



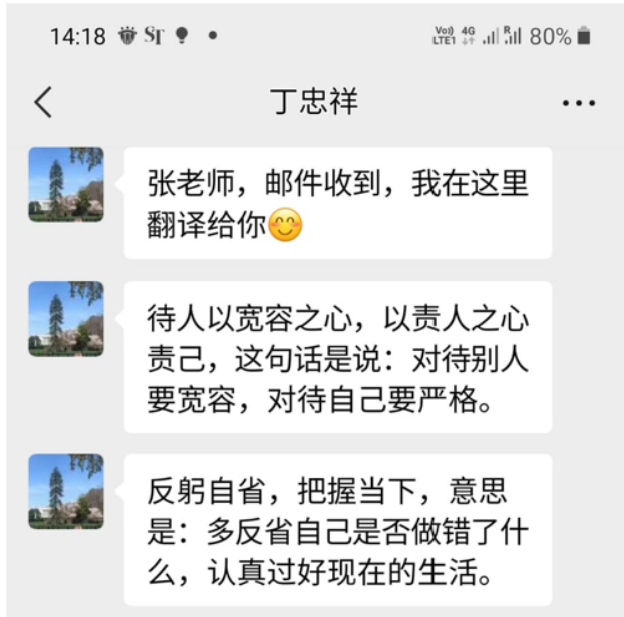
Reflections on a Piece of Art

Description

On the 1st of January 2022, Professor Foo Keong Tatt posted one of his paintings and asked if anyone could translate the Chinese scripts on his artwork. There was an unusually muted response, and I thought I would get an opinion outside our chat group.



I contacted Ding Zhongxiang (???) from Hangzhou and asked his thoughts. He was, like many Chinese, highly driven and very hungry. He came to me 15 years ago as a fellow to learn clinical and research skills. He published three papers during his stay. We have kept in touch ever since. He is now a Full Professor of Radiology at [Zhejiang University](https://www.zhejiangu.edu.cn/), the 5th ranking university in China (2019). He still addresses me as “?? (teacher).”



Ding Zhongxiang's interpretation (explanation)

????????????????After reflecting on Professor Ding's explanation, I would translate the expression as, "Treat others with tolerance at heart; treat yourself as others would expect from you." In other words, be stricter with yourself.

The first half of the expression calls for tolerance. As Kant spelled out ages ago, we see things not as they are but as we are. Our culture, upbringing, education, character, values, and a host of factors determine "as we are" and what we see. It is little wonder why we see differently – how could it be otherwise? In other words, we should be tolerant because we are different; we should also hold a higher standard for ourselves. "????????????????" advocates "double standards" but with a positive spin. (We usually perceive "double standards" with negative connotations.)

????????????The first half of the expression urges self-reflection; the second reminds us to grasp the present moment. Putting the two parts together means getting an insight into the current situation (or reality we face), live in it and enjoy the moment.

Experiences help to make the present more meaningful. And the present is for us to enjoy! How we live today will determine the quality of our future.

Best wishes for CNY and happy festivities!

