

# The Secret Passage to My Safe Haven

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It is said that the price to pay for the prosperity of a city can be high. Since the successful transformation of Macau, our home town, into a gambling hub, now crowned with the glamorous name “Las Vegas of the East”, many of us are ready to accept the bitterness lodged in our lives. Quite a few of the merits which we used to cherish have been lost, including the tranquility and simplicity of life, the thoughtful and caring neighbourhood spirit, and, above all, the leisurely pace of life. Replacing these virtues are, regrettably, earthly luxury, the worship of fame and the endless desire for pleasure.

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據說，造就一座城市的繁榮所付出的代價，可能是高昂的。按此來說，自從我們的家鄉——澳門成功轉型為博彩業聖地，被冠以“東方拉斯維加斯”（Las Vegas of the East）的美名以來，許多人就做好準備，去接受這轉變所帶給我們生活中的苦澀。不少我們曾經珍視的東西，如今都失去了，包括生活的那份寧靜和單純、守望相助的鄰里精神，以及至為重要的閒適的生活節奏。令人惋惜的是，取代這些可貴之處的，似乎是世俗奢華、名利是尚，以及無盡的享樂欲望。



In the eyes of others, Macau is a prestigious city enjoying the highest gaming revenue in the world; yet in mine, it is no longer a simple town for the reason that it is not known when a balance can be struck between prosperity and peace and how the various social problems caused by the overcrowdedness of the city can be solved.

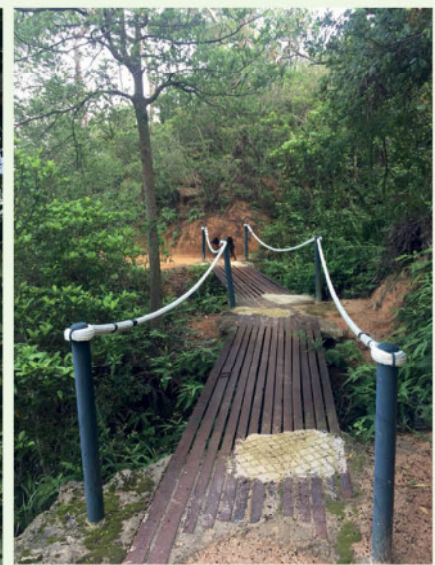
In spite of this, life must go on. Ordinary people, like me, are doing our best to search for a hideout from the city chaos, where we can seek breathing space, and enjoy peace of mind. The story of my quest for my little safe haven begins like this ...

Six years ago, I adopted two mongrels from an animal protection association. I had no knowledge, then, of how impactful this act could be to me in the days to come. It started off as nothing more than a location hunt and the fulfillment of a pet owner's obligation. However, over time, things changed; I embarked on a new journey of my life.

在他人眼中，澳門是世界上博彩收入最高的著名城市；然而，在我眼中，這已是個不復樸素的都市，究其原因，在於繁華與寧靜之間，未知何時得以平衡，以及城市擁擠帶來的種種社會問題，未知如何解決。

即使這樣，但生活仍需繼續。像我這般的普通人，正在努力搜尋一個避離城市喧囂的地方，在那裡，我們可以找到呼吸的空間，享受心靈的寧靜。我尋找我的小小避風港的故事就是這樣開始的……

六年前，我從一個動物保護協會領養了兩隻混種狗。我當時不知道，在未來的日子裡，這次領養會對我產生多大的影響。一開始，只是關乎找個地方，以及履行寵物主人的義務。然而，隨著時間的推移，事情發生了變化；我開啟了我人生的新旅程。

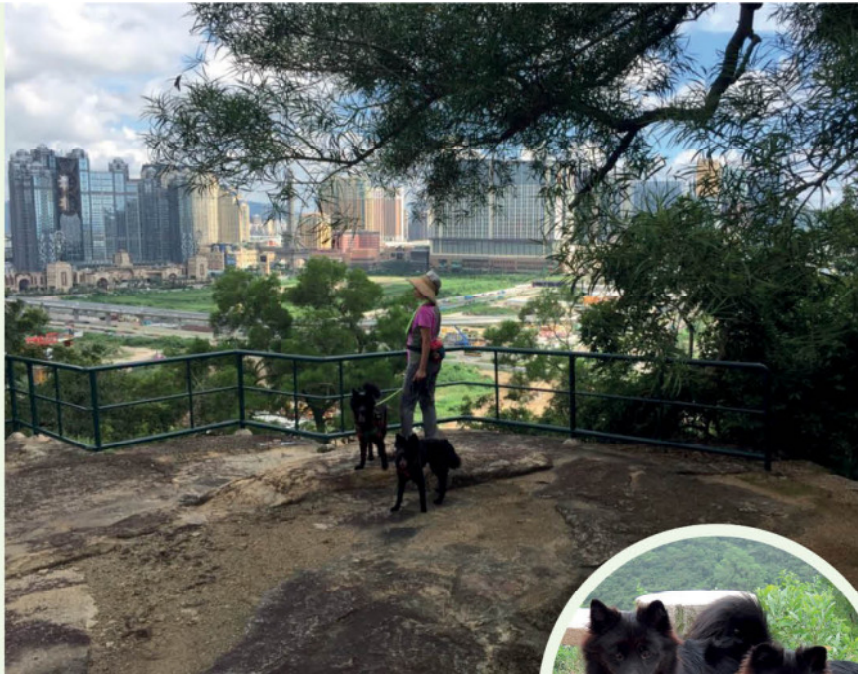




Devoted pet owners have serious concern for the well being of their pets. Seeing to the physical needs of pet dogs can be tricky. One of my dogs is very particular about her pick of the toileting spot. Busy streets thronged with people and cars are not welcoming to her. Instead, she needs a rural environment to answer her body calls. But in a jungle of high-rise buildings like Macau, patches of green are either too rare to find or have already been turned into communal backyards of the urban dwellers. The only exception are a few hiking trails in Taipa and Coloane.

Now the early morning sees the jolly jumps of my dogs at the sight of the leashes in my hands. After a short drive of 10 minutes away from home, we commence our morning expedition. The morning walk offers me and my dogs quality time to break away from the physical confinement of brickwork. And the merit does not end there.

The seasonal change in the colour of the foliage on both sides of the meandering trail is an abundant feast for the eyes. In spring time, the foliage transforms into a silk band of green in different shades along which, from time to time, there seem to be waves moving up and down as the leaves dance in the wind.




有愛心的寵物主人會非常關心其寵物的健康。照顧寵物狗的生理需求是很棘手的事。我其中的一隻狗在如廁地方的選擇很是挑剔。熙熙攘攘的街道上擠滿了車輛行人，容不下牠。相反，牠需要郊野環境來解決生理問題。但在像澳門這樣高樓林立的地方，一片片的綠地要麼非常罕見，要麼已經變成了城市居民的公共後院。唯一的例外是氹仔和路環的一些遠足路線。

現在，每到清晨，小狗們看到我手中的遛狗皮繩，便會歡快地跳躍起來。在離家10分鐘的車程後，我們開始了晨光中的遠征。清晨的散步，讓我和我的兩隻狗擁有了優質的時光，擺脫水泥森林所帶來的壓抑桎梏。好處還不止於此。

蜿蜒小徑兩旁，樹葉顏色隨季節而變化，此種美景堪稱一頓視覺盛宴。春日





When the colour of the leaves turns from sprouting green to harvesting gold and finally to withering brown, time trickles away.

The morning orchestra of Nature treats our ears to different symphonies. Sometimes, it is a lively violin overture played by the birds at a pitch that varies with time. At other times, it can be a humming percussion by the cicadas with the Zen effect, a guitar session by the falling rain, or a ferocious roll of drums by the roaring wind in winter time. These natural pieces of music alternate with or complement one another according to the changes of seasons and weather patterns.

裡，樹葉變成了色彩斑駁的綠色絲帶，隨著樹葉在風中起舞，好像一片綠波不時地上下搖曳。當樹葉的顏色從剛剛發芽的嫩綠，變成收穫時節的金黃，最後變成枯萎的褐色時，時間亦在指縫間流逝了。

大自然的清晨管弦樂隊，奏出多變的交響樂，供我們聆聽。有時，是一首活潑的小提琴序曲，由鳥兒演奏，音調隨時間而變化。又有時，是蟬鳴隆隆的打擊樂，營造禪意效果；又是落雨時的吉他演奏會，或冬日凜冽風中咆哮的兇猛的鼓聲。這些大自然音樂創作，隨著季節和天氣的變化而相互交替、互補。





Adventures may lie ahead as we trek on. With snails scattered here and there on the trail in spring time, we have to go tip-toeing all the way like elegant ballet dancers. Wild mushrooms that appear in clusters in the moist soil in the spring mist may look tempting to the gourmets but should never be consumed as an exotic food item on our plate. A ‘head-to-head’ confrontation with a wiggling snake in the wake of summer definitely drives a rush of blood to our head and flushes our body with an influx of adrenaline. Meeting the ‘Spiderman’ in the form of a real spider dangling above our head can hardly be called an adventure after the above excitement.

However, what is most rewarding to me is not the contentment and excitement I experience but the transformation of the walk with the dog into a body- and-soul awakening and cleansing

長途跋涉的行程中，奇遇可能就在前方。春天時節，蝸牛爬滿小徑，我們得像優雅的芭蕾舞演員一樣，踮著腳尖走完全程。在春天的薄霧中，野生蘑菇成簇成群地從潮濕的土壤中露出頭來，這對饞嘴的人來說看來是誘人的美食，但萬萬不可當作餐盤裡的異國食材來享用。夏天過後，我們與一條扭動的蛇“正面交鋒”，這肯定令人血脈沸騰，激起一股腎上腺素在體內竄動。經歷了刺激相遇之後，碰到懸掛在我們頭上，以真實的蜘蛛形態出現的“蜘蛛俠”，簡直算不上是冒險奇遇了。

然而，對我來說，最有價值的部份，不是我體驗到這些滿足和興奮，而是和狗一起散步的過程變成了一個身心覺醒和淨



journey. The magical moment begins when I focus on every step I take. I rid my mind of unsettled questions as I carefully manoeuvre my way over rubble stones. My worries vanish and so does my fury as I strenuously make my climb up the pile of stones. The more immersed I am in walking, the more I free myself from the mental entanglement of everyday nuisances. Troubles, stresses and strains as well as all the other unpleasant feelings are washed away with the sweat as it rolls down my face, my limbs and, in fact, my entire body. Confusion in my mind gradually gives way to clarity. Despite physical exhaustion, spiritual calmness reigns at the end of the walk.

My morning dog walking rewards me with daily spiritual enlightenment. With a mind rid of grudges and resentments, I have a bigger heart to take in the simple beauty of life. Suddenly, a revelation dawns on me. The safe haven I have been seeking does not need to bear a physical form. It is, fundamentally, a state of mind in me. What I need is a means to gain access to it.

The quest for a haven may vary individually in the form, in the means or in the time of such pursuit. To me, my morning walk is the secret passage to my safe haven. What about yours?

化的旅程。當我專注於腳下的每一步時，奇妙的時刻就開始了。當我小心翼翼地碎石路上行走時，就擺脫了那些懸而未決的疑慮。我的煩惱沒有了，憤恨也消失了，只因我在費力地登攀那堆石頭。我越沉浸在步行中，就越能從日常生活的煩惱中解脫出來。煩惱、壓力和緊張，以及所有其他不愉快的感覺都被汗水沖走了，汗水順著我的臉頰、我的四肢，甚至整個身軀流淌。我頭腦裡的混亂逐漸被清醒取代。儘管身體疲憊，散步結束後，精神上的平靜仍然佔優。

清晨遛狗給了我每日的精神啟迪。當頭腦擺脫了怨恨和不滿的情緒，我就有了一顆更包容的心去接受生活的簡單之美。突然，我恍然大悟。我一直在尋找的避風港不需要是實體形態的存在。從根本上說，這是我的一種心態。我需要的是一種走近它的方法。

對避風港的追求，可能在形式、途徑或時間上各不相同。對我來說，晨間散步便是通往避風港灣的秘密小徑。你的呢？

