

Getting Married

And thus it came about that on a biting cold January morning in 1984 I presented myself at the Nantong General Hospital for the medical examinations I had to pass before I could be considered healthy and disease-free enough to marry a Chinese girl.

The hospital was at that time a squat and ugly affair of four storeys, built unmistakably to an outdated Soviet design, reflective of a time when the two countries had passionately professed eternal friendship. Creeping political differences and the growing hubris among their respective leaders, however, soon rendered that friendship somewhat less than eternal, though the hospital remained a stolid symbol of that once worthy intent.

Although Kit and I had arrived at the hospital at 5.30 a.m. a queue of half a dozen prospective patients had already been formed ahead of us, waiting for numbered tokens to admit them for attention when the hospital opened at six.

Intermittent snow flurries excited the gloomy morning air but no shelter was available for anyone except for an abbreviated and barely discernible set of eaves projecting from the top of the building. One or two of the earlier arrivals had brought along tatty quilts or worn blankets to cover themselves.

I felt immensely grateful that I was not among those who actually required medical assistance. I was dressed in a smart padded leather overcoat of iron-grey which I had acquired many years earlier during a visit to Berlin. My head was covered by one of those Russian military fur caps with earflaps which could be lowered to shield the ears from cold. I had also bought that headgear during that Berlin visit.

As for Kit herself, she appeared incongruously bundled up, almost as tightly as a glutinous rice dumpling, in her own home-made blue padded cotton garments. She had already completed her own medical examinations the previous week and was therefore merely there to keep me company. The cold had brought out fetching blooms to her cheeks which enhanced her youthful loveliness. The alien cut of my clothes and the close proximity at which Kit and I stood together attracted the curiosity of some of those queuing at the hospital.

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When I was eventually admitted into the precincts of the hospital, I was directed to a room where I was to begin my medical examinations. I

was asked to strip naked so that my height, weight and blood pressure could be recorded. It became apparent immediately that the building was not centrally heated. Individual rooms housing white-coated staff each had a coal-fired brazier to provide a measure of warmth.

I peeled off my clothing as required; first my padded leather overcoat, followed by my Harris tweed jacket, my brown corduroy slacks, my beige turtle-necked sweater, and finally my woollen undergarments, all of which ended up in an untidy heap in the arms of Kit, as she waited coyly outside the room.

Rather than dress again before proceeding to the next stage of the examinations, I merely retrieved the overcoat to hide my modesty before going for an examination of my eyes, ears and throat.

Part of those procedures gave me my first shock. The medic in charge took out a wooden spatula from a jar of purplish liquid, which I had assumed to be a solution of potassium permanganate, pressed it upon my tongue and asked me to say "ahh". I almost gagged because I noticed that the instrument had discoloured patches on it, no doubt from having been soaked for too long in that purplish solution. The spatula was the kind that medical staff in Hong Kong would only use once before discarding. The fact that the air smelt overpoweringly of disinfectant did not help.

The next ordeal was no less disconcerting. I was required to provide a sample of blood for testing. The veins in both my arms were unusually thin, so that anyone wanting to extract blood had to be fairly practised at the task. What I had not realised at the time was that disposable syringes and hypodermic needles were too expensive for single usage in China. Therefore they appeared to be generally sterilised for re-use on economic grounds. The blunted needles made for several failed attempts to connect properly with my veins.

The next set of requirements was for me to provide a sample of urine to be analysed, to have my reflexes tested and to have the state of my prostate thoroughly probed. Somewhere during those processes, the medic in charge unceremoniously took hold of my testicles and ordered me to cough. The situation reminded me of an old home truth attributed to President Nixon, to the effect that when a man held one by the balls it usually made sense to obey his orders. So I promptly coughed.

The final stage of the examinations consisted of being guided by Kit to another part of the hospital for X-rays to be taken. There I was in for another shock. The machine used simply took my breath away. It

consisted of an antiquated wooden box with two lead-lined gloves sticking out from either side. The contraption gave every appearance of having been handed down from either Wilhelm Röntgen or Marie Curie! I wouldn't have been the least bit surprised if I were to learn later that I had been rendered completely sterile after my exposure to that antiquated piece of equipment.

What I had gone through brought home to me how primitive and backward so many of the basic health and other facilities in China were. One had to admire the sheer audacity of the country's leaders. They were facing monumental problems in every direction and yet they seemed determined to drag the nation forward into a new socialist future — even by the hair if necessary.

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At the conclusion of the various tests, just as Kit and I were about to leave the hospital, a terrifying series of thoughts struck me one after another. What other tricks might local cadres get up to? Could they tamper with the medical findings and allege that I was suffering from some rare and incurable disease? Would that put an end to my chances of ever marrying Kit or at least playing ducks and drakes for months without end?

The possibility was not so far-fetched as all that. After all, both the private medical specialists and the Queen Mary Hospital consultants had failed to identify the cause of my recurring pancreatic attacks. Any allegation made by cadres in China could well take time and stupendous effort to disprove. I realised all at once that I was in thoroughly unfamiliar terrain. Whom could I approach to even lodge a protest or to seek a second medical opinion? Who would even entertain an appeal by an outsider from Hong Kong? All the money in the world would be of no use to me.

But rather than alarm Kit with those dark and outlandish thoughts, I merely asked: "How long will it be before I can get my results?"

"It should take no more than a few days," she replied.

"I can't wait around here for very long, you know. I've got loads of work piling up in Hong Kong."

"There's no need for you to wait for results here. When they're ready I can lodge them with the Home Affairs Department and seek a date for the wedding. That is, if you're still minded to go through with it." There was an obviously teasing note in her voice.

“Do you think I went through everything here today just for the fun of it?” I cried.

“Just checking,” she said.

On that more lighthearted note we both broke into a laugh.

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In less than a fortnight I was back in Nantong, armed with a time and date for our wedding. My fears had been totally misplaced; I had been given a clean bill of health, pretty much on all fours with what the Queen Mary Hospital had originally provided.

It appeared that the Home Affairs Department had taken over a former mansion of a gentry family as an adjunct for conducting wedding ceremonies and settling minor domestic disputes. Kit and I duly turned up at a great hall which, judging by the carved and painted crossbeams in its ceiling, must have once served as an ancestral hall for some venerable family. But the cracked and pitted state of the cement floor spoke depressingly of its inadequate up-keep as a public facility.

The hall was divided into two unequal parts by a low wooden fence with a hinged gate at its centre. The greater part of the hall was used as a dedicated public waiting area filled with a number of stout wooden benches which were already fully occupied. Most of those present consisted of prospective pairs hurtling into matrimony, overly-made-up young women and fidgety young men in new but ill-fitting suits. Naturally they were accompanied by entourages of their respective families. One or two of the prospective brides surprisingly had on traditional embroidered bridal gowns but, for the most part, the more proletarian substitutes prevailed.

The overflow from the benches loitered around the entrance to the rear of the hall which opened onto what had once been a privately landscaped garden, with the remnant of an impressive rockery on display. Kit and I joined those idling around the entrance. By design, no Chiu family member turned up for the occasion, to underline their distancing themselves from Kit's decision.

The wall of the smaller section of the hall was dominated by one of those ubiquitous portraits of Chairman Mao. In front of the portrait, a wooden dais rose a few inches above the floor. Upon it was a long zitan bench of uncertain original usage. It was complemented by three seats to form an improvised magisterial adjunct for official purposes. A metal

ashtray half-filled with cigarette butts was left in front of each of the three places. A couple of paces away from the dais, two chairs stood at the lower level facing the bench, with their backs against the wooden fence separating the two parts of the hall.

Presently, three officials entered the smaller section through a side door and took their seats behind the zitan bench. A hush descended upon the hall. The official who sat at the centre had thinning grey hair, though he appeared to be younger than myself. His companions were obviously his subordinates for they were in their twenties and had those dull and unimaginative faces of people satisfied with their lot as note-taking functionaries. Each carried a stack of files and notebooks.

After the three had settled themselves at the bench, one of the younger men stood up and called out two names. They were unexpectedly mine and Kit's. We made our way forward through the crowded hall till we reached the low wooden fence separating the two parts of the hall.

As we moved forward, someone called out: "This is the case the whole town has been talking about." A murmur of interest rippled through the assembly.

Upon reaching the fence we were asked to pass through the hinged gate and to take the two seats facing the bench. We were then asked to confirm our names and other details.

The grey-haired member of the trio then addressed us. "My surname is Yim," he began. His voice sounded cultured and well-modulated. "I have been assigned to process your application to be married. There appears to be several unusual features about this application. You have both been found to be medically fit and in good health. So that is not an issue.

"However, though we get many applications for marriages, the number involving one of our citizens marrying an outsider, especially someone from Hong Kong is rare. I have a responsibility for ensuring that marriages are freely contracted and are fully in compliance with the laws and regulations of the People's Republic of China. The young and the vulnerable have sometimes to be protected from their own indiscretions.

"There has, in the present case, been in addition a letter of objection lodged by the parents of the prospective bride, which was subsequently withdrawn. Some local cadres and the central authorities have also become involved in the case. These are all matters which bear looking into."

Listening to Comrade Yim's summary of our application, I became a little troubled by his approach. I had no experience over marriages in China. The available evidence suggested it might be more akin to a trial. Comrade Yim did not strike me as a Kafkaesque ideologue standing with those bent upon frustrating my marriage; I could detect in his tone of voice and in his choice of words some sense of humour and an inclination towards human sympathy. Yet his mouth seemed compressed firmly into a no nonsense mode. Perhaps he had once been a class enemy now attempting to prove his usefulness to the new regime. I warned myself I had to tread carefully.

"Let me begin with you, Mr. Wong," Comrade Yim said. "According to my papers, you first met Miss Chiu on the Great Wall of China. Not the most romantic spot for a meeting in my book. Now it appears you are proposing to marry her. Can you please explain your reasons? Why should a mature and successful businessman from Hong Kong want to marry so young and fervent member of the Nantong Communist Youth League?"

"We fell in love," I said.

"Ah, yes! Love! The perpetual illusion that lies just a little beyond our ability to grasp. Do you see all the young people here in this hall? They and their families are all anxious for them to rush into a state of wedded bliss. And yet, within a few years, half of them would be right back here trying to untangle the messes they've made of their lives. But you have an advantage over them, Mr. Wong. You've already been down that rocky road. Your first marriage had ended in divorce, had it not? Why would you wish to travel down that road again?"

"Hope springs eternal, sir. My first wife and I discovered belatedly that we did not want the same things out of life. I'm hoping to do better this time, having benefitted from my past mistakes."

"And have you and Miss Chiu reached accommodation on your common objectives in life?"

"More or less. In theory, at least."

Comrade Yim allowed himself a wry smile. He then fished out a package of cigarettes from one of his pockets, extracted a stick and lit it. After blowing a cloud of smoke into the air, he turned to Kit and said: "Now Miss Chiu, is this marriage you have applied for one made entirely of your own volition, without pressure or inducement from any quarter?"

"Yes, it is entirely of my own free will," Kit said. "I am of legal age."

"Then why did your parents initially object to your marrying Mr.

Wong?”

“They did not know Mr. Wong at all. Perhaps they also thought I was too young to be married.”

“Did some of your former comrades and instructors at the Communist Youth League also considered you to be too young to marry?”

“I don’t know what they thought. My getting married was none of their business.”

“Please help me to understand your situation, Miss Chiu. You could have chosen a husband from among millions of young men of your own age in China. Yet you have chosen a divorced Hong Kong man, one you hardly knew but decades older than yourself, old enough to be your father, one might say. Why?”

“Oh, no, that is not so. Mr. Wong is not old enough to be my father. My father is two years older than him.”

“Ah! I stand corrected, Comrade. But there still has to be a reason, since you apparently just bumped into him in some remote corner of the steppes somewhere.”

“Because he’s got lots of money!” a voice in the public area cried out, to a peel of raucous general laughter.

“Was that the real reason?” Comrade Yim asked, indicating with his head the rough location from where the shouted remark had apparently originated. “Was that also the reason for your parents withdrawing their objection?”

“No, no!” Kit cried. “That subject never came up. My family leads a very simple life. After my parents got to know Mr. Wong, they liked him. They became convinced he would take good care of me. That was why they withdrew their objection, I suppose.”

“But what about your own feelings towards him? How did you jump from a chance meeting at the Great Wall to a decision to marry him?”

“It did not happen in such a simple way. I had won a prize from the Communist Youth League to visit Beijing. While there, a friend of mine and I decided to visit the Great Wall. We bumped into a group of about a dozen older compatriots from Hong Kong. They were very friendly. They wanted to know about life in China, while my friend and I wanted to know about life in Hong Kong. We got talking and they invited us to lunch with them at the Ming tombs. Mr. Wong was part of that group. That was how we first got acquainted.”

“Mr. Wong must have made a big impression on you. Swept a young

girl like you off your feet, wouldn't you say?"

"Not exactly. He both baffled and impressed me. He seemed very sure of himself and what he wanted. For example, within less than two hours of meeting him, he asked me to marry him. He did it quite openly, in front of everybody. It came as a complete shock to me. I had never met anyone like him. Chinese men do not behave that way. They worry about losing face. In addition, he seemed to know a lot about China and aspects of Chinese history which I did not know. It was very interesting just listening to him talk about the various Ming emperors. It became quite natural to enjoy his company."

"It appears that Mr. Wong not only knows a great deal about Chinese history but he also knows some quite influential personages in the capital. Otherwise, a representative of the United Front Work Department would not have made a journey to Nantong to talk to the cadres at the Communist Youth League opposing your marriage."

"I don't know anything about that. All I know was that they stopped bothering me and my parents."

"Well, it's obvious that there are people in high places who look with favour upon your union with Mr. Wong. So unless I can find evidence of illegality or impropriety, there is no call for dealing with your application in any other than a normal way. You have both answered my questions and I have found nothing that bears investigating further. Unless either of you have something else to say, I suggest you come back here tomorrow and I will issue you with your marriage certificates."

A small outburst of clapping met Comrade Yim's announcement.

Kit and I stood up, said: "thank you, Mr. Yim," and gave a small bow in his direction.

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As we left the hall in high spirits, with our arms around each other, I said: "I'm not sure whether we're now technically married. But so far as I am concerned, tonight will be our wedding night and I want you registered at my hotel so that we can spend the evening together."

"I wouldn't advise that," Kit said. "You have to remember that Nantong is still a very small and conservative town. The hotels here wouldn't register any man and woman together in a room for the night unless they have seen proof that they are lawfully married. We can't

produce any proof as yet. It's better to avoid an unnecessary row and not provoke a fresh round of salacious rumours."

"Bloody hell! You mean we have to wait till tomorrow before we can enjoy a night together?"

"Not necessarily. There is an alternative. My father has found a nice antique double-bed and had it installed in my room. The only trouble is that you would come in for a lot of scrutiny from the children in the neighbourhood. We're all used to living our lives in public, without too many secrets from one another. It's safer that way."

"I imagine common courtesy demands that I first pay my respects to my new parents-in-law. Let's do that then."

Kit's parents lived in a very modest and sparsely furnished two-bedroom house with a tiny sitting room in front. Its walls were decorated with only a solitary Chinese landscape painting and a Chinese calendar. No portrait of Chairman Mao was to be seen. Kit's room ran off from the modest sitting room. But it had no door. Only a dark blue calico curtain hung over the entrance. The curtain had a length of bamboo attached to its bottom, to weigh it down.

Within two minutes of our arrival, the doorway and the two barred windows on either side of the door were swamped with children of all ages and sizes. But they seemed to follow the rule of some unwritten protocol. They stayed well clear of crossing the threshold, though they showed no inhibition over voicing and exchanging their prejudices and opinions on a whole range of matters.

"Elder Sister Kit is now married and this is supposed to be her wedding night," someone said.

"She's supposed to fight like a wild cat to protect her Pearl," another responded.

"If we hang around long enough we should be able to hear how much of a fight she's going to put up."

"Maybe she's lost it already. Can never trust these Hong Kong types. They'll sweet talk you into all kinds of things."

"Her husband does not look that old at all."

"He must have lied about his age."

"I've told you Hong Kong types can never be trusted."

"She has made her choice; now she must live with it."

While that incoherent chatter flowed back and forth, some in Mandarin and some in the native Nantong dialect, my in-laws and I played

out a pantomime of quietly sipping tea and exchanging inconsequential pleasantries. I did, however, summarise for them the essentials of that morning's marriage rituals.

After another hour or so of pantomime, it occurred to me that dozens of children at the windows and doorway and myself had been going through our respective *Passage to India* or *Tale from Bali* moment. They were scrutinising me not because I happened to be a man who had married their neighbour; rather I had become the prototype of a type of "Hong Hong man" loaded down with their preconceptions and prejudices; the type who could not be trusted.

I became very conscious of E. M. Forster's injunction to connect. But how could I? I completely lacked the tool to engage with them. In a very short while they and I would probably never set eyes on each other again for the rest of our lives. What did it matter what they might think about a Hong Kong man throughout the rest of their lives?

And yet, it seemed somehow inexplicably important that human beings should reach out and touch another human being, should the opportunity present itself. I had during the course of my life made connections with people in Paris and Amsterdam, Munich, Venice, Florence, Los Angeles and many other faraway places. And in every case, I and those opposite numbers had known enough about each other's cultures to make the exchanges mutually meaningful and rewarding. My life had always been expanded and enriched by such encounters. It was a pity I could not follow through with that in Nantong. I was anxious to show Kit how she too could enjoy and benefit from that approach to life.

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When Kit and I finally retired to our room, she told me something which took me by surprise.

"We have no toilet facilities in the house," she said. "No one in this entire neighbourhood has. This used to be part of a village. We all use a public latrine just a short distance away. But I don't want you to try and head there because the lighting in public areas are poor and I don't want you to have an accident. I've put a chamberpot next to the bed. Please use that if you have to obey a call of nature."

"That's very considerate of you. What you have suggested makes excellent sense to me. If I tried looking for a public latrine in a strange

place in the middle of the night, chances are that I will end up falling into it. I think too many of us in Hong Kong never fully appreciate how desperately poor many parts of China remain to the present day.”

“We get by somehow.”

“That’s a marvellous spirit to have,” I said. And just to tease her a bit, I added: “And you mustn’t forget that all your neighbours are waiting outside to hear you fight like a wild cat tonight!”

“They’d be disappointed. We’re going to be as quiet as mice!”

“Yes,” I said. “It is only during those moments of telling silences that lovers can begin to sniff out the deepest secrets and vulnerabilities in each other.”

With that we cuddled tightly and kissed beneath a large hand-made quilt with many colourful patches.

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The next day we called upon Comrade Yim as directed and he received us alone in a private office with an elaborate show of courtesy.

“I’m sorry if some of the questions I had asked yesterday had been a little close to the bone,” he said. “I meant no offence, just a demonstration I was taking my responsibilities seriously.”

“Of course,” I replied. “I had been a bureaucrat myself for a spell, so I know how things sometimes have to operate.”

“I’m grateful for your understanding. Well, here you are. I have much pleasure in presenting each of you with your own copy of your marriage certificate. And may I take the opportunity to offer both of you my congratulations and my best wishes for a long and happy marriage.”



The certificates were identical except for a serial number. They were crimson on one side with bold golden characters stating “Marriage Certificate”. The reverse side was white but half the space was taken up by a traditional symbol signifying “double joy” or “double happiness”. The rest of the space was used to include a coloured photograph of the couple and their personal details.

After receiving our certificates, I remarked casually: “I suppose the next logical task would be to apply for one of those family reunion visas here to allow my wife to take up residence in Hong Kong.”

“That depends on how quickly you wish your wife to join you in Hong Kong,” Comrade Yim said.

“I naturally would want her there as soon as possible.”

“I hear Hong Kong people are very entrepreneurial. I understand that for a fee certain people known as ‘snakeheads’ can get a person into Hong Kong very quickly.”

“Yes, most things are obtainable in Hong Kong for the right fee. But people getting there without any proper documentation would be considered illegal immigrants, liable for deportation if caught. I’m not willing to turn my wife into an illegal immigrant.”

“I fear the normal waiting time for a family reunification visa issued from Jiangsu Province is approximately eight years.”

“What! How can that be? The British and the Chinese have a long-standing agreement. The British would allow 150 Chinese per day to

take up permanent residence in Hong Kong. That should be more than enough to take care of *bona fide* cases like mine.”

“One hundred and fifty per day, seen in isolation, does appear a generous number but is it possible that Mr. Wong has overlooked certain developing realities? There are 23 provinces in China, plus four municipalities and five autonomous regions. Moreover we have 21 ministries and 26 cabinet-level executive departments under the State Council, not to mention various commissions and organisations like the Central Bank, the National Audit Office and the like. Once you have distributed quotas to each of them, 150 per day do not add up to very many for any of them.

“We must also not forget that the present is also a time when we are supposed to open up to the rest of the world. Everyone wants to set up a representative office in Hong Kong, staffed by its own people so that it can bring in foreign investments and expand economic ties outside of China. Their staff sent to Hong Kong also have a need for family reunification. Official requirements must always take precedence over personal requirements.

“Mr. Wong, you are a man with good connections to both the British and Chinese authorities. May I suggest that it may be more efficient and productive for you to explore some other channels as well, rather than to rely solely on your wife’s theoretical entitlement for a family reunification visa as a native of Jiangsu Province.”

“I am deeply indebted to you, Mr. Yim, for taking the trouble to draw my attention to the great complexities in the situation. I shall certainly give full weight to your helpful advice. Thank you once again. It has been both a great pleasure and a privilege to make your acquaintance.”

“We are both Chinese, Mr. Wong. If we do not do what we can to help one another, who else can we turn to?”

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After receiving our marriage certificates from Comrade Yim, I tried to reassure Kit that I would move heaven and earth if necessary to get her to Hong Kong. Until that had been achieved, I would return to China every month to spend a few days with her.

This could be easily arranged if I took two or three days of leave from work commitments by linking up weekends and Hong Kong public

holidays. That would give us a reasonable bank of time together, which we could spend in historical and picturesque Chinese towns studded along the Yangtse valley — like Hangchow, Suchow, Wushi, Yangchow, Nanking and so forth.

In order to provide flexibility for my business commitments, I urged Kit to give up her job at the textile factory and instead spend her time mastering the rudiments of the English language by using the Linguaphone lessons I had supplied.

And so it was that I began a series of monthly visits to notable Chinese destinations like Soochow, Hangchow and Yangchow to link up with Kit. I would take two or three days of leave each time and fit them in with weekends and public holidays. In that way we managed to enjoy regular reunions of reasonable duration each month.

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Naturally, the moment I got back to Hong Kong, I sought the help of my friends at the Hong Kong Chinese General Chamber of Commerce to get over the latest obstacle I was encountering. They all agreed that the demand for visas for permanent residence in the colony was very high and the number available for family reunification very limited. But, like true friends, they all promised to do whatever they could.

My return to Hong Kong coincided with the Chinese General Chamber hosting an investment and business delegation from China headed by the Chairman of the All China Federation of Commerce and Industry. His name was Mr. K. L. Chang and he was from Nantong. It turned out he was a descendant of the celebrated Chang Jian, the first scholar from Nantong to attain the top spot in the national Imperial Examinations.

When Mr. Chang indicated that he would like to talk to some people knowledgeable about Western corporate culture during his stay in Hong Kong, my friends naturally introduced me to him.



A meal with Mr. K. L. Chang, Chairman of the All China Federation of Commerce and Industry

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Another Nantong personality who descended on the colony in that critical year of 1983 before my marriage was Mr. Xu Jia-un. He had just finished a six-year stint as Party Secretary of Jiangsu Province to assume the post as the Director of the Hong Kong branch of the New China News Agency.

Such a posting might appear, on the face of it, to be a demotion for the veteran Communist, for he was a member of the Central Committee of the Party. But in fact the post made Xu China's top representative in the colony at a time when the country was about to embark upon tortuous and deliberately ambiguous negotiations with Britain on the return of Hong

Kong and its people to the Motherland.

An extraordinary degree of diplomatic skill was required of such a person because even when a matter was agreed the recording of the agreement needed a great deal of creative ambiguity, so that both parties could claim to have got the better of the other side.

The nakedly neoliberal capitalism rampaging throughout the colony must have been something of a shock to a Communist cadre of Xu's standing. Nonetheless he quickly recognised the power that wealth could wield and he tried reaching out to the traditional class enemies to rally them to the national cause. Such moves drew some criticisms, however, from the more conservative elements back in China.

Xu belonged to the reformist wing of the Communist Party and was a close associate of the then Party General Secretary Zhao Ziyang. When Zhao fell from grace because of the Tiananmen débâcle in 1989, Xu also fled into exile in the United States. He was expelled from the Communist Party in 1994.

Like most true Chinese, Xu had that special sense of place and unalterable attachment to his homeland through thick and thin. He longed to return to spend the final days of his life there. But the authorities refused to allow his return. He died in America in 2016, at the age of 100.

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Mr. Chang and Mr. Xu were among the personalities and organisations that my friends at the General Chamber lobbied on my behalf to secure a family reunification visa for Kit. I have never kept a complete list of those they approached. But I do know that it was towards the end of 1984 that someone from the Hong Kong and Macau Office contacted Kit to inform her a family reunification visa was being issued for her.