!

With deference to his expertise, I would choose to go on a trip through China, preferably along the Yangtze River, like the main character of Gao Xingjian's "Soul Mountain" did. We would start off from Chengdu, a city filled with ancient culture and history, and make our way along the meandering river, visiting with

the Yi, Miao, and Zhuang minorities in turn. My Chinese teacher would very likely be thrilled at the opportunity to see for himself those wonders that lie untarnished in the vast rural regions of the Middle Kingdom which he could previously only imagine with the assistance of books and television. Knowledge and wisdom would spout from his mouth like water from an artesian well — I would try my best to not be churlish and drag him on to the next destination. Alas, all good things must come to an end, and the sun would ineluctably set on our hypothetical day. We would return, exhausted but satisfied, to Taipei, where we would part ways and promise to take another trip sometime soon. There probably would not be another trip, but that is inconsequential; the memories of this one would suffice.