

(Writer) Chen Si'an  
Commissioned by Nabuqi and Kiang  
Malingue

# Geopoetics regarding a waterless sea

*There is not the slightest similarity between the plan of a city and our mental image of it as we consult the unfolded map, or between the sediment deposited in memory by our daily wanderings and the sound of its name.*

—Julien Gracq, *The Shape of a City*

## Intro Key

She is thrown into the turbulence of time. Her toes are clenched in the last century, lips sucking and slurping in the present one, limbs scattered in the whirlpool stirred up by the hour and minute hands. The battle between the order of time and her willpower has come to a fatal end; her body is unaware of it. Amidst the tumult, she is conscious that every moment of hers belongs simultaneously to many eras, many places, and many identities.

Time's swamps bring to her not so much nuisance, but an opportunity to clarify space to an unprecedented extent. Time becomes inconsequential; she ceases to commit anything to memory in a sequential manner. She follows a stone—it is born, rolling, accumulating, sedimenting, and ultimately turning into dust—the measurement is no longer time but geography. She dedicates time to traversing this land that has been a source of sustenance for her for a long time (or vice versa, a place she has been nurturing for a long time), in search of a key.

A key capable of rousing this dormant, waterless sea. It is asleep for too long, completely unaware that each individual water element has been trying to break free, one after another. It does not even know if its name should still be sea.

There is an abundance of unnamed entities, regardless of the challenges associated with naming them. Even the dirt beneath our feet is caught up in a conflict over names. It has to do with the overabundance of spices it has produced; it has to do with the presence of a pure water river; with an infamous female pirate; with an exotic red censer brought all the way from overseas; and with the distinctive accent of a seaman. Conflicts arise between narratives, robbing one another. Fighting for, instead of the right to name, memory of the future.

She is aware that her pursuit of the key also entails engaging in pillage. She disapproves of such effort, yet she is unable to conceal her profound ambition.

To comprehend this location, future generations must rely solely on storytelling.

Is story.

Is key.

## Part 1 Scouting North

How do humans obtain from the sea things that it does not possess

Prior to acquiring the ultimate key, she must first fetch another key, which is a physical and unique key, for a certain building. She regards it as an anchor for the conjunction of identity, recollection, geography, and imagination. From this point, her searching sight extends in every direction.

Ascend and survey the northern direction. The ever expanding shoreline transcends the ancient limitations imposed by fate and has now attained autonomy. A hundred years ago, before the building beneath her feet, it is the sea. An actual, palpable sea, with substantial, physical waves that crash on the coast. Over the course of a century, an immense amount of mud and rock, measured in trillions and billions of tons, has plunged into the ocean, forming a substantial stretch of land that spans dozens of kilometers, being called home by a population of people. Ingesting seas, consuming waves, cutting through mountains, and levelling lands.

The struggle between humans and the sea for land is, after all, inconceivable. She frequently wonders: how can humans rob something from the sea that it both possesses and does not possess simultaneously? Undoubtedly, the sea has been deprived of a content that is both extremely small and unbearably immense. The ambitious human urge for conquest is once again fulfilled when the lands transforms into a unified and compact entity. However, this achievement, in relation to those who are conquered, merely showcases hubris. Does anyone share her belief that we need the sea's consent? Indeed, it is important to note that not every vision implies the act of exploitation, not every silence means consent.

She stares as the narrow pebble beach repeatedly lifts up its skirt, tears open its skin, absorbing gravel that is forcefully inserted, as if it were new flesh and blood. It allows this new flesh and blood to be more vital than the old one, facilitating the construction of buildings and boulevards, the development of ball parks and grasslands, and even the creation of a designated area for coronations. It grants humanity the ability to freely roam on this independent territory that they have created themselves, experiencing either joy or sorrow.

Night, deeper night, when all humans and animals are asleep, she perceives the arid sound of the seawater, originating not from the visible sea located miles away, but from beneath the solid ground beneath her feet. The tides ebb and flow, lashing the ancient, submerged shoreline that is now buried deep down. She listens again to the undulating noises of the desiccated sea, uttering, uttering, uttering.

The sea never vanishes, even when it is waterless.

## Recognising sea in a person

How can the atmosphere of the sea become incorporated into a human's body to the extent that it may be identified as the sea within this body. What are the characteristics of the ocean. Sea-related terminology and words serve as reminders and labels for the qualities associated with the sea. Moist, sticky, floating, immense, salty, limitless source of nourishment.

# Kiang Malingue

馬凌畫廊

10 Sik On Street, Wanchai, Hong Kong

香港 灣仔 適安街10號

(Follow) @kiangmalingue

kiangmalingue.com

Additionally, there exist terms that are more dangerous. Rogue wave, engulf, apprehension, fury, turbulent, tumultuous, insignificant. Does one's insignificance in relation to the water equate to one's insignificance in relation to the mountains? She ponders.

*Ponder no more; for you can discern within my body the sea. Lose no time, however, for I am the last of the Tanka people. When I am gone, sea-bodies will be extinct. He stares at her, occasionally blinking a sea blue glimmer in his pitch-black irises, his shallow dimples holding the weight of stories he has recounted countless times. You know, there was once a sage named Zhou during the Song Dynasty who wrote about my kind in books. "Those who treat boats as houses, the sea as land, relying on rivers and the sea for their livelihood, are the Tankas." As far as I can see, nay, as passed down orally by my ancestors, my people is first known during the Qin Dynasty. They flee from servitude under the rule of Qin and migrate into the sea. Hence, the inclination to revolt is inherent in our genetic makeup. We choose to reside permanently on the ocean for successive generations, rather than submitting as subjects of Qin. She is already accustomed to the confident manner in which he speaks—she, like most of the audience, has heard this clear and persuasive introduction numerous times on various media platforms. He does not recognise her, she knows him well. Spotting him for the first time, she observes him buoyantly suspended in water, secured by a straw rope encircling his waist. Under the guidance of his mother, he is acquiring the skill of manipulating the gravitational forces of seawater through the acts of lifting and pulling.*

*Regrettably, this sage Zhou has embellished his description of the Tanka people with false information, asserting that we are a covetous community that practices polygamy, goes unclothed in both winter and summer, and exhibits primitive behavior. His account is, in modern parlance, a piece of exoticism, reflecting the gaze of others, a gaze that treats the so-called abject people with condescension. But there is a well-crafted line from his account that I frequently quote: "A Tanka existence may seem wild, free and untamed, but it actually adheres to a specific structure, operates inside a particular domain, and serves an appointed authority. Therefore, we know that there is no escape from heaven and earth." Isn't it nice? I like this line; it is also where I have adopted my screen name of roaming between heaven and earth. He gets excited talking about all these, emitting warmth from his body and giving off the aroma of squeezed shoulang yam juice from his gray linen shirt. Dangling half a shoe, his white and tender heel is visible, swaying in the air along with the crossed calf. We are a resilient eggshell buoyantly floating in the water, vulnerable to every gust of wind and swell, yet we have managed to endure throughout our journey. Who can deny that we are the greatest eggshell in the entire world? He grins, nearly dropping the shoe that dangles loosely on his toes. One person's distinct appearance gradually melts into the vague narrative of a we.*

Everything has disappeared; there is nothing remaining. The eggshell has finally reached the shore. I persist, contending with the forces of waves and time, in order to be the last person to disembark from a Tanka boat and set foot on shore. You know, there are no cellphone signals in the sea. He gives her a wink. I could not be the first who escapes the land and embraces the sea; I have to be at least the last person who forsake the sea in favour of the land. I can still tell stories, which is a relief. So I have to keep telling them. Or, there is truly nothing left. At this point, he lowers his head, hiding his eyes and half of his face in the shadow of the sunset.

# Kiang Malingue

馬凌畫廊

kiangmalingue.com

10 Sik On Street, Wanchai, Hong Kong  
香港 灣仔 適安街10號  
(Follow) @kiangmalingue

My son will be a first-generation Tanka who simultaneously loses the sea and the land. I hope one can at least see the sky in him.

## Thesaurus

Fire qilin: burdened with an excessive amount of cravings and addictions. Mud carp: a housemaid. Airbreathing catfish: an old man. Drunk cat: a drunkard. Dog by the door: a person who dares not go out. Tiger crab: a brute. Salt storehouse patron: a lewd person. Kublai Khan: a porter who embezzles grocery money. Zhao Kuangyin: Emperor of Great Song, punning on eating only dishes and not rice. Land-measurement officer: a vagabond. Gaping son: a person who earns a living by running his mouth. Scholar's handkerchief: wrapping books, punning on losing in all games, standing for a gambler who is out of luck. Pixiu boy: a naughty kid. A footprint full of bullshit: an ill-educated person. Three beats six: a retarded person. Flower beaut: an innocent, naive person. Bean nail: a short person. Dusty White Fok: an arrogant and aggressive person. Compiled by Siu Fung, published on the 31st of December, 1949, Ta Kung Pao,.

Butchering the dead bull: highway robbery. Knowing the mouth and the face but not the heart: do not judge a book by its cover. M hau: not interested. Lose your mom: fuck. Pulling the bull onto the tree: difficult to teach. Walk ghost: (pedlars) run (away from the police). Release high rates: to practice usury. Good heart with no good return: bite the hand that feeds one. Gwan zan: to be fair and just. Wearing a green hat: when one's wife cheats on him. Lau gaa lin: defective goods. Snake meeting sulphur: soft. Good heart matter: gentle and considerate. Big chunk of lotus root: not blaming others. Familiar temperament: well versed in unwritten rules (used by gangsters). Showing teeth not eyes: laughter. Boxed shit all over the body: getting into trouble. Sky does not contain: not afraid of anything. Enough Taoist practice: smart and resourceful. Three inch nail: a short person. Powerful chamber member: a powerful, resourceful person (used by gangsters). Saam Seoi people watch revolving lamp: keep it coming. Little kid having a head shave: doing something fast. Last night's fried dough sticks: losing vitality. Living person with no living gallbladder: a person with no courage. Compiled by Wun Gam, published on the 10th of December, 1949, Ta Kung Pao.

Barber rings the alarm: Couldn't care less (lazy shaving). Same roll same pot: a gang of cronies (used by gangsters). Begging for hate: a person who is hated by all on sight. Rice path (or world): opportunities. Calculate dead straws: to be mean. Egg-fed chicken: (cannot drink water) Look and don't touch. Play raw: having a windfall. Beating bamboo stick: extortion. Cracking corner: stealing another's partner (in a love triangle situation). Falling into water: cooperating with the Japanese during the Japanese occupation of Hong Kong. Fat corpse massive: having a chubby body. Addictions all over the body: having many hobbies. Cloud biting: smoking cigarettes. Compiled by Mong Jin, published on the 7th of November, 1949, Ta Kung Pao.

Salvage: to succeed. Wan gat: to mess around. Clay bodhisattva statue crossing the river: cannot look after itself. Dead but mouth: talking without doing. Japanese watch: chunky and inaccurate. Eat pig blood, shit black shit: to have an instant effect. Feet lifting: boot-licking. Only the fierce dragon cross the river: he who arrives comes with aggressive intent. Dong seoi: bad luck. Square egg: strange thing. Compiled by Mong Jin, published on the 5th of November, 1949, Ta Kung Pao.

## Part 2 Looking West Fish finding a path ashore

Just as there are humans who crave a future in water, forfeiting the land, there are fish that yearn for being freed from water, seeking a route on a continent. Humans and fish think of each other as food, but humans also end up desiring more. She has seen shoals of fish darting from their faraway hometown all the way to the land, and has also closely examined those who have luckily survived the exodus.

Looking west, her nose discovers, quicker than eyes, the street teeming the shoal of stranded fish. They chase the propulsion of the waves, trailing the light that is blinding—some are also being dragged by the nose. Regardless of their landing location, they invariably congregate on this street. Gradually, therefore, they also take over the street's name. They gather not due to a sense of security or solidarity, but because a continuous sonic wave of a certain frequency summons them to the same place.

Among the lucky survivors, the luckiest one cannot hear the sonic wave. Once it has landed, it does not head to the street in a hurry, but pauses and carefully surveys its surroundings. It is used to waiting in patience. Waiting quietly has proven to be much more rewarding than acting blindly.

In addition to its auditory trait, it harbours many other secrets. It has a pair of tiny, tender feet. When it is born, its mother casts a glance at it before hastily swimming away. The mother lays thousands of eggs during each ovulation cycle; it is rare for a mutation as such to take place, but it is a loss completely negligible. The fish observes its siblings as they swim after their mother, then turns its attention to its newborn self, immediately mastering its first self-taught skill: it adeptly tucks its delicate feet into its scales, allowing it to walk underwater using its tail instead of feet. Just like all other fish. It can then be accepted as a member of the community, instead of a mutated weakling to be promptly devoured. It grows up keeping these secrets, gradually realising that the most critical survival skill is not to act blindly due to anxiety.

The two feet of the fish develop in proportion to its body and have acquired considerable strength, begging it to utilize this unique power. When night falls and darkness covers every secrets, it releases from its scales the pair of feet that have developed their own language, tiptoeing on the sandy beach, and practicing along the coastline a style of tail-free, water-free walk. Which is, for this fish, an authentic, genuine form of movement. It surveys from afar the metropolis, where every building and street emit faint sunshine, envisioning a mundane life devoid of hidden truths. None of its kind has returned to the sea, but messages about them keep coming in. There, on the land, every creature uses its own feet, and there is no need to hide them. This anticipation has not transformed into a sense of urgency; it must learn to breathe anew, to balance, to endure aridity, and to become a real land-dweller, rather than longing for the sea while residing on the coast.

*The sonic wave that leads them to the street is in fact a smell. It reveals the mechanism to her with a grin. It is a smell that can be captured by the ears. Salty, pungent, and persistent, it is a smell that exudes from a totally dehydrated body. Perhaps humans could produce and identify this smell, provided they thoroughly dehydrate their dead bodies instead of cremating them. In her eyes, the fish making this speech already looks like a fully*

adapted terrestrial creature. Displayed on its face are ambiguous expressions exclusive to land-dwellers. Expressions that fish can never make. *At that point, the defect that I was born with, the secret I have been painstakingly hiding for all my life, is finally sublimated into a priceless fortune. I cannot hear that sonic wave; furthermore, I loathe that pungent smell. Even if I have no place to go on the land, I will not go in the direction of that street. I am the lucky one.*

She has to constantly remind herself that she should not reveal motherly concern when looking at him. It will only force him, holding his high-end briefcase, to push his way into the peak-time subway crowd, vanishing from her sight for good. For an adept in the art of concealment, this city is his deepest sea. However, it must now exercise prudence when handling its fishtail. Its suit is properly tailored using quality materials, its tie clip flashes like a cluster of small diamonds, and its firm and sturdy (no longer tender) feet wear a pair of utterly polished leather shoes, soaked in wax. She knows why it deems its own people unlucky when they focus solely on taking to the street. From salted fish stores to dried seafood shops, this street is essentially founded on massacring and consuming its people. She imagines that from time to time it has to, as it handles its onerous business, take a short cut through the street with its briefcase in its arm, catching sight of a display of corpses, fillets, offals, tendons and skins, gills and fins, and bones, neatly arranged behind glass windows—deep down, is it filled with grief or pride? It is difficult for her to tell it that, what they have been looking for ashore is never what it means to achieve. Renouncing one's identity is not the appropriate or lawful means to establish another identity. There has never been a right path.

Yet it is entitled to find out about all this by itself. Rather than being told and schooled. Therefore she says nothing.

*But you know, I have never been truly patient. It says. I am just scared of everything.* It takes a sip of the stale coffee, avoids her gaze, and turns its face to its brand-new sea world outside the window. In this submarine world, every building and street emit faint sunshine.

## Spectacle amnesia

Here, the epidemic that takes place before the last one takes place before the second-to-last, is referred to as spectacle amnesia.

According to medical professionals, what initially triggers the outbreak of the disease are current disorders in the hippocampus structure of the brain, caused by rapid changes in spectacles at the time. The hippocampus is chiefly functional for storing and processing spatial information. Simply put, it is a person's cognitive map, where there are important cells named by researchers straightforwardly as *place cells*. In even simpler terms, the size, activity and firing rate of the hippocampus determine whether or not one can find his way. What makes it crucial is also the fact that it does not only play a role in processing spatial information, but is also responsible for forming new memories based on one's experience with different incidents. Why are these two cardinal functions—it is not easy to determine which one is superior but they are both definitely essential—stuffed into one organ? She does not know to whom she should raise the question.



Long story short, current disorders induce further lesions and damage to the hippocampus. People cannot remember the spectacles they have seen, the places they have been, or the way to wherever they would like to go. Specific places are compressed into void terms and concepts, unable to evoke any tangible memory or image. *Direction or orientation*, in both the physical and the cognitive sense, makes a sticky stew in the brain of the contaminated person—with ingredients misshaped, forming a messy clot of woolly taste. Stranded on the streets are pedestrians bumping into one another, clumsily climbing the children's sliding board with a briefcase under their arms, endlessly circling in a white lab coat a counter in the shopping mall, or driving a fire truck into a pond of shrimp and crabs. Filmmakers believe it is an inspiration: armed with a camera, they rush into the streets and alleys, trying to capture spectacles on the public's behalf. Seahorses are now on the menu in restaurants, steamed, flash-fried, stewed, braised, pan-fried, deep-fried, hotpotted, boiled, barbecued, baked, lou mei-ed... People have faith in the ancient wisdom: eating something visually or conceptually similar to a body part will aid in the healing of that particular body part.

Just like the last time an epidemic takes place, or the time before that, or the time before the second-to-last time, or just like every single epidemic outbreak, it is to be overcome. Each time at a price too high. Nonetheless, in the war between humans and epidemics, the former is nearly elevated to a god's position, trying its its best to learn a lesson.

Spaces and places finally quiet down and stop changing. People no longer feel the urge to zealously keep pace with the time, no longer believe that changes equal evolution. Even after the outbreak has fully ceased. It is as if only after a bad fever people start to calmly study electrophysiology, attempting to understand cellular voltages and currents. Not only are the spectacles deactivated, but also faith.

Upon her first arrival in this place, she lays down the ground rule of no interference. She may love, observe, company, lament, document, but is not entitled to interfere. She watches this ever-expanding city, gradually collapsing as it swells up. Is it space that expands, and time that collapses, or the other way around? As it approaches infinity along one dimension, it converges into a singularity along another. The core of a blackhole. The universe moves slower as it approaches a blackhole, and finally stops at an event horizon without actually falling into the blackhole. Until her existence becomes just as irrelevant.

### Part 3 Turning South Where spirits and humans coexist

Turning south, there is an abrupt sight of a ten-metre-high jutting out from the coast, standing alone by the curving mountain pass. Atop the platform is a columned two-storey redbrick mansion, commanding the hustle and bustle of the harbour below. It is haunted. People nowadays summarise its history and future with these three simple words. But she remembers much more than this.

The platform used to be but a modest mountain. Its rocks cold and steep, haphazardly disposed, deeming this particularly whetted mountain an undesirable spot to relax. Even exhausted seabirds tend to fly by instead of taking a break here. She, however, favours this small mountain, and is familiar with nearly every individual rock and stone. Among the uniquely

# Kiang Malingue

馬凌畫廊

kiangmalingue.com

10 Sik On Street, Wanchai, Hong Kong

香港 灣仔 適安街10號

(Follow) @kiangmalingue

shaped rocks, that one stone perched on the summit of the tiny mountain captivates her the most. She often walks up to it, gently caressing the stone, listening to its faint vibration, receiving its thoughts.

It has been alive for too long, with not much to say. It is mostly about a petrel. It calls the bird my companion. Unlike other birds, its companion rarely frequents the coastal area; whenever it appears, the bird is accompanied by a rainstorm. As a stone, one that is firmly welded and nailed on top of a mountain, it remains undaunted by wind and waves. However strong wind and waves may be—tearing open houses, ripping apart trees—they can do a stone no harm. Although she knows well that, given time, waves may eventually damage and penetrate rocks and stones, the stone is too young to be convinced. It is a truth that is too remote, sounding almost like a lie.

Once it has got its companion, its apathy towards the storms turns into a passionate anticipation. Its friend belongs to the storms, offering an excuse for it to develop affection towards them. Day after day, it stretches its neck, longing for the arrival of stormy weather, for huge waves rolled up by the wind, for its companion to graze its body against terrifying splashes, slightly leaning its torso, scissoring the water surface with its blade-like wings, leaving behind long, steep watery trails, before performing a graceful rise in the air, exiting the storm, and finally returning to it.

It is never tired of it. Its never is longer than many many living beings' eternities.

*We have our own languages, it explains to her. The companion's language is gesture, speed, and its immersion of itself into the waves with all its strength. My language, is permanence, solidity, and a barely noticeable tremor. Despite the linguistic differences, once it approaches me and its tiny claws make contact with my vibrating body, the languages become irrelevant. It may be the same between you and me. She gives it a gentle stroke, convinced that it is a sincere assumption. Now that its companion is gone for good, it awakens for shorter and shorter hours, and vibrates for lesser and lesser times. Compared with their existence, a petrel's life is regrettably brief. While there are other petrels who cut all the way through waves to its side, there is only one companion that can make it quiver.*

Hundreds of years have passed, many areas adjacent to the tiny mountain have gathered communities who yearn for starting a new life here. Its dangerous edges and obstacles have been gradually targeted by the people who means to conquer. Many people threatens to level it, without actually taking action. It has to be taxing work; the profit out of such intimidating task is almost negligible.

There is but one person who wields his pickaxe, chisel and bamboo basket everyday, breaking and cracking the mountain bit by bit just to build a humble abode on his own.

What kind of person would assign himself to this task? She observes him in silence, trying not to judge. Maybe a desperate person. A terrible typhoon has completely destroyed his only hut, leaving him homeless. Maybe a lonely person. He wanders to this region, all by himself, without family or friends, and is not even neighbored by anyone before losing his hut. The hut appears poorly makeshift, barely supporting a stack of horseweed with a couple of timber beams, starkly standing by the



# Kiang Malingue

馬凌畫廊

kiangmalingue.com

10 Sik On Street, Wanchai, Hong Kong

香港 灣仔 適安街10號

(Follow) @kiangmalingue

mountains far from the hamlet. Maybe a determined, strong-willed person. At daybreak, he climbs to the mountaintop before hacking, removing boulders and flattening surfaces until dusk. The battle between iron and stone can easily reach a stalemate, but the war between the resilience of a mountain and the vulnerability of a human being is heavily skewed in favor of the mountain, much like the mismatch between a mountain and a bird.

It is not the story of the old fool who moves the mountains. The old fool in command is determined to not—or not only—devote his life, but the lives of generations of sons and grandsons (he ambitiously asserts that this commitment will be everlasting). No benevolent, compassionate deity will allow such oppressive ancestor, and that is why the gods have to move the mountains for him. This man here has no children (and is apparently not planning to have any), has no ambitions, has nothing to consume and utilise for this task but his own body. He simply stoops down and digs, one spot at a time, using what little, ever-diminishing strength he has left in his body to move fragments of the mountain to a new place.

She has made attempts to talk to him, but soon realised that his language is silence. Looking at this piece of land being gradually flattened, he lacks in his eyes a kind of hard-earned happiness. An action is an action, and is the only goal, not pertaining to any other outcome. His back gradually curves, mirroring the descent of the sun, his hair bleached by grey snow that never reaches in this region. The pointy mountaintop has been slowly planed. The stone that talks to her is now debris in his hands, ashes to ashes, dust to dust, sedimented into the grounds and walls of his stone mansion. The stone has not disappeared but vibrates in a different form, mixed together with his silence, giving birth to the platform's new life.

On the eve of his corporeal disintegration, he has not yet roofed the mansion. She sits silently by his side, listening to his slow breath, reluctant about whether she should help roofing the mansion, airing some satisfaction into his last breath. Looking up at the over-saturated orange glow above the horizon, he utters with a smile his first, last, and only speech. Look, it's dawn.

All the creatures who would have rested or lived on this platform in the future remind her of these words. Spirits of the stones, petrels, tigers and leopards, humans, trees and plants, worms and bugs, and the earth, all have constructed this habitat where spirits mingle with humans.

Are personalities and fates stubbornly genealogical, genetic and hereditary, are haunting spirits crystallised so deeply in the land that it is nearly impossible to expel them?

She still cannot figure it out.

## Geomorphologist

She is reminded of an old friend, a geomorphologist. He has spent all of his life classifying, categorising, ordering, distributing and mapping all land forms, unreservedly documenting all topographies. Mountain ranges, hills, plains, basins, plateaus. Rocks, shorelines, caves, waterways, bodies of water. Canals, farmlands, gardens, dams, architectures.

# Kiang Malingue

馬凌畫廊

kiangmalingue.com

10 Sik On Street, Wanchai, Hong Kong

香港 灣仔 適安街10號

(Follow) @kiangmalingue

There is widespread skepticism over his ability to achieve his ambitious aim within his lifetime. Challenging is not the cataloguing task. Challenging is not even being impeccably comprehensive at it. Challenging is it once was. This old friend could understand, without being long immersed in the river of time as she has, what a luxury it is to capture a region that is in rapid evolution. What is previously known as a bay is now bay-less; what is previously named a mountain has long lost its peak. The only traces left, testifying that they once were, are the series of names that fail to catch up with the changes, as well as unverifiable legends about them.

Thankfully, his patience is abundant. Going through historical documents piled up as thick as the mountains that are no longer, he counts every river's avulsion, drought, flood and demise, every rocky hill's formation, erosion, and pulverization. Day after day, he draws a map that few can really comprehend. On this map that is heavily dotted, sectioned and lined, annotated with cryptic texts and figures, a stream from thousands of years ago penetrates cloud-reaching skyscrapers; an overflowing muddy swamp infested with sick flies houses a colossal, densely wired power station; boils underneath the hustle and bustle of an urban district is a marching canal.

She belongs to those who have tried to decode the cryptic map. She remembers the chill enveloping her finger as she glides the tip of it on the map, tracing the multilayered, vertical landscapes. Layer after layer, the topographies used to adhere fast to the earth as skins immediately attached to bodies, but are bloodily peeled off before they have fully withered. No one remembers this pain as vividly as she does. Even him. He can draw, but cannot experience it.

She caresses the scripture and murmurs, for whom is it reserved. He smiles, as if ridiculing the absurdity of her question. *For no one, of course, he says. I simply cannot be bothered by anything else but landforms. Such as, humans.*

## Soaked tiger crabs' stand-off with powerful chamber members

Title: Shanghai murder case fugitive Wong Sau-Zoeng arrested in Hong Kong

Agent Lo Jiu makes the arrest within two hours

Wong pleads for cancelling the extradition and for voluntarily returning to Shanghai

Date: 1939/12/07

Paper: Ta Kung Pao Hong Kong edition, page 6, local news

Traitor-fugitive of the Shanghai Bubbling Well Road murder case Wong Sau-Zoeng was apprehended and taken into custody yesterday afternoon in Hong Kong by the reputed local agent Lo Jiu, who has been leading investigations in Shanghai-related crimes. Below are the details of the story:

Cross-turf casino

Traitor murder

The murder that took place on 28 July this year near Bubbling Well Road and Tifong Road was a shoot-out that left Zoeng Sau-Mui and others dead as a result of a traitor-run, cross-turf casino business feud. The Shanghai Special District Supreme Court of Justice issued and distributed

across different cities arrest warrants for the fugitives Lau Gam-Sing, Zau Tit-Bou, and Wong Sau-Zoeng.

The fugitive is followed as he flees to Hong Kong  
Police takes action after receiving report

One of the fugitives, Wong Sau-Zoeng, was followed by the victim Zoeng Sau-Mui's brother Zoeng Sau-Mui as he made his way to Hong Kong. Zoeng filed a report at the General Detective Division yesterday at 11:30, requesting the apprehension and extradition of Wong to Shanghai. Deputy detective chief, deputy superintendent Shaufton and chief detective inspector Mack Murphy immediately sent the esteemed Shanghai-related affairs detective Lo Jiu to the assignment.

Lo's brilliant design solves the case in one day's time

Detective Lo is fluent in Shanghainese dialects, maintains extensive connections with prominent individuals in Shanghai, and has solved many important Shanghai-related cases. At the time, the police did not know where the fugitive was located in Hong Kong, even though his appearance had been reported. Upon receiving the order, Lo, with the help from his important friends in Hong Kong and Shanghai, immediately learnt of Wong's whereabouts and devised a plan to lure him in. After securing room 323 on the third floor of the Luk Kwok Hotel in Wan Chai as the meeting place for Wong, Lo met him in person at 13:30 and arrested him on the spot. While monitoring Wong closely, Lo called the Chief Detective Office to report the arrest. Chief detective inspector ordered deputy detective inspector Tak Kin, stationed in Wan Chai Police Station, to proceed to Luk Kwok Hotel and meet with Lo to escort Wong back to the headquarters.

Wong Sau-Zoeng is a famous rider

Investigation showed that Wong was 32 years old, a native of Baoshan County, Shanghai. He was the first secretary of the Songhu Police Command. At the time of the arrest he was wearing a suit; the detectives monitored him closely without resorting to physical force or restraints. Lo and Tak accompanied him to the car and returned to the headquarters. The time of the arrest was 14:30; after receiving the order, it only took Lo two hours to set up the trap and make the arrest.

Wong pleads for return to Shanghai for his trial

Yesterday afternoon, Ta Kung Pao's reporter conducted an interview with the detective in charge, chief detective inspector Mack Murphy. According to Murphy, the Hong Kong police authorities, upon receiving a report from Zoeng Sau-Mui, decided to arrest the fugitive and await the Shanghai Municipal Council to officially request an extradition. The first step of the Hong Kong police authorities was to accuse Wong with the murder of Zoeng Sau-Mui on 28 July 1939 near Tifong Road and Bubbling Well Road, Shanghai, and to request the preliminary court to prosecute the fugitive for extradition, pending the Governor's express instructions. Wong was brought before chief magistrate Fullers and charged by Murphy yesterday at 15:00 in the afternoon, pleading the cancellation of the extradition, expressing that he was willing to return to Shanghai for the trial. If the fugitive were to voluntarily return to Shanghai, Hong Kong authorities would be able to significantly reduce the amount of time required for the case. Consequently, the judge issued an order to cancel

the extradition and directed that the fugitive be handed over to the police for custody.

It was reported that Wong is at the moment being detained in Hong Kong under surveillance. According to reliable sources, Wong's return to Shanghai is scheduled for the 9th of this month. The police authorities may appoint Lo and a British agent to transfer him to the Shanghai Municipal Council.

## Part 4 Regarding East Goddess and queen

Into the east, is the realm of the goddess and the queen. It is customary to walk up to the red censer of the goddess, ignite three joss sticks of incense, bow in all directions amidst the steamy atmosphere of all spirits, repeat the simple wishes everyone makes, before walking up to the bronze statue of the goddess, repeating the same prayers. The goddess and the queen, only a couple of hundred metres away from one another, solemnly watch over the space that is a perpetually haphazard clot of words, deeming it difficult to draw a line between prayers and invocations.

The goddess lives as long as heaven and earth; a mortal, on the other hand, cannot be a queen forever, so it is clear which one is superior. Say the the goddess' followers. The queen is corporeally present and brimming with energy, issuing edicts that can change fates and lives of thousands, while the true nature of the invisible goddess remains a matter of speculation. In comparison, that which is visible and tangible is reliable. Say the queen's admirers. The queen's existence spans only a few centuries, which is almost insignificant when compared to the goddess's reign. Say the the goddess' followers. Who dwells in the past anyway, I am living in the present. Say the queen's admirers. The goddess' subjects and lands are given, while the queen's subjects and lands are taken, and you have to return what you have taken sooner or later. The given, the intrinsic, is to remain. Say the the goddess' followers. Fights and struggles make it lively for the immortals and mortals alike; otherwise, the world is but a dead pool of stagnant water. Read some Greek myths. Say the queen's admirers. The goddess and the queen, only a couple of hundred metres away from one another, watch over with delight the space that is a perpetually haphazard clot of debates, deeming it just as difficult to draw a line here and there.

She enjoys following the crowds, going back and forth between the goddess and the queen. Walking on gravel, flagstones, granite, and eventually patterned floor tiles. In time, she has realised that, as long as the passage of time goes fast enough, the bloodiest struggles are going to be encased and reshaped in memory. No one is interested in the differences between the goddess and the queen anymore; staying dead for long enough, an unforgettable, indelible person becomes god-like. Humans sculpt invisible, shapeless gods based on their imaginations, producing statues and idols that are anthropomorphic. At the end of the day, humans want to be gods.

Most living things desire gathering, it is in their nature. This holds particularly true for the human species. By the side of the goddess and the queen, people gather time and again, singing, chanting, crying, clamouring, raging, praying, fighting, building altars, destroying them, building them again, just to destroy them again. Gathering is each person

# Kiang Malingue

馬凌畫廊

kiangmalingue.com

10 Sik On Street, Wanchai, Hong Kong  
香港 灣仔 適安街10號  
(Follow) @kiangmalingue

knocking a crumb out of his own spirit in the extravagant hope that all the crumbs together will make a complete scroll. Gathering is the attempt to weave a Babel of sound, out of a myriad of tiny emotions. Gathering is a collective mourning of the helplessness of the individual.

The goddess and the queen, only a couple of hundred metres away from one another, stoically watch over the space that is a perpetually haphazard clot of realities, deeming it just as difficult to draw a line here and there.

## A billion years of dust

The ancient Yangzi Craton contains deeply within itself a 2.9 billion-year-old Neoproterozoic crystalline basement. Throughout billions of years, it has undergone oceanic subduction and arc-land collision, and the crust of the land mass has been constantly proliferating, arching out mountains and trapping rivers.

One billion years ago, the Chinese landmass with a deep Archean basement rushed from the south-eastern flank to the Yangzi Craton—a long period of friction, union and continued friction could not be avoided. Six hundred million years ago, most of the land in the south-eastern part of the tectonic plate was submerged in shallow sea. Four hundred million years ago, sediments transported by rivers and their deltas accumulated here. They became the oldest rocks in the area today, the Devonian Wong Chuk Kok Tsui Formation. One hundred and sixty-five million years ago, active volcanoes erupted violently, spewing ash and lava rich in quartz, potassium, sodium and iron aluminosilicate minerals, forming large crater volcanoes. Fifty million years ago, the continuous subtropical weathering environment brought to the surface most of the granite originally hidden at a depth of about 2,000 metres. Two million six hundred thousand years ago, fluctuations in the global sea level occurred as a result of shifts in the ice age. Subsequently, the Earth's temperature rose slightly, the ice sheets melted and the sea level rose again. The increasing water levels inundated the accumulated sediment from the river and submerged a majority of the nearby bodies of water with marine silt. Eleven thousand years ago, at the end of the last glacial period, the sea level rose rapidly. Eight thousand years ago, the water level rose to its present level. Since then, the land has been land and the sea has been sea, waiting for the next great change to consume each other in a million years.

As the edge of the southeastern corner of the earth's land mass, this place has been repeating the cycle of exposure, inundation, re-exposure, and re-inundation over billions of years. Repeatedly, cyclically, each exposure and inundation brings a new composition. New rocks, new sediments, new rivers, new coasts. The dust of a billion years ago is always suspended in a solid crystalline base, quivering with the reverberation of the beat.

One hundred million years belonging to the land, it observes the mountains. One hundred million years belonging to the sea, it listens to the waves.