

# ***WHITE BUDDHA***

PORTRAIT OF AN ESL  
TEACHER IN CHINA



BY KIM CANCER

## White Buddha: Portrait of an ESL Teacher in China

“Melvin...”

“Where was he from?”

“Portland, Oregon.”

“That’s weird.”

“It’s a weird place...”

“But he hated Portland, like, really, really hated Portland, always shitted on its hipsters, and politically correct, passive aggressive people...”

“He certainly was not passive aggressive.”

“Wasn’t he like 43?”

“Nah, he was 33, 34, 35, I think, but looked older because of his balding. Not sure why he didn’t just shave off the sides.”

“Crazy how he ran, every day practically, yet he still had such a big beer belly. And I don’t ever remember him drinking beer, which is unusual for an ESL type.”

“Soda and junk food, comrade...”

“Oh, he guzzled assloads of soda. His apartment was carpeted in coke cans, candy bar wrappers...”

“Remember that meme, the deep fake of him as Mord from *Game of Thrones*...”

“A Lannister always pays his debts.”

“I hope Melvin didn’t see that.”

“He must have. He was always online.”

“The meme of him as Shrek...”

“Man never slept, posted on his WeChat at 3 AM, status updates, like all the time.”

“The cranium on him... Must have had a fuckton of Neanderthal DNA...”

“He looked better with a beard.”

“His eyelids were always so droopy, puffy and red.”

“And his one eye was bigger than the other. Looked all fucked up.”

“He never slept.”

“He was always so pissed off.”

“Didn’t he smoke crack or meth?”

“Nah, he didn’t even smoke weed.”

“Someone from Portland who doesn’t smoke weed? What’s up with that...”

“He watched the Fox News Channel.”

“Wasn’t he also a ‘Flat Earther?’”

“Every time I saw him, he was angry and complaining about something. Usually about a person who was an asshole to him, or work problems, or China stuff...”

“He was on about something the first time I met him, too. But he seemed mostly normal, just animated, eccentric, a character. I liked him initially.”

“It’s hard to make friends in China.”

“Friendships are transactions.”

“*Guanxi*...”

“If this place doesn’t make one a misanthrope, nothing will.”

“Makes me feel better about my misanthropy. That’s for sure.”

“And my alcoholism.”

“I dislike all of you. I only talk to any of you because we work together, and I have to.”

“You’re a humanitarian.”

“Takes a special sort of human being to make it past a year in the PRC.”

“Challenges your every notion of decency, China...”

“Personal space, hygiene, honesty, privacy, freedom... Pretty much everything...”

“Can’t even count how many Westerners come and don’t make it two weeks.”

“Slipping away on a midnight run...”

“On a midnight train to Vietnam.”

“Plenty of runners.”

“Or they’re gone, disappeared by next semester, on a plane to another country or back home.”

“Or they’re violent, drunks, violent drunks, bipolar, or a missionary.”

“And those are the good ones.”

“The only sane ones are the recent college grads or older, retired guys.”

“The missionaries are occasionally okay, as long as they don’t get all freaky with the Jeebus on you...”

“That’s one thing I appreciate about China, the lack of openly evangelical, religious people...”

“At my old school there was a whole network of underground missionaries. They’d set up a pipeline from a Bible college in Kansas that had a special TEFL major... They’d send us lots of young, fresh college grads...”

“The head of the crew, this freckly, frumpy, 30-ish, ghost-white lady, would invite every new teacher to her apartment for freshly baked, chocolate chip cookies...”

“There, she and her posse’d gauge your spirituality through casual conversation and float an invite to services at an underground church, but if you declined, and they figured you weren’t sufficiently into the Big J, the cookie invitations stopped abruptly, and you were out of their orbit, shunned, really...”

“And they’d lure students with the cookies too. That’s how they roped them in. They’d do Bible study groups, weekly, at a teacher’s apartment, with students...”

“Cookies for Jeebus.”

“Some tasty cookies, I must admit. I could see how they might dissuade someone from eternal damnation...”

“Only the missionaries and crazies last in China for more than a year.”

“One girl, a pretty young white thing, came to China, and after only a couple weeks, she had mouth ulcers and her face was covered in unexplainable, horrific acne, looked like a pepperoni pizza...”

“She went to an international clinic, and the doctor’s only advice was simply to leave China. So she did a runner, and when she got back to Iowa, her ulcers and skin cleared up immediately.”

“Only the missionaries and crazies...”

“Defective human beings.”

“Yup.”

“Hey, the dumplings are delicious.”

“When they don’t give you diarrhea.”

“I’m an expert in diarrhea. A diarrhea connoisseur...”

“All the food poisoning and diarrhea has turned me into a germaphobe. I scrub the fuck out of everything now...”

“We’re all gonna get cancer or some shit... Cancer of the ass...”

“One teacher got ball cancer and had to have one of his testicles amputated.”

“Another guy, an older one, got lung cancer, but didn’t know it. They found him dead in his apartment on campus.”

“Crazy Stevie, from Wales, dude with the humpback... I remember him...”

“His Chinese wife stuck flyers around the apartment building asking for donations...”

“Remember that Irish lady, a couple years back, the one with the partially paralyzed face and googly eye, who died from leaving her gas tank on in the kitchen?”

“Then there was that American, hippy, granola lady last year who, on her first night in China, not knowing better, drank a glass of the tap water and had to be rushed to the hospital. Died the next day...”

“Every semester at least one teacher dies, has a nervous breakdown, or gets fired for punching or molesting students. That’s why they have language written into the contract about

such things...”

“Not sure why’d you’d even need to molest anyone. Plenty of beautiful women around who aren’t students.”

“Especially for older guys. All those ‘leftover’ women the locals won’t touch.”

“I like touching them.”

“And ample supplies of hookers if all else fails, or so I heard, like, from somebody...”

“Cops shut down the brothels in the last city I worked. Replaced them with veiled kiosks selling adult toys...”

“They got factories in Dongguan developing AI sex-bots. *Bladerunner* shit.”

“Already is *Bladerunner* in China, the smog, crumbling buildings, neon signage lit up at night.”

“Gritty and cyberpunk as fuck.”

“I dig the neon lighting.”

“I’ve gotten to seriously appreciate the absence of a tipping culture...”

“It is a beautiful thing, not having a waiter or waitress in your face every five minutes because they’re desperate for tips, needing to kiss your ass...”

“Chinese restaurant servers are usually polite, friendly but not servile, occasionally rude, but they’re there when you need them...”

“I sorta like it when they’re rude to me... Find it refreshing...”

“People doing stuff outside, at parks, hanging out, kids running around... That’s something I like about China. Folks not so shut-in and hyper-paranoid like in the States...”

“Every girlfriend I’ve had is afraid to go outside... Afraid of the rain, because it’s so wet... Afraid of the cold, *pa leng!*, afraid of heat, because it makes her sweat and sweat is sticky and gross, and afraid of the sun because she’ll tan and her skin will be dark...”

“*Sajiao...*”

“I got *sajiaoed* out of a job once. Had a summer gig, nice paying one, summer camp in another city... Girlfriend supported it, at first, but then *sajiaoed*, ripping down our pictures from the walls, screaming about how I’d meet a girl in that city...”

“So I quit, and I told the guy who hired me I couldn’t go because of my girlfriend. Figured he’d be angry, but he laughed and was quite understanding...”

“Every girlfriend I’ve had has looked through my phone, computer, searched my apartment...”

“My last girlfriend demanded I delete every girl from my phone and WeChat contacts...”

“A Chinese buddy of mine caught his wife installing a listening device in his car...”

“I had a Chinese girlfriend install a GPS tracking device on my phone...”

“Not hard meeting ladies in China, particularly if you’re white and tall... The difficult part is what happens afterwards...”

“They’re way better after 30. Far less *sajiao*, princess shit...”

“It’s that way everywhere, comrade...”

“I like how the ladies in China appreciate my pasty skin...”

“And they think all British men are ‘so gentlemen’...”

“British dudes kill with the ladies abroad, anywhere they go. That’s why you see such high numbers of British expats... The States is packed with them too...”

“I appreciate the directness of people in China, the brutal honesty, the lack of political correctness. You’ll know where you stand with them...”

“Totally is that way with the women. Some feisty, strong ladies... Let you know how they feel, one way or another...”

“*Sajiao* aside, the women are what I dig best. Beautiful, elegant, feminine, slim, high cheekbones, perfect china doll faces.”

“I never really understood ‘yellow fever’ until I came to China.”

“Once you go Asian, you can’t go back to Caucasian...”

“Too much starfish sex for my taste. Feel like a necrophiliac sometimes...”

“Can’t kiss either, plunging tongues down your throat like a succubus.”

“Lack of porn leaves them at a disadvantage.”

“Lack of experience too. Can’t date much when being kept a prisoner of their parents and the State...”

“Gotta teach them... Provide experience...”

“Japanese, Taiwanese, and southeast Asian ladies are far better in the sack...”

“Fucking firewall...”

“Gotta deprogram them...”

“Bottom line... Chinese ladies are red-hot, more feminine than Western women, way thinner... All that rice and vegetables they eat...”

“Once you go Asian...”

“But if you aren’t in Shanghai, Shenzhen, Beijing or Guangzhou don’t count on too much sport-fucking. Anywhere outside of Tier 1 it’s generally gonna be marriage, your hand, or prostitution.”

“Better watch out in Beijing. Hear there’s gangs of pissed off young incel types, Chincels, with baseball bats and knives, going after white dudes with Asian girls... Out looking for honkies to fuck up...”

“Remember the French guy in Beijing whose fiancée got stabbed to death, in public, broad daylight, at a shopping mall, by a young Chinese dude with a samurai sword? Not one passerby helped, and she bled to death on the street...”

“Yeah, fuck Beijing. They closed the famous food street, too. The one with all the fried insects, scorpions, and crazy Asian snacks.”

“Fascist assholes... No more fried grasshoppers and tarantulas?”

“Forget the insects, I gotta worry about my girlfriend getting slashed by maniacs wielding samurai swords?”

“Shanghai, comrade. The Shanghaiese are too apathetic and rich to care.”

“And, unlike the big ruffians up north, they’re usually too girly-man to put up much of a fight.”

“I don’t know, those long fingernails they got. Shanghai dudes going Freddy Kruger, Wolverine on your ass... Slash you to shreds...”

“I’ve seen tattooed, scary, gangster triad types, all over, north to south. Not the types I’d want any problems with. Hate to be caught making one of them wear the green hat...”

“Have no fear, comrade, the fuckbots are on the way. All equipped with QR codes...”

“The mobile phone payments are handy. I’ve gotten to appreciate them.”

“At least you don’t need a VPN for those.”

“Couldn’t live without my VPN.”

“VPN, hand sanitizer, tissues, condoms, air purifier, pollution mask, McDonald’s, noise-cancelling headphones, bottled water, probiotics and penicillin. The essentials of the China Expat Survival Kit...”

“My VPN was down for almost a month last year during the ‘World Internet Conference.’ Was brutal...”

“My VPN gets molested every June 4<sup>th</sup>...”

“Thank Mao for pirated DVDs...”

“Loves me some pirated DVD...”

“Probably my favorite thing about China is the public transportation links, not needing a car.”

“The subways are great when they’re not too jammed with the masses.”

“The bullet trains. War-mongering imperialist countries need to catch up with that infrastructure...”

“Infrastructure’s top-notch, girls are pretty, food is tasty, but all the daily life stuff, the small annoyances, the attrition of it... That’s what gets to you... That’s much of what drives everyone out eventually...”

“I can’t understand anyone who’d come to China for a regular job. If you’re not making buckets of cash in IT, business, or seriously forwarding your career, teaching at an upscale international school or simply doing ESL to live a stress-free lifestyle, travel, have fun, then how could you do it?”

“Defective human beings...”

“World travelers...”

“Dropouts...”

“Misfits...”

“Alcoholics...”

“*Diaosi*...”

“Disgruntled former high school chemistry teachers...”

“Disgruntled former university adjunct professors...”

“Career changers...”

“Hermits...”

“At large criminals...”

“Those in the witness protection program...”

“The divorced, the indebted, the curious...”

“The binary...”

“Conspiracy theorists...”

“Globalists...”

“Bolsheviks...”

“Sinophiles...”

“Maoists...”

“Sexpats...”

“Like you.”

“Guilty as charged, comrade...”

“Why is it that men are stigmatized for liking Asian women, foreign women? Mail order brides? Younger, legal age, ladies? Yet you’ll never hear anyone putting down a ‘cougar’ or being pissed about fat older white ladies prowling Jamaica and Africa for the BBC...”

“To each his or her own, I say... Everyone has his or her reasons, and as long as they’re not hurting anyone...”

“Only things I’m hurting are my lungs and my rectum...”

“The lower cost of living is a big reason for me... At least for ESL you got low hours, disposable income, cash for paying off student loans, debt, doing an online master’s... Beats many other alternatives... I know lots of folks who bettered themselves with it, moved on to greener pastures...”

“Fucking gig economy...”

“I’m living the Chinese Dream. One that doesn’t include 996 and paying a fortune for a



crumbling concrete box that you lease from the Jinpooh Bear, on an ever so tenuous basis...”

“I got a foreign passport already. I’ve achieved the Chinese Dream...”

“If you got the right connections and can handle the physical, environmental, emotional and mental challenges, China can be a fun place to be. At least while you’re still young...”

“Or just crazy...”

“Or tough...”

“It’s a decent place to teach. A lot of the students are a pleasure. They generally don’t talk back, give teachers shit.”

“It’s the flipside, the positive aspect of authoritarianism, creates some obedient students...”

“Teachers are generally quite well-respected in their society. Not too common for students to challenge them, shit on them...”

“Might also be that parents can beat their kids. Used to be like that in the States, now parents can’t do anything...”

“Think that’s a big reason why there’s such a culture of little bastards, sluts, and freaks shooting up schools... No parents around to smack ‘em upside the face, slap the taste out their mouth, no belts, switches, spankings... No discipline or fear of consequences...”

“You’ll still hear about spree stabbers at schools... Kid in a high school stabbed eight of his classmates the other day, during morning readings...”

“Media doesn’t perpetuate those mucker stories as much as in the West. Ban that news quickly...”

“Ah, students, kids, people in general, are good and bad everywhere. Students in China are just not usually as demonstrative with it. More passive aggressive than anything. Rarely openly hostile, rude...”

“I had a few students who were openly rude, but only a couple. One who asked me, in class, why I was fat, if I was gay... Another who sat in my class with his chair turned backwards so he could face away from me... Aside from that, had very few problems...”

“My students are usually too busy staring at their phones to give me any problems...”

“The English majors are usually the best. Quite friendly, eager to learn, and genuinely curious about other countries and cultures.”

“My classes of Art majors hardly ever turned up on time, or at all on occasion... Girls covered in tattoos, goth makeup, lazy as anything, respectful and friendly, though...”

“Mao help you if you ever are stuck with Computer Science majors, especially classes filled with boys. I’ve never seen such lazy oafs... They’ll play on phones, watch TV on tablets, wear ear buds, talk over you and not give any sort of a fuck.”

“The Computer Science students’ determination not to learn and lengths they’ll go to ignore teachers are impressive...”

“The worst is the Chinese college students’ teacher evaluation system...”

“Whether students ‘like’ you, rate you highly, is largely the basis on whether they renew your contract, for both Chinese or foreign teachers... So you’re basically compelled to be ‘nice’ to them...”

“It’s like *Lord of the Flies*...”

“*Children of the Corn*...”

“It’s a *guanxi* based society... If the school likes you, you’re respectful to the students, nice to the administration, patient, don’t give them shit, they’ll keep you around for years and rip you off far less...”

“Although if you’re too strict or too ‘serious’ as the students say, you’re generally toast...”

“Nah, if the administration likes you, if you’re not showing up to classes drunk, you’re polite, friendly, punctual, don’t cause trouble, keep your paws off the female population, they’ll give you a chance, pull you in for tea, and allow you the opportunity to lighten up, correct your ways, quit pissing off the customers...”

“But if no one likes you, like the guy they recently let go, you’re a ghost...”

“That crazy Korean American guy throwing books at students, got into a kickfight with one... Everybody hated him...”

“No, that was last year, just this past semester, the ex-marine guy...”

“The bald head, muscled-up dude from South Carolina, oh yeah, he would get all drill sergeant on the students, be strict about phones, was fighting a war against digital devices in his classes, but he said they were ingenious at concealing them, that they’d find ways to hide phones in their books, clothes, use smart watches, girls hiding wireless earphones under their hair...”

“The students complained about him being too strict and his classes being ‘boring’, so the school sacked him...”

“It’s the inmates running the asylum...”

“The Chinese teachers don’t usually care about that stuff, the phones, tablets... I’ve seen Chinese teachers playing on their phones, too, during classes. But did hear about one throwing her students’ phones out a window once... So there is progress being made somewhere...”

“The students are fried. Those stupid propaganda classes they sit through, being burned out from the *Gaokao*, and, mostly, I think it’s because they know they can’t fail...”

“They can’t fail?”

“For Oral English classes, if they fail or get too low a score, an admin will just change the grades...”

“For subject courses, Chinese universities will make teachers create an answer key for every exam and a corrupt administrator will circulate a copy of the answers to the students, before

the test, to ensure none fail...”

“To their credit, they’ve cracked down on some of that in recent years... Enforcing an entry card swipe system to track attendance, deducting ‘morality’ points for those late to or skipping classes... Used to be many wouldn’t turn up at all, until the final...”

“But still, Chinese universities, upper tier, Ivy League status equivalent included, have like 80% class score, grading requirements and 98% graduation rates, not too demanding... Not exactly Yale...”

“Speaking of Yale, Yale withdrew from China, because so many of the students at its campus there were plagiarizing...”

“I taught a writing course at my last university and, first paper I assigned, nearly every student handed me a plagiarized paper.”

“So I had to explain plagiarism and why it’s wrong... And the students looked so pissed I’d even brought it up...”

“Afterwards I made them write papers, in class, so they couldn’t copy anything from the internet, but then they copied off each other, students blatantly staring at each other’s papers...”

“The Chinglish on many of those papers, too, was murder trying to wrap your head around it...”

“A teacher I know, at an upscale international school, went through about five layers of security measures to obstruct cheating, but somehow, even the kids who couldn’t speak English would always hand in ‘A’ papers...”

“The corruption, it’s endemic, from a micro to macro level... Even Xi Jinping plagiarized his PhD thesis...”

“They’re conditioned not to think, purposely. Dictatorships don’t want critical thinkers, intellectuals...”

“It is depressing. But I’ve made my peace with it. Not up to us to sort out. It’s their country...”

“I try to help who I can help. Not pay too much attention to the slackers, those forced to be there...”

“It is a shitty thing to do, to force a language on someone. At least many of the English majors have chosen it...”

“A lot of the English majors were forced to study English as well....”

“Seriously, could you imagine that? A college assigning you a major?”

“Especially a language you have no interest in? Like you show up to UCLA and an administrator points at you and commands that you study Portuguese for the next 4 years, whether you like it or not!”

“It’s university with socialist, Chinese characteristics.”

“Explains the apathy...”

“Master’s of Apathy...”

“Hobbies include shopping, computer games and breathing...”

“Learned helplessness.”

“So this might be why my English majors can barely speak English.”

“Used to be all the students, even Accounting majors, could speak well, easily hold a conversation.”

“But since 2013, China’s public schools have been doing away with a large portion of their English education, replacing English courses with Marxism, ‘patriotic’ education, Chinese cultural courses.”

“Last couple years CCP has been banning Christmas too, Christmas parties, sending squads of goons, in grinch vans, to chop down Christmas trees outside shopping malls, tear down Christmas decorations...”

“Fascism with Chinese characteristics...”

“CCP has also been demanding Chinese companies change their brand names from English and European names to patriotic Chinese names... Claiming foreign names ‘hurt the feelings of Chinese people...’”

“And they have been purging English language TV shows, movies from CCTV, apps, the Chinternet...”

“Didn’t they also ban ghost movies, time travel plots too?”

“And a highly rated, beloved historical drama that was actually popular in other Asian countries, which is a rarity for Mainland China... Something about the stories being too ‘racy’, women showing too much cleavage...”

“The Great Leap Backwards...”

“Has to suck for English majors, so little useful media, and the atrocious textbooks they get... Full of Chinglish or 10, 20, 100 years old...”

“Have you seen their university course schedules? College students commanded to sit through 10 hours a week of those lame propaganda classes. On weekends, late into the night, too, until 10 PM.”

“They could, at the very minimum, for the English majors, conduct those propaganda courses in English, couldn’t they? A win-win...”

“They sleep through those propaganda sessions, like most of their classes. I’ve walked by those Marxism courses and seen them sleeping or watching movies on tablets, with headphones on, while a Chinese teacher stands behind a podium, reading from a book, mumbling into a microphone... The *Peanuts* voice...”

“Not every single one of them is sleeping... Some take it quite seriously... The Communist Youth League types... The ‘*wumao*’ eunuch sorts who go online and argue with foreigners, defending China’s politics, policies...”

“I’ve had a couple eunuch students, admins, turn up to my class, sometimes trying to goad me into political debates...”

“I don’t think it’s fair to argue with Global Times readers, *wumao* eunuchs. They don’t have unfettered access to information. Their ignorance is a handicap. They’re intellectual cripples...”

“Debating with pro-China, pro-CCP people, when you come from a free country, is like the intellectual equivalent of LeBron James and a team of NBA Allstars playing at the Special Olympics...”

“Horrible for them to be denied information like they are, kept ignorant... The CCP must not be too confident if they won’t allow opposing sides to simply speak...”

“From a competitive perspective, too, how hamstrung Chinese college students are being denied access to academic resources, losing time, irreplaceable, precious time, rotting away in those propaganda courses...”

“I guess they figure instilling nationalism and brainwashing to be of crucial importance, vital to their competitiveness. The fear of anti-government uprisings must keep the CCP’s billionaires up at night...”

“They saw *glasnost*... They study the USSR’s fall religiously, for a reason... Don’t expect a free press anytime soon...”

“But if they’re so serious about their propaganda and brainwashing courses, why do they allow students to sleep through them, play on phones the whole time?”

“Why aren’t there teacher’s aides prowling around, enforcing discipline? Like why have such strict rules, be authoritarian, yet have so little enforcement?”

“*Chabuduo*...”

“Don’t fear, comrade, the AI, facial recognition cameras and software will be able to spot students on phones, those daydreaming, sleeping, ‘morality’ points and sesame credits deducted...”

“Monetary fines, instantaneously subtracted from your Alipay, WeChat wallet, like the AI software, facial recognition cameras are now doing for jaywalkers...”

“*Xi Dada* is watching...”

“There’s already testing for that in middle schools. Cameras zeroing in on facial expressions, deducting points from students seemingly disengaged...”

“I’m still not convinced. *Chabuduo* is ever pervasive... It’ll be programmed into the AI... *Chabuduo* will save the day...”

“Maybe not for the *Gaokao*, that could be above *chabuduo*...”

“Nothing is above *chabuduo*...”

“Lower tier universities, colleges... If *chabuduo* can prevail anywhere...”

“All Chinese colleges... You can’t *Gaokao* these kids and not expect them to require the

PTSD, mental health recovery facilities that Chinese colleges serve as...”

“The phones are medication and preparing them for the job where they’ll sit in a cubicle all day, sleeping, playing phone games and shopping on Taobao...”

“Chinese colleges are like kindergartens for young adults. They’ve got curfew, nap times. It’s basically adult babysitting.”

“Aspects of it are maybe better than American colleges, no keg parties, or frat, sorority culture...”

“No 10 million dollar a year, asshole of a football coach... No NCAA crooks...”

“No adjuncts teaching at five schools, trying to make ends meet... Chinese colleges actually provide on-campus housing and decent benefits, pay...”

“American colleges are fucked up... Hear there’s an American college thing called ‘blowjob contests’ where a line of girls sucks off a line of guys, and the guys vote on the best brain...”

“Happened once at my college, a girl was bragging about her dick sucking skills, blew five dudes in a row at a party, in front of everyone...”

“I saw a tiny girl, like 5’0, dark skin, think from southeast Asia, girl called Tina, at a fraternity house, take on the whole college football team. Linebackers, everyone, ran a train...”

“Couldn’t see that happening at a Chinese college...”

“Not happening as much anymore at American schools. Students mostly sitting around staring at phones, 24/7, there too...”

“A happy medium between debauchery and prudence would be nice...”

“They’re nowhere close to debauchery at Chinese colleges...”

“The boys and girls sit on opposite sides of the classroom, barely talk to each other.”

“Most any of them do, if they have a boyfriend or girlfriend, is hold hands...”

“I had one girl confide in me, after class, in tears, that she’d had sex with her boyfriend, after he pressured her to do so, and then he broke up with her afterwards, saying that he couldn’t be with a girl who would have sex before marriage...”

“Hypocrisy with Chinese characteristics...”

“Learned helplessness...”

“Chinese hospitals regularly offer hymen replacement surgery. Probably have the department for that not too far from the medical testing they need for a marriage license...”

“Vagina mechanics...”

“Gotta wonder who invented that procedure...”

“Can and can’t get away with anything...”

“Seen their dorm rooms? Five, six, eight to a room, only one squat toilet... Bunk beds... A college I was at didn’t have AC or heating and the dorms’d be freezing in the winter, far colder

than outside, boiling in summer, far hotter than outside...”

“I taught at a school like that... Students would be comatose in the morning classes, late Spring Term, from not sleeping because of the heat... How poorly ventilated, hot those buildings were, swarming with bugs too...”

“It’s character building, comrade... Their Struggle Sessions...”

“And meanwhile the administration buildings and living quarters all had central heating and air... Admins in Audis...”

“Classrooms didn’t have AC either, it was around 100 degrees in there, only had these loud, overhead fans that just moved the muggy air around...”

“Classrooms with decaying, moldy walls, old, hard, beat up desks, no projectors or computers, only a warped blackboard... Sweltering hot in there, the temperature, plus having 50 people packed in a tiny room... One time I got vertigo and almost fainted...”

“My last school had an online ‘suggestion box’ for the administration, open to students, teachers who wished to make recommendations... No one used it...”

“Hundred Flowers...”

“A good way to get deported, that...”

“I don’t know, for shits and giggles, if nothing else, I’d fire up the VPN, leave a snarky remark about installing AC, ending vanity construction projects around campus, ditching the farcical ‘military training’...”

“I fucking despise that military training...”

“During the military training, late summer, I saw a girl collapse on the street, from heat exhaustion, had to be rushed via taxi to hospital...”

“That mandatory military training every college must do is so unnerving, seeing those students dressed in camouflage uniforms, carrying flags, marching, belting out communist slogans and songs in unison...”

“Eight hours of hate...”

“It’s a waste of time... They don’t usually learn how to fight or shoot. They just yell stuff and learn to march. Seen prissy girls and fat kids, lounging in the shade, sleeping through it or playing on their phones...”

“Worrying, for their sake, if there really were a war. Those singing, dancing PLA guys, students who can’t fight, can only march in formation... Not exactly formidable opponents... Plus all their weapons are ‘MADE IN CHINA’... Guns, missiles can’t fire...”

“Rest assured, comrade... They’ll send wave after wave of humanity at the enemy, marching right at ‘em, swarm ‘em, like they did in Korea...”

“1.4 billion people, plenty to spare... They’ll send the bare branches, *diaosi*, and old people first, wave after wave of *ayis* and *shushus*, with hammers, sickles and walking sticks... fatboys with cellphone nun chucks... *Nongmin* with pitchforks and lit cigarettes....”

“*Ayis* wielding peeing and pooping babies...”

“No war is gonna happen... Certainly no young people going... Those *ayis* and *shushus* won't let their pension funds go to fight... They won't even let them go outside...”

“Tiger parenting...”

“Many of my students' parents call them 6 times a day, simply to tell them to eat lunch... Facetime them twice a day... Tiger parents with movement tracking, listening devices, GPS apps on their kids' phones... Even from afar they can't do anything...”

“I was told by an admin not to fail any of my students, even if they never came to class, because it 'makes the parents, school and students lose face.’”

“The face... Always about the face...”

“You snowflakes... I worked as a high school teacher in America. I had parents flipping out on me, and snarky bureaucrats, who never taught a class in their lives, dictating our lesson plans. I once had a student get violent and slam a door shut on my hand, lost the tip of my thumb...”

“So Chinese colleges, I can handle pretty easily. Many unfortunate things about it, but, all in all, my students, lazy oafs included, are completely respectful and friendly to me, wonderful kids... Many genuinely want to learn, improve themselves... I can't complain much...”

“Yes, sir. They can be sugar-sweet, but careful what you say around them. There're at least one or two snitches in every class, recording you, ready to report you for spreading 'wrong ideas' or being a spy. They can even get paid reward money for it...”

“A middle-aged white guy teaching Oral English at a lower tier Chinese university. The picture-perfect profile of a CIA operative...”

“Read the comments some post online about foreigners, on Weibo, Sina... Scary stuff. The stink eye, dirty looks come from somewhere...”

“Has gotten much worse since the Trade War. Xinhua had a graphic with two boxing gloves, one painted as an American flag, the other as a Chinese flag, smashing into each other. Think of the effect that has on the local populace. That's their one and only news source...”

“I don't know, I've not noticed any uptick in dirty looks and hostility. I've always gotten dirty looks from the locals, especially the *laotou*.”

“Nah, I'm definitely noticing more stink eye from younger ones nowadays.”

“The generation now, those born in the late 90s, early 00s, are way more nationalistic. You should see the propaganda they were taught, hatred of foreigners... In primary school.”

“Atavism...”

“They're preparing for another Long March...”

“5000 years of history... Don't say they didn't warn you!”

“*Dangran*, comrade, most of the young people are quite patriotic, but not violent or crazy about it...”



“They can be... I know an Italian guy who was beaten up at a bar, simply for being a foreigner...”

“Bars are the worst. Random drug testing there too, make you whip it out, piss in a cup, in public...”

“A year ago I had to spend the night at a police station because the coppers had raided the bar to do drug tests but hadn’t brought their drug testing kits, so we had to go back to the police station with them and wait for 5 or 6 hours while they found the officer who actually had the kits...”

“I hate Chinese bars, fake alcohol, never any girls there, aside from a few hookers, and it’s mostly dudes sitting around, staring at their phones, or playing that stupid dice drinking game...”

“Worst experience at a Chinese bar for me was the time I had a young guy ask me if the Diaoyu Island is Japan’s or China’s... Told him I didn’t follow the news much and don’t know what Diaoyu Island is... He then screamed at me that ‘It’s China’s!’”

“He kept yelling at me, ‘China’s!’ ‘It’s China’s!’ and so I got up and left the bar and he followed me down the street yelling ‘Diaoyu Island is China’s!’ until I got into a taxi and drove off...”

“Incredible how it takes so little for the CCP to push those nationalist buttons and have the masses go wild.”

“Controlled conditioning... Pavlovian...”

“Still are some nice ones who see through that. Had one kid tell me how all the anti-Japan shit in the news is just to keep people from being pissed off about housing prices and pollution.”

“One told me globalization is a positive thing because they can learn about human rights and how China doesn’t have human rights.”

“One of mine posted on her WeChat Moments about how last year they were supposed to hate Korea, the year before Japan, this year America... Which country should they hate next...”

“Taiwan!”

“Tibet!”

“The East Turkestan Republic!”

“Transnistria!”

“Doghouse Diplomacy with Chinese characteristics...”

“Ai-yo, fuck you hairy barbarians, you foreign devils! I’m still optimistic about China’s future, once the Red Guard dies off... You’ll see...”

“Some of these young people, these students truly are great. They’re a big reason why I’ve stayed.”

“They sure do beat the elder generation, for the most part.”

“Fucking Red Guard, that ‘Lost Generation’. Only Islamic State, Jihadis are worse than those people...”

“The Educated Youth...”

“Even the other Chinese hate that ‘Lost Generation.’”

“Just smile a lot. Smile at everyone. Do the Asian thing. Even if they don’t smile back. Which they often don’t.”

“They smile at me when I speak Chinese.”

“Really depends where you are, I guess, and who you come across. I’ve met amazingly kind older people. I once had a random guy stop and drive me back to my apartment, which was an hour away, because I’d gotten off at the wrong bus stop and was haplessly lost.”

“Just don’t be a dick. Show the respect you want shown to you...”

“Certainly, be careful what you say and how you say it.”

“Pretty much any country doesn’t appreciate foreigners ‘picking quarrels’ or being judgmental.”

“Definitely don’t ‘hurt the feelings of the Chinese people’. There’s actually a law about that...”

“Oh, they are a sensitive lot. Fragile glass hearts. Don’t handle criticism well.”

“Face culture...”

“Such delicate creatures, they are.”

“The three T’s especially will have ‘em riled up.”

“Roger that, comrade.”

“Not so sure about Tiananmen Square... That happened over 30 years ago... Most people these days are too selfish to give a fuck.”

“A teacher I know showed video in his class of the 1989 riots, talked about ‘Tankman,’ since he was leaving the country in a couple days, and his students didn’t really care. Most just had their heads bowed to their phones...”

“Taiwan and Tibet, though. Those are airport topics. Discuss those, and you’ll find yourself at the airport, stat...”

“One girl I was dating flipped out when I mentioned Taiwan as a country. She actually threatened to have me arrested. Seriously...”

“The South China Sea too... That sure ruffles their feathers... The evening newscasters the other day were all butthurt about a Japanese primary school textbook with a map listing some tiny island as Japan’s territory. The anchor was fuming about it...”

“Some of it I understand, the sensitivity, their antipathy to foreigners, especially those being critical... They did get done wrong, Mongols, World War 2, Century of Humiliation, the Opium War...”

“That sticky sweet black stuff didn’t go well, did it?”

“Fucking British Empire. The genesis of our presence and a large part of why they detest us.”

“The opium paradox... But now they’re avenging the yanks with fentanyl...”

“I had a middle-aged Chinese man in Shanghai cut in front of me and steal off in the taxi I was about to get in... He flicked me the finger and yelled ‘yankee doodle, motherfucker!’ as the cab peeled away...”

“You shoulda yelled back: ‘Fuck you for killing Tom Petty, you bastard!’”

“And Prince too! Bitch!”

“I was looking for some of that shit, the fentanyl that killed Prince, couldn’t find it anywhere...”

“With good reason. Could you imagine if they let loose fentanyl on the natives?”

“Population control, that.”

“They already got tobacco, melamine and smog. The herd’s being sufficiently thinned daily...”

“I think they are truly prone to addictive personalities, something in their genes, maybe... I mean, look at the history, the opium, and now it’s gambling, cigarettes, drinking, e-gaming, and phone addiction.”

“I’ve never seen such phone addicted people...”

“I read somewhere the average Mainland Chinese person under 45 spends 12 hours per day on their smartphone...”

“Been reading articles about parents on phones, having their kid jumping into rivers and drowning, falling from windows, running out in front of cars...”

“One 10-year-old kid found wandering alone at a subway station, told police he’d run away from home because his parents didn’t pay attention to him, only played on phones all day...”

“Never seen so many people walking down the street while texting... Particularly college campuses, just swarming with phone zombies...”

“Palm Readers...”

“The bowed head tribes...”

“This is why AI, the robots will eventually win, displace humans... If we can’t handle phones, how will we handle AI, infinitely smarter than us, able to self-replicate... We’re doomed...”

“The robots already have won... By our own hands...”

“Look at these young people, young couples, on their phones at bars, restaurants... Sitting there the entire time, face to screen, not speaking a word to each other. Even at fancy places...”

“Fucking cyborgs...”

“It’s everywhere, a global epidemic... We’re all cyborgs now.”

“They take tech addiction to new levels, though...”

“Aside from occasional shitty parenting, can’t begrudge them, though, working the hours they

do, they need an escape mechanism...”

“That’s it, comrade. They work hard, play on phones hard. Hell, they go hard with everything. Mainlanders are simply extremists.”

“Hardly... the *chabuduo*? Half-assery?”

“That’s different, that’s craftsmanship, work ethic... You can’t expect a kid, a construction worker, or repairman from some impoverished village to give too much of a fuck. He knows he’s never going far. He knows the game is rigged. So he does just enough to get by...”

“They’re not stupid. They know what’s what.”

“Some of the smartest people I’ve met in China have been migrant workers, doing menial jobs. Could be because they escaped the indoctrination of the college entrance exam.”

“Fucking human rights violation, the *Gaokao*. Studying 10 hours a day for 12 years straight, for a single test. Memorizing ancient poetry, line by line, rewriting the same essay over and over about ‘Why I Love China’, methodical, purposeful brainwashing...”

“That’s it, comrade.... I’ve met people who dropped out of middle school to work in a factory and were cool, smart, mature, great friends... Solid people... Then you got so many of these university grads, 22 years old, totally clueless, with the mind of a 14-year-old.”

“Bachelor’s of Apathy...”

“Hobbies include sleeping and eating...”

“Sheeple...”

“Apathetic phone-zombies...”

“Think of all the people in China who are going to have Carpet Tunnel Syndrome...”

“Carpal Tunnel Syndrome...”

“That too, fuck...”

“Scariest are the motorized phone-zombies, on scooters, motorcycles, tearing down crowded streets, sidewalks, texting... Those food delivery guys... Mental...”

“Phone-zombies in grocery stores, with shopping carts, blocking everywhere, like an episode of the *Walking Dead*...”

“Phone-zombies on bicycles, hoverboards and skateboards, pretty maddening, frightening too...”

“But the absolute worst are the phone-zombies driving vans and cargo-trucks. Human missiles, those...”

“Authoritarianism. Doesn’t help emotional, mental development.”

“Learned helplessness, comrade. Learned helplessness.”

“Arrested development...”

“This is why in Singapore, Malaysia, Taiwan, Hong Kong, all those countries, the *Hua Ren* are

so different... That's the real Chinese culture. Not the Disneyland PRC re-creations..."

"The sane ones left."

"Or got chased out."

"Fucking Cultural Revolution."

"How come in China no one does Kung Fu or wears triangle hats? Thought I'd see Kung Fu fighting on every street corner. Disappointed I don't."

"Only occasionally I see pensioners doing Tai Qi in the mornings... But never Kung Fu... And never triangle hats..."

"No rickshaws, either. What's up with that..."

"No fortune cookies or General Tso's Chicken."

"A travesty..."

"The paucity of all-you-can-eat buffets."

"The indignity..."

"Mainland China isn't so bad, if you can deal with the pollution and xenophobia, I mean, overall, if you get past that..."

"It's the place to be if you've got \$50K and need a new kidney."

"There's a freshly executed prisoner in a van right now being sliced up."

"They've got an app for organ deliveries..."

"I was in Shanxi at a school near an execution ground. Sometimes you'd hear sirens and gunshots..."

"Used to be they'd parade the condemned around town, a placard dangling from his or her neck with their crime scribbled on it, and the villagers could crowd around and watch the executions."

"There'd be group executions, five in a row, knelt down, all receiving a bullet to the back of the head from PLA soldiers..."

"Then they'd bill the families of the executed prisoners for the cost of the bullets."

"They don't waste much time with capital punishment in China. Particularly for serious, headline grabbing cases. Maybe one appeal, and four or five months later, a couple years at most, it's done."

"One day, riding out to the market, I saw a guy who'd set fire to a kindergarten, killed like 12 kids... Saw him with his hands hogtied behind his back... He was wearing this big blue vest and puffy orange pants."

"He was being led by a gaggle of masked, armed police to see the firing squad..."

"It's walled off now, in some woods, where they do it..."

"Usually it's stabbing or hammer attacks at kindergartens, primary schools, not fire attacks..."

Fire attacks usually come inadvertently from the chemical plant explosions...”

“Nah, sometimes it’s public buses or KTVs they pour gasoline in and set ablaze. That’s why at the subway now they make you drink any bottled water you have in front of a security guard, to prove it’s not an explosive.”

“I heard a civilian airliner was blown up that way. Some freak boarded with gasoline, set it on fire after takeoff.”

“There’s been more vehicle attacks recently. Fucktard ramming his car into random pedestrians, purposely. Running them down.”

“Sure it’s not just the poor driving skills?”

“Never know. If I were his lawyer, that’d be my advice for a plea.”

“My ex-girlfriend’s mother bought her driver’s license. Plain bought it outright. No tests or anything.”

“*Guanxi.*”

“I’m generally against the death penalty. But mass murderers, be it by car, fire, or especially an asshole who stabs a school full of little kids, those sorts seeing the firing squad, I don’t have too much of a problem with it. And if that kidney can be put to better use, so be it...”

“You sure they’re still harvesting and selling organs? Heard they put a stop to that.”

“It’s still going on. The forced labor camps too. One Nigerian English teacher who got arrested, not that long ago, for smoking weed, had to spend a few months in a Chinese prison...”

“There, along with the Chinese inmates, he was forced to string together Christmas lights. Inmates who didn’t make them quickly enough got beaten by guards.”

“They slept up to ten to a room, on concrete floors, no AC, no heating, one cold water tap. The lights were kept on 24/7... He said there were mosquitoes and cockroaches everywhere, and the newest, weakest inmates had to sleep next to a filthy squat toilet.”

“Chinese jails have certainly served as a deterrent for me. Kept me from punching a lot of people in China. Not even decking Ajit Pai or that ‘Pharma Bro’ asshat would be worth going to Chinese jail over...”

“I read an article in a Japanese paper that an increasing number of Chinese prisons are operating as factories these days, because more young people want white collar work.”

“No laws or transparency in China, either, so it’s hard to say that the shoes you’re wearing, or your electronic device wasn’t made in one...”

“My ex-girlfriend’s uncle ran a lighter factory, using prison labor... There was an accident, an explosion, and about 50 prisoners burned to death because they’d been chained up and couldn’t escape.”

“She told me her aunt recently bought a kidney... So that’s still a thing too. Organs might be more expensive, but are available...”

“Inflationary pressure...”

“Hope that kidney was from a school stabber and not a Falun Gong or something. It being a dissident certainly poses a moral conundrum...”

“Some’ll sell you a kidney voluntarily; bet there’s a kid from Gansu ready to sell you his so he can buy an iPhone.”

“Huawei!”

“And a house and a car so he can get married and his parents’ll stop nagging him.”

“The younger folks here, anyone under 40, generally, is way more of a human being. Anyone over 40 is a fucking animal...”

“Have some sympathy, comrade. That ‘Great Leap’ Forward, people eating tree bark... Rampant cannibalism... Think about that next time you’re at the buffet...”

“These young fellas, the poor bastards. They’re alright. Decent guys, many of them. Kind of remind me of me when I was that age...”

“I don’t care too much for the *fu er dai*, the little emperors, and study abroad students in Australia who can barely speak a word of English. A twat exchange student in Sydney living in a luxury high-rise threw a cat off his 31<sup>st</sup> storey balcony... What a shitcunt.”

“The *lao bai xing*, the commoners, non-princelings, I feel bad for those... The gender disparity, needing a house and a car for a girl to consider him...”

“Can see why so many are importing brides from Vietnam and Russia.”

“Or kidnapping them from Myanmar. There’s a place on the border where they auction women for marriage at a public market...”

“I wonder what Xi Jinping thinks about when he’s dropping a deuce... That’s what I wanna know...”

“You know he lets rotten egg type farts, dog farts...”

“You know he drops malicious stinking shits...”

“When Xi drops turds, is he on his smartphone, playing a game?”

“He’s got the most reliable VPN in China, I imagine...”

“Probably stays in the bathroom as long as possible, hiding from his wife... Peng Mama... That green tea bitch...”

“I see him reading the People’s Daily sports section...”

“Then he reviews his enemies list while eating honey... And he’ll sort of stare at the wall, blankly...”

“Think he has a squat toilet, throne toilet, or, dare I say, Japanese style electric toilet?”

“A solid gold or platinum, diamond, ruby-encrusted premium electrical toilet... Red silk seat cushion... MADE IN CHINA...”

“I bet he wanders into the Zhongnanhai woods, squats and lays one under a tree... Then

wipes his ass with a white rabbit... Got a cage full of them, exclusively for that purpose..."

"Nah, he ain't shitting right... Always got that constipated look on his face... Like he needs to release a hefty log but just can't..."

"This is killing! I bet he yells while he squats and pulls at his bowels..."

"No way he's constipated... All the funds he's got, he can get enemas on demand... His plumbing's running like a Himalayan mountain stream..."

"I would give Xi Jinping an enema, just to say I did. Would have to put on a hazmat suit first, though... Then I'd yank down those high pants, crank the hose up to full blast... Get wet, wild, and wacky..."

"How many billboard-size self-portraits, oil paintings of himself does he have in his mansions? That's what I'm curious about. I say 8 or so in each... Or maybe one in every room..."

"Doubt that man's sleeping well. The enemies he's made, all traumatized as he is from the Cultural Revolution. People threw rotten fruit and rocks at him... He lived in a cave."

"Bet he has nightmares, night terrors every night... Doesn't want to wind up like Mussolini or Qadhafi."

"Ole' Winne the Jinpooh Bear ended term limits for a reason. He can only leave office dead, his family out of the country, money safely embezzled. He lives in the smoggy red prison of his own making."

"That's one paranoid, miserable fuck... His policies are not those of a confident man..."

"I wonder what would happen if Xi Jinping dropped LSD, shrooms, or DMT..."

"That'd be great... Seriously... He'd have a spiritual awakening and turn China into a hippy commune where everyone fucks and does yoga..."

"Emperor High Pants and his wealth belly... He must be worth billions, trillions, even... He and Putin... Stinking trillionaires... Those animals... The bear and the weasel..."

"Some Chinese guy got jailed for saying on WeChat that Xi looks like a steamed bun... Ever since I heard that, all I wanna eat is steamed buns... *baozi*..."

"Unharmonious foreign devils! You and your barbarian countries..."

"Xi Jinping farts in your general direction!"

"*Gun laowai!*"

"You don't see my country building any artificial islands in the South China Sea... We only sail and park nuclear-armed warships there."

"Gunboat Diplomacy."

"Sometimes I miss Trumpistan."

"Not me. Too boring there. Something sort of fun about the PRXI dystopia..."

"I actually like China, overall. Warts and everything..."



“It’s like this, everyone in the Mainland was a berserk farmer. Chinese rednecks and hillbillies.”

“It’d be like Kansas and Tennessee, people from *Deliverance* or *Duck Dynasty* taking over America...”

“Then the rednecks became commies and killed and chased away all the intellectuals.”

“They still do kill and chase away intellectuals.”

“Mostly they just imprison them. You’d think winning a Nobel Prize would get you off the hook...”

“Mainland Chinese generally hate everyone, except those in their inner circle, their family and parents.”

“Every so often they hate their family, but nothing like the West. Like they’ll still do what their parents tell them to, all the time.”

“Filial piety...”

“Family name first, given name last...”

“The loyalty to family, inner circle is incredible... They’ll do anything for their family... Ask your students what they want to do after graduation... Almost everyone says: ‘get a job to help my family’. While in the West it’s: ‘Fuck you, dad! Buy me a car!’”

“We could learn some things from them, when it comes to the family unit, seriously...”

“It’s *guanxi*...”

“*Guanxi* and its complexities...”

“The bright and dark... yin and yang...”

“It’s about relationships, and fuck everyone else. Fuck all strangers. Unparalleled loyalty and selfishness. True social Darwinism...”

“Bizarre dichotomies...”

“No love for strangers...”

“Keep seeing news stories about pedestrians hit on the head by objects falling from tall buildings... Careless cleaners, dropping, throwing stuff from high storeys... Lady in Shenzhen outside a subway station got hit in the head with a barbell... 10-year-old kid killed by a falling window...”

“*Chabuduo*...”

“Been lots of news about people jumping from high-rise buildings. Every day another jumper. Sometimes they talk them down, but what’s to stop that person from jumping later, when no one’s around...”

“At my old school there was a crazy lady, a relative of an administrator. Family kept her locked in her bedroom most of the time because she’d go outside, shove a toothbrush down her throat and force herself to vomit on the street and would scream and curse at random people.”

“They put bars on their apartment’s windows because she threatened to jump and tried to, a

couple times. Finally, she snuck away, went to the roof and took the plunge. A group of students found her.”

“Social Darwinism. They generally don’t understand and give little to no shits about the mentally ill.”

“Or the handicapped. They either hide them or use them out on the street as beggars.”

“Those burn victims, amputees on the street begging, what the hell...”

“I heard they were gamblers or borrowed money from a loan shark or triad, couldn’t repay it, and got disfigured and put on the street as an example to others.”

“Someone said that’s where the hookers come from, but they don’t get disfigured...”

“Where are all the homeless? Hardly ever see vagrants... They must round them up, execute them or quarantine them somewhere...”

“Rumor has it homeless often go to jail, paid to stand in for corrupt officials.”

“Tigers and fleas.”

“I read on Weibo that homeless are kidnapped and murdered, their corpses used to replace rich people’s bodies in crematories.”

“That way the rich are secretly buried in family tombs and can circumvent burial bans...”

“That’s dark...”

“How about those poor bastards kneeling in front of hospitals, holding up a sign about a surgery they or a family member needs or having a baseball size tumor hanging off their face.”

“Then an apparatchik in a Ferrari drives by...”

“*Xiaosan* riding shotgun, phone firmly in hand... En route to class at the uni...”

“Or maybe high school. The age of sexual consent in Mainland China is 14.”

“Must have been Chairman Mao who wrote that law...”

“The walking. That’s what gets to me. What is it with the walking? Why is that a thing?”

“No why...”

“Fucking hell, how they walk. Always bumping into you.”

“Charging into the subway the second the door opens, not letting the riders in the train exit first, racing each other for seats.”

“They do that in the elevator too. Bumrush right in there, start smashing at the buttons.”

“Maybe they simply enjoy shoving and pushing into people.”

“I’ve gotten to enjoy it, actually, giving a nice, stealth shove to people in the subway... Especially the *ayis* and *shushus* crowding the doors...”

“You gotta be ready to fight in the subway. Ready to rumble...”

“I ride the subway sometimes just so I can shove people...”

“No way you’re out-shoving an *ayi*... They got better blocking skills than an NFL offensive lineman...”

“Fucking Great Leap Forward, Fucking Cultural Revolution.”

“Fucking Red Guards.”

“The young ones don’t do that as much. And often are enthusiastic queuers.”

“The Buddha-like youth.”

“Counterrevolutionaries.”

“Rightists...”

“It’s famine mentality.”

“Learned helplessness.”

“They’re crazy patriotic but yet they hate each other so much and litter and spit everywhere.”

“Such terrible communists. Marx would be pissed.”

“They tend to be more optimistic than Westerners.”

“They want to kill each other.”

“Could explain the driving... Horrific car crashes every day in the local news. Pedestrians run over, e-bikes bashed by lorries. Montages of it set to music on the Chinternet.”

“Only thing I enjoy more than Chinternet car crash videos are animal attack videos... Nothing better than a gory animal attack video, especially one involving a mountain lion, bear or alligator attacking the morbidly obese...”

“I heard a *tuhao* in an Audi SUV reversed and ran over a pedestrian he’d just hit, to make sure she was dead, because that way paying off the family for her death would be cheaper than paying her hospital bills.”

“Back in 2012, in Guangdong, there was a young girl crossing the road, and she got run over by not one, but multiple cars. Not one person, not one passerby stopped to help her, and she died on the street...”

“You gotta run for your life, literally, anytime you cross the road.”

“Cars don’t stop for pedestrians at the crosswalks. It’s almost like they want to hit you.”

“It’s a different concept of personal space and right-of-way.”

“The *pengci* scam probably has origins in legitimacy, I gather...”

“The driving is just different... They communicate by honking. It’s lost in translation to us...”

“All the honking in the morning outside my apartment... It’s musical, like a barbershop quartet...”

“Not only the cars you better be afraid of... The escalators... An escalator might eat you. Literally. Hungry Hippos level shit...”

“I saw a viral video of a lady sucked alive into a moving escalator that had malfunctioned. She was holding an infant, too, but was able to safely toss the baby to someone nearby, like a hot potato, before she herself was munched to death by the escalator’s mechanical teeth...”

“I take the stairs now whenever I can after watching that.”

“Was she a dancing granny? I hate those fucking street dancing grannies. I’d throw one into an escalator.”

“Everyone hates them. Someone in a nearby town was shooting iron pellets from a slingshot at the dancing grannies.”

“I heard about a lady who, from her apartment window, dumped a bucket of feces on them.”

“Fucking Cultural Revolution...”

“The proletariat are only apathetic until they’re not...”

“Yesterday, I saw a young couple... Guy slapping the spit out of his lady on a crowded street. Everyone nearby just watched or pointed phones at it. I wanted to intervene, but I knew if I did, the crowd would turn on me...”

“One time at a hotel, I saw a pretty, scantily-clad young lady screaming for help, sobbing, being dragged, literally, through the lobby by two gangster, tattooed types, and no one did anything; most totally ignored it. I told the hotel staff and called the police, but both said it was probably a ‘family’ matter and wouldn’t do anything... “

“Still haunts me to this day, the sound of her screams...”

“Sometimes it’s the guy on the receiving end... I’ve seen many ladies, in public, slapping their husbands, boyfriends. The craziest was this preteen girl just wailing on her dad at an upscale shopping mall in Shanghai.”

“She was warming up for when she’ll beat her husband.”

“Every Chinese girlfriend I’ve had has slapped me at least once in public.”

“The *sajiao* is strong...”

“They should know how to fight. Females in the PRC should all be taught MMA tactics for dealing with the subway creepers and gropers, for real... That shit is a pandemic...”

“Fucking gender disparity...”

“Saw an internet video of a tall, jacked Chinese dude, in the Shanghai metro, collaring, holding up a short, nerdy little scrawny fuck that the tall dude had caught snapping upskirt pics... Tall dude yelling out how this is a perv and a disgrace to men everywhere. Refreshing antidote to the apathy...”

“Seriously, why can’t they just take a mental picture, go home and beat off, or, at the very least, have the decency to rush into a bathroom stall and rub one out like a normal person...”

“Shorty’s no *gao, fu, shuai*, and never will be, is doomed to be an eternal *diaosi*...”

“Nothing worse than too many men...”

“Must be a good place to be gay, though, all the surplus dudes. And they don’t bash or kill gays like they do in Russia or the Middle East.”

“They’re way more civilized about that, I must say.”

“They’ve got no gaydar. Remember that flamboyantly gay kiwi? Remember how much of the female population had crushes on him?”

“Didn’t that guy barricade himself in his apartment for 3 weeks during the Spring Festival? Thought the secretaries were coming to kill him, that they were poisoning his food?”

“The admins shut off the water in his place to force him out and so he was shitting in plastic bags and throwing them out the window.”

“Didn’t hit any dancing grannies, unfortunately...”

“His Chinese boyfriend from another city finally had to come and talk him down. Last I heard they were together in Henan...”

“Is it just me or are there lots of people walking backwards down the street in the morning? I’ve been seeing that. I don’t know why...”

“Some of my neighbors just throw bags of garbage out the window into the alley below, where the dumpsters are. Too lazy to go down there, I guess. Once, when I was taking out the trash, I nearly had a bag of chicken bones hit me on the head. So now I’m afraid to go out and am throwing my garbage out the window too...”

“Last weekend I got drunk and threw an old houseplant off my balcony...”

“I killed a snake on my balcony last month... Beat it to death with a chair...”

“A snake crawled out of my toilet at a guesthouse I stayed at in Thailand. The Burmese maintenance guy caught it, and I believe was saying something about eating it...”

“A Chinese teacher I knew in Shenzhen used a live snake to unclog his toilet...”

“At another school, coming home from class, I caught a burglar climbing down from my balcony, with my laptop in his hands.”

“If only you’d had a snake on your balcony...”

“I threw a shoe at him and he jumped down and ran away. The security guards caught him later ... A migrant construction worker from Guizhou...”

“He’d been stealing from student dorms too. The campus police beat him up real bad and offered me to stuff him in a garbage can. I declined, though, because he looked damn near comatose, and I had gotten my laptop back unscathed...”

“A group of construction workers, at another university, gangraped a college girl, on her way back from a bar, late at night, near the campus... None of them were arrested, and the girl was paid off by the school to keep it quiet. But her roommates spread word of it around school...”

“Those are guys I’d stuff in a garbage can, and then throw in a polluted, cancer village river...”

“Population control from the smog, human culling, might not be a terrible thing, after all...”

“Too many fucking people...”

“The population, so many people, think of what would happen if the zombie apocalypse came...”

“Might be a net positive, a zombie or plague outbreak. A lot of people are probably going to have to die off for it to be a livable place.”

“You’d think it would be easier for an authoritarian country, police state to ban bad behavior, gross stuff, like snot rockets, spitting, and smoking in public places. Nowhere else I know of in the world allows it to the extent they do.”

“The smoking is gnarly. I get tired of it. And I smoke.”

“One of the Chinese professors next door to me smokes in his classroom before lectures and in the hallway outside my classroom during breaks...”

“I saw a Chinese teacher holding a newborn baby in his arms, cigarette dangling from his mouth.”

“From the baby’s mouth?”

“Sometimes I think all the smog in the morning is just leftover secondhand smoke...”

“They really do smoke everywhere. Grocery stores, playgrounds, schools, elevators, underground subway stops...”

“They still are the ‘sick man’ of Asia...”

“Speaking of that, sometimes they even smoke in hospitals too. Sort of ironic, really...”

“Oh, I’ve seen lots of farmers smoking in hospitals.”

“I’ve seen doctors smoking in hospitals.”

“A doctor offered me a cigarette after a colonoscopy once. Seriously.”

“You sure he was a doctor?”

“I can only pray it was a scope he stuck up there...”

“China is like the futuristic, Hollywood sci-fi movie from the ‘50s in which everyone still smokes cigarettes... An alien planet with advanced technology...”

“It’s probably the closest thing one can get to an alien planet... The language, people, everything is extraterrestrial to us...”

“And we’re aliens to them.”

“Some of them stare at me like I’m an alien stepping off a spaceship.”

“Well, you basically are...”

“Fuck, the staring. They need to do something about that. The looks they’ll give you...”

“China can be like the nightmare you have where everyone is staring at you. But instead of it

being a dream, they really are all staring at you, craning necks, pointing, snapping photos even. Especially outside of Tier One cities.”

“It’s the ‘Chinese Dream.’”

“Must be what zoo animals feel like...”

“What happens to the photos they take of foreigners?”

“I had a dream that a cadre in a rural, mountainous region has mine on a mantle in his living room, and sometimes, if no one is around, he’ll drink *baijiu* and masturbate to it...”

“That’s my ‘Chinese Dream’...”

“ ... “

“Gotta expect to be a curiosity in places with no foreigners... There are foreigners who even specifically go to those regions because they enjoy the attention...”

“It’s a homogenous country. About a million foreigners out of a population of one point four billion... Most of the foreigners in the big, Tier 1 cities... Outside those big cities, if you’re not yellow, you’re basically a monkey...”

“A space alien...”

“In big cities too, they’ll ‘hello!’ at me. Children, mostly.”

“The children in my building point and yell ‘*waiguoren*’ at me, every day.”

“My Indian friend won’t take public transport anymore because people were always pointing at him, astonished at his dark skin. Amazed it could be that dark.”

“Don’t learn Chinese. It makes it so much worse when you can understand what the local people are saying.”

“Black people have it the worst. Don’t be black in China, unless you’re Stephon Marbury, playing professional basketball, making lots of money.”

“NBA players are the only black people they like.”

“But would they let their daughter marry one?”

“For the right price, perhaps.”

“Been lots of Chinese men marrying African women these days. Seeing that on social media all the time...”

“Most schools won’t hire them as ESL teachers. Black people have a tough time finding any Asia ESL gigs. It’s not impossible, but it is difficult for them, even qualified teachers.”

“Remember the job ad for a China ESL job at a middle school, advertising pay as 5000 for the ‘black face’, 8000 for the ‘white face’...”

“Used to be they’d hire any blond haired, blue-eyed person. Lots of Russians, Germans, Polish, Moldovans who could barely speak English. Getting less common nowadays with the increased visa requirements. But still is hard for black teachers to find jobs.”

“They think all black people are Africans. One black ESL teacher I knew, from Detroit, who spoke perfect Chinese, said she couldn’t convince people she was American, how they wouldn’t believe it.”

“And how she got into daily staring contests on the bus, and how people on the street would always point and laugh at her ass and would constantly ask to take pictures with her and how they loved to touch her hair...”

“Might have been good she spoke Chinese, otherwise she’d have been constantly triggered by ‘*nage*’ ‘*nage*’...”

“Russell Peters had a great bit about that...”

“I’d posit that China ESL is better than being shot by police in America. But still. Don’t be black in China.”

“Black ESL people leave fast.”

“Everyone leaves. Eventually China forces you to leave, one way or another.”

“It’s systemic...”

“I met a hiring manager for a large corporation once at a bar in Shanghai. He said he’d hired and placed employees in over 80 countries and that in every other country, at least one or two people stayed there. Every other country EXCEPT China. That’s just not normal, he said...”

“When it comes down to it, China is for the Chinese... It’s an ethno-state.”

“The PRC does not allow foreigners to own land, houses, doesn’t offer citizenship to foreigners... Doesn’t recognize dual citizenship... Best a *laowai* can hope for is a green card, which virtually no one has or can have, except those with *guanxi* and/or venality...”

“For all the criticism Japan receives for its immigration system, much of it deserved, China’s is far, far more restrictive...”

“They’ve got over a billion people and generally aren’t looking for more, especially non-ethnic Chinese, non-tech, non-science, non-IP people...”

“It’s systemic... Exclusion by red stamp...”

“It’s systemic amongst themselves too. The *Hukou* system. The landlords basically use that to control, enslave their population...”

“Someone’s gotta build the buildings, sweep the streets, deliver the food...”

“The bureaucracy touches the locals probably worse than us, even. They gotta apply for and receive certificates, red stamps, from 10 different bureaus to basically do anything.”

“Application for marriage, apply to have a baby, 15 different stamps... And they’ve got a local ‘family planning’ bureau that forces women to be sterilized once they’ve reached the allotted birth quota... Certificate and stamp for that too...”

“Not sure why the American, evangelical types don’t rally against China more, the amount of sterilizations, abortions they perform...”



“The One Child Policy... Heard a story about a lady who’d had twins and was forced to give up the second baby, because she couldn’t afford to pay the fine...”

“The hospital asked around her village if anyone wanted the baby, but no one did, because it was a girl, so a doctor snapped the baby’s neck...”

“Read somewhere around 100 million female babies were either aborted or sent away for adoption... Though many were hidden, grey babies, numbers probably never truly known...”

“Murdering women, especially Asian women, as beautiful as they are... Heinous...”

“Over population, an environmental disaster. Planet wasn’t built to accommodate so many... They had to do something, the CCP. Not their fault people were so misogynistic... Chairman Mao actually did a lot to improve the status of women in China...”

“1.4 billion... That sort of population, must be tough to run a country that size...”

“Imagine having to care for and employ 1.4 billion human beings...”

“Government’s gotta give everyone something to do...”

“Yup. Sterilization squads, bureaucrats, assorted workers of every dominion... Iron Rice Bowls...”

“There’s a guy sitting in an office right now, cigarette hanging from his mouth, and he’s just stamping form after form, all day long... That’s all he does...”

“When he’s not ‘playing his phone,’ that is...”

“Bureaucracy with Chinese characteristics...”

“Bureaucracy for religion too... If you’re any type of religion you must be registered, have stamped documents for that.”

“I hear if you’re a Buddhist, you gotta apply for reincarnation...”

“Unsurprisingly, they denied the Dalai Lama’s application to be reincarnated...”

“Be it sterilization, reincarnation... *Hukous*... The Z Visa..... It’s all the same... It’s bloody systemic... Tyrannical bureaucracy...”

“It is what it is... For real, for all its bluster, outside of a few places, the Tier 1 cities, tourist spots, it’s mostly a banana republic, a developing country with serious pollution and hygiene issues.”

“A developing country, yet it has the world’s second largest economy, world’s largest by PPP...”

“Go figure...”

“I mean, if you could have everyone in China give you just one dollar... Heck, one RMB...”

“Whole lotta Rambos, whole lotta humans...”

“It’s so crowded, everywhere, can’t totally comprehend a billion and a half human beings until you see it... The ‘smaller’ cities, have 8 or 9 million people... It’s so packed, peopled... Everywhere, everywhere you see humans...”

“Whenever I go back to the States, see empty streets... Feels like a ghost town... Like where is everyone...”

“In India and China...”

“The holidays, that’s when you notice it most... Never go anywhere during the holidays...”

“I absolutely detest the holidays. Those wretched ‘makeup’ days, forcing people to work on the weekends, work 9 straight days, to ‘make up’ for 2 days off. It’s as if they haven’t quite grasped the concept of what a holiday is.”

“You’d think they’d be more sympathetic to the proletariat.”

“I appreciate Spring Festival... The fireworks, food, festive atmosphere... Plus, giving money, those red packets, is way easier, less stressful than Christmas shopping, more practical...”

“I concur, but only if you can flee the country or quickly get wherever, early as possible...”

“At a certain point, going anywhere is basically impossible. It’s totally mobbed. Those bus and train stations. People mountain, people sea...”

“People travelling 20, 30 hours by train... Madness...”

“Filial piety...”

“The largest human migration...”

“That’s when the pickpockets are worst too, Spring Festival. Organized gangs, pickpocket cartels, plucking cell phones...”

“They kidnap cats and dogs too the most around then. Particularly poodles. Sell them on Taobao or hold them for ransom...”

“Bloody Mao. Making all those farmers have ten babies...”

“I barricade myself inside during Spring Festival.”

“I barricade myself inside on any and every holiday.”

“I barricade myself inside every day...”

“I’m used to the crowds, the holiday madness... Thing I’ll never be able to handle is the public bathrooms...”

“The unspeakable horrors... “

“I know a foreigner who started wearing adult diapers to avoid using the public restrooms in China.”

“I make sure to eat enough fiber in the morning so I can drop a good tactical shit and not have to squat.”

“Having to squat... So undignified, dehumanizing... Makes you feel like an animal.”

“Then the toilet’s all reeking of piss and turds and the restroom is full of people smoking cigarettes.”

“I think there’s a law in China that stipulates every bathroom must have at least one person

smoking in it at all times.”

“Piss and shit stench or cigarette stench... Which is worse?”

“Some people in China believe cigarette smoke kills bacteria.”

“It’s Traditional Chinese Medicine, the tobacco smoke... And ammo for the hacking up of loogies, cleansing the lungs, throat and teeth...”

“The cleaning ladies at my old school would use vinegar to clean the bathroom and then use the same mop in the hallways, spreading piss and vinegar everywhere... The mutated stench it created... Holy panda shit...”

“Sorta made me grateful to the security guards, teachers and students, smoking in the bathrooms, stairwells, empty classrooms and hallways, I must admit.”

“The squatting, smoking and butt-stenches I can handle, but that they don’t have toilet paper... Once I forgot to bring tissues and had to use a sock...”

“I once pulled used toilet paper that wasn’t too dirty from the basket next to the squat toilet and used the unsoiled portion of that.”

“Comrade, I think you contracted ass-AIDS...”

“I’ve gone Turkish a few times.”

“I was doing that in India. You become accustomed to it as long as you keep your nails trimmed...”

“The toilet revolution can’t come soon enough...”

“The bathrooms really need hot water and soap. That’s a big reason why so many folks, natives included, get food poisoning and diarrhea constantly. People only washing, if at all, with cold water...”

“It’s so cold too, that water, in the winter, like demonic, satanic, poltergeist type cold...”

“Think of that, the guy making your food basically wiped his ass with his hand and didn’t thoroughly wash it. His long fingernails full of fecal-particles. You’re basically eating his shit.”

“You aren’t a true China expat unless you soil your pants at least once.”

“Every long-term China expat has a graphic diarrhea story... Hot pot, fire sprinkler ass shits...”

“I don’t have diarrhea that often anymore, think I’m inoculated...”

“China went from extreme communism to extreme capitalism, practically overnight. There’s bound to be hiccups and diarrhea along the way...”

“The diarrhea factor is why I try to cook at home whenever possible.”

“But then the water is dirty, contaminated with heavy metals. Really nothing you can do...”

“Gives me rashes if I shower too often...”

“Ever noticed how much dust is everywhere, on the floor, the counters? You’ll clean it and the next day it’s back. Never seen anything like it...”

“Did any of us think it was gonna be healthy to come here? At least in the countries we come from we can see the pollution levels, can complain about it, force governments to do something. But in China, they censor that information, and jail or kill you if you speak up...”

“The lengths to which they go to keep people ignorant.”

“Ignorance is bliss.”

“Ignorance is diarrhea.”

“It’s basically North Korea-lite.”

“That’s why everyone eventually leaves. Look how many Overseas Chinese there are. There’s a reason for that.”

“I’m too invested to go, for now... Came when it was going to be the ‘next big thing.’”

“I’m not throwing in the towel just yet.”

“China is sort of like an abusive spouse you can’t leave...”

“Stockholm Syndrome.”

“You’re institutionalized...”

“And I’m not even a Muslim.”

“When they were rounding up all the Uyghur Muslims, to put them in the concentration camps, I got stopped twice by PSB units, who said they were conducting an ‘operation’. Once they saw I was a foreigner, one without a Muslim name, too, they let me go, but if I was...”

“Guess from their perspective it made sense, taking Tibet and Xinjiang... All the natural resources, geographic, military buffer... Fucking sucks for the locals there, though...”

“Cultural genocide.”

“Icky genocide stuff aside, what could really make it better? I mean, it still has potential. There are lots of genuinely kind people, especially the young ones who weren’t traumatized by famines, floods, and *Mao Yeye*...”

“They have survived a lot.”

“They tolerate us. Mostly.”

“Fucking honkies.”

“The dichotomy of chaos and totalitarianism.”

“Is a shrinking number of Westerners coming to China...”

“Not many of the young backpacker, ESL types coming anymore...”

“They’re in Vietnam and Thailand.”

“Taiwan and Japan.”

“Good Korea.”

“Indonesia.”

“Tajikistan...”

“Most of the foreigners now in China are from those BRI countries, Africa, Pakistan...”

“Loan Shark Diplomacy...”

“But seriously, what could make it better? A real country people would want to actually move to, travel to, retire to, rather than just work and or flee...”

“They should fill all those empty apartment buildings with expats.”

“Thai bar girls.”

“Strictly enforce laws about grandparents not letting little kids poop and piss on the street.”

“Impose caning punishments, Singapore style, for nuisance crimes like spitting and littering.”

“They could have Saudi Arabia type religious police out lashing motherfuckers for spitting or smoking in elevators.”

“I’d volunteer for that job...”

“What I wouldn’t give to cane a dancing granny...”

“Outlaw dancing grannies!”

“Outlaw stinky tofu.”

“Outlaw squat toilets.”

“Outlaw lying. I’ve never come across so much dishonesty.”

“Being in China sure has made me far more distrustful of others...”

“Lying doesn’t have the stigma it does in the West.”

“White lies, though...”

“Outlaw white people.”

“Legalize guns!”

“You crazy? Could you imagine the carnage... Way easier to outrun a mucker on a stabbing spree than a mucker on a shooting rampage...”

“Not as afraid of spree stabbers as I am of escalators, elevators, building collapses...”

“Outlaw crappy construction!”

“A lady died recently because she opened a door marked ‘Exit,’ thinking it was a stairwell, and it turned out the door led to nothing, and she plummeted to her death from the 5<sup>th</sup> floor...”

“Fucking *chabuduo*.”

“There’re building collapses almost daily, new buildings too. They’ll throw up a new, fancy looking apartment building and a year later it’s got cracks in the foundation, leaking pipes... Buildings from 5 years ago look 20 years old.”

“Acid rain...”

“Built-in obsolescence.”

“Tofu concrete... The 2008 Sichuan Earthquake... That’s why so many died.”

“Occasionally a building will collapse during its construction, killing all the workers.”

“Man, I feel for those migrant workers, from Anhui, Ningxia, those places...”

“Confiscate government property, reallocate it to the migrant workers!”

“Fill the Forbidden Palace of Zhongnanhai with migrant workers!”

“Purge the rightists!”

“Rise, comrades, start a new revolution! One led by a friendlier, not so genocidal Mao type dude...”

“Democracy. Voting. Preferably a parliamentary system.”

“Chinese democracy. The real kind, not some shitty Guns N’ Roses album.”

“You kidding? Think of who would vote, all those crazy nationalists... Hell, they’d bring in some halfwit who’d wanna nuke Japan.”

“Outlaw the daily anti-foreigner, five minutes of hate in the newspapers and evening newscasts!”

“Outlaw the daily anti-Japan bullshit war dramas!”

“The TV and movies are terrible in China. Those propaganda documentaries, sappy soaps...”

“And their popular music, all those trash love ballads...”

“No wonder they have no soft power globally...”

“Totalitarianism and heavy-handed censors don’t exactly assist the creative process, comrade...”

“Outlaw censorship!”

“Second that. The CCP actually censors portions of its constitution online...”

“Legalize Google! Down with Baidu! Down with Jackoff Ma!”

“Mr. Xi, tear down that firewall!”

“Legalize weed. If they smoked that like they smoke cigarettes, imagine how chill they’d be.”

“Clever idea for when automation hits. 1 billion people out of work. It could be massive chaos, riots, social unrest...”

“Forget that. The facial recognition system, surveillance cameras will have weaponized lasers, flamethrowers to target, incinerate and neutralize counterrevolutionaries, those subverting state power... Really think they’ll only deduct sesame credits?”

“If only they’d had that in 1989.”

“Outlaw security cameras!”

“Troublesome foreigners, picking quarrels! China’s technology will be peaceful and most harmonious!”

“Outlaw foreigners!”

“Outlaw ESL teachers!”

“Definitely.”

“We’re fucked, ultimately, a dying breed... Simultaneous translation apps, talking robots will do away with us...”

“Outlaw robots!”

“It’s like every once arduous process, language learning will be obsolete... Instantaneous translation ear buds, AI, all that; we’re on the precipice of the next industrial revolution... Soon to be washed away by the tidal wave...”

“Outlaw AI!”

“There’s a nerd working on an app right now that’s going to eventually decimate nearly every ESL, language learning job... It’s only a matter of time...”

“Outlaw nerds!”

“And the Filipinos are coming... As a stopgap before the robots, they’ll replace us all with qualified Filipino teachers ready to work for \$500 a month and they can spell and know all the basic grammar rules we don’t.”

“We’re dinosaurs waiting for the asteroid...”

“Outlaw asteroids!”

“And outlaw the Filipinos! Except the chicks!”

“Outlaw all fempats!”

“Outlaw any ESL teacher not under 30 and not over 55!”

“Outlaw all expats!”

“The worst people I’ve met in China have been, by far, the expats.”

“Especially the Americans.”

“Especially you.”

“Exactly.”

“A country gets the expats it deserves.”

“Exactly.”

“America doesn’t have the history or culture of expatriation that Britain or Australia does. That’s why only the military, criminals, losers, drunks, crazies, perverts, basketball players or missionaries come abroad...”

“I can understand leaving Britain. The British Empire was really a result of explorers in search

of places with better weather...”

“And better-looking women.”

“Elizabeth Hurley, Kate Middleton, Kiera Knightly?”

“Outliers. Probably Viking DNA...”

“All the most mental expats in Asia are Americans.”

“Well, there was the 60-something Australian guy with the pink hair, who wore those long, golden imperial era traditional Chinese robes and was always running around, laughing, poking people in the back or stomach.”

“All he ate was French toast at the café next to school, every day, 2 or 3 times...”

“And he’d ride this unicycle around the campus and be drunk on *baijiu* by the afternoon, often passed out on the steps of the library. Other teachers, students and security guards would have to carry him, by his arms and legs, back to his apartment.”

“Or how about the South African with the purple mohawk who was always dancing and singing that song *Beez in the Trap* and taped dead cockroaches to his neighbor’s door...”

“Then there was the Indian who’d throw chalk at sleeping students in class and stalk around the campus, fondling females, touching their legs...”

“The Polish lady into eugenics who claimed Asians didn’t need sunglasses because their eyes are slanted and can block out the sun...”

“My favorite was the Iranian math teacher who got into a running slapfight, shouting match with a hooker outside a KTV...”

“Oh no, the best was the 50-ish British lady whose AC in her apartment was broken so she left the refrigerator door open in her kitchen the whole time... Her lessons consisted of playing duck-duck-goose... with college students.”

“She wore a British judge wig and carried a cricket bat everywhere, although I never once saw her play cricket...”

“I got drunk and had sex with her after the Christmas party... She kept the judge wig on the whole time...”

“You’re a humanitarian...”

“Glasgow guy... Glasgow guy... The shaved head guy from Glasgow who’d go out every weekend to bars, headbutt random people, and get in fistfights and be bashed by the locals...”

“Everyone from Glasgow does that.”

“The Glasgow kiss. A headbutt to your nose. That just means they like you.”

“Sure, you got your winners from everywhere, but the worst overall are American.”

“I’ve never seen ESL teachers who fight amongst themselves as much as the Americans do...”

“The Americans are the worst.”



“Remember that fat redneck guy with the mullet and baggy FUBU shirts and jorts... He'd go out into the crowded Shanghai city streets and scream out 'NIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIGGUUUUUUUUUUUURRRR' simply because he could. He'd look so relieved afterwards.”

“Or the short, hairy wackjob from Maine, who called himself a 'Maniac' and was constantly talking about his bowel movements, in graphic depictions, bragging about how highly rated they were on ratemypoodotcom...”

“The craziest American I remember was that white supremacist, skinhead guy who taught his students the hail Hitler salute, hit on students, and went off on an anti-Semitic tirade at the Christmas party and later tried to steal a cell phone from a hooker.”

“Didn't that guy get his contract renewed?”

“No, they actually fired him because he had a psychotic breakdown in class over students playing on their mobile phones...”

“But they did let him stay rent free in his apartment for 4 months afterwards, and he flipped out on an African girl exchange student, calling her racial slurs, and they still let him stay another month even after that.”

“I got drunk and slashed that guy's bicycle tires.”

“Was he the guy who bottled Melvin?”

“I'm not sure.”

“Didn't Melvin get bottled twice?”

“Three times, I think. Definitely once by a Chinese dude at a bar.”

“Melvin also got jumped by a group of taxi drivers in Beijing, something about them demanding he speak Chinese because it's China and Melvin freaking out over it...”

“That Boston dude, the one who'd do Bill Burr impressions, he ran up on Melvin. I remember.”

“Boston guy, that crazy fire-red hair ginger, he'd get piss drunk, every night, go to McDonald's, and strip bare-naked, sit down and eat his food... Then he'd put his clothes back on, leave, and go out and pick fights, mostly shoving matches, with random people.”

“Boston dude tried to choke out Melvin. On Thanksgiving, I think...”

“Sneak attack, ninja shit. Ran up from behind, jumped on his back, piggyback style, and started strangling him.”

“Then Melvin fell backwards on him, with all his weight, which was a lot, and knocked Boston guy out cold and stomped on him a few times before some other teachers pulled him away, all kicking and screaming and shit.”

“With two Chinese coppers watching, one smoking and laughing. The other staring, jaw dropped, practically a deer in headlights.”

“Chinese cops are useless. The whole place is lawless, basically.”

“I got physically attacked by a crazed nationalist Chinese guy at a bus station in Hangzhou. Accidentally bumped into him when he was trying to cut in line, and he started screaming insults at me, *laowai* this, that, and he punched me in my chest a few times, right in front of a Chinese cop, who stood silently, watched and did absolutely nothing.”

“Boxer Rebellion 2.0”

“No, comrade, that’s just ‘The Wild Wild East.’ No laws. Cops are only there to smoke cigarettes, bust people for jaywalking, and torture dissidents... They otherwise don’t do shit.”

“*Shi de*. Piss off a rich person or someone in the government and the cops will move quickly then. You’ll have a knock on your door, be invited for tea, disappeared, promptly...”

“The CCP is like the mafia. You gotta know someone to get in, be vouched for, then you’re in for life, and if you fuck up, they off you...”

“I wonder how long they’ll last, the CCP, their dynasty...”

“Can’t currently envision how they’ll fall... With their tech, facial recognition software, control of all media, communications systems, malware and spyware and bugs in smartphones...”

“People said the same things about East Germany, the *Stasi*...”

“True. But no totalitarian regime ever had such weapons in their arsenal...”

“The next revolution will be the ‘Smashed Surveillance Camera Revolution.’”

“Won’t happen as long as the proletariat have rice in their bowls...”

“Let them eat rice!”

“For all their ills, the CCP has improved many people’s lives and at least care somewhat, unlike Cambodia... I mean, if you’re a PRC citizen would you really want to go back to the Warlord Era?”

“They could probably last for a while, so long as their economy keeps up and they don’t go full fucktard and invade Taiwan...”

“Won’t make a difference, Taiwan. The world, US included, won’t give a damn about it, a tiny Asian island... Maybe lip service will be paid, but there’s too much money, business done in the Mainland...”

“I think most people anywhere are quite happy to trade human rights and privacy for food, housing and jobs...”

“But how would they feel if they knew seventy percent of their soil and groundwater is toxic?”

“And that the Red Nobility have their princelings, princesses and wealth in Vancouver, and the technocrats in Beijing have their own protected farms, water supplies, industrial air purifiers...”

“I think most people would choose technocrats who give them contaminated food rather than technocrats who give them no food...”

“The CCP is a lot better than what preceded it. That’s for sure... The Qing Dynasty was a bunch of corrupt shitbags...”

“And Chiang Kai-shek was a cunt.”

“Whatever becomes of the CCP, they won't go quietly, riding off into the sunset... They began violently and will end violently...”

“The barrel of a gun...”

“A bunch of gangsters...”

“Kleptocrats.”

“Don't they make you scream out an oath and kill a live chicken and drink its blood when you join?”

“Prostrate, prostrate before an 88-meter-tall jade statue of *Xi Dada!*”

“I for one certainly hope they don't takeover the world... The ‘China Model’, that sort of totalitarian, Orwellian society, with world domination, total hegemony... It'd be the end of art, creativity, thought...”

“Won't happen. In the end, authoritarian systems always flame out...”

“They'll lose the Trade War, Tech War, any new Cold War. They can't innovate. They've got no allies, no soft power, nothing better to offer.”

“Best hope for the CCP is getting back to reforming and opening...”

“Then losing the Poohbear and his bootlickers. A transparent, benevolent CCP could be beneficial for everyone...”

“Make China Great Again!”

“Bring back Hu!”

“Follow the Taiwan model...”

“Sad irony is that China could rise to ‘Number One’ if they'd only allow freedom of speech, expression, rule of law, reform their schools, truly join the world, but that'd threaten the Red Nobility, billionaires at the top of the CCP, so it won't happen, and, being as such, they can never surpass a certain threshold...”

“China has loads of smart people... If they let them loose, followed the Taiwan model, they'd be unstoppable...”

“Return the Mainland to the ROC... The capital split between Taipei and Beijing... The CCP as one of multiple parties...”

“Melvin wanted to join the CCP, didn't he? I remember him having a socialism phase...”

“I can imagine his induction ceremony. That's sure to go viral...”

“Wasn't Melvin already in a viral China video? The one with those asshole expats fighting at a McDonald's in Shenzhen? That was him, wasn't it?”

“Could have been... I never watched the video...”

“I'm usually too happy at McDonald's to want to fight anyone...”

“At least those dudes weren’t naked in public. In a McDonald’s.”

“Was the Boston guy naked when he attacked Melvin?”

“I can’t remember.”

“There was a *laowai* jogging butt-naked, except for running shoes, late nights, early mornings, around the Bund in Shanghai for a while, back in 2010. Not sure if they caught him or if he’s still doing that.”

“It was Melvin.”

“Where is he now, Melvin?”

“Wasn’t he in Cambodia?”

“Deep in the jungle...”

“He joined a cult...”

“I bet he overdosed on smack.”

“Got his kidney stolen. Fucking dead in a dumpster in Manila or India.”

“No, he was in China. I saw his timelines on WeChat. He taught at 6 schools in 2 years or something.”

“His last place he posted about had this terrible on-campus apartment that wasn’t heated and was freezing cold, flooded regularly, and had no working light in the bathroom...”

“Place had moldy walls, flying cockroaches and swarms of mosquitoes, even in winter, and brutally loud honking trucks and fireworks outside, constant drilling sounds at all hours...”

“Sounds better than my first apartment in China...”

“Construction noise, fireworks, hacking and spitting, honking and drilling sounds. The soundtrack of China.”

“The drill is like a national instrument. Children practice it, have recitals at primary schools.”

“Melvin was super salty and posting something about how his boss laughingly refers to him as her ‘enemy’ and that he told her to fuck off at a meeting because they got into it over a chair or something like that.”

“Wasn’t he at a high school in Lanzhou where they made him sit in an office, from 9 to 5, every day, during the summer, when no students were around, with nothing to do, just sit there, and then later the administration tried to force him to join a construction crew outside, paving a road?”

“I saw him post how he went to this training center in a far-flung province near the border with Russia. He was the only white guy in a town of one million people.”

“The teacher at the training center before him, Derek, this tall handsome white guy, was a local celebrity, and everywhere he went, people asked if he knew Derek or where was Derek, and if he could play guitar, sing like Derek, and how much it fucking pissed him off hearing about Derek all the time.”

“Then his boss asked him to sing and dance during his lessons and he spazzed and cursed out the boss and got beat down by a bunch of *baos* and passersby and was in the hospital for a while with his jaw wired shut.”

“I worked in a small town in Japan that had only one other white guy. First time we met he had a go at me, jabbed his finger in my chest, saying how ‘HE was the only one allowed to be a white person here.’”

“His honorary White Monkey status infringed upon. Hashtag Fuck You.”

“Oftentimes bumping into another foreigner in Asia, especially in a place with few to none, is a conversation starter in itself...”

“At least warrants the polite hello, ‘I’m a foreigner so are you nod’...”

“Hey, that Russian border town place, Derek guy, dancing, mob beating thing, I thought it was Thomas that happened to...”

“AIDS Thomas? The skeleton looking, jaundice, gaunt motherfucker?”

“Nah, not AIDS Thomas, the other Thomas, the one who talked to himself.”

“Schizophrenic Thomas, dude with the nose hair. I remember him...”

“I thought Canadian Thomas was the one with the nose hair...”

“Canadian Thomas? Wasn’t he the one who got extorted by a girl he’d been dating? Like she wanted \$20,000 from him after he refused to marry her...”

“Then her uncles started showing up to the school, threatening him, and the girl broke into his apartment, claiming that she’d saved a condom, and had impregnated herself and would press rape charges and she bit his ear when he tried to throw her out and he put her in a headlock, flung her out the door, and was later arrested for assault and spent a week in jail and afterwards did a midnight run.”

“Yeah, Canadian Thomas was my neighbor. I saw the cops knocking on his door after he bailed... He fucked one of his college students, too, and broke her heart, was telling her ‘she’s the one’ and all that, took her virginity. I hear he’s in Korea now...”

“I remember Canadian Thomas saying how he’d taught with that Laowhy86, C-Milk, YouTube vlogger guy, at a college in Inner Mongolia, and that C-Milk would fuck tons of the students, and the two of them had a contest to see who could fuck the most students that semester.”

“Canadian Thomas talked about fucking students all the time... Even loudly in the hallway of our apartment building... And you couldn’t get away from him either. He’d corner you, start talking, and just not stop.”

“Schizophrenic Thomas was like that too. He’d corner you in the hall, talk and talk, not let you go... I did all I could to avoid him...”

“What happened to Schizophrenic Thomas? Where’s he now?”

“I’m not sure.”

“I know AIDS Thomas started a restaurant in the Philippines and had gotten married to a

Filipina lady, but she divorced him the day after she got her Green Card.”

“So then he went back to Colorado and was working in a factory. Or living in the woods, in a tree, I think.”

“No, Melvin was working in a factory. A packing plant or something. He’s been back and forth between China and Portland several times.”

“Melvin got his ass beat by security guards. I know he did. Somewhere.”

“It was one of those times when a foreigner hits on a Chinese girl in a bar or public place and the local males in the vicinity begin slapping and kicking at him.”

“It’s never one on one. Ask Wendell Brown.”

“Mainland China bars, dark and evil places...”

“I’m shocked Melvin didn’t wind up like Wendell Brown... Melvin would go apeshit, constantly, in public places, people on the street, random people, especially bicyclists or motorcyclists who passed too closely to him.”

“Which is everybody.”

“Or people not covering their mouths while sneezing. Or picking their noses...”

“He really fucking hated when people smoked in elevators. He’d go ballistic over that.”

“Pretty much every China thing, he’d spaz out over, but he stayed, year after year.”

“He never developed the healthy love/hate relationship with China most longtime expats have...”

“I made the mistake of telling him to chill one day when he screamed at a random bicyclist. He went off on me about ‘lecturing him’ and we stopped hanging out, but were cordial, after that... He lived across the hall from me and I’d see him and hear him going in and out of his apartment, at all hours, always slamming the door.”

“I remember seeing him winding up like a pitcher and throwing imaginary baseballs in the hallway.”

“He’d throw imaginary baseballs or shoot imaginary basketballs at random times when I talked with him...”

“Last time I saw Melvin was at the cafeteria... He snuck up behind me, tapped me on the shoulder, and when I turned around, he was grunting and twitching, crouched down, arms spread, in a defensive basketball stance...”

“He never slept. Seriously, I don’t think he slept at all...”

“Didn’t someone he raged at tell him to learn to meditate or do yoga?”

“It was me. I told him Buddhism or Sam Harris. Both preferably.”

“That must have really driven him mad. He told me he fucking hated Buddhism.”

“His apartment was so filthy. Way past normal single guy, bachelor shit. I don’t understand how someone could live like that.”

“You’d think he’d be cleaner, too. He’d go off about discipline, posting quotes from David Goggins on his WeChat. Then he was overweight and living in a pigsty. I can’t understand it.”

“He’d always come by my apartment unannounced. Just banging on the door. Police knocks.”

“I wouldn’t let him inside my apartment. I’d be afraid to...”

“He often complained to me about none of the other teachers having any ‘social skills’ and our school being a ‘social desert’...”

“He alienated everyone by the time he left. I don’t think he had any friends, anywhere.”

“One of his students told me that, during a lecture, he asked his students if they could help him make friends with local people. They told him ‘no’, laughed, and thought it was a joke. But I think he really meant it...”

“A class I shared with him told me Melvin misspelled words on the board quite frequently and would shout down any student who’d mention it or attempt to correct it...”

“Another student of his said she’d politely suggested he relax a little in class because his ‘enthusiasm was scaring a few of her classmates.’”

“So next time he had that class, he demanded to know ‘who had any problems with his enthusiasm’, asking anyone who had a problem to raise their hand. None did. They remained quiet. And later he said to me how annoying it was that students rarely spoke in his classes.”

“Really can’t see why they didn’t want to help him make local friends... A headscratcher that...”

“Probably didn’t help either that he’d teach students curse words, literally snatch phones from their hands, and yell and curse at them, start arguments, and hit on females, send strange messages on WeChat...”

“Those aren’t qualities that’ll endear you to most people, no...”

“He seemed to desperately want friends, seek connections with others. Like he’d talk to random people, strike up conversations and invite ‘em to eat, coffee, but then there’d always be a falling out, he’d flip over something.”

“And all his social media posts about him being ‘lonely.’”

“He always needed to be the center of attention.”

“He was easily triggered by fat-shaming. Think he’d be used to it after so long in China.”

“Lots of expats in China lose weight because they get so tired of being relentlessly called a fatty by the locals...”

“He sure said ‘bro’ a lot. Completed nearly every sentence with it.”

“That fist bump thing he did was so 2012.”

“Constantly snapping so many selfies, that guy. Always of him running, too, how many kilometers he did that day. Maps of his running routes. Posting shit like ‘While you were off in dreamland snoozing, I was running a half-marathon.’”

“He never slept.”

“That would explain the puffy eyelids.”

“He never flossed. His teeth were gunky and gross as fuck...”

“He always wore the same two shirts.”

“Those faded Jordan brand t-shirts and raggedy old Nike basketball shorts every day, even to his classes, and even in the dampest, coldest days of winter.”

“The *ayis* always shuddered when they saw him wearing those shorts in the cold.”

“Where do you think he found that neon green vest, you know, the type traffic cops wear?”

“Stole it off somebody he killed.”

“He’d wear that neon vest running through campus, with these bright orange shoes he had, and his big ass bald head all bobbing up and down... You could see him coming from a mile away.”

“Like a rhinoceros. A rhinoceros attacked by a paintbrush.”

“Damn, he ran a lot. Walked so fast down the street too.”

“He was always gonna get ‘ripped.’”

“I think he said he used to be about 300 pounds, though. What was he like, 5-7 and 240?”

“It was mostly on the belly.”

“A pretty squat, muscly fuck, otherwise...”

“Could have been, should have been a lumberjack.”

“He looked like a lumberjack.”

“Lumberjack Shrek.”

“I never saw him without his phone in his hand. Dude was on it all the time and got so pissed if you’d didn’t ‘like’ his posts on social media or reply to his texts quickly enough.”

“He was always pissed off...”

“Our building managers, those *ayis*, despised him. He was arguing with them nearly every day, and they’d ignore him in the hallways when they saw him... And then he’d get mad that they ignored him...”

“Same with the office staff... He’d fight with them, too, over the littlest things, like how a secretary rolled her eyes at him or wasn’t friendly enough... He’d show up to the office once a week or so, airing his latest list of grievances...”

“He had a crush on this secretary there, a married lady, and he was messaging her daily, trying to have her come to his apartment or buy her dinner, and he was so upset when she declined his invitations. Posted on his WeChat that people in China are ‘incapable of normal social relations.’”

“This other admin, this pretty, tall lady, who he also flirted with, had to get her boyfriend to tell



Melvin to leave her alone and later Melvin and her boyfriend almost came to blows...”

“He once got in a shouting match with a grad student intern over the office staff being tired of Melvin always losing his apartment key... Later he tried to date that same grad student and got mad when she turned him down and asked him to stop flirting with her...”

“He’d hit on all the ladies at our school, relentlessly, random women on the street...”

“Pretty much everyone at the shops on campus couldn’t stand him. The women most of all. He was always using broken Chinese, the same couple phrases, to try to pick them up. His go-to pickup line was asking if she was a *‘chir huo’* (a foodie)...”

“But when he said it, he mangled the tones and made it sound like *‘che huo’* (a car accident). They’d awkwardly giggle, and he never got their WeChat.”

“They called him ‘White Buddha’ because of his bald head and big belly.”

“His students called him that too.”

“It was a running joke around campus.”

“Really a good thing his Chinese was so shit. Think of how many more fights and confrontations he’d have been in if he knew what the local people were saying.”

“Seriously, never learn Chinese. One guy I used to work with had left teaching, went into business, was making bank, but eventually left after he learned enough Chinese. Said China is way better when you don’t know what people are saying. The dude got laid a lot too...”

“Shit, even Melvin got laid from time to time. Amazingly.”

“Sure did. He hit Tinder and Tan Tan hard.”

“Told me his strategy was to machine gun swap on every profile and carpet-bomb dick pics to hundreds of girls...”

“Said sometimes Chinese chicks would reply, saying they thought he’d be bigger.”

“They think all white dudes have porn star dicks.”

“Must be like a black dude with a smallish dick. Chick pulls his pants down, expecting a hog, is unpleasantly surprised...”

“Are there black dudes with small dicks? I’ve never heard of one...”

“I’ve not seen enough black penises to say. Porn and hearsay are my only reference...”

“Whatever the case, Melvin did get ass.”

“But he’d only pull these really large ladies.”

“I’m not hating. Some people like the BBW. Cushion for the pushing.”

“And some ladies in their fifties...”

“I think he’s the only white guy in Asia who ever fucked a lady 20 years older instead of 20 years younger.”

“I don’t think he ever had a girlfriend. Maybe the only white guy to stay in China longer than a

year and not have one steady girlfriend for like at least a month or two.”

“A Mongolian lady he’d spent a weekend with wouldn’t return his calls... I told him that maybe she just didn’t like him and he should move on, find another, plenty of fish, you know, and he got legitimately pissed, asking, in all seriousness, how it was possible for a girl not to like him... Thought he was going to physically attack me. Never talked much to him after that...”

“Honestly, I’m not sure he ever had a long-term girlfriend anywhere...”

“That one Russian chick, wasn’t she his girl? She was hot.”

“She looked like a hooker.”

“Nah, supposedly she was a businesswoman.”

“And she ghosted him after one weekend.”

“He was broken up after that. Had a panic attack. Had a student bring him to hospital, got a CAT scan, reckoned it was a heart attack. They sorted him with psych meds.”

“Think he said he’d had a panic attack like that at another school... Was freaking out, on about how, if he died, no one would know, no one would find him... Had a CAT scan then too...”

“Didn’t he have a thyroid thing?”

“Yeah, this big lump on the back of his head, atop his neck. Kinda like a tumor. Scary, that.”

“What the fuck is a thyroid? How do I know if I have one?”

“ESL teachers don’t have thyroids.”

“Was his thyroid what made him so... animated... all the time and quick to rage?”

“A rage-aholic maybe.”

“He’d really wear you out. Being around him for more than a couple minutes was totally exhausting.”

“He was an alpha-male. And proud to be an alpha. Talked about it with everything, ‘Gotta be the alpha, bro.’”

“As a kid he said he was bullied relentlessly and was on Adderall from age 10.”

“Everyone in his, what he called, ‘white trash’ hometown picked on him. His stepfather threw a glass of milk at him and always called him a ‘fag’ because he liked reading.”

“He said his mom was married six times and fucked an 18-year-old student of hers.”

“It was probably him...”

“He liked reading, really? We were talking lesson plans and he didn’t know what syntax was...”

“I saw him posting about making outlines for short stories. Said he was going to be a writer...”

“He posted a poem once about how he was pissing sitting down...”

“In Melvin’s apartment he had stacks and stacks of books, classic novels, *Infinite Jest*, top-notch, cream of the crop literature, many of which I’d read, but when I asked about them, he’d

read none of them. Not one. At all.”

“He was from Portland and had never read *Fight Club*. Or ANYTHING by Chuck Palahniuk. How the fuck does that happen?”

“He was no alpha-male.”

“An alpha doesn’t call himself an alpha.”

“His becoming an alpha story. That was classic. Inspirational. He should do a public speaking tour, like Jordan Peterson.”

“I never heard his becoming an alpha story.”

“He’d be dramatic telling that one.”

“So one day he finally fought back against his childhood bullies. Snapped. Bludgeoned some kid, picked up a math book and smashed it over the kid’s face, again and again, and, after that, he got into self-help audiobooks, PUA forums, and alpha-male websites.”

“Then he found his swagger.”

“Bro...”

“One time he came by my apartment, unannounced, late at night, crying. He was on about how he’d never be a father, never be married, never even owned a suit...”

“Not sure it matters so much, the whole marriage, kids thing. Like can you really leave a legacy? Does it matter so much...”

“Just think, where we sit, here, this whole planet, Earth, the solar system, fucking everything, everything will someday be gone... Swallowed by the sun, a black hole, incinerated by gamma rays, a neutron star, a mushroom cloud, a supervolcano, humanity overtaken by AI, the CCP, killer robots... Global warming... Us all bashed into oblivion by an asteroid or a comet...”

“The whole concept of time is flawed.”

“There’s matter from the Big Bang in your DNA.”

“Nihilism is the only truth.”

“There’s no such thing as death, really.”

“There was no such thing as Melvin. We imagined him. A collective delusion.”

“Oh no, Melvin was real. Never told anyone this...”

“But after a big mass shooting, I can’t remember which one, he confessed to having planned a school shooting attack himself and being into mass killers, that he understood them. That he thought of going back to his high school, with an AR-15, bushmaster rifle, the kind from Sandy Hook, him gunning down everyone, his footprints in their blood.”

“Or maybe he’d hijack a plane and crash it into his high school. But then he started laughing about it, and I’m still not sure if it was a sick joke or not. I hope it was a joke, like the Louis CK, Parkland kid thing.”

“As long as he’s not jerking off in front of people...”

“I know he jerked off in front of someone. Somewhere. It happened.”

“He jerked off in front of a *bao'an*.”

“He jerked off in front of a cleaning lady.”

“And she grabbed his peter and finished him off for a cool 50 RMB.”

“He told me he was into studying plane crashes. Said he curated Wikipedia pages about them...”

“I was done with him after the Christmas party incident... Albert went through all that trouble, booked the restaurant, bought turkey, real turkey from Hong Kong, actually fucking turkey, in China, which is no simple task.”

“Then about 11 of us got there at 6 and soon after the food was served. I remember Melvin saying he'd be there late because he had class, so we made sure to save a plate for him.”

“But when he found out we started eating without him, he flipped out in our WeChat teachers' group, and decided 'he'd go elsewhere.' How 'we must have really been hungry.'”

“Told me later, casually, no hint of emotion, that he stayed home alone on Christmas night, doing sit-ups and eating microwave pizza.”

“The nerve, to think 11 people would all wait to eat, for another hour or two, only for him. Malignant narcissist, that guy.”

“I mean, I know he was fighting a war in his brain; he was mentally ill, was bipolar, probably, for real, but to be that much of a dick, on Christmas, nonetheless, and post a shitstorm online about how 'everyone must have been really hungry.' Yes, we were hungry. Fuck that guy.”

“I think he posted more negative comments about our school on more China ESL forums than anyone ever.”

“A Guinness World Record.”

“Dave's ESL Café banned him, didn't they? He had a flame war that went on for ages.”

“He even went to the US Consulate in Shanghai and demanded they investigate our school. It was about his electric meter being rigged and the school owing him money.”

“Well, he told me he was leaving our school because he didn't feel valued enough.”

“Sometimes I think China purposely hires people like him only to keep the local people afraid of foreigners.”

“See, kids, here, this is what they are...”

“And you?”

“Exactly.”

“Melvin was the sorta guy who, in America, made me want to own a gun, but, at the same time, made me afraid that people like him could have guns, too...”

“Remember his idea to invent drones, with harnesses, large enough to strap in, transport people, fly them around town? You could summon the drones with an app. It would be the next

Uber.”

“He could be the next Elon Musk, and we’ll all be assholes for mocking him.”

“He’s in Silicon Valley right now, amassing venture capital.”

“Nah, last I talked to him he was looking into applying to a school in Thailand.”

“God, that’d be the worst place for him. Bet he’d be beaten down BAD by the locals. They DO NOT take kindly to aggressive foreigners, ‘falangs’ starting shit.”

“He’ll be drugged and robbed by ladyboys.”

“There really are violent gangs of ladyboys there, you know. Pattaya late at night... They go out looking for foreigners... Out looking for honkies...”

“Whatever becomes of him, I can’t see it being a good ending. It’s akin to the shoddy construction, crumbling apartment buildings in China. He’s got a faulty foundation. He’ll never be right.”

“The best team of psychiatrists in Austria couldn’t fix him.”

“He’s dead in a dumpster in Austria.”

“Nah, I say he went to Thailand, got killed by ladyboys or is in jail.”

“Maybe joined the ‘Pattaya Flyer Club.’”

“He is exactly the sort who’d die there.”

“I bet he died there in a previous life. Buddhists believe in reincarnation and shit...”

“In Thailand, they have spirit houses and pray and make daily offerings of fruits and juice to keep malevolent ghosts away.”

“So Melvin probably isn’t there...”

“Didn’t he say he was going to write a book about teaching English in China and go on the *Joe Rogan Experience* podcast to promote it?”

“Yeah, that’s gonna happen.”

“Maybe he’s building wells for the pygmies in the Congo.”

“That’d be by far the best outcome I could envision. Seriously.”

“Melvin and Joey Diaz on the same podcast.”

“Melvin and Joey Diaz building wells for the pygmies in the Congo.”

“Melvin on Bill Burr’s Podcast.”

“Melvin and Eddie Bravo.”

“Nah, David Goggins. Definitely David Goggins...”

