

# THE EPOCH TIMES

# ARTS & CULTURE

THE NATIONAL PALACE MUSEUM

## TRADITIONAL CULTURE

## The 24 Chinese Solar Terms

## Rhythms of Heaven, Earth, and All Beings

CORA WANG

The four seasons tell us where we are in the story of our year, but did you know that within each one, there are six miniseasons that last 15 days each? At least as far back as 139 B.C., sages in China recorded a seasonal change each year beginning around February 4 and called it Spring Commences.

This season is followed by Spring Showers, Insects Awaken, Spring Equinox, Bright and Clear, and Grain Rain. Summer, fall, and winter dance their intricate steps, too, which we'll explore in this article, for a total of 24 solar terms. Each term is divided into three notable periods or pentads, of which there are 72.

This ancient and sophisticated calculation of Earth's circuit holds so much wisdom that Asian people who have long moved away from agricultural lifestyles still use it to optimize their diet and health and to mark important milestones. UNESCO's Lists of Intangible Cultural Heritage includes the ancient Chinese understanding of seasonal rhythms. No matter how modernized we become, our bodies will always be subconsciously in tune (or painfully out of tune) with the year's inescapable rhythms. Knowing the 24 solar terms can give us insight into what to expect next and what simple choices can help put us in step with nature.

The classic four seasons are only the beginning. The solar terms were first recorded in the book "Huainan Zi," and they are evenly marked on the ecliptic in segments of 15 degrees. The description of the four seasons below is from Wu Cheng's "A Collective Interpretation of the 72 Pentads," a work from the Yuan Dynasty (A.D. 1271-1368).

### Spring: The Preface

"Lichun" (Spring Commences) is the first solar term of a year. Its three pentads depict the subtlety of nature awakening: The mild breeze thaws the river, fish swim upward to the surface, and insects come out from hibernation. "Yushui" (Spring Showers) ensues; the ice melts, and the air becomes moist when raindrops fall. Otters hunt fish that swim upstream, wild geese migrate back to their northern homes, and seeds begin to sprout.

Continued on Page 4



The Chinese have long divided each of the four seasons into six terms that last 15 days each. "Dahan" (Great Cold) is the last solar term of the year. This famous painting depicts children merrily celebrating the Chinese New Year in heavy snow. "Snow Dedicated to the Emperor's Poem," Qing Dynasty, by Dong Gao.



# Behind the Subscription

Your subscription will not only provide you with accurate news and features, but also contribute to the revival of American journalism and help safeguard our freedoms for future generations.

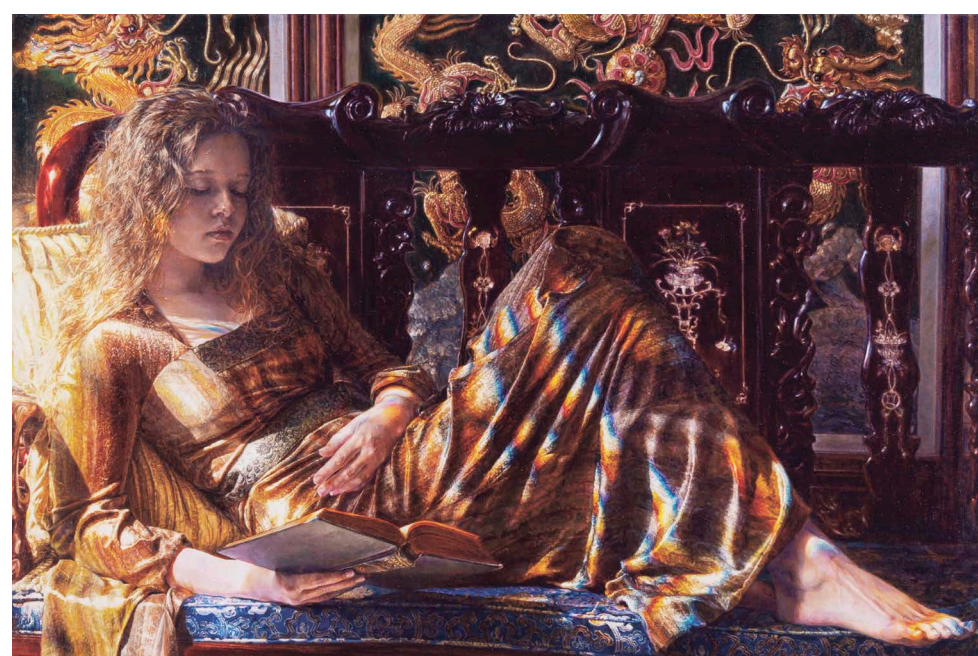
We aim to tell you what we see, not how to think; we strive to deliver you a factual picture of reality that lets you form your own opinions.

We believe that we live in truly epochal times, where the faithful representation of our current events won't just be important for the people of today, but also for the generations to come. The records we keep now will directly inform the foundations of the history they'll learn and the values they'll cherish—and this knowledge is what drives us.

Learn more at

[EpochSubscription.com](https://EpochSubscription.com)

**THE EPOCH TIMES**  
TRUTH AND TRADITION



Ying and Yang by Sandra Kuck

Original artworks, canvas wraps, and prints of Award-winning oil paintings now available at

[InspiredOriginal.Org/Store](https://InspiredOriginal.Org/Store)

**INSPIRED**  
ORIGINAL

## LITERATURE

# Never Say Die: Lessons From Michael Walsh's 'Last Stands'

JEFF MINICK

Throughout history, men with their backs to the wall have time and again fought against overwhelming odds rather than surrender to their enemies. Why do they die battling to the last? What force drives them to fight on with rocks and fists after the blades of their swords are broken or their rifles are empty of bullets?

In the book "Last Stands: Why Men Fight When All Is Lost," Epoch Times columnist Michael Walsh raises these questions and others. Listen, for example, as he asks: "What is heroism? What are its moral components? Is it altruism, love, self-sacrifice? What are its amoral components—fear of cowardice, lust for glory, pride? Why was it once celebrated, and now often dismissed as anachronistic at best, foolish and vainglorious at its worst?"

Throughout "Last Stands," Walsh explores these topics by an examination of 17 battles ranging from Thermopylae in 480 B.C. to the brutal 1950 engagement between the United States Marines and the Chinese communists at Korea's Chosin Reservoir. In addition to his fine descriptions of these conflicts, Walsh provides excellent brief histories of the events that foreshadowed these last stands and their consequences, and short biographies of the commanders involved.

In each case study, Walsh also discusses what inspired these soldiers to make the supreme sacrifice.

Given the current unrest in our country, understanding the motivations of these warriors may prove instructive and rouse us as well to fight the good fight.

### Desperation and Despair

When George Custer led troopers of the Seventh Cavalry to the terrible massacre at the Little Bighorn (1876), he made several mistakes. He divided his force in the face of the enemy without careful reconnaissance; he depended on subordinate commanders who proved weak and disobedient; and worst of all, he believed that the Sioux and other warriors would run from the cavalry as they had in the past.

Instead, the Indians attacked and slaughtered Custer and his men, many of whom were poor shots, inexperienced riders, and ill-trained in military maneuvers. Outnumbered and overwhelmed, most of them went down fighting, but for no other reason than that they had no choice. Surrender was impossible, for to be taken alive meant death by torture. Some of the Sioux later reported that several of the soldiers committed suicide for fear of falling under the knives of the women.

As a last stand, the Little Bighorn is the most ignominious of Walsh's examples. The soldiers who died in that short battle went to their deaths neither for hearth and home nor for a cause larger than themselves. Here in

this desolate place, both Custer and his men and the combined forces of Native American tribes—the Little Bighorn marked the beginning of the end of their resistance—made their last stands.

### Patria

Walsh makes the point in "Last Stands" that men will go their deaths for their country, not so much for ideals like democracy but for the realities of their homes, their towns and farms, and their loved ones. We hear little these days of "Mom, the flag, and apple pie," but soldiers throughout our history have given their lives for these values. They die for what they love.

When Hannibal and his forces crushed the Roman legions at Cannae (216 B.C.), surrounding them so that the packed legionaries could barely move and were cut down, so many were lost that nearly every family in Rome went into mourning. Yet the senate and the people of Rome never considered surrender. They raised another army, devised different tactics, subdued Carthage, and became rulers of the Mediterranean.

"Patria," which gives us "patriot," is the Latin word for "country," and the Romans at that point in their history revered that idea. As a result, they lost a battle but then won a war.

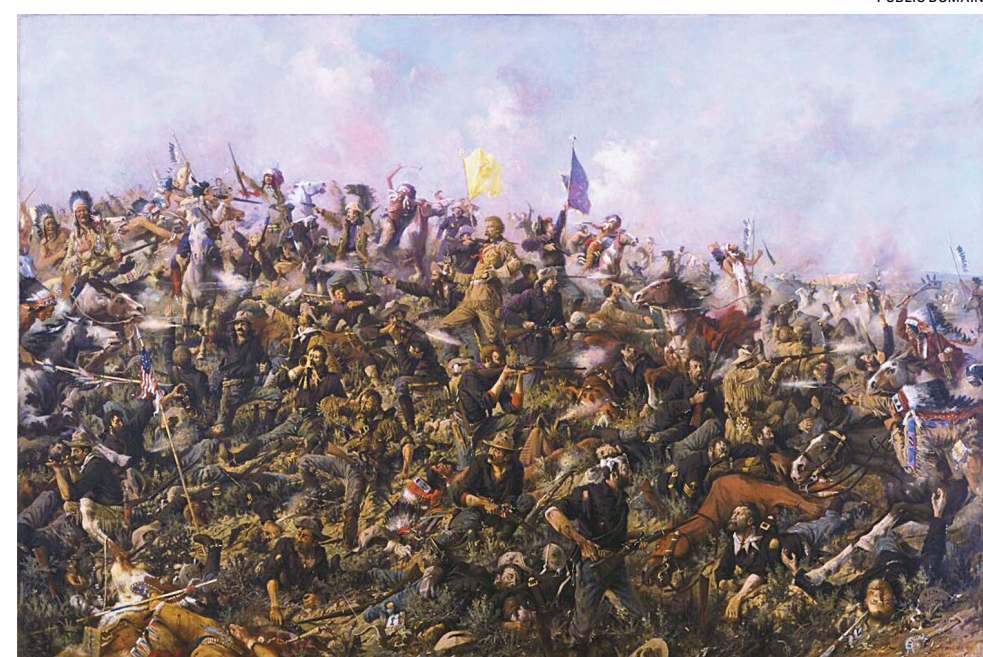
We who love our country, who believe in its ideals of liberty and justice, might take a metaphorical lesson from those events. The election may be behind us, but we can still win back America.

### Duty, Honor, Pride

Both William Travis of Alamo fame and Charles George "Chinese" Gordon, who died defending Khartoum in 1885, had the opportunity to retreat before commencing battle, yet both men felt compelled to stand at their posts in the face of enormous odds. As Walsh writes of those at the Alamo (1836), "They died for those most abstract and yet most fundamental of concepts: duty, honor, country." Gordon also died for these values, though his countrymen at the time were the Sudanese people as well as the English.

In the 1863 Battle of Camarón, a tiny band of French Foreign Legionnaires fought against a superior Mexican force. "The Mexicans were fighting for their country," Walsh tells us, "the legionnaires were fighting for their honor." One motto of the Legion, even today, is *Legio Patria Nostra*—"The Legion is our country"—and that day, the legionnaires nearly all gave their lives to remain true to that idea. The battle ended when the last six men still on their feet charged with their bayonets into the Mexican ranks. Two of them were killed, one was badly wounded, and the other three were captured.

To this day, the French Foreign Legion remembers and honors those men with



"Custer's Last Stand," 1899, by Edgar Samuel Paxson. Whitney Gallery of Western Art.



a formal ceremony on April 30. Soldiers such as these, and others whom Walsh examines, remind us that we too have a duty to our country and to the preservation of our institutions, that we should acquit ourselves with honor in the public square, and that we should take pride in our Americanism. Like those warriors, we must defend those things we hold dear—not with bayonets and bullets, but with words, wit, conviction, and prayer.

### Comrades

"Why do men fight?" Walsh asks. "What or whom is worth dying for?"

His response: "The answer, as we shall see in these pages, is surprisingly simple: they fight for themselves, for their brothers-in-arms, and therefore for their women and children and for their country, which is the expression of the family."

The Jews who fell in A.D. 74 at Masada fighting the Romans and 19

centuries later in Warsaw fighting the Germans died defending their families, friends, and fellow combatants. The outnumbered troops at Rorke's Drift, the Marines at the Chosin Reservoir, the Hungarians wiped out by a Turkish army at Szigetvar: all those who perished in these battles died fighting for their fellow combatants as well as for themselves.

In the political battles ahead of us, we should recognize as our comrades anyone who champions the ancient verities: liberty, truth, goodness, beauty, and tradition. Whether we are black, white, or brown, rich or poor, we cannot allow anything to divide those of us who believe in the American Dream. We are brothers and sisters bound together in the spirit by our belief in "Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness."

Like so many of those who gave their lives for a cause, let's gather together for love of our country and stand shoulder to shoulder for truth and justice.

(Above) Famous painting of the last stand made at the Alamo. "The Fall of the Alamo," 1903, by Robert Jenkins Onderdonk, depicts Davy Crockett wielding his rifle as a club against Mexican troops who have breached the walls of the mission.

(Above right) The "Pasta" building afire in July 1944 during the Warsaw Uprising, where Jewish Poles made a last stand against Nazi invaders.

(Right) The Battle of Szigetvar when Count Zrinski, the viceroy of Croatia, and his men defended the castle of Szigetvar against the besieging Turks in 1566. The 1825 painting is by Johann Peter Krafft. Hungarian National Gallery in Budapest.



**Let's gather together for love of our country and stand shoulder to shoulder for truth and justice.**

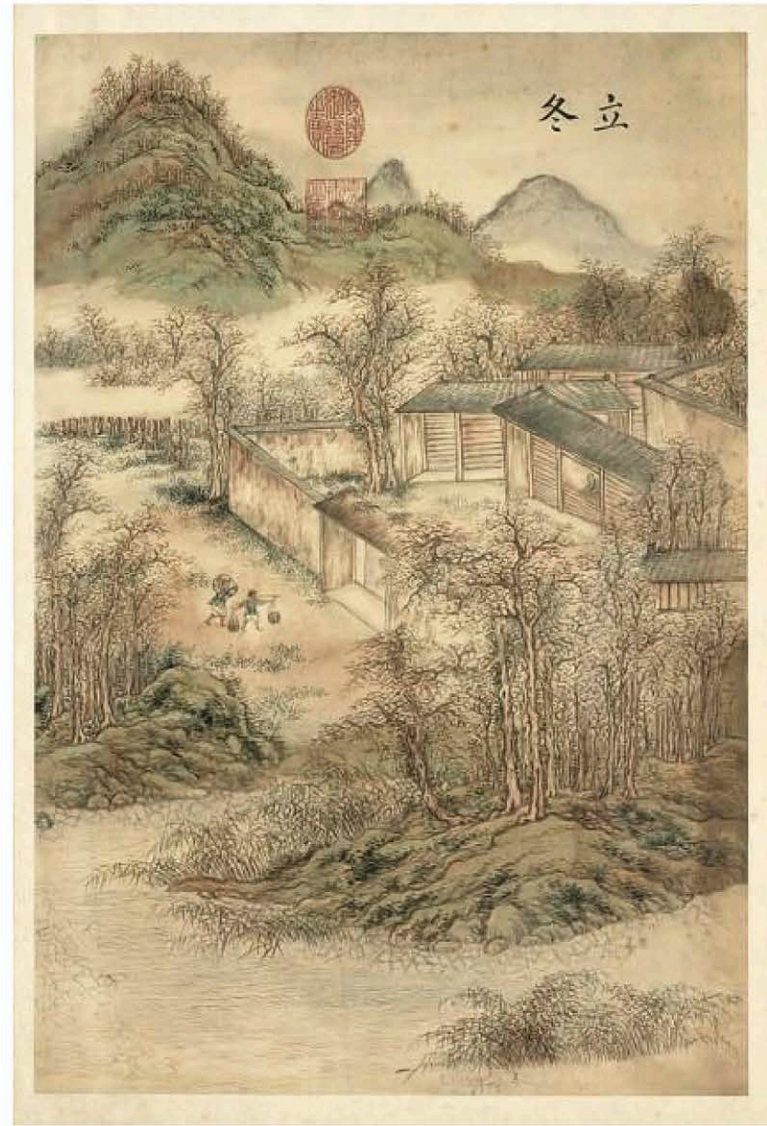
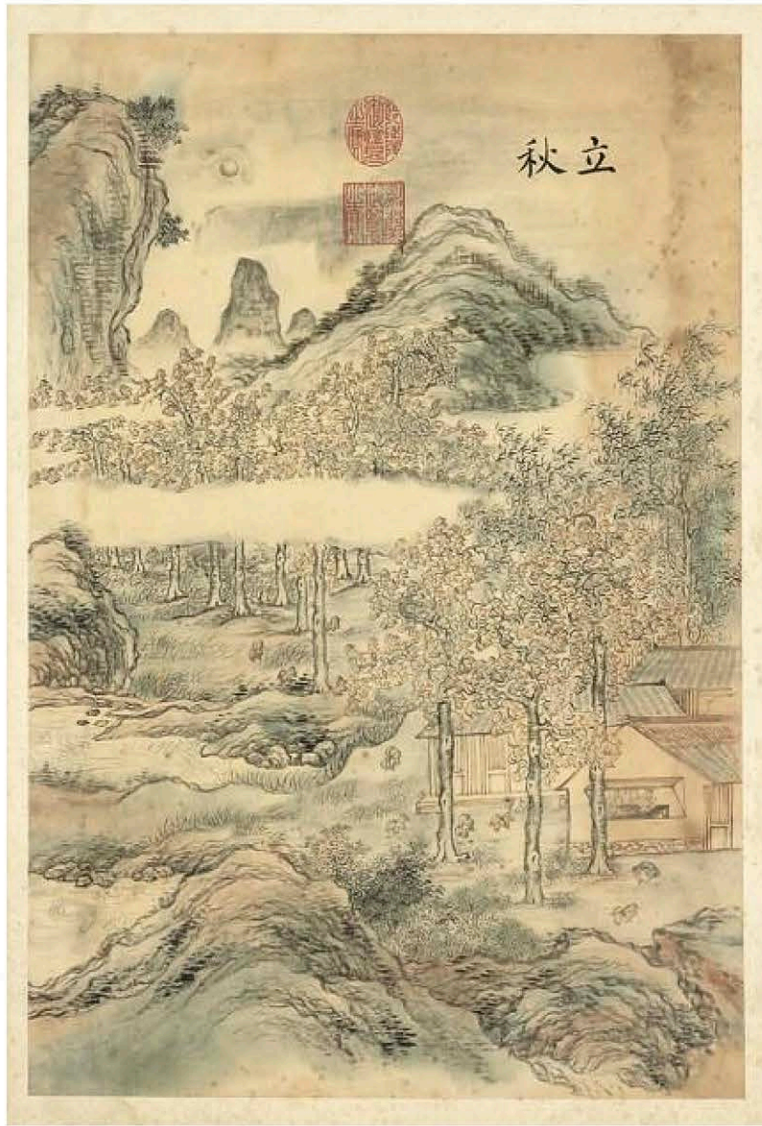
I LOVE SHEN YUN  
**SHEN YUN SHOP**

A Symbol of Hope:  
Shen Yun's Mystical Phoenix

Enjoy **15% off**  
selected jewelry

ShenYunShop.com | TEL: 1.800.208.2384

Four paintings from the book "A Grove in Four Seasons," Qing Dynasty, by Zhang Ruoai. In the paintings, the seasons are identified by the names for the first solar terms of each season: Spring Commences, Summer Commences, Autumn Commences, and Winter Commences.



## TRADITIONAL CULTURE

# The 24 Chinese Solar Terms

## Rhythms of Heaven, Earth, and All Beings

Continued from Page 1

The Lantern Festival falls during this solar term. The first night of the year with a full moon marks the return of spring. "Jingzhe" (Insects Awaken) is the third solar term; peaches begin to blossom, orioles chirp, and caterpillars become butterflies. In traditional Chinese culture, spring is the time when the earth showers its benevolence on all living beings.

On "Chunfen" (Spring Equinox), there are equal periods of daylight and darkness across both hemispheres. In the days to come, the Northern Hemisphere will have longer daylight hours and more moisture. Throughout three pentads, swallows arrive in the north and nest, and thunderstorms crack with lightning.

The solar term "Qingming" means "bright and clear," for the sky is bright, the air is fresh, and the breeze is bracing during these days. It's the perfect time for a spring outing. Flowers are blooming and rainbows appear. The Tomb-Sweeping Festival falls on this day. That's when people go to cemeteries to pay respect to their deceased relatives with offerings.

"Guyu" (Grain Rain) falls at the end of spring. It originates from the proverb "Rain nourishes all grains." Duckweed sprouts, cuckoos fly, and the rice seedlings and spring tea leaves keep farmers occupied.

### Summer: A Dynamic Period

During "Lixia" (Summer Commences), crickets and grasshoppers chirp, earthworms crawl out, and gourds ripen. Farmers markets carry all kinds of melons. In "Xiaoman" (Grain Buds), crops have started to plump but have not yet matured, while some grasses wither in the harsh sunlight.

"Mangzhong" (Grain on the Ear) is the busiest time to seed millet and harvest barley and wheat. Sensing the dampness, the mantises come out, the shrikes start to sing, and the mockingbirds become silent. It's a day to say farewell to flower fairies, as many blossoms are fading. The Dragon Boat Festival is approaching. It's also a day to commemorate Qu Yuan, a famous exiled intellectual who fought against corruption in the Warring States Period (475-221 B.C.).

On "Xiazhi" (Summer Solstice), the Northern Hemisphere sees the longest day and the shortest night, and crops are in their prime. "Xiaoshu" (Lesser Heat) is a period when the weather is hot but not scorching. Fireflies and crickets are active in the balmy breeze, and eagles soar high in the sky. By comparison, "Dashu" (Great Heat) is much hotter. This is when people go hiking and swimming, or enjoy sweet watermelon slices to stay cool. According to folklore, dead grass can turn into fireflies during damp summers. The story implies the cycles of life.

### Autumn: A Time of Serenity

"Liqiu" (Autumn Commences) falls when yang is receding and yin is growing. It signifies cooler weather, the



"Five Deer," Ming Dynasty, by Chen Chun.



"Bird and Peach Blossoms in Spring," Qing Dynasty, by Zou Yigui.

ripening of crops, and the buzzing of cicadas. "Chushu" (End of Heat) marks the end of summer. Temperature drops after each autumn rain, eagles hunt other birds, and millet ripens.

From the first day of "Bailu" (White Dew), yin becomes dominant. During the night, water vapor turns into tiny droplets that shine like crystals in the morning sunshine. Birds hoard food for the cold winter, and wild geese and swallows migrate southward.

On "Qiufen" (Autumnal Equinox), the sun shines exactly above the equator, and both hemispheres experience an equal amount of daylight. From then on, the Northern Hemisphere sees longer nights and shorter days. The sound of thunder begins to soften, water freezes, insects return to their nests, and flora and fauna wither away. This solar term overlaps with the Mid-Autumn Festival, when families admire the moon and feast on mooncakes together.

"Hanlu" (Cold Dew) falls when the dew is so cold that it is about to freeze. This is the best time to appreciate chrysanthemums in all their many shapes and colors. On "Shuangjiang" (Frost's Descent), dew turns to frost. As yang recedes, plants shed leaves and wither, insects go dormant, and wolves start to hunt.

### Winter: A Solemn Time

During "Lidong" (Winter Commences), water begins to turn to ice, the earth hardens, and pheasants look for clams in the lakes. Warming foods and tonics

are suggested to prepare for the frigid winter: chicken soup, ginger duck soup, mutton hot pot, and the like. "Xiaoxue" (Minor Snow) embraces the dormancy of winter, and the snowy season begins. "Daxue" (Great Snow) heralds the heaviest snow, and the "winter-crying" birds go silent.

On "Dongzhi" (Winter Solstice), yin gradually abates and yang rises, enabling the spring water to flow. Elk, which are associated with yin in traditional Chinese culture, drop their antlers during this period. People in ancient times believed that spring would arrive in the 81 days after elk drop their antlers.

"Xiaohan" (Minor Cold) is the bitter-cold stage of winter, when wild geese begin to fly northward, swallows build nests to prepare for the new year, and pheasants crow from distant fields. "Dahan" (Great Cold) is the last solar term of the year. But the frigidty doesn't stop people from welcoming the Chinese New Year: They paste New Year's couplets on their doors and bring new purchases home. Although rivers are still frozen, hens start to hatch chicks and watch out for attacks from eagles.

Knowing the 24 solar terms gives us a glimpse into the beauty and characteristics of seasonal changes.

*This article was written by Cora Wang and translated by Anne Chan and Brett Chudd into English. It is republished with permission from Elite Magazine.*



"Wild Geese by the Reeds and the Cold Lake," Yuan Dynasty, by Wang Yuan.

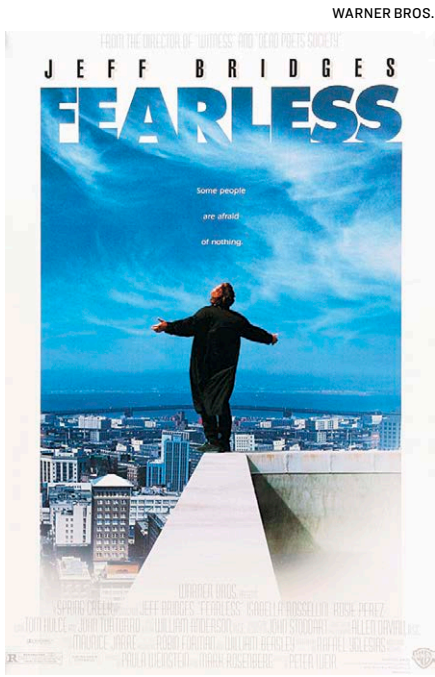
UNESCO's Lists of Intangible Cultural Heritage includes the ancient Chinese understanding of seasonal rhythms.

The solar terms were first recorded in the book 'Huainan Zi,' and they are evenly marked on the ecliptic in segments of 15 degrees.

Zou Yigui impeccably captures the soothing feminine essence of the chrysanthemum in this painting through his use of gentle brush strokes and soft pastel colors.







(Above) The poster for "Fearless" shows the unforgettable scene of the protagonist dancing on the ledge of a tall building.

(Below) Max Klein (Jeff Bridges) underwent a transformative experience in a plane crash and now he is fearless.

**This film encapsulates what many would consider a 'crashing' of the economy and of certain freedoms and civil liberties.**

POPCORN AND INSPIRATION

# A Rousing Drama for Today

IAN KANE

When I first recalled director Peter Weir's 1993 film "Fearless," I must have subconsciously known how timely it is. And after watching it for the first time in probably over a decade, I see parallels to many of the recent tumultuous events. In many ways, "Fearless" plays like the cinematic gestalt of recent times. After all, 2020 was a year that many would like to forget even happened—with all of the tragic deaths, increased political upheaval and divisiveness, viral hysteria, and so on.

The film opens with middle-aged architect Max Klein (Jeff Bridges) walking calmly through a cornfield, as an ethereal score by composer Maurice Jarre hums in the background. Max is holding a young boy's hand and carrying an infant.

As Max emerges from the field, we see that he is leading many who have just survived a horrific commercial airline crash. Crash rescue teams scramble all around frantically, but Max displays an odd air of tranquility and peacefulness, despite the fact that it is later revealed his best friend Jeff Gordon (John de Lancie) perished in the crash.

At the opposite end of the spectrum, a woman named Carla Rodrigo (Rosie Perez)

is being hauled out of the still-dangerous plane wreckage by a pair of men. She is frantically clawing away at them in a desperate effort to get back to the plane's damaged fuselage in order to find her baby who was ejected from her grasp in the crash. A tiny burned shoe can be seen amid the debris, signaling that the worst has happened.

Seemingly in a state of deep shock, Max finds the mother of the baby he is carrying and hands the child off to her. He then rents a car and drives to Los Angeles to visit an old flame, Alison (Debra Monk). As they sit eating at a local restaurant, Max orders strawberry pancakes. Surprised, Alison notes that Max has always been allergic to the "forbidden fruit" and almost died from eating them as a child. But he shrugs it off and says that now "I'm past all that."

Indeed, due to the plane crash, Max's life seems to have undergone a transcendental shift and displays characteristics of a messianic figure. He is completely forthright and honest with people and has conquered all of his fears. For example, when the airline tracks him down (with the help of the FBI) and offers him a train ticket back to his home in San Francisco, he tells them that he'd rather fly back instead, having overcome his fear of flying.

During his flight, the airline pairs him up with psychiatrist Dr. Bill Perlman (John Turturro), who specializes in treating trauma victims. Since Max believes that he has entered a transcendent state, he doesn't think Dr. Perlman can wholly understand his transformation.

When Max returns home, his wife Laura (Isabella Rossellini) and young son Jonah (Spencer Vrooman) are ecstatic to see him. But it doesn't take long for them to figure out that something is vastly different about Max's personality. When Max and Laura have a private moment together, she asks why he didn't immediately let her know he was alive. He responds, "I thought I was dead."

While things begin to fracture on the home front due to Max's somewhat detached nature toward his family, he is hailed as "the good Samaritan" by the media—having comforted other passengers

during the crash landing and led many of the survivors to safety.

Dr. Perlman believes that Max may be able to help Carla, who lives with her family in New York. When Max meets Carla, he finds that she is wracked with survivor's guilt because she wasn't able to hold on to her baby during the crash. Max and Carla strike up an unusual chemistry, and he makes it his duty to save her, just as he did some of the other survivors.

Needless to say, Laura becomes jealous of the attention that Max shows to Carla, and their family life becomes increasingly unstable. At one point, Laura finds Max in the famous scene that the movie poster depicts—fearlessly dancing on the rooftop ledge of a tall building.

As Max's progress with Carla begins to taper off, will he still be able to save her from her seemingly endless despair? And who will save Max from his own new, strangely exalted self?

As a new year begins, this film encapsulates what many would consider a "crashing" of the economy, of certain freedoms and civil liberties, leading to an overall sense of worldwide turbulence. However, just as the film ends on a positive note—with regard to a return to normalcy—so too can all of humanity hope for a semblance of normalcy. As the saying goes, "Don't count the days; make the days count."

*Ian Kane is a filmmaker and author based out of Los Angeles. To learn more, visit [DreamFlightEnt.com](http://DreamFlightEnt.com)*

**'Fearless'**

**Director**  
Peter Weir

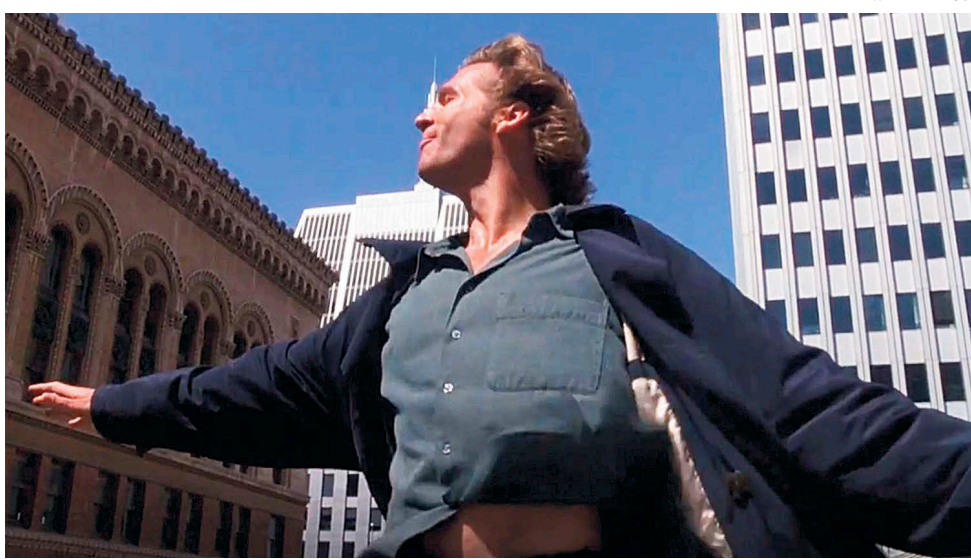
**Starring**  
Jeff Bridges, Isabella Rossellini, Rosie Perez

**Running Time**  
2 hours, 2 minutes

**Rated**  
R

**Release Date**  
Nov. 5, 1993 (USA)

★★★★★



## Virtue of the Brush in a Time of Chaos

"When things are chaotic to the extreme,  
order must be restored."  
- "The four books" by Zhu Xi

The original calligraphy is now available for purchase at  
[InspiredOriginal.Org](http://InspiredOriginal.Org)

