



PEN for Freedom

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CONTENTS

1. [You Appear and Others](#) (poetry) *By LIU Xiaobo*
2. [Say No to Tombs](#) (short story) *By Jin Yi*
3. [Birthday Present](#) (short story) *By SHENG Hui*
4. [The Death of My Father Guo Xiaochuan](#) (essay) *By GUO Xiaolin*
5. [One Day for Liang Xin and His Workmates](#) (short story)
By ZHANG Mingshan
6. [Racing against Terror](#) (Lecture) *By ZHOU Qing*
7. [# 15, Lane 23, Baoqing Road](#) (short story) *By YEN Minju*
8. [Melody in the Dark Night](#) (memoir) *By HU Jun*
9. [Our Home Over There](#) (essay) *By Bei Cun*
10. [It's The Time and Another](#) (poetry) *By ZHU Yufu*

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You Appear and Others

By LIU Xiaobo

You Appear

- To my wife

You always appear at
Such an unique moment

To get me look up and dizzy
My feet unable to climb
And my eyes full of fear

Your smile is
Hanging on the weed tips in a cliff seam
But I, at most, am the wind
Stroking but daring not to stay
Such a test is too dangerous and too wonderful
Does the humble like me
Really need such nobleness?

Their birth and their death
Originally had no essential difference
It is due to the occasional prank
That the birth is so tremendous
While the death is so solemn

At the moment when you appear
My world has been crashed
But you
In the mud and ruin
Are intact

On my birthday, 28/12/1996



Looking up at Jesus

- To my modest wife

Jesus, do you recognize me?

As a yellow skin Chinese

I come from the land where the bread of human blood has been used to bribe the gods

Worshipping gods or buddhas is to annihilate their divinity

Our gods are gilt with gold

From the emperors, saints, warriors and virgins

Countless humans have become the gods

Not repenting but only begging for blessing

One can even see reflection of a god in the urine

I do not know you, Jesus

Your body was too skinny

Every rib was clear and startling

Your gesture of crucifixion was too tragic

Every nerve was suffering

Slightly tilted head

Joined the neck with blood vessels protruding

Hands were powerlessly drooping

Fingers were open

Like the deadwoods in flame

The sins of mankind are too heavy

Your shoulders are too narrow

Can they carry the Cross

That has been imposed to you

The blood has seeped the wood grains

To have brewed the red wine raising mankind

I suspect that you are an illegitimate child

Cruel God tore the hymen

And forced you alone to die a martyr

Was it merely to

Spread God's love.

The believers that have read the Old Testament

Are awed by those commanding sentences
And terrified by that angry God
There is no question, neither discussion
Nor any reason
To believe or not, to obey or not
Wanting to create was at his pleasure
Wanting to destroy was to send a great deluge
God has no image
But sow the seeds of hatred

Genesis was a small self-entertainment
But created an unprecedented sin
Human ancestors, a tree of wisdom and a snake
Forms a cycle manipulated by God
On the day when human were deported
God became a bottomless trash tank
While Jesus
You were not born yet

From the farm manger to a God's cross
A poor baby
Has turned God of hatred into the embodiment of love
With continuous repentance and endless atonement
Love
Has no boundaries and leaves no space.
Like the prehistoric darkness

28/12/1996

From the hands of God

– To my wife

Occasionally

You would focus on listening

What I did not notice

Could be seen by you at a glance

When your hand often

Held that transparent glass

Alone, in which soaking

Were green tea leaves

The milk at breakfast had been cold

At night

You were in bright light

Naked and pale

Tranquilly calling for the fear

And lingering

When Martha died

In a distance I held you

By your body lying under the ice

And were even warmed

Sleepless for a whole night

Now

You may be longing

To receive a dream

From the hands of God

A dream that will make

Chocolates melting into memory

A dream that will make

Tears flowing into mourning

31/10/1999

**The Killer Sneaked in
- To Xia**

Stone would fear
So as a bullet could sigh
You carefully gaze
The traces of the past
So expensive dust
Fascinating the eyes

Having no time is all right
Crying all days
Will ask no more why
Everywhere there are
Evidences of rust and doubt
The safest night
Is also restless

The killer, from the canthus
Quietly sneaked in
He looks like a part of yours
Strange and quiet
Never to let you learn more
About how
The sharp teeth of a mouse
Chew the darkness

23/9/1998

(Translated by Yu ZHANG)

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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, the recipient of the 2010 Nobel Peace Prize, 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, American, Portuguese, Czech and Sydney PEN Centers.

Say No to Tombs

By Jin Yi

(Continued)

In the beginning, Xin thought that the most difficult would be to face Ma Jun, but who knew that it was Rong-er. Jun did not really say anything out of line. It seemed that Xidu had passed on the message, so he still acted as before, laughing and joking. Just on the night before leaving, he expressed his sadness for her decision of living here. He forced a smile and said, "Is it your final decision? Would it be too late to start learning how to take care of yourself?" What he actually meant was that he would be happy to take care of her if she would go back to the hometown. Rong-er casted Xin a significant look and said, "Help me to take care of my brother instead. He is such a brat, but pitifully, the only male in our family, as the root of the offspring."

At the night after they all left, Xin repeated what Ronger said to Xidu, and asked him, "What do you think your sister meant? Did she felt that we had a dubious relationship? She is worried about your family peace, isn't she?"

Xidu looked at her for a while, and then suddenly said, "You feel guilty in your mind."

"You're the one feeling guilty."

"Of course I am, so I felt a sin when hearing something like this. If you do not feel so, you wouldn't even chirp me about it." Xidu sighed, with his head approaching staring at her for a while and said, "If you keep chirping in your mind, we would have an affair sooner or later."

"What?" she boldly focused on such a word as sin, what does it has anything to do with her?

"All right. Tell me, have you ever felt me enticing you?"

"Never thought about that before, but when you mentioned it, it seemed so." She responded bluntly.

"Exactly. I didn't feel you enticing me, but when starting to think about it, I feel that you have enticed me. Then I begin to feel guilty in my mind. The guilt was just faintly simmering, but after my sister came, the more stirred, the more turned to a raging fire." She felt a chill, and began to be diffident. It was over midnight, and Xidu was still in her room. His head was just

a few inches from her, but she did not get angry. Xidu had put her hand into his pocket, but she had not pulled it out. Xidu deliberately clarified her relationship with Ma Jun to let him give up his hope, and she acquiesced. What did these mean?

No, it was not so. They had been innocent. It was Rong-er whose thought had not been clean! She replied coldly, “Don’t put your own mode on me. Are there too few women in Lijiang? Seek it somewhere else.”

“I am afraid to be loved by a woman, unable to get rid of. But you have got a resistance to any poison,” he responded very indecently. “On the other hand, it is said that women of 30s are sexually ferocious like wolves and those of 40s like tigers. You are over 30 years old, but still pretend to be an innocent sheep?”

Obviously he could give her anything except love, while she had everything but love. He said that he was bored, that was all. She shook her head, gave him a sad look, and showed him the door.

He went out and gently shut the door. She breathed a breath like releasing a weight off her shoulders. Her cellphone got a text message from Ma Jun, “I’ve got home, but not my heart.” She was flurried again for a while. Was she not lack of love? Then, did Jun not appear like a refreshing rain after a long drought? Why had she been so determined to refuse him? Was it because she had felt no enthusiasm between her and Jun? Then was enthusiasm between her and Xidu not enough? Why had she refused him so quickly? After all, she was still afraid to arouse passion. Between her and them there was a thin gauze curtain, to see through clearly, but unable to reach each other. She opened her eyes while playing hide and seek with them. Men were dangerous. They all wanted to take advantage of her laxity to catch her. It must be so!

She armed herself up, and hid herself, just like the soldier dressed in camouflage hid in the forest.

She was going to arm and hide herself, like a soldier wearing camouflage to hide in a tropical rainforest.

Then she hid herself by hanging out with friends, Laolang, Shaohong, Luoluo, etc. Zhang Xin had not come back after the New Year, so a couple moved into his room. The couple looked like a husband and a wife though they were not. They met each other in Lijiang, and moved together. After that, their relationship was up and down, like loving enemies. While in the

mood of love, the couple went out with them instead of Zhang Xin to eat, drink and tour together. The friends often liked to talk about them when the couple was absent. Luoluo lived next to them. One day, she mentioned their noises after a few drinks, “They swore so many dirty words when fighting, unclear to know who taught whom. But when making love, they even got the floor shaking, not to mention their screams in bed, getting me to feel the house about to break. No wonder they are born a couple.”

They all laughed. Xin privately admired that Luoluo could sleep well in those noises nightly. Her reply was surprising, “I hardly sleep in that court, just five days a month.”

“How come only five days?” Xin was surprised.

“Five days are my period. I spent other times outside. Well, one could not bring men to one’s own court, right? Rabbit cares about the environment around home.” Luoluo was born in 1987, the year of rabbit. Xin could imagine her mind to be quite open, but not to such an extent. She had to pray Amitabha, for she became older while this world had not changed but herself.

When praying Amitabha, she recalled again what Xidu said, “women of 30s are sexually ferocious like wolves and those of 40s like tigers. You are over 30 years old, but still pretend to be an innocent sheep?” Xidu did not turn up any more since that night. She had repeatedly recalled that his mean words were actually said very frankly in every sentence. After all, he had just been such a heartless person. He walked away carelessly, while she thought he would play hide and seek with her.

3

Luoluo’s body was found and sent back on 1st June, the Children’s Day. The police had talked to Xin for investigation, but Xin had not gone with them to Tiger Leaping Gorge. Laolang said that Luoluo had fell on a big rock under the gorge, like a kite, and that she had got a smiling month while passing to the underworld... Was it for real? Just a few second, could Laolang have observed so much? Although what Laolang had presented was an illusion, it was the truth that Luoluo’s body fell from the cliff onto the ground, a bump leading to the end of a life, whether she smiled or not.

The police finally found Luoluo’s picture in the missing people’s website. In fact, she had run away from home over two years. Her father had been the owner of a large enterprise. When leaving home, she had taken with her millions of money, a casual amount for her family, and then wandered around casually. It had been long for her to stay in Lijiang. Maybe she had not

intended to treat herself well when leaving home. Maybe she had already left her suicide note when leaving home. Luoluo they had known had died long time ago, just like a ghost wandering around them, until her body fell onto the rock under the Tiger Leaping Gorge, where she had been reborn from a ghost and reincarnated into a dead body. One time, only one time, she had smiled to celebrate her own new birth and vanishing. Xin even felt her smile before her death was full of scorn and disdain for the world. Luoluo, whom she had used to looking down upon and always been surprised by, as a dead body at the moment, made Xin feel it deserve fear to be alive.

When the police asked her questions, she only remembered madly shaking her head and saying she had not known anything. Even she herself could not recall she had known a person as Luoluo. Later, the police had no choice but leave. She then found Xidu appearing again when she had not noticed, and sitting not far from her, silently.

She started sobbing, leaning her head on Xidu's shoulder. How could a life, so alive, be exchanged with a dead body? As if it had been still the day before, Luoluo had been asking her with a smile, "How's the man?"

Xidu sent the police away, carried Xin to bed, kissed her, and had invaded her. She did not reject it. She was born as a white board. People with a little experience of playing Mahjong, with a thumb to rob its face, could easily realize that it had no content but a frame. Luoluo's death became her vulnerable point that Xidu went through. Nobody could be blamed for this, but the short and bitter life. As being compelled, everybody should seize the day.

When Luolao was mentioned at the friends' gathering, Laolang said it was the problem of the post 80s generation. As their parents had been busy earning money, children had been ignored and so would like to rebel. Lan Shaohong rolled her eyes as she was one of post 80s as well, but she did not go the same as Luoluo had.

When Sun Yue spoke on behalf of Shaohong, he almost forgot that he actually had been born in 1970s. When people mentioned post 80s' or post 90s', his generation was called the 70s. He did not try to go to the bottom of this distinction. Getting older is not pathetic, but being differentiated. Xin and Xidu knew exactly what it meant, but not Yue.

Xidu became the big brother accepted in the group, for his sense of humor and mean comments. A big brother was not for one to fight for but endowed from one's natural advantages. Xin liked others calling her "big sister-in-law". Only at this time, she could feel Xidu belong to her. They had been together so long, but never even tried to quarrel. Quarrel

needed time and energy, either of which, apparently, they did not have. Xidu was always so docile and obedient as using his toleration for a compensation for the dedication and commitment which he was unable to pay. Xin was always so lenient as she was aware of her own status not to deliberately give him a hard time. If he had been a fickle libertine, it would have been all right, as she might get the desired object after all but feel unnecessary to cherish it. However, when they were together, his wife -would often appear like the sprite of Luoluo. It could unintentionally be mentioned by him or recalled by her that his commitment and determination to his wife could not be replaced by either of beauty and death. Therefore, she was getting more and more addicted.

Until before his leaving, they had the first conflict. Xidu's wife was graduated, and got the residence permit to be able to apply for his reunion. Xidu just told her frankly.

Xin asked, "What about me?"

Xidu was still mean as always, "You will still be yourself."

"Still be myself?"

"I'm sorry. The first time when I hug you, I knew I was wrong, but I it was unable to restrain myself."

Xin slapped on his face, and then looked at him, stubbornly staring at him, "You had the chance to restrain yourself! You were able to restrain yourself! You have emptied me, and then just say sorry to walk away. Even if you could fool me, can you fool yourself?"

Xidu lowered his head without a word. It was his way to go and so was his determination. He conveyed it to her with his lowered head and regret look.

"I had thought about divorce, but I am the only male in my family. Since she has not done anything wrong, how can I betray her?"

Everything went back to common customs. What were common customs? They were the commandments that none of men and women can challenge!

She had compromised again and again, and given in again and again. This time could not be an exemption. After all, she was a human in a mundane world, neither a god nor a devil. Otherwise, she could end up differently.

On the day of his leaving, he handed over his ID card to her, and said, “Open the window and throw it, then I cannot go.” At that moment, she knew that he loved her, but confusingly.

The card was in her hand for a few minutes. If throwing it out, that man would stay, but never belong to her!

She held his card until it was returned to him at airport. He left, and her world collapsed. But he did not understand that. Otherwise, it would be another problem for his personality. He was just the person who left with his flight tickets and ID card, like the opposite of Luoluo, reincarnated from a dead body into a human. The man whom Xin wanted to take into full consideration was neither a dead body nor the living. What she wanted was to respect his choice though the power of choice had been held in her hand.

While parting, she said, “If life is not happy in reality, come back. I’ll be waiting for you,” as if Lijiang was an everlasting pure land, or at least she thought so. In fact, the pure land was not in Lijiang, but in her memory.

The moment of his turning around to leave became the last picture in her life, yellowed with light grey. As time went by, the picture started to fade, but its content remained the same. That was the view of his back, as the first time when they had met and she had seen his back at first. The view became blurring by time, but retrospective.

He never came back!

However, Rong-er and her husband came back once. It was their habit to visit Lijiang every year, as a token of their love.

Rong-er and Xin sat in the same old bar, still with tee and beer. She wanted to trap Rong-er to tell something. Rong-er did not wait but told her, “They have divorced!”

“How come? He loved so deeply.”

Rong-er smiled, looking at Xin like looking at a newborn baby, “Life is about making a living. Do you really think romance could maintain forever? It says that love only exists for 18 months. What about the rest of life?”

“Haven’t you and your husband got along with each other?”

Rong-er smiled again, “it is because we know how to uphold our love at last, but my brother has still been a romantic kid.”

However, he did not come back.

If he had not lived a happy life, he should have come back.

He did not come back, which should have implicated he lived a happy life!

“I have been in Lijiang for two years, but never been to Tiger Leaping Gorge. Are you guys going with me?” asked Xin.

“We have been there, but it’s fine to go there again. Lijiang is changing, but our hearts don’t. That’s why we come back every year. What I said is to come back.”

Right. Lijiang was no longer the place she used to love, but people were still the same as she had known. Xidu was still himself. Although he had not been successful at all, he did not come back for her. That man had been dead before they had known each other, like Luoluo, of which she had just been unaware.

They went together to the Tiger Leaping Gorge. For the first time, she felt so fascinated by the rock down there.

She said, “Tell your brother, I’m going to look for him!”

Then she jumped down.

In the pictures of her life, there was not this dynamic piece, but at least, it was recorded in Rong-er’s life.

As for Xidu or Luoluo, who knows?

(End)

(Translated by Angela HU)

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Jin Yi, a member of ICPC, is a writer and poet who is currently living in Shenzhen, Guangdong.

Birthday Present

By SHENG Hui



(Continued)

4

It was already over seven o'clock in the evening when we were back to our small town. People, who got off from the bus, quickly disappeared into the darkness of night. The lights coming from Chunsheng Grocery were like drowsy eyes. There were two billiard tables at the shop door, at one of which several long-hair young people were playing billiard, wearing nothing on their upper bodies and exposing tattoos of dragon. On the other table, one naked child was climbing up and down. On the bridge people were fully packed with people to get cool night winds, which mixed up with stinky smell from the river.

Song Debao greeted at the sight of my dad: Fuchun, so late back from work?

Dad replied: Yap.

Song Debao asked: what's in your hands?

Dad answered: crabs.

Song Debao said with half trust and half doubt: you can afford to buy crabs?

Dad smiled and said nothing.

As soon as we got home, Dad started to deal with the crabs. After having brushed them over and over again, he poured them all into the pot to boil. The whole house started to fill with a strong stinky smell. Dad opened all doors and windows, but it didn't help at all. The stinky smell was like a ghost lingering in the house for long.

Dad called: Xiao Hai, come over and eat crabs.

I replied: I don't want to eat.

Dad said: these are such good stuffs, pitiful should we do not eat!

I said: it will make you die if eating.

Dad said nothing more. He was eating very slowly, first opening apart the crab legs, smashing them with a little hammer, dragging out the snow-white crab meat and them into soy sauce before putting into his mouth. He then gently sipped one mouthful of rice wine from the edge of the bowl, and closed his eyes, showing great enjoyment out of it. He finished all of the crabs within the period from nine to twelve o'clock at night. Finally, he sucked his fingers and made a burp with great satisfaction.

I was lying in bed with my hands cover over my face and tears coming down quietly. I thought it was all Dad's fault. If he didn't try to buy bargains, how could we buy those half-dead crabs! If the crabs were not dead, my job would have been already sorted out.

In the next few days, Dad always came back home very late. I thought he must try again to borrow money for going to Aunt's house once more. But Dad failed me again and again. Each time he got back home, he went to wines. He drank only one bowl before, but now he could have three or four bowls. He drank to full drowsiness, and tilted over in walking, just like a pineal being blown by winds. He even never talked about my job any more.

Dad was just like a fishbone stuck in my throat. My feeling of disgust towards him gradually turned into hatred. I didn't talk to him any longer. After meals, I would like to hide back into my bedroom. I wrote down all my hatred in the diary. Once I wrote: Dad is totally a useless big loser. Otherwise Mum wouldn't have left him. All he knew was to drink wines, using wines to lull himself. I felt greatly ashamed of having such a dad like him. I wished I were not his son at all. Everybody said that my job was not a problem and I would have a bright future. But what future would I have now? Everything is because of Dad, my loser Dad, who even had no courage to knock at the door. What's the use for him to live? Better to die. Maybe if he died, auntie would show sympathy to me and find a good job for me.

5

The afternoon of July 24th was long and dull, same as every ordinary day. I hid in my bedroom smoking, one cigarette after another. When the last cigarette burned to the end, I burned the butt into my palm. I could not have a tiny hope, feeling my heart being turned into a piece of yellow and dry leaf.

I was sitting in my bedroom, motionless; the darkness, like a cat, jumped into my bosom. After finishing the last cigarette, I finally made a daring decision: to leave, leave Dad, just as Mum had left Dad before, and never come back. This idea made me exciting for long, and I

seemed to see my beautiful life which, as described in the pop songs, I would be sitting back to back with my lover on the floor, listening to music and chatting about wishes....

I gently pushed open Dad's bedroom door, and a whole room of dark coolness came over to me. I didn't turn on the light. I felt my heart turned into a bouncing ball. Once I opened my mouth, my heart would jump out. Beside the bed there were several gunny bags filled with paddy. I knew Dad hid his money in the bags, but didn't know which one particularly. I searched for a while, and finally found a cloth bag. My heart turned icy cold when I touched it. After opening it, I found with surprise that there was two hundred and sixty yuan in it. I took two hundred and fifty, and quickly put back the other ten yuan to its original place. Getting back to my own room, I relieved with a long sigh and started to write a letter.

I wrote as follows:

Dad,

When you are reading this letter, I already left, forever left. Please do not try to find me. Even if you find me, I won't come back with you. Many thanks for your grace of raising me in the past years. Just forget that you once had a son like me.

Xiao Hai

I was getting more nervous when I went back to Dad's room again. My hands were sweating, and I was feeling that everything in the room, light bulbs, gum boots, umbrella and rice barrels, were looking at me with their eyes wide open. A gust of wind closed the door with a big bang, which made me feel like being stabbed by a knife. I placed the letter under Dad's pillow, moving as stiffly as a puppet. At the moment of getting out of the room, I got to have a soft heart and took fifty yuan out of my pocket to put back.

While packing up, I heard sounds outside the door.

Dad was back.

Dad came back with the help of Uncle Li.

Dad's face was covered with blood.

I was shocked and asked in surprise: what's the matter?

Uncle Li answered: your Dad was knocked down by a truck.

My face was hot, as hot as a ball of flame.

Uncle Li and I helped Dad to his bed, and I fetched a basin of water to wash off the blood from Dad's face.

Uncle Li said: I mentioned to send him to the hospital but he refused.

I didn't dare to look at Dad's eyes, and said with my head down: Let me take you to the hospital.

Dad gently shook his head, saying nothing.

Uncle Li told me the whole story of the accident.

Uncle Li said: I went off from work with your Dad, and he invited me to drink at a pub. He was quite unusual today. He generally talks few and wouldn't make a fart even with three beatings of the sticks. But today, he was so talkative. He also mentioned that you would get a job soon. However, after finishing drinking and getting out of the pub, he threw himself onto a truck. Luckily the driver stopped the truck in time, otherwise....

Upon hearing Uncle Li's sayings, my tears couldn't help dropping.

After Uncle Li left, the room returned back to silence. I fed Dad with some rice with water, and then sat in Dad's room with my head down like a criminal.

I didn't know how long time passed before Dad said in a low voice: I am all right, and you can go to sleep.

6

The moon was full and round, and the moonlight spread over my bed like salt. I couldn't get into sleep for a long time, rolling over and over again like frying chestnuts in the pan. I was scared that Dad would see the letter, but had no way out. I was stretching up my ears like a rabbit, trying to listen to the moving in the next room, and waiting. In the normal days, Dad would get up to release himself. I thought today wouldn't be an exception. I was not quite sure if Dad was asleep or not, as I didn't hear snoring. I must try best to take out the letter from underneath his pillow.

The clouds were moving slowly to cover the moon. I heard some sounds in the next room. That was Dad coughing. The coughing sound was getting closer and closer, and then I heard my bedroom door was pushed open. I quickly closed my eyes. Dad walked very gently to my bed side. I felt some itches on my eyelids. Dad stood there for a while, and he tried to touch my face. But fearing that I could be awakened, he gave up and went out of the door softly. Dad didn't go back to his room, but went out of the house gate. I opened my eyes. I thought Dad must go out to release himself. It was an extremely good chance. I jumped out the bed like a grasshopper, rushed to Dad's room, and took out the letter from underneath the pillow. My hands were shaking very hard, fearing that Dad might suddenly appear. Getting back to my own room and lying down, my heart was still beating mad. I heard one dog-barking in the village, and then barking came up everywhere. After quite a while, Dad still didn't come back. I suddenly got a bad omen. It was so late now, where would Dad go? Could it be...? I didn't dare to think further.

I jumped out of bed again, running mad towards the highway behind the village. It was cool outside, and I was like a tree leaf in the wind. When I was running through the woods, countless mosquitos began to flying as well. I ran faster and faster, with tears full of my eyes. I noticed a shadow beside the highway. He was sitting on the ground, with cigarette light on and off, as if he was weeping.

I came to a stop. The moon was still hiding behind the clouds, the night sky was cool and quiet with several ancient stars scattering. Fireflies were flying up and down in the trees, and bursts of frog singings were one after another just as transmitters were working over there. I could feel a touch of coldness when the wind was blowing upon my body.

I heard sounds of a truck, and after seconds, the harsh lights shot directly over, like an angry beast.

Dad had a deep puff of the smoke, threw it away, and stood up.

I shouted with tears: Dad, let's go home, let's go home.

7

On July 25th, my 19th birthday finally arrived. At early evening, it began to rain, raining as a sewing machine was put on the roof. Dad came back home, with one fish and several cane shoots in his hand. When it was getting dark, Dad started to prepare dinner and I was sitting behind the kitchen range setting up fires. The dinner was not very rich, only with stewed fish, cane shoots stir-fried with pork, salted duck eggs and rice porridge. But I felt extremely

warm.

I poured some wine for Dad, and one bowl for myself as well. I said: Dad, I have figured it out, I will not depend on someone else, but want to try my luck in Guangzhou. Dad was looking at me, and his eyes were full of comforts. We touched our bowls and drank up the wine.

At that night, my sleep was like a mass of fairy floss. In the next morning when I opened my eyes, the rays of light in my room were as gentle, sweet and thick as honey. Dad came in, and brought me my favorite Fried glutinous rice cakes.

Dad said: eat more; otherwise you cannot get it to eat when you are away.

I said: Dad, how do you know I like it?

Dad replied: of course I know, because you are my son!

After breakfast, I started to pack up. I was slow in packing up, and Dad was sitting in front of the house smoking in silence. He didn't hurry me up. When we were waiting bus at the station, Dad said: it's not easy when you are alone away from home; please write back if any problem. I felt like to say something, but could not. Dad took out all money he had with him and stuffed them into my hand. I said: I had enough with me, and you can have them for yourself. He didn't say anything, but threw the money on the ground and quickly disappeared into the crowd.

(End)

(Translated by CHEN Biao)

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SHENG Hui, born in Jiangsu Province in 1978, a member of ICPC, has published novels, short stories, proses and poems for over one million words. He is currently serving as a professional writer at Foshan Arts Institute, Guangdong, China.

The Death of My Father Guo Xiaochuan

By GUO Xiaolin



One night in the late autumn of 1976, poet Guo Xiaochuan unexpectedly died during his journey.

At that time, the "Gang of Four" was arrested just a dozen days ago, and Guo Xiaochuan's 57-year-old birthday had just passed one month and a half.

According to the conclusions made by the investigation team set up jointly by the Central Organization Department and the Ministry of Public Security, Guo Xiaochuan died of suffocation from a large amounts of toxic gases produced from the beddings' burning ignited by a cigarette butt dropped in bed as he had been smoking after taking sleeping pills for going to sleep. It was an accident.

Over the years, however, some of our family members and his old friends have doubted about the cause of his death. One should say that their doubts are reasonable. The reasons are firstly that Guo Xiaochuan's death was too coincident in its time: just about a dozen days after the fall of the "Gang of Four", when the central authority had internally decided the he would take a leading position in its cultural sector; secondly, as he had been fighting the minions of the "gang of four" who had dominated the cultural sector during the medium-late period of the Cultural Revolution, the "Gang of Four" had hated him very much; thirdly as he was just on his returning journey to Beijing, alone with chronic disease, it was easy to make it; fourthly, as the Central Organization Department and the Ministry of Public Security were still controlled by the minions of the "Gang of Four", people could not really trust in the conclusions by the personnel they had appointed.

A Vice Premier of the State Council at that time, who had been an old superior of Guo Xiaochuan, said bitterly to us: "Your father was murdered!" Until a few years ago, writer Huang Qiuyun, an old friend of Guo Xiaochuan, still published an article on Xinmin Evening News that considered the cause of Guo Xiaochuan's death in doubt.

Although I mentioned that we had doubted about the cause of his death in a letter to Hu Yaobang in early 1978, Comrade Hu Yaobang criticized me, and expressed his trust in the conclusions made by the Central Organization Department and the Ministry of Public Security. In the later years, however, I have calmed down to think about it, and felt it more and more

unlikely that Guo Xiaochuan had been murdered.

Why?

Firstly, Guo Xiaochun had just occasionally been drawn into the vortex of the power struggles, but never deeply into the high-level. It had been impossible for him to grasp some vital, core secrets so that the "Gang of Four" had to murder him. Secondly, as the "Gang of Four" had been unprepared for their arrests, I am afraid that there had no time for them to start killing those as they had wished; thirdly, there had been many people like Guo Xiaochuan from all walks of life who had come forward struggling with the "Gang of Four" and their minions. Could they kill all of them before they stably mastered the state apparatus? In literary and art circles, there has been none of others with such an incident but in safety. More importantly, Guo Xiaochuan's life had already been in such a precarious state with a possibility of accident at any time that the "Gang of Four" had got no need to kill him from their point of view.

Another point is that we were lack of realization that his diseases had been very serious.

Today, after three decades, we have held many of the materials and evidences that were unknown, and so can fully conclude that his unfortunate death had been largely related to his suffering from a variety of serious diseases. His suffering from serious diseases had been completely caused by the repeated punishments and poor living conditions during the Cultural Revolution. Therefore, one can say that the Cultural Revolution was the root cause of his misfortune. In other words, it was the evil Cultural Revolution that killed him.

As early as in 1959 before the Cultural Revolution, he had contacted hepatitis due to the long-term of hard overwork and nutritional deficiencies during the "Three Difficult Years". Since then this disease had wrapped him and never been cured. In October 1964, he had joined a work team of People's Daily for "Socialist Education Movement" to the countryside. After a month, he had had to return to Beijing for medical treatment due to an acute exacerbation of hepatitis,

In early 1967, he had been sized by the rebels at People's Daily for criticism, assaulted at first, and then punished to do the cleaning duty for 8 months. In September of that year, he had been taken by the rebels from Chinese Writers Association and held in their "bullpen", the temporary prison, for denouncement and assault. Thus, his hepatitis had recurred once more, and his condition had been so serious that the rebels had had to hold him alone in a small room, with someone to take care of him in particular. Thanks to that worker with a good heart, he had been slowly recovered.

Since he went to the cadre school in January 1970, the harsh environment and extra physical labor had further aggravated his illness. In 1973, in addition to his old trouble with hepatitis and long-term insomnia, he had been also examined of suffering from coronary heart disease, hypertension, atherosclerosis embolism, etc. Under such physical conditions, he had got none of his family members to take care of him on one hand, and, on the other hand, he had suffered from the persecution by the "Gang of Four" because of his actively writing. He had been subjected to the "Central Committee's special investigation" on extremely ridiculous charges up to a year, without personal freedom, and his spirit has been hit very hard. In 1975, an old doctor nearby the cadre school told others, "this old comrade is very ill, and I'm afraid that he would not survive long... "

While suffering from serious diseases, moreover, he had got some bad habits constantly damaging his body. Because he had adhered for years to his writing at night after working during the day, he had had to rely on sleeping pills due to his suffering from the long-term insomnia since his 30s. Over the years, he had taken a dose in several times or dozens more than that for an ordinary individual so that the toxins in those drugs had slowly been accumulated in his body, resulting in the late situations that he had often experienced hallucination, confused theosophy, unsteady gaits, etc.

Another of his bad habits had been his smoking, one or two packs of cigarettes a day, regardless of time. He had been smoking as soon as his getting up, before going to sleep at night, and even after taking the sleeping pills. In the beginning at the cadre school in 1970, he had been found several times dropping his cigarette butt into bed to have burned his clothing and mosquito net because of his falling asleep while smoking.

In the end of 1975, he had been in Linxian County where it had happened that his cigarette butt had ignited the quilt in the guest house. Later he had been admitted to the county hospital because of his serious illness. In the summer of 1976, because of cigarette butt igniting of the quilt, the medical personnel had found the smokes from his ward, and they could not have shouted him to wake up nor pushed the door open, but had to break the door and carry him out. At that moment he had still been asleep, but a large portion of his chest had been heated into redness by the smoldering quilt.

It is because of the Cultural Revolution that Guo Xiaochuan had been repeatedly tortured both mentally and physically, resulting in the continuous deterioration of his health. Under the conditions then, it had been impossible for him to get a good curing and recuperating in hospital, while his family had been unable to take care of him. In addition, he had not minded

it himself but often called himself a "survivor". In Autumn Song, the last of his famous poems, he had stated: "One day, I will become a smoke, smoking gas rising up to the sky..." It was not that "the prophecy has unfortunately come true" but that he had realized his own physical conditions and bad habits, aware of the possibility of that perhaps one day he would have died of fire due to his smoking ...

Without the Cultural Revolution, what Guo Xiaochuan had suffered would never have happened. Thus, one can say that it was a decade of the Cultural Revolution that had claimed his health and his old age that he should be supposed to enjoy, but also that had deprived of his opportunity to write more of good works.

It should be established to say that the Cultural Revolution was the deeper cause of Guo Xiaochuan's accident.

Gong Liu, a late poet, wrote an article painfully mourning Guo Xiaochuan, and he quoted a poem by Du Fu: "To more winds and waves on rivers and lakes, the vessels fear loss and fall." During those precarious years when the disaster victims were moaning everywhere, for the majority of the masses and intellectuals, who was not living in fear? Who might not at any time lose one's family, one's health, or even one's life? Guo Xiaochuan's death, although being extremely sorrowful to us, the relatives, was just one of ten millions under the background of the Cultural Revolution when the unnatural deaths had been over ten millions people. If those corpses were piled together, I am afraid to be even higher than Beijing's Jingshan, right? But today, three decades later, some people seem to have completely forgotten that the horrible disasters of the Cultural Revolution Chinese ever occurred, and some even believe that originally "The Elderly" had launched the Cultural Revolution for China's goodness! Alas, the insects in summer cannot talk of ice! To them what can one say?

2006

(Translated by Yu ZHANG)

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GUO Xiaolin is a poet and member of ICPC based in Beijing, China.

One Day for Liang Xin and His Workmates

By ZHANG Mingshan

(Continued)

The job went quite smoothly afterwards. At about noon, they finished the installation of the steel fixer, and in two or three hours they could complete the connecting the flat steel.



Lunch was still steamed buns and a dish of stir-fried pork with black salted turnip as usual. As a matter of fact, the so-called stir-fried pork with black salted turnip was the black salted turnip mainly boiled in water with some pieces of cracklings from extracting the pork fat, only one or two pieces in each dish, but hardly with any drops of oil in it. The meal cost at the construction site canteen was controlled between four to five yuan per day per person, and the workers could not afford good meals anyway. Everybody took the dish and steamed-bun back to his own dorm in a hurry. This period of time was very precious to everybody. For this one-hour meal time, we could spend half an hour for lunch and for the rest of time we could have a rest to relax our stressed and painful bodies.

Before starting to work in the afternoon, Liang Xin and his workmates got all materials ready and put them in the dump truck for the next working well, so that they could save some time. If they come back to get the materials after finishing the current job in this working well, it would take them double time. Liang Xin and workmates usually would like to work in a slow mood, as nobody could endure to work in a fast speed every day for more than ten hours. However, it was not the case today. They had to complete the job before the cable installation team started to work tomorrow. If not, nobody could have an excuse. It made them to quicken their working speed.

The job in the afternoon went quite smoothly as well. As Liang Xin and Fu Hai were unloading materials, Xin Fu had already finished working on one pole of flat steel according to the measures. Fu Hai quickly kept the processed flat steel fixed and firm, and Liang Xin turned on the welding machine to start welding. After finishing the flat steel, Xin Fu went to the next working well to install supporting fixture. This kept their job going quicker. After two o'clock in the afternoon, Liang Xin and Fu Hai completed the installation in the first working well, and quickly moved the tools including the welding machine to the second well. The second working well was a small one. With the experience of working in the first well, the job in the second well went much easier. A little after six o'clock, they completed the job in the second well and started to move tools to the third. Thanks God! Though totally exhausted,

they felt delighted to see that they could complete the urgent job which they thought could not finish as expected.

At seven o'clock, evening came, dim and dark. Winds and snow were still blowing up and down. The snow reflection cast some light to the evening, and helped people to see vaguely things on the ground. Before supper, Liang Xin and his two workmates had moved all supporting fixtures and tungsten lamps to the third and fourth wells. After supper, Liang Xin called his two workmates to move clumsily towards the working wells. They plugged the two tungsten lamps first, and then moved the tools and materials into the well. The two lamps kept the working well bright and warm for them to work there. Everything was ready, and the over-time work in the evening would start immediately.

As Liang Xin and Fu Hai saw Xin Fu was rolling his own tobacco powders, they approached and rolled one for each. Ever since last year, Hard Gate cigarette stopped its production, which the workmates smoked most and it cost them only two and half yuan a pack. The other brands such as Red Golden Dragon and Grand Harvest, at the cost price, didn't have the same good taste. For other good-taste cigarettes, it would be at least four or five yuan a pack, which Liang Xin and his workmates could not afford. Therefore, most of the workmates changed to the tobacco leaves. They asked workmates to bring tobacco leaves from Lingyi where the strong but cheap tobacco leaves were produced.

Upon getting to the working well, Liang Xin and his workmate were not hurried to start. They had a puff of smoke first to relax. Usually there was a fixed quantity for overtime work, and the team leader wouldn't come over to monitor the workers. As the job in the working wells were urgent, the team leader lived nearby and there was a hope of finishing it as expected, the leader wouldn't come to monitor. So it was unnecessary for them to work without stop as they did in the daytime. As long as they made it faster in working, the process wouldn't be slow. Liang was extremely reluctant to work overtime tonight. He had been frozen over ten hours in the winds and snow during the day. Though having cotton underwear, cotton jacket and trousers, and even a cotton overcoat with a hood, he didn't have any warmth on his body after one day's work. He wore a pair of imitated military cotton boots which were already wet with the mud in the working well. His toes were frozen to pains as if cats were biting them. Liang Xin, exhausted, was sitting on the fixtures smoking. His stomach, filled with cold air the whole day, was in on-and-off pains. Liang Xin usually didn't drink. But at tonight's supper, he drank one cup of warm alcohol to drive away coldness. At this moment, he didn't feel warm at all, but gusts of shivering instead.

Fu Hai, due to longtime construction work, damaged his body as a wheelbarrow which would

collapse with one move. His face might be turned yellow because of exhaust after over ten hour work in the day time. Once lying down, Fu Hai would be murmuring in his dream up to daybreak. When the weather turned bad, Fu Hai's whole body would be in great pains and he had to live with pain killers. Overloaded labor for many years overdrew his physical strength. But how could he manage to live if not working? Because being born in a poor family, he married at the age of forty a woman with one son and one daughter from her previous marriage. And now these two got married and formed their own families, but his own son was younger than twenty years old and studying at school. Fu Hai had to work further for some years to get his son form a family before he could have a relief from hard work. Fu Hai and Xin Fu were from the same village. They worked the whole year round at construction sites except New Year holidays, wheat harvest and autumn harvest times.

Fu Hai was the only one having his own special treats in the installation team. He was nearly sixty years old. He usually had some tofu with salt for a day. Sometimes he might buy some dry soybeans or peanuts to boil with salt for several days. It would be a luxury for his to spend one yuan or so to buy a dish from the site canteen. Xin Fu's hobbies were to smoke the tobacco leaves he brought from his hometown, and to drink some bag-packed wine at the cost of four yuan per kilo for lunch and supper. As he put it, he could work only with the support of drinking wines. It was cold the whole day today and the pains from the injuries in his arms were staying there all the time. If without the team leader's order to work overtime, Xin Fu, with a nickname of "Money Flea", could have been got into his warm electric quilts.

Xin Fu was the most accountable man in the construction site to work overtime. Nobody heard of his complaints. Some workmates like Xin Fu and Fu Hai were from the mountain regions. They could not hope for incomes from the fields. So they made their living by taking construction jobs when they were not busy with their field work. Due to expenses for two sons' weddings, Xin Fu owed a huge debt. The two sons had already set up their own families, and had tight lives as well. Xin Fu lived with his wife and daughter. Xin Fu had to try his best to earn money to pay the debt and daily expenses. What's more, his daughter was studying at university and needed a lot to spend. While other people would go back home at wheat harvest and autumn harvest times, Xin Fu spent more than three hundred days except several days new year holidays at the construction site to work hard to earn more. As Xin Fu had no skills, he was paid fifty yuan a day. His annual earning could be sixteen thousand yuan including all overtime payment, which could cover ten thousand yuan expenses for his daughter at university and three to five thousand yuan for his wife to buy chemical fertilizers, insect killing liquids and family expenses.

Though reluctant, but they still had to work. Liang Xin called them up and all the three started

again to work. If any delay, they had to make it up by themselves. After supper, the team leader said: "The job has to be done by daybreak. Tomorrow's cable installation could not be delayed just because of us. Otherwise there would be nothing good to anybody!" It would rather terrible if they really worked up to daybreak tomorrow and spend another ten hours in the snow. According to the current progress, nobody knows if overtime work would be needed or not tomorrow?

Liang Xin made measurements for the fixtures with a steel rolling ruler, and Xin Fu followed to drill holes on the well wall to fix up the supporting fixture. At the same time, Fu Hai finished setting up the hanging fixture and waited Liang Xin to come over and weld. Liang Xin welded the first hanging fixture, and Fu Hai started to set up another one. The three people were working as busy as a spinning top without one second to be idle. At about ten thirty, Xin Fu made the supporting fixture fixed and firm, and used a spanner to make flat steel for ground connections. After Liang Xin finished welding the hanging fixture, Fu Hai came back to fix the processed flat steel to the connection spot. And Liang Xin started to weld them one after another.

Thanks God! Just past midnight, the job in the third working well was completed. The three quickly moved tools to the fourth. Fu Hai, who wanted to make a breath after the tiring work, was shivering with gusts of northern winds. The three became relaxed after the tools were moved over. Fu Hai felt jumping pains in his injured big toe. Fu Hai suggested to get close to the lamps to warm themselves and have some smoke. Xin Fu agreed and came over as well. Liang Xin felt pains in his stomach. He tried to hold up to work till now. He followed them to the lamps too to have a rest and warm hands.

"Master Liang, could you please go and ask if we could stop and come back to work tomorrow morning," said Xin Fu with a worried face. "We have been freezing for one day and a half night. The second half of the night is so freezing. Fu Hai's feet were injured. It could be a big trouble if it turned into frostbites."

"I will go and ask," Liang Xin frowned his eyebrow and said with hesitation. "I have pains too in my stomach." Liang Xin walked out of the working well, and went to a sheltering place to release himself. The winds and snow didn't seem to reduce their strength in the second half of night. The winds were blowing against the electricity wires with scary screams. Though crouched in a low place, Liang Xin was still hit by winds and snow which were whirling and whipping on his face and ass like needles being punched into him aimlessly. Liang Xin stayed there over ten minutes and felt better before he got up and walked to the team leader's dorm.

Against the winds and snow, Liang Xin walked into the team leader's dorm. He woke up the leader and told him their suggestion.

“No way,” Mr. Zhu, the team leader, interrupted him immediately and shouted without stop. “Even working to your last breath, you have to finish the job before the others come in to work tomorrow morning! Don't tell me your reasons; tell your reasons to the boss!” With these words, the team leader pulled up his quilt and closed his eyes, leaving Liang Xin over there by himself.

Liang Xin walked back to the work well with heavy steps. In fact, Liang Xin understood as well that Mr. Zhu, the team leader, had no way out either. With tight schedule and less workers, nobody had a better way to sort it out. The Electricity Industry Bureau always has tight schedules as their jobs are military-styled; projects should be completed according to their schedules. As for fewer workers, it is the responsibility of the boss. The boss was always afraid of having too many workers to be idle around. Therefore, they always had no enough workers on working sites.

Mr. Zhu, the team leader, though having primary-school education, often pronounced some excellent sayings such as “wolves are born to eat meat while dogs are born to eat shits. People are categorized in the same way”, and “Skills are superior; upper-class people depend on their fates to have good lives while lower-class people depend on their skills to survive”. It is quite true. Take the Electricity Bureau as an example. Let alone the cadres, the clerks enjoyed high salaries and did no physical jobs. All the jobs are done by the temporary workers who came late and went off early just earning their daily wages. However, those like Liang Xin who worked for the sub-contractors worked hardest; they had to work more than ten hours a day and often worked over time.

Liang Xin was angry while thinking that the boss must be hugging his wife and having a sweet dream at the moment. Though team leaders and workers were employees, team leaders enjoyed salaries twice as much as the ordinary workers, special meals and much lighter work. Was it really true that the difference between people was the same as that between wolves and dogs as Mr. Zhu said? Was it true that people had to be divided into meat-eating wolves and shit-eating dogs?

“Skills are superior” needed to be considered from different views. Liang Xin was an electrician himself, but he worked sometimes as a welder. Though, with a little bit more for wages, his health was deteriorating as a result. In this way, “Skills are superior” turned into “people with skills work more”.

Liang Xin felt waves of anger within while walking: in 1989, he had been sentenced for 8-year imprisonment due to sympathy to democratic movement and dissatisfaction to social circumstances. It was hard to imagine that the lives of the 1989 victims and long imprisonments of the democratic received returns with depth of social darkness and corruption.

Liang Xin felt pretty heavy at heart upon these thinking: after he had imprisoned and sacked from his public position, the whole family had been supported by his wife's salary alone. However, his wife was unemployed now and had to pay superannuation every year. Their kid, due to less parenting, ended up in doing poor in schools and hoping nothing. So the heavy burden of the whole family was on his shoulders alone. He had previously been thinking of doing some writings in his rest of life so as to push social development; however, with current circumstances, he had no time to write, and what's the use of writings in such a social situation of pervasive materialism, and furthermore even if he had time and ability to write, who could support the family once the political situation got tightened? Men of letters are no use at all. The old Chinese saying is really right.

Liang Xin was totally dejected when he went back to the work well. He passed over the instruction of the team leader. The three complained a lot, but soon returned to the intense work. At three o'clock next morning, the supporting structure in the work well was finally installed. In the next half an hour they carried all tools back to the storage. All of the three were completely exhausted to the edge of collapse. But they won precious one and half hours for themselves. How happy to sleep one and half hours in warm electric quilts!

The three dragged their nearly-collapsed bodies, climbed onto their beds to lie down and went into sleep nearly at the same time. Within these one and half hours, there was no social injustice, no forced overtime work, and no worries during the day time. This was a true harmonious place, harmonious land. However, it's a great pity that this period of time belonging to them was too short.

(End)

(Translated by CHEN Biao)

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ZHANG Mingshan, born in Shandong Province in 1963, is a member of ICPC, who was arrested and sentenced two years imprisonment due to his support to the 1989 pro-democratic movement.

Racing against Terror

By ZHOU Qing



Honorable Mr. President,
Honorable Delegates of PEN Centers,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good Afternoon. I am very much grateful to the Italian PEN for your invitation of me to this conference in such a beautiful city - Milan. It is the first time for me to have attended a conference as a writer after 17 years of being labeled as a “dangerous element” by the Communist Party of China since I was arrested in the wake of June Fourth Massacre in 1989. The reason that I am here emphasizing my identity as a writer is not only because this opportunity may be considered as a comfort and compensation to my inhuman life in the jail for two years and eight months, where I lost six teeth and got a permanent cripple arm, but also because my personality have been defined as a “fearful carrier of viruses” in the society of China. As a matter of fact, I started writing in early 1980’s and got a prize for my publication even at my teenage. I have never stopped my writing since my release from jail, and ever nominated for some International literature awards for several times.

Since I was released from jail, my name has not been allowed to appear in the media in Mainland China for a considerably long time. When it appeared for the first time, the character of my given name had to be split into two parts as Jing-li. Chinese literati had been known to preserve a tradition that one should not change one’s name in whatsoever situation. In today’s China, however, the authorities have censored the names of many writers as carefully as to prevent the pestilences from occurring. More dreadfully, a few members of the Independent Chinese PEN Centre have been severely sentenced in prison just for their different opinions from those of the Chinese Communist regime.

On the contrary, if one could behave oneself obediently toward the Chinese communist regime, a writer in such a corrupted state of authoritarianism would get unthinkable material comforts and spiritual debauchery from it. For instance, a woman communist writer is said to have got an author’s remuneration 10 times higher than the normal one for a short story of hers despite being a privileged author who has already enjoyed, even if she would do nothing any more, a good salary, a big apartment, a full job insurance and other benefits which the most of Chinese citizens cannot have. What would such a writer say about the situation in China? What would the Chinese Communist regime do for such a kind of hack writers? To the second question, the cultural and propaganda departments of the Chinese Communist regime

have done utmost to support and propagandize them both in China and abroad. There are famous writers, such as Yu Hua and Mo Yan, who have been written the complementary works without any troubles in China, and who, at the same time, have also been nominated for the Nobel Prize in literature. Their identities as a member of the Chinese Communist Party, or even a member of the Chinese People's Political Consultation Committee, have however been completely ignored by the Western society. Therefore, they have chances to eat everything, enjoying not only the governmental banquets at the People's Congress in China but also the great culture meals abroad. An extreme case is Mr. Yu Hua who visited Italy not long ago, as you might have known. He announced to the Italian media that publication in China is now very liberal, and that his publication has never been censored at all, bla, bla. That was of course a ridiculous announcement. Hence, I would like to express my respect to Italy PEN again for giving this opportunity to a member of Independent Chinese PEN Centre in the present Italian-Chinese Culture Year.

When I am now writing this, as a matter of fact, I am still wondering whether or not I will finally be present in this conference. It is well known that many Chinese writers, particularly members of our Independent Chinese PEN Centre, including our president Dr. Liu Xiaobo, are not permitted by the Chinese government to be abroad for participation in any activity or even for a private tour. At the end of 1999 when I returned from a visit to Russia, I was detained at the border in Xinjiang Autonomous Region for more than ten days. The reason could be only that I was not supposed to have returned to China.

I believe that terrifying and lying are the two most important tools that all the totalitarian states employed to maintain their legitimacy and continuity. The dictators can always take their advantages in controlling the resources almost in a whole society to occupy, override and threaten the private spaces of the society and its citizens at any costs. Those in power have just made use of the common fears of publics to protect their interests obtained from corruption and preserve their sources of continual corruption. Meanwhile, they constantly produce lies to distort the history and reality. The terrors and lies are spreading over whole China so as to seriously pollute and drug the people in various social groups and the society as a whole. Hence, I define it as the State Terrorism.

It is during the past 17 years since June Fourth Massacre in 1989 that this State Terrorism has been getting more and more threatening so as to reach the peak of degenerating Chinese people as a whole. The State Terrorism behaves like a carrier of virus. As it extends and expands without limitation, it will finally devour all the living spaces of the people, freedom of expression, and future as well as spiritual development. Now, I will tell you the story of my life during the past 17 years, both inside and outside jail to explain State Terrorism. I believe

that my case should be a vivid example for realizing and understanding the situation in China, particularly for a writer there.

In 1989, I was studying in a class of writers at university before the massacre. When the student petition movement was touched off by the death of the former Party General Secretary Mr. Hu Yaobang, my indifferent and indolent life was turned to become intensive and meaningful accordingly. I wrote and put up a poster to protest the editorial of People's Daily published on the 26th April 1989 that condemned the student petition movement. This poster became therefore the root for later persecution against me. When I was sentenced to jail, the first item of my crime in my court verdict was that I had illegally published a newsletter of Democracy and Freedom, for which I was the chief editor, with a printout of 1000 copies. Moreover, I had drafted several posters for the students, mobilizing the student's strike, etc. Obviously, this is a typical case of persecution because of expressing one's opinion.

In the wake of the June Fourth Massacre, I fled though completely penniless. A student gave me some money from the earlier donation. An unlettered peasant couple also helped me on my way of fleeing and said: "We can see that you must be a student, and so please hide at our home. If the police come, we will let our dogs face them while you will escape from our back door to the mountains." However, I was aimless in my fleeing and also very much worried about my girlfriend at the Xi'an Jiaotong University. Therefore I decided to return to Xi'an, just for a look at her.

I was beaten down in front of the university gate. What I faced was various types of guns pointing at me. I was immediately punished by handcuffing my thumbs. Seeing the blood full of my face, my girlfriend helplessly screamed for help, "A student being arrested! A student being arrested!" but none of the students playing football nearby appeared to care of it.

My first place in jail was the detention center at the Fifth Department of Xi'an Public Security Bureau. That was the most infamous one amongst all the jails in China where most of the prisoners had handcuffs and shackles for they were waiting to be executed. There I accompanied more than 30 of them.

The director of the detention center had a nickname as Tiger Wang. He often broadcasted like this: "I will make you a subject for three changes! Your wife will change her husband, your son will change his surname, and you from dog fucking will change your mind!"

As so many were locked up in the same cell, fights, tortures and sexual attacks among the prisoners have frequently been happening. There were many prisoners sentenced to death for

different types of crimes who enjoyed overriding, beating and humiliating the others. The student prisoners like me were often the victims of those attacks. We had to fight back to defend ourselves since the detention administration often neglected those attacks intentionally. Once with a wooden piece, I broke the head of a death-sentenced prisoner who had always humiliated the student prisoners. However, the police punished me by handcuffing my hands tightly behind my back. I could neither eat nor sleep. The only way to survive was to be fed up by kind roommates. After six days of such punishment, I could hardly withdraw my hands from my back.

There were many different kinds of tortures amongst the prisoners. It is never possible for anyone in a normal and rational society to imagine how brutal these tortures could be. One of the tortures was called “vaccination” carried out during the summer time. It was to make a cut on an arm of the victim, and then put many fleas, bugs and cooties into the wound. After several days, the victim became “vaccinated” with a reluctance swelling on the wound like a tomato. But there were hundreds of visible bugs moving inside. It was really terrible.

Another brutal torture was beating one’s buttocks with a plastic hose until they became heavy swelled. I witnessed that a prisoner was tortured in this way to a very severe extent just for his smoking without permission. He died of the infection of his wound but his death was certified as a natural one due to some disease.

On 26th of September 1990, I was transferred to a Labor Camp for so called “Reeducation-through-Labor” (Laodong Jiaoyang) in Fengxiang County, Shaanxi Province. There had been more than one hundred prisoners in its June Forth Special Team, prior to my arrival. The prisoners were teachers, engineers, students, workers as well as hoboes and beggars. In November of the same year, I learnt from the only newspaper available in jail that the Communist regime made its most efforts for the prolongation of so-called Most-Favored-Nation status from USA. They published such a statement day by day as to claim that nobody was locked up in jail any more for the June Forth Movement. Due to the lack of information in jail, I thought that the international society must have been cheated by such a lie and that Chinese intellectuals had been too weak and obedient to do anything against it. Under such a completely closed circumstance, this radical mentality of mine became more emotional. Then I made an extreme decision that I should set a precedent to escape from the Labor Camp and then flee abroad. Then I could tell the world the truth.

Accordingly I started looking for partners of jailbreak. Mr. He was a group leader among the prisoners. He told me that he wanted to escape as well, because he was missing his girlfriend. I thought he might be a good partner since he was a group leader who had much more

convenience to get necessary tools than I had. There was another man who was just arrested from a former jailbreak. So there became a team of three persons for jailbreak.

The plan for jailbreak was carried out as such. The group leader, Mr. He, was able to get a piece of steel-saw hidden in a sausage transported into the jail. My responsibility was to saw off the sticks of the security fence on the window. I had also utilized my bed sheet, to make an eight-meters long rope together with my two partners, which would be utilized to get over the high wall of the prison.

All in a sudden, four hours before the planned moment, a group of fierce policemen rushed into our cell. They easily discovered the off-sawed window fence, as well as the eight-meters-long rope. I was immediately put into a isolated cell with heavy guards. The rest of the prisoners held a meeting, and decided to burden me for any charge. I realized later on that the so-called team of three for jailbreak was a trap from the beginning.

The consequence of this attempt of jailbreak was obvious. I was guarded in an isolation cell for a long time, and then punished with a prolongation of my imprisonment for five months. The reasons for prolongation of imprisonment were given as follows:

- Bad and stubborn attitude in the isolation cell;
- Refusing to confess my crime of jailbreak;
- Singing and shouting loudly to disturb the integrations;
- Spreading continuously in the Labor Camp my arguments against the June Forth Massacre in 1989;
- Collecting a name list of imprisoned students and teachers and trying to get it out of the Labor Camp.

Hence, I spent two years and eight months in jail.

As soon as I was released from the jail, I was carefully watched in the society. For instance, I was told that I must stay at home for several days because the President Bill Clinton was visiting China. I became furious and told the police, “Bill Clinton’s visit must not disturb my ordinary life. If you continue to tail me, I will disturb Mr. Clinton as well!” Later on, a kind neighbor told me that there had been several new peddlers and strange cars around our house during these days. They were all from the security police.

It has been rather often that I was forced to have a tourist trip escorted by policemen outside Xi’an during the so-called sensitive periods. They just guarded my door to prevent my disappearance from their sight. I tried once to travel to Zhangjiajie city located in another

province, without telling anybody. However, I surprisingly encountered two policemen who were in charge of my case in Xi'an, on the third days after my arrival. This was not an easy job for them to find me in such a city with a population of three million people. However, they got plenty of policemen to trace me with my photo in hands.

Last year, when I tried to help a friend from USA to publish a series of books on Christianity, all the related persons were questioned by the police, including a car driver.

The policemen watched me as careful as possible. They told me that their attitudes were never to believe me for any of my publications. At the middle of 1990's, I was in charge of publishing a newspaper entitled Historical Tale. Then they threatened me to shut down the newspaper immediately. Otherwise they would do it themselves, because I was not worth to be trusted, even if there were full pages of a slogan such as "Long live the Chinese Communist Party" on my newspaper.

In short, I have suffered fears and turbulence day by day in the past 17 years. Yet, all of my family members and friends suffered from inquisition, disturbing and even threats. Naturally, I have to continue to face with the terrors, in the future.

I am telling the stories of my experience just for a surprising and unbelievable truth that I found by chance, that is, all of my sufferings for so many years have been related to the words. I therefore realize that whenever the writers are subjected to terror in a country, the regime must be based on a state terrorism. This has been thoroughly proven in history, from Hitler's Germany to Stalin's Soviet Union, from Mao Zedong's China to Saddam Hussein's Iraq, as well as today's Cuba, North Korea and my homeland.

My opinion is that it is much more important to recover and repair the humanity which has been distorted by the dictatorship, than to face with the state terrorism. Please allow me to explain with the example of the Pro-democratic Movement in 1989. During the Movement, there was a very special period from 15th April to the end of May. The people appeared to be extremely self-disciplined though no police carried out their duty by intention. There was not a single case of serious crime happened almost in the whole country during such a long time. Even the thieves published poster of suspending stealing in order to support the students.

Nonetheless, the extreme high self-discipline society turned immediately into a prosecution movement, as soon as the gun fire broke out against the students. In the prosecutions, people disclosed and betrayed each other, so that it became a new kind of terrors among the people. *Homo lupus homini* One is a wolf to other. This has been the strategy of the Chinese nation.

This is also the great success of the long-term rule over China by the Communist Party. All the people became slaves of the dictatorship system. I therefore believe that the dictatorship is the natural enemy of the civilized society. It is also the most terrible threats against democracy, freedom and global orders.

To live in China at the moment means that one must race with terror, particularly for a writer. We utilize our ration to face and struggle against the terrors, so as to achieve the slight improvement. Independent Chinese PEN Centre and its Writers in Prison Committee have just been organized for such a racing with terror. It makes its best effort to care and rescue the writers from the terrors.

Finally, I believe that there must be a public space in human society which is shared by everybody. In this space, the strengths of goodness and evil are always competing. As a writer, I believe that any kind of freedom is first and foremost derived from the expression of freedom. To write in freedom is also a challenge against the living status under the dictatorship. Though we fail often, we will continue to fight for the freedom of writing and expression!

Thank you!

(Translated by AH Hai)

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ZHOU Qing, writer and member of ICPC, was born in Xi'an, China, in 1965, and sentenced for two years in prison due to his involvement in the democratic movement in 1989.

15, Lane 23, Baoqing Road

By *YEN Minju*



That grave, it was brand-new. Actually, calling it a grave may be pushing it a bit: after all, it was little more than a heap of earth cordoned off on all sides by a thin rope, waiting for the builder to furnish it with bricks, and give it a proper top and finishing. The family of the deceased had particularly reminded the builder to make sure that the character for “Zhang,” the victim’s family name inside the back wall’s central circle, should be written in particularly bold calligraphy. And extreme care was also to be taken with the deceased’s whole name on the front tombstone. His family had fought for two weeks about whether the tombstone should be made of terrazzo or marble, without reaching an agreement. Even on the day of the funeral, his father and uncle almost got into a fistfight in front of all the relatives and friends, and it was only his mother’s breaking out in tears that prevented things from getting out of control. The father felt that he had only this one son, so even though he died in a rather undignified way, it was still necessary to preserve the Zhang family’s good reputation in the village by giving the boy a proper funeral and grave. The uncle took a different view, saying that the guy lying in the ground there had it coming, since he was an unreliable fellow who lost his life young over a mistress from God knows where. No, he simply didn’t deserve a proper grave, and if he couldn’t find peace in death, that was his just reward.

The funeral band was playing out a cacophony of dissonant melodies and rhythms with its surnas, yehus, little cymbals and big drums. Add to that the groundswell of the women’s sad wailing, and it was no wonder that even the flies buzzing about the procession were put in an irritable mood. So there they all were, kneeling and praying, kowtowing repeatedly, offering up incense and food. And of course there were also two monks chanting sutras to ensure the deceased’s spirit wouldn’t linger. It was sizzling hot that day, and it was more than an hour before the procession finally went back again, this time a bit quieter than before, leaving no one behind but the cemetery workers in their broad-rimmed farmer’s hats and with wet towels draped across their necks against the heat. They set about finishing their work—shoveling dirt, laying bricks, building a last resting place for that guy.

She was standing behind a longan tree in the distance, hiding out of sight, her heart more than broken. With her eyes wide open, she stared desolately at the coffin as it was being lowered into the ground. Yes, in that coffin, glistening red and orange in the bright sunlight, someone was lying who had been close to her. According to the geomancer, his head and feet had to be

perfectly aligned for this final interment.

She was crying so quietly, her sorrow deep yet somehow light and detached at the same time. She couldn't even bear to raise her hand and wave a last time. In the oppressive heat of a sweltering summer's day, her entire body felt cold as ice.

She didn't remember how she got home. She took a shower and put on a white blouse, a white skirt, white socks and white shoes. She combed her long black braided hair. Sitting silently at the wooden dressing table, she eventually took white paper from its drawer and began to write a letter. She did so in a happy mood, blissfully writing a bit, pausing to laugh sillily, then writing some more, laughing again... When she was done, she folded up the letter, ever so lightly, and put it in a white envelope.

The little stove was just as new as the grave. With a crackling sound, she ignited it and allowed the white letter to be reduced to ashes. She became dizzy as she watched until even the last wisp of smoke has disappeared. Then she got up slowly, went over to the drawer, took out some more white paper, and, happily as before, began to write another letter: writing, laughing sillily, writing some more, laughing again. When she was finished, she folded up the letter and put it in the envelope. In the oblong rectangular space in the middle of the envelope, enclosed by red thick lines, she wrote the recipient's name, "Miss Jing Yiruo." To the left of this, outside the rectangle, she wrote, "name and address of sender enclosed." And on the right, she wrote the recipient's address, "# 15, Lane 23, Baoqing Road, Baodian Borough, Shanghe Village." After that, she went to the post office and sent the letter. Now she was feeling at peace.

Two days later, she received a letter. She tore it open and read it. Then she smilingly returned the letter to its envelope and put it in the left drawer. From the right drawer, she now took some paper and, as before, began to write in a state of bliss: writing, laughing sillily, writing some more, laughing again... When she was done, she folded up the letter, ever so lightly, and put it in a white envelope. The little stove was still new, and the white letter curled up blackly and burnt to ashes, like a sleep without dream. She got up, took more paper from the drawer, and blissfully wrote another letter, and addressed to the same person at the same address. And as before, after she'd gone to the post office and send the letter, she felt at peace.

Writing letters, burning letters, sending letters, waiting for letters, reading letters... As the days went by, always following the same routine, she grew older. Her braided hair grew longer and matted; the white blouse, white skirt and white socks faded to yellow with too many washes. One night, when the rain was pouring down in buckets and the wind howling

around the corners, she made her way to the grave, which was no longer new. Her fragile body wet and covered in mud, her soul burdened with quiet grief, she threw herself on the ground in front of the marble tombstone. The white light of lightning was illuminating her slender fingers as they were running over the lines of the deeply engraved characters: “Zhang Zhengtang, born in the year Gengshen, passed away in the year Kuiwei.” She was calling the name of the young man who had died at the tender age of 23. Her drawn-out wails of mourning were heartbreaking...

She didn't remember how she got home. She took a shower and put on a white blouse, a white skirt, white socks and white shoes. She combed her long black braided hair and dug out all the letters from the drawers—filled to the brim—and two large canvas sacks. She read one, and pasted it to the wall, as high up as her arms would reach. Then she read the next letter, and pasted it next to the first one. In this way, she proceeded until the wall, as well as the closet, the bed, the table and the chairs were all covered with letters. As she began to stick letters to the window, she suddenly noticed how the tears from her eyes and the raindrops on the pane were trickling down in strange unison, merging into a blurry mist.

When she had covered the windows and even the floor completely with letters, she plastered her own body, white as the paper, with the letters. The few letters that remained after that she tossed in the stove. In the wink of an eye, it was ignited, and the bright flames quickly devoured the paper, turning its whiteness into the darkness of dreamless sleep.

Since it was raining hard that night, only one house was burned down. The next day, a large crowd of people was standing around the rubble. There was nothing left of the building but the metal address plate, “# 15, Lane 23, Baoqing Road.” A few raindrops were still clinging to its surface, but the wind was threatening to blow them off any moment...

(Translated by David van der Peet)

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YEN Minju is a writer and member of ICPC living in Switzerland.

Melody in the Dark Night

----Memories from a guitarist in 1970s

By HU Jun

I have been used to finding the meaning of life from memories. It almost becomes the momentum of me being myself. Surprisingly, with winning the memories of happiness, I have found myself unable to grasp the presence and the future.



-- My soliloquy

It was in the middle of the Culture Revolution period when I was in grade four, if my memory does not fail me.

One day, my father took us three children to visit a distant uncle of ours. While we were talking, a burst of soft melodies came from the bedroom, slowly suffusing throughout the whole house. Uncle noticed our curiosity, and so told us it was our cousin playing guitar.

Uncle asked the cousin out to play for us. As I have remembered, he played then an Australian folk song *Click Go the Shea*. The pleasant guitar sound, advanced skill and lively melody immediately made us fascinated. That was the first time for us to come across guitar. Noticing our fascination, the cousin promised to teach us if we wanted to learn.

Hearing the cousin willing to teach us, the uncle hurriedly told us that guitar was something with a bad reputation. It was all right for us to listen to it, but never to learn how to play. The present young generation may be unfamiliar with the background of the Culture Revolution, when guitar and foreign songs were tagged as the appearance of decadent bourgeois thoughts. They were prohibited to play or sing on the official stages.

With my elder brother's request and father's acquiescence, a few weeks later, the cousin bought us a second-hand guitar for dozen Chinese dollars or so. Having my own guitar, I was so excited as to describe that I would be "sleepless for three days and nights". Since then, I was "starting a new life in the world of guitar", as described in the present movie *Forrest Gump*.

The idea of study being useless was highly promoted during the Culture Revolution. There was no homework after school, and so I spent the afterhours on playing with guitar and on collecting the information on guitar which was very little pitifully. The word "guitar" in any

book or magazine could light my eyes so that I would read it repeatedly. One of my classmates in my primary school used to copy my homework, and, after knowing my learning to play guitar, he occasionally borrowed for me some old music books from his aunt working on music. Once he mysteriously got me an old book of Christmas songs, which had been sealed in the school library. The book had been severely yellowed with some broken pages. I carefully fixed the book with the transparent tapes as an archaeologist would repair an antique. I tried hard to learn musical notation by myself in order to understand the music scores. From that book, I learnt how to play the song *Jingle Bells*, which became my masterpiece later on.

As living far away, the cousin normally came to teach us once a month. One day, the cousin came excitedly with a guitar seemingly ordinary but special. He explained to me it was made in Japan. Although a bit old, it sounded very well, as the older the better. In our balcony, with this light yellow colored guitar, the cousin played *Siboney*, a song from Cuba. That was the first time for me to hear such a beautiful melody, and also the first time to touch an “imported good”. The cousin also played other songs at that night, including the *Beautiful Village*, *By the Road*, *Do not Date on Sunday*, and *La Paloma*. The melodies were like lover’s whispers spreading in the staring night, evoking some of my emotions that were usually hard to find in my heart of premature teenage. Later on, I learnt that, because the cousin had loved foreign songs, played guitar, and kept his long sideburns, a sign of “unhealthy thoughts” by then, he had been set as the bad example in his workplace, not only forced to write a self-criticizing statement, but also ordered to shave his sideburns. The cousin had not been convinced but argued his reasons for the idea of individual rights, the “heresy” unknown in China at that time. After a few arguments, he had been dismissed from his job. That night, he came to my place to let off his gloom.

After touching the Japanese guitar, I would hardly want to play my own any more. After having learnt that there had been nice guitars produced in Hangzhou, I wrote secretly to another uncle, a brother of my mother, in Hangzhou for help. One year after, a cousin in Hangzhou came to Shanghai for the Chinese New Year, and brought me a new guitar of “West Lake” brand with nice tone quality. I was overwhelmed, but also wondering at the same time, why there was no guitar for sale in Shanghai? At that time, the daily necessities, such as soaps, sugars and clothes, consumed by uncle’s family were all sent by my mother from Shanghai to Hangzhou. I did not understand politics by then. As the cradle of Culture Revolution, the authorities in Shanghai had been ruthless to censor all of the bourgeois arts including guitar, but not completely so in Hangzhou.

It was extremely hot in one summer holiday. I was suddenly disappeared in my neighborhood, for my elder sister had luckily borrowed a book, *200 Foreign Folk Songs*. I shut myself at

home, sweating while carefully copying all the songs to my notebook. To make it beautiful, I even draw small illustrations and inserted the quotations on music in artistic fonts from famous musicians and writers. At that time, there were none of foreign songbooks to sell or publish. That notebook with my sweat in it undoubtedly became such a treasure for me. Unexpectedly, one day when taking rest at home, my father found and considered it as “pornographic”. He madly called me back, and shouted at me while tearing my notebook, “How dare you at so young an age to copy these pornographic songs about love and affection? The guitar is for you to play revolutionary songs. I am so regretted to have bought it for you!” When seeing my hand-written treasure-like songbook was torn, my anger was indescribable, but I was so young that I could only “bury the seeds of hatred into the bottom of my heart”, as sung by Li Tiemei, a major figure in a revolutionary model opera *The Legend of the Red Lantern*. In fact, My father’s “culture tyranny” was just a miniature of that era when people had to “sing the communist songs, listen to the Party’s words”. As getting older, I started to think about the causes of my father’s deeds. The little seed in my heart gradually became “the weapon of criticism”.

In the later period of the Culture Revolution, the social environment started to change in a certain extent. A book titled *New Songs in Battlefield* was published. These changes were reflected as family music parties in my home. Usually at the weekends, I played guitar, while my brother and sister sang former Soviet songs after my mother, such as *Moscow Nights* (Подмосковные Вечера), *Oh, Guelder-rose Is in Flower* (Ой, цветет калина), *Katyusha* (Катюша), *The Road* (дороженька), *Troika* (Вот мчится тройка почтовая) and *Far Away, Far Away* (Далеко-далеко). My mother was not an artist but an active passionate in her youth when China and former Soviet Union had a good relationship in 1950s, and had been exposed to a whole lot of former Soviet songs. I still remember the Chinese translated lyrics of *Far Away, Far Away*, noted in my mother’s notebook as follows,

*Far away, far away,
Where drifting is haze,
Where breezes lightly sway
The waves of rye.
In my home edge,
At the mound on a prairie,
You live as used to be,
Remembering about me.
Day and night without ceasing,
You are still waiting
From a distant darling,*

For news to be coming.

Music could affect a person's views so greatly that when both of China and former Soviet Union behaved like two shrews exposing and abusing each other, I still had a poetic impression on the "big brother": under blue sky with white clouds curling, the red guelder-rose was in flower everywhere, and by the edge of the green waves of rye, the beautiful angel-like Tonia was reading Pushkin's poems... Later on when reading some books of politics, such as *The Russians*, and *Stalin and the Soviet Communist Party: A Study in the Technology of Power* (Технология власти), I came suddenly to realize the truth behind the iron curtain. Dulles once quoted from Bible to describe the dictatorships as "the white-washed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside, are full of dead men's bones and everything unclean".

As the Culture Revolution was about to end, people were trying to find out the outside world through all channels. In a period, I listened to foreign music, and also the news on current events, with my brother's tri-band radio, which had mainly been used for his English study. At that time, the foreign radio stations with Chinese broadcasting service, such as Radio Moscow, BBC and VOA, were called as "enemy radios" that were not allowed to listen to. So I could only listen to them secretly at home. After school every noon, I would listen to techno music on a Japanese radio without Chinese broadcasting. I had never heard of the concept "techno music" by then, but just felt surprised at how come there could be so wonderful music on earth, as Confucius had said after listening to the Shao music, "I have been unaware of the meat taste for three month!" Only after the reforms and opening up, having learnt of *Penelope*, I came to realized that the Japanese radio had been broadcasting the light music performed by the famous French band of Paul Mauriat. After studying something of the Frankfurt School, I was told that these wonderful "techno music" and "light music" like dreaming were "spiritual opium" in consumer society.

Time flew quickly in music. The history turned over its darkest page in the curse. After the "Gang of Four" had been crashed, social life began to diversify. On the streets in Shanghai, there the popular songs from Hong Kong and Taiwan, and the "concerts" of ballads and guitars held spontaneously by young people. There are basically four styles of guitar play, classic, pick, folk and Hawaii. My classmate Little Monk in middle school spoke with a big tongue but chose to play folk style (more people were playing folk while less playing classic or pick as the latters needed a certain knowledge of music theory), and asked me to be his partner, because I played pick style following my cousin. We worked well as a team. Every time, he was bound to begin the concert with a cheerful African song to create an atmosphere, and to finish with a moving song of Teresa Teng's, *The Moon Represents My Heart*, while I

used to play *Jingle Bells*, *Siboney*, *The Great Wheel*, and other songs in between. Our performance often caused a crowd of onlookers, until later night neighbors came out to complain. After ending it, there were still some people surrounding us for advices and hoping us to teach them, which made us feel especially self-satisfied and important.

Seventh was a folk guitar player with a bad reputation for his fighting around in our neighbourhood. He was five years older than me. He found me through a classmate at my primary school, and wished I could give him some advices about guitar. Every time I went to his home, the neighbours felt astonished how a good student like me could go with Seventh, totally a young scamp in their eyes. In fact, Seventh was always quite kind to and very much respected me, which, in terms of popular bureaucratise later on, means “respecting knowledge” and “respecting the talented”.

From Seventh, I heard some sad stories about the middle school graduates in 1966-1968, and learnt *The Song of Madman*, a popular song among them. I didn't know why I liked him playing and singing this song in a sad tone, but why he often sang it. Among seven brothers in his family, the third brother had died of falling with a tractor into a ravine in the southwest Yunnan Province, and the fourth had suffered severe mental injury, where they had been respectively sent to farm after leaving school. Whenever he whispered singing the song with guitar, his usually hideous face immediately turned sad and serious expression, which seemed to have an impenetrable fog, making people falling and sinking deeply:

*A person who has lost the mate,
whose spirit and soul are separate,
watches autumn leaving and winter coming,
and snowflakes fluttering.
The world is laughing at me,
as a madman as they see.
My youth is to be buried,
but who has compassion for me?*

Either of performing on the streets and contacting different group of people got me generating some new understandings about myself during my personality transformation. I began to look at livelihood and life in a broader vision.

I was admitted to university in early 1980s, and dove into the library, reading books on social and political issues instead of music, unwittingly to become a Gadfly of the era.

20 years have passed. Now around the town of universities where I live, big and small shops of guitars have been opened one after another. When seeing the students absorbed in studying in these shops, I cannot help but recall my “guitar world” related to that period of my premature but naïve teenage years.

(Translated by Angela HU)

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Jun HU is a poet and member of ICPC residing in Shanghai.

Our Home Over There

By *Bei Cun*



Dear Brother, together we spent one night, which was like 20 years to me. Looking back, with old memories flashing, we were not brothers but friends by then. There were many links between us to lead us together during sadness. We came from the same region, and worked in the same place; and then we became the literary colleagues, and finally the close friends. Our connections constantly varied as our world changed. Dear Brother, we could not find an everlasting connection then. The environment dominated us, but we had no alternative. Whenever I thought that you would suddenly vanish from me some day, my heart was in stabbing pain because I could not ascertain our connections everlasting. My future was blurring. Your leaving was like the sand in hand, unable to retain. Dear Brother, sadness is stabbing, and pain is killing. Since the party will end ultimately, why do we need promises? Are human's words so worthless? I remember once we met. After we were haranguing, you stood like a desolated tree by river, and said, "People are strange. Today you are still talking to me, but tomorrow you will have been in another place. All seems so unreal." This was the realest words then, which made you lonely.

Dear Brother, at that time, I was really afraid of leaving you, as leaving you made me nowhere to go. My footsteps were lonely. My mood was like the water in both hands unable to hold. My mind was in a mess without a leader. The past way was vague, while the way ahead was vast. I stood awkwardly in the middle, like a piece of nonsense. Dear Brother, I could not call you as my brother by then, but just a friend. What could you console me with? You already had too many troubles holding you back, getting nowhere to rest, running around and being exhausted. On you face, there was no consolation but tiredness. I was really afraid of your looking at me, because I looked like you in a mirror. We were like two blind men, as one trying to lead another, dropping into a pit together. I was a man with no focus. In the temple of my mind, there was temporarily filled with a variety of groceries, sometimes literature, or love, or career, or cigarette; sometimes a little noble, sometimes a bit despicable. My focus was changing all the time, until it became completely emptied to reach the nihility of darkness. At that moment, I put on the silky nightgown, walked to the apple tree, and grabbed the quill pen. I was like the dead, as I became a hollow man. The words I said was not what I wanted to say, and the deed I did was not what I wanted to do. I was emptied, and had nothing. My eyes were darkened, my ears were blocked, my muscles were paralyzed, and my minds were fainted. I opened my mouth widely but could not say a word. My fresh heart

became a stone. I began being frightened since that night, and thought, “I have been displaced to wander over the earth, and whoever sees me will kill me.”

Dear Brother, this is fear, while the endless punishment has fallen on human, making us nowhere to hide. A person will be full of light when his heart is lightened, or full of darkness when his heart is darkened. A person in bad mood sees everything negatively, and so might go to kill someone or commit suicide. But what made him full of darkness? Oh my Brother, we were in such darkness by then. We thought the issue about spirit and soul could be hung up highly until we got old. However, Lord did not let us go. He took us to a place where we could see the world and the darkness, salt losing its flavor, and people working worthlessly. We saw the truth and the honor upon us, what are the meanings and values, and what is human. Dear Brother, you must still remember the night when you were listening to me delivering the news. At the same night, in the same light, there was only one thing different, the discourse that you had never heard of, so fresh and nutritious, shocking the human, shaking human foundation, changing human life, destroying human construction, and rebuilding his holy temple. That was good news, the sweetest news that I had ever tasted. I witnessed you being stunned by the good news, your heart being opened, the miracle happening, and you being saved. You said to me, “Every time after your coming back and talking to me, I went back to the loneliness. But this time was different, because He will not leave me. You may go now.” Dear Brother, do you know how joyful I was when hearing your words! Yes, but it was not me who did the talking at that night. It was Lord who created us. It was Him who wanted us to go home. He is holding the best robes and waiting to cover us. We were the last sheep lost in a hundred sheep. He left the ninety-nine to seek this one.

Dear Brother, I still remember you said then, “Now it is fine.”

These four simple words were carved into my heart, surpassing all of the words in the past. Behind this sentence, we had seen the past life lifeless and the human meaningless. The lost soul was running in vain on the wilderness, feeling bitter and painful in heart without knowing why, or even joyful without knowing why. Without life sustenance, the emotions were placed on the wind, on the walls around, on the food on earth, on money, on indifferent houses and cars. Our fluctuated hearts were jolting with the prices, shaking with the world, and changing with unreliable human. Then, we were foolish, because we were too wise, only full of our own in heart. As God is always closed to those who are wise and learned, but open to little children. In His home, all are children, full of new life forms. Dear Brother, He is so merciful to us that he can reach sinners like us, making the foolish learned. Now we are so wise as to see human so stubborn, to consider themselves as creators though they are obviously created. We see human find no way at all but the biggest liar. Now, we shut up,

being foolish, and getting rid of the burden to His home, and worship him as our Lord.

Dear Brother, there is one thing immovable in this world, the death. However, He died for us. Therefore, nobody can change our status any longer, but He has become our lives. During all the unrests, there is one thing unshakable; during all the corruptions, there is one thing imperishable; during all the changes, there is one thing everlasting; during all the brevities, there is one thing eternal; during all the fears, there is one place to rest. It is our home, where Faith is written on its door, full of holiness, brightness, justice and love inside.

Our homeland is over there.

Dear Brother, there are too many times when we forgot the way home. We cried on half way, until the wind blew our tears away, exposing a farthest face of stone. Non-faith put our hearts into endless drifting. We were like the blind, who thought the truth would come out by arguing. However, our hearts became more and more darkened. Our conscience was sleeping and our intellect humiliated. We were arrogant, obsessed with personal willingness, and wanted to be the first for everything. We loved arguing, but never cared about life. We were indulged in thinking, but not caring about its source. We discussed eternity, but could not explain death.

Dear Brother, this was the wandering soul, whose heart had being grasped by the unknowable darkness. If Holy Spirit did not come to control my soul, it would get lost in the terrible “freedom” going nowhere. I used to getting up for no reason in the middle of night, going out to the street on my bike, riding across the city to get tired, and finally returning home to sleep. Sometimes I ate a lot for lunch, and slept a long sleep for the whole afternoon, making my body feel like being filled with cotton and straw. I started to hate my body. Now I understand, as my spirit was never awakened, my soul could only wander, and my body fell with the soul. How ridiculous! Since Eva had eaten the fruit, human spirit fell into its soul, starting to be the master of themselves, and all of the relationships began messing up.

Dear Brother, all these have passed since we had our new lives. News came to us. Our spirits have been awakened, and we have seen the world fading, but only the life in our hearts everlasting. We see the origin of all beings, only in one sentence: “In the beginning God...” In this amazing sentence, everything stipulated took place: green grass grew up from the earth, water seeped out of the soil, fruits on the trees gradually close up their cores to be plump, and human appeared on earth to have one’s heart full of glory, holiness, love, justice and light. The profiles of all the creatures came out from the darkness, revealing their order of origin. We have lived above these, enjoying whatever is ready, and praising Him. Behind the

immense creation, the invisible Creator revealed his face, and commanded Adam on behalf of the authority to name what he saw.

Dear Brother, this is the ultimate happiness.

We are all sojourning in this world, as pilgrims. What we sing is not for the earthly happiness. We will sing:

*Our home is over there,
full of brilliant light in there,
neither suffering nor sadness,
but all of the joy and peace;
Our Lamb of God is over there,
and so we are really yearning to see Him face to face,
who will lead us to the spring of living water
and give us rest;
Brothers and sisters are over there,
all of whom I am missing and really longing to meet again;
Our Father is over there,
I am looking forward to living in front of Him,
who will wipe away every tear from their eyes,
and death shall be no more,
neither shall there be mourning,
nor crying, nor pain anymore,
for the former things have passed away.
He is making all things new.*

(Translated by Angela HU)

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Bei Cun is a writer, novelist and member of ICPC.

It's The Time and Another

By ZHU Yufu

It's The Time

-- A poem for Jasmine Revolution in China



It's the time, Chinese people! It's the time
The square is everyone's
The feet are one's own
It's the time to use feet to the square for a choice.

It's the time, Chinese people! It's the time
The song is everyone's
The throat is one's own
It's the time to use throat to sing a song in heart

It's the time, Chinese people! It's the time
China is everyone's
The choice is one's own
It's the time to make one's choice for a future China

To A Friend

In order to escape from the cruel sun scorching,
You have finally gone oversea,
Under the dense shade of a tree,
Enjoying a moment of the refreshing.

There was a philosopher importing seedlings from afar,
And planting them in the desolate soil
Suffering from badgers' damage and wolves' spoil
The seedlings have been poisoned y fishy clouds so far.

In order to find a moment of serenity,
You could not help but go oversea,

Are you still maintaining in your heart deeply
The panic that the clamoring storm left you and me?

Riding a convective wind belt in the heavens,
The seeds have sprinkled over your home cities,
In those rows of chapped gullies,
The solid seeds have been buried deeply into the bitter soil.

There are the painstaking efforts soaking from sages
To get seeds sprout and seedlings mature,
There will be envoys to culture,
And dense foliage to flutter in the breeze.

(Translated by Yu ZHANG)

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ZHU Yufu, a member of ICPC, was arrested four times in 1989, 1999, 2007 and 2011, and has been imprisoned over 10 years. Since March 2011, he has been detained on suspicion of “inciting subversion of state power” and likely to be tried in 2012.

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 October, 2011, ICPC held its Fifth Internet Congress of the Membership Assembly to have elected 5 Board members and 2 alternates to fill it vacancies, and the President Tienchi MARTIN-LIAO (Germany). The past president Dr. LIU Xiaobo, who has been imprisoned since December 8, 2008, has been its Honorary President since October 2009, and he got Nobel Peace Prize in 2010.