



PEN for Freedom

A Quarterly Journal of Literary Translations

No. 1

Independent Chinese PEN Center

Spring 2010

Special Issue for 50th Anniversary of Writers in Prison Committee of International PEN

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This issue is edited in cooperation with Sydney PEN Center

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A Little Mouse in Prison and Other Poems

By LIU Xiaobo and LIU Xia

LIU Xiaobo's Poetry

A Little Mouse in Prison

- For Little Xia

A little mouse crawled through the iron bars
And paced nervously on my windowsill.
The worn walls watched him.
The mosquitoes full of blood watched him.
He drew even heaven's silver light
And seemed to fly.
This kind of beauty is rare.

Tonight, the mouse is a dapper gentleman.
Not eating,
Nor drinking,
Nor aimlessly chattering.
His wide-eyed stare is that of a traitor as
He walks in the moonlight.

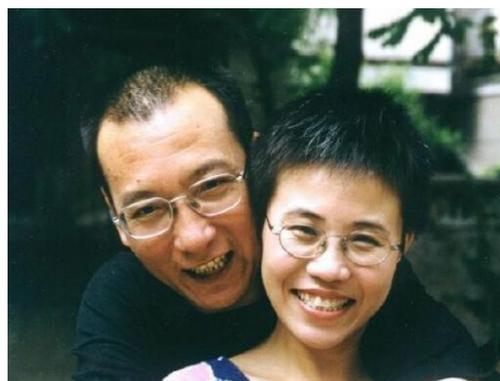
1999.5.26

Longing to Escape

- For My Wife

I would toss aside the pretense of martyrdom
To lie humbly at your feet.
This, saving death, is my one true duty.
Then my heart would be as a mirror,
Reflecting everlasting happiness.

Your toe could not snap.
As a cat surreptitiously followed you,
I tried to drive it away.
Instead, it turned around to me,
Claws outstretched.
In the depth of its blue eyes
There appeared a prison;



If I stepped out blindly,
Even just a step,
I would be turned into a fish.

1999.8.12

A Letter is Just Enough

—**For Xia**

A letter is just enough
For me to transcend it all
To speak with you.

As the wind blew,
The night with its own blood
Wrote down its secrets
Whispering to me to remember,
Every word is my last word.

Your body like ice
Melted into fiery myth
While the executioner's gaze
Hardened to stone.

Two rails unexpectedly overlap.
A moth follows your shadow,
As it flutters toward the light.

2000.1.8

(Above translated by Lindsey Purdy)

Daybreak

for Xia

over the tall ashen wall, between
the sound of vegetables being chopped
daybreak's bound, severed,
dissipated by a paralysis of spirit

what is the difference

between the light and the darkness
that seems to surface through my eyes'
apertures, from my seat of rust
I can't tell if it's the glint of chains
in the cell, or the god of nature
behind the wall
daily dissidence
makes the arrogant
sun stunned to no end

daybreak a vast emptiness
you in a far place
with nights of love stored away

6. 30. 1997

(Translated by Jeffrey Yang)

Original texts in Chinese can be found at http://www.boxun.com/hero/liuxb/370_1.shtml

LIU Xia's Poetry

One Bird after Another

We saw it
A little reflection left on the glass
It had been printed there for a long time without leaving...

Every year on July 15 of the lunar calendar
The river would be covered with water lanterns
But they could not call back your soul...

The train heading for the concentration camp
Sobbingly ran over my body
But I could not hold your hand...

(Translated by Yu ZHANG)

Original texts in Chinese can be found at http://www.boxun.com/hero/liuxb/370_1.shtml

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***Dr. LIU Xiaobo**, literary critic, politic commentator and human rights activist, Honorary President of Independent Chinese PEN Center and its President in 2003-2007, was held under residential surveillance by Beijing Public Security Bureau since 8 December 2008 and then formally arrested on 23 June 2009, sentenced to 11 years imprisonment on “inciting subversion of the state power” for his participation in drafting Charter 08 and publishing 6 articles on December 25, 2009. He is also an Honorary Member of German PEN and Sydney PEN.*

***LIU Xia**, the wife of Liu Xiaobo, is an artist and poet.*

Random Thoughts on Poetry

By LI Hong



1. Great Poets

The old saying "Poetic art is beyond poetry" still makes sense today. A poet can fly at will in his inner world. However, so as to fly much freer, he has to face the reality very often.

In my opinion, those poets who can go through "the inner world and reality" in a brave and graceful way are great poets, such as Czesław Miłosz.

2. Quality of Poetry

As we are at "Poetic Time Waves" magazine, we have to discuss poetry itself, about the spiritual and artistic qualities of poetry itself.

Poetry Forum is not a grocery store, not Hyde Park in London, and certainly not a literary draining channel for people to discharge. Since the abolition of imperial examination system, poetry is no longer a step for climbing up the social ladder; it does not bring fame to your life any more; it cannot make the emperors or leaders listen to you; it will not assist you to the mastery of swords to keep the world in peace. Poetry is just poetry itself, which has come back to its own self long before. However, poetry can sometime just be a waste of time to you and me, merely a pleasure to entertain ourselves before the computer.

If you are lofty in spirits and outstanding in strategies, you can write anything you like, such as essays, diaries, thesis, proposals, speeches, defending speeches, prayer speeches and even criticizing posters. However, if you claim you are writing poems, someone may try to put them against poetic standards to find faults out of them. It is not strange at all.

For months after coming up to this Forum, I have a deep feeling that there is an absence of poetry criticism in us (I mean the real criticism, not a phenomenon unique to this Forum) and the abnormality of the criticizing atmosphere as well.

It is easier to spoil a poet but hard to nourish one! Blind praises sometime can only direct a poet to a wrong track even further; and at the same time, wake-up comments, on the contrary, seem out-of-date and even bring hatred.

When improvisational works attract an expanse of praise, first of all, the poet himself must have basic vigilance and self-knowledge; and at the meantime, we, as true friends, must be cautious (as the stuff put on the Forum is huge, we may not have enough time to have a careful reading. As a consequence, it would be an easy way to follow with praises).

It is the same case to some of my writings. As they were written twenty years ago, I always

look forward to solid and in-depth criticisms, even a total negation. I am always expecting such sincere criticisms.

Sometimes blind praises are more doubtable and even dreadful than condemnations. Condemning or praising, who can escape by sheer luck?

The absence of criticism may often make us lose direction, and so does it do to the poetry of an era, a poetry forum and even a poet. As a staff of the online forum, I fully understand and cherish your good intentions. However, when a phenomenon or a certain atmosphere is pervasive but no conscious comments are heard, that would be a discouragement to some real poets.

3. Adoration to poetry

At present, there is not so much which is adorable to us Chinese people. We only adore Buddha, Jesus Christ, music, motherland, mother, love and our undiscardable poor poetry.

Talking about adoration reminds me of a scene in my childhood (several years after the start of the Great Cultural Revolution). The mother of one of my classmates, once a daughter of the owner of the biggest silk factory in Hangzhou City and a graduate of parochial girls' school, felt pity that her son had nothing to read and brought out two old books with trepidation from her old suitcase. One book was *Eugene Onegin*, and the other was Selected Poems by Heine. That classmate and I spent several weeks copying these two books. In those days, piety and adoration, brought about by ignorance and fear and never wiped out for the whole life, were engraved in depth of the hearts of two adolescents.

For adoration, there should be at first an existence of a sacred pure land in the inner world. Jia Baoyu talked to his servant: "the word 'girl' is extremely noble and extremely pure. You are not allowed to utter this word with your stinky mouths and tongues. However, if you have to mention it, you must rinse your mouths first with clean water or fragrant tea." What we adore can be different, but we have to admit that this kind of psychological characteristic of adoration is absent in Chinese people.

Adoration is not obedience to reality, but conviction to Gods; it is not a bow to merits and benefits, but an upward quest with no purpose to seek. Jia Baoyu considered girls as water, saying "Girls are bones and flesh made of water while men are bones and flesh made of mud. I feel clean and clear at sight of girls, but stinky at sight of men." We should not sneer at such remarks. I know this is the best interpretation to adoration. Fear makes people stinky from the core, while adoration makes people clear and clean. It is not strange that masters of modern poetry are correct for this insight. Only with adoration, do mysterious and divine reflections come; and only with adoration, do people get closer to the essence of beauty.

Whenever I face a sheet of paper or a computer to write, this kind of experience of learning poetry always sends me a feeling of walking on a thin ice, and a sense of fear to the gods. I am simply fearful of polluting the pure skirts of poetry due to my carelessness and flightiness.

This is why I did not publish any poems in the past ten years, especially after 1980s. I do not mean that I stopped writing. I mean that, with a sense of loss and guilt after great changes, I dare not approach her to beg for her forgiveness.

It's a shame to be a poet after Auschwitz. What about after 1989 Tian'an Men Square? I could not think further about it. Not until last year when I sorted out *Pathetic Four Chapters*, I felt like digging a small hole from far under where I was buried deep. I was relieved a little bit and gathered guts to put it up on several forums.

It sounds I am defending myself for my own cowardice, self-contempt, incapability and laziness. Maybe it is the truth.

In a world where Nietzsche declared "God is dead", Foucault talked about "the death of man", Bart discovered "the author is dead" and eventually Lyotard revealed the truth of "inhuman" "capital punishment", we, of the modern generation, have to run down a hopeless track of nihilism and frenzy even further.

No matter it is adoration or affection, it is ultimately just a sigh uttered when a person is in the far depth of uncertainty and inability. You can totally ignore it.

Original texts in Chinese can be found at http://boxun.com/hero/2006/lhongwj/68_1.shtml

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LI Hong, pseudonym of ZHANG Jianhong, poet, playwright, freelance writer and a member of Independent Chinese PEN, has been serving 6 years imprisonment since 6 September 2006 on "inciting subversion of the state power".

(Translated by Chen Biao)

A Testimony to the Final Beauty

--An Eyewitness's Diary on TAM Square in 1989

By TAN Zuoren



"The heart is only for giving away with a tear and a song, my love."

from Gardener by Rabindranath Tagore

As the tanks were approaching, the college students were sitting in a circle on the center of the Square where the Square University of Democracy had started its opening ceremony.

At 11 pm, the night sky in the Capital was still bright, and the gunfire in the distance was making noises from time to time. The people, sitting on the ground, were calm and quiet. Mr. Yan Jiaqi, the first President of the Square University of Democracy, was giving his lecture on the history of democracy, its current situation, democracy and the rule of law, democracy in China ... Breeze was blowing while Mr. Yan was tirelessly talking: Democracy is the majority role, with a respect for minority rights; Democracy is for the people to restrict the government, instead of the government to dominate the people; Democracy must rely on the rule of law and oppose the rule of man; Democracy is a good thing that the Chinese people have struggled hard for 70 years and still relentlessly pursued.

The humming noises suddenly came upon us, seemingly from the sky. Some of the people were standing up and raising their heads to look around. If you were sitting, you felt the earth begin to shudder. Soon, you heard the sounds that you would never forget – the roaring of a tank and the chugging of its high-speed running tracks.

"Roadblocks!" shouted someone. Roadblock, roadblock, roadblock! People jumped up into the air, calling out and rushing toward the tank running fast at the west plaza of the Square, as they were the roadblocks.

That was at 11:10 pm on June 3, 1989, in front of the People's Great Hall.

The Highest Principle of Peace is Sacrifice

That Democracy had a chance to encounter the tanks had gone beyond many people's expectations. All of the students had been familiar with the history of the Square. From the May Fourth Movement in 1919 to the April Fifth Movement in 1976, the Square had been the venue of public demonstrations. For 70 years, people had been pursuing the footsteps of Mr. De(mocracy) and Mr. Sci(ence) and campaigning here time and again. They had seen the sticks, swords and guns, high-pressure water hoses, and the lethal weapons as well, but never happened to see a minimum of military common sense: the tanks could deal with the crowd, even driving to your home. Perhaps this spirit of insufficient preparation inspired the fears and

fierce reactions.

Roadblock! Roadblock! Roadblock! The students shouted and rushed to the Square West Road and Chang'an Avenue, chasing the tank – actually a light armored vehicle – and throwing soda-water bottles, bricks, and even the pens and books. The vehicle seemed confused for a moment, and then made a sudden U-turn, running away along its previous route towards West Qianmen Street.

With neither mobilization nor command by anyone, the Square that had not been fortified instinctively reacted in fear. The traffic-dividing blocks, iron railings, trashcans, and even garbage and debris were moved to the roads to look like obstacles. You, moving the dividing blocks together with other people, thought that at seven o'clock when swearing the oath on the Square, the outcome that you could have imaged was to be beaten black and blue followed by Qincheng Prison. You were willing. Holding fast on the Square for 15 days, you were willing to wait for that outcome. It was because the revolutionary education over 30 years had characterized you, eroded you, and made you believe that you were the Gadfly, Rudin, Che Guevara, Alekos, or Pavel Korchagin, a piece of the flesh doomed to the destruction, disruption, and devotion to the sacrificial altar. Maybe at that time, you did not really know yourself.

Not knowing oneself did not mean not knowing the society, or not knowing the history, or not knowing the nation and people. Forty years ago, somebody loudly declared here that the Chinese people had stood up at that time. However, the Chinese people who had stood up did not know where they were "standing" but became even shorter after "standing up". In 1989, Chinese intellectuals and people gathered together at an unprecedented scale, and finally shouted out their own wishes and determinations to take the world by surprise!

The tank approaching suggested the arrival of the last moment. The students were sitting around the Monument and quietly waiting. They opposed the violence, ready to sacrifice. One and a half hours ago, a quiet soft voice at the broadcast station of the Hunger Strike Group had presented the common will of all: Student Colleagues, Colleagues, the last moment of our peaceful demonstration has come. We must remain rational, remain calm, and maintain the idea of peaceful petition, not to use violence to deal with violence. For two months, what we have insisted is the non-violent peaceful struggle, and the highest principle of peace is sacrifice.

The people on the Square were familiar with this voice, from Chai Ling, who at that time, in one sense, was another Goddess of Democracy on the Square.

Good-bye, Comrades!

The Square calmed down again while the gunfire around started making noise again. First in the distance, the sounds burst like the firecrackers on New Year's Eve, more and more intensively. Then, from the Museum and the People's Great Hall, the rifle tracer came in fixed

or repeated bursts of fire, like the fireworks drawing the sky.

You were at the northwest corner of the Square. In front of a broadcasting bus of the Independent Labor Union, you were counting the shots from the dark windows of the Museum and the Great Hall – after a flash, a shot must be heard. In the mind flashed the idea of observing the firing points. It seemed that you were Huang Jiguang or Dong Cunrui, ready to go for destroying a firing point at any time. In no time, there were too many to count – too many intensive shots, and too many "firing points".

The broadcasting bus was broadcasting the "Militia Training Textbook" to teach people how to fight a tank: blinding its eyes, digging its ears, cutting its belly open, chopping its legs It really came so quickly. Just thinking of them, a tank came.

At 0:30 am, from the east to the Jinshui Bridge, came the roaring of a tank, bursting more and more intensively. The people on the Square were running there. At the same time, from the crowds running frantically, you heard the news that the tank crushed to death a girl student, one from the Beijing Normal University, some said.

The loud speakers produced a harsh noise. Suddenly, "Militia Training Textbook" was changed to a high-pitched singing of "The Internationale". Then, the broadcasting bus that had been modified temporarily from a public bus did a u-turn. Watching the bus turning and turning around and dragging the speakers on the ground, you understood what it meant – to block the tank, die together! You were chasing it and finally grasping its door. But the door was shut in a sound of thundering, and a cry of farewell came from its cab: "Good-bye, comrades!"

Later, you would see this very bus on TV screen several times. The tank only tens of meters away in front of it would disappear. The bus would be no longer on the Chang'an Avenue, but was changed to have its mission to attack a building instead of intercepting a tank as an evidence of crime.

Strange? No. Greatness and absurdness are relatives, just as the beauty, to other's eyes, is always ugly.

The most important reason for choosing to remain on the Square and wait for the final outcome was that the Square had been the place where the students dominated the organization, but also where they had been expressing their collective will. The collective will had been to uphold peaceful demonstration: non-violence, disobedience, bloodless, and not to surrender. You agreed with this idea, even though you knew it "inappropriate" at that time. At the same time, however, compared to the street barricade battle with high confrontation and high destructivity, this road of failure might lead to another kind of victory, instead of leading from the disorder to the greater disorder.

Violence came from fear, and excessive violence from excessive fear. At that time, however,

not many people understood this point of view. Even understanding it, it was impossible to control the situation, nor to change it, and so it was of no use.

No Beating!

The broadcasting bus rushed to Chang'an Avenue, and stopped tens of meters away from the armored vehicle, because it had been immobilized by the piled trashcans, roaring in vain and then died. Instantly, the armored vehicle 003 became an item for the people to siege and give vent to. Bricks and sticks were pounding this iron turtle, and lit clothing and quilts were immediately piled upon the "Turtle." The people were angry, excited and crowded, as if surrounding a giant baked potato and waiting to divide and eat it.

Holding a bamboo stick, you touched the hot backdoor of the iron turtle. Before the stick hit down, "bang", the door sprang open. In the billowing smoke, two soldiers rushed out. They had been driven out by the heat and smoke in the vehicle; too drowsy to defend themselves, and so immediately stumbled onto the ground by the crowd. In the crowd there were heard only the deep sounds like ramming the earth, without a cry for mercy or help.

You desperately squeezed in, and wanted to beat, or to kill. Perhaps, you did not or need not think anything, but followed the crowd to do what they were doing. It was unexpected – what you did was the opposite. For eighteen years, whenever you have recalled that moment, you have always been confused. Then you have become increasingly convinced that, at that moment, there was a miracle that saved you.

You squeezed into a circle to the left of the armored vehicle, saw the soldier lying on the ground, no longer moving. Someone kicked him on the head, and someone jumped up and stepped on his body, as playing the Kung-fu roles in a movie. The soldier showed no response. You heard yourself shouting: no beating, no beating, the man won't pull through! Then you pulled up his left hand on your shoulder, bent to carry him on your back with all your strength, and moved toward a first-aid station.

The assault did not stop. Some people began to hit you, and you staggered a step, nearly falling to the ground. Before you knelt down, a pair of hands from your right stretched out to hold you, and then both hands put up the soldier's right arm to let you straighten the body. "No beating!" shouted someone. No beating! No beating! No beating! People began shouting, more and more loudly, more and more regularly. In such rhythmic cries, and as rich characteristics of the Square at that time, protected by a circle of more than 10 pairs of arms, you were running to deliver the soldier to the first-aid station outside the Museum a few hundreds meters away.

It was heard later that no soldier died on the Square that day, including that big man of more than 180 cm who was bloodied but not sacrificed. It was good luck for all of us.

To Remain Or To Withdraw?

"Tomorrow" arrived in a very strange way: turning off the lights.

At 4:00 am, when the Emergency Notice was rebroadcast, all of the lights on the Square went out. Fear fell as the darkness came. In the east of the Monument, someone lit the garbage. As the soldiers would always have smashed their weapons before they might die, some people collected the sticks and bars together and threw them into the fire and burned them. 3,000-4,000 students were sitting around the base of the Monument, horribly quiet. All were waiting, and waiting for the last moment to come. "The Internationale" was voicing, "This is the final struggle..."

In front of the People's Great Hall, the spotlight turned on brightly, shining on the infantry phalanxes outside its gates. Near the phalanxes, a detachment hunched, held their rifles and rushed to the Monument. In an instant, a skirmish line surrounded the Monument. Someone called out: all of the city residents get out, out of here! At the same time, gunfire was heard. The soldiers started to act, picking out and shoving away those who did not look like students.. In a short while, someone held your collar, and pulled you out of the encirclement. Those citizens pulled out did not go away but stood outside the encirclement, chanting: Students are innocent! Students are innocent!

Someone was shooting the Monument, which made a shower of sparks. Soon, the big loudspeakers were silenced. After a moment of commotion, however, the students sitting on the steps of its base were still in silence. You admired those children for they had overcome their fear. Then, someone on the base of the Monument loudly suggested deciding to stay or leave based on a vote: which voice would be louder.

In fact, such voting on the Square had been previewed as early as on the first day of the "Martial Law". On May 22, the rumor of "the Square will be assaulted by an air bomb" spread like wildfire, shaking the students' determination to remain on the square. At that time, the broadcast station of the Hunger Strike Group was broadcasting a public debate. As it was hard to determine which side of "Remaining" and "Withdrawing" was to win, in the southwest corner of the Square there appeared a quiet procession with the banners, rolling up the sleeves and standing in silence in the cold wind at midnight. As one came closer to have a look, my goodness, there were all the national teams of news media: the Central People's Broadcasting Station, China Central Television, Xinhua News Agency, People's Daily, Beijing Daily Applause! The students burst into tears! The motorcycle team of the Beijing residents stuck in flags, lined up in ranks and patrolled around the Square to encourage the students. Since then you had started to believe that China's bright future would rely on the intellectuals.

At that time, the intellectuals could indeed impress the heaven and earth, but not the Government.

No Enemy, No Hatred

The students' commitment to a selection of "staying" to uphold stimulated the soldiers of "cleansing". In the darkness, they began rifle-shooting intensively at the Monument to increase the pressure. You seemed to see the relief sculpture of the May Fourth's Youths on the Monument staring with their confused eyes. Thus you crossed the skirmish warning line and returned to the Monument again – to die, together with everyone.

The decision to return to the encirclement and to take the risk actively might not be considered somewhat as heroic but significant. At that time, a large number of Chinese intellectual elite did not hesitate to jump into the fire, purifying their souls and restoring their humanity. On June 2, when staying on the Square had already been very difficult, and when the authorities' intention of crackdown had already been very obvious, Liu Xiaobo, a doctorate in literature who had returned from the United States, together with Hou Dejian, Zhou Duo and Gao Xin, launched a new round of hunger strike protests. These "Four Gentlemen of the Square" issued a "Declaration on Hunger Strike", saying "China's history of several thousand years had been fully filled by replacing violence with violence and mutual hatred. To this end, we make a hunger strike to call on the Chinese people for the gradual renunciation and elimination of the enemy consciousness and the hatred sentiment from now on, and for a complete abandonment of the political culture such as the class struggle, because the hatred can only produce violence and tyranny! We must have the spirit of tolerance and consciousness of cooperation in a democratic way to start building democracy in China. Democracy is a politics without an enemy and without hatred." The 1989 generation of the intellectuals were not only ready to stand for justice, with the courage to feed tigers with their lives, but also profound and far-sighted, fully capable of undertaking the mission of promoting the progress of China's history. In fact, what any of the historians cannot avoid is that the June Fourth Movement in China, by turning over stones caused an avalanche effect, closing the door of Cold War and opening a new era of globalization. Its historical significance is no less than the collapse of the Berlin Wall.

The bullets ricocheting from shooting at the Monument were making new casualties from time to time. Within a short while, four men carried a student with a hemorrhaging neck and ran down from the top of the Monument base. With a doctor's instinct, you went to clear the way ahead and guided them to the first-aid station outside the Museum. Arriving there, you were dumbfounded: several ambulances that had parked there for a long time had gone! Ambulance! Ambulance! Ambulance! You were desperately shouting and looking.

During that night, the busiest place on the Square had been the temporary first-aid station in front of the Museum. For the whole night, as the alarms had been ringing and the wheels were rolling, they had been constantly transferring the wounded on the Square as well as those from the neighboring junctions. And now, they had quietly disappeared. You looked at the north of the Square, but could not see an ambulance, only tanks and armored vehicles. In the reflection of approaching daylight, about 40 armored vehicles were lined up, moving like a flock of crouched monsters.

Suddenly, the monsters roared and their engines shot out smoke, instantly obscuring the gray dawn sky that was just appearing.

Kill Li Peng!

An orderly withdrawal from the Square began. When you were directly faced with the tanks' canons at your nose, heavily encircled, and left with a sole passage at the southeast corner, your only way to survive was to leave. Hence at the last minute, it was really peaceful and orderly.

The soldiers adopted push tactics. The students withdrew from one level, and the soldiers took it over. Within a short time, the Monument was full of soldiers. In order to clarify the situation, you even climbed an armored vehicle and saw the leading rank of the withdrawing students had arrived at Qianmen Avenue but its tail just exiting the encirclement. The number was estimated as over 1,000 persons. The time was 5:10 am, in the early morning of June 4.

You jumped down from the armored vehicle to chase the ranks. The residents who got up early were pouring toward the Square. They had heavy faces, but applauding in lines to give you a good farewell – no, a sad one. You caught up with the ranks and asked, “are there any behind?” Some students answered that there were some on the Monument who firmly refused to leave! At this time, a plump girl wearing glasses rushed out of the ranks, squatting on the ground crying. Two or three girls went to pull her, but she hugged the tree and would not get up! Two boys came to persuade her but in vain. Several of them squatted on the ground, crying!

Then you heard yourself shouting a roar that did not belong to you: Kill Li Peng! Kill Li Peng! Kill Li Peng! The students followed and cried three times. The ranks continued to march toward the Qianmen.

Then you believed that, at that moment, if there was something to represent Li Peng standing in front of you, whether it was a soldier or a tank, you would not hesitate to tear it. If there was a machine gun in your hands, you would not hesitate to pull its trigger. At that moment, you had completed the transformation from an intellectual to a spiritual mob, and then across half a step, you would be a street thug, the mob produced by the tyranny. Of course, this result would only prove that you had lost, while those holding the power and weapons would have won.

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Epilogue

On June 10, on the train home, you took out a notebook. It was noted that, on May 21, the first day of your arrival in Beijing, you copied a poem "Dialogue" on the Monument. The

pro-democracy movement in 1989, which went from the original purpose of the dialogue to the outcome of confrontation, has of course got far too many problems to reflect. However, the spirit of "Dialogue" is forever so beautiful!

Therefore, on the train running to the west, you read for all this small piece of the poem to express the deep gratitude to the final beauty of an era.

Dialogue

Child: Mom, these little aunts and little uncles, why not to eat?

Mother: They want to get a gift.

What gift

Freedom.

Who will give them this beautiful gift.

Themselves.

Mom, why so many, so many people on the Square.

This is a festival.

What festival?

Lighting festival.

Where is the light?

In everyone's heart.

Mama, Mama, who is in the ambulance?

Hero.

Why does a hero want to lie down?

To let children on the back row see.

What to see?

A flower of seven colors.

May 22, 2007 in Chengdu

Original texts in Chinese can be found at

<http://2newcenturynet.blogspot.com/2010/02/1989.html>

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Extracts from the Criminal Verdict issued by the Chengdu Municipal Intermediate People's Court on February 9, 2010

The facts are clear, on which the Chengdu Municipal People's Procuratorate, Sichuan Province, have accused the defendant Tan Zuoren, that he cooked up "The Square Diary" and published it at the overseas media, and that he publicized the so-called the "spirit of June 4th" in a way of blood donation; and their evidences are definitely sufficient and so have been confirmed in accordance with the law. Other accusations shall not be affirmed. The evidences submitted by the defense hold no relevance to the confirmed facts, thus inadmissible.

This court found that the defendant Tan Zuoren, in a way of disinformation and defamation, incited subversion of the PRC State power and overthrowing of the socialist system, and that his conducts constituted a crime of inciting subversion of the State power. According to the provisions of Item 2 of Article 105, the Item 1 of Article 56, Item 1 of Article 55, Articles 47 and 58 of the PRC Criminal Law, the verdict is made as follows: The defendant Tan Zuoren is found guilty of the offence of inciting subversion of the State power and sentenced to five years imprisonment and three years deprivation of political rights.

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***TAN Zuoren**, an environmentalist, writer, former editor of Literati magazine and honorary member of Independent Chinese PEN center, has been serving 5 years imprisonment on “inciting subversion of state power” since 28 March 2009.*

(Translated by Yu ZHANG)

Death of A Doctor

By *DU Daobin*

Something that she was most afraid of but also secretly looking forward to was going to happen soon. She heard a series of the sounds of movements before and after the iron-gate was opened.



She was very familiar with these sounds of movements. She seemed to see him hooking with his left forefinger to pull a doorknocker, and nimbly closing the door behind. Finally, it was an abnormal strident noise caused by the door edges rubbing the doorframe. This noise alarmed her. He should be reminded earlier, she thought with a little regret. The iron-gate of his home looked almost the same as this one, and even the painting on both doors was the same light-gray lacquer. The only difference between two gates was that a screw on this doorframe had been loosened so as to scream strangely from opening and closing while another was still taut. Thinking of the loose screw, she felt a grievance arising from the bottom of her heart. "All are the fault of that lazy pig," thought she bitterly and, on the other hand, prayed in her quilt for him not to make another noise. "He is putting on slippers", she judged through the closed door, and was dwelling on her full understanding of him. At the same time, helplessly some part of her body started feeling the reaction to the upcoming affair of betrayal. "When the human engine waits..." the verse jumped into her brain at this time. She had first heard the phrase from the mouth of her own man as he quoted from *The Waste Land*, a poem by Eliot. Not long after being married, there had been several occasions when he had recited this sentence aloud as he entered her. Each time she laughed while scolding "disgusting". But these words took a root in her mind to be remembered unconsciously afterwards even though her man would not recite it while making love. It gave her a secret pleasure that this verse would have also appeared in her mind while having a clandestine affair with another man. It got her to produce a sense of pioneering for an affair, and occasionally caused a sense of shame for her abnormal sexuality. However, the sense of shame had been often too weak to face the uncontrolled eroticism. She did not understand why she could now get a climax only when doing it secretly. While making love with another man or when her husband laid in deep sleep on top of her, she always flashed a same idea: to find out what change had occurred in her body. However, she could never clarify it finally.

"Yeh!" The door was pushed open. She could once again enjoy seeing the great frame of his body. She had taken off her knickers to be ready! It was strange that his face did not show the impatient look as usual.

"Where is money?" He went so far to show a ferocious look, "get your money out quickly."

Shock was just a matter of a moment. She soon realized that he did not come to want her but to rob her! She hatefully wished to cry. This was what she had been reluctant to face, but finally came. She gnashed teeth and retorted: "I will not give it to you, why should I?"

"You bitch!" said he contemptuously, "Don't you look in the mirror? Almost 40 years old, you still consider yourself as coquettish! And believe that I would really like you! If you do not get the money out, I will do it by myself."

Then he immediately made his move. He opened the bedroom closets one by one, and searched in between her neatly stacked sheets and neatly hung designer dresses. In only a few moments, the recently tidy room became a mess. She was eager to get up and stop him. Her whole body was immobile. She recalled the rumors in newspapers about drugging thefts not long ago, and so was horrified. He had drugged me? She was heartbroken.

"Where is the money?" He could not find it. Of course he could not. Who could find out what she had placed? Seeing his helpless appearance, she was a little proud. She knew what she looked like when she felt proud. The expression on her face was an arrogant and mocking smile. She was pleased to see another enraged. He immediately rushed to the bed, but she decided to continue her mockery. She would like to laugh at this gamester, red-eyed for his losing, the very guy who had betrayed and insulted her.

His face was expanded and flushed. The veins on his thick neck bulged. Such a look had been so familiar to her as he had behaved like that each time when he was about to come. The look, previous funny, horrified her at this time. There was suddenly a coldly shiny pair of scissors in his hand. She recognized it was a pair of surgical scissors that the doctor had brought home. The doctors had once brought back two identical pairs of the scissors, one left in her possession to cut her nails, and another as her gift given to him. She would like to distinguish which was in his hand. She got up to have a clear look, but found more than half of the scissors already inserted between her breasts.

It is said that the poet Coleridge dreamed of Kublai Khan's palace, thus having penned his immortal poetry. With the development of science, the extravagant hopes to have all under control have been increasingly becoming human beings' reality. Today, nothing in this world seems to be beyond the human control, with one exception, that is a dream.

The doctor felt very aware and had never been so. In the shadow of camphor tree opposite the Diana Boutique House of Dresses at the Middle of Ancient City Avenue, he had stood for 1 hour and 47 minutes. The accuracy of timing was beyond doubt as he had kept checking his watch, though the singing brought by the north wind from the Entertainment City not far away occasionally distracted his attention, causing him to wonder why it had always been the same song – "Never to Leave". While he stood there, there was a fight at the gate of the Entertainment City. Several drunks jointly attacked a man, kicking and punching him. He felt that he could not let go, but held back the impulse just to avoid getting involved in the jealousy among the rogues. He only remembered that he had walked step by step to the tree shadow opposite the Diana Boutique House of Dresses. But where had he come from? Why had he stood here? He did not know. He just saw her entering the dress store. Across the concrete road of nearly 80 meters, and across the peach branches and leaves shaking on the greening island, he recognized beyond doubt, with a glance, the back of someone who wore a

lavender dress that must be hers. That woolen dress, she had said, had been customized in early autumn. Who knew whether or not it had been bought here? She was so swaggering that no word other than shameless could he find to more appropriately describe her appearance. She pretended to appear like a gentlewoman, without a slightest look of fear or shame to be seen, as if she were not going to seek another man. She went inside and then could not be seen any more. "Good, she is finally caught," thought he sadly but also gloated after being liberated at the moment when the aluminum gate was noisily pulled down behind her. He had a reason to be happy for he could not be deceived. Although she did it so covertly, her true feature was exposed at last. The only thing was – what to do next?

This was a question that he had not foreseen. Having caught her himself became a huge problem. He felt being caught in a dilemma. In his mind, he considered several options. One would be waiting to meet her when she came out. The benefit of doing so would be for her to avoid becoming notorious, the only way for her honor. Another would be rushing to kick the door open and catch the pair for adultery. In his heart, he strongly wished that he could rush to it and felt shameful for considering her at this time and this moment. How would it be without her? He would not like to think about it, simply shuddering so that his eyes became moist. He was in pain for his cowardly incompetence while wiping tears, and slapped his own face. He sensed the voices as a window opened in the building behind him. Certainly someone was peeking since he was slapping himself. Then, he sensed that all of the windows along the street were opening in sequence.

There was a pair of eyes behind every window, laughing at his cowardice. The doctor felt the shame that he had never experienced. "I have had enough!" he said to himself, "One can no longer bear such insults and dirt." He moved, walking quickly the other way. At this moment, his mind was in such confusion that he could not understand how he had crossed the greening island. While lifting his hand to knock on the door, he wondered whether or not he was manipulated by someone to run toward death, or was drunk. He looked around and behind, but found no one else. Then he paused to give serious thought, and was sure that he had not drunk alcohol.

The door opened. The dress store had just two rooms, a large one in the front and a small one in the rear. In the rear room, on simple narrow bed by the wall, he saw two naked bodies, a man and a woman enjoying themselves, both wholehearted into what they were doing. Sure enough, his woman was sitting up on top. The man with a great frame was lying naked below her. "This position below should be mine!" he thought bitterly.

His rushing in did not shock the carnival apart. They seemed not to be care of his presence at all. The women turned back her head. On her face there was a contemptuous and arrogant smile that was familiar to him. A stream of blood boiled up, especially her laughter was intolerable.

He thought of the disadvantage of his body being weak, and feared not to march the strength of his rival. Just at this moment, however, he saw a pair of scissors, the long sharp surgical

scissors. At a glance, he recognized that his own scissors. The scissors exacerbated his anger, but also his anger strengthened his courage. He grasped the scissors backhandedly and slashed out fiercely with the strength of his whole body. “I want to deal with both of you bitches together,” he shouted loudly.

In 2000, it was still popular in Yingcheng City to publicly announce the death sentence for the condemned and to shoot them publicly. On an autumn morning, bright and sunny, three trucks came into the Yingcheng Soccer Stadium. On the foremost truck, a man tied and held by armed police was the condemned who wore glasses and who had a red bar inserted behind his head and back. He looked up at the sky. It was uncertain whether he intended to avoid the eyes of the public or he wanted to enjoy watching this unpredictable world for the last time. Beneath the peripheral vision in his eyes and on the turf, thousands of spectators were crowded, including students, teachers, cadres, workers and peasants. The owner of Diana Boutique House of Dresses was also among the crowds. All of them came according to the requirements notified by the Municipal Committee of Political and Legal Affairs of the Communist Party. In fact, even without notification at this time, most of the people would probably have come because many of them had visited the doctor for their health. On the public opinions from most of the audience, the doctor’s family had been a perfect match between a talented man and a beautiful woman. Until now, some of the public could still hardly believe that he could have personally killed his beautiful wife.

Original texts in Chinese can be found at

<http://www.chinamonitor.org/article/article/drdeath.htm>

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DU Daobin, internet writer, Honorary Member of Sydney PEN Center as well as ICPC member and recipient of its 2008 Writer in Prison Award, was sentenced to 3 years imprisonment with 4 years suspension on “inciting subversion of the state power” and so released on 11 June 2004 after 7 and half months detention, but re-imprisoned on 21 July 2008 to serve the remaining sentence of 2 years and 4 and half months.

(Translated by Zhang Yu)

A Travel Report

By SHI Tao

Taiyuan

the city of sunset, the city of Tang poetry
carrying a ticket
issued by Chang An Station of the Empire
I stepped into another dark castle
the sunset is not yesterday's
sunset, though the Tang poetry is still recited
but you have to take a lift
rocketing up to the top of a fake ancient tower
to the vast groups of people
shouting a loud "Good"
otherwise...
there would be a piece of brick coating
spilling off from the ancient city walls
smashing grey imprints onto your body
to make you remember lifelong
the taste of cultural violence

Yinchuan

sunflower, the fruit of autumn
you introduced one line of a poem
into the tomb of poet Hai Zi
just as within the church of a fairytale
among the groups of people, one pair of eyes
is making pilgrimage to another pair of eyes

tonight, the silent sky
will be with me, together
to mourn a deceased, beloved person

Shanghai

from the eyes of a clown, I
entered a palace of human bodies
withered grass in silence, salt of the desires
the streets cooled down
from the fever of the season



from a thick art magazine, I
reached long-dreamed-of Shanghai
where graffiti in dreams
had turned into landscapes in everyone's booklet
I used poems to write a six-year-long

travel report. several years later
I forced myself into
a stock house of memories,
“private, repeated and lengthy”
just like a bee yenning to share the happiness of an elephant

Nanjing

worn-out days are like the fallen ancient city
the fragrance of withered weeds on the city walls
also envies my fully soaked nostalgia

my story
once touched a lengthy dark night
silent passion disheartened by the cap of an opened wine bottle

in my days there are beetles
a dream of stardom, the city of Nanjing
and a pair of hands to bury the ruins

Original texts in Chinese can be found at

http://www.chinesepen.org/Article/wk/200603/Article_20060320144524.shtml

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SHI Tao, a journalist, writer and poet, was sentenced to imprisonment for 10 years in 2005 for releasing a document of the Communist Party to an overseas Chinese democracy site after Yahoo! China provided his personal details to the Chinese government.

(Translated by Chen Biao)

There Is A Wall Outside the Window

--Essays from Prison

By KANG Yuchun



1. A Sunflower in the Shade

Outside the glass window of my cell, less than two meters away, there stands a high wall, blocking the wind, blocking the rain, but also blocking my endless longing for the complex noisy world beyond it.

The spring arrived and the earth became light green. At the foot of the high wall, there emerged a patch of tiny grass in light green. Without sunshine, the grass grew thin and yellow. Every day, I concentrated on this patch of light green. One day, I discovered suddenly that, in this patch of tiny grass, one blade of grass grew especially fast and especially tall, with a thin stalk and large leaves. Oh! That was not an ordinary grass but a sunflower in the shady place under the wall. Although tender and tiny, she staunchly and rigidly grew up. She had been blown down by the storm time after time, but stubbornly raised her head again and again, upward...

I looked at her every day, expected for her every day, and also worried about her every day. I did not dare to hope that she would blossom and bear fruit. One day, however, a tender yellow sunflower blossomed on her fragile head. What was strange is that she was not facing toward the sun, but flashing a smile at me, toward the glass window to express her gorgeous charms. Please, do you know why?

(August 22, 2002)

2. Little Birds Unfearful of Electricity

Not far away outside the window, there stands a wall. On top of the wall, there is an electric fence. The electric wires are exposed and appear to be stainless due to their electrification. I often stand at the window, looking at the big wall and electric fence to dream a daydream. Having lost freedom, I am very familiar with this wall and its fence outside the window. On one brick in the 38th row above the ground, there is a knot, resulting from the brick-baking, which displays its extremely unusual colour under the reflection of the window glass...

Several times, we placed some of food scraps on the windowsill outside the window. By chance there came several little birds. They were unattractive and belonged to a kind of house sparrow, most commonly seen in the north. The people at my hometown called them “old house-thief” to describe their quick reactions. It is very difficult to catch them. Whenever a little bird came, some of us at the window tried to make a surprise attack to catch it. Those fellows were really very crafty. Whatever means we used, whenever we stretched a hand or another tool out of the window to catch it, it would be rapidly flying up, passing between the

iron bars outside the window and swaggering away. However, it seemed to care nothing about us. Soon it flew back and squatted on the electric fence not far away. It appeared to be very spirited, twittering to provoke us, as if saying “Chase, chase!” It made us so angry inside the window. Once a prisoner asked suddenly, “How is this bird unfearful of the electricity? There is electricity in the electric fence, isn’t there?”

This question made me feel awkward and think deeply. Yes, the electric fence is so powerful as to electrocute people who are intelligent and wise, but also so reluctant to injure a little house sparrow. Although little and weak, a house sparrow may fly through the iron bars and take up the station on the electric fence. The stronger may be violently powerful over the world, but it still has weaknesses. The weaker is powerless, but also has its opportunity to survive. This is a heavenly principle, but also the highest truth in man’s world.

(November 30, 2002)

Original texts in Chinese can be found at

<http://www.penchinese.com/wipc/04letter/04xd/main-04kangyucun.htm>

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KANG Yuchun, a doctor at Beijing Anding Hospital, sentenced to 17 years in prison for political issues in 1992, was released on 28 October 2003 due to an imprisonment reduction of 5 years and 7 months.

(Translated by Yu ZHANG)

A Beauty Condemned to Death

By ZHANG Lin



Wang Guocui was a beauty who attracted people at first sight. People often talked about her in Bengbu Detention Centre. She was detained in our neighbouring cell. Those who met her once often talked about her with sparkles in their eyes. Every time the neighbouring iron door clicked, following the tinkling of the leg-irons, prisoners would madly rush to the door. The luckiest guy might catch a glance of her through the peephole. Guocui always brushed her hair with fingers when looking around with a coquettish smile, and then followed the guard toward the interrogation room. Many of those who had seen her highly praised her beauty, especially for her slender figure and tender eyes.

Unfortunately, I've never seen her. However, I've heard her singing beyond the partition wall during exercise time every day. There were wire fence above the dividing wall, but we could toss crumpled paper over it. We asked her to sing songs for us, and her singing had never been interrupted. Her voice sounded a bit like Cheng Lin, a famous singer, and Guocui especially liked to sing Lin's songs like *Any Empty Wine Bottles to Sell* and *Travelling through Wind and Rain*.

Sometimes, she would dance while singing, using leg-irons as her accompaniment. The tinkles were supposed to be made by a pair of leg-irons weighing 3 kilograms. They sounded pleasant. Sometimes when the jail guard on duty got drunk, he would sigh pitifully for such a beautiful beauty. Every night, the armed policemen on guard leaned over the skylight watching Guocui, talking and flirting with her.

Guocui had been a student of Foodstuff Workers Training School at Bengbu. She was only 19 at that time. She was good at singing and dancing, and was regarded as a campus star. She was chased by many boy students. Finally, her heart was taken by one of them. One day, they hugged together wildly when alone in the dormitory where 10 girls usually lived.

All beauties seem to have unfortunate destiny. A pair of cold eyes belonging to one of Guocui's roommates had watched them sneaking into the dormitory. A long time living together in such an over-crowded place had inevitably brought lots of resentments among the girls. Now it was the roommate's chance to get revenge.

While Guocui and her boyfriend were carried away in love, the door was kicked open roughly. No knocking or the sound of unlocking was heard when more than a dozen people rushed into the room. They were the principal, vice-principal, chief and vice-chief of the security section, a bunch of security workers, and, last, the informer. These people were staring at Guocui's body wolfishly. They had finally caught the couple red-handed. The general office immediately decided to expel them from school.

Guocui's parents were both farmers who had suffered hunger and cold during their several decades of hard working in the fields. Their only wish was that their pretty and smart daughter would not live such a life as theirs, but get rid of the rural household registration and live in the city. Guocui did not let them down. She was admitted into the Foodstuff Workers Training School, and would be regarded as a government official after graduation. When that happened, she would get her own salary every month.

However, after being expelled, the only path for her was to return to the rural area and lead the same life as her parents. She would struggle her whole life under the brutal rule of the rural party members and cadres in her exceptionally poor village, with face down to the earth and back up to the sky, and nobody would ever answer her appeal. The moment she heard the bad news of expulsion, she burst out crying and fell in a fit. After waking up, she became a totally different person with totally dull eyes. She had no appetite for food or drink, and kept talking to herself.

She fell to her knees in front of the principal's office, crying and begging them not to expel her. She also lay on the floor of the security section, swearing to God that they had no sexual relationship but had only been hugging each other without clothes on, and begged them to check of her body. Still, everybody ignored her. The school only sent a telegram to her parents, urging them to take her away immediately.

It appeared as if Guocui had understood that her fate had been settled with no hope. Her parents would come the next day without knowing what exactly happened. This would be the last day in this school, and the last night sleeping in this dormitory.

Her tears ran dry. Guocui was too ashamed to face her wretched parents who would be heartbroken after knowing the whole story. She gazed at the informer who had fallen asleep soundly. Brandishing a small axe that she had stolen from the carpentry yard, she cried within her heart, "Why did you set me up like this? How did I offend you that made you ruin my whole life like this?"

"Since we are already enemies, let us go to hell together!" Guocui lift the axe and chopped down hysterically. With one hack after another, she altogether chopped 19 times.

Guocui was sentenced to death not long after. On the morning of the execution, Shi Dalai woke me up quietly. He thought there would be 6 people being executed on that day. All the jail guards had a kind of special capability: they were able to open the iron-lock without a sound and pull the door suddenly. Two armed policemen would jump into the cell and pull the prisoner backwards by catching his or her arms. At the same time, two armed policemen with guns would suddenly show up above the skylight, with their guns pointing down. The yard would be filled with armed policemen as well.

After the prisoner was dragged out, the armed policemen would smash the leg-irons after

stepping on the prisoner's body, and then bind their hands and feet until the prisoner could barely breathe or shout. Two buns, put beside the prisoner's mouth, are the so-called the last dinner.

While being dragged outside the door, Guocui reproached the policemen with a smile, "My high heels, my high heels fell off when you dragged me." We all knew that her last request to her family and the whole world was to buy her a pair of high heels that she had been wanting for years, at the cheapest price.

She had been worrying being looked down on as a countrywoman, so she hoped that she could go to another world with high heels. She wore the pair of shoes for the whole night before execution. The armed policemen knew about this. They put her down violently, and went back for her shoes.

It was said that she died peacefully, but not like the other condemned prisoners with pale faces and shaking bodies. Several days before her death, she tossed us a piece of crumpled paper, saying:

"I would rather die than live my whole life as my parents, suffering as a peasant, living in hunger and cold. I never had my stomach full until the age of 10. It is extremely horrible living in the countryside. I don't think the hell would be that miserable and awful. I'm leaving. Hope you lucky city residents obtain your freedom very soon, and lead a happy life ever after. Wang Guocui."

We felt sorry for her for a long time. She was forced to death. The informer was responsible for this, so were those seemingly respectable school leaders, so were the education ministry officials who set so many people in such a tiny dormitory, and so were the Party and government leaders who converted peasants into serfs and brought them poverty and hardship.

Living in the dormitory without any privacy will inevitably create contradiction and hostility, which constrain human nature and twist human character. Anyone who has ever lived in a dormitory has an intimate knowledge about this. Half a dozen people living together in a room less than 10 square meters over the years is incredible to those who live in a free world. However, in China, you have to bear this for a long time.

In Mao Zedong's time, the cadres in the government and the Party had the power to order the females working for them, because their power was unbounded. They could even control their time of going to the toilet. Every detail of life, including eating, sleeping, seeing a doctor or having a rest, had to be arranged by the leaders. That cannot be counted as violation. However, dating had to be approved by the leaders, or it would be considered as having "bourgeois ideas" and liable for punishment.

After reform and opening up, the cadres in the government and the Party gradually have

plenty of money to burn. Ninety per cent of the guests going to the exclusive clubs, restaurants, bathing centres, luxury estates, and hotel penthouses are cadres from the government, the Party and the army. General civilians have been hard-up with no spare money for such entertainments. Even the businessmen who always have strict budgets would not spend money like this, unless they have to socialize with the cadres.

The cadres have been eating the Chinese young women's youth, but not allowing the young couples to date, otherwise the couple's whole life of happiness will be ruined, like Wang Guocui. This is the same as the way magistrates are allowed to burn down houses while the common people are forbidden even to light lamps.

It reminds me of the related policy in past dynasties: singles, soldiers and businessmen who were away from home were allowed to seek fun from prostitutes. However, it was strictly forbidden for the officials, because the imperial understood that this would be a bottomless pit as there were so many beauties in the world. Indulging in the beauties would inevitably rapidly lead to corruption.

Even if in the United States, ordinary people's sex life earns respect. Earvin Johnson (Magic Johnson) admits in his autobiography that he has had sexual relationship with more than 3000 women, but American people still like him even though he suffered with AIDS from it. However, this didn't work for President Clinton.

The Community Party goes to the opposite extreme. Everything goes contrary to normal society.

Wang Guocui was dead. Another delicate and charming flower was smashed by the giant wheel of Communism.

Original texts in Chinese can be found at http://www.boxun.com/hero/zhanglin/5_1.shtml

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ZHANG Lin, *freelancer, member of Independent Chinese PEN and recipient of its 2007 Writer in Prison Award, was detained on 29 Jan, 2005 for "inciting subversion of the state's political power", and sentenced to 5 years in prison, and released earlier on 12 August 2009 due to a reduction of half-year imprisonment.*

(Translated by Angela Hu)

Dancing with Wolves

By YAN Zhengxue



Where is the meaning of effort? Where is the essence of life? When I was detained again to face the adversities of life, when I spent countless days and nights staying behind the bars, when I had to go through torture by six electric batons, when I was suffering from pain just like skin peeling off, when I was struggling between life and death... I suddenly realized that the value of life is not fully reflected at that moment of effort. While the efforts of wolves are just for survival, human beings strive for hope, and search for freedom and democracy.

As a nature-loving artist, there are many legendary experiences in my journey of exploration. This year, I turned fifty, an age “knowing the fate decreed by Heaven”, but I have never forgotten that adventure...

That was in the summer of 1988. My daughter Yinghong and I were carrying heavy tents and sleeping bags to take a field tour along the Yellow River for 30 days and nights. We went through the city of Lanzhou, passed over the south of Gansu province, celebrated the Gulang festival with Tibetans in the Laburang Lamasery of Xiahe County, and then travelled to the south through Luqu and Maqu directly to the source of the Yellow River. Walking out of the forests in Jiuzhaigou, we two hikers were welcomed by the tolls of evening bells in the Xining Tar Lamasery. Next we camped on the Bird Island in Qinghai Lake, which is the largest inland lake in China. As the final destination of our trip, we planned to go to Dunhuang after going through the city of Golmud, along Hoh Xil and crossing the Altun valley.

Although Daqaidamzhen town in Qinghai province is a center where a variety of lorries and trucks meet, my daughter and I could not get any lorry to stop to give us a lift. The drivers paid no attentions to our hitchhiking requests. Finally we made our minds to shoulder the load of our heavy luggage and set our feet on the endless highway. Like two camels, we were walking step by step towards the west. Walking against the hot wind, we felt our throats as dry and hot as smoking chimneys. Our feet were so heavy. We found nothing but a road leading to the distant horizon in the empty Gobi Desert. Did the world consist of only us two?

To ease the pain of loneliness, we took turns to recite poems: “Withered vine, old tree, crows at dusk. Tiny bridge, flowing brook, and cottages. Ancient road, bleak wink, bony steed. The sun is sinking west.” This “Autumn Thought” by Ma Zhiyuan describes the scenes inside Shanhaiguan Pass, which were different from the forceful scenes in the northern deserts, but it made me homesick. My heart sank in sorrow, and I could not help speaking out: “Where, before me, are the ages that have gone? And where, behind me, are the coming generations? I am thinking of heaven and earth without limit nor end and I am all alone and my tears fall

down”...

"Dad, a car's coming from behind." My daughter suddenly cried out. Looking in the distance, there was a dim "beetle-like" gray dot in the dust moving towards us. Yinhong took off her scarf to wave with joy. At the moment, wilderness, the burning sun, and two people who were roasted by the sun formed a moving tragic stage show, and any stone-hearted driver would have a mercy. The truck stopped abruptly. The driver gave us a lift without any conditions. However, he would not go to the Bird Island. We had to get off half way at a crossroad, where there was only a United Nations investigator's tomb.

We were getting closer Qinghai Lake. The grasslands were full of a variety of beautiful flowers. The sunset made the ancient path covered with a bronze color. Long shadows of our figures were thrown over it. Finally, the sun went down the horizon. "Dad, we can not stop any lorry any more." Yinhong uttered a sigh of disappointment. Looking around the vast field, the deserted bleak prairie was becoming darker and darker. It seemed that we could not get to Qinghai Lake by the end of the day. So we decided to spend that night on the grassland.

At the end of the grassland, we found an earthy ridge. We climbed up to get there. There was a square wall built with earth bricks. It seemed that it was a place for shepherds to rest overnight. The wall was less than two meters high, and the side facing the road the wall had collapsed to be only one meter high. The deterioration of the wall demonstrated its long age in the past. We went into the earthy dam, carried some hay, put up two small tents and lay the painting blankets and sleeping bags on the ground. We wet our throats with very little water, and chewed the crisp, hard instant noodles. The moon washed away the summer heat and the breeze sent us the fragrance from the grassland. The open and wild grassland became quiet and still. Yinhong fell quickly into sleep due to fatigue and exhaustion.

Suddenly, a mournful wolf howl broke the silence of the grassland like a lightning bolt, followed by intermittent echoes coming from all directions. Yinhong was frightened into sitting up. She looked out of the broken wall and said: "Dad, these are some Tibetan mastiffs." The memory of being dragged onto the ground by three Tibetan mastiffs at a Tibetan residence in the south of Gansu province lingered in her mind. But soon she realized that we were facing much more terrible and ferocious animals than the Tibetan mastiffs – wolves.

Together with Hong, I quickly collected clods and hay to put them on the broken wall, together with the sleeping bags and back packs as well, in preparation for fighting against the wolf attacks at any time.

The wolf howls were getting closer and closer to us, and the ghost-like eyes more visible, as if they were spying on us. Suddenly, a long-forgotten scene came back to me. More than 20 years ago, in the Wenduhala Gobi Desert in Xinjiang, I came across the bloody remains of a tramp, which had been left by wolves. I did not know where he came from nor where he planned to go. I, a passer-by, buried him in silence ... Would the scene of over 20 years ago

also be the same fate for me and my daughter? I regretted bringing her to run such a risk. She was just over 20 years old in the bloom of her life, and a top student at a Fine Arts Institute; to end like this would be too unfair and too cruel to her!

I took out a torch, and the light made the wolves step back a little. Then they bent over, yawned and howled from time to time; it seemed that they were waiting for the chief wolf to order an attack. After a while, the old chief wolf began to move forward, gradually coming closer to the wall, followed by as many as 30 wolves. Hong constantly put many things onto the top of the broken wall, including clods, sleeping bags, painting carpets, drink bottles, traveling bags and back packs. All of a sudden, groups of wolf howls broke the night sky, and also tore my heart into pieces. To our horror, the wolves started to attack. Some attempted to climb up the wall, and others were pawing at the bottom of a wall. Yinhong and I were hitting them constantly with clods. One wolf dragged away a sleeping bag, and pulled down a row of clods as well. This type of resistance was obviously not useful. So I had to set the hay on fire to defend us as the last resort. I saw several wolves scrambling and biting my dark blue sleeping bag. The downy pieces came from the broken bag and floated in the sky, presenting an orange-red colour against the fire, as if an expanse of bloody rain poured from the dark sky.

The wolves calmed down, walked back, squatted and sat down, but they were still peering at us, their targets. In the sparkly and crackly sounds of the hay burning, I was imagining the our doom after all the hay was burnt up. I tried to control the speed of burning, so as to extend such a confrontation, because our lives would be extinguished with the ending of the fire. Outside the walls were howls from time to time. The flame was gradually getting weaker and weaker. As the hay was burnt up, I had to ask Hong to pull down the small tent, which accompanied me for several summers. We pulled over the back packs, took out several magazines and books, tore them into pieces and threw them into the fire. Seeing the paper sheets turned into ashes so quickly and float away with the wind, I could foresee that our lives would fade away soon.

The evening breeze raised shining sparks to make our last moment splendid. We had no books and magazines to tear up. I instinctively pulled our two cameras from the back packs, and calmly put whatever we could, such as back packs, traveling bags, clothing and pants, into the fire to burn.

At that moment, the presence of fire-light meant the existence of our lives. What should I leave after my life? A will? Not necessary at all.

We had escaped from urban noise and false prosperity, just because we were tired of the crisis of faith, of values and of survival amid the commercial tide just like the changes of a Rubik's Cube. The loss of the spirit could not be recovered by the gain of money, and could not be regained in the intricate fabrics of interpersonal relationships. As a result, we chose to face nature to find out the broad truth in this world, and to trace back the heroic history of the

mankind for its existence and survival. That was the very purpose for our trip, that's the goal I wanted to pursue in the future period of my life. We survived arduous journeys, one after another. We are abundant of spirits, purified in souls, and kept far away from the anxieties and worries of this world. However, the artistic inspirations came only in the rainy and windy days and nights... and now we were reaching the end of our lives, what should we leave behind? Our final fight, I thought.

The wolves jumped over once again. I picked up the camera and adjusted the settings. I wanted to have my daughter take a last shot of me. This was a moment when needed tears most, but I found her not crying at all. She still waved burning clothes to drive the wolves away. With the sight of her figure and face against the fire, I felt the deep shame of being an artist. She had such a brilliant figure but, with all my skills, I couldn't paint it. I changed my mind. I wanted to take pictures of her last moments fighting against the wolves. I pressed the button, and it sent out a flash just like a bright lightning in the dark wilderness.

A miracle happened. The wolves were getting upset, and whining in low voices, a sharp contrast to the loud howls earlier. I quickly asked Hong to take out her camera. We both held in our hands four spare batteries, as though they were the last part of our lives. We constantly recharged the photoflashes, and pressed the buttons one after another. The flashes lit the sky and make a splendid black and white scene in the night. The wolves got into a panic, and finally retreated into the darkness. But we still replaced the batteries instinctively and mechanically, pressing the buttons again and again against the darkness....

Time flew away by seconds, as in silence the sun and the moon crossed the heavens and the rivers flew across the wide land. Everything was still and everything passed by in silence. Suddenly my daughter burst into tears. I didn't know whether it was in desperation or excitement and whether she congratulated herself on the narrow escape or had terror in her heart? Hong nestled tightly up to my chest crying sadly like a baby. The wind from wasteland was harsh; and I was just listening attentively to my heart and my daughter's crying in the wind.

Death passed away along with the darkness, and the vivid dawn painted the wilderness red in a moment. Around the walls there were down pieces scattered over the green grass. Was it the thrilling trace left by the life-and-death struggle last night?

Several years later, when we went back to our both familiar and strange city, I made several attempts to describe our experience that night with my brushes, entitling it "the last struggle". But I failed due to my own superficiality. Where is the meaning of efforts? Where is the essence of life? When I was detained again to face the adversities of life, when I spent countless days and nights staying behind the bars, when I had to go through torture by six electric batons, when I was suffering from pain just like skin peeling off, when I was struggling between life and death ... I suddenly realized that the value of life is not fully reflected at that moment of efforts. While the wolves strive just for survival, human beings

stive for hope, and quest for freedom and democracy. As a result, I completed the picture which I had been thinking about very hard for several years in a windy night – "Dancing with Wolves". It was painted with a lightning flash in the night sky, over the heads of both the terrified wolves and a joyful me. The picture indicated glory and spectacle in the lives of human beings.

Original texts in Chinese can be found at http://www.boxun.com/hero/yzx/71_1.shtml

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***YAN Zhengxue**, painter, performing artist, freelance writer and a member of Independent Chinese PEN Centre, was held in detention on October 18, 2006, and sentenced to three years' imprisonment with the crime of "inciting subversion of state power". He was released on July 17, 2009 due to a three-month imprisonment reduction.*

(Translated by Lu Taizhi)

Nightmare

By SHEN Youlian



On May 20, 2003 at 3 p.m., three plainclothes security officers came to my work unit and tricked me into leaving my office. They then identified themselves and told me that I shouldn't make a sound as they shoved me into an ordinary-looking car. They spent the day interrogating me. Just before 12, they took out the arrest warrant and officially charged me with "encouraging the overthrow of state authority." The concrete evidence for my criminal activity was, first, that I had written a book entitled *The End of Marxist Theory* and had mailed it to Hong Kong and Guiyang to be sold and distributed. And secondly, I had written two essays, one called "Kicking out Marx" and the other called "The Third Kind of Feudalism." Because I had put them in the mail and they had been intercepted, they became my "criminal activity."

On May 21, they searched my home and confiscated all my manuscripts, my letters, seven diaries and notes, 52 computer disks, 492 books, computer, typewriter, radio, my bank book and cash. Among the materials confiscated was an unfinished essay I was writing entitled "The Communist Party Ought to Practice Communism" and a copy of an English-language BBC television broadcast called "Marxism and Chinese Economics," which especially intrigued them. They added these to my "crimes."

In the afternoon, they put me into a car and gave me some clothes and blankets from my family. Two official, government A-license plate cars escorted me to Guiyang Railroad Office Number Two Jail.

When I arrived, a one-armed police officer came in and took all my clothes and threw them on the floor. Then this one-armed guy stomped on them. (As it was raining outside and he'd followed me inside, his shoes were covered with mud.) He used big pliers to pull all the buttons off my clothes and then he tried to poke holes in them. He split my pants and waistband, took my belt, then emptied my pockets and threw everything away, including medicine I had with me because I had a cold. Finally he told me to put on the clothes. Then he put my blankets on the floor and stomped all over them. Afterwards, he told me to pick them up. I wore my ruined, filthy clothes and followed another guard outside. I had to hold my pants up with one hand while I carried my other clothes and blankets in the other.

I was sent to cell number 9. Altogether there were 12 of us in my cell, including thieves, pickpockets, drug addicts, con artists and thugs. The oldest among us was 65, the youngest 14. Four of the prisoners were orphans who had become thieves and pickpockets to survive.

Some prisoners had been there for seven to eight months, others for five to six. The warden was always trying to squeeze something out of the prisoners over the 20 days I was there. I had to hand over 300 yuan. Those prisoners who stayed the longest had to pay the most. I don't think the Nazis had even thought of this scheme. In all, I gave the guards 435 yuan when I first came and told them to give the prisoners a good meal, and so everybody looked at me differently and didn't beat me up. I was even allowed to sleep on a wooden board rather than the floor.

Inside the cell there was a big hole used for a toilet. There were no beds or blankets, just a wooden board raised several inches off the ground. Only designated people could sleep on the board. Everyone else had to sleep on the floor. Every meal included half a dirty potato. At the bottom of our bowls, there was grit and dirt, and the soup looked black. The drinking water was even worse. Multicolored oil floated on the surface.

The cells had no shower and no time was allotted for exercise. There was a hole in the ceiling covered with a cement and steel cover, but a little light and fresh air could get through. Although there was a sign in the prison that said we had time to read the newspaper, if anyone had one, he was beaten.

During my incarceration, the National Security Office held a trial and I raised the issue of my being a political prisoner. I said that China is a member of the United Nations and has to follow the U.N. Charter, and we are a signatory of the U.N. human rights covenant. I asked that all the prisoners' rights be improved, including better food and living conditions. They replied: our country does not recognize political prisoners. Although my opposition to Marxism was not the same as murdering someone or arson, it was still a criminal offense. As to our country being a member of the U.N. and international law, they said that has no relevance to what we are doing here.

I didn't know if by "here" they meant the jail or China.

Once after court, a National Security agent and a guard took me back to jail. In order to get to my cell, I had to pass a cage with a dog in it. Whenever I passed, the dog barked. I was very careful to cling to the wall because I was afraid the dog would bite.

This time my luck ran out, and the guard opened the dog's cage. The dog barked and jumped toward me. The security agent and the guard immediately turned their backs. I looked at that vicious dog and I knew that even as I yelled for help, no one would do anything.

When I was young, I had been bitten by a dog, so I knew that if you run, a dog will just chase you faster than ever. Besides, there was no place for me to run now. So I just stood still. Suddenly the vicious dog was on me. It opened its big mouth as it lunged at me. I threw up

my hands to protect my face. It had its paws on my clothes, but the dog didn't bite. He didn't seem to be satisfied however, so he jumped and lunged and barked. Gradually I stopped shaking, and although I was afraid and my heart was racing, I remained still.

The vicious dog kept barking and jumping and snapping at my trousers, then finally it turned around and ran away.

Then the guard came over and, pretending concern, asked, "Were you bitten?" I responded coldly, "No." The guard feigned disbelief. "Your luck's still good!"

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***SHEN Youlian**, a member of Independent Chinese PEN Centre, was arrested and detained by Guizhou National Security Bureau in 2003 due to self-printing "The End of Marxist Theory". His home was raided and all his books and manuscripts were confiscated.*

(Translated by May-Lee Chai)

originally published by PEN American Center

<http://www.pen.org/viewmedia.php/prmMID/2742/prmID/1502>

Candies

By YANG Tianshui



"These are a few pieces of candies, rock candy, milk candy, and fruit candy."

Pointing to the blackboard, a female teacher read aloud, followed by a burst of childish voices echoed among the hills – "These are a few pieces of candies,,,"

Magnificent but patient dawn slowly brightened the Songpan Grasslands; also brightened the southwestern mountains, a village primary school hut halfway up the mountain, the fine chalk handwriting on the blackboard, the nice mild round face of the teacher and a dozen untidy boys and girls.

The female teacher, eighteen or nineteen, was holding a wooden stick to lead the reading again:

"This is a piece of candy."

The sunlight traveled through the door and windows to caress her dark black double pigtails.

The school kids were fully concentrating and reading in slow but sweet childish voices:

"This is a piece of candy."

It was a little bit chilly in the mountains in the autumn; spells of chilly winds eddied around the cottage, and some kids were rubbing their small reddish hands while reading.

The teacher had a look at the southern row of children and said:

"Dear girls and boys, if Drolma has two candies and Sangzhi has one, how many pieces of candies do they have in total? Please hands up to answer." the teacher said.

Some small hands were raised high in the southern row. The teacher said:

"Drolma, please."

A girl in Tibetan robe stood up. Her black little eyes blinked and said:

"A total of three."

The teacher motioned Drolma to sit down while saying "Drolma is right." She then added:

"Those in Year Two, please be attentive! If Drolma gets nine pieces of candy, but Basang takes four away, how many pieces will be left? "

Some of the children sitting in the mid-row of the classroom began to raise their hands, some turned their fingers to count, and some heads lowed as if they were afraid of being found. With a smile the teacher said to a boy:

"Gelang, do you know the answer?"

A dark, timid boy stood up and said:

"Five."

The teacher smiled happily and said:

"Gelang is right. Sit down, please! Next, those in Year Three, please be attentive! If Drolma, Basang or Jielang was assigned five each, then what is the total number assigned to them? Please use the multiplication to make it out! "

Only one kid among the children sitting in the back of the classroom put up a hand. The teacher gave him a gesture, he stood up and said:

"Three fives is fifteen, the total is fifteen."

Very satisfied, the teacher went up to the back of the classroom and led the kids at back to read the multiplication table. She then went to a boy of fourteen or fifteen and asked:

"Moocuo, now we have fifteen candies, if they are divided equally among Zoma, Basan, Gelang and you, how many does each get then? How many will be left? What will you do with the remainder?"

Moocuo, in a Tibetan robe with dirty sleeves, stood up tamely, looking at the ceiling and said slowly:

"Each could get 3, and two will be left, and to whom should the remaining two be given ?"

After thinking for a while, he resumed:

"The remaining two should be given to Drolma who is the youngest among us."

The teacher asked:

"Why do you want the rest candy going to the youngest?"

Moocuo said:

"The elder should take care of the younger. That is what teacher always teaches us"

The teacher said:

"Dear boys and girls, the elder kids should take care of the younger ones, understood?"

The children answered immediately in chorus: "Understood!"

Outside was a sheep dog, standing under a tree and casting his curious eyes into the classroom. On the hill-slope not far away cattle and sheep were moving leisurely: some were chewing grass, some looking at the sky. The teacher opened the green canvas bag on her desk, took out a paper bag, and said:

"Dear boys and girls, let me hand out the candy, okay?"

The girls and boys were excited and active. Some whispered, some twittered. Their tender voices sounded like many little birds singing. Some asked:

"What does candy look like?"

Some asked:

"Really very very sweet?"

Some asked:

"What is rock candy and what is fruit candy?"

The teacher waved to the children and said:

"Please be seated on your seats, I'll distribute the candies among you."

The students kept quiet at once, with joy and an expectant look on each face. The teacher started the distribution from the Year-One kids in the southern row, with each kid having two: one fruit candy and one milk candy. When the teacher walked to Moocuo of the Year Four, only one fruit candy left. "Moocuo, sorry, I will give you another one next time."

"It's all right, Teacher. I'm older than them. One is enough."

Petting his head gently, the teacher said:

"You are a virtuous good boy!"

Now all kids began eating the candies. Some were chewing noisily, and some were smacking their lips to enjoy the sweet taste. There were also several kids playing with the sweets in their hands. Drolma, who was in the first grade, put one piece of candy into her bag, and then opened the other one, licked it several times, covered it again and carefully put it into the inner pocket. As the teacher intended to resume her lesson, she asked Drolma after seeing what she did:

"Little Drolma, why didn't you eat your candy?"

Drolma's deskmate answered:

"Teacher, she ate nothing. That piece of milk candy ... was placed in her bag."

The teacher: "Why don't you eat them? Are you going to enjoy them later slowly?"

Drolma: "No, teacher. The milk candy is for my brother. I will take it back to him after school."

Teacher: "Little Drolma, you can eat it. I will bring some for you when I return to the city next month."

Drolma: "No, teacher. I don't like to eat it. I will leave it to my brother. He is very cute."

The teacher approached Drolma, patting her braids and said:

"How old is your brother? What a lovely boy!"

"Four," Little Droma inclined her head with a smile, exposing a mouth of white little teeth.

The teacher went back to the teaching platform, and said:

"Dear boys and girls, lots of plants, crops and fruits contain sugar; canes from the south are sweet; apple, orange, pear, jujube, hawthorns, rock melons and watermelons are all sweet." All the kids listened intently.

She continued:

"These sweet stuffs already existed hundreds and thousands of years ago. However, it was not until Tang Dynasty that people began to make sugar out of the sweet stuffs."

One student asked:

"Tang Dynasty?"

The teacher went on:

"Tang was a dynasty 1200 or 1300 years ago. At that time, Indian people introduced sugar refining methods to China, and our Chinese people started to have sugar to eat."

Then the teacher wrote on the blackboard: "During Tang dynasty, the Indians brought sugar refining skills to China."

She then led the students to read it over and over again. Outside were the clear blue sky and the quiet autumn mountains. The cattle and sheep were still lingering on the grass slope. Probably tired, the sheep dog sat down under the trees and curiously looked into the classroom.

When school was over, Drolma pulled the skirts of her teacher quietly, and asked:

"Teacher, what is rock candy like?"

Teacher answered:

"Rock candy? Just like small broken pieces of smashed ice."

"Sweet?"

"Of course. That's why we call it candy!"

The sheep dog strode to Drolma, whining and spinning around her with its tail waving. Drolma bent over, pulled out the fruit sugar, bit it into two halves, and put it near the dog's mouth. That dog reached out its tongue and licked the fruit sugar repeatedly. Later on, it appeared to be eager to swallow the sugar, waving its head and tail violently to show its coquetry. Droma touched its ears and put the half candy into its mouth.

The teacher said: "This dog is as dear to you as your brother."

Drolma said:

"So said my parents."

She added with a mysterious look: "Teacher, next time if you come with rock candies, please give me one more for my younger brother, okay?"

Teacher smiled: "Little Drolma, next time I will bring you some more. Well, hurry home for lunch now. Your mum and dad must be waiting for you."

Getting close to her home, little Droma saw mum and brother standing before their felt tent. She ran to them and took out the piece of candy in the bag, shouted:

"Mum, brother, milk candy."

The dog ran after her eagerly. Drolma went to her brother, bent over, peeled the paper off the milk candy and put it into his mouth, and said:

"Brother, candy."

Her mother asked: "Where did you get it?"

Drolma answered: "Our teacher brought it from the city. Everybody got two except that Moocuo got one."

Mom said: "Teacher Ah-chin is so good. As an 18 or 19-year-old city girl, she put aside all the benefits to come to this remote mountain village to teach you to read and write. What a Buddha!"

Drolma: "Teacher Ah-chin told me she would bring us rock candies when she goes home next time. She said that rock candies are just like broken pieces of smashed ice, bright and clear as crystals."

Mother: "She has only 20-30 yuan per month for her salary. It will cost all that to buy candies for you, won't it?"

Drolma said: "We can send a goat to her in the future, okay?"

Mother added: "And a scarf as well."

Drolma dropped her bag, and went to help Mum to carry straw to feed the mare about to give birth. Busy for a while, she suddenly realized something. She took out the half candy which she had carried with her, carefully opened the paper, and lifted it to her mother's lips:

"Mum, taste it to see if it is sweet or not?"

Mum said with a smile: "Mum does not like to taste. Candy is always sweet, just like Buddhas always save people, while a wolf licks a lamb."

Little Droma had to withdraw her hand. She licked it several times, wrapped the candy and then put it back in her inside pocket.

Several days after that, on the way to school or at home, Droma would quietly take out the half candy to lick it gently. Sometimes when there were no others around at school, she would quietly take it out and lick it a few times. Sometimes at home she would take it out to let her brother lick it a few times and put it back. The sheep dog often stared at Drolma's hands with its big and black eyes, sitting still with an expectant look. Every time this happened, Drolma did not like to ignore the dog. She would take some cooked mutton from her pocket to feed it.

Over three months passed. The prairie and the mountain village had been covered with heavy snow. The village school seemed completely isolated except for some wild geese flying southbound in the blue sky occasionally. Only when the female teacher took all the children out of the classroom to bask in the sun, did there emerge some energy halfway up the mountain. At that moment, the sheep dog always stayed near Drolma. The dog was getting more friendly to the teacher. It often ran to kiss her feet and rub her trouser legs. One day near noon, the teacher found Drolma standing before a pile of forage grass. She walked and over talked to her:

"Little Drolma, I'm so sorry. I promised you to bring some rock candies. A few months passed, but I couldn't get any. It was a palm-sized town, and not enough supplies for everything."

Drolma replied with a grin:

"Teacher, we still had candies."

She took out the half candy to smell and then gently licked it. The dog was beside, listening to

their talk. It turned its head toward the teacher when the teacher was talking, and then turned to Drolma when she was talking.

School was over, and she walked home alone with her dog after a short shared journey with some of other students, as her house was far away. The wind rose from humming at first to roaring. The huge cold air was quickly spreading all over the whole grassland and mountains. It made Little Drolma shiver. She put her hands into her sleeves, pulled in her neck and ran to a cliff for shelter. When the dog heard the huge wind, it hesitated for a while at first, and then followed its little master to trot to the shelter under the cliff.

That cliff was dozens of meters high, like a tall black tower. The winding path, on which little Drolma often walked, was to the south of the cliff. Beyond the path was a dozens-of-meter deep valley. In spring or summer, the valley would be full of grass, flowers and trees; in autumn a clear stream would be running down there and many birds would be singing. But it was winter now, the whole valley was covered in silence. Luckily there were some rays of sunshine, shining and bright, opposing the gloomy sternness so as not to turn the chilly silence into dead silence. The cold cliff was too steep. Even the dog dared not go close. The dog shrank back as close as possible to the shelter cliff.

Little Drolma sat beside a huge rock, hugged the dog in her arms, pulled out some broken pieces of mutton to feed the dog. She kissed the dog. Lifting its bright and gentle eyes, it looked at Drolma, whined for a while and turned to the west-side of Drolma. Drolma suddenly felt a bit warmer. She did not want to go home until the wind became weaker. Taking out the text book, she read aloud:

Under the pines I questioned the boy.

“My master’s off gathering herbs.

All I know is he’s here on the mountain----

Clouds are so deep, I don’t know where...”

She read it several times, then she took out the half candy, opened the paper, and licked it a few times.

Suddenly there came a burst of tiger and leopard roars in the distance. The sheep dog made several barks. Little Drolma was so surprised that her candy dropped onto the ground from her hands. The candy rolled away a few feet and landed onto the slope of the cliff, which was just a few feet away.

Little Drolma searched for the candy and finally found it lying in a stone nest on the slope. The dark red candy paper was very obvious in the noon-time sunlight. Drolma slowly moved to the cliff top, knelt down, stretched out one arm to reach the candy, but she failed several times. The dog also followed her closely. That dog cowered, lying there with anxious looks.

After a while, sweat came out on her head. With her second try, she finally got it in her hand. Smiles came back to her reddish face. She hastily straightened up to lift her knees to move toward the cliff. Probably with a leg numbed, she swayed and fell down into the valley. The sheep dog was totally shocked. It wanted to go down to the bottom of the valley, but it only pawed the ground anxiously with fear. It made up its mind several times to rush down, but it

stopped at last. The dog wandered for a while on the windy path, and ran a dozen of metres in both directions to the east and west. Finding a place with a gentle slope, it went down the valley, trampling on the cracked pieces of ice. It finally sniffed in the right direction and quickly ran to little Drolma.

Drolma was lying on a pile of pebbles. Her dog shoved at her hand and her face worriedly. It waved its tail and barked affectionately at Drolma. Although it waited for a long time, the dog didn't get any response from little Drolma. It began to head back to the winding path and hurried back to the village school.

In the school kitchen, the teacher had just finished her lunch and was putting the remaining noodles and pickled vegetables back into a very old dark cupboard. When the dog ran over, it kissed her feet and trouser legs, shoved its head into her knees, raised its begging eyes accompanied with its barks and whines, and looked up at the teacher. The teacher smiled:

"Little Droma came to school so early today. Why not going home for lunch? Come here, all the leftover noodles are for you."

Upon saying this, she served a bowl of noodles from the cupboard, and poured it into a pot in the corner. But the dog had no interest in it. It kept making low whines with an anxious and restless look on its face. When it tugged her outside by her pants, the teacher shouted outside:

"Drolma, little Drolma, does your sheep dog want me to teach it to read?"

Just then, a student came in: "Teacher, Drolma is not here, only her dog."

The teacher felt something wrong. They walked out of the door with the dog. The dog ran in front of her and looked back from time to time to check if the teacher was following or not. They hurried to the cliff. The dog looked back at the teacher, and ran along the gentle slope into the valley bottom. The teacher followed. Seeing Drolma lying on a pile of pebbles, she called out: "Little Drolma". The dog got there one step earlier than the teacher. It shoved up her with its mouth, and looked up at the teacher. The teacher kneeled down, only to find that the blood running from her nose had been frozen into ice. Her small face was purple with freezing. Her eyes were closed. Tightly clutched in her left hand was the half fruit candy.

Original texts in Chinese can be found at http://www.boxun.com/hero/yangtianshui/66_1.shtml

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***YANG Tianshui**, pseudonym of YANG Tongyan, internet writer, member of the Independent Chinese PEN Center, recipient of its 2006 Writer in Prison Award and of PEN America Center's 2008 PEN/Barbara Goldsmith Freedom to Write Award, has been serving 12 years imprisonment since 23 December 2005 on "subverting the state power".*

(Translated by Yifeng)

A Brief of Independent Chinese PEN Centre

Independent Chinese PEN Center (ICPC) is a nongovernmental, nonprofit and nonpartisan organization beyond borders based on free association of those who write, edit, translate, research and publish literature work in Chinese and dedicated to freedom of expression for the workers in Chinese language and literature, including writers, journalists, translators, scholars and publishers over the world. ICPC is a member organization of International PEN, the global association of writers dedicated to freedom of expression and the defence of writers suffering governmental repression. Through the worldwide PEN network and its own membership base in China and abroad, ICPC is able to mobilize international attention to the plight of writers and editors within China attempting to write and publish with a spirit of independence and integrity, regardless of their political views, ideological standpoint or religious beliefs.

ICPC was founded in 2001 by a group of Chinese writers in exile and in China, including its founding President LIU Binyan, a prominent author, journalist and activist who passed away in exile in USA on Dec. 5 2005, Vice-president and author ZHENG Yi, Executive Director and poet BEI Ling and Freedom to Write Committee Coordinator and poet MENG Lang, all of whom have been in exile in USA. In November of same year, ICPC was approved as a chapter of the International PEN at its annual congress in London. Since then, ICPC has made vigorous efforts to promote and defend the freedom of writing and publication and the free flow of information in China, and been deeply concerned about the state of civil society and open discourse there.

In September and October, 2009, ICPC held its Fourth Internet Congress of the Membership Assembly to have elected 5 Board members and 2 alternates to fill its vacancies, including the President Tienchi MARTIN-LIAO (Germany) and 2 Vice-presidents Patrick POON (Hong Kong) and QI Jiazhen (Australia). The past president Dr. LIU Xiaobo, who has been imprisoned since December 8, 2008, was elected Honorary President.