

Eulogy

I'd like to read a poem dedicated to Tang-Hua:

相知四十載，筵殘君先行。
憶君少年夢，恁恁細膩情。
顧人如溫玉，自勵勝寒冰。
深謀展豪氣，奮己創業成。
落拓一君子，生命苦行僧。
肝膽留人世，大愛不伶仃。
滄桑猶鴻雪，淚眼對孤燈。
悲思隔萬里，子魂歸故城？

This poem was written by Chao-Shiuan Liu (劉兆玄,) a very dear friend and classmate of Tang-Hua. In our senior year, TH, Liu and I became very good friends. We enjoyed the same kind of books, music, movies, and we share similar thoughts. We talked about everything under the sky except chemistry. After a while we were able to finish each other's sentences.

We loved to meet on top of the chemistry building. We thought we were pretty cool. In reality we were standing on the 100-degree concrete roof, permeated by the stench of the chemical fume coming from the exhaust fans. At the time Fujen University was newly re-established in Taiwan. Jokingly, we said that we were going to finish our degrees and come back to take over their chemistry department. Little did I know that my friends would go on to conquer areas much bigger than a chemistry department.

George, I'd like you to know that your father dabbled a little in the singing business when he was young. One of our favorites was Peter, Paul and Mary's "Where Have All the Flowers Gone". We practised singing this song for our debut in a class party; we even prepared for an encore. Sadly none of our classmates recognized our talent; therefore our music career was cut short.

For extra-curricular activities, we decided to attend weddings. Yes, we were the wedding crashers way before Owen Wilson and Vince Vaughn; except our target was mainly the food. Another classmate Frank Shu (舒瑞元), who is also present here today, joined us in these adventures. Our feasts might have gone on for much longer, if we had not met a very friendly man who was affiliated with the police department. The man complimented us as model youths, and asked for our names and addresses. The next day he visited TH's home and sold his father a subscription to a magazine called "Friends of the Police."

Kids grow up here may not be able to understand, that in those days, how long we were able to stay out still depended very much on how strict our parents were. Liu was always the first to go home. My mother was pretty strict and I knew I would be in big trouble if I stayed out too late, but invariably TH persuaded me to stay "just a little longer." On one such occasion we stayed out a little too late and my pumpkin coach disappeared. My father went to Liu's house

and woke up the future prime minister. Together they went to TH's home to look for me. Needless to say, we made an indelible impression on all three sets of parents.

In 1986, while attending a conference in Santa Barbara, I was invited to Shio-Luan and Tang-Hua's wedding in Las Vegas. Except for his parents, I was the only guest and witness. I took an afternoon off and flew over. As we were ready to take off, I noticed that a couple of workers climbed on the wing and started to bang on it here and there. Well, when I got to the chapel, the bride, the groom, and the parents were anxiously waiting. I met for the first time, this gorgeous young lady who had won TH's heart. The ceremony was simple and elegant. As we walked out of the chapel, I bid my good-bye and was going to get a taxi for the airport. TH would not hear of it. Thus the bride and the groom accompanied the wedding witness to the airport in a taxi. As if this were not bad enough, my plane was delayed for a few hours. Again there was no way to talk TH out of accompanying his friend. The three of us ended up having a simple meal at the cafeteria of the airport. As Shio-Luan removed the lid of the yogurt, she announced, "Here begins the wedding banquet!" and we all burst into laughter. At that moment, I was greatly relieved, that TH had found a woman with a wonderful sense of humor to be his partner.

It is pretty obvious to all, that Shio-Luan was the wind beneath TH's wings. It was her strength, sacrifice and encouragement which allowed him the freedom to pursue his dream, and accomplished what most people could not have accomplished in many more years.

TH was smart, witty, innovative, open-minded, hard-working, sincere, considerate, patient and modest. I can go on and on. Though his thoughts were complicated, his style had always remained simple. He was kind and generous to others, but he himself led an almost ascetic life, which he enjoyed to the fullest. Though he had more than his share of pain and frustration in life, he was able to channel his frustration into creativity, and pain to compassion, and grew to be a greater person.

What happened to TH came as a big shock to all of us. While we mourn for his early departure, we also celebrate his bountiful accomplishments in life. He was a devoted son, brother, husband, father and the best friend to many.

The liver transplant was a success and part of him will continue to live on. As we are mourning, another man and his family are rejoicing over a new lease on life because of a precious gift from TH.

Yvonne and George, you were all your Dad talked about when you were young. He always believed in pursuing dreams. He was very proud of you. Shio-Luan, WeiWei and HuaiHuai, you were the joy of this life. The time you went camping in Taiwan and when he could not reach you, he was frantic. Like my father, he called up the prime minister in the middle of the night to look for you. As to the siblings, Di-hua, you are all hearts, and TH had a big heart as yours. Sui-Hua, When I first met you I thought you were a little lofty. As soon as I started to talk with you, I realized that you are a warm person. You reminded me most of TH when he was young. Kang Hua, You are so composed under difficult situations, just like Tang-Hua.

Shiao-Hua, Just look at you! You share the same look and mannerism with TH. When I look at each and all of you, I also see the extension of TH's life.

Tang-Hua, when you jokingly asked me to write your biography 45 years ago, I had no idea that one day I would need to summarize your life in a few minutes. I speak for many in saying that you were a wonderful human being, and it has been a great privilege to be your friends.

So long, old chap, until we meet again.

(Mimi Schaaf (周亦培))