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I have a particular experience of the activity of thread-winding: I remember that when I was small, playing most happily with my friends, my mother suddenly called me to her saying: "Help me hold the skeins: I have to wind thread into balls." At that time, whether for darning clothes or knitting a sweater, all thread had first to be wound into balls. At that age, for a child to stand so still for so long was really like a kind of tortuous punishment. My mother herself could have no idea that such activity would leave such a deep impression imprinted in my mind. When I grew up, I discovered that I had a particular feeling for raw cotton thread, and that looking back, I had ambiguous but fond memories of this "tortuous" activity of thread-winding. I found that I actually wanted to relive the experience.

It was thus that I selected this activity, to bind up every kind of household object with thread. In the beginning it really was a kind of torture. I was continually telling myself to give it up. Eventually I became accustomed to it. Each day I would bind a little, every day the same. I became calm, composed. In this way, my concept of "torture" changed. Was it me that was being "tortured", or was I actually "torturing" myself?

In reality, all women have experience of this kind of torture. There's no escaping this in life, for a new kind of "torture" will always be found lying in wait around the corner: the more you try to extricate yourself, the more tangled up you become.

During ten years of bouncing back and forth between Beijing and New York, it became very easy for me to compare lifestyles old and new, especially with regard to the objects most prevalent in daily life that we all see every day. Old-fashioned woks, large iron pans, coal stoves, sewing machines, thimbles, ladles, back-scratchers, knitting needles, pickling bottles, pots for decocting medicine, all such things have been replaced by modern inventions like spark lighters, juicers, electric ovens, microwaves, etc. The impression that such old-fashioned utensils conjure of a natural, familiar, harmonious way of life, is being crushed by the concept of a modern lifestyle. New values negate old ones, and at the same time make it very difficult for people to make rational judgements and choices about them. I too, find it all confusing, so I simply bound all these things up. Whether old or modern, the process of wrapping all these things up in thread makes it impossible to use them, denying both their identity and their ultimate function.