

Literary Reportage: when red stars fall into Qigulin Mountains

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At the end of 1949, the Taiwan “Provincial Working Committee” started to fall apart. Throughout the island, as the slaughterers unconscionably launched arrests, torturous interrogations, forced imprisonments, and murders, Hakka tenant farmers and exceptional sons of poor farmers in Miaoli escaped, continued their secret works in the precipitous mountains in Sanwan, Shitan and Dahu, and were eventually annihilated. Xu Qing-lan’s lonely tomb in the Liuzhangli Public Cemetery unveiled stories of these fallen red stars in the sky of Qigulin Mountains ...

May 27, 1993, at a bleak corner overgrown with weeds in the Liuzhangli Public Cemetery, Ceng Mei-lan, from Tongluo Township of Miaoli County, as he expected, finally found his elder brother Xu Qing-lan’s decrepit and small tombstone that he had strenuously sought for 30 years. The tombstone was only 15 centimeters in width; the exposed part on the ground, slightly tilted and damaged, was about 30 centimeters in height. Most of its inscriptions had been pasted by mud, while a relatively clear Chinese character of “Xu” was shown.

Using his sturdy hands, developed over the past few decades as a cement mason, Ceng Mei-lan grabbed a handful of sprawling weeds to rub determinedly against the tombstone. Characters inscribed on the tombstone gradually became clear. He widened his eyes to decipher the characters. On the tombstone it read:

August 8, 41st Year of Minguo²

Xu Qing-lan

Ceng Mei-lan cried at once, with tears and snot all over his face. While he was crying, he spoke in Hakka, “Dear brother ... I had been looking for you so hard for so long ...”

Paying no attention to Old Xu the thóo-kong-á (bone-collector) who was standing silently beside him, Ceng Mei-lan indulged himself in crying.

“Dear brother... you, several times, coming into my dreams... saying you are living under a bamboo grove, oh, my dear brother...”

While Old Xu gazed at this heartbroken younger brother, he looked at a small cluster of wild bamboo ten steps away from the tombstone. He took out a cigarette and lit it up, mumbling soundlessly in his mind to himself:

“There, a couple of steps in front of the tomb, that bamboo grove had been much bigger. It was all shoveled away when those houses were built.”

When I was young, I played the Xiao³ very well ...

After crying for a while, Ceng Mei-lan thought of going down the mountain to buy some gold-leafed incense to make veneration on the spot. He then took a sickle out of a plastic bag, trimming the pensively dense grass so that an open ground could be used for burning joss paper. Yet, to their surprise, after trimming off a few more feet of weeds on the surrounding ground, they discovered yet another almost identical tilted tombstone that quietly stood there.

Old Xu the bone collector was also astonished this time. He said, "Here it is! I've heard of it before. Now that there're two tombs, a huge field of them should be here..." Old Xu picked up his sickle as well, and helped cut away the thickly dotted red grass, porcupine grass, wild taro, and wild light galangal. The third tombstone right next to Xu Qing-lan's appeared; Ceng Mei-lan scrubbed the surface of the tombstone clean with the cut porcupine grass. With a sound of "ah," he said in amazement,

"Huang Feng-kai!"

According to *Confidential Documents of National Security Bureau: A Collection of Handling the Espionage Cases* published by Li Ao (1991), Huang Feng-kai joined the Tongluo branch (in Miaoli area) of Taiwan Provincial Working Committee of Chinese Communist Party in August, 1949, and launched active tasks under the leadership of Liao Tian-zhu. In March, 1950, he had to go underground to escape. In April, 1951, while hiding secretly in a stone cave in a banana orchard run by Zhang Xiu-jin in Qigulin Mountains, Huang Feng-kai was arrested. On August 8, 1952, along with Xu Qing-lan, he fell on Kuomintang's communists-suppressing, terrifying execution ground.

On August 7, 1952, Ceng Mei-lan saw his dear second elder brother for the last time. At the time, he was being locked up in Cell No. 10 in the detention center at No. 3, Qingdao East Road, Taipei City at the Taiwan Garrison Command Headquarters.⁴ That day, around four o'clock in the morning, he heard the sound of heavy clinks of iron near his cell. He jumped up, squinting through the crack in the cell door to peep at Cell No. 14 in which his dear brother was being held. He already knew that his brother had been indicted according to Clause 1 Article 2 of the Traitors Punishment Act, and his brother had been waiting vainly to be called for his execution for months. Although Ceng Mei-lan knew

that his own offense was less serious and his crime would not lead to death, he woke up at four o'clock in the morning along with other death row inmates, worrying about his brother being dragged to the execution ground.

Bailiffs and military police opened up Cell No. 14. Ceng Mei-lan held his breath and gazed through the crack in the cell door. From inside the cell, four men wearing fetters and handcuffs walked out one by one. One of them was indeed his second brother whom he unconditionally loved and respected.

Ceng Mei-lan covered his mouth with great effort, trying to avoid from crying out loud. His teary eyes stared yearningly at the back of his brother. Impotently, he could only let those four people walk quickly out of his very limited line of sight. But each sound of clangs made by the iron fetters on their ankles being dragged on the floor of the long prison corridor at dawn beat upon his wailing heart. He wailed in silence. He called out in Hakka,

"My brother, dear brother... please don't leave, brother..."

Fellow inmates in the same cell all consoled him, telling him, who was only a young man in his early 20s, not to be so sad, and that he should take good care of himself for his brother's sake. The following month, he went to court and bore back a ten-year sentence.

Although it is common knowledge that the Kuomintang in the 1950s fabricated a tremendous number of wrongly, falsely, and mistakenly prosecuted cases, people still find it difficult to understand why Ceng Mei-lan suffered from such an unjustified wrong.

In the spring of 1952, Ceng Mei-lan's family had just heard that the second brother, who had been taken away but who had then seized an opportunity to escape for another year, had been arrested once again; they nevertheless had not heard any news from him. Not until several months later did Xu Qing-lan's letter arrive home

from the address of "No 3, Qingdao East Road, Taipei City." His younger brother Ceng Mei-lan, traveling all the way from Tongluo to the detention center at the Garrison Command in Taipei, went to visit his second elder brother twice, bringing him some old clothes and coarse food. During the early summer between May and June in the exact same year, Ceng Mei-lan, surprisingly, was also arrested.

As Ceng Mei-lan who is currently more than 60 years old recalled, after his second brother was taken away, his already impoverished family had become even more destitute. Ceng Mei-lan and his third elder brother had to go electrofishing every night; at dawn, they gave the fish they caught to their mother to sell in the market in exchange for food. In the daytime, the two brothers slept at home.

One night, a villager surnamed Xie asked him to deliver a letter to Wen-Lin Hospital on Tongluo Street the next day. Why did he ask Ceng Mei-lan to deliver the letter? "Every morning after electrofishing, I had to ride my bike to Tongluo Street to recharge those batteries. The man said to me, 'You ride a bike, so it's fast and you are going there anyway.'" Ceng Mei-lan said, "Country folks never guard against other folks. So I said yes to him. I just deliver a letter for someone on my way, what could possibly go wrong?"

He recharged the batteries, holding the letter entrusted to him by that man, and went to Wen-Lin Hospital. He saw many patients waiting in the emergency room. He registered at the registration window. When it was his turn to be examined, the head administrator of the hospital held out his hand to touch his forehead. No fever, said the head administrator. Ceng Mei-lan handed the letter he carried at his bosom to the superintendent. After reading it, the head administrator gave him back the letter, saying, "I don't have the medicine he needs here. Go try at another hospital."

Ceng Mei-lan put the letter in his shirt pocket and cycled home. "Though we only graduated from public schools (elementary schools), we know that we shouldn't read

other people's letters. I'm well aware of this principle," said Ceng Mei-lan. Riding his bike all morning, he was covered in sweat because of the heat. After Ceng Mei-lan went home, he took his shirt off. Not knowing about the letter in the shirt pocket, one of his sisters-in-law simply threw the sweat-stained shirt onto a pile of clothes immersed in water to be washed. After Ceng Mei-lan thought of the letter, it had already been soaked soft and mushy. Ceng Mei-lan broke out in sweat, quickly put the dripping wet letter over the stove fire to dry it, but, he accidentally burned it instead.

In the morning just past 11 o'clock, a police officer was sent by the local police station of Tongluo, requesting Ceng Mei-lan to pay a visit to the station. "As soon as I got to the station, they asked me about the letter I had burnt." Ceng Mei-lan said, "I thought, it was just a letter that someone asked me to take for some medicine for him, how come the police also knew about it and called me in for questioning?"

Ceng Mei-lan recounted the entire event matter-of-factly. "However, that police officer said that I couldn't even make up a story. They asked me if I myself would believe such an absurd plot." The special agent accused Ceng Mei-lan of destroying the evidence of a crime by burning the letter. What followed was a series of non-stop tortures and beatings from night to day, day to night, asking him to hand over the letter. If he could not give them the letter, he ought to confess to them its content.

"They tied my two thumbs tightly together, hung me up, lifting my body three Chinese feet⁵ above the ground. They also asked me to kneel halfway down, put wooden sticks on my calves, and let people tread and crush on those sticks on my calves." Ceng Mei-lan said, "Every time they grilled me, the excruciating pain made me shit, pee and sweat all over my body with tears all over my face, and I would scream until I lost my mind and consciousness ..."

Ceng Mei-lan became silent. He lit up a cigarette, and continued to talk about how he was transferred later to the Hsinchu Military Police Brigade, and then to the Bureau

for the Protection of State Secrets of the Ministry of National Defense. After that, with his face covered by a black cloth, he was transferred to a dingy and dark underground chamber where he could not figure out whether it was even day. Before long, he was again sent to the Station of Criminal Police, and finally, to that detention center on Qingdao East Road. He was repeatedly interrogated with the same questions by every single unit, and was treated with almost the same tortures and beatings. During every torturous interrogation, shit, pee, tears and snot would come out of his body. Not until his voice became hoarse and his body was completely exhausted would the tortures stop.

"They would ask you to stick the webs of your hands to the edge of a table, tie up your two thumbs with a string, and then firmly pull the string from under the table, so your four fingers on each hand and eight fingers on both hands were locked tightly on the table." Ceng Mei-lan said calmly, placing the cigarette on an ashtray, and then stuck his hands to the table's edge. "And then they would use a needle to prick into the tender flesh underneath each fingernail..."

As he quietly recounted these gruesome events, it seemed that you could hear those utterly heart-broken screams, accompanied by all the shit and pee coming out from his body. When Ceng Mei-lan was transferred to the detention center, the broken needle that was lodged inside his left ring finger caused a serious inflammatory infection. "The entire ring finger had swollen to the size of half a ping pong ball," he said. After he arrived at the detention center, in order to operate and take out the needle, the doctor could only cut off half of his fingertip.

"When I was young, I played the Xiao very well," said Ceng Mei-lan, laughing, "but once the half of that fingertip was cut off, I could no longer play it."

I saw his shortened left ring finger. After years of being tempered by the life of a cement mason, the finger looked clean and solid, with only a tiny piece of dark gray fingernail left.

On the day he was summoned to appear in court for sentencing, the judge surveyed his case file and kept frowning.

"Your case only involved one person, you. The investigation records state that you held a meeting." The judge asked, "Only one person, who the hell was in the meeting with you?"

Ceng Mei-lan said he was forced by those investigators to say so.

"Then why did you fingerprint this confession?"

Ceng Mei-lan told him that he was tortured into confession. Special agents pulled his hand forcefully to stamp his finger print onto the confession.

"I'll sentence you to 10 years. Deprive civil rights for 10 years."

His appointed interpreter in court told Ceng Mei-lan, "Ten years. So you won't die. It's not bad."

However, to this day, Ceng Mei-lan has yet to receive his indictment paper or his verdict document.

Little Jiang

As the youngest son of poor Hakka farmers in Miaoli, Ceng Mei-lan was well taken care of in prison by his comrades-in-hardship. They helped Ceng Mei-lan learn Mandarin Chinese, study algebra, geometry, trigonometry and calculus with great enthusiasm. "I studied real hard," he said, "I'd learned some knowledge in prison. Not really at a disadvantage." Some of his comrades-in-hardship wanted to teach him English; however, while in prison, his political awareness was elevated as well. "I was against American imperialism; I didn't want to learn English," he said. One of his comrades-in-hardship specialized in English, so that he could translate books and articles for a living after he was released. "The math I learned was useless once I got out of prison. As time passed, I became unfamiliar with it. Couldn't really earn money with it." He started laughing.

Ceng Mei-lan also learned to sing in prison, including "The Internationale" and "Honghu Lake." He learned them all.

"They said these were communist songs. Who cares?" He said, "They locked me up without any reason whatsoever. Even a non-communist would want to sing communist songs."

I asked him whom he remembered the most during his ten-year-long imprisonment. He said he remembered most clearly a National Taiwan University college student surnamed Jiang from Xinpu. "This Little Jiang, he was one of us Hakkas!" he said. This youngster surnamed Jiang taught him Putonghua, taught him to write articles and letters. Jiang also racked his brain trying to write a statement of defense for Ceng Meilan. He also taught him how to sing, told him to take good care of himself by all means, and said that Ceng Meilan's case was minor, so he shouldn't worry or be afraid. "But Jiang was a 'Clause 1 Article 2,' waiting for the military police to take him out to be shot dead ..." said Ceng Meilan, pressing his cigarette on the ashtray, squeezing to extinguish it.

One early morning, Ceng Meilan opened his eyes amidst a strange disturbance. He saw a couple of chief bailiffs taking advantage of the fact that all the prisoners in the cell were sleeping soundly, and groped for Little Jiang who was sleeping beside him. The bailiffs pressed down Jiang's four limbs and covered his mouth.

People of the entire cell woke and sat up one after another. In the deadly silence, they watched this young man tidying up his clothes and being shackled, and then cleared a way to let Little Jiang to be brought out of the cell by a gang of bandits.

"I'm leaving."

The young man said quietly. "There wasn't a tinge of apprehension on his face. Calmly and tranquilly, he walked out of the cell," said Ceng Meilan. He said, if it had happened on the outside, whoever did this to Little Jiang, he would have risked his life to fight for this young man. "In prison, all you could do was let others take him away in silence," said Ceng Meilan. The iron door of the cell was shut closed solemnly. Ceng Meilan buried his face in his quilts and kept on crying. "I cried and cried. Tears

and snot was all over my quilts. F— you." He quietly cursed in Hakka.

Where is the bamboo grove?

Between April and May in 1962, Ceng Meilan was released on parole. After his verdict was finalized, during those seven or eight years of serving his sentence, he had washed and ironed clothes and worked as a tailor in prison. He was paid a daily wage of two New Taiwan Dollars; by the time he was released, he had actually saved about 3,000 or 4,000 NT Dollars.

When he was released from the Xindian Military Prison in Ankeng, he carried with him his worn clothes, worn quilts, and several boxes of books, heading to Taipei Main Station on foot, and then got a ticket to Tongluo.

When Ceng Meilan finally returned to his old home from which he had been separated for so long, he could indeed be described as "crying while laughing." He cried because the surroundings that made him sad reminded him of how he had watched his second brother with fetters around his ankles going out to meet death. He laughed because he had really returned to his old home that he had been poignantly yearning for during those 10 years.

The state of the old home he had returned to was still impoverished; the family could barely sustain three meals a day. Because of their second son Qing-lan's unnatural death and their youngest son Mei-lan's dreadful imprisonment, the two elders of the house had been depressed for all these years and had become frail and aged. As soon as Ceng Meilan got home and before he finished eating a bowl of trotter vermicelli customarily served to avoid calamity and to repair one's fortune, his parents reminded him to search for his second brother's skeletal remains to bring them back for a proper and peaceful burial.

It was then that he learned of the fact that his second brother Qing-lan's skeletal remains had never been returned to his hometown. His family told him, in the year of his second brother's execution, a person

from the Tongluo Police Station came to tell them that family members were given only an hour to bring a thousand NT Dollars to claim the corpse.

"At that time, the daily wage was 11 NT Dollars. A *kah* of land was worth 8,000 NT Dollars. A thousand NT Dollars could have bought two fens of land,"⁶ said Ceng Mei-lan.

Ceng Mei-lan remembered that, even in prison, he had dreamed of his second brother telling him that he lived under a bamboo grove several times. After he returned home, this particular dream became more frequent, and repeated that his second brother was living under a bamboo grove. The corpse had not been returned, but there were bamboo groves all over Taiwan. Where exactly, and under which grove, could he find his second brother?

Soon after his return, Ceng Mei-lan passed the examination for a job of connecting oil pipes offered by the Chinese Petroleum Corporation.⁷ The job was rather nice; however, when the corporation found out about his criminal record, they asked him to leave the next day. He was so angry that he borrowed a hundred NT Dollars from a friend, and went north to Taipei. Ceng Mei-lan had learned some skills in cement working from his father. "But after 10 years, materials and techniques of cement works had changed and been improved," said Ceng Mei-lan. He went to construction sites and did some heavy labor works such as carrying bricks and mixing concrete; as he started afresh, he covertly observed the techniques to learn new stuff, new crafts.

On the other hand, after coming to Taipei, Ceng Mei-lan became more determined to find his second brother's skeletal remains. He worked part-time, and whenever he thought of finding the remains and had free time, he would go searching everywhere. At first, he went to the public cemetery alongside Machangding. Watching porcupine grass in the wind and sandbanks of Machangding, he thought of the scene in which his second brother and Huang Fengkai fell down under the stars and the moon

in that particular early morning. His second brother's remains must have been buried near Machangding. He looked all over every public cemetery around Machangding, but nothing came up. He went to the graveyard of Xindian Military Prison, to the shooting range at Sanzhangli. "I mistook the shooting range for an execution ground," Ceng Mei-lan scratched his not entirely bald, squarely rounded head and said, "People said that place was for 'shooting.' Isn't Ho-lo-lang⁸ talking about shooting someone by firing squad as dragging someone 'to be shot'?" He mocked himself with a laugh.

One time, he heard that the executed and unclaimed corpses of political prisoners were all sent to the National Defense Medical Center as anatomical materials. He also heard that students of the National Defense Medical Center had once recognized the bodies submerged in formaldehyde sinks as their classmates, who had been taken away by special agents and were never heard from again... After much thinking, he decided to look for the remains at the National Defense Medical Center. But when Ceng Mei-lan reached the gate of the National Defense Medical Center, he was stopped by the military police guarding the gate.

"I want to see the head administrator," he said.

The military police asked for his identity, whether he had made an appointment or not, and what was his business for seeing the head administrator. Ceng Mei-lan said that he had urgent business and had to see the head administrator. "You can see I'm just a country folk. I don't have any weapon on me. Are you afraid that I'll do something unlawful?" Ceng Mei-lan knelt down and said, "You gotta let me in; you can even have gun soldiers to escort me." The military police kept on calling the office. The head administrator agreed to see him; a medical officer was sent out to bring him in.

"They took me to the head administrator's office," recalled Ceng Mei-lan. He told the head administrator his purpose.

"I understand that, if my brother's corpse has already been dissected, his bones, flesh, can never be found. Then it doesn't matter," he told the head administrator, "I just want to read your documents to confirm that my second brother's corpse had really been handled here, and would you let me grab even a handful of soil to bring back home to perform a ritual of veneration, so that, I, can appease my father, my mother..." He started to cry.

After listening to his request, the head administrator simply said that the National Defense Medical Center had never performed autopsies on corpses of political prisoners and naturally there wasn't any document. What Ceng Mei-lan heard seemed too vivid to be false, "but when the administrator said there was no such thing, what could I do about it?" Ceng Mei-lan said, "I could only go home, thinking that my brother wasn't very spiritually efficacious after all."

Actually, the head administrator lied. There were indeed people who went to the National Defense Medical Center and reclaimed dissected corpses of political prisoners.

When Ceng Mei-lan was released from prison in 1962, he was 33 years old. When he was 40, he married a good "po-ngiong" (Hakka, meaning wife); when he was 41, he had a son.

"During that time, my brother came into my dreams so often, always saying that he lived under a bamboo grove..." Ceng Mei-lan said, "Waking up from my dreams, again and again I pondered painstakingly: a bamboo grove in where? My brother should really give me a clear sign or hint..."

Every time he had a dream like this, his heart was worried and anxious. He thought his second brother Xu Qing-lan's bones must have been desecrated in ways unknown to him, must have been extremely uncomfortable and uneasy. Hence, he would ride his motorbike, circling and passing the public cemeteries on the outskirts of Taipei, looking everywhere for people to ask, but always coming back without an answer. "For 30 years, not a year, a month, had I

ever forgotten to look for my second brother," said Ceng Mei-lan.

In 1981, he moved his family to the foot of the Liuzhangli Public Cemetery. In a couple of years, an old bone-collector moved into the neighborhood. "But because we had different jobs, we rarely greeted one another," said Ceng Mei-lan.

One day, Ceng Mei-lan saw his neighbor, this old *thóo-kong-á*, picking up and washing bones alongside the path of the public cemetery. "In fact, my father had collected bones for others before. He implored his sons never in their lives to do the work of collecting and washing bones." Ceng Mei-lan parked his motorbike and chatted with the old *thóo-kong-á*. It was only then that he learned the old man's surname was Xu. "He was also one of us Hakkas!" he said.

Ceng Mei-lan asked Old Xu how much money he could earn by collecting and washing a bundle of bones. The old man said, including washing, drying in the sun, and putting into an urn, a bundle would earn him 7,000 NT Dollars.

"I didn't know this line of work was more lucrative than working as a cement mason," said Ceng Mei-lan, "I asked Uncle Guang—he was called Xu Jin-guang. I asked Uncle Guang, whether he had heard of a place ... where the corpses executed by the government around the 40th and 41st year of Minguo were buried..." Old Uncle Guang, unexpectedly, said,

"I've heard of it."

"Where?"

"Right in this Liuzchangli Public Cemetery."

"Where in this public cemetery?" asked Ceng Mei-lan with his eyes wide open.

"That I don't know. I heard it from the older generation of us *thóo-kong-á*," said Old Xu.

Ceng Mei-lan talked in details about how he had been strenuously searching for his second brother's bones for 30 years.

"My brother was called Xu Qing-lan." Ceng Mei-lan told Xu Jin-guang which Chinese character "Qing" and "lan" refers to respectively, and said, "Whenever you find it, do let me know."

More than a year after this encounter, Uncle Guang, who loved to eat snails, often went to a corner in the public cemetery to pick wild shiso to be stir-fried with snails. He accidentally discovered a tiny tombstone by a cluster of shiso. He casually looked at it. It was a tombstone with the surname Xu inscribed on it. "What was that A-Mei-lan's⁹ brother called?" Old Xu murmured absent-mindedly. He had already forgotten the name.

Next day, Uncle Guang found Ceng Mei-lan.

"A-Mei-lan, I found a tomb with a surname Xu yesterday," said the old man, "the name ... I couldn't see clearly..."

This was how Ceng Mei-lan finally found the decrepit and small tombstone of his second brother Xu Qing-lan, for which he had been diligently searching for 30 years. Moreover, he inadvertently brought 202 tombs to light. Like Xu Qing-lan, these tombs belonged to those who were executed in great numbers in the silenced darkness in the early 1950s. A handful of them were real, but most of them were not, Taiwanese communists and their sympathizers.

For those corpses and bones that were obliterated, abandoned, and buried slovenly in the most desolate corner of the public cemetery on the outskirts of Taipei, and under the circumstance that the slightest traces and hints of evidence could hardly be found during the long-lasting period of political terror, who could have been like Ceng Mei-lan who, with undismayed perseverance and unyielding steadfastness, had searched arduously for 30 years? And now the truth has become clear: without Ceng Mei-lan's unflinching and arduous search for 30 years, the more than 200 tombs—an horrible testament to the terror of the suppression of communists in the 1950s that shocked thousands of hearts and souls, that forced people to re-think the dark page of history—would never have been uncovered.

This, of course, has something to do with being the son of poor Hakka farmers, Ceng Mei-lan's uniquely persevering, determined, and "hard-necked"¹⁰ character; yet, it has also much more to do with the

eternal fraternal love, as close as flesh and bones, between Ceng Mei-lan and Xu Qing-lan, a love that had been cultivated from their destitute childhood.

My second brother suddenly fell to his knees with a thud

Ceng Mei-lan said, he had heard that his grandfather was a blind man; as for his grandmother that he had never met, he did not know much about her. His grandparents had only one daughter, and that was Ceng Mei-lan and Xu Qing-lan's mother, Ceng Cao-mei. Because Ceng Cao-mei was the only daughter of the Ceng family, they adopted the young man Xu A-xiang as a son-in-law into a matrilocal marriage with Ceng Cao-mei. The couple bore four sons. Two of the brothers assumed their father's surname, the other two their mother's. That was why the brothers Ceng Mei-lan and Xu Qing-lan had different surnames.

This family at first had rented three *kahs* of land for farming. Although toiling all the year round, the family at that time basically could have rice for three square meals. The father of the children was also a celebrated cement mason. The third brother of Ceng Mei-lan would gather firewood for the brick kiln during the slack farm season. The family also raised two robust bullocks and the youngest son Ceng Mei-lan was in charge of tending and feeding them. Before Land Reform, the living conditions for the family of tenant farmer Xu A-xiang was fairly good. Their land owner, whose surname was Zhong, had a son who was a director at Chunan Precinct of Miaoli County Police Bureau at the end of 1948. Being in a governmental office, Zhong's son was naturally well informed. He knew in advance that the government was going to issue a policy for farmland reform. At the beginning of 1950 in the new calendar, the landowner came to "set up ploughing" (landowners retrieving their rented farmlands) and forced the Xus to give up farming, falsely claiming that the Zhongs wanted their lands back for self-farming

where in fact they wanted to protect their own estate. "Farmers are honest and naive! If we had refused to give up farming and stalled for several months until the '37.5' policy was announced, we would have had a share of the land," said Ceng Mei-lan. But then the second brother Xu Qing-lan said indignantly, "Let him take back his farmland! We won't beg him! Instead of farming, we can work and do manual labors and still be able to live! I don't believe we would die of hunger without ploughing the landowners' farmlands!"

Thus, the household of Xu A-xiang, a major tenant farmer who rented three *kahs* of land, was unable to obtain a single *chhun*¹¹ of land under either the Rent Reduction to "37.5" percent or the land reform that followed. Since then, the entire family had made a living by doing temporary work around the village, drifting from tenant farmers to wage laborers in the village. The father, Xu A-xiang, picked up work at cement masonry again, while the youngest son, Ceng Mei-lan, followed his father to learn handicrafts. Ceng Mei-lan's eldest brother was conscripted to Southeast Asia as a Japanese soldier before the war; he had not yet returned. His second brother Xu Qing-lan was just demobilized from the Japanese military; he went to the peanut oil mill next to their village and became a worker who extracted oil. His third brother gathered firewood for the brick kiln.

"While my second brother worked in the peanut oil mill, he got to know a man called Luo Kun-chun. They became very close," said Ceng Mei-lan in remembrance. Since the oil mill was about 3,000 meters away from home, Xu Qing-lan began not coming home to sleep, but stayed overnight at the oil mill, talking with Luo Kun-chun all night long. Next year, 1951, this Luo Kun-chun suddenly fled. "Not long after Luo Kun-chun's escape, it is said that he turned himself in," said Ceng Mei-lan, "we supposed that my second brother had something to do with Luo Kun-chun, and before long, he left home and fled."

At first glance, like Ceng Mei-lan, Luo Kun-chun was a robust Hakka farmer. He was sincere, straightforward, and talked with neither vagueness nor verbosity. He was once involved in the February incidents in 1947,¹² and was sent to a labor-drilling camp in Dazhi, Taipei, only to come home after being tortured for half a year. In May, 1950, the underground party of the Chinese Communist Party in Taiwan—i.e., Taiwan Provincial Working Committee of Chinese Communist Party—fell apart entirely. A group of people including Cai Xiao-qian, Chen Ze-sheng and Hong You-qiao jointly declared their surrender, urging the underground members throughout the province to stop their work and turn themselves in. The short-lived yet fully four-year life of the "Working Committee" in Taiwan was over.

Before long, however, in the middle of May, 1950, the task of reconstructing the party with Chen Fu-sheng, Xiao Dao-ying, Li Ming-hua and a few others as core members, had been vigorously launched under the extremely adverse circumstances. It was during this tough moment that Chen Fu-sheng found Luo Kun-chun, and together they prepared the work of reconstruction.

Luo Kun-chun and Xu Qing-lan were classmates in the Japanese instituted elementary school ("public school"); they had lived close by since childhood and studied in the same school. Luo Kun-chun's family was both self-farming farmers and tenant farmers, while Xu Qing-lan's family was pure tenant farmers. "The states of our families were impoverished, barely eking out a basic living," said Luo Kun-chun.

In 1951, Luo Kun-chun's uncle, along with others, gathered some money to open an oil mill in the village. Luo Kun-chun and Xu Qing-lan had both worked at the mill.

"Xu Qing-lan was my classmate during our time in public school." Luo Kun-chun recalled calmly, "Friends were important to him. He was a man of integrity, with a righteous heart, a man of very good quality." In the spring of 1951, Chen Fu-sheng's new core members carried out a series of thorough inspection on their thoughts, policies and directions, as well as stipulated an

approach and a guideline to construct their bases, work for a living and achieve progress through arduous labor. By doing so, their tasks achieved an obvious development. Using his role as an oil-mill worker to perform undercover work, Luo Kun-chun was solely responsible for the task of building strongholds, setting up base camps, and deploying the party's populous supporters in the Miaoli mountain regions.

"Every day and night in the oil mill, I talked with Xu Qing-lan a lot." Luo Kun-chun recalled, "He wasn't very educated; however, for a poor tenant farmer's son, life itself had educated him profoundly..."

Luo Kun-chun said the party needed a good person like Xu Qing-lan, especially during that difficult time. "The party was fish, the people were water. Without water, the fish could hardly survive," said Luo Kun-chun, "Xu Qing-lan sought knowledge thirstily; he had an unquenchable pursuit for the politics and knowledge to liberate the impoverished people..."

Luo Kun-chun looked outside the window, in silence.

"This summer is unusually hot. Please have some tea," he said.

"Thank you."

"But before long, the reconstructed party organization started to be sabotaged from Hsinchu. Chen Fu-sheng and the others were all taken into prison." He said calmly, "The Kuomintang special agents began to search for me everywhere. I could only go underground, and run away."

From sabotaged organizations in Hsinchu, Chubei, and Chunan, Luo Kun-chun said, numerous comrades escaping underground rushed toward Miaoli. While he was on the run, Luo Kun-chun had to set up strongholds for the escaping comrades to hide and work. Before he left, he asked Xu Qing-lan to watch out for his own safety with great care. If necessary, Xu Qing-lan must leave as well. "I told him the locations of several strongholds for the underground party and ways to contact with them," said Luo Kun-chun.

Apparently, not long after Luo Kun-chun went underground and escaped, Xu

Qing-lan sensed that something was wrong and began to hide underground as well.

"After my second brother had hidden for two or three months, the Tongluo Police Station started to send people to my house to look for him," Ceng Mei-lan said. One day, the local police station of Tongluo sent a janitor to ask Xu Qing-lan to go to the local station. "A few days in a roll, the janitor came by three times. My parents begged people to call for him, but my second brother wouldn't show up," Ceng Mei-lan said.

By the fourth time, the local police station of Tongluo dispatched four or five police officers to our house.

"Nothing serious! We just want to ask him a few questions, and then he can go home ..." they said.

The friendliness of these police officers made Ceng Mei-lan's parents feel angry with their second son. They sent people to look for him everywhere, and finally made Xu Qing-lan come back.

"A true man should have the courage to accept the consequence of his own actions. They've said it clearly: after they ask you a few questions, you can come back," said Xu A-xiang to his second son. "You listen to me and go with them!"

Four or five police officers walked Xu Qing-lan to the grain-basking field in the courtyard; his parents was seeing the guests off. At the gate of the courtyard, Xu Qing-lan suddenly fell to his knees with a thud while facing his parents, straightened his clothes and kowtowed to them three times. He said, "Dad, Mom, your son fears that he won't have the opportunity to serve you with filial piety from now on, please do take care of yourselves..."

The police officers promptly helped him up, and promised again to bring him back in the evening.

"I was there and saw everything very clearly," said Ceng Mei-lan, "now that I think of it, my second brother definitely knew his misfortune had fallen on him!"

The criminal police took Xu Qing-lan away. About 40 or 50 meters away, after seeing that the parents of the Xus had gone inside the house, they cuffed both of Xu

Qing-lan's hands and walked to the local police station of Tongluo. "I had been following and watching from afar," said Ceng Mei-lan, "since then, there had been no news of my second brother."

The big lunchbox

Ceng Mei-lan, 64 years old this year [1993], thought of the year when he had just turned 20. The event in which he followed from afar his second brother, Xu Qing-lan, who was taken away by criminal police appeared before his own eyes as clear as day. Whenever Ceng Mei-lan fought with his classmates but could not beat them and wouldn't dare go to school the next day, it was Xu Qing-lan, who was five grades higher, who would always cover his back. "My second brother told me to walk ahead to school alone, while he would take the shortcut from where he could see me." Ceng Mei-lan laughed at his reminiscence and said, "When those classmates who bullied me and picked on me showed up and we started fighting again, my second brother would show up. Since then, nobody dared to bully me anymore."

However, as the younger brother, Ceng Mei-lan, saw his second brother suffering from a great catastrophe twice during his lifetime, and there were nothing he could do to help except cry helplessly. The first time was when the criminal police took his second brother away. He could only follow them closely from behind, in tears, all the way from their home to Tongluo Street, until he saw Xu Qing-lan being handcuffed and pushed fiercely into the local police station. "The other time was in the detention center. Seeing my dear brother being fettered, through the crevice of the door, dragged away to be shot, I could only cover my mouth and cry hard," he said.

When Ceng Mei-lan attended the first grade of the Japanese instituted elementary school, Xu Qing-lan was in the sixth grade. The two brothers shared a big lunchbox together. During lunchtime at noon, the sixth-grade Xu Qing-lan would eat first and leave a portion for the first-grade Ceng Mei-

lan to eat after. "Our family was so poor that two children had to share one lunchbox." Ceng Mei-lan said, "My brother always left as much nutritious ingredients for me as possible." Together they would walk half an hour to school every day, and eat the lunchbox at noon. Even though sometimes the only ingredients available in the meager lunchbox were a tiny portion of dried radish fried with garlic, each brother would still rather let the other eat more.

After Xu Qing-lan graduated from school, he went to the landowner's house to work as a long-term hired hand, looking after cattle and feeding them. When he was 17 or 18 years old, Xu Qing-lan's father rented one more piece of land. The young tenant farmer Xu Qing-lan was very good at agricultural works. "He was well-known in our village! He was very strong. The *lakdakk*¹³ for weeding rice paddies was extremely heavy, yet he could shoulder it and walk with it by himself," said Ceng Mei-lan, "Ho! When it came to how fast one could be, how large the area was for planting rice seedlings, he was always number one."

Xu Qing-lan was also a good son.

"After my second brother graduated from elementary school, he started to go out and earn money." Ceng Mei-lan said, "Including his work at the peanut oil mill, the money he had earned every month, he gave them all to my Mom, not keeping a penny to himself."

Xu Qing-lan's deep reverence and sincerity toward the elders in his village was well-known, too. Near the end of the Second World War, the Japanese deployed the commoners, exploited their labor without compensation, having them offer manpower for the sake of "pursuing public affairs" (obligatory labor). One time, the Japanese wanted to accelerate the building of a military airbase in Shueiwei. They sent a list to enlist workers, asking Xu Qing-lan's dad, Xu A-Xiang, to go to the airbase to "pursue public affairs." On his father's behalf, Xu Qing-lan went to work; as he arrived there, what he saw was a great number of elders from his village laboring.

The young and vigorous Xu Qing-lan on the one hand rushed to do his work, and on the other, busied himself with helping other elders push trolleys uphill, carry heavy loads. He therefore was much praised by the older generation in the village.

Near the end of the war, Xu Qing-lan was conscripted into the Japanese navy. After several months of training, he was transferred to an organization of the Japanese navy to manage the kitchen. One day, Ceng Mei-lan went to Nanliao in Hsinchu to "pursue public affairs" on his father's behalf for 20 days. At the age of 16 or 17, Ceng Mei-lan then made use of his spare time, going to the navy organization in Hsinchu to look for his second brother. "During wartime, life was extremely hard," said Ceng Mei-lan. "People ate sweet-potato-chip-rice for three meals every day, and it was rare for us to see even a few grains of rice."¹⁴ After he got in touch with his second brother in the navy kitchen, Ceng Mei-lan went to his second brother's kitchen to eat steamed rice every evening. "A few days later, my brother simply found an underbrush between Nanliao and Hsinchu, and asked me to go there and take military rations, canned sardines, he took from the kitchen," said Ceng Mei-lan, "Think about it, it was during wartime! Canned sardines!"

When Ceng Mei-lan was released from prison and went home in 1962, he started to investigate openly and secretly, to get a complete outline of how Xu Qing-lan took his chance to escape during his transfer from Tongluo police station. He personally followed this outline to tread the road of hardship of his second brother's escape.

After Xu Qing-lan was taken from his home to Tongluo police station and questioned for his testimony, around 11 o'clock that night, two police officers escorted him in order to transfer him to Miaoli by train. "From Tongluo to Miaoli before passing Nanshi, there was a very steep slope on which the train went really fast," said Ceng Mei-lan, "my brother told the officers escorting him that he wanted to use the lavatory. In the carriage, the officers waited by the

lavatory door while my second brother jumped out of the window from the speeding train and ran away."

Xu Qing-lan jumped off the train and ran alongside a stream. Having been trained in the Japanese navy, by 1951, Xu Qing-lan was able to hike across a mountain and cross a river from Tongluo to Fuji in Gongguan. He disguised himself as a rural day-laborer and helped local farmers with rice harvesting. At night, he slept in the house of Lai Fu-xiang, one of the populous supporters of the underground party. One day, some police detectives suddenly closed in on Lai Fu-xiang's house. "My brother was carrying a Japanese grenade. The instant he was about to pull the safety pin and die with his enemies," said Ceng Mei-lan, "he thought of his host's two sons sleeping in the same room. If the grenade had exploded, the innocent would have been harmed." While Xu Qing-lan hesitated, the detectives immediately pounced on him. They handcuffed him to the leg of a heavy, red-wood table, so that they could continue to search the entire house and courtyard of the owner Lai Fu-xiang.

"To everyone's amazement, my brother took his chance, struggled and broke off the handcuffs while they were searching the house, and walked out the courtyard swaggering. This is what I've heard from others later," said Ceng Mei-lan, radiant with great delight. Xu Qing-lan walked for 20 or 30 steps, then in an instant sprinted toward a mountain hill in darkness, and simultaneously, numerous gunshots were heard everywhere. "When my brother ran, at the same time he threw stones behind him; the police took what he threw as grenades, so they all ducked down or backed away," said Ceng Mei-lan. "You see, he ran away again!" said Ceng Mei-lan, with his two eyes radiating with a sparkle of admiration. There was a downpour at that moment. The detectives finally knew that he did not carry grenades with him, and thus chased after him with all their might. Xu Qing-lan ran toward a bank of a stream, realizing that the original stream had flooded into a roaring river during the pouring rain. "But my brother leapt into it, into the rapid mighty

currents. The police assumed that Xu Qing-lan must have drowned in the big flood," said Ceng Mei-lan. "Surprisingly and before long, Xu Qing-lan my second brother started to shout from across the river: Come and catch me if you have the balls!"

Without much that could be done, people watched him disappearing into the mist in the torrential rainfall across the river. While Xu Qing-lan was not caught, the host Lai Fu-xiang who "harbored and sheltered" the "wicked bandits" was afterward arrested and sentenced to ten years' imprisonment. In 1952, Xu Qing-lan was brought to Yanshuikeng in Dahu by Luo Kun-chun, working together with another underground party comrade, Huang Feng-kai, at a workshop to extract citronella oil in the daytime, and sleeping in a stone cave in Zhang Xiu-jin's banana orchard at night.

"At the time, how pricey the citronella oil was! A catty of citronella oil could exchange for a hundred catties of grains.¹⁵ You can do the math yourself," said Ceng Mei-lan, "but others wouldn't know that this citronella oil was distilled with people's flesh and blood." Workers cut off citronella grass and sun-dried them during the day, steamed them at night. Distilling the oil would take an entire night. The work was extremely exhausting, "It was done with much toil. Huang Feng-kai and my second brother would instantly fall asleep every day." Ceng Mei-lan said, in the middle of a dark night, more than ten special agents groped their way to the stone cave in the banana orchard, and pressed down onto the two bodies in a flurry; Xu Qing-lan had been tightly tied up before he fully awakened. "Huan Feng-kai took his chance to escape, running into wild mountains, but the special agents shot and hit him in his leg. The two of them were taken away just like that."

Ceng Mei-lan lit up a cigarette. We fell into silence yet again.

However, after jumping off the train, how did Xu Qing-lan, who escaped with his bare hands, rely on a Japanese grenade the entire time? How did he end up in the same place with Huang Feng-kai?

Besides Luo Kun-chun, Xie Qi-dan who belonged to the same "group" of the

underground party with Xu Qing-lan answered this question.

Another child with a bitter fate

Like Xu Qing-lan, Xie Qi-dan was an impoverished tenant farmer in Tongluo, Miaoli. He lost his father at the age of nine, while his mother was an unfortunate child-bride,¹⁶ an illiterate who could not count from one to ten. After graduating from the Japanese instituted "public school," Xie Qi-dan went to one of the landowners' house in town and worked as their long-term hired hand to look after cattle. Next to the landowner's house, the young master of a wealthy household studied at the Industrial High School; he and Xie Qi-dan were about the same age. Every night, the young worker Xie Qi-dan stared yearningly at this young master doing his homework. "He treated me very well. While he was doing his homework, he was also teaching me..." Xie Qi-dan recalled, "I'd worked as a long-term hired hand for two years, and I'd studied for two years."

The wage of a young long-term hired hand was 800 catties of grains for the first year, and it went up to 900 catties for the second year; it was adjusted on an annual basis. "While I watched the young master doing homework to learn knowledge, I was often scolded and mocked by the landowners. They said that if I had had a fate for study, I wouldn't have to be a long-term hired hand," said Xie Qi-dan. Every time he was jeered, he felt like a blade was cutting his heart, so ashamed and resentful that he could hardly show his face. "When I think about it now, I couldn't understand why I was yearning so much for studying at such a young age," he said, "although heartbroken, ashamed, I still thickened my thin-skinned face the next night, held back my tears, and leaned against him to learn knowledge attentively, greedily..."

So many years had passed by, Xie Qi-dan had suffered from so much bitterness, and walked on so many rough mountain trails during the hardship caused by Kuomintang's persecution and suppression.

However, as he recalled this phase of his childhood, when he endured shame and pursued knowledge, even though Xie Qi-dan's face was all smiles his eyes was sparkling with trembling tears.

Xie Qi-dan had two uncles, both of whom went abroad to Japan for work studies in their early years. Not long before the retrocession, they came back with new thoughts. "I remembered one of my uncles had me read the Japanese version of Sun Yat-sen's *Three Principles of the People*. I still remembered my excited reflection back then: a life promised by *Three Principles of the People* was indeed a heavenly one!" said Xie Qi-dan. Shortly after the retrocession, he knew that his uncles had both joined the underground party. "My uncles said that Sun Yat-sen's *Three Principles of the People* was different from Kuomintang's *Three Principles of the People*!" said Xie Qi-dan, starting to laugh.

In 1950, he was 21 years old. At that time, the government announced the policy of "Rent Reduction to '37.5' Percent". Many landowners were quickly and well informed, and thus devised ways and means to force tenant farmers to give up farming before the policy was officially implemented, in order to retrieve their lands and avoid dividing up their farmlands, and thus illegally kept their estates intact. One of Xie Qi-dan's poor relatives was one of these victimized tenant farmers. The young Xie Qi-dan was so provoked by such an injustice that he decided to confront the landowners and legally fought for the tenant farmer's right. Xie Qi-dan said that both the landowner and the tenant farmer were from the Xie Clan. In the end, both parties of this legal dispute sued each other in an institution of land administration in Taoyuan. The landowner invited 20 to 30 gentries, teachers, and prominent figures to testify for him; talking all at once, lively but chaotically, they spoke for three hours. "When it was us, the tenant farmers' turn to speak, we only spoke for five minutes before they started to interfere and rebuke us in various ways. I had had a very profound realization," said Xie Qi-dan.

The peremptory acts of the landowners and the gentries had stimulated further the young Xie Qi-dan's will to fight. He went around investigating and collecting evidence; then, with solid evidence that could not be refuted, he proved that the landowner was an absentee landlord who had never farmed in his life. This, finally, helped the tenant farmer win the case, while Xie Qi-dan the youth became widely renowned in the township.

However, what Xie Qi-dan certainly did not know was that the underground party was observing him with appreciative and attentive eyes. One day, an itinerant pharmacist came to him. This itinerant pharmacist was Luo Kun-chun.

The hardship of life, an unjust society, an impoverished, humiliated childhood and youth as a tenant farmer, had already planted the seeds in Xie Qi-dan's heart of a strong, sensitive desire for justice and for a happy and bright life. Like Xu Qing-lan, Luo Kun-chun became the first spark to ignite Xie Qi-dan's thoughts, which made him into a person who believed that, through poor people's struggle, it was possible to change the world, turn destiny round, and create a wonderful life.

"Shortly after this, I was taken to join the study group. It was a study group for the poor; we craved the knowledge of liberation hungrily and thirstily." Xie Qi-dan recalled, "Xu Qing-lan—I got to know him in this study group."

In his memory, however, he and Xu Qing-lan did not know each other well. "He had a sturdy, muscular physique unlike ordinary people. He was quiet, diligent, and righteous," said Xie Qi-dan. "During that era, most of the poor peasants in the countryside were all like this. Honest, dependable. Once they were awakened, they would become extraordinarily brave."

However, also at the end of 1949, before the Korean War broke out, the core of Taiwan's underground party led by Cai Xiao-qian had been fatally sabotaged. General leaders of the Provincial Working Committee in Taiwan, Cai Xiao-qian,

Chen Ze-min, Hong You-qiao, and Zhang Zhi-zhong, were arrested one after another. In various places in northern Taiwan, different levels of each party organization were severely wrecked. Numerous comrades were arrested. Next year and the years after the Korean War erupted, the newspapers were inundated with news of organizations being sabotaged and comrades being executed on a daily basis. "Not long after the study group started, those reconstructed organizations in the north, in Hsinchu, in the Chunan area were dismantled one by one. The comrades who managed to escape and scatter around were evacuating toward the Miaoli area in great number one batch after another. In the gloomy underground, the comrades who were scattering around escaped in all directions, hiding from the defeated frontline..." recalled Xie Qi-dan.

At this moment, the organization in Taipei (Songshan) Airport was sabotaged. Police detectives quickly came to the Xies' home to search for Xie Qi-dan's second uncle who was on the run. The clever Xie Qi-dan could not help but leave his young wife and his baby still swaddled in clothes behind, and he started his life of escape and work in the Dongshih and Zhuolan mountain regions in Miaoli. "Supposedly, Xu Qing-lan and Huang Feng-kai who retreated from Hsinchu were assisted and arranged by the underground party to roam around Yanshuikeng near the Dahu base camp, in order to hide from the wolfish detective soldiers. Their route was a totally different one from mine," said Xie Qi-dan.

This is consistent with Luo Kun-chun's account.

Luo Kun-chun said that he was informed and understood that the situation had extensively and rapidly headed in a disadvantageous direction. In order to receive the numerous comrades who were about to retreat, he needed to arrange for the settlement of the base camps, and thus went underground. "Before I left, I especially told Xu Qing-lan several strongholds around the base camps to retreat to and hide in, in case of emergency," said Luo

Kun-chun. Therefore, not long after Xu Qing-lan escaped, he found Luo Kun-chun. Luo Kun-chun took him around the Dahu area, scampering through places such as Yangshuikeng and Qigulin, and arranged for him to live in a banana orchard run by a household of the party's populous supporters in Qigulin, with Huang Feng-kai who had retreated as well.

"At the time, I was busy running and patrolling between each base camp, so I didn't have many chances to meet with Huang Feng-kai and Xu Qing-lan," said Luo Kun-chun with his uniquely peaceful and succinct tone, "I once told them, two people couldn't fall asleep at the same time. One person must be awake so the other could rest, so as to be on guard in turn. One slept during daytime while the other during nighttime."

At this instant, a momentary dim light of sadness flickered in Luo Kun-chun's expression. He heaved a sigh. "Until today, I still can't figure out how they exposed their identities," he spoke as if in monologue.

How did Xu Qing-lan expose his identity, and thus lead the police detectives into the remotely isolated mountains to capture Xu Qing-lan and Huang Feng-kai? In fact, Ceng Mei-lan had already considered this same question.

In 1950, Ceng Mei-lan was transferred to the detention center at the Garrison Command in Taipei. He had been there before when he delivered clothes and food for his second brother Xu Qing-lan. As soon as he was arrested and locked up in Cell No. 10, he yelled about his second brother Xu Qing-lan being locked up in Cell No. 14.

Outside the detention cells, there was a big yard; every morning, the chief bailiff would open the doors of each cell and allow the prisoners to freshen up in a very short time. "The news of me being arrested was indirectly passed on to my second brother by kind cellmates," said Ceng Mei-lan. "The next morning, I saw my second brother by the washbasin through the window silt; with his back to the bailiffs, he gestured the signs of 'two, one' to me with his fingers. My cellmates told me, it meant that my second

brother had already been indicted according to Clause 1 Article 2 of the 'Traitors Punishment Act.'" 'Clause 1 Article 2,' at that time, meant the death penalty.

"Since then, I realized that my second brother had been living every single day waiting for the call to death." Ceng Mei-lan said, "Every morning through the window openings, I greedily watched my second brother freshening up. He had no idea whether he would live until the next day. Every day, my second brother was also staring silently at his little brother at the same time. Most of the times, washing my face and wiping my tears away were usually the same thing..."

But the then young Ceng Mei-lan could no longer take the pain of being separated in life and parted in death. One day, when all prisoners were outside during freshen-up time, Ceng Mei-lan took his chance, regardless of everything, dashed to his second brother's Cell No. 14. "I had heard that in many cases, people were secretly reported by others that led to their arrests. I rushed to Cell No. 14, asking my second brother about who had secretly reported him or who had turned him in through confession," said Ceng Mei-lan, "and I told him I would seek revenge for him."

Ceng Mei-lan said, he asked his second brother in tears, speaking incoherently. "My second brother said, 'no one had hurt me; I walked on this path all by myself.' My second brother said, 'A-Mei-lan, are Dad and Mom well?' 'They are both well, brother, don't worry,' I said." Ceng Mei-lan continued, his voice choked and muted. "I said, 'Brother, what can I do?' 'Don't be afraid,' my brother said. 'I walk on, you have to follow up, follow to the end; 20 years later, I'll be strong again. Be brave.' My brother said."

Because of this incident, Ceng Mei-lan was dragged away by the chief bailiff and suffered a harsh beating. "Less than two months later, my brother was taken out," said Ceng Mei-lan, "on the same day with Huang Feng-kai, at the same time, they were gone."

Brother A-Kun

At the Liuzhangli Public Cemetery, Xu Qing-lan and Huang Feng-kai's decrepit and small tombstones were unearthed at the same time, more than 40 years after the two men stopped breathing. Ceng Mei-lan's reminiscence was published in a newspaper.

"I didn't turn myself in until 1953," said Luo Kun-chun calmly. "I came out from hiding nearly a year after the entire underground party and its re-established core was completely destroyed. It could be said that I was the last one left."

What Luo Kun-chun did not state clearly was the fact that, from Ceng Mei-lan's account on the news reports, he knew Ceng Mei-lan had some misunderstanding about him. "I came out from hiding in 1953. Xu Qing-lan was arrested in May 1952 in Qigulin, of course it wasn't me who had leaked A-Qing-lan's whereabouts after I came out..." he said solemnly.

From the end of 1949 onward, the "Provincial Working Committee" had been gradually falling apart. In the mid-1950s, the remaining cadres of the underground party, with Chen Fu-sheng at the center, who had survived the political purge, started to reconstruct the party. By the end of 1950, surprisingly, organizations all over the island had been restored to a cursory scale. However, in April, 1951, the branches of this reconstructed core in Hsinchu and Chubei had been scouted and sabotaged by the Kuomintang police detectives; finally, under a comprehensive, painstaking deployment organized by special agents, the leading core members of the party were all arrested during April, 1952. The underground party thus faced its ultimate collapse.

It was then that Luo Kun-chun, whose superiors were gone, started to look for lower-leveled organizations that might have remained. He moved and searched underground, and when he escaped to the area around Yamukeng, he was suddenly surrounded by more than 80 military police. In such a dangerous and tense

situation, he fired a shot, resisted arrest, and ran away. But he was separated from the party's populous supporters who were accompanying him along the way in the midst of chaos. By that time, detectives of the enemy had already been deployed around the entire Miaoli area; the situation was extremely perilous. He had used up all his travel expenses; moreover, under such a dire circumstance, the party's populous supporters could hardly hide and protect the escaped cadres. "And we didn't want to disturb our supporters again, for fear of bringing troubles to them," said Luo Kun-chun. At that moment when all the paths would lead him to impasses, Luo Kun-chun groped his way back to his own house late on one dark night.

Under the bean-like light, Luo Kun-chun's father quietly listened to his dark-faced, hollow-cheeked son, who asked for more money in order to be on the run immediately. "Unexpectedly, my father did not utter a reproach at all. My Dad said that the current situation was fraught with perils; only the most dangerous place could be the safest one. This was what my father said," said Luo Kun-chun, with a tranquil voice, yet seemingly lost in thought. "He wanted me to hide in our own house."

That night, Luo Kun-chun's elder brother dug a hidden cave in the backyard of the house. "From then on, I hid in the cave during daytime, and went out to bath, eat, and exercise my body after nightfall," said Luo Kun-chun. During this period of time, the newspapers were inundated with news about organizations being sabotaged, comrades being killed, rehabilitated comrades coming out in large numbers from hiding, and the government's repeated intimidation and appeals for their surrender. Inside the dark, stifling and damp cave behind the house, he felt deeply that the whole situation was rapidly and irreversibly crumbling.

One night, he went out of the cave to eat and bath. Suddenly, he heard someone softly calling him, "Brother A-Kun..."

Luo Kun-chun instantly pulled out a pistol he was carrying, aiming with precision at the source of the voice. He saw the dark

shadow that had just spoken sighed faintly, "Brother A-Kun, it's me ... if you want to shoot me, I'd have to take it."

Luo Kun-chun quickly recognized two senior comrades, who he had heard had already come out and turned themselves in. He thought, if he had shot these two people dead in the backyard of the Luos and escaped, his old father and the whole family would have suffered from a cruel counterstroke.

"Because of this hesitation, my fate started to change," Luo Kun-chun said as if talking to himself, "they were Lao-Zhong and another comrade. They said our organizations had all collapsed..."

Regarding Xu Qing-lan and Huang Feng-kai, according to the documents at the National Security Bureau, their whereabouts in Qigulin (in Jhulin Village, Daan Township)¹⁷ were secretly reported by another person, surnamed Huang, who turned himself in and was then used by the authorities. Informers were then deployed to investigate, and eventually arrest Xu Qing-lan and Huang Feng-kai.

I suddenly remembered my first time of interviewing Luo Kun-chun at his house in Tongluo, Miaoli. As the host and the guest were seated, I told him about my intention.

"I'm a communist," said Luo Kun-chun peacefully.

"..."

"People of the world say how bad the communist party is," he said. "I don't think so."

When I went to interview Xie Qi-dan in Waishuanxi, he said to me right away,

"The road I took was chosen by myself. The decision was mine."

"Yes."

"Others said things like people were beguiled, baffled by the communist party's 'evil doctrines' ..." he said, "I wasn't. I did what I did according to my thinking..."

I thought of how he abandoned his wife and child, how he arduously and bravely trekked underground, with perils lurking in the steep and rough terrains in the Miaoli mountain regions. When he and his

comrades ran into farmers' sweet potato fields, they only dug out the small ones to eat to fill their stomachs. "The communist party should not take people's food. When hungry, desperate, we only picked the small sweet potatoes ..." said Xie Qi-dan. As he returned to society, he strived to move forward as before, worked as a dyer first, was promoted to a dyeing technician, and then retired with honor.

"I had asked Xu Qing-lan's eldest brother about Xu Qing-lan."

Luo Kun-chun spoke with his constantly peaceful tone of voice.

I took notes in silence. Luo Kun-chun poured a new round of tea for us.

"He said that Huang Feng-kai and Xu Qing-lan were called out on the same day."

"Yes," I said. "Could you tell me about your impression of Xu Qing-lan...?"

He pondered for a while.

"He was, very honest, very righteous..."

Luo Kun-chun, who had always been calm and spoke in a moderate speed during our interview, suddenly had tears streaming down his cheeks. He could not stop himself from crying. "Very brave, a very good, young man ..." he choked up.

Luo Kun-chun took out a handkerchief hurriedly to wipe away the uncontrollable tears on his face. "I'm sorry ...," he said. "I... lost my manner."

I silently, slightly shook my head, and watched Luo Kun-chun lower his head and struggle to swallow his cries. I moved my gaze to look out of the window; it was a clear sky in summer dusk. "No, Mr. Luo. Even if you cried your heart out, you wouldn't lose your manner," I said silently in my heart.

"Our people were really good."

In these interviews carried out for more than a month, I often heard these old warriors of the underground party from the 1950s talk about "base camps" and "strongholds" in Qigulin, Shenzhuo Mountain, Qinshuikeng, Dahedi, and so on in the Miaoli mountain regions. Listening to their words with my ears and writing down notes with my

hand, I constantly had a question in mind, like a lump stuck in my throat that could not be easily swallowed: could it be that the underground party in Taiwan had truly and already developed red guerrilla armed forces and base camps then? Had it really had its own political, military, social, economic and cultural systems in the Taiwanese mountain regions?

As mid-September had just passed, at the reporter's¹⁸ request, Luo Kun-chun and Xie Qi-dan accompanied the reporter and spent two days treading the mountain regions of Dahu, Shitan, and Sanwan in Miaoli, focusing on the traces of how Huang Feng-kai moved around the area, about which the oral information was incomplete. From Miaoli to the Sanzuocuo neighborhood, we visited Xu Qing-lan's old house. The previously dilapidated thatched cottage that the Xus used to live in had been transformed into a concrete storied building. The old house of Luo Kun-chun's family nearby, on the other hand, had been preserved in its previous state: a small red-bricked three-section-compound, in which lived Luo Kun-chun's elder brother whose hair had become grey while his body was still strong and healthy. We went to the back of the small house; the cave in which Luo Kun-chun used to hide for nearly a year had already been filled; a little concrete house was erected next to it. Not far from here, next to Xie Qi-dang's old house, a free-range chicken farm had been built. At the former site of Xie Qi-dang's house, there was only a small slope of thriving grass and trees left, with the song of a few cicadas on the breeze.

The car left Tongluo, started to head for the Dahu Mountain region. Not until I was on the way did I know that the mountains around Dahu and Shitan in Miaoli could be this beautiful. The topography of the mountains were aberrant and precipitous; some regions looked nearly similar to the mountain scenery of Kunming—layers upon layers of impressive and splendid steep hills. Between these neatly layered mountains were creeks and streams. On the top of the mountains were patch after patch of

forest, which had had protective functions since the era of Japanese rule, and I noticed a dense forest of makino bamboo dancing luxuriantly in the wind. Such geographical surroundings were not only breathtaking, but from the standpoint of a guerrilla base camp, it was advantageous. I looked around this quiet yet precipitous mountain region, thinking that there was really a group of young people, using their youthfulness as fuel, burning with the strongest faith in liberation and happiness, vigorously running and hiding in these mountain ranges, in the protective forests, and between creeks and streams. An incredible sense of reality of a certain historical event suddenly flooded over me and surged up in my chest.

"Mountain trails are all extended into industrial roads now," said Xie Qi-dan, "Were it in our time, this distance would have us leave in the morning but get here very late at night."

After April and May in 1951, the situation had deteriorated day by day. Working units in Chubei, Chutung and Hsinchu, as well as the party organization and prefectural committee within the Department of Transportation, consecutively collapsed. In May, organizations in Yunlin, Taoyuan, and Yingge were also severely sabotaged. The circumstances were extremely hostile. "The initial intention of establishing strongholds in the mountain regions was never for passive escape or refuge. It was to practice a new set of working guidelines after reconstruction: to carry out work in rural mountain regions, and to fight for survival, for shelters, and for developments based on labor," said Luo Kun-chun. "But by that time, the system of our organization was completely destroyed. We ran and hid in mountain regions; afterward, when we had to escape in order to survive and wait for opportunity, livelihood became harder and harder."

Huang Feng-kai and Xu Qing-lan, like Xie Qi-dan, were all genuine rural laborers. Since their childhood, they had been working with their two sturdy arms in exchange for food. "Judging from their

appearances, lifestyles, and languages, they were genuine agricultural workers; no one would have doubted them," said Luo Kun-chun in the car on the bumpy road. "The directors wanted us to 'construct base camps through utilizing labors, and to make a living, seek safety, and carry out our work while we labored.' For this, we had to rely on them [Huang Feng-kai and Xu Qing-lan]. As for me, I wasn't good enough." Luo Kun-chun mocked himself with a laugh. He, of course, wasn't a young master of landowners, but he wasn't a tenant farm hand in a rural village either. His appearance and the way he worked were slightly different from the others. In reality, a large number of rural laborers came from indigent villages around Miaoli, looking for temporary works in citronella oil workshops in the Miaoli mountain regions. Huang Feng-kai and others were mixed among other workers in these mountain workshops, establishing social relations and working relations in the mountains by leading a life of extraordinary, burdensome labor. "They worked well, they were nice, and they lived justly... they could easily win favorable impressions from workshop owners and from other workers. When they became familiar with the people and the environment, they began to employ propaganda to instigate the people," said Luo Kun-chun.

"How did you employ propaganda?" I asked.

"By advocating the comprehensive land reform in the Mainland, telling them how the poor had completely turned things round."

"I see."

"We advocated New Democracy," said Xie Qi-dan. "As the poor talked about it to the poor, we talked non-stop." He laughed. He said that now he had forgotten most of it.

"Huang Feng-kai was very eloquent," said Luo Kun-chun, seemingly lost in thought. "He could really talk."

"Any other advocacies?"

"We advocated anti-U.S. imperialism."

"Sure."

Luo Kun-chun lit up a cigarette and rolled down the car window. Forty years

ago, on this mountain, the poor talked with the poor about anti-U.S. imperialism, while for the past 40 years, how many civilized intellectuals in urban cities have been talking about how friendly and nice the United States is? Whoever dares to say that the U.S. is an imperialist state would be a ridiculous and pathetic "Boxer Yihetuan." For Western intellectuals, "nationalism" is a dirty word used to insult people.

"You just said that you advocated anti-U.S. Imperialism back then?"

"Yes. We said that the U.S. oppressed Chinese people and Joseon people, not allowing the poor people of the two countries to rise up."

"..."

"The U.S. imperialism assisted the Japanese to re-establish imperialism, and would tell the Japanese to invade and oppress us Chinese again."

Could the already impoverished Hakka peasants in the mountain hollows understand?

"Of course they could," said Xie Qi-dan.

Xie Qi-dan said that as a party member like him who lived with other rural laborers inside the same hut, worked with them in an oil-extracting workshop, broke sweat together, scooped out rice from the same wok to eat, they shared the same languages, same thoughts and feelings. "The works we did were never worse than others, and were often better than others, and we were much more exhausted than others," he said. "People felt that our lives and fates were the same, but they also felt that we thought more than others, saw things more deeply and farther than others." They could usually win the trust of workers very quickly.

"Our people were really good," said Luo Kun-chun quietly.

"Really good," echoed Xie Qi-dan reverently.

"Our people were smart. They might not have known many words, but were really smart," said Luo Kun-chun. "He saw you working, speaking, living, and he knew who you were, and for what and for whom you were suffering and working."

Xie Qi-dan said, without our supporters' sympathy, love and care, and their assistance, "in those harsh years, it was utterly impossible for you to 'walk' in such a vast mountain region," he said.

"They wouldn't say it, but they treated you like a close relative. No, more intimate than that," said Luo Kun-chun.

When strangers came to the mountain villages and kept asking around, he would tell you. When someone in the adjacent village or township was taken away, he would inform you. When a few more vendors appeared on bridges or in streets, he would warn you. When the list of wanted fugitives was distributed, and your name was on it, he would tell you. "When we had to go and hide underground, we would knock gently on his window in the depth of night; he would let you quickly wolf down two bowls of cold congee, and let you bring a bag of salt, a bar of soap, and several articles of clothes to keep warm," said Xie Qi-dan, with his eyes reddened, "silently, without saying a word. For safety, we'd often take the stuffs, turn our heads and walk away. We were young then; we clenched our teeth, held back the tears that filled in our eyes." While he smiled, he wiped away his tears.

At noon, we visited a solitary farmhouse built halfway up the mountain in the Shifendong mountain region. Before long, the hostess arranged a table of food and drink, with two big plates of boiled free-range chickens gleaming with yellow drippings. A group of workers sat down at the table and ate first. Then, with some extra meat and soup added, it was our turn to eat. The son-in-law of the host offered us drinks of liquor attentively. During the dinner, I realized that a mountain farmhouse like this one would leave orchards of persimmons and tangerines all over the mountain untended, and rent fields at the foot of the mountain to plant "sightseeing strawberry." The workers at the table were hired as agricultural laborers to plant strawberries.

The fragrance of ginger lilies

After lunch, we thanked the hosts, and drove along the mountain roads in our car, heading toward the mountain region on the common boundaries of Gongguan, Dahu, and Shitan.

"The family we just visited was one of the relatives of the populous supporters we recruited all those years ago," said Xie Qi-dan. He said that the old host just told him, during those years, whenever police detectives organized an operation in the mountains, they would always visit their family to ask around and search for suspects by entering their hall and house. "But when we met up again today, he was as warm and friendly to us as he was back in those days," said Xie Qi-dan. I thought of how they all talked in Hakka affectionately and lively during the entire dinner. Beer had made the faces of the host and the guests flush with festive red glow.

The car proceeded on the narrow mountain road, with dense forest of makino bamboo on both sides. The bark of makino bamboo had a stratum of light, powdery-misty dark green on it. On the ground of the bamboo forest was a thick layer of ash gray fallen leaves. Luo Kun-chun said that, during those years, he used to walk in this forest of makino bamboo, often two or three days in a row. "We were light-footed, and fast," said Xie Qi-dan. After the break of dawn, the walking party members would chop off a few bamboo branches as well as green taro leaves from the dense and deep forest, using those branches and leaves to build a hut as a shelter from rain for them to sleep in. "As the sky darkened, people awoke. In high spirits, we kept on walking," said Xie Qi-dan.

"Just take a look at these bamboo forests," said Luo Kun-chun while watching the thick bamboo shades outside the car window, and he smiled. "During those years, we walked in the forest like walking on main roads. How could they catch us?" However, one could never disturb the bamboo trees while scurrying within the forest. Once, they were surrounded by dozens of police. "Wherever the bamboo

swayed, the bullets would fly over there," said Luo Kun-chun. "They looked down from the top of the mountain; as long as there's no wind, they could see the direction of the people who were stirring the bamboo tips..."

The car kept moving on the mountain road. After a turn, a creek appeared beneath the hillside on the right. The creek was fully dotted by snow-white ginger lilies in blossom. Xie Qi-dan said that, during their escape, whenever circumstances were allowed, they would try to take baths every day.

"Ginger lilies like to bloom along waters. During blossom season, taking baths in ginger lilies' unique fragrance late at night was something one would never forget."

As Xie Qi-dan recalled, taking baths was not only hygienic and healthy; if they knew they would pass through families in mountains, or go down the mountains and walk within villages, they not only had to take baths, but also use soaps to wash themselves clean. "Otherwise, your body odor that accumulated from not taking baths for a long time would definitely provoke the most ferocious barks from the dogs nearby," said Xie Qi-dan, "and then startle the tranquil village at night and draw attention from police detectives."

"Soaps, not easy to get one?"

"Our supporters would give us. Laundry soaps at best. Ordinarily, we were reluctant to use them anyway," said Luo Kun-chun with a laugh.

The populous supporters provided them with salt and matches. Xie Qi-dan said that salt was more important than anything. "You were able to have no rice for a year, but you could not eat without salt for a few days," he said.

"Without eating salt, a person would lose all his strength," said Xie Qi-dan.

"Walking" in the mountains resulted in years of malnutrition. "Because of malnutrition, toenails would turn black first, and then fall off completely," said Xie Qi-dan. However, as they recalled, they still could not explain from where they had obtained

such physical strength. They climbed over one mountain after another, walked on long mountain ridges and edges, strode through rugged creek beds, constantly eating sweet potatoes, stems of red grass, and a very small amount of fish and shrimp. "But we were never sick all year round. A hike in the mountains from one stronghold to the other could take up two nights and three days, but we never complained about being tired," said Xie Qi-dan. "Sometimes there were three rainy days in a row, and your body was never dry for three days."

Crying for the entire night

We came down from Jioufendong, driving on a wide road beside the upstream part of Houlong River. When not deep in the mountains, the mountain tops were undulating as we gazed from afar at the Qinshuikeng mountain region; the mountain ranges were steeply crisscrossed, while vast patches of tea-green makino bamboo forests were swaying and waving gently in the wind. It was in this Miaoli mountain region, a mere 40 years ago, that the blood of many excellent sons of poor peasants was heated in their hearts by the faith of liberating themselves, liberating Taiwan, liberating China, and liberating all humankind; while enduring hunger and cold, difficulties and risks, they roamed this mountain region.

"When you learned that the Korean War had broken out and the Americans blockaded the Taiwan Strait, did you not feel that the situation was irretrievable?"

"No," said Xie Qi-dan.

We found a shade of trees to park the car, to drink some water and take a few pictures. Luo Kun-chun said that after the Korean War erupted, it was said that the central authority requested the comrades in Taiwan to stop every activity and not to develop their work any further. "But we heard that Chen Fu-sheng and others didn't pass on the message," said Luo Kun-chun. "This was what I heard afterward, but whether it's true or not, I'm not sure."

From April 1951 onward, the re-established Provincial Working Committee had basically collapsed, unable to command leadership in response to the specific circumstances and political mood at that time. Plenty of youths of the party, such as Luo Kun-chun and Xie Qi-dan, bearing only a persistent yet simple faith, suffering from hardship and bitterness, persevered to survive in the deteriorating circumstances and insisted on continuing the lifeline of the organization. "It was because we had this ideal," said Luo Kun-chun, "that the poor should live better. The old society should be overthrown. China must become strong again. Imperialism could not bully China anymore."

For this ideal, Xie Qi-dan abandoned his wife and child, running and hiding in treacherous mountains, without a word of bitterness. "Special agents were numerous, so were their guns, but they could never catch us," he said. "Why? Because the special agent was there for a salary; playing hide-and-seek with us in the mountains made him whine constantly about the hardship. As for us, we were there for the self-liberation of the poor..." Xie Qi-dan wanted to take a few pictures of this particular vast creek bed, because he had an unforgettable memory of it. The entire province was suffering from a severe drought this year [1993]; the source of Huolong River was no exception. "In those years, even the driest drought could not dry out Qinshuikeng," said Luo Kun-chun loudly. In the center of the creek pier, a quarry was transmitting a rumbling sound. Forty years ago, if the youths of the party wanted to meet up or arrange appointments, they would often choose this place.

"This place had a panoramic view; everything was clear at a glance," said Luo Kun-chun, "and if we found anything out of the ordinary, we could easily hide ourselves."

Huge rocks were strewn all over the creek bed. Once the special agents started shooting, one could hide behind a rock as one wished, safe and secure. "Clusters of red grass were everywhere. As you tilted

your body sideways, the enemies could not see you. In a wink, you'd already waded out the water and run agilely into the wild mountains," said Luo Kun-chun.

In 1952, the leading core of Chen Fusheng had gone out for "self-rehabilitation"; the core was ruined for a year. Right on this creek bed, Xie Qi-dan met with Lao-Huang whom he respected. Xie Qi-dan arrived much earlier than the appointed time, hiding in a strategic vantage point, holding his breath to observe if there was any plot of ambush. In the middle of the night, Lao-Huang showed up; Xie Qi-dan immediately took Lao-Huang to a coal kiln in the mountains. The two young men conversed the whole night in the abandoned kiln. Lao-Huang told him that they had reached the end of the road. The party had completely collapsed. Dying for justice was to no avail. "At this moment, when you come out, you need not to turn others in, need not to harm anyone. You don't have to confess, because the enemies already know everything," said Lao-Huang.

Xie Qi-dan's strongest will to fight eventually crumbled. "I cried. I cried for the entire night. Lao-Huang was crying with me too," he said. "Why have we ended up this way? We felt so wronged."

Being guided by Zhang Xiu-jin's wife, our car stumbled and bumped forward on the dried riverbed. Passing by the quarry and moving forward a short length, we had to stop alongside a stream that wasn't dried up. By using the makeshift gondola lift to get to the other side, we began to climb up Qigulin on foot. Luo Kun-chun's gait was still vigorous. Xie Qi-dan who had had open-heart surgery walked rather slowly. They were very surprised to see that the mountain trail had become a concrete industrial road. Along the road were the same dense forests of makino bamboo. Around the end of 1950, Huang Feng-kai came to the Dahu mountain region in hiding, and was introduced by one of his uncles—who did not know anything—to Zhang Xiu-jin who lived in Qigulin. Then, recommended by Zhang Xiu-jin, Huang Feng-kai found work at the citronella oil workshop located deeper

in the mountains, and then settled down. Xu Qing-lan who jumped off the train to escape around Dongshih soon found Luo Kun-chun underground, and was brought to Qigulin by Luo Kun-chun as well.

"Zhang Xiu-jin was a sympathizer of the underground party. He helped Huang Feng-kai and Xu Qing-lan settle down in a stone cave in his own banana orchard," said Luo Kun-chun. "The situation became tenser and tenser. I instructed them to sleep in different shifts, to be on the lookout for one another. This, I've said before..."

Zhang Xiu-jin passed away a few years ago. Because of "harboring and sheltering" "communist spies," he was sentenced to ten years' imprisonment. Mrs. Zhang and their children moved away from the mountain. Nowadays, Mrs. Zhang would go up to the mountain to check on the old house every ten days to half a month. Behind the house was a persimmon orchard. The market price of persimmons was so low that no one tended those fine persimmons grown on trees and lands. Luo Kun-chun secretly told me that the relationship between Zhang Xiu-jin and his wife was never good. Coming back from Green Island, Zhang Xiu-jin brought another woman to nestle in this mountain hollow to live their life; he rarely went down the mountain. "The young and the old of the family were all attentively taken care of by this old Mrs. Zhang down the mountains," said Luo Kun-chun, whose words inevitably were critical yet feeble. I thought of us stopping by the house of Zhang Xiu-jin's wife earlier for some rest and water halfway here, and saw the wedding pictures of Zhang Xiu-jin's child on the wall. The groom and the bride both looked good.

"At the base of Shenzhuo Mountain we bitterly parted"

In April, 1952, after KMT special agents planted a large number of "moles" who infiltrated deeply within the "re-established" Provincial Working Committee, it fell apart rather quickly. On April 22, Lao-Huang was betrayed; with a gun in his hand, he

was cornered, resisted in vain, and then arrested. On April 26, Chen Fu-sheng was framed and arrested.

The news of Lao-Hong's (Chen Fu-sheng) arrest spread quickly throughout the underground of the Miaoli mountain regions. Luo Kun-chun thought of Huang Feng-kai. "Huang Feng-kai was from Sanwan. In April, 1951, after the organization in Chunan was sabotaged, Huang Feng-kai was ordered to establish strongholds around Yanshuikeng," recalled Luo Kun-chun. They knew each other from that moment on. When Lao-Hong was arrested in April, 1952, Luo Kun-chun hurried to Dachonggui in Sanwan to figure out the actual situation, meanwhile he arranged an appointment to meet with Song Song-cai and a few other underground comrades.

"Sanwan was Huang Feng-kai's original residence; he was more familiar with the place than I was. Because I wanted to understand the situation in Sanwan, I thought of looking for Huang Feng-kai to lead the way," said Luo Kun-chun.

The time was August, 1951. Luo Kun-chun met with Huang Feng-kai; they departed from Yanshuikeng at a time after which they estimated they could arrive in Sanwan that evening. "Entering Sanwan in the evening was safer," said Luo Kun-chun. After nightfall, they arrived at a house—not far from Huang Feng-kai's home—of one of the party's populous supporters, surnamed Liu. Luo Kun-chun asked first if there was any new development. "This Liu Deng-xing, surprisingly, said that there wasn't any and told them everything was fine. How could that be possible? The entire section of leadership was arrested, and the police detectives were stationed at every mountain trail, along every creek, and at every crossroad in the village. I asked again, but he told us the same old tale: nothing, everything's fine," said Luo Kun-chun. He instinctively became suspicious of Liu Deng-xing. After dinner, Luo Kun-chun, still without any news, could only prepare to go to bed, but he planned that no matter what, he and Huang Feng-kai would leave at three o'clock in the middle of the night, and in darkness, they

would grope their way back to Qigulin. Liu Deng-xing asked Luo Kun-chun to sleep inside the house, but because they were more vigilant than most people, they politely refused his offer and proposed to sleep in the broken coal kiln behind Liu's house. They fell asleep and when they opened their eyes again, it was five minutes past three at night. Luo Kun-chun quickly woke up Huang Feng-kai, while he unexpectedly discovered that Liu Deng-xing was in the front room, still awake. "I took a closer look, and saw that there were shadows of people wearing paddy hats moving under the moonlight," said Luo Kun-chun. He took out the gun he carried. Treading with catlike steps, he walked out of the main hall. "As soon as I was about to step out of the door, a row of gunshots was fired toward me," said Luo Kun-chun. He shot back a few times, ran back to the broken coal kiln behind the house only to find that Huang Feng-kai was already gone; he could only flee into the mountains, running away with the sound of gunshots ringing in his ears.

At a later time, the reporter met Song Song-cai, who was 81 years old then. He was the son of a poor peasant from Dahe village in Sanwan Township. As early as 1949, he had joined a study group in a stronghold on Shenzhuo Mountain. "At that time, Huang Feng-kai was still young. As we studied and held discussions, he would stay outside to take charge of security," he said. According to him, after Huang Feng-kai and Luo Kun-chun were ambushed in Liu Deng-xing's house, they were separated from each other; as Huang Feng-kai ran, jumped and rushed down the mountain, his top shirt was torn. Huang Feng-kai slunk through creeks between mountains, heard the splashing sound of somebody walking in water, and then he met Song Song-cai who went there to keep his appointment. The two of them accompanied one another in their escape, went up to the Shenzhuo Mountain, "There, the two of us hid for one day and one night. Huang Feng-kai's top shirt was torn so his upper body was naked—this, I remembered the most," said Song Song-cai.

These two young men talked wholeheartedly the entire night. What did they talk about?

"He talked about his life in the citronella oil workshop," said Song Song-cai.

"Anything else?"

"I can't quite remember," said Song Song-cai, "He was younger than I, but he had a more profound experience, thought, and theory than I did."

"What's the most memorable thing he said to you?"

Song Song-cai showed me a thumb's up sign. "He's a man of talent and knowledge," he said, adjusting his glasses. He then talked for a while in Hakka, with a solemn look on his face. Luo Kun-chun translated for me.

"He said, Huang Feng-kai told him that fighting a civil war meant killing our compatriots, destroying our own national land, and damaging our own people, our own field, our own property," said Luo Kun-chun. "Huang Feng-kai also said that our struggle was meant to stop the civil war, to unite our nation..."

"Huang Feng-kai said that China must become stronger. A nation splitting into two and fighting against each other was most disgraceful," Song Song-cai switched to Hokkien. "For the purpose of having the poor live like a person, having China prosperous and strong, we must struggle and fight—Huang Feng-kai said so!"

The conversation that took place up on the Shenzhuo Mountain forty years ago had left a tremendous weight in the memory of Song Song-cai, who had luckily survived. Song Song-cai's childhood was so destitute that he could not graduate from public school; he often forgot how to write certain words. However, he had somehow learnt to compose classical Chinese poems. He copied his compositions of several classical poems into a small notebook, poems that were not very refined but emotionally transcended languages and format. One particular poem recorded the aftermath of their separation on Shenzhuo Mountain. The poem "Recollecting Feng-kai Three Months Later" consisted of these lines,

Reminiscing the time and event with
utter sorrow,

At foot of Shenzhuo Mountain we bitterly parted.

The two of us could hardly meet up
after separated,

An auspicious or adverse future we will
never know.¹⁹

Song Song-cai recalled that they spent one day in the mountain but eventually had to bid each other farewell. Song Song-cai was concerned with Luo Kun-chun's safety after the ambush, so he wanted to stay in Sanwan to scout for information, while Huang Feng-kai wanted to head for the dangerous Yanshuikeng.

"Huang Feng-kai received some payment in advance from the citronella oil workshop. Now that the works had not been done, the payment was not balanced. Breaking your promise with the people, not good," said Song Song-cai. "In order not to let the people down, he dared to venture into the dangerous tiger mountain again."

"Next day in Qigulin, I met with Huang Feng-kai, whom I lost touch with two days ago in Sanwan," Luo Kun-chun continued. Four months later in February, 1952, Huang Feng-kai and Xu Qing-lan were both arrested in the stone cave in Zhang Xiu-jin's banana orchard, only a month after Song Song-cai composed the poem of reminiscing Huang Feng-kai during his escape.

The next day, we drove from Miaoli and passed by Minde Reservoir on our way to Sanwan, and visited Huang Feng-kai's younger brother, Mr. Huang Feng-yin. While we were approaching Sanwan, we saw the Shenzhuo Mountain that had been frequently mentioned by Song Song-cai. Looked at from afar, the Shenzhuo Mountain was indeed akin to a large Taoist altar: a long platform was unusually visible within the undulating mountain ranges, while two pointed edges, similar to the swallow-winged sweeping curvatures on the roofs of ancient houses, were at both ends of the platform. It looked very much like a "red-framed altar"²⁰ at a wealthy household for

enshrining the gods and the spirit tablets of their ancestors in the main hall. In those earliest days, Song Song-cai would hold meetings and study with some poor peasant youths on Shenzhuo Mountain. He wrote a poem entitled "Remembering Study Groups in the Old Days."

Where to find the study hall from good
old time?
In cypress forests beneath Shenzhuo
Mountains.
Green grass over rice paddies full of
spring colors,
Birds sing in jade-green forests on
empty mounts.
Together comrades discuss schemes for
the world,
Arouses ardent patriotic spirits of
talented youths.
How many noble comrades met with
terrible death,
Tears of strong fighters forever moisten
the clothes.²¹

The poem bore a raw crudeness of farmer-commoner's poetry, but it was read with strong affections. Another one, "Going up Shenzhuo Mountain Again in 1971," had these lines:

Half of a life idly passed in anguish,
Leaving nothing but traces on earth.
Many comrades talk in vain over
politics,
Their heads fell, with bloodstains all
over!²²

He wouldn't do this kind of thing

Luo Kun-chun and Xie Qi-dan used Shenzhuo Mountain as a background, took a few pictures, feeling deeply and profoundly poignant. We walked up the mountain trail again. Within an hour, we arrived at Huang Feng-kai's younger brother Huang Feng-yin's house built halfway up the mountain beneath a makino bamboo forest.

One night during August, or September, in 1950, about seven or eight special agents and policemen groped their way to the house of the Huangs. Huang Feng-yin said

that the already vigilant Huang Feng-kai did not stay inside the house but was sleeping in a rough-paper workshop behind the house. A policeman who was unfamiliar with the terrain stumbled in the dark night and fell down. Although asleep and dreaming, Huang Feng-kai heard the noise, got up and ran, vanishing in the pitch-dark bamboo forest, starting his life of working underground and setting up strongholds. After his elder brother left for nearly a year, Huang Feng-yin went up the mountains, cut some grass to feed the bullocks. He also visited Liu Deng-xing's house nearby to ask for some water. In the house of the Lius, he accidentally ran into Peng Nan-hua who had also gone underground. Since Peng Nan-hua was a friend of his elder brother Huang Feng-kai, they exchanged a few words of greetings. Several months later, Peng Nan-hua "came out" from his escape; as he turned his itinerary of escape in, he mentioned about running into Huang Feng-yin in the house of the Lius. "After that, they came to my house to arrest me. 'Willful negligence to fact,' a sentence of 10 years," said Huang Feng-yin. "At the time, two years had passed since my elder brother escaped."

Consecutively, one of the two brothers ran away, and the other was imprisoned. "The heavy burden of supporting our family immediately fell on to our eldest sister's shoulders, who had just graduated from elementary school," said Huang Feng-yin. Their father died from worry and illness, while their mother washed her face with tears all day long. A week after Huang Feng-yin was arrested, there came news of the elder brother Huang Feng-kai being arrested around Shitan Qigulin. It was in April, 1952. Four months later, Huang Feng-kai and Xu Qing-lan were both executed. "The news of my brother's death was first heard by my second younger sister during her elementary school's morning assembly, from an admonitory speech delivered by a discipline teacher," said Huang Feng-yin, giving Luo Kun-chun a cigarette and lighting it up.

After Huang Feng-yin returned home from jail, he once heard from Liu Deng-xing

about how his mother exhorted Huang Feng-kai to surrender.

It was said that after Huang Feng-yin was taken away, special agents came to encourage Mrs. Huang to make Huang Feng-kai surrender to the authorities, and they guaranteed that he wouldn't be killed. It was Liu Deng-xing who led the way; the hiding place of Huang Feng-kai was also at the creek bed in Shitan Yanshuikeng. The elder madam had walked such a long way!

"Who told the special agents?" asked Luo Kun-chun astonishingly.

"Liu Deng-xing."

"It was him!" said Luo Kun-chun. "Did you see your brother?"

"I did."

"So did your mother?"

"Yes," said Huang Feng-yin. "My brother said that he could not surrender. He said he had fled for two years; in Qigulin, he had too many relations with so many people!"

"He was right," said Luo Kun-chun.

"If he had surrendered, he would have turned a large group of people in! He wouldn't do this kind of thing," said Huang Feng-yin. "My brother told my mother that he could only die. He wouldn't do this kind of thing. Stop urging me again, my brother said."

Mrs. Huang watched despondently as her eldest son swiftly ran away and disappeared in the whitish inflorescence of red grass. She walked toward Liu Deng-xing who was a zhang away.²³ As Liu Deng-xing learned that Huang Feng-kai would not surrender, he became angry.

"Then how can we report to them?" said Liu Deng-xing.

"What else can we do?" said Mrs. Huang. "Let's go back."

"Go back?" Liu Deng-xing laughed bitterly, and then suddenly pointed at a small mountain in the opposite direction. "Take a look ..." he said.

Mrs. Huang stared closely at the mountain on the other side. Behind the shadows of trees, she gradually recognized several plain-clothed policemen walking slowly down the mountain.

"I had already muttered to myself a long time ago, this Liu Deng-xing ..." said Luo Kun-chun frowningly.

While we were talking, a table full of dishes of food had already been set up in the kitchen. Together, using Hakka, Huang Feng-yin and Luo Kun-chun reminisced about Huang Feng-kai. He was the son of a farmer family in an impoverished mountain village; he had been ranked number one from the first grade to the sixth in elementary school. He was determined and strong-willed, reliable and trustworthy. He had a craving for study and was extremely eloquent.

"My level was far lower than my brother. I knew nothing and was just a kid from the countryside," said Huang Feng-yin, "and my brother wouldn't tell me a thing."

Luo Kun-chun and Xie Qi-dan both said, "Telling you nothing was to protect and love you." Huang Feng-yin kept offering liquor to his guests, talking about how their household, after losing two sons, had become even more destitute, how they had no place to borrow money, how their neighbors, relatives, and friends dared not visit them.

When red stars fall into Qigulin Mountains

Shortly after coming back from the mountain regions of Miaoli, I met with Peng Nan-hua who once guided Huang Feng-kai. It was said that, over the past decades, he had never mentioned a thing about those bygone days. Nevertheless, when he saw his old comrade-in-arms, Song Song-cai, with whom he had not met for years, it seemed that he could hardly repress the happiness of their reunion.

Peng Nan-hua said he had known Huang Feng-kai as early as in 1949. "He came from a family of small self-farming farmers. A man with an extremely strong party spirit," he said succinctly. He said that Huang Feng-kai was an ardent and passionate young man. "I heard that right before he was executed, he shouted the party motto. It was true, wasn't it?" he whispered. Everyone seated was all still and silent.

Most of the time, Peng Nan-hua and Song Song-cai were talking about the past in Hakka; they seemed to be in a joyous mood.

"One time on the trail of escape, I suddenly ran into Huang Feng-kai," Peng Nan-hua immediately switched to Hokkien and repeated to me what he had just said to Song Song-cai. "Before that, we made an appointment to meet with each other, but hadn't met up in the end, and we thought it would be very difficult for us to meet in this lifetime. So when we unexpectedly ran into each other underground at that time, we were extremely happy. Huang Feng-kai was such a big fellow, and he even cried. He was so happy."

"He treasured affections between people," said Song Song-cai.

"Such an ardent and passionate young man," said Peng Nan-hua.

They then started to reminisce in Hakka again about the bygone days. Chatting for a long while, Peng Nan-hua switched to Hokkien to talk about how he saw Huang Feng-kai for the last time. He said that after he "came out," nearly a year passed; one day, the police came to find him, told him that they had arrested Huang Feng-kai, and wanted Peng Nan-hua to urge him to "collaborate."

"I did go. How could I not go? In front of the police, I picked some superficial words to say to him," said Peng Nan-hua softly. "Huang Feng-kai just smiled. He looked ... really peaceful."

" ... "

"He had decided to die," he said, with eyes looking at the cup in his hands. "You immediately knew it the moment you saw him."

Exactly at this moment, Song Song-cai took out the notebook of his classical poems from his pocket and handed it to me. The last two lines of the poem "Feng-kai Leaving Golden Messages on Shenzhuo Mountain" were:

Realizing the storm is dangerous,
Yet into the storm I still must go.²⁴

"For all these decades, I'm most afraid of insomnia at night," said Peng Nan-hua all of

a sudden. "You think over and over again. Thinking that the dead were dead, the imprisoned were imprisoned."

Then, Peng Nan-hua was suddenly in tears. Song Song-cai pursed his lips tightly, with eyes fixed at the green trees outside the window. Everyone seated was silent, listening to Peng Nan-hua sobbing.

There had been no liberation zone, no weapons, and no guerrillas. Even counting from 1946 to 1952 when the "Provincial Working Committee" was completely dismantled, it lasted for only six years in total. In June, 1950, as the Korean War erupted and the U.S. imperialism blockaded the strait, the "Provincial Working Committee" was no more than four years old. However, history had already determined the irreversible defeat of the "Provincial Working Committee."

In Taiwan during those years, thousands of young people devoted their youth to the ideal of pursuing happiness, justice, and liberation. They were smashed into pieces during those violent, cruel investigations, slaughters, and imprisonments. While hundreds of people might have wanted to die in honor but couldn't, they had swallowed disgrace and endured insult; for half of their lifetime, they had suffered from severe self-punishment, insisting on not forgiving themselves. Yet still there were others, utterly greedy for life and thus changed sides, using their comrades' blood in exchange for wealth and status, while leading a carefree and content life.

That was an era of dignity, pride, splendor, purity, and heroics; at the same time, it was an era of hesitation, defeat, regret, timidity, and betrayal.

While constricted by the specific history and geo-politics, the curtain for the second wave of proletariat movement that arose on this beautiful island of our national homeland after the Taiwanese Communist Party was annihilated under the Japanese Empire had finally dropped. When red stars falling into Qigulin Mountains, still many nebulous clouds of histories are waiting for the later generations to clear out, to sum up, to comment on, and to carry on.

Finalized on September 30, 1993.
Unitas A Literary Monthly, no. 111,
 January 1994.

Acknowledgement

The translation is based on the Chinese version published in 2001 in *Selected Fictions by Chen Yingzhen*, Volume 5 [陳映真小說集 5], Taipei: Hong Fan Publishing [洪範書店].

Notes

- Note on spelling: all the Asian names in the text are presented in the Asian order: last name first.
- "Minguo" is the system of numbering years of the Republic of China. The first year of the Republic of China is 1912; therefore, the 41st year of Minguo is 1955 in the Western calendar.
- "Xiao" is an instrument often used in performing Hakka traditional music. It may refer to a horizontal bamboo flute, which is called "xiao flute" in Hakka, or a vertical bamboo flute called "dongxiao." For more information on Hakka music, see the website of Hakka Affairs Council (<http://www.hakka.gov.tw>).
- Taiwan Garrison Command Headquarters, commonly known as Garrison Command, was in action from 1945 to 1992. It was notoriously known to be in charge of "maintaining order" during the Martial Law era.
- A Chinese foot is approximately 23 centimeters.
- In Taiwanese units of measurement, a *kah* of land approximately equals to 0.97 hectare; one *kah* equals ten fens.
- Chinese Petroleum Corporation was renamed "CPC Corporation, Taiwan" in 2007.
- Ho-lo-lang, also known as Hoklo or Hokkien people, constitute the largest population of the Taiwanese. While both Hoklo and Hakka had been Han Chinese who migrated from China to Taiwan, their ancestral origins, cultural traditions, and languages, etc., vary from one another.
- Here the "A" before the name is a Hakka term, indicating "dear" or "little."
- "Hard-necked" is a Hakka term, which perhaps can be roughly translated into an English phrase: "break one's neck to do something." "Hard-necked" used to be a negative term to disapprove of one's stubbornness; however, from the late 1980s onward, along with Hakka identity/ethnic movements in Taiwan, it has been appropriated positively to refer to "traditional Hakka spirit" of perseverance and resoluteness.
- "Chhun" is a linear unit of measurement; it is equal to 3.03 centimeters. It is also used to describe things very small or few.
- The "February incidents" are commonly referred to as the "228 Incident", which is, in fact, not a single event but as Chen Yingzhen depicted, a series of incidents.
- The word and pronunciation of "lak" in Hakka generally means to "plow," but a single Hakka term may vary in sound due to different regional accents and dialects. It is difficult to determine and translate the exact meaning of "lakdakk," as it is not further explained in the text by the author; yet, from the context and the general meaning of "lak" in Hakka, it is certain that "lakdakk" is an agricultural tool for farming.
- "Sweet potato chips" are sliced and sun-dried chips of sweet potatoes. Because sweet potatoes were cheaper and more widespread in Taiwan than grains of rice, it was a common staple eaten as a substitute for rice during the harsh times.
- In Taiwanese units of measurement, a "catty" is equal to 600 grams.
- A "child-bride" is also known as "tongyangxi" in Chinese, "shim-pua" in Taiwanese. In this traditional quasi-marriage system, a "child-bride" is a pre-adolescent girl whose family could not afford to raise her. She is usually sold to a richer family as an adoptee as well as a servant. As the girl reaches her puberty, she would be arranged to marry the son of her adoptive family.
- In administration, "Qigulin" nowadays is in Shitan Township, Miaoli County.
- The writer and narrator, Chen Yingzhen, is referred to as "the reporter" by himself.
- The original poem in Chinese goes as: "懷念當時事盡悲。神桌山下苦別離。兩人分手難相見，來日吉凶未可知。"
- "Red-framed altar" is the literal translation of Chen Yingzhen's words for the altar commonly known as "ang-ke-toh" in Hokkien. Such an altar is made of Formosan red cypress, an expensive timber with red-brown bark that is resistant to decay.
- The original poem in Chinese goes as: "舊日書堂何處尋？神桌山下柏樹林。田畑青草春色滿，空山翠林鳥啼喧。同志共論天下計，羣英激越愛國心。幾多壯士遭難死，長使壯士淚沾襟。" In the original text, two characters are not commonly used today: "dien" [畑] and "tsui" [翠]; the former is a Japanese kanji that can hardly be found in a Mandarin dictionary, while the latter is a variant no longer in use.
- The original poem in Chinese goes as: "半生痛苦等閒過，空留遺跡在人間。多少同志空論政，頭顱落處血斑斑！"
- A *zhang* [丈] is approximately equal to 3.33 meters.
- The original poem in Chinese goes as: "明知此去風波險，也要風波險處行。"

Reference

Li, Ao [李敖]. 1991. *Confidential Documents of National Security Bureau: A Collection of Handling the Espionage Cases. Part 2* [安全局機密文件：歷年辦理匪諜案彙編·下]. Taipei: Li Ao Press.

Special terms

Betrayers Punishment Act 懲治叛亂條例
 Cai Xiao-qian 蔡孝乾
 Ceng Cao-mei 曾草妹
 Ceng Mei-lan 曾梅蘭
 Chen Fu-sheng (Lao-hong) 陳福生 (老洪)
 Chen Ze-min 陳澤民
 Chen Ze-sheng 陳澤生
 Dachonggui in Sanwan 三灣的大銃櫃
 Dahedi 大河底
 Hong You-qiao 洪幼樵
 Huang Feng-kai 黃逢開
 Huang Feng-yin 黃逢銀
 Little Jiang 小姜
 Lai Fu-xiang 賴福相
 Lao-huang 老黃
 Li Ming-hua 黎明華
 Liao Tian-zhu 廖天珠
 Liu Deng-xing 劉登興
 Liuzhangli Public Cemetery 六張犁公墓
 Luo Kun-chun 羅坤春
 Machangding 馬場町
 Minguo 民國
 Peng Nan-hua 彭南華
 Qigulin 七古林
 Qinshuikeng 清水坑
Rent Reduction to "37.5" Percent 「三七五」減租
 Sanzuocuo 三座厝

Shenzhuo Mountain 神桌山
 Song Song-cai 宋松財
Taiwan Garrison Command Headquarters
 (abbr., *Garrison Command*) 台灣省警備總司令部
Taiwan Working Committee of Chinese Communist Party 中共台灣省工作委員會
 Tongluo Township, Miaoli County 苗栗縣銅鑼鄉
 Xiao Dao-ying 蕭道應
 Xie Qi-dan 謝其淡
 Xu A-xiang 徐阿祥
 Xu Jin-guang 徐錦廣 (阿廣伯)
 Xu Qing-lan 徐慶蘭
 Zhang Xiu-jin 張秀錦
 Zhang Zhi-zhong 張志忠

Author's biography

Chen Yongshan [陳永善] was born in 1937 in Taiwan. Chen Yingzhen [陳映真] is his literary pen name, whereas the pen name Xu Nancun [許南村] is used for his review articles. He started writing literary works in 1959, and was incarcerated for seven years in 1968. After his release from prison, he continued writing and involved himself in various leftist social practices. His writings and deeds remain one of the most important resources for leftist thoughts and practices in Taiwan, East Asia and the Chinese speaking world.

Translator's biography

Liu Yi-Hung [劉羿宏] is a first year PhD student of American Studies at the University of Hawaii at Manoa. Her current research includes critical histories of the American empire and US imperialism, and cultural exchange between the US and the East Asian region.

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