**永和九年，岁在癸（guǐ）丑。暮春之初，会于会（kuài）稽山阴之兰亭，修禊（xì）事也。**

It is the ninth year of Yonghe (A.C. 353), also known as the year of Guichou in terms of the Chinese lunar calendar. On one of those late spring days, we gather at the Orchid Pavilion, which is located in Shanyin County, Kuaiji Prefecture, for dispelling bad luck and praying for good fortune.

**群贤毕至，少长（zhǎng）咸集。**

The attendees of the gathering are all virtuous intellectuals, varying from young to old.

**此地有崇山峻岭，茂林修竹，又有清流激湍，映带左右，引以为流觞（shāng）曲水，列坐其次。**

Endowed with great mountains and lofty peaks, Orchid Pavilion has flourishing branches and high bamboo bushes all around, together with a clear winding brook engirdled, which can thereby serve the guests by floating the wine glasses on top for their drinking.

**虽无丝竹管弦之盛，一觞一咏，亦足以畅叙幽情。**

Seated by the bank of brook, people will still regale themselves right by poetizing their mixed feelings and emotions with wine and songs, never mind the absence of melody from string and wind instruments.

**是日也，天朗气清，惠风和畅。仰观宇宙之大，俯察品类之盛。**

It is such a wonderful day, with fresh air and mild breeze. Facing upwards to the blue sky, we behold the vast immensity of the universe; when bowing our heads towards the ground, we again satisfy ourselves with the diversity of species.

**所以游目骋（chěng）怀，足以极视听之娱，信可乐也。**

Thereby we can refresh our views and let free our souls, with luxuriant satisfaction done to both ears and eyes. How infinite the cheer is!

**夫（fú）人之相与，俯仰一世。**

People keep coming and going, and life soon rushes to its end.

**或取诸怀抱，悟言一室之内；或因寄所托，放浪形骸之外。**

Some people prefer to share their proud aspiration and lofty goals with close friends indoors, while some others choose to follow their interest and free their minds wherever and whenever they like.

**虽趣（qǔ）舍万殊，静躁不同，当其欣于所遇，暂得于己，快然自足，不知老之将至；**

May characters vary from person to person, or some would rather stay peaceful while others like to live restlessly, they will all become delighted and satisfied once they meet something pleasant, so cheerful that they get unaware of their imminent old age.

**及其所之既倦，情随事迁，感慨系之矣。**

However, when they get tired of their old fancies that they’ve already experienced, and sentiment correspondingly accompanies the change of situation, all sorts of complicated feelings will well up in the heart, too.

**向之所欣，俯仰之间，已为陈迹，犹不能不以之兴怀，况修短随化，终期于尽！**

Isn’t it thought-provoking that the happiness we used to enjoy passes by without leaving a single trace, let alone that the length of life is subject to the fate, and death is inevitable for anybody in the end?

**古人云：“死生亦大矣”，岂不痛哉！**

Just as some ancient man once put it, “Death also deserves our attention, like what life does.”, so how can we restrain ourselves from grieving?

**每览昔人兴感之由，若合一契，未尝不临文嗟悼(jiē dào)，不能喻之于怀。**

Every time I ponder about the reasons why our predecessors would produce works with such inenarrable emotions, I find there seem some similarities between our minds. Yet I cannot help lamenting their literary masterpieces while I am struggling for the very cause in my innermost world.

**固知一死生为虚诞，齐彭殇(shāng)为妄作。**

Now I come to realize that it has been ridiculous for me to equate death with life, long life with short life .

**后之视今，亦犹今之视昔，悲夫！**

The descendents view us just the way we look at our predecessors, and how woeful it is!

**故列叙时人，录其所述，虽世殊事异，所以兴怀，其致一也。**

Hence I write down all the names of the attendees and put their poetry into record. Conditions may go with the changes of time, but people’s emotions shall stay the same.

**后之览者，亦将有感于斯文。**

I believe the following readers will still have much to mediate about life and death when appreciating this poetry anthology.