

“Ten Thousand Scrolls of Books”

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Translator’s Note

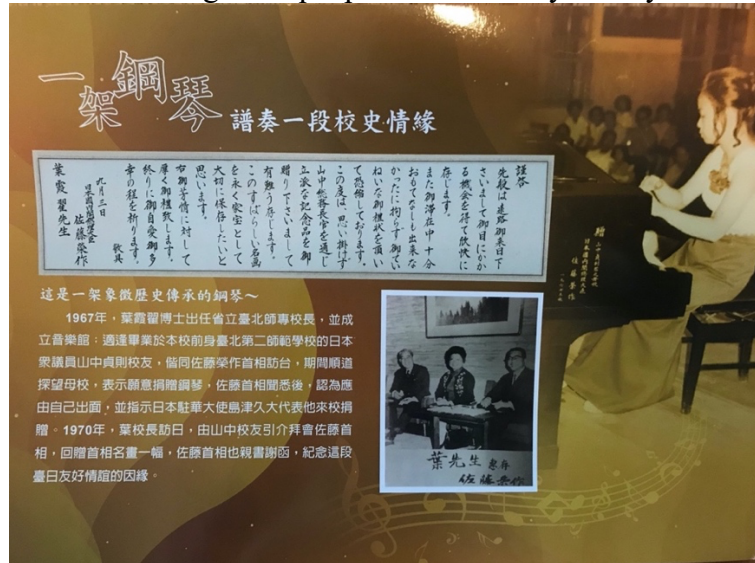
A native of Songyang in Zhejiang Province, China, Dr. Yeh Hsia-Ti 葉霞翟 (1914-1981; Ye Xiadi in *pinyin*) is one of Taiwan’s pioneering female intellectuals with a legacy as an influential educator, writer, and scholar. Ambitious, resourceful, and committed to strengthening the Republic of China, Yeh, like many of her generation, faced daunting personal and academic challenges when the eruption of the Second Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945) disrupted her life course. Nevertheless, she successfully completed her academic training in the midst of China’s War of Resistance, earning degrees from Guanghua University (1939, B. A. in Political Science and Economy), George Washington University (1941, B. A. in Political Science), and the University of Wisconsin-Madison (1942, M.A.; 1944, Ph.D., both in Political Science). Immediately returning to China after receiving her doctorate, she put her transnational educational training to excellent use as a full-time professor at Guanghua and later Ginling (Nanjing) universities from 1944-1948. On Taiwan, she served as Co-Founder, Dean, and Vice-President of the Chinese Culture University (1962-1966) before assuming her role as the first female President of the National Taipei University of Education from 1967-1980, then known as the Taiwan Provincial Taipei Junior Normal College, the premier Teachers College¹ founded during Japan’s colonization of Taiwan (1895-1945).

Yeh’s contributions to her school and to the field of Education continue to be recognized decades after her passing: for her centenary in 2014, the National Taipei University of Education organized a week-long commemoration followed by a concert in her honor, and in collaboration with the Chinese Culture University published a Festschrift by former students, colleagues, and friends. More recently, the University’s 125th anniversary celebrations in December 2020 honored Yeh’s contributions during her tenure as President: she had built the Concert Hall, among other buildings, and after a visit from an important Japanese alumnus, Sadanori Yamanaka 山中貞則 (1921-2004), a member of the House of Representatives who worked for Japan’s Prime Minister, Eisako Sato 佐藤榮作 (1901-1975), Prime Minister Sato gifted the College with a Yamaha Concert Grand which Yeh later attributed as part of God’s “divine plan.”² This story of cross-cultural legacy, including a photograph of the Prime Minister with President Yeh and a letter in

¹ During Dr. Yeh’s tenure, thousands of candidates competed each year for admission to this highly selective institution. See Hu Wei-Jen 胡為真, “Jiaozeliufang--danren Beishi xiaochang shisan nian de Yexiadi boshi shengping jianjie” 教澤流芳—擔任北師校長十三年的葉霞翟博士生平簡介 [“An Educator’s Legacy as NTUE’s College President for Thirteen Years: A Brief Biography of Dr. Yeh Hsia-Ti”], *Beijiaoda xiaoxun* 北教大校訊 [National Taipei University of Education Newsletter], vol. 203 (Jan. 2021):19.

² Yeh Ping 葉蘋 [Hsia-Ti Yeh]. “Yi jia da gangqin” 一架大鋼琴 [“A Concert Grand”]. *Yi shu zihua* 一樹紫花 [A Tree with Purple Blossoms] (Taipei: San Ming Publishing, 1969), 26. See also Esther T. Hu, “Reflections on Grandmother Yeh Hsia-Ti’s Life of Faith,” in *Jiaozeliufang: Ye Xiaochang xiadi boshi baisui danchen jinianwenji* 教澤流芳: 葉校長霞翟博士百歲誕辰紀念文集 [President Hsia-Ti Yeh’s Centenary Festschrift] (Taipei: Chinese Culture University and the National Taipei University of Education, 2014), 198.

Eisako Sato's own calligraphic hand, appears on a historical plaque unveiled in December 2020, commemorating a unique part of university history³ and Yeh's critical role.



Plaque from the National Taipei University of Education (Dec. 3, 2020 Commemoration Ceremony). Used with permission from NTUE.

The grand piano also served as a symbol for a promising new beginning after the carnage of World War II: Dr. Yeh had married four-star Chinese Nationalist general Hu Tsung-nan 胡宗南 (1896-1962; Hu Zongnan), Commander-in-Chief of the First War Zone during China's War of Resistance against Japan.⁴ The couple had fallen in love and become engaged in 1937,⁵ shortly before the War of Resistance and the Chinese Civil War (1945-1949) that immediately followed. A decade of relentless waiting separated them before their marriage in 1947, for during a tumultuous period of war and nation-building, they had prioritized the needs of their suffering country over their love for one another. General Hu's sudden death in 1962 compelled Yeh to pen the story of their romance and secret engagement, birthing *Tiandi youyou* 天地悠悠 (1965) [*Heaven and Earth: Love, War, and the Dream of China's Destiny*], her most famous literary work. The Chinese title of her love story originates from the four-line poem "On a Gate-Tower at Youzhou" by Tang dynasty poet Chen Zi Ang (陳子昂 661-702), whose speaker observes that he

³ Office of the Secretary, "Yi jia gangqin puzou yiduan xiaoshi qingyuan" shuomingpai jiemu yishi 「一架鋼琴譜奏一段校史情緣」說明牌揭幕儀式[“Piano Performs Part in School History's Providential Friendship”: Unveiling of Plaque Ceremony], *Beijiaoda xiaoxun* 北教大校訊 [*National Taipei University of Education Newsletter*], vol. 203 (Jan. 2021):5-6.

⁴ Hu Tsung-nan 胡宗南 (1896-1962; Hu Zongnan) received a Commander's Legion of Merit from President Truman in 1945 for his military collaboration with the Allies. In modern Chinese history, General Hu is best known for leading Nationalist troops to storm Communist headquarters in Yan'an in 1947 during China's Civil War (1945-1949), forcing Mao Tse-Tung 毛澤東(1893-1976) and his men to evacuate. Hu was the last high-ranking Nationalist general to leave the mainland in 1950, after enabling Chiang Kai-shek 蔣介石 (1887-1975) and the Nationalist government's retreat to Taiwan in December 1949. In collaboration with the C. I. A., he subsequently led the Nationalist effort in covert operations to raid the Zhejiang coast during the Korean War and bolstered the defense of the strategically vulnerable islands of Dachen (1951-1953) and Penghu (the Pescadores; 1955-1959). Today General Hu's mausoleum on Yang Ming Mountain, Taiwan, his bronze bust and pavilion in Lintou Park, Penghu Island (the Pescadores), Taiwan, and his childhood home in China's Zhejiang Province are tourist sites.

⁵ See Esther T. Hu (Trans.), "The Photograph," *Renditions*, no. 91 (Spring 2019):113-130.

can neither see the past nor future generations, and in meditating on the vast expanse of heaven and earth, feels such loneliness that he sheds tears:

登幽州臺歌

前不見古人，後不見來者；念天地之悠悠，獨愴然而涕下。

Chapter Two, “Ten Thousand Scrolls of Books,” begins with the Marco Polo Bridge Incident on 7 July, 1937. Through a first-person narration, Yeh chronicles her lived experience as a young Chinese woman seeking to complete her college education in war-torn China before continuing her studies in wartime America from 1939-1944. Ultimately, Dr. Yeh’s staunch perseverance and resilience, as well as the kindness of friends and teachers who help her along the way, demonstrate both the indomitable nature of the human spirit in times of national and global survival and one Chinese female intellectual’s dream of a China strong and free.

Ten Thousand Scrolls of Books

More often than not, things just don’t go our way. As I joyfully anticipated our wedding day, a shot heard by a bridge in the North shattered ten good years and drove me to study thousands of books.

July 7, the twenty-sixth year of the Republic (1937). Japanese troops stationed in northern China were conducting field exercises near the Marco Polo Bridge in Wanping City, the southwestern part of Beiping. After a Japanese soldier had been reported missing, a fabricated excuse for invasion, they fired at Wanping. The Nationalist Army stationed in the vicinity returned gunfire in response to this final provocation. President Chiang, who had been conducting military exercises at Lu Mountain, immediately called the whole nation to stand, unite, and fight for its survival. Already enraged by Japan’s ambition to invade and conquer China, my fellow countrymen gallantly responded to the leader’s call. An arduous eight-year War of Resistance began.

My fiancé, who was also at Lu Mountain, immediately returned to his designated line of defense as instructed. From Shanghai I heard that war had erupted and my first thought was that our wedding would be postponed. The delay didn’t distress me since I couldn’t have imagined that the war would drag on for as long as it did; furthermore, I had long hoped that we would resist Japan. In high school I’d joined the Hangzhou City Student Petition Team after the January 28 Incident,⁶ taking a fourth-class train to Nanjing to petition our government to retaliate against Japanese provocations. Although preparations for defense remained incomplete in these

All Notes are the translator’s own.

⁶January 28 Incident: On 28 January, 1932, Japanese forces stationed in the vicinity of Shanghai provoked an attack from Chinese forces, and the fighting lasted until May when an armistice was signed between the two sides following mediation by Great Britain and the League of Nations. The Nationalist Government did not fight an all-out war at the time as the whole nation was ill-prepared and barely unified. But the general public wanted the government to fight the Japanese, as expressed by student petition. China formally declared war against Japan on 8 December, 1941, the day after the bombing of Pearl Harbor.

intervening years, we still anxiously waited, with escalating hope, for our troops to drive out the foreign powers that carved up our land! I wasn't about to let private matters affect my mood now that the day of reckoning had finally arrived. All I waited for was a letter from Nan⁷ informing me of his whereabouts. Since he would be one of the first to engage enemy fire, I would feel far more assured if he were around Nanjing and Shanghai.

But there was silence for two whole weeks. I wrote several letters to his Nanjing office and received no response. Shanghai had stiffened with apprehension, and many were preparing to leave. Elder Sister Lan, a good friend from Jiangwan, moved into the city and stayed with us. My oldest brother wrote, advising me and my sister-in-law to return temporarily to our home in Zhejiang Province, while Elder Sister Lan wanted me to return to Chongqing City with her. But I resolved to go nowhere until I had heard from Nan.

One afternoon in early August, Teacher Yu's adjutant called to deliver an invitation to dinner at Haig Road. So Teacher Yu⁸ had arrived in Shanghai, which meant that Nan may have come too, though all this meant that war was creeping up on us. Anxious to inquire about my fiancé, I rushed Elder Sister Lan to leave when it had not even struck six o' clock. She thought I was eager for a good meal and scolded, smiling,

“What's the rush? It's not as if they don't have a refrigerator to keep the ice-cream from melting.”

Yet she hurried to dress anyway.

Teacher Yu came downstairs to receive us as soon as we arrived. His peaceful demeanor suggested that nothing was about to happen, and when Elder Sister Lan asked whether Shanghai's situation seemed urgent, he only smiled, saying,

“Of course it's urgent, but it wouldn't really affect young ladies like you.”

“Should I keep studying even if war breaks out in Shanghai's outskirts?” I asked.

“Let's wait and see how things turn out. If schools continue to hold classes, you should continue to study. This will be a long war.”

I observed that the servant was setting five pairs of chopsticks at the table. Who might the other two guests be? Suddenly Teacher Yu's secretary, Mr. Chen, appeared from the study.

“Where is Mr. Hu?” asked Teacher Yu.

⁷ General Hu Tsung-Nan, addressed as “Elder Brother Nan” in the Chinese version.

⁸ Teacher Yu: Dai Yu-Nong 戴雨農, the nickname of General Dai Li 戴笠 (1897-1946). Dai had studied at the Whampoa Military Academy where Chiang Kai-Shek was president. He later served as Generalissimo Chiang Kai-Shek's security service chief. He worked in the Investigation and Statistics Bureau, in the Military Commission of the Nationalist government, and was concurrently a professor at Hangzhou Police Academy. Dai worked with the United States during World War II to direct Sino-American intelligence activities after the signing of the Sino-American Cooperative Treaty in 1942. He had introduced Yeh and Hu in Chapter One. See Esther T. Hu (Trans.), “The Photograph,” *Renditions*, no. 91 (Spring 2019):120.

“He’s upstairs and will be down shortly.”

Scarcely had Mr. Chen finished his sentence when that general of mine was heard bounding down the stairs. A surge of joyful excitement coursed through me, and I wanted to rush forward to greet him, but he had already appeared and warmly shook hands with each of us. To my dismay, he seemed no more affectionate towards me than towards Elder Sister Lan. My heart felt an indescribable melancholy as I joined the others at the table in silence. During dinner he was more full of talk than anyone else and even managed to tell two jokes; his composure was perfect, as if he hadn’t come from the front lines. I had so much I wanted to say, but no opportunity. After dinner Elder Sister Lan said that she would like to return to Sichuan Province if the war continued to drag on. Nan supported her plan and after chatting with her for a while, turned to me and asked with a smile, “And what are your plans, Miss Yeh?”

I replied, “If Shanghai doesn’t turn into a battlefield, I would rather stay here.”

He said, “Good. Shanghai should hold out for at least another three months.”

How would you know? I thought to myself as I wondered about his confident tone. Later events proved my doubts to be unnecessary since he had already resolved to hold Shanghai for at least that long. We chatted a bit until he said he had an important letter to write and retired upstairs. Baffled, I forgave him only after telling myself that he hadn’t wished to reveal our relationship before strangers. He was meeting Elder Sister Lan for the first time after all.

It turned out that his “important letter” was addressed to me. Teacher Yu’s driver delivered it not long after I had returned home, despondent. Briefly, it said:

“Hsia,⁹ business had called me here and I return to my post this evening. We have no choice but to postpone our engagement, as I’m sure you’ll understand and forgive. When the war ends in victory, I shall come to claim your hand. Please take care.”

I had guessed as much so was not disappointed, and one week later the battle to guard Shanghai began. Nan’s troops, around 40,000 soldiers comprising the First and Seventy-Eighth Divisions, were the main force. Although their line of defense Yang-Hang, Liu-Hang, and Yun-Zao-Bin was unfavorable since the terrain was wet without cover and their trenches were directly in the line of enemy artillery fire, his troops formed a great wall of flesh and blood, stalling for time to enable our nation’s other forces to retreat to various positions in inner China. Words fail to describe the heroic sacrifices that these troops made and the heavy casualties sustained. Nan’s heart broke as he witnessed his brothers fall line by line for the nation’s existence and honor, but he resolved to continue his guard. He held Shanghai for over three months. At the war’s start, international opinion unanimously predicted that we couldn’t last for more than three weeks. One short-sighted French politician even gloated sarcastically, “How do you suppose chopsticks could withstand cannonballs?” Yet not only would our chopsticks delay the enemy, we would also have the ultimate victory. In retrospect, when people discuss reasons for China’s victory after eight years of fighting, the defense of Shanghai was said to have achieved important results for the war

⁹ The author, Yeh Hsia-Ti, addressed as “Little Sister Hsia” in the Chinese version.

effort: the initial three months of guarding Shanghai by using one's own flesh and blood gave the government ample time to transport men and facilities to inner China.

My school at Da-Xi Rd was destroyed, so we continued classes at Yu-Yuan Rd. I studied, and I also participated in Shanghai's nursing organizations, visiting troops at army hospitals which had been converted from Shanghai's dance halls and theaters. Many of the injured were actually Nan's soldiers, but I wasn't aware of this then. Besides studying and volunteering, I wrote Nan once every two or three days, describing the situation in Shanghai and telling him how much I missed him. I didn't receive a word in reply and was oblivious to the fact that he was stationed right outside the city, but I'd never really expected him to respond, only hoped that my letters would bring him comfort and strength in battle. Writing letters steadied my spirits during a time when our emotions in Shanghai vacillated and wavered. Nan told me afterwards how my letters brought him solace: after suffering a day of heavy losses, he would take them out in the dead of night and read. When his troops withdrew from Shanghai, he put all my letters in a small briefcase and buried it in the garden behind his camp for fear that they might get lost as he traveled and end up in enemy hands. After the victory he'd wanted to return to Shanghai to retrieve them, but he became too preoccupied because of the Communist revolt. Might they still be there?

We weren't to meet again until February, in the twenty-seventh year of the Republic (1938). By then the Nationalist Army had withdrawn from Shanghai and had given up Nanjing; many located there were moving into the interior. Mr. Chang, our college president, decided to move Guanghai University to Chengdu and had already asked Mr. Xie Lin, Dean of the School of Business, to make preparations. I'd written my parents and obtained their permission to go. Because my eldest brother had friends in Hong Kong and Shanghai, I first went from Shanghai to Hong Kong by boat, and then from Hong Kong to Hankou by plane. When they saw me off, my brother's friends had telegraphed him and told him to meet me at the airport in Hankou, but when the plane arrived, I didn't see my brother; instead, I only saw one of Teacher Yu's aides, Mr. Guo, waving. Apparently business had called my brother away and he'd asked Mr. Guo to pick me up. But as Mr. Guo and I proceeded towards the exit, I suddenly saw Nan's secretary, Mr. Cheng, coming towards me. My heart nearly missed a beat—would *he* be here too? Mr. Cheng reached us and greeted me before I could think this over. After joining us for a few steps, he quietly asked where I was staying, and Mr. Guo gave him my address.

In less than an hour Nan arrived.

He looked dark and gaunt, although his eyes were radiant and his movements swift. He rushed forward to shake my hand vigorously, asking repeatedly, "How *are* you?" In the chaos of wartime he had frequently been within a hair's breadth from death; our half-year parting felt like an eternity.

Saddened by his lean frame, I could only say, "You're so thin!" before bursting into tears. Holding my hand and helping me to a sofa, he said tenderly,

"Look at you, a girl to the core, unable to withstand any buffeting winds. What are you crying for? I'm alive and well!"

He took a handkerchief from his pocket and wiped away my tears. After waiting for them to stop, he asked, “Tell me how you left Shanghai. I haven’t heard from you in the past two months, and, worried, I’d asked people to go there to find out.”

It turned out that after his troops left Shanghai, fresh forces were added before they joined the battles of Nanjing, Pukou, Wuyi, and Chuzhou. He’d received none of my letters during that period. So I filled him in on the details of my departure from Shanghai and arrival in Hong Kong. After listening intently, he sighed and said, “I’m ashamed that I haven’t done my part to ensure your safety.”

After chatting awhile, he said that he had urgent business to attend to and would ask his driver to pick me up the next day.

Early in the morning, Mr. Cheng took me to Nan’s residence. As soon as I entered Nan said, “Let’s go pay our respects.” At first I didn’t grasp his meaning, but soon everything became clear: in his small study, a photograph of an elderly gentleman was placed on a table against the wall. In front of the photograph burned incense; the atmosphere was grave and solemn. Gazing at the picture, he said,

“This is my father, who died two months ago. There were many times last summer when I’d wanted to bring you to see him when he was hospitalized in Shanghai, but I hesitated and now it’s too late. I deeply regret that he couldn’t meet you while he was still living.”

Moved by his words, I walked in tears to the front of the table and bowed deeply three times to my future father-in-law. When I looked up, I noticed that Nan’s eyes were wet too. Filial piety formed such an integral part of his nature that not being able to attend his father’s funeral wounded his heart. Later, he would fast for a whole day and decline to receive visitors on his father’s memorial day. During the third and final year in Confucian mourning tradition for sons, he telegraphed Generalissimo Chiang to ask for permission to return home to pay tribute to his father. But since he shouldered critical responsibilities as both Commander-in-Chief of the Thirty-Fourth Army Corps and Dean of the Seventh Branch of the Central Military Academy, Generalissimo Chiang couldn’t approve his request. So Nan went to commemorate his father and offer libations at the top of Zhong Nan Mountain (in Shaanxi Province near Xian), and wrote an elegy. Towards the end he says,

*For many years your son has never returned to look after you;
During war’s chaos, even a hundred lives can’t make up for my loss of you.
I’m indebted to your paternal love, and haven’t heard your gracious words or seen
your face in ages;
Your virtue and integrity are like the mountains.
I’ve not been able to comfort you
And now I come, alone, to Nan Mountain to pay my respects and offer libations.
My body is cold; the wind and snow engulf me.
I cannot express the sorrow in my heart with appropriate words,
As I am too sad to utter them.*

I collected this elegy in *Tsung-Nan's Selected Works*. Whenever I come across it, I would recall with an aching heart that day at Hankou when he asked me to bow in front of my father-in-law's photograph.

I stayed for lunch. Afterwards, he asked me to keep him company while he wrote to his uncle and younger brother. He told them that this was a protracted war, and the enemy would likely pillage and plunder their village. They should change their names, move to China's interior, endure hard days, and wait for him to return after the victory to take care of them. These two letters he sent with some money by special messengers, and around four o'clock that afternoon Mr. Cheng took me home while Nan left for his area of defense. His troops were undergoing supplementary training around Wuchang before departing for the front lines.

I lived in Hankou for half a month before boarding a boat for Chongqing; Wuhan had become dangerous and residents around the Yangtze River were retreating into Sichuan. The boat to Chongqing was packed. I had purchased a first-class cabin, but upon boarding saw that uninvited guests had already occupied my small room. There were three families in all: a young mother with four children, the oldest age six and the youngest three months; an elderly couple with a seven or eight-year-old; and finally, a middle-aged couple with three children. Approaching the door, I saw the dark room full of heads and thought that I had come to the wrong place. Responses to my questions made me realize that no, I'd come to the correct location; these people were refugees from downstream who had not been able to purchase tickets and had stolen onto the boat by night. They felt a little sorry when they realized that I was the cabin's occupant, but in times of war *escape* had a higher priority than *justice*. I stood at the door to my room and couldn't even get my foot in. Eventually, it was the elderly couple who felt apologetic and asked the child to sit on his grandfather's knee, thereby creating a small space on the small bed but no place to stretch my legs. For three days and three nights I endured the torture of remaining scrunched up in a tight position with my back against the wooden board of the boat, my legs tucked in, and my arms hugging my knees. But we were lucky enough to escape with our lives intact during this chaotic time, so no one complained. Instead, we bonded: during mealtimes, whoever sat by the door would cautiously step over the people sleeping on the boards outside and carefully deliver the food. We took turns holding the small children, and my knees even served as a temporary bassinet for the three-month-old baby. When we finally reached Yichang (in Hubei), there was an air raid alarm. For a moment chaos ensued as many people on board scrambled to shore for safety, thereby granting me the opportunity to stretch my limbs for a few hours. The enemy planes didn't bomb Yichang that time. Once the alarm was over, people boarded again and we moved forward, finally arriving safely in Chongqing on the fifth day. By then we all looked like beggars with soiled clothes and dirty faces.

I had managed to telegraph Elder Sister Lan when the boat reached Wan County (in Sichuan), so she was already waiting at the dock in Chongqing. She had left Shanghai three months earlier, and in war-torn China such a separation could have been for an eternity. Seeing each other safe and sound, we embraced and wept.

Elder Sister Lan had already arranged for me to stay at her home in Jiangbei, and we headed there after claiming my luggage. She lived in a rather large house with a lovely garden; her mother came out to welcome us the moment we entered the garden gate. A kind, affectionate and capable elderly lady, she took my hand and led me to the beautiful and comfortable room she had prepared.

That evening, as I relaxed on the Simmons bed after a hot bath, I felt I had leapt from hell to heaven. I stayed in Chongqing for an entire month and to this day remember it with nostalgia. I will never forget Mrs. Zhao's generous hospitality. Sadly, she was unable to escape from the mainland when it fell to Communist forces; I very much hope she is safe and in good health!

In mid-March I was notified that our school had rented a place at Wangjia Ba in Chengdu. Classes would resume at the end of the month. Though reluctant to leave Elder Sister Lan and her comfortable home, I knew my purpose was to further my studies, not escape the ravages of war. So on the twentieth of March I took a bus to Chengdu, registered for classes, and started school.

Nan was posted to Xian not long after I arrived in Chengdu. He had been promoted to Commander-in-Chief of the Thirty-Fourth Army Corps and was integrating the units in northern China that had retreated to Shaanxi. He also served as the Dean of the Seventh Branch of the Central Military Academy and coordinated the training of cadets. With an enduring passion to educate youth, he naturally seized this opportunity and worked with all his heart. His record of fierce courage on the battlefield, heroic mettle during hardships, and selfless conduct inspired young people's devotion. His slogan, "Greatness without self, greatness without fame, and greatness without fear," inspired many a passionate youth. Young men came to the Academy in the Northwest from all over the land; his students from the Seventh Branch of the Central Military Academy and the Wartime Cadet Training Corps once reached 20,000. Many intellectuals and specialists also made their way to the Northwest, giving East Lake Park of Fengxiang (in Shaanxi Province) the unprecedented distinction of serving as a host site for China's intellectuals.

Students from universities in the Chengdu area greatly admired General Hu of the Northwest. They had formed four Wartime College Students' National Salvation Corps responsible for military propaganda and service in the war effort, and I led one of the four branches as the only female leader. One day, General Hu of the Northwest came up during conversation when the executive boards of all four corps assembled. (No one was aware of our relationship, of course). The leader of the first corps, a senior from Sichuan University, asked,

"Why don't we form a Northwest Investigation Team and visit Xian?"

"Investigate? We should go for training instead. I heard that Mr. Zha Liangzhao once received a command from the Ministry of Education to take in 1,500 migrant students¹⁰ from Beijing and Tianjin, Hebei, and Shandong. They had nothing to eat or wear by the time they had reached Fengxiang. When General Hu learned of this, he immediately sent people to receive everybody along with 500 donkeys to transport everyone to the dormitories of Tianshui's Training Class. Now they've all happily resumed their studies there!" This flood of information gushed forth from a Huaxi [West China or West China Union] University student whose cousin happened to be one of the 1,500.

"I definitely think we should go, but would our families want us to leave since they're all here?" asked the leader of the second Youth Corps, a student from the music conservatory.

¹⁰ These students had missed school due to the Japanese occupation.

“Who would object? The Northwest is the melting pot of the revolution. We’d only improve our skills and success rate if we went,” opined yet another student. So the conversation continued from person to person, until the group reached a general consensus: a trip to the Northwest was definitely worthwhile whether it be for business, for pleasure, or for training. At this point a classmate turned to me and asked:

“Elder Sister Yeh, would you lead our group? There are now many women serving in the military.”

“Of course, like that famous author Xie Bingying¹¹ who is currently posted in Xian.”

“I also heard that Lee Fanglan, general editor of Hunan’s magazine *Ripples of Xiao and Xiang Rivers*, organized a team of female war volunteers to visit the Northwest.”

“Oh, please go, Elder Sister Yeh! If you lead us, we will all go!”

All eyes were suddenly on me. *Thank God they’re oblivious to my connection with General Hu: I would be the target of much teasing*, I thought. Knowing that it wasn’t the right time for me to appear, I said,

“All right, I’ll go if everyone wants to go, on condition that I graduate first. My parents are waiting back home to see my college diploma, and I would feel very ashamed if I can’t produce it.”

The chattering stopped when they heard me say this; perhaps everyone was thinking about his college diploma too. So our “investigation team” never formed, though quite a number of us made individual trips to the Northwest.

But during the year and three months of my stay in Chengdu, this idolized war hero secretly came to visit me twice. Since Nan and I could not marry, we had agreed not to publicize our relationship and no one in Chengdu knew of our connection. His visits to Chengdu were really to see the dentist at Huaxi University’s Medical School. The first time was particularly funny. One afternoon in early winter, I had just moved to a dormitory close to the Grass Hall Temple of Du Fu.¹² After class, three friends and I were walking arm in arm in the garden when the guard at the door suddenly rushed over, calling,

“Miss Yeh, there’s someone here with letters for you. I told him to leave the letters with me, but he said that there was urgent business and needed to deliver them in person.”

¹¹ Xie Bingying 謝冰瑩 (1906-2000) was a famous Chinese writer and author of *Autobiography of a Female Soldier/A Woman Soldier’s Own Story* (1936; 1946; 1996; 2001). She had been recruited by General Hu, Yeh’s fiancé, to found and edit *Huanghe (Yellow River)*, a literary magazine that provided “soul food” for his soldiers in Xian [Sian].

¹² Du Fu 杜甫 (712-770) was one of the most famous poets of the Tang Dynasty.

I thought it very strange. Was his secretary, Mr. Cheng, here? I said goodbye to my companions and ran towards the gatehouse. When I reached it, there was no one in sight. I went and found the man who had called me, a Mr. Chen, and he pointed to a garden plot towards the left.

“There he is.”

I looked where he had pointed, and saw a man dressed in a grey Sun Yat-sen jacket who stood by the fence admiring chrysanthemums. The moment I saw his back I knew who this “mailman” was. Quietly walking over, I waited until I was near his shoulder before asking gaily,

“Are you the messenger who wanted to deliver letters?”

He turned around immediately when he heard my voice, showing a face with an impish grin.

“Yes, you’re right. This is your letter,” he said, as he made one appear from his breast pocket.

“Thanks so much. Would you like to come in and sit a while?”

He gazed at me, then said with a smile, “I don’t think that’s necessary. But I hope you’d accompany me on a walk if you have time.”

“It’d be my pleasure to keep you company in return for all that effort in delivering a letter!”

And so we left the school grounds like classmates who saw each other daily.

I waited until we’d stepped outside the school gates before asking why he’d suddenly appeared. He’d wished to come much earlier, he said, but work kept him too busy. But now he could take two days off because of a toothache. *Oh, so you’re fulfilling a personal agenda under the pretext of a public mission*, I teased. *No, I’m fulfilling a personal agenda under the pretext of visiting a dentist*, he returned. I laughed out loud.

Chengdu was home to many scenic spots and historical sites. The Grass Hall Temple at our school received its name from the Grass Hall Temple of the poet Du Fu, while the Emerald Sheep Palace stood nearby. Annually, on the twelfth of the second month of the lunar year when flowers bloomed in full array, florists and flower lovers from Chengdu and its vicinity displayed their blooms at a “flower market” alongside their handicrafts and agricultural produce. The flower market season lasted at least two weeks, or sometimes even an entire month, and it attracted visitors from near and far. To the east of the city was the well of Xue Tao¹³, once known as Pipa Gate Lane, residence of Xue Xiaoshu, the Tang Dynasty courtesan famed for her talents in poetry and other literary genres; to the south of the city lay the shrine of Zhuge Wu Hou (AD 181-234),¹⁴

¹³ Xue Tao 薛濤 (AD 768-831) was a courtesan in the Tang Dynasty famed for her talents in poetry and other literary genres. Xiaoshu was her official rank. People used it as a nickname for Xue Tao’s talents.

¹⁴ Zhuge Wu Hou 諸葛武侯 (AD 181-234). Wu Hou was the official title of Zhuge Liang 諸葛亮, the prime minister, statesman and military strategist of the Kingdom of Shu in China’s Three Kingdoms period.

Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Shu during the Period of the Three Kingdoms; while Hua Xi Ba¹⁵ boasted many western-style buildings and gardens. The next day we toured Chengdu's sites together, reminiscent of our days at West Lake. He flew back to Xian in the early morning of the third day.

He came to Chengdu again in June of the following year. I had just finished my graduation exams and was waiting for the graduation ceremony and my diploma. There was no personal letter delivery this time; instead, he'd asked Mr. Cheng to bring me from school to where he was staying, a friend's home on Citang Street.

"Miss University Graduate, I've made a special trip to offer my congratulations," he said with a smile when we met.

"Thanks, but there's no reason to celebrate when graduation means unemployment!"

"But who won't welcome you with all your talent?"

"But what good are university graduates at such a time as this?"

"What do you mean? University graduates are our cherished national treasure."

"That may be your personal opinion. Yes, I've heard of many intelligent, talented people taking shelter under General Hu's canopy: there are discerning officials as abundant as rain, intrepid generals as common as clouds, and heroes from all over the land. Do you think I qualify to serve as one of your foot soldiers?"

"Too bad that you're a *shero* and not a *hero*," he laughed loudly.

Embarrassed, I stood up in mock anger.

"All right, since I'm not welcomed, why should we bother discussing anything?"

He stood up too and took my hand, saying,

"All right, please don't be angry, mademoiselle; let's sit down and talk in earnest."

We had actually only engaged in empty talk. Earlier, realizing that this was going to be a protracted war, I'd prepared to continue my studies abroad upon graduation. After gaining admission to Columbia University in the United States, I'd asked people in Chongqing to complete arrangements for me to go abroad. He'd really come to say goodbye ahead of time since having the leisure to see me off was unlikely.

We discussed our many plans, including details for going abroad, my research plans in the United States, the war's domestic developments, the international scene, and the war's possible

¹⁵ Huaxi Ba, a famous scenic spot on the campus of modern-day Sichuan University.

outcomes. Most importantly, we promised to remain true to each other and wait for one another regardless of the length of war or the vast distance separating us, till we met again.

I left for Chongqing not long afterwards and completed final procedures for departure. Although I knew that he could not bid me farewell, on the eve of my departure I still hoped for a last-minute appearance! He did not come, but sent someone to deliver a letter:

*This time, my beloved, you are crossing the vast oceans,
And the thought of your leaving your home, your country,
And our leaving each other
Fills both of us with sweet sorrow and regret
Whether awake or asleep.
My official duties preclude me from bidding farewell in person,
Here's to wishing you a safe journey
Do take care of yourself so that I will not worry.*

I put his letter in my purse next to my passport and brought it all the way with me to the United States.

I left Chongqing for Hong Kong on July 23, and on August 12 I left Hong Kong on an American cruise ship, *President Coolidge*, passing Shanghai and Japan, and arriving in San Francisco on August 26. Since I had long heard of the beauty and majesty of Yellowstone National Park, I took the opportunity to see it, so on the twenty-seventh I took a train from San Francisco to Salt Lake City and from there visited Yellowstone before taking the train for New York by way of Chicago. It was September 1st 1939 when I arrived in New York. A large newspaper headline "Germany Invades Poland" caught my attention the moment I disembarked. I had never imagined that war would break out in Europe too!

But as soon as I arrived, I felt that NYC was too big and disorderly to be a good place to study. I discussed my hopes of going to another school with Mr. Xiao, the knowledgeable secretary from the embassy who'd come from Washington, D. C. to pick me up. He suggested my going to George Washington University. So I went with him to see the capital of the U. S., the world's political center, and found the city spacious, beautiful, and clean.

I stayed temporarily with Mr. Xiao and his family. He and Mrs. Xiao had only one child, a senior in high school who had arrived from China not too long ago. They were warm, hospitable, Hunan people and took very good care of me. The day after my arrival they took me to see Mr. White, Dean of the School of Government at George Washington University. After he reviewed my academic transcript and Columbia University's letter of admission, he permitted me to register for classes right away.

The school had a women's dormitory, but there was no room because I'd arrived on the spur of the moment. Left with no choice, I needed to find a room elsewhere. Though many private homes in Washington, D. C. had rooms for rent, most landlords did not want to rent to a person of color. Mr. Xiao drove me to more than a dozen homes before finding a room far from campus on Garden Street. An elderly couple originally from Germany lived on the first floor of a three-story

house and rented the other two floors. My room was on the front side of the third floor; a female office worker rented the room at the back. On the second floor a couple who worked as sale clerks lived in the front while an elderly lady lived in the back. Everyone had his or her own job. We met infrequently, and should we bump into each other downstairs we simply nodded and said a brief “Good morning” or “Good evening.” An alienating loneliness crept over me as soon as I moved in; I felt abandoned, thrown in a freezer.

I didn’t fare much better at school, either. Having just arrived in a foreign land, I lacked the confidence to start conversations with my shaky English. Besides, I’d get to school just before class, rush to my classroom and do some last-minute cramming for the quizzes that George Washington University’s professors had the habit of administering for five to ten minutes during most lectures! After class we went our separate ways; people had neither the leisure nor the mood to stop and socialize with a stranger. So at first I would go through entire days barely uttering a single word, besides the one or two sentences spoken when ordering fast food. To make matters worse, I’d been in the U. S. for almost two months with no word from home. Every evening I studied alone in my room, poring laboriously over a dictionary; when I suffered from eyestrain, I would lie on my bed and indulge in feelings of homesickness. After a good cry I would dry my eyes, get up, and continue my studies far into the night. Then early the next morning I would again go to school on my own. Little wonder that when Sunday finally arrived, I would rush to the Xiao home after having passed another desperately lonely week. And I would always stay till late afternoon, even tagging along when they went to visit friends at the slightest hint of “Why don’t you come along?” I wasn’t tactless, but deeply dreaded returning to that dead house! I felt abandoned by my family, forgotten by my Nan, and wondered if I’d ever be loved again. *Why was this happening to me?* I repeatedly asked. Surely they’d no reason to forget my very existence in a foreign land!

One afternoon when I finally hit rock bottom, I suddenly heard the landlady call loudly from the stairwell: “Come down quickly, Catherine¹⁶; lots of letters have arrived!”

The word “letter” was the word that I’d most wanted to hear, and I flew downstairs. The landlady was holding a thick pile, and as she passed them to me, I counted: eight. Two came from home, two came from Elder Sister Lan, one from my sister-in-law, and the remaining three from the Northwest! Ecstatic, I embraced the landlady and cried with tears streaming down my cheeks,

“Mrs. Bay, this makes me so happy!”

Mrs. Bay’s eyes glistened as she patted my shoulder consolingly.

“Yes, child; go upstairs and read your letters. I know you’ve missed home.”

Releasing her, I bounded upstairs.

“And Catherine, don’t forget to save your stamps for Mr. Bay!”

Mr. Bay was an avid stamp collector.

¹⁶ Catherine was Yeh Hsia-Ti’s English name.

I shut the door behind me and perused each letter repeatedly. This must've been my happiest moment since leaving home: I could finally believe that they all missed me and still loved me. War ravaged everywhere in China, either cutting or overburdening postal routes. Though delayed, my dear letters finally reached their final destination, safe in my hands, because of the Lord's protection.

Life remained lonely and difficult, but my heart no longer felt that aching emptiness. Letters from home remained infrequent, and I often had to wait one or two months before a huge pile arrived. But I no longer felt anxious since I now knew the cause of delay. At the end of the first semester, the university notified me about moving into the women's dormitory.

The dorm was located at the intersection of H and G streets, just two buildings away from the political science department. It had seven floors; my room was located on the sixth, and both of my neighbors were graduate students. Natalie White, on my left, studied English literature; Emma Swanson, on my right, pursued history. They popped in to introduce themselves on the first evening of my arrival, repeatedly offering their help should I ever need anything. I realized then that Americans with racial prejudice were mainly confined to some uneducated city folk and housewives; real intellectuals of course showed more perspective and understanding. Both became good friends, especially Natalie, whom I found easier to talk to. She later received her doctorate in literature from Yale University and even spent a week hanging out with me in Wisconsin. She lived in Norfolk, Virginia, where her father was chief of police; he came to see me off when I boarded an American navy freighter docked at Norfolk on my way home.

Life took a turn for the better after I moved into the dorm, and I never felt that kind of loneliness again. Two years later, I received my first degree from an American university. Mine was a bachelor's and not a master's degree because studying Political Science in the United States required almost thirty credits of courses I'd not covered in China, such as U. S. Government, the U. S. Constitution, the U. S. Political Party System, and U. S. History. My advisor had wanted me to see the fruits of my labor in a short time. At his suggestion, I was to first study as an undergraduate transfer student, receive my bachelor's degree, and then apply to master's programs with my U. S. degree. It would then take another year to complete my master's. I listened to his advice and graduated successfully from George Washington University. I then telegraphed Cornell University, the University of Chicago, the University of Wisconsin, and the University of Michigan to apply as a graduate student in political science. All four schools telegraphed back offers of acceptance. Since I didn't have a deep understanding of any of these schools, I solicited the advice of a few American friends. They unanimously agreed that Wisconsin ranked first in scenic beauty and neighborly people, and therefore I decided to go there.

Although my two years in Washington D. C. were academically rigorous and afforded little time for socializing, I wasn't completely cut off from the rest of the world. While D. C. didn't have many Chinese students, it was the location of the Chinese Embassy. Chinese students frequently passed through, and members of the Chinese army, navy and air force came for study or training. When the Embassy or local Chinese organizations held parties, I often received an invitation along with other Chinese graduate students. To avoid trouble, I played it safe by turning down invitations to dances and dates, causing people to wonder why I acted like an old maid since I didn't look like one! A few years later my brother-in-law's classmate, who happened to be one of the young

lieutenants-in-training in Washington, told my younger sister: “Your sister Catherine was a professional in keeping secrets. When classmates got together in Washington, we frequently discussed General Hu and his heroism and brilliance in leading troops and training them. We admired how he was holding out for China in the Northwest, fighting the Japanese on the one hand and keeping the Chinese Communists at bay on the other. Sometimes people touched on the subject of marriage. We threw out guesses as to why he’d not married and wondered if he’d a country bumpkin of a wife at home. Not only did Catherine keep a poker face, she also joined in the guessing! Who would’ve thought that she was General Hu’s fiancée? Sometimes boys asked her out on dinner dates or dances, but she always said that she had too much homework. On the rare occasion when she consented to go, she discussed politics the moment she was seated and gave lectures about not squandering time while one’s homeland suffered the hardships of war. This sufficed to scare away all potential suitors, and no one asked her out a second time. So these tactics were actually her smoke bombs!”

When my younger sister passed on this gossip, we nearly died laughing.

I left Washington D.C. for Madison, Wisconsin in June 1941. As the state capital, Madison didn’t have the hustle and bustle of a big city; it was peaceful and quiet instead, its residents friendly and wholesome, focusing on freedom of thought and not on class or racial differences. This was the ideal place for higher education. The main buildings on campus were situated on a hill next to Lake Mendota. Some stood partially hidden among tall, ancient trees, a glimpse of red brick lending an aura of classical elegance. I lived in Elizabeth Waters Hall, a modern five-story building next to the hill and overlooking the lake, in “a room with a view.” The dorm boasted resplendent interior decoration: every floor had its own matching wallpaper, carpet, drapes, bed sheets and furniture in a distinct color. The five-stories were separated as dusty rose, light azure, silvery white, golden yellow, and faint purple. I lived on the dusty rose floor. Every morning, as I drew open the curtains, a glistening view of emerald green from the lake greeted me. I felt I was living in a fairyland. A Mr. and Mrs. Shen, who were studying history in the United States, once took a summer course at Wisconsin. After touring my dorm, they compared it to the Crystal Palace,¹⁷ its residents mermaid princesses. I felt carefree there in both body and spirit, in sharp contrast to those early days in Washington.

I had arrived in mid-June. In late June I registered for two summer classes, “Party Politics” and “American Political Thought,” the latter course taught by the department chair, Professor John Gaus.¹⁸ Because Professor Gaus most respected the political thought of Henry Adams, he assigned *The Education of Henry Adams* as one of our texts on the first day of class. An American classmate sitting next to me quietly confided that the professor loved this book with a passion; it would surely appear on exams. Wanting to give Professor Gaus a favorable impression, I started reading the book once I returned to my dorm and perused it three times in a row. Three weeks later, Prof. Gaus tested us on the reading as predicted, asking us to list the names of fifty characters connected with Henry Adams and to provide descriptions. I named all fifty in one fell swoop and described each

¹⁷ In Chinese mythology, this was a palace located under the sea and home to the Dragon King.

¹⁸ John M. Gaus (1894-1969), considered one of the founding fathers of the discipline of public administration, taught at the University of Wisconsin (1927-1947) and Harvard University (1947-1961). His book, *Reflections on Public Administration* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1947) went through fifty editions between 1947 and 2011.

character's relationship with the protagonist. During the following class, the professor praised me to the skies. In his entire teaching career, no student had provided such full answers, he said, yet I had miraculously succeeded as an international student. "A good beginning is half the battle," goes the saying, and from that day on, this elderly professor gave me special attention. I wrote both my master's and doctoral theses under Professor Gaus's supervision. Beginning that fall, I also began receiving a graduate student stipend from the school that freed me from worries about making ends meet. After the attack on Pearl Harbor, funds from home were discontinued. Who knows if I would've been able to complete my studies without that scholarship?

The "day that will live in infamy" occurred that winter on the morning of December seventh. I first heard the news in the cafeteria at nine a. m. We'd all risen pretty late because it was a Sunday; after breakfast some of us remained, chatting around a table. Someone must've turned on the radio because we suddenly heard a gruff voice reporting,

"At dawn today, Japanese planes bombed Pearl Harbor. Our naval losses are severe, and the President has convened Congress for an emergency meeting to declare war against Japan!"

Everyone froze at the news.

"What? Japan has ambushed Pearl Harbor? Hasn't Mr. Whatever-shi arrived as a peace envoy? This is impossible, just impossible!" said one senior classmate.

"Japanese people are such robbers and liars; old President Roosevelt is crazy to trust them!" a graduate student interjected.

"All right, Catherine, I guess now we're really "allies." I had no idea that the Japanese emperor had us in mind as well!" observed Jenny, a good friend and next-door neighbor, in a sarcastic tone. This surprising news awakened everyone's patriotism, in addition to eliciting feelings of anger and bewilderment. I also felt surprised, though a selfish elation simultaneously welled up in my heart. *At last we won't have to fight this terrible war alone*, I thought. Afraid that my classmates would misinterpret my happiness during a tragedy, I darted back to my room so no one would see my expression and misunderstand.

In truth, the Pearl Harbor attack was bad for me personally. Letters from home stopped, financial support abated, and Nan's letters ceased altogether. His letters were already few to begin with, and very short; they only comprised two or three sheets of thick stationary, each with three to four lines of writing. He wrote on this thick paper regardless of whether he was sending letters by air or by sea. But for me, even one line provided tremendous solace as long as the letter came from him. Now that Hong Kong was in enemy hands, airmail ceased and I did not even have the pleasure of reading his three to five lines of writing, and as the days passed, I grew more and more despondent. When I received my master's degree in May of my second year, I wanted to go home. However, when I returned to Washington, D. C. and asked Mr. Xiao to telegraph my teacher (Teacher Yu) to request his help in securing my return, the response was that I should continue my studies and not return just then.

I had no choice but to resume my studies as a PhD candidate. Fortunately there were five of us from China, all in the same boat, so we supported each other. Two classmates were men: Mr. Fan and Mr. Ou studied insect-borne plant disease in the Department of Agriculture. Both were significantly older than I and had wives and children back home. The two female classmates were Anna Mei Ma and Grace Kuan. Miss Ma originated from Shanghai; she was petite in stature and had a lovely face.

[...]Miss Kuan's family originally hailed from Guangdong Province, but she was born in Shanghai and grew up there. Her parents had sent her to an American school since childhood, so she acquired fluency in English but understood very little Chinese beyond writing her own name. Once, when touring Chicago, she met a classmate from Sichuan Province who instantly fell in love with her. After she returned to Wisconsin, he wrote a series of love letters to her, all in Chinese. Grace had no choice but to show them to me so that I could read them to her. I told her to reply in English, but this young man was both particular and obstinate: not only did he continue to write in Chinese, he also insisted on receiving Chinese letters from her! She had no choice again but to ask for my help. So we naturally became bosom friends.

Although I missed home dearly, the days were not intolerable because of these Chinese classmates. Occasionally I heard how Nan was doing through newspapers or visitors from China. When U. S. presidential envoy, Wendell Willkie (presidential election opponent-turned-envoy), visited Chongqing during his world tour, he visited the Northwest.¹⁹ An American reporter also wrote an article on the Northwest, saying that it was an important reservoir of various talents that provided the foundation for training cadres who supported military expeditions in northern and northwestern China. In his analysis of the war effort, he said that the Northwest was the gateway for the defense of Chongqing, a provisional capital, with strategic importance: if it were lost to the enemy, the war would not be easily won. Fortunately, he reasoned, the Northwest was guarded by an intelligent general with a will of steel, so the Japanese could not easily cross the Yellow River. (History proved this reporter to have been correct: in the eight-year war against Japan, Nan's troops bravely guarded the Yellow River, not allowing the enemy to advance one inch beyond Tongguan [Tungkwan]²⁰). Such news comforted me immensely.

Nevertheless, my life was stressful with many hurdles to overcome; one examination followed another and yet another. To collect data for my thesis, I stayed for four months in Antigua, a town on the border of Wisconsin and Minnesota.²¹ Finally, the final hurdle arrived in Spring, 1944: the oral defense of my thesis. Seven senior professors formed the defense committee, which included my advisor, Professor Gaus (he was the chair), as well as my second advisor, Professor

¹⁹ See Wang Liben 王立本, *Baizhanzhonghun: Hu zongnan jiangjuntuwenchuan 百戰忠魂：胡宗南將軍圖文傳* [*A Loyal Soul of Countless Battles: The Pictorial Biography of General Hu Tsung-nan*], (Taipei: Central News Agency, 2016), 86.

²⁰ This was a strategic location between Shaanxi and Shanxi, the only feasible juncture to cross the Yellow River from the east. See also Lin Yutang 林語堂 (1895-1976), *The Vigil of a Nation* (New York: The John Day Company, Inc., 1944), 143.

²¹ A newspaper report from 1944 describes farmers of Langlade County, Wisconsin, being approached by a "charming, petite Chinese girl" called Hsia-Ti Yeh who offered to join them in eleven-hour days spent planting and picking potatoes in return for "first-hand assistance" for her doctoral thesis for the University of Wisconsin. "Chinese Girl Toils Long Hours for Doctor's Degree," 1 Jan. 1944 (United Press), Private Collection; "Chinese Girl Toils Long Hours for Doctor's Degree," *St. Cloud Times*, Jan. 5, 1944, 2.

Kolb, and a world-renowned authority on comparative political systems, Professor Ogg. The defense took half a day, and I was asked questions from nine to noon; every member on the committee had many questions for me, some fairly easy to answer and others very complex. I tried to answer most of the questions in lengthy detail, and at last, Prof. Gaus asked with a smile,

“Miss Yeh, if we gave you another semester, or another year, what parts of your thesis would you revise or alter?”

I pondered the question before responding in earnest:

“Professor Gaus, I think that I’ve already done my best for this thesis. At present, I really can’t think of anything that I would need to spend more time on.”

On hearing this, all seven professors burst into laughter and the chair announced that the examination had ended and asked me to wait outside. After ten minutes my advisor came out to shake my hand and offer his congratulations, followed by white-haired Professor Ogg, who said to me, “Wonderful, just wonderful!” and warmly shook my hand without letting go. These elderly educators were so benevolent and modest; their kindness caused me to shed happy tears of gratitude and joy. These intermingled with tears arising from the thought of having spent more than twenty years, studying hard, followed by five years studying abroad, alone. For the rest of my life, I shall always remember what these dear elderly professors have taught me and try to emulate their way of teaching.

By this time my heart was like an arrow determined to return home. Though the Crystal Palace was wonderful, I didn’t want to linger. The next day, I packed my bags, said goodbye to my professors and friends, and headed for Washington D. C. With the help of Chinese friends and American Admiral Miles,²² I boarded a U.S. naval transport ship headed towards India. I departed from Norfolk at the end of May, passed the Panama Canal, curved around the Cape of Good Hope, passed the Red Sea, and arrived at Bombay, India. From there I travelled to Jakarta, Indonesia, by train and then to Chongqing, China, by plane. When the airplane left the runway and burst into the skies, I looked down. Seeing blankets of white clouds, I uttered a prayer:

“God, you have been blessing your daughter and caring for her over the years; now I just ask you please to let this war end quickly. Let my life burst forth from the clouds and into the clear skies; may I quickly arrive upon the shores of bliss.”

²² Vice Admiral Milton E. Miles (1901-1960; Chinese name 梅樂斯) was a friend of Dai Li (Teacher Yu) and author of *A Different Kind of War: The Little-Known Story of the Combined Guerrilla Forces Created in China by the U. S. Navy and the Chinese During World War II* (New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1967). During the Second World War, Miles was head of Naval Intelligence operations in China and later second-in-command of the Sino-American Special Technical Cooperative Organization (SACO). See John K. Fairbank, review of *A Different Kind of War The Little-Known Story of the Combined Guerrilla Forces Created in China by the U. S. Navy and the Chinese During World War II* by Milton E. Miles and Hawthorne Daniel, *Pacific Affairs*, vol. 41, no. 2 (Summer 1968):275-276. Vice Admiral Miles and General Dai’s relationship resulted in many effective coordinated battles against the Japanese occupying army in China. In fact, the friendship between descendants of the two organizations’ members has continued to the present, with frequent visits between the US and Taiwan.