

詩中有畫，畫中有詩——

王維

His poems are like paintings,
and his paintings, poetic

— Wang Wei

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BIOGRAPHIES | 人物誌

名維，字摩詰。因喜誦《維摩詰經》故。唐代山西河東人。生於佛教家，其母篤信佛，持戒坐禪。母卒後，捨莊為寺。居士自幼耳濡目染，虔誠奉佛。

五歲能文，善繪墨山水，分外傳神，近視亂墨一片，遠觀奇峰異谷，活現紙上，後人謂「詩中有畫，畫中有詩」。

中年喪妻不續弦；晚年長齋，念佛坐禪。自奉儉樸，常齋供僧。受神會大師之囑，撰六祖碑銘，可知對佛法研究如何之深。

惜對國未盡忠，待友未盡義。安史之亂，未離京隨駕；摯友孟浩然來投，未能及時引見唐明皇。臨終時，索筆寫告別親友書，投筆而逝，年六十一，著《輞川集》行世。

Wang Wei's first name was Wei, and his courtesy name was Mojie, given that he liked to recite the Weimojie Sutra (Vimalakirti Sutra). He was born in a Buddhist family during the Tang Dynasty, in Hedong, Shanxi Province. His mother was a devout Buddhist who sincerely upheld the precepts and practiced meditation. After his mother passed away, he donated his family's property to a temple. Influenced by his Buddhist upbringing, he sincerely believed in the Buddha.

At age five, he had already mastered writing and Chinese traditional painting. His paintings were exceptionally vivid. If you looked at them closely, they appeared to be a chaotic mess of black lines; but when you looked at them from a distance, you can see wondrous mountains and beautiful valleys come alive on the paper. When later generations talked about him, they said: "Reading his poems is like appreciating a painting and appreciating his paintings is like reading a poem."

In his middle age, his wife passed away and he did not remarry. In his old age, he became vegetarian and recited the Buddha's name while practicing Chan meditation. He lived a very simple life, and made frequent offerings of various necessities and vegetarian meals to the Sangha. At Great Master Shenhui's request, he wrote an inscription for a stone monument in commemoration of the Sixth Patriarch. We can tell that Wang Wei was a dedicated Buddhist with a deep understanding of Buddhism.

On the other hand, he lacked loyalty to his country. During the An-Shi rebellion, as a subject, Wang Wei should have followed when the emperor fled

我們每一個的人生，在這個世界上就好像著棋一樣。有的時候，就把這個棋著得贏了；有的時候，不會著這個棋，就把這個棋著輸了。那麼著贏了，就是眾善奉行；著輸了，就是諸惡已作。

這一位王維居士——王摩詰，他生在這一家庭裏是很好的，因為信佛的家庭，所以他也就信佛了。這位居士是山西河東軻川的人，他為什麼能生在佛教的家庭？因為和佛有緣，種的善根不錯，所以生在佛教家庭。可是他有妒嫉心，嫉賢妒能，所以有時候做事就做得不當然，做得不對，沒能禮賢下士，沒能選賢與能。因為這樣子，所以他才遇到「安史之亂」。在安史之亂的時候，他也沒有氣節，沒有節操，所以苟且偷安，委曲求全。這是他沒有智慧的地方。

他的名字叫「王維」，字叫「摩詰」——王摩詰，因為他喜歡《維摩詰經》，所以叫這個字。他生來在很小的時候就會寫文章，當然這是有父母的栽培，各方面的助緣才能這樣。等長大了，他眼睛所看的、耳朵所聽的，都是佛教的這個境界，所以就虔誠地做了一個佛教徒。

他又善於繪畫水墨的山水畫，或者是潑墨的畫。他畫的畫裏頭，就好像有一首詩似的；每逢作詩時，也好像有一幅畫似的。所以他的詩畫分不開，可是有心的人詳細觀察，就能得到其中傳神的妙理。他的畫在近的地方看，是黑黑的這麼一片墨；要是遠觀呢，就看這個奇峰特出，異谷宛然，在那兒活靈活現，好像活的一樣。所以一般人對他的畫評論都是：「詩中有畫，畫中有詩。」在這種境界裏邊，他大約也有一點自滿驕傲。

他的詩畫畫得這麼好，但是身為國家一個右相——右相就是丞相，在一人之下、萬人之上，他沒有把國家治理得太平無事，使得安祿山和史思明來造反，擾亂國家的治安。身為宰相，有這樣的事情發生，足見他的才能是「名有餘，而智不足」——他的名譽很大，可是智慧不夠。

☞待續

the capital to Sichuan province, but he failed to do so. He was not a very good friend either. When his best friend, Meng Haoran (who was also a famous poet), came to visit him, he should have recommended him to Emperor Ming of Tang, but he did not. Before he passed away at the age of 61, he asked for a brush and wrote a letter of farewell to his relatives and friends. Wang Wei left behind, as his legacy, the Wangchuan Collection, which since then has circulated throughout the world.

Commentary:

In this world, we are like chess players; sometimes we win, sometimes we lose. If we win, it is because we have done many good deeds in the past; if we lose, it is because we have committed many evils.

Wang Mojie was a layperson born into a deeply devoted Buddhist family from Wangchuan, in the Hedong area of Shanxi Province. Why was he born in a deeply devoted Buddhist family? Because of his past affinities with the Buddha. In his previous lives, he had planted good seeds which had ripened in this one. But he was jealous of those who appeared more capable than he was, so he didn't always conduct himself in a proper manner. For example, he sometimes failed to show respect to his elders and subordinates, and failed to recruit or recommend talented candidates. When the An-Shi Rebellion broke out, lacking moral character and unwilling to compromise his safety for that of others, he ran away from his responsibilities and went into hiding. In these situations he showed a lack of wisdom.

His name was Wang Wei, and he was given the courtesy name of Mojie, because he liked the *Vimalakirti Sutra* (also called the *Weimojie Sutra*). Because his parents supported him in his education, he was able to acquire great skill in writing at a very young age. Having been raised in an environment where he was constantly immersed in the Buddhadharma, he naturally became a devout Buddhist.

He was good at traditional Chinese landscape painting, also known as ink-wash painting. His paintings appeared very poetic; in every painting a poem could be read. It was hard to differentiate his poems from his paintings. If you examined them closely, they looked like a chaotic mess of black lines; but when you looked at them from a distance, you could see the wondrous mountains and beautiful valleys come alive on the paper. His paintings were exceptionally vivid. When you analyzed them in detail, you saw their soaring spirit. When later generations talked about his paintings and poetry, they said: "Reading his poems is like appreciating a painting and appreciating his paintings is like reading a poem." As a result of receiving such recognition, he might have become a little arrogant.

Although his poems were well-written and his paintings were excellent, as a prime minister, he failed to govern the country well, and thus give An Lushan and Shi Siming a chance to rise in rebellion, plunging the country into turmoil. The rebellions of An and Shi are indicative of Wang having more of fame than wisdom.

☞To be continued