

Fifth Conversation with Professor Wang

Monday, February 11, 1991

RM: Who were the "special authorities"?

TY: At that time in Beijing, there were two types of "authorities". One group was from the Military who were headed by General Fu Zuo-yi. The other authorities were the Peking Municipal authorities, which were run by the Kuomintang Committee. They had a lot of secret meetings. The group we feared was the second group, because they could do anything they liked, without any restrictions from Ministry authorities.

RM: Why would they have been likely to attack the professors at Peking University?

TY: They thought that the professors were sympathizers with the Communists. They also suspected that some of the professors had connections to the Communists. We found a blacklist which included the names of about 20 professors. Those "authorities" wanted to openly attack or arrest those who were blacklisted.

RM: But the students protected you.

RM: Let us return for a minute to your going out to meet the

Liberation Army.

TY: I got up very early on the <sup>3rd</sup>~~8th or 9th~~ of February, because I had heard the night before that the Liberation Army would be coming to Beijing to liberate the city. I went to the Western Gate of the City, which is the gate you would go through to get to Qing Hua. I think the Army came by way of Qing Hua. I watched the Army go through the Western Gate as we stood on either side of the street and cheered and clapped when the Army appeared.

RM: Was it a very large army?

TY: Yes. They marched in long lines. It was very orderly because Fu Zuo-yi the head of the military in Beijing, had already surrendered, so there was no resistance to meet them. They just walked on. I didn't know where they were going, but they walked down the long street of the city. There was the infantry, the cavalry, cannons, and gun carriages. All of the people who were watching clapped because it was like a parade. Some of the most daring young men climbed up to the cars to shake hands with the army men, but they didn't respond. Some people even offered the army men water or tea, but they would not drink. They were very disciplined. They just walked straight forward, step by step. I also climbed one of the gun carriages to see what they would do, but they did nothing.

RM: Was it a beautiful day?

TY: It was a bright day, but it was cold. February in Beijing is rather cold. After the Liberation of Beijing, I was welcomed by the Communist Party, so I was invited several times to meetings - some to celebrate the Liberation, or other meetings.

RM: Can you tell me a little more about that conference, the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference. Also, what was the nature of that document, because that is very important from a historical point-of-view.

TY: The conference was convened by the Communist Party but included prominent members of different parties. We had in China so-called democratic parties, and the leaders of these democratic parties participated in the conference. There also were well-known Party members in attendance. I estimate that there were more than 500 participants. They got the report from Zhou En-lai and also reports from other leading persons in the Communist Party.

The purposes of that conference were, first, to establish the Central People's Government. We elected Mao Tse Tung Chairman of the Chinese government, as well as Zhou En-lai as Premier -

he organised the government. We also elected the Chief Justice for the Supreme Court.

RM: So in a way, it was the first major constitutional and legal conference.

TY: Yes. It was rather like a constitutional conference, but it was not very formal, because it was a Party Conference, the representatives there were not elected by the people. It was semi-authorotative, semi-consultatative conference.

The second intention of the conference was to enact the common program, which in nature, was the constitution. The common program governed the People's Republic until the first consitution was ratified in 1954.

RM: That was important, then. It lasted for five years.

TY: Yes. It assured that everything would be in accordance with that common program.

RM: This next point is about the United Nations and will go in on page 5. TY, while you were working in Beijing, waiting to hear from New York, what were you doing?

TY: All of the members of the delegation were divided into groups,

studying different organs of the United Nations, for instance, the Security Council, the General Assembly, even the Economic and Social Council. You know the father of the (Chi), who is now the Vice-Secretary of the United Nations, was the person who organised the study of the Economic and Social Council. He was one of the chief delegates to go to the United Nations. My part was to explain to them what international law problems are concerning the United Nations. All of these people came from the country. They knew very little about the United Nations and even less about international law. So we arranged group-studies or small meetings. I gave lectures on the law of treaties in the newly established Ministry of Foreign Affairs. All the members of the delegation joined the meeting to listen to my lecture.

We had two advisors; a scientific advisor and a legal advisor. I served as the legal advisor. I was not a member of the Communist Party. The other one was a very well-known scientist. The scientific advisor withdrew from the delegation because he had a more important job to do with the scientific task of the People's Republic.

RM: It was a very great tribute to you to be appointed legal advisor to that first group.

TY: Yes, but unfortunately we didn't have a chance to go. I lost

another chance. In 1951, a delegation was sent to the United Nations General Assembly to debate on the Taiwan problem. Originally, I was appointed to be a member of that delegation which was to be composed of 15 members. Afterwards, Zhou En-lai decided to send a smaller delegation, limited to only 5 people, so I was excluded from that delegation. I would have liked to attend the Security Council to see my former professor, T.F. Chiang. He was a delegate from Taiwan.

RM: You had two very important legal appointments, then; first, to the drafting committee for the common program, and, secondly, as legal advisor to the United Nations delegation. Those were two of the most important legal conferences at that time.

TY: Yes.

RM: This point will be included on page 7. TY, what exactly was the land reform movement?

TY: The most important issue in the land reform movement was what we described as 'redistributing the land to the peasants'. In previous times, the land was owned by landlords and most of the peasants were oppressed by them. When we went to the villages, we had to instruct the peasants in the 'spirit of revolt' against those landlords, so the landlord system would be abolished. At the end of the movement, all of the land was

redistributed to the peasants.

RM: How long did the land reform movement last? You went to instruct in 1951-

TY: As a whole, it lasted 1-2 years, but each village had up to 3 or 4 months to complete their land reform. I participated in 3 different localities.

RM: This point will be included on page 8. TY, who killed the two students? Was it the peasants or the cadres?

TY: It was the local cadres.

RM: The local cadres who were against the intellectuals, is that right?

TY: Someone told me that they belonged to the landlord families. The landlords resented the movement. It was not with the intellectuals especially, but by chance the cadres were distributed amongst the group of students.

RM: This point will be incorporated on page 12. Why were all of the Political Science Departments and the Law Departments abolished in 1952?

TY: The authorities thought that the Political Science and Law Departments were altogether capitalistic. They thought that the professors needed training and thus, they were not qualified to teach students. So they abolished the Departments and later re-established new ones.

RM: So it was an ideological question.

TY: Yes. It was an entirely ideological question.

RM: On page 13, what was the date you joined the History Department?

TY: After the success of the land reform movement in 1952, the universities and colleges were re-organised and the Political Science and Law Departments were abolished. It was October of 1952.

RM: That was when you went into the History Department?

TY: Yes

RM: We're back to page 12. What was the purpose of the mind reform movement?

TY: The purpose of that movement was to correct your thinking. It

was to purify your mind and to eliminate old ideas and old thinking. It was a very strong ideological movement.

RM: You had to do this in public.

TY: Yes. It varied. Sometimes the groups were very small, sometimes they were very large, according to the circumstances. If you were a very prominent professor, you would have to face a very large audience, in order to influence those in the audience.

RM: Would one confession be enough?

TY: No. It was always one or two, because the audience would raise questions and criticize you. So you would have to make another report, criticizing yourself.

RM: This is on page 14. We're talking about the collection of treaties.

TY: I had been long interested in treaties, even during my years as a student. My original plan, however, was formed in 1948 when I talked with Dr. Borg about the continuation of (mad meres) ( between China's treaty ). At that time, it was thought that the collection would be published in English, but I couldn't get any funding, so I began to collect documents

written in Chinese in 1948. My efforts were not very intensive at the beginning, but in 1952, when I joined the History Department, I began to work intensively on the collection. I worked a long time on that, especially during the Anti-Rightist Movement, when my activities were restricted, it allowed me the time to collect and edit material at home. I completed the first volume in 1958 and then the second and third volumes by 1962.

RM: Was Cai watching over this work?

TY: Yes. She helped me a lot.

RM: Where were you able to get the material? From the Ministry? From the libraries?

TY: I got the material from the Kuomintang's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, because all the treaties were concerned with the Kuomintang period. I also collected a number of treaty series from different countries and different periods, in both Chinese and foreign languages, so I had my own very small library of treaty collections.

RM: That must be the only collection of its kind.

TY: Yes. I think it is rather complete. No other work can

compete with that one.

RM: It is unique.

TY: Yes. I think that for anyone who might want to study or research Chinese treaties, this book would be a good resource. There is also a continuation of my collection, a treaty series published by the Foreign Ministry of the PRC, so the whole series has been continued.

RM: That was a major accomplishment.

TY: I also made some notes on some of the treaties that were more complicated entitled, "The Date of Ratification" and "Wrong Consulation", for example.

RM: What was the project that was published by the Foreign Ministry? Was it a continuation of your collection?

TY: It was not exactly a continuation, but in substance, it is a continuation. However, my work was entirely private. The Foreign Ministry's work was official.

RM: The Ministry's work was sort of a treaty series.

TY: Yes. The Ministry's was a treaty series.

RM: Would you tell us a little bit more on the Asian States Conference?

TY: The Asian States Conference was a rather private one. It was not 'official' in any sense. At that time, India and China were on very good terms, so when the Bandung Conference was initiated by some Asian countries, people in Beijing and New Delhi thought of initiating a parallel conference which would be private in nature to support the Bandung Conference. It was to take place at almost the same time, but in a different places. Of the two conferences, one was in Indonesia, the other was in India. The Asian States Conference was composed of representatives from nearly all of the Asian countries. They sent prominent people to attend; statesmen who were not in official positions, businessmen, literary men. They passed some resolutions which were not very important, because they were private in nature, but they did have some influence on the Indian opinion. After the conference, we were invited by the Indian delegation to visit some cities in India after the conference. I think the conference was rather successful, but-

RM: Did you speak or give a paper at that conference?

TY: No. I prepared a paper for the delegation, but I didn't speak at the conference, because all of the representatives at the

conference were very prominent figures in Chinese politics and economics. The head of the delegation was Guo Mo-ruo who was the most prominent literary man in China during those 50 years. He later became Vice-Prime Minister, second in position to Zhou En-lai.

RM: What year was the Asian States Conference?

TY: 1955.

RM: The speech at the university.

TY: I think that was in late April in 1957. Then the movement started on

May 7th. There was an editorial that appeared in the People's Daily which touched off the Anti-Rightist Movement. It was after that movement had begun that I was labelled as a Rightist and criticized. The content of my speech from a present-time point-of-view is very simple. The topic of my speech was the elimination of the bureautic style and the establishment an academic atmosphere. Even today, you could make that speech in China, but at that time, I was considered "anti-communist".

RM: Was it interpreted as a criticism of the leadership?

TY: It wasn't a criticism of the leadership, but a criticism of the university and the department. I said that the university [was being run in a very bureaucratic manner]. The professors and other teachers were suppressed from expressing their opinions. Most of the people were not making an effort to study, but were more concerned with their personal relationships with the leaders.

RM: So it was a call for higher academic standards.

TY: Yes, a better atmosphere for teaching and studying.

RM: You had said the last time that at the beginning, shortly after the speech, the university people hadn't objected to it, but that the objection possibly came from the Ministry.

TY: Yes. In the first few days following the speech, I had got a positive response from the Party leaders at the university.

RM: They liked it.

TY: Yes. They liked it. After the movement had begun, I was still considered a prominent professor. I even was given the chance to be Chairman of one of the large meetings convened to criticize other people. It was very suddenly that I was submitted to criticisms in small groups, which was then

followed by large groups.

RM: That must have come from a superior.

TY: Yes. A superior outside the university.

RM: The social isolation during the Anti-Rightist Movement must have been a terrible thing from a psychological point-of-view, because you and your family were cut off.

TY: Yes. We were cut off from outside. To me, it was very depressing. I could not write anything. I could not read any books. I was sent to "socialistic reform" courses. I was separated from my family for 2 years. There were very few people who could even talk with us. For the most part, we remained silent all day.

RM: That would be terrible because day after day then, you would just have your family. Important as they were-

TY: Of course you could always join the meetings for discussion and such, but you would always keep silent. I was concerned that you didn't mix with others because I was condemned as an enemy of the state.

RM: How would a person know that? Did you have to wear any

identification? Of course, everybody knew you?

TY: In the university, the people would know. When you went into the city, however, no one would notice you.

RM: Did you have any relaxation at all?

TY: We weren't restricted from going downtown, but at the time, I wasn't interested in anything like that.

RM: The large camp that you spoke about, was it in the South of the country?

TY: Yes.

RM: With 1,000 people in it. Why were people sent there and what was the object of it?

TY: Being sent to the camp was not something limited only to Peking University, anyone at any university was subject to being sent away, without cause. The authorities thought that it was better for all of these people to be taken somewhere outside of the campus to do manual work which would reform their minds.

RM: Was it all intellectual people at the camp?

TY: It was only intellectuals. There were also a few staff members of government departments who were sent to the camp as well.

RM: These people were sent from all over China?

TY: Yes. All from different areas.

RM: This camp was in the south of China.

TY: Yes. For instance, the Foreign Ministry sent hundreds of their staff members to a camp that was near ours.

RM: I see. How many miles was your camp from Peking?

TY: It was in another province. It was more than 2,000 miles away.

RM: And Cai was with you. Were there any children?

TY: Yes. There were families of other professors who brought their children with them.

RM: Were your children with you?

TY: No, my second daughter didn't want to go, so the children

stayed in Beijing with my oldest daughter.

RM: So the time at the camp was to correct your thinking, to purify your mind, you might say, and to get rid of old-fashioned ideas through manual work.

TY: Yes. It was all-day manual work that was very strenuous. During the summer, it was very hot and in the winter, it was very cold.

RM: What kind of work was Cai doing?

TY: At one point, she was doing the same work as I was, but later she was assigned to the kitchens. The whole camp was divided into 12 groups and she was assigned to the kitchen group. One group was composed of about 200 people.

RM: So the theory was that through manual and physical work, you were supposed to get a better mental attitude.

TY: Yes. That's right. In the daytime, you worked the whole day and after sunset, you went back to your dormitories - they were very poor dormitories - and you had to study political writings, discuss political questions, and generally indoctrinate yourself.

RM: What time would you go to bed?

TY: It was 10:00 or 11:00 o'clock in the evening. We got up very early - sunrise - about 6:00 a.m. We had breakfast at 7:00 a.m.

RM: Then you went out into the fields.

TY: Yes. Sometimes, we had to have meals out in the fields. It was very dirty and there was nowhere to wash.

RM: You were picking rice?

TY: Yes. The men picked rice. In China, picking rice is a very dirty job. We did not use chemicals, but manure.

RM: How long did all of that go on?

TY: Two years.