Water and Culture

2

As attributed by Thales of Miletus (634–546 BC), water is the source of all life. Similarly in ancient China, Guanzhong (720–645 BC), a legalist chancellor and reformer of the State of Qi during the Spring and Autumn Period of Chinese history, realized more than 2000 years ago this important viewpoint that Water is the origin of all thing. In his famous work "Guanzi Water Place", he proposed that "Water is the intrinsic nature and the source of life," and maintained the implementation of education to water. Water is therefore a source of national culture and civilization.

Study from archaeology, history, and anthropology has proved that most of the human beings civilization originated from water sides. The four ancient civilization countries were resided by rivers—the ancient Egyptian civilization was reward of the Nile, the ancient civilization of Babylon was originated from Euphrates and Tigris in Mesopotamia, the ancient Indian civilization was developed along the Ganges, the sacred river of India, and Indus, and the Chinese civilization of 5000 years began and flourished in the valley regions of the Yellow river and the Yangtze river.

As Ernst CASSIRER said, "From the history that any great culture is controlled and dominated by the flood myth." The mythological stories around water are also many folds, and gods and goddesses with power over or with connections to water are found in all mythologies. There is important similarity in the basic structure on the creation or recreation of the world and human beings. A hero or Heroes appeared and strived to conquer the disaster and rebuilt a new civilization. Nevertheless, different nations have their specific versions or characteristics of the flood myth, and even manifest their different national spirits and cultural values. As an example, the western flood myths are usually God-centered or theocentricism and embody a strong sense of religion with the theme of asylum, while Chinese flood myths are human-oriented and take "harnessing water" as a theme to reflect the use and control of flood.

Of the more well-known water characters that are more or less known by most people even today, we just mention (Fig. 2.1):

- The Bible tells that Noah was the tenth generation after Adam, and he was ordered to build an Arch and to collect two samples, one male and one female of all animals to survive after the flood of sins, where God had the intention to clean the world. After 40 days and 40 nights of rain, the water was covering the whole world, and the Arch stranded on the mountain of Ararat. The mythology in the story is underlined in the claim that Noah should have lived until he became 900 years. The rainbow was the sign that God should never again destroy the earth. A similar story is found in the old Babylonian legends, and possibly is the origin of the legends a major flood in the area between 3 000 and 2 000 BC.
- Poseidon, the God of the sea from Greek mythology, and Neptune from Roman mythology, were mighty Gods that ruled over oceans, water, storms, earthquakes and floods. Nowadays we find the names in a number of relational areas, from special products to harbor bars and cafés (Fig. 2.2).
- The anecdotes from Greek mythology about the three *Sirens* that fooled seamen into death with their songs have been copied in a number of varieties, and the name has even become a word for alarm signals. The mermaids have been a sex-related attraction object in a number of stories and anecdotes (Fig. 2.3).
- The story about the virgin at the Lorelei cliff in the River Rhine from German mythology that fooled the seamen has also become a traveling story. This story has strong bonds to the Nix stories to be mentioned later in the chapter.
- Chinese flood myths are manifold with close to 400 stories among the 56 different national "nationalities." Chinese history books regard the Huang Di, Yan Di, and Yi tribes as three tribal groups 5000 years ago. The former two groups lived in the valley of the Yellow River, and Yi tribes occupied East China.

The best well known and praised flood myth, according to Shan Hai Ching (The Classics books before the Qin

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Fig. 2.1 The rainbow has given the apartment building its glory in Asker, Norway in September



Fig. 2.2 "Poseidon" is a brand name in diving equipment

dynasty, mainly describes ancient myths, geography, animals, plants, minerals, witchcraft, religion, history, medicines, folks, ethnic, and other aspects) originated from the control of flood by the great father Gun (who is said as grandson of Huang Di) and his son Yu. Gun built dikes to prevent flood. Yet he failed due to the severe flood. He heard that there was a special soil named Xi Rang by which could stop the flood. He took the special soil from the heaven without the permission of the Emperor of Heaven in order to save the people in suffering. The emperor was enraged and killed Gun. Though Gun had been dead for 3 years, his body had not decayed and flew out a dual-horn dragon when the body was cut open. That was said his son Yu who carried on his un-completed mission of flood control. Yu, having learned from the previous failures and investigated the flood characteristics and topography, dredged waterways and irrigation canals and finally succeeded in conquering flood and benefiting the agriculture of many tribes spread far and wide. Yu was so devoted to his work that he did not visit his home for 13 years although he traveled nearby three times. His celebrated contributions won him the respect of people who honored him as "Yu the Great" and God of the soil.

Another myth worth mentioning is about Fuxi and Nüwa from Miao and other tribes which lived along the Yangtze River valley. Fuxi is said the first man who used ropes to make nets for hunting and fishing. In the days of Nüwa, the four pillars supporting the heaven collapsed and the earth cracked with flame spreading wildly, torrential water flooded everywhere and fierce beasts and birds preying on men. She smelted rocks and made five-colored stones to patch up the

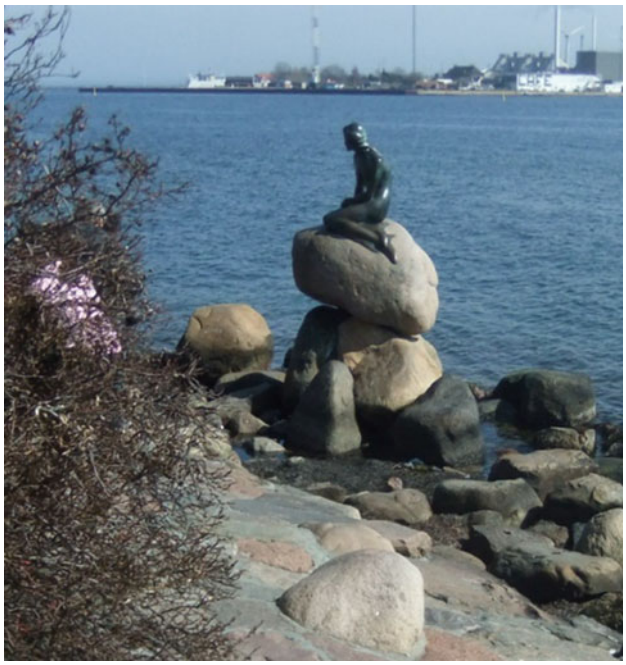


Fig. 2.3 The little mermaid at Langeline in Copenhagen, Denmark is an attractive sightseeing object. The statue is made by the artist Edvard Eriksen, and celebrated in 2013 its 100 year's anniversary, and is still a reminder of the fairy tales from H.C. Andersen with the same name. *Photo* Marit Myhre

heaven and cut the four legs of a huge turtle to prop up the fallen sky. With water and land restored to order and the fierce animals killed, people again lived in peace and happiness. Nüwa in return was regarded as a goddess for her great achievements [1].

For the especially interested, we might recommend the web page http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/list_of_water_deities, where you will find examples of water Gods from 26 different mythologies from all parts of the world.

As mentioned earlier, water is a source of national culture and civilization. Water has inspired authors, poets, and other artists through all times in history, both directly in embracement and disgust, in a bit more indirect descriptions and poetic descriptions about the life by, in, and on water.

It might be interesting to start with the evolution of Chinese script—水(Pinyin: [shuǐ]; English: Water; Latin: Aqua) to introduce water and water-related in Chinese culture.

It is well known that Chinese is a script of ideograms with pronunciation system of Pinyin instead of an alphabetic language. The formation of Chinese characters follows three principles:

Hieroglyphics or the drawing of pictographs—This is the earliest method by which Chinese characters were designed and from which other methods were developed subsequently. The history of using pictographs in China can be traced back to 4500–6400 years ago, which was discovered in Shandong province as an evidence of late Da Wen Kou Culture. The unearthed pottery wine vessels from ancient tombs were found to have characters stylizing pictures of certain physical objects. They are therefore named pictographs. For example, water was written as  stylizing a flowing water, the sun as , and the moon as . These pictographs are easy to understand and are close both in style and structure to the inscriptions on the oracle bones and shells, though they antedate the latter by more than 1000 years.

The evolution of water character is given below from ancient oracle to modern regular script:



http://www.zdic.net/z/1c/js/6C34.htm [2]

This represents a change of water character from Oracle to Bronze inscription, Small seal script and Regular script. Interesting is that from the evolution radical as is derived to stylize things or status of things related to water, which can be very popularly found in Chinese characters, for example:

River as 河[hé] or 江[jiāng]; Sea as 海[hǎi]; Wave as 波涛[bō tāo]; Lake as 湖[hú]; Wet or Humid as 潮湿[cháo shī]; Flow as 流[liú]; Steam as 汽[qì], etc.

The word Han as 汉[hàn] (the Han nationality accounts for 93.3 % of Chinese population at present) with water radical to the left is also the best historical witness of Chinese culture in close relation with water.

When water converges it becomes river as  in oracle stylizing a flowing water, which is somewhat different from the ancient Egyptian water as , symbolizing a still water with ripples. The difference and common in ancient Chinese and Egyptian on water character and the way of thinking and expressing water might be found in the difference in geological conditions of the rivers between China and Egypt.

The second principle: Associative compounds, to combine two or more elements, where each element has its own meaning, to form a new character expressing a new idea. Ice (冰 [bīng]), for example, in bronze inscription is written as , a pictograph or ideograph of water  in an expansive solid state. The change of character of ice is shown below from Bronze inscription to small seal script and regular script, which is derived to stylize cold.



http://www.zdic.net/z/15/zy/51B0.htm [3]

Same as above, a number of characters can be derived to stylize things or status of things related to coldness, for example:

Cold as 寒[hán] or 冷[lěng] or 寒冷[hán lěng]; Piercingly Cold as 凛冽[lǐn liè]; Cool as 凉[liáng] for noun and [liàng] for verb; Dewdrop as 凇[sōng], etc.

The third: Pictophonetics—to create new characters by combining one element indicating meaning and the other sound or pronunciation. For example, as the above-mentioned Dewdrop as 凇[sōng], in which the left radical is related to water in cold situation and thus can be condensed either from steam into liquid or solid state or from liquid into solid state, and the right radical represents the pronunciation of the character. The nice pictures about dewdrop can be found in later chapters.

Other Chinese characters related to water might also be interesting to brief:

Steam: Chinese as 汽[qì], which evolution is shown from Small seal script to Regular script as:



Rain: Chinese as 雨[yǔ], which evolution is shown from Oracle to Bronze inscription, Small seal script and to Regular script as:

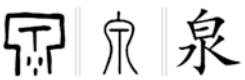


It seems that Rain in oracle is much easier to understand than modern regular script. The pity is that we do not use oracle now.

Snow: Chinese as 雪[xuě], with rain as the upper radical indicating its origin. The evolution is shown from Small seal script to Regular script as:



Spring: Chinese as 泉[quán], the evolution shown below from Oracle to Small seal script and to Regular script stylizes water flowing down from a high place:

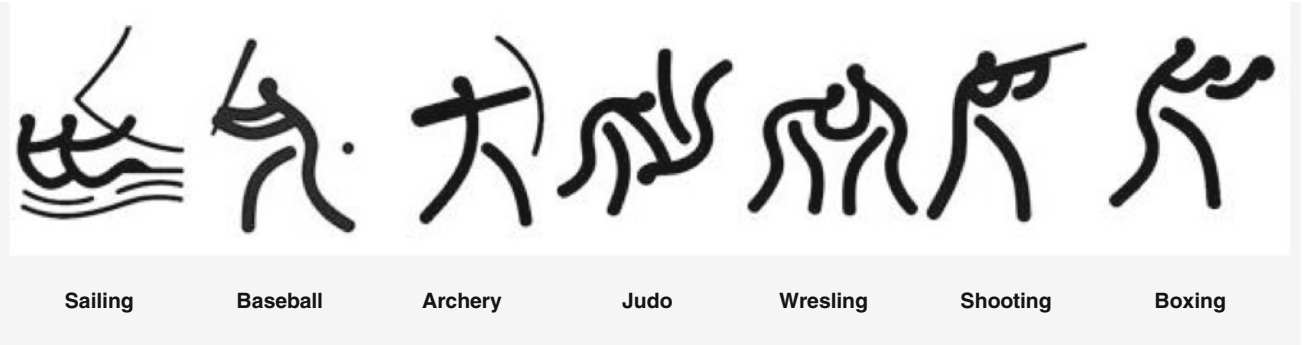


Pictographic signs have also been used for a number of occasions in modern times. Olympic games have used them to symbolize the different events for some time. During the 29th Beijing Summer Olympic Games in 2008 we found Beijing Olympic Games sports icon, being rewarded as the beauty of the Seal Script, used seal character strokes as the basic form. The formation of the icon combined the pictographic charm of Chinese ancient oracle, bronze inscriptions of with simplified feature of modern design—original creativity, fluent and fruity, tempering force with grace, beautiful and elegant, melodious, which showcase a perfect combination of Chinese culture essence with Olympic sports. It, as sports icon, also delicately fits the requirements of easy to recognize, easy to remember and easy to use.

The following are icons of some of the 35 sports for Beijing Summer Olympic Games in 2008, in which we can easily find all the 8 water-related sports.



Canoe/Kayak Slalom | Swimming | Synchronized Swimming | Diving | Water Polo | Rowing | Canoe/Kayak Flat Water



Water has been consistently cited since ancient time in China to symbolize the sublime virtue of a man. This can be seen everywhere, in every dynasty, and are well known in China. We can easily find more than three hundred Chinese idioms that are related to Water if we hit Chinese web search engine BAIDU (http://www.baidu.com). Chinese idioms (中国成语[zhōng guó chéng yǔ]), as one of the priceless legacies deeply rooted in traditional culture with extremely profound implications in them, have been making Chinese language more powerful, functional and thus more fascinating.

The following are some idioms which can reflect Water's virtue and character.

上善若水 [shàng shàn ruò shuǐ]

One of the most famous idioms coming from Chap. 8 of **Tao Te Ching** (**Dao De Jing** in Chinese Pinyin or **Classic of the Way and Virtue** in English) by Laozi (also spelled as Lao-Tzu; Lao-Tze, 600 BC), one of most famous ancient Chinese philosopher, poet and legendary figure of Chinese culture. He is best known as the reputed author of the Tao Te Ching and the founder of philosophical Taoism.

This idiom gives the implication that **the highest level of ethics is like water**, which is beneficial for all things, without striving for fame and gain. It implies a philosophy of human beings which seems to be inactive and yet closest to the **Way of nature**.

Water is Inclusive and Philosophical in Chinese eyes, which can be seen from the idiom as:

海纳百川,有容乃大 [hǎi nà bǎi chuān, yǒu róng nǎi dà]

All rivers run into sea, tolerance brings greatness and respect.

This encourages a virtue of being generous, broad-minded, modest, and tolerant to diversity, which eventually leads to a greater success and power, like water, which is always compatible with land and becomes part of land and with life and becomes part of life and never becomes arrogant for these. Finally, it completes itself as mighty sea surging forward.

Water can temper force with grace and mercy. It looks tender and weak and flexible to form any shape to follow any mold, it is on the other side so determined and persistent, and therefore was reputed by Chinese idiom in Song dynasty during the period of 1127–1276:

绳锯木断,滴水石穿 [shéng jù mù duàn,shuǐ dī shí chuān]

It means that "rope can saw off wood, constant dropping will wear away a stone."

It is not for the force but persistent spirit and effort of water that can fulfill the conquering of hardness with softness. Profound morals is brilliantly shining through this and telling us the truth that persistent quantitative change will lead to the final qualitative change.

Confucius (551–479 BC), the most famous ancient Chinese teacher, editor, politician, and philosopher of the Spring and Autumn period of Chinese history also in his masterpiece, **the Analects**, made a subtle comment on water to connote the swift flying of time:

逝者如斯夫,不舍昼夜 [shì zhě rú sī fú, bù shě zhòu yè]

Time is going on like this river flowing away endlessly day and night.

Confucius also made enlightening remarks in **the Analects** as:

智者乐水,仁者乐山 [zhì zhě yào shuǐ, rén zhě yào shān]

The wise loves rivers but the benevolent loves mountains. It indicates that each has his own likings. This actually comes from Confucius in The Analects which said, "The wise enjoy water, the humane enjoy mountains. The wise are active, the humane are quiet. The wise are happy; the humane live long lives."

Water has very Strong Cohesion and Infinite Capacity. Now we know that the cohesive unity comes from the hydrogen bonding between water molecules. It can float ships and do the opposite. Here is the Chinese idiom about this:

水可载舟,亦可覆舟 [shuǐ kě zài zhōu,yì kě fù zhōu]

As the water can float a boat, so can it capsize it.

This proverb actually refers to **the "power" of the water in two opposite sides**, just like the phrase "The same knife cut bread and finger." It is normally used to connote the relationship between people (as water) and ruling government (as ship) and to advise the importance of serving for people.

More examples of idioms related to sailing on water can be given, such as:

逆水行舟,不进则退 [nì shuǐ xíng zhōu, bú jìn zé tuì]

A boat sailing against the current must forge ahead or it will be driven back.

The most common use of this phrase is that study or learning is like sailing against the current: you keep either foregoing ahead or falling behind, which indicate that we have to strive for the work otherwise we will be laid behind since life and work are not easy;

顺水推舟 [shùn shuǐ tuī zhōu]

It means to push a boat in the direction of the current, more specifically to make use of the favorable current situation to push matters through with little effort;

随波逐流 [suí bō zhú liú]

It means to swim or sail with the stream and implies that one must have one's own opinions and not drift with the current.

Water has power and life, which can be expressed in the Chinese idiom:

流水不腐,户枢不蠹 [liú shuǐ bù fǔ, hù shū bù dù]

Running water is never stale, and a door-hinge is never worm-eaten.

This metaphorizes that exercise regularly can have lasting vitality, vigor and vitality.

大浪淘沙 [dà làng táo shā]

It means mighty wave crashing on a sandy shore, which is often used to describe the growing or screening through fierce competition and the nature's evolution through the principle of survival of the fittest.

Some more interesting idioms are as follows:

水中捞月 [shuǐ zhōng lāo yuè]

Catch the moon in the water, which implies it will be just vain and ineffectual effort if one targets on something that is impossible to succeed no matter how hard you work for;

无源之水,无本之木 [wú yuán zhī shuǐ, wú běn zhī mù]

Water without a source, and a tree without roots

It implies a thing without basis, just like a castle in the air without foundation.

饮水思源 [yǐn shuǐ sī yuán]

When one drinks water, one must not forget where it comes from.

One should be gratitude for the source of benefit or remember past kindness.

Similar idiom like:

滴水之恩当涌泉相报 [dī shuǐ zhī ēn,dāng yǒng quán xiāng bào]

A favor in the size of a drop of water should be repaid with the amount of a surging spring.

覆水难收 [fù shuǐ nán shōu]

Spilled water cannot be gathered up.

It's the same meaning as "It is no use crying over spilt milk."

心如止水 [xīn rú zhǐ shuǐ]

One's mind settles or calm down as still water, a state of mind without any distracting thoughts.

柔情似水 [róu qíng sì shuǐ]

Tender and soft as water

This is normally used to describe the love between man and women—their tender love flows like a stream.

Furthermore, water also exhibits virtue and character as follows:

Water can be just perfect. This can be seen through the transformation for the three phases: solid, liquid and gas. Under atmospheric pressure water can be turned into gas (steam) at 100 °C and ice at 0 °C. The change of water's state under different circumstances implies that there exists a limit for everything under certain conditions and that it is important for us to fully understand and take advantage of this property.

Water is clear, transparent, fair and perfectly open in all one's actions. We like to see fish swimming in clear water, we admire water as it can mirror the truth, kindness and beauty of the world. This is because water has a peaceful heart and can be stored in any vessels no matter it is clay vase or golden cup and fit very well any shape of any container.

Now we know how Chinese think and respect water. Here are two idioms as proof:

君子之交淡如水 [jūn zǐ zhī jiāo dàn rú shuǐ]

The friendship between gentlemen appears indifferent but is pure like water.

This is similar to "A hedge between keeps friendship green."

If this becomes too much and exceeds the limit, it then goes to the opposite:

水至清则无鱼 [shuǐ zhì qīng wú yú]

When the water is very clear, there will be no fish.

This means that "One should not demand absolute purity, otherwise he who is too critical has few friends."

Now we might understand **Water** at least to some extent through the evolution of Chinese characters and idioms associated with water—**a subtle and thought-provoking substance being so simple yet complicated, so soft and peaceful yet powerful, and so unexceptional yet special and even unique**.

Besides, another spectacular Chinese culture with water is the long history of poems on water. People often use poems to express their mind and thinking, their affection and aspiration, and their success and failure. If we log on the Chinese web search engines on famous ancient Chinese Poems (http://www.gushiwen.org/gushi/xue.aspx [4]) we will see from Xianqin period (2100–221 BC) up to Qing Dynasty (1616–1912) tremendous contributions to Water or related. Poems about Rain rank the first in number with 126, followed by snow with 88, water with 67, mountain

and water with 41. We can also find specific number of poems describing Yellow River with 23 and the Yangtze River with 20.

Before that let us start with water to one's daily life. It is known in ancient China that the most luckiest and happiest things in one's life lies in four important moments, among which the first happiness is related to water. The poem can prove this:

Four—Happiness Poem	《四喜诗》 [sì xǐ shī]
to have a welcome rain after a long drought,	久旱逢甘雨, [jiǔ hàn féng gān yǔ]
to run across an old friend in a distant place;	他乡遇故知。 [tā xiāng yù gù zhī]
to spend the wedding night,	洞房花烛夜, [dòng fáng huā zhú yè]
to succeed in the government examination.	金榜挂名时。 [jīn bǎng tí míng shí]

Yes, to have a welcome rain after a long drought, who will not be happy with this?

The first eulogy in Chinese history is《诗经》[shī jīng], the Book of Songs, also known as Three Hundred Poems (诗三百 shī sān bǎi), is the earliest collection of poems in China with a history more than 2500 years, recording a total of 305 poems written in 500 years from the early Western Zhou Dynasty (1100–771 BC) to the middle of the Spring and Autumn Period (770–476 BC). It was said that the great sage Confucius made great contribution to it and used it as a textbook to teach his disciples. So the Book of Songs was not only a general collection of ancient Chinese history and literature books, but also conveyed the spirit of Confucianism. Confucius once said, "One could not talk well without learning the Book of Songs." The Book of Songs exerted a very profound effect on ancient China in terms of politics, culture, language, and thinking. Confucius, a sage of China and who gave a high praise to the Book of Songs, claimed that people's cultures, observation abilities, and interpersonal skills could be highly improved through the study of the Book of Songs.

The Reeds and Rushes (part)	《秦风· 蒹葭》 (节选)
When reeds and rushes grew green,	蒹葭苍苍,
And dews to hoar-frost changed.	白露为霜。
One whom they speak of as "that beauty",	所谓伊人,
Somewhere the river ranged.	在水一方。
Upstream they went in quest of her,	溯洄从之,
A long and toilsome way.	道阻且长。
Downstream they went in quest of her,	溯游从之,
In mid-stream there lay!	宛在水中央。

The Ode to Xizhou (西洲曲 [xī zhōu qǔ]) is the representative work of Folk Songs of the Northern and Southern Dynasties (420–589). The main theme is that the heroine's lover had not come back home, so she went to gather lotus to divert herself from loneliness and boredom. At a distance from the lake, both of them were lovesick apart. Finally, she begged the wind to bring her dream to Xizhou where her lover was staying.

Ode to Xizhou (Extract)	西洲曲(节选)
…When they gather lotus at Nantang in autumn,	…采莲南塘秋,
the lotus blooms are higher than their heads;	莲花过人头。
They stoop to pick lotus seeds,	低头弄莲子,
Seeds as translucent as water.	莲子清如水。
…The waters is beyond the scope of eyesight,	…海水梦悠悠,
You are lovesick, me either…	君愁我亦愁。
The south wind knows my mood,	南风知我意,
It blows my dream to Xizhou.	吹梦到西洲。

A poem with deep significance said like below in cooking peas in the pot:

The story came from the period of Three Kingdoms (220–280) in Chinese history, Cao Pi, the son of King of the Wei State, Cao, came to power. He was said to envy the brilliant talent of his brother Cao Zhi and once requested his brother to complete a poem within seven paces, otherwise he would be executed. The following is said what Cao Zhi did.

Poetizing While Taking Seven Paces by CAO Zhi	《七步诗》 曹植
Pods burn to cook peas,	煮豆燃豆箕,
Peas weep in the pot:	豆在釜中泣。
Grown from the same roots,	本是同根生,
Why boil us so hot?	相煎何太急?

Most of the famous poems related to water happened in Tang Dynasty. Let us enjoy some of them.

Liu Zongyuan (773–819), a well-known statesman and writer in the Tang dynasty and one of the top 8 masters on poetry during the period of Tang and Song Dynasty. The poem below is one of his masterpieces picturing us a solitary but vivid, a rich yet pure imagination.

River Snow by LIU Zongyuan	《江雪》 柳宗元
A thousand mountains without a bird.	千山鸟飞绝,
Ten thousand paths without trace of man.	万径人踪灭。

(continued)

A lonesome boat and an old man in straw raincoat,	孤舟蓑笠翁,
Alone in the snow fishing in the freezing river.	独钓寒江雪。

Note A thousand mountains imply all around mountains; Ten thousand paths imply all paths. The number used here is a metaphor only rather than an exact number

Cen Can (715–770), a well-known poet in the Tang dynasty. His poems are colorful, passionate and full of romanticism, majestic momentum and rich in imagination. The following poem is about making farewell to friend beyond the Great Wall in a snowing day. Magnificent picture of snowing like vivid blooming of pear trees impresses readers with beautiful scenery and the warmth of Spring, which make the poem unique and rich in artistic connotation and imagination.

A Song of White Snow in Farewell to Field-Clerk Wu Going Back Home by CEN Can	《白雪歌送武判官归京》 —岑参
The north wind rolls the white grasses and breaks them,	北风卷地白草折,
Snow sweeps across the Tartar sky in August;	胡天八月即飞雪;
It's like a spring gale coming up at night,	忽如一夜春风来,
Blooming as petals of ten thousand pear trees.	千树万树梨花开。
……	……
We see him off at the east wheel-tower gate,	轮台东门送君去,
Into the snow-mounds of Heaven-Peak Road	去时雪满天山路;
And then he disappears at the turn of the pass,	山回路转不见君,
Leaving behind him only hoof-prints.	雪上空留马行处。

A significant poem from Wang Zhihuan (688–742, Tang Dynasty) related to Yellow River is:

At Heron Lodge by WANG Zhihuan	《登鹳雀楼》 —王之涣
The shiny sun sets by mountains,	白日依山尽,
The Yellow River converges into the ocean;	黄河入海流。
If you wish to widen your view by thousands of miles,	欲穷千里目,
The best way is to go up to a higher floor.	更上一层楼。

This is a poetry by famous poet Wang Zhihuan on climbing higher for a look into a far distance, which implies that "For a grander sight, strive for further improvement." This has become a motto in China for the pursuit of the ideal state.

Li Bai has been titled as the lead among the top 8 poets during the period of Tang and Song Dynasty. He had many poems praising the Yangtze River, Yellow River, etc. The following are only typical part of them selected.

Bringing in the Wine (Extract) by LI Bai	《将进酒》(节选) —李白
See how Yellow River is pouring down like from heaven,	君不见黄河之水天上来,
Running forward to the ocean and never to return.	奔流到海不复回。
See how parents lament their gray hairs before bright mirror,	君不见高堂明镜悲白发,
How time flies as if the black hair in morning had changed by night to white. ……	朝如青丝暮成雪。……

Again in this poem water is compared with time for their commonality of going forward with no return, which implies a proposal to treasure, enjoy and make good use of the present time.

A Farewell to Meng Haoran on His Way to Guangling (Yangzhou) by LI Bai	《送孟浩然之广陵》 —李白
You have left me behind, old friend, at the Yellow Crane Terrace,	故人西辞黄鹤楼,
On your way to visit Yangzhou in the misty March of flowers;	烟花三月下扬州。
Your sail, a single shadow disappears at the far end of blue sky,	孤帆远影碧空尽,
Till now I see only the Yangtze River on its way to horizon.	惟见长江天际流。

One of China's most famous female poets Li Qingzhao (1084–1155, Song Dynasty) had her home near hot springs in Ji'nan, capital city of Shandong Province. Water topics are found in quite a few of her poems. The poem, or perhaps better the song as follows describes a fascinating scenery near the water and follows a special rhythm and a pattern originating from the Tang Dynasty, which was fully developed during the Song Dynasty:

Ru Meng Ling · Always Remember the Sunset over the pavilion by the river by LI Qingzhao	如梦令·常记溪亭日暮 —李清照
I always remember the sunset over the pavilion by the river,	常记溪亭日暮,

(continued)

So tipsy, we could not find our way home.	沉醉不知归路。
Our interest exhausted, the evening late, we tried to turn the boat homeward.	兴尽晚回舟,
By mistake, we entered deep within the lotus bed.	误入藕花深处。
Row! Row the boat!	争渡,争渡,
A flock of herons, frightened, suddenly flew skyward.	惊起一滩鸥鹭。

In one of her last poems, she was very melancholic. Mostly, it is due to the sudden big change of her family.

- The English and Chinese versions look like this [5]:

Qing Ping Yue • Year by Year while It Snows LI Qingzhao	清平乐•年年雪里 李清照
Year by year while it snows,	年年雪里,
I often gather plum flowers,	常插梅花醉,
Being intoxicated with their beauty and fondling them impudently	掇尽梅花无好意,
I got my robe wet with their lucid tears.	赢得满衣清泪!
Having drifted to the corner of the sea and the edge of the horizon this year,	今年海角天涯,
My temples have turned gray.	萧萧两鬓生华。
Judging by the gust of the evening wind,	看取晚来风势,
It is unlikely I will again enjoy the plum blossoms.	故应难看梅花。

And a Norwegian version of the poem (Fig. 2.4):

År for år, i snøen,
har jeg ofte samlet plommeblomster,
og blitt beruset av deres skjønnhet
og funnet dem uforskammende,
Fordi kjolen ble våt av deres klare tårer.
I år er jeg drevet til et hjørne
av sjøen, og til enden
av horisonten
Mine tinninger har blitt grå.
Vurdert fra kastene av kveldsvinden,
er det ikke sannsynlig at jeg igjen
vil glede med over plommeblomstringen

Finally, a modern poem is selected and has been regarded as one of the most famous poem with great momentum. It was written by Mao Zedong (also Mao Tse-tung, 1893–1976), the former Chairman of China in last century. He, besides as one of the most remarkable political leaders of the 20th century, has also been well recognized as a poet, calligrapher, and writer (Fig. 2.5).

Qin Yuan Chun: Snow (Extract) by Mao Zedong	沁园春《雪》(节选) —毛泽东
What magnificent northern scenery! Thousands of miles of land sealed by ice, Whirling snow fluttered across ten thousands of miles land.	北国风光, 千里冰封, 万里雪飘。
Watching both side of the Great Wall, Only a vast expanse of whiteness left; The upstream and downstream of Yellow River, Freeze its swift current.	望长城内外, 惟馀莽莽; 大河上下, 顿失滔滔。
The mountains dance like silver snakes. The ups and downs of plateau extends like white running elephants. Wishing to compete with the sky in height.	山舞银蛇, 原驰蜡象, 欲与天公试比高。
Till a fine day, The land cladded in white and adorned in red Looks more enchanting. …	须晴日, 看红妆素裹, 分外妖娆。 …

It is possibly only in the drinking songs that direct contempt is shown for water. However, we find this in a famous Norwegian student song; *D'er liddeli flaut (It is very insipid*



Fig. 2.4 The Chinese poet Qing Zhao (Li Qingzhao) lived in a small town in the Shandong Province in China–Bamai, and there we find a museum to her memory in a park with hot springs. This picture of her is located in the museum, and even the picture has a lot of water poetry

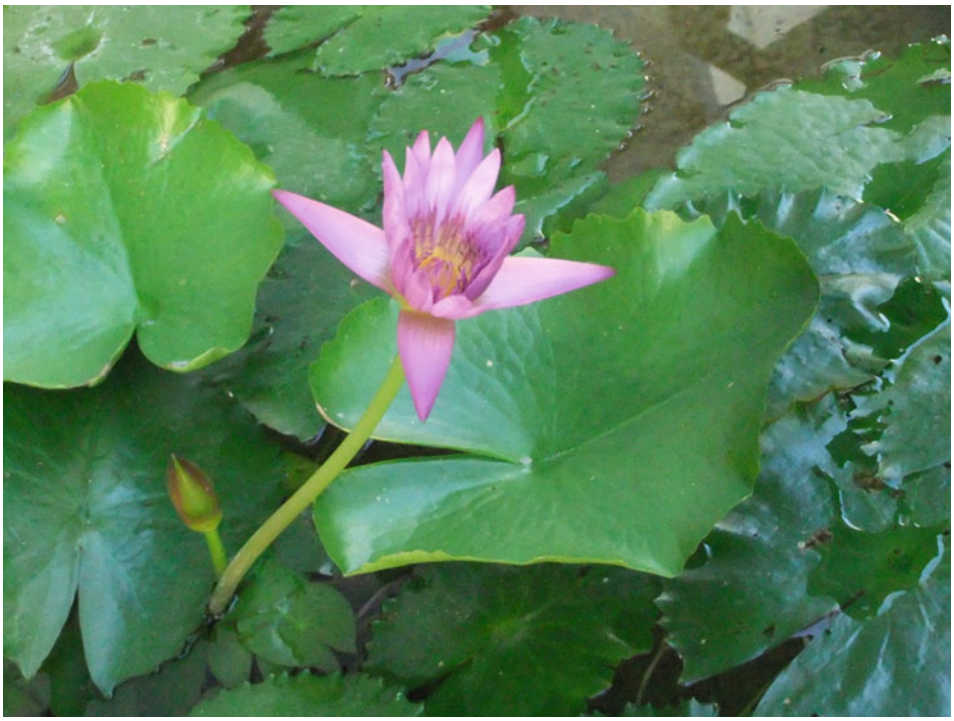


Fig. 2.5 Water lilies, is also called the nix-rose, is poetry itself and a popular subject in a lot of water poetry

to drink only water.) However, it the third verse we also there find respect for water;

> Engang holdt jeg på å krepere i Saharas ørkenland, (Once I nearly died in Sahara's desert sand)
> Jeg tok det som en mann, (I handled it as a man)
> Skjønt jeg lå på gravens rand (Even if I was on the edge of death).
> Hvor jeg snudde hue, så jeg bare himmel, sol og sand, (Where I turned my head, it was only sky, sun and sand)
> Jeg skjønte jo sjæl (I finally understood)
> Jeg tørsta i hjæl, (I was dying of thirst)
> Da var det jeg ba om litt vann! (Then I asked for some WATER)
> REF: Det er liddeli flaut da gitt å drikke bare vann, (It is no good to drink only water)
> Men blanda med Whisky kan det jo til nød gå an… (But mixed with whisky is OK)

The topic, however, is not only for student songs. Mark Twain shall have said; *Whisky is for drinking. Water is to fight for.*

More salty pleasures, and praise for water that is found in old seamen songs, in particular when they tell about the old sail ship era, is not hard to find.

The salty and simple respect to water in the first chapter Jack London's book *The cruise of the* "*Snark*," is hard to find better described. We can nearly feel the water in our hair;

> Possibly, the proudest achievement of my life, my moment of highest living, occurred when I was seventeen. I was in a three-masted schooner off the coast of Japan. We were in a typhoon. All hands had been on deck most of the night. I was called from my bunk at seven in the morning to take the wheel. Not a stitch of canvas was set. We were running before it under bare poles, yet the schooner fairly tore along. The seas were all of an eighth of a mile apart, and the wind snatched the whitecaps from their summits, filling. The air so thick with driving spray that it was impossible to see more than two waves at a time. The schooner was almost unmanageable, rolling her rail under to starboard and to port, veering and yawing anywhere between south-east and south-west, and threatening, when the huge seas lifted under her quarter, to broach to. Had she broached to, she would ultimately have been reported lost with all hands and no tidings.
>
> I took the wheel. The sailing-master watched me for a space. He was afraid of my youth, feared that I lacked the strength and the nerve. But when he saw me successfully wrestle the schooner through several bouts, he went below to breakfast. Fore and aft, all hands were below at breakfast. Had she broached to, not one of them would ever have reached the deck. For 40 min I stood there alone at the wheel, in my grasp the wildly careering schooner and the lives of twenty-two men. Once we were pooped. I saw it coming, and, half-drowned, with tons of water crushing me, I checked the schooner's rush to broach. At the end of the hour, sweating and played out, I was relieved. But I had done it! With my own hands I had done my trick at the wheel and guided a hundred tons of wood and iron through a few million tons of wind and waves [6].

If not more salty, but at least as painting and dramatic, and a little more mythological is Alistair Maclean's gale description in *H.M.S. Ulysses*, where he in Chap. 6 *Tuesday Night,* describes what he calls *the worst storm of the war.* He writes [7];

> …At 2230, the Ulysses crossed the Arctic Circle. The monster struck.
>
> It struck with a feral ferocity, with an appalling savagery that smashed minds and bodies into a stunned unknowingness. Its claws were hurtling rapiers of ice that slashed across a man's



Fig. 2.6 Not "praam through the forests", but praam in the forest, which the spring is about to melt to the surface from its wintry hiding place in ice and snow, Sem Lake, Asker, Norway

> face and left it welling red: its teeth were that sub-zero wind, gusting over 120 knots, that ripped and tore through the tissue paper of Arctic clothing and sunk home to the bone: its voice was the devil's orchestra, the roar of a great wind mingled with the banshee shrieking of tortured rigging, a requiem for fiends: its weight was the crushing power of the hurricane wind that pinned a man helplessly to a bulkhead, fighting for breath, or flung him off his feet to crash in some distant corner, broken-limbed and senseless. Baulked of prey in its 500-mile sweep across the frozen wastes of the Greenland ice-cap, it goaded the cruel sea into homicidal alliance and flung itself, titanic in its energy, ravenous in its howling, upon the cockleshell that was the "Ulysses". …

But not only in the stormy seas and even in the most earthlike situations poets has found associations to the water world to express their views. Nobel literature prize winner Knut Hamsun in his book *Markens grøde* (The crop of the soil) tells about the main character Isak Sellanrå *that he walks like a pram through the forests* (Fig. 2.6).

We also include some water fascination from other Asian classic literature. Sei Shonagon was probably born about in year 963. She was a lady-in—waiting at the Court of the Japanese Emperor. Her father was a provincial bureaucrat, but best known as a poet and scholar. Sei Shonagon got a writing book from a Captain at the Royal Court. The book was used as a pillow. The notebook was filled with her observation and happenings, often very critical from her viewpoint at the Court. Not at least she is commenting on what she thinks is good or bad behavior. The book has later been named "The Pillow Book" [8].

In note number 84 she is thrilled and a bit wondering about some water observations:

> I remember a Clear Morning..
>
> I remember a clear morning in the Ninth Month when it had been raining all night. Despite the bright sun, dew was still dripping from the chrysanthemums in the garden. On the bamboo fences and the criss-cross hedges I saw tatters of spider webs, and where the threads were broken the raindrops hung on them like strings of white pearls. I was greatly moved and delighted.
>
> As it became sunnier, the dew gradually vanished from the clover and the other plants where it had lain so heavily; the ranches began to stir, then suddenly sprang up of their own accord. Later I described to people how beautiful it all was. What most impressed me was that they were not at all impressed (Fig. 2.7).

The falling snow triggers the imagination and creates association to all of us, and the poets might put the associations into beautiful verse lines with music in the rhythm of the lines, often with some melancholic undertones. Many poets have taken the inspiration and the opportunity of the falling snow as for example the Norwegian poet Arne Paasche Aasen that created the poem *Nysne faller (New snow falling).* To translate the poem to another language would give unforgivable discredit to the original—but he fabulizes about the new snow that falls and creates a blanket on the fields and the hills. The mildness of the soft landscape, the peacefulness of the snow landscape, the white star like view both from the sky and the ground, how the snow creates the special silence, how the snow creates loneliness



Fig. 2.7 It is snowing again, and the contours soften—and quietness is sinking down over the landscape. From the Sem Lake in Asker, Norway

and the bring the mind towards the wondering of the meaning of life.

In the introduction to the short story *Det snør og snør (It snows and snows)*, the author Tarjei Vesaas gives a snowfall description about the endlessness and the hopeless feeling a heavy snowfall can give:

> It snows and snows over the plains-in an endless infinity. Not a living three. A house can be seen, only one, and it gets smaller every hour, and soon it has slowed down.
>
> Around the house the snow piles are growing. Silent and light it comes down,—the snow stars are filling the roof. No weight at all—but in the end the roof beams will crack under the heavy load.
>
> It goes on for days, where the grayness is filling the vision. It does not change; there is no end to the weather any longer. As it snows no, will it snow forever… (Fig. 2.8)



Fig. 2.8 Snow winter, Asker, Norway

Snow can also inspire to more grotesque poetry. The Norwegian author Andre Bjerke in 1958 published a collection of limericks. In translation, one of the poems sounds about like this:

> A snow landscape painter from Rody
> he painted the snow picture so the
> picture was artistically true
> and next day they do
> recover his ice-frozen body

The skill to mirror the reality, in a quiet lake or fiord can be a considerable inspiration (Figs. 2.9 and 2.10).

It looks like most rivers have given inspiration to painters and poets. Through the city of Oslo runs a small river, only a bit more than 8 km long and with a total fall of 149 m. This little river was very important for the development of the Norwegian Capital with energy to industry that later has become important companies, and it has also given inspiration to the artists that have been living in the city. Painters like Fritz Thaulow and Edvard Munch has painted from the river and quite a few poets have described the life along the river. Most inhabitants of Oslo probably know a verse from one of the songs about the river (Figs. 2.11, 2.12, 2.13 and 2.14).

Few things are as simple as water. Still, water with all its many faces and phases is sometimes complicated and difficult to grasp. Few have performed this complexity in Joni Mitchell's beautiful song better than Roger Whitaker [9];

> I've looked at clouds from both sides now.
> From up and down, and still somehow
> It's clouds illusions I recall.
> I really don't know clouds at all.



Fig. 2.9 The Ice Fiord, Møre and Romsdal County—a quiet spring day. The fiord is a perfect mirror



Fig. 2.10 Turned upside-down, the mirror picture might be just as realistic as the original



Fig. 2.11 The river through Oslo, Akerselva—at its beginning the Maridal Lake a sunny day in March. The water is now clean so there is good sight to the bottom



Fig. 2.12 In Nydalen, a former industrial area, the new buildings are architectural attempted to fit in with the old industry buildings to form a charming environment. Also the river picture has been taken care of and cleaned up, both visually and sound wise



Fig. 2.13 "Nidelven stille og vakker du er, her hvor jeg går og drømmer" (Nidelven, quiet and beautiful you are)—is the verse of a beautiful little tune. About the river that runs through the city of Trondheim in Norway. Even on a day in January, where the typical Trondheim weather is changing from blue sky to windy snow, where the snow ice comes at you nearly horizontal—it is beautiful and quiet along the river. The Cathedral—Nidarosdomen—on the other bank adds a melancholic dimension to the river view

We also bring with us typical marine expressions into the daily language, and let them express associated meanings, even if they do not necessarily have anything to do with water or the sea. Here are some examples:

Anchor	Gallion figures	Lantern
Armada	Grogg	Navigate
Ballast	Harbor	Propeller
Broadside	Virgin trip	Sail
Brigg	Caravel	Skipper
For full sail	Collisions course	Set course
Free harbor	Command bridge	Wave
Galeas	Convoi	

Water creates ideas, fantasy, illusions, and joy. The Norwegian newspaper VG Weekend in September 2012 [10], asked children in a kindergarten in Bergen: What is most fun with rain?

Boy 4 years: *It's fun to play with water. I use to make a river, and then I put water in it. I use sand to make the river, and dig it out, and then the water runs down the river.*



Fig. 2.14 Moscow at the end of November, 2011, photo from the window of Crown Plaza World Trade Centre Hotel before dawn while the sky was in sapphire blue, the beautiful Moscow river winds through and separates the Hotel Ukrain and Federal Government office building, which composes a harmonious picture. The moving cloud and bright vehicle lane can also be shown under long time exposure

Girl 5 years: *I'm bicycling in the rain, at full speed into the water dams. And then we are sliding better in the rain. We have a slide behind the house in the kindergarten. Have plenty of clothes on. It is fastest in rainy weather.*

Boy 5 years: *I make a volcano, with lots of sand, and there must be a hole in the top. Then I make a line downwards with my spade. I have two friends, because we really need 3 buckets, and we poor a lot of water in the volcano. The water is the lava that runs down all the sides.*

Girl 5 years: *The funniest is to have bucket and spade and water in the bucket. Then I make a coffee party. But no one can really drink it.*

Boy 4 years: *I play in a pond. There is always a water pond down the road from our house. I throw stones into it, and the splashing is fantastic.*

Water has not only inspired authors and poets, but of course also painters, photographers and other artists. We just take a short trip to Japan and to a few artists that was pioneers in their field in general, and in expressing water in particular.

The Japanese wood block print master, or rather Ukio-e artist Utagawa Hiroshige, Better known as Ando **Hiroshige** (1797–1858), was a pioneer in a number of areas regarding landscape painting, not at least with respect to creating perspective, depth, and also rain and snow in his paintings. The French painter van Gogh even tried to copy on of his rain prints—evening rain over the large bridge in Atake. Of Hiroshiges many prints, probably most well known are the series; *53 stations on Tokaido*. The print series has 55 prints from the road from Edo (Tokyo today) to the old capital til



Fig. 2.15 Print number 46 from Ando Hiroshige's Tokaido-series, Shono



Fig. 2.16 Ando Hiroshiges "Moonshine over Kazawa"

Kyoto. The 55 pictures describe stops on the road, plus the Nihonbashi—the bridge into Edo and the Saga bridge in Kyoto. In the series that was made in 1832 (some say 1833) there are 4 rain—or snow—pictures. In connection with an exhibition in Tokyo in 2000, a Tokyo newspaper claimed that these 4 prints had values 2–4 times the other print (Fig. 2.15).

Probably, the best known of the few triptych prints that Hiroshige made is *Moonshine over Kazawa (1858).* Possibly with the exemption of the foreground, this print could have been a very nice expression of a summer night somewhere along the Norwegian coast. What we find most fascinating with the picture is the simplicity in the color design with the indigo color dominant in the fine and genius description of a summer night by the water. Symbolically, the water that dominates the picture in a proportion that is approximately the same as water dominates the globe in total (Fig. 2.16).

The great Japanese master of wood block prints/Ukioe Katsushika, also Tetsuzo **Hokusai** (1760–1849), born in Tokitaro Kawamura, is probably best known his series *63 views of Mount Fuji.* Some of the prints that has received most acclamation are "*Red Fuji*" and "*Great wave at Kanagawa*".

The wave from Kanagawa (print number 19 in the series), with its monster claws has made school for painter regarding water illustrations all over the world. The way Hokusai illustrates the underside of the wave and how the monster wave with its claws is about to swallow the two small boats with its men is unique, not only for nearly 200 years ago, but also today (Fig. 2.17, 2.18 and 2.19).



Fig. 2.17 Katsushika Hokusai's "The wave from Kanagawa" (also called "Monster wave outside the coast of Kawagawa"), with Mount Fuji in the background



Fig. 2.18 Hokusai repeated the dragon claws in another print in the series, #41, From Kajikazawa, Kai Province. The fisherman on the top of the cliff is handling his net in some impressive waves



Fig. 2.19 Hokusai's Red Fuji. Print #45 in the series—Mount Fuji in clear weather and light wind, mostly known as "Red Fuji" has little liquid water in it, but it has clouds and the snow. This is also part of a holistic glimpse into fabulous 200 years old woodblock print



Fig. 2.20 Water statue, Solar de Mateus, Duero Valley, Portugal



Fig. 2.21 This is also water, a special water as teardrop for praying for peace and commemorating the dead, sitting beside the Wall of Peace built inside the Lmjingak near DMZ, Korea with stones from 86 battlefields of 64 countries around the world

Examples about how water has been inspiration for sculptures are numerous, and are partly covered by other chapters. Here we just give an example just to remind about it (Fig. 2.20).

Water is often used for expressing human's thinking, feeling, mode, and so forth. For instance, a special water as teardrop means a lot for mankind, this is evidenced by the picture below in Seoul, Korea (Fig. 2.21).

A mythological water phenomenon that has inspired many artists is the Nix. The stories about the Nix are found in many varieties, but mainly the Nix figure is a male character that lives in water. Often we connect him with small, dark, and mysterious lakes, but the Nix figure has also been connected to brooks and rivers, larger inland lakes, and sometimes he also pops up in fiords. The Nix stories are wandering stories that has got their local colors from



Fig. 2.22 At the tourist location Huso in Hemsedal in Norway, Torbjørn Rustberggaard has made a Nix-centre to remind about the legends. *Photo* Torbjørn Rustbergard

fantastic people over time. One theory is that the Nix stories were created to scare children to keep them away from dangerous water sources.

An older dictionary tells that the Nix is a water God that is found in rivers and lakes and that can show himself as a man, a timber log or a horse. He is mean and try to fool people to the water to drown. He is particularly dangerous just after sunset.

The Nix character is found all over Northern Europe, and it is claimed that also the mermaids, the sirens and the virgins in the Rhine is a female variety of the same character.

The Nix has many names. In German—På tysk der Nix, der Neck der Nöck. In Swedish—näck, neck or stömkarl, In Danish—nøkke or åmand, In Norwegian—nøkken, nøkk, nykk, nykkj, and also fossegrim, fossekall and kvernkall.

The fantasy has been great among storytellers and artists describing the Nix.

The Norwegian painter Theodor Kittelsen has made a famous picture of a rusky head of a monster with shiny eyes in a dark little lake with rings in the water around. The picture was made around 1892 and is hanging in the Norwegian national gallery. For those who have seen this picture, they will have an imagination of the Nix for life (Fig. 2.22).

The Nix has also sometimes taken place in characters like white horses or fiddlers. The common part is that the Nix tries to fool people, and often children, to the water to drown. Most often this happens just after sunset. Persuading fiddle or harp music in quiet nights is often an ingredient in the stories.

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