Amendment 22, first sentence: No person shall be elected to the office of the President more than twice, and no person who has held the office of President, or acted as President, for more than two years of a term to which some other person was elected President shall be elected to the office of the President more than once.

Monkeys are smart and intuitive animals, and back in ancient China, they served their masters well…to a point. There was an old Chinese man who lived at the foot of a mountain, and he relied on his monkeys for his survival. Each morning as the day began, he would summon his “troops” and order them to go up into the mountains to gather fruit for his and their sustenance. The rule was simple. Collect fruit. Give the monkey master one tenth of the day’s pickings or be brutally beaten. One day, while on their mission, one of the younger monkeys allowed his curiosity to embolden him to ask a question of the others. “My fellow monkeys,” he began, “ Did the monkey master plant the trees and bushes from which we gather fruit?” His comrades answered collectively, “No.” “Then isn’t it true that we are free to pick the fruit for ourselves, and if so, why must we serve the old monkey master? After all, we spend all of our time either caged by him or searching for fruit for him. Clearly, we have proven we can fend for ourselves.” With that simple question, the monkeys heaved a collective sigh and realized that the young monkey had a new and fresh point of view. There really was no good reason why the monkey tribe had to be locked up, forced to serve a cruel master, and possibly suffer from the brutality of not complying with his wishes. That night, when all was seemingly quiet, the monkeys worked together to destroy their constraints. They tore down the walls of their cage, grabbed their bounty, and fled to the mountains where they were free to pick the fruit and live their lives unfettered by the rules of the old guard. The old monkey master, so out of tune with those who served him, eventually died of starvation.

The 22nd Amendment to the United States Constitution was ratified in 1951 and had its roots in the early history of our young nation. Some say that George Washington chose not to seek a third term as a means to support our founding fathers who firmly believed that, as Thomas Jefferson had confessed, “If some termination to the services of the chief Magistrate (or President) be not fixed by the Constitution, or supplied by practice, his office, nominally four years, will in fact become for life.” To the citizens of our young nation, the thought of having a leader for life was the last thing they wanted for their new country. After all, they just fought a bitter war to be free of the constraints and hierarchy found in countries ruled by monarchs. No President of **these** United States would have even the slightest chance to lead for life. Many of the early Presidents such as James Madison and James Monroe believed in the same two-term limitation on the Presidency. Franklin D. Roosevelt was the only President to serve three terms, but given the circumstances surrounding his tenure, namely the struggles and hardships everyone experienced during World War II, it was believed that continuity of strength and morale was of the utmost importance during such extraordinarily difficult times.

The Chinese philosopher Liu Ji offered the fable of the Monkey Master as a parable to illustrate the dangers of complacency in a leadership that does not adapt with the times. It teaches us that eventually, there will be a public outcry for justice and change. It is imperative that whoever is elected as the President of the United States has a fresh viewpoint, empathy and compassion for all citizens while being fully aware of the contemporary issues of the country and world around him. The Constitution of the United States provides an organic context within which we are all served as democratically as possible. It is also essential, as is provided by the Constitution, that the office of President of the United States provides a platform for governmental leadership that adapts to the needs of the people and the time at hand.