China’s natural beauty

While many of us grew up **watching** CCTV’s educational TV show Animal World (《动物世界》), few wildlife documentaries actually tell the stories of animals **native to** our country.

Born in China (《我们诞生在中国》), which came out in the Chinese mainland in August last year, was one of the only documentaries to focus on Chinese wildlife. And now, **the hit production has made it to the US.**

**Released** on April 21, the movie, **directed** by top Chinese filmmaker Lu Chuan, tells the story of three animal families native to China: pandas, snow leopards, and golden monkeys.

***“The magic of nature and its wildlife often takes great patience for the humans who want to revel (陶醉) in it,”*** noted the Associated Press (AP). “Born in China is a perfect example of that.”

The documentary is 79 minutes long but it took three years to shoot. As British scientist and environmental advocate (提倡者) Dame Jane Goodall told AP: ***“the imagery was breathtaking and shows the personality of the species captured*** (镜头捕捉到的).”

According to Variety, Born in China celebrates the notion that ***“loss and death are all part of the circle of life”***, and leaves audiences with the feeling of “Animals – they’re just like us.”

For example, the panda story follows how Ya Ya raises her cub (幼崽), Mei Mei, in a bamboo forest. But it’s not just the daily lives of the lovely creatures that are shown. ***“Finally, these two must separate, not because anything harsh (严酷的) happens but simply because life happens. The quietly touching story resonates (引发共鸣) with adults and children alike,”*** commented Variety.

And **it also captures the coming-of-age tale of a 2-year-old golden monkey.** After feeling like his life has been changed for the worse when his new baby sister arrives, he quickly joins up with a group of other free-spirited (自由自在的) monkeys. Eventually, he returns to his family after understanding the meaning of responsibility.

But while the golden monkey learns to protect his family, a mother snow leopard – an animal rarely caught on camera – also faces the challenge of raising her two cubs in a harsh environment on the Tibetan Plateau (青藏高原). Since the cubs are still unable to hunt for themselves, feeding them through the freezing winter is her **top concern**. However, competition from other snow leopards makes their survival very difficult.

Not only does the documentary **promote** the beauty of China’s wildlife, but also **present**s a different side of the country to the rest of the world. When thinking of China, many people only “think of Beijing and Shanghai and glitz (浮华),” Goodall told AP, “***but China is huge and some of these landscapes that are captured in this film are truly spectacular.”***

***In this sense, Born in China is, as Variety put it, a “cross-cultural diplomacy (外交)” which shows “the majestic (宏伟的) diversity of Chinese landscapes.”***

Data shared every day

Next time you go shopping, keep in mind that there may be **hidden** cameras **analyzing** your habits.  
 According to a 2015 survey of 150 retail (零售商) managers from IT services company Computer Services Corporation, a quarter of all British shops use facial recognition software to collect data on shopper behavior.  
  ***With concerns that face-recognition cameras “are kind of invasive (冒犯的)”, British retail analysis firm Hoxton Analytics has come up with a novel way of measuring footfall (客流) – by filming people’s shoes.*** The technology can collect a large amount of information such as age, gender (性别) and social class from customers’ shoes.  
  ***“We have cameras at about 50 cm off the ground and they point down so they are less invasive than facial recognition,***” Duncan Mann, Hoxton’s chief operating officer, told the BBC.  
 The system is also surprisingly **accurate.** It could make correct guesses about gender 80 percent of the time, which is better than some facial recognition technologies.  
 As our modern cities get fuller – 70 percent of the world’s population will live in urban areas by 2050 – **cameras and other technologies are taking over our public spaces and collecting data on us.**  ***Their purpose is to keep people safe, provide more efficient services and prevent overcrowding or other disasters.*** Smart CCTV (闭路电视) cameras feed into operation centers to ***watch out for crimes*,** while smart streetlights turn brighter when someone walks beneath them.  
 But ***some people are not happy with the cameras as far as their privacy (隐私) is concerned.*** “Very few of us have any real concept (概念) of what data smart cities are gathering,” said Renate Samson, of privacy watchdog Big Brother Watch.  
 We begin leaking data as soon as we wake up. Even when checking Weibo for the latest news, one click immediately becomes public property.  
 And once we enter the transport system, we are giving away even more details about ourselves. The ticket gate is waiting to swallow our data, through the swipe (刷) of a smart card, mobile phone or credit card.  
 Nick Millman, managing director at consultancy firm Accenture, ***thinks statistics (统计学) are the key to the privacy concern. He used the example of Google, which is currently using Google Maps data to monitor the flow of traffic in Stockholm, Sweden. In this case, Google gets enough data to improve traffic flow but not so much that it shows individual journey patterns.  
 “It is basically adding privacy controls to statistics so that you only see the data you need to know about,” Nick told the BBC.***

People need connection

I was out for my usual morning run and found myself in the late-summer heat, wishing I \_\_1\_\_(take) a water bottle. After I stopped under a bridge for a moment of\_\_2\_\_(荫凉), I saw two young, homeless men standing next to their sleeping bags. One smiled and gently raised his hand as if he were about to say hello, but he didn’t say a word. He wasn’t asking for anything. I smiled and raised my hand too.  
 As I started back on my run, I thought about how much we all need to \_3\_\_\_(联结) with other people. At that moment, this homeless man seemed to want to connect with someone else more than he wanted food or money.  
 We have all had experiences of feeling \_\_\_4\_\_(疏离)and lonely. **I once felt lonely being in a relationship that lacked an emotional connection. Feeling separated doesn’t have anything to do with being alone, but is about the human desire to feel connected by being seen and valued by another person.** If your \_\_5\_\_\_\_(倾向) is to spend time alone, practice saying “yes” to invitations. Practice moving toward rather than away from people.  
 We all benefit from connection. That homeless man\_\_\_6\_\_\_(影响) my day. After meeting him, I felt more grateful and it made me\_\_\_7\_\_\_(感激)all that I have. He made me feel concerned for him. **I had the choice to move toward separation or connection. Are there many ways in which he and I are very different? Absolutely. Are there many ways in which we are alike? Absolutely.** I can \_\_8\_\_\_\_(考虑到，想到)on times in my life when, like him, I was in a situation I had never expected. There have been times when I felt at a low point, and times when I needed someone to stop and \_\_\_\_9\_\_\_(打招呼，致意) me.  
  **We always have a choice as to whether we move toward separation or connection. Separation is looking at the homeless person and \_\_10\_\_\_\_(关注于) on how unclean he looks. Connection is understanding that he influenced my day by reaching out to me.**  
 Pay attention today and notice whether you tend to move toward separation or toward connection.

Letting go of parenthood

I’m not the kind of mother who normally brushes and styles her daughter’s hair, and my daughter has never liked sitting still long enough for me to do it.  
 But today, I’ve dragged a kitchen stool (凳子) outside and sat my daughter Sally on it. She’s sitting high with her eyes closed, skin still wet from the shower, and her messy hair behind her back.  
 I realize she is taking in every touch from my hands. It’s the last time for a week that our bodies will connect. Today, I’m sending Sally away for a week of summer camp. She never actually asked to go. This was all my idea. She’s nearly 12, and I noticed that I’m with my child nearly 24 hours a day.  
 Living on a farm without any neighbors, I’ve chosen a life that is quieter than a typical family’s. But rather than longing for space away from me, Sally has become increasingly dependent on my presence.  
 What frightens me most is that she has become a “mini-me”. She pursues (追求) my hobbies, my dreams, and my opinions. And that’s why I pulled her to the summer camp: a nearby wilderness (荒野) camp called Hawk Circle.  
 After we eat, I drive Sally to Hawk Circle. Once there, we get a tour of the grounds and are introduced to Sally’s fellow campers. Sally stands by the group of children, holding my hand, horror in her eyes, trying to work up the courage to join a game of soccer. “I need you for a few more minutes,” she tells me, holding my hand tightly.  
 I pull away and walk up to one of the camp’s workers. “Excuse me,” I say loudly，“I’d like to introduce you to my daughter. Maybe you could help her meet a few of these kids.” He comes over to talk to Sally, and I kiss on her cheek (脸颊) and then I disappear before she realizes I’m gone.  
 It’s not until that drive home that I finally feel it. A piece of my soul has been taken from my body. I begin to shake. The tears stream down my face. It takes every bit of my strength (力量) to keep driving forward.  
 When I arrive home, I calm down and remind myself why I chose this path. I want Sally to have a chance to find herself, out of my shadow. I don’t want to see only myself in my child. I want to learn who she is. If I don’t set her free, I fear I’ll never really meet her real personality.  
 After 12 years of constantly being together, I want to finally meet my daughter for the first time.