

◎GUAN GUAN / translated by Wai-Lim Yip

A VAT

Upon a road once walked past by the solar-chair of the Ch'ing Dynasty, by  
the heroes of the Ming, the swords and spears of the Yuan, the warfare of the  
T'ang, upon this sleepy imperial road, all bleak, like a leg full of boils,  
there stood a vat glazed with classical patterns

with its mouth

wide-open looking

How did this vat get here and stand there to look?

What of Time schemed to this vat to stand there to look?

Who asked the vat to stand there to look?

The fact is

that there stood

upon the bleak imperial road

a vat,

single, alone,

with its mouth

wide-open

looking at you.

This vat stood and stood, it stood so long it is no longer a vat,

at least it stood so long it is no longer alone,

just as the poet Yao Chi'en is more than Yao Chi'en

and Fushoung is more than Tombuang.

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