



China Infodoc Service [china.infodoc@online.be]

Wednesday, 7 September 2011 10:50 PM

To: China Infodoc Service
SFC: New Book 'God is Red'

San Francisco Chronicle

New Book 'God is Red' Written by Exiled Chinese Dissident,
Liao Yiwu, Reveals Untold Stories of Christians in China

PRWeb

Tuesday, September 6, 2011

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New Book 'God is Red'*

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Chinese dissident author Liao Yiwu-the once lauded, later imprisoned, and now celebrated author of *The Corpse Walker*-profiles the extraordinary lives of dozens of Chinese Christians, providing a rare glimpse into the burgeoning underground world of belief that is taking hold within the officially atheistic state of Communist China. A luminous writer, and not a Christian himself, Yiwu offers a uniquely objective and insightful perspective on the position Christians occupy in mainland China.

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In 1990, Chinese dissident Liao Yiwu was imprisoned for writing a poem about the Tiananmen Square protests and remained under police surveillance after serving a four-year sentence. Moreover, in the past ten years, Yiwu was denied leave from China to travel abroad 15 times and forbidden to publish "illegal" works outside of China.

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Now, with empathy and compassion, Yiwu gives voice to another persecuted people in China - Chinese Christians. His new book, *God Is Red: The Secret Story of How Christianity Survived and Flourished in Communist China* (HarperOne; September 13, 2011; Hardcover; \$25.99), recounts their ongoing battle for freedom of expression and religion.

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In *God is Red*, Liao reveals that Christianity is undergoing a resurgence in China, a country typically associated with Buddhists, Taoists, and atheists. According to the World Christian Database, five percent of China's population practices Christianity, making it the country's largest formal religion.

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Providing an unprecedented glimpse into a deeply complex religious and political reality, Liao shares the stories of a wide range of astonishing and unique characters for whom Christianity is life-sustaining—a faith that has enabled survival, forgiveness, a sense of community, and peace, both under Mao and now as Christians continue to be persecuted. Through this human lens, Liao Yiwu reveals a new Christian identity which is distinctively Chinese.

Mickey Maudlin, Senior VP and Executive Editor at HarperOne, says, "God is Red incorporates the beauty and wonder of what books can do—transporting us into an unknown and hidden world with depth and intimacy. We are proud to be able to publish Liao Yiwu."

ABOUT LIAO YIWU

Liao Yiwu is a Chinese author, reporter, musician and poet. He is the author of *The Corpse Walker: Real Life Stories*, and *China from the Bottom Up*. In 2003, he received a Human Rights Watch Hellman-Hammett Grant, and in 2007 he received a Freedom to Write Award from the Independent Chinese PEN Center.

Liao Yiwu escaped China in July 2011. He is currently in exile in Germany, and plans to visit the U.S. for the first time in September.

ADVANCE PRAISE FOR GOD IS RED

"In this book, Liao wanders in those forgotten villages in the southwestern part of China and explores a spiritual world neglected by modern civilization, restoring an important part of Chinese history that has been distorted, erased or forgotten, and documenting the life stories of a special group of people who battle against suppression to preserve their faiths. Liao's coverage of Christians allows truth to shine in the darkness.

That's the beauty of his writings."

- Liu Xiaobo, 2010 Nobel Peace Prize winner

"God Is Red is the most wonderfully surprising report on the church in China I've seen, and Liao Yiwu is the best literary guide since Vergil."

- John Wilson, Editor, Books & Culture

"For anyone with a long view of history, it is very difficult to read Liao Yiwu's work without being constantly reminded of Christian struggles in the ancient Roman Empire, when a harassed minority was struggling to exist.

Parallels with the modern-day world are startling. Who can tell how the story will play out this time round?"

- Philip Jenkins, author of *Jesus Wars*

"This is a mesmerizing and amazing tale of courage. Author Liao Yiwu's story, covering even the recent past, is especially powerful because he is not himself a Christian. The reporting is brilliant and the perspective dazzling."

- David Aikman, author of *Jesus in Beijing*

"The author, himself an object of intermittent government harassment, is a deft interviewer. Not a believer himself, Liao empathizes with the Christians he encounters. These portraits of faithful Christians are beautifully drawn, neither triumphalist nor maudlin. Suffering, but also resilience and hope, are the common lot of these believers."

- Daniel Bays, author of *Christianity in China*. ♦♦♦

China Infodoc Service [china.infodoc@online.be]

Chinese nuns run to help AIDS victims

By Jaime FlorCruz and Xiaoni Chen, CNN

October 18, 2011 -- Updated 0748 GMT (1548 HKT)

Click to watch the video

<http://edition.cnn.com/2011/10/18/world/asia/china-nun-aids-charity/>

(CNN) -- Over 30,000 people joined this year's Beijing Marathon.

Some ran on Saturday to compete and win lucrative prize money. Others ran for fun with colleagues, friends and family.

This year, 52 Chinese catholic nuns ran for charity.

The jolly group of women came in jogging pants and white T-shirts emblazoned with the logo, Great Wall Appeal.org.

Nuns participating in a major public event are an unusual sight in China. Religion here is still state-controlled and activities of charity groups and non-government organizations (NGO) are regulated. Catholic figures prefer to keep a low profile.

Sister Tian Wenjiao ran a 9.8-kilometer stretch, or five miles, of the race to raise donations for the Langfang Sacred Heart Care Group, a charity group that serves scores of needy farmers in Yongqing County in China's Hebei province. In a

cramped, three-room apartment, the charity cares for orphans of farmers who have died of AIDS.

She helps children like Lin Xiaoxue, 12, who lived with her grand-parents after her parents died of AIDS four years ago. No school accepted her because she, too, is HIV positive.

A lot of them have had to lie to their neighbors and say they have hepatitis.

The orphans, Tian says, remain psychologically fragile. "We want them treated with respect and dignity so that they can have confidence to live."

Like many poor farmers in north China, their parents got contaminated with AIDS after selling blood to unscrupulous "blood devils" who used unsanitary methods that contaminated and killed countless donors.

Continued next page...



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Some former donors have survived -- barely.

They have little income and are hobbled by physical disabilities caused by the disease. "They are also facing social discrimination," Tian tells CNN.

"A lot of them have had to lie to their neighbors and say they have hepatitis."

Cui Guilin, 47, is one of them. He and his wife are living with AIDS. Although they receive government-subsidized medicine to keep their illness in check, they have remained relatively poor.

Sister Tian's charity is helping farmers like Cui to become more self-reliant. Last year, the group gave him 2,500 yuan as seed money to raise goats, the extra income meant to help Cui boost his standard of living, health and self-esteem. Cui's herd has multiplied from two to 16 in one year.

"A few months after we give them the seed money, they give back half of it, which we then use to help others," Tian said.

Tian, 37, is a graduate of psychology and theology and is good with children. She is not the athletic type, and she has had heart ailment, but for weeks before pledging to run 9.8 km (5 miles) in the Beijing marathon, she woke up at 5 a.m. daily to work out and run.

"I'm running for these children because they need a lot of attention and care," she said.

After crossing the 9.8 km finish line, Sister Tian said she was uplifted by the experience. "I had fun running," she said. "Next time I think I can run a half marathon." ♦♦♦

Agenzia Fides - www.fides.org

ASIA/CHINA

Sunday, 11 September 2011 9:07 PM

For the Mid-Autumn Festival, the Catholic community visit the elderly Bishops, priests and the nuns, "an example of faith and witness"

Xi An (Agenzia Fides) - "I am an example of faith and witness. We and the whole Church will always be grateful for their contribution", said the parish priest of Bei Tang of the diocese of Xi An, Shaan Xi Province of mainland China during a visit to several homes and convents that host the elderly bishops, priests and religious who are there to rest because of their age, in view of the traditional mid-Autumn Festival, which according to the farm laborers' calendar, this year falls on Monday, September 12.

In fact this festival is a traditional festival of the family and is symbolized by the "moon cake", eaten on this occasion by all members of the family. According to information gathered by Fides, the Catholic community of Bei Tang, like many other Catholic communities scattered in China, has decided to recall in this circumstance the elderly bishops, priests and nuns who have dedicated their lives to the Church offering in many cases a heroic witness.

As for example a 90-year-old nun who spent 40 years in prison, and today still works in her garden, because, she says, "I must not be a burden on my young sisters who must devote time and energy to the mission of the Lord, certainly not to assist me". The vegetables and medicinal plants cultivated by the nun are then sold and the money gained is used for the community. As the parishioners of Bei Tang say, these religious elders "always touch us with their simplicity and their immense generosity". During these days they visited the 91-year-old Bishop of San Yuan and thirty elderly priests and nuns, bringing them the affection and gratitude of the entire community. ♦♦♦

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For more information and to apply, contact:

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图20 胡嫣然 《救主圣诞》国画设色

*We wish
All our friends
The peace and joy
Of
Advent -
Christmas -
Epiphany.*

China Infodoc Service [<mailto:china.infodoc@online.be>]
Tuesday, 8 November 2011 5:01 AM
Subject: 30 Giorni: Interview with John Baptist Li Suguang
30 Giorni 09-2011

'The Church in China has never changed a single iota of the Apostolic Tradition that was delivered to it'

Interview with John Baptist Li Suguang
Coadjutor Bishop of Nanchang
by Gianni Valente

At the twenty-fifth International Prayer Meeting for Peace held in Munich by the Community of Saint Egidio he was also there: John Baptist Li Suguang, 46 year-old Catholic bishop in mainland China with the consent both of the Successor of Peter and also of the government officials in Beijing. So young and timid as to be almost lost among the many religious leaders called from 11 to 13 September last to the Bavarian capital by the network of friendships and closeness without borders that the Community founded by Andrea Riccardi continues to weave around the world.

Yet, when he spoke in one of the 35 panels that marked the event hosted by the Archdiocese of Munich, the voice appeared decisive and the ideas clear. His speech was punctuated with allusions and references to the complex and unresolved trilateral network of relationships that for centuries involve the West, the Catholic Church and the former Celestial Empire. Such as the Chinese proverb that Monsignor Li used to remind everyone that also in the fluid times of globalization 'a long distance can become as close as nearness'. Or as the clear confirmation of the fact – verified in his experience as a pastor of souls – that 'the Church does not lose its universality by respecting Chinese culture and considering the actual circumstances in China'.

Q- Monsignor, you are very young to be a bishop.

JOHN BAPTIST LI SUGUANG: I was born in 1965, in a village in Shanxi Province where the population of about two thousand inhabitants shared a very strong Catholic faith. I grew up like that, in the midst of many people who loved Jesus

Q- And yet those were difficult years. The cultural revolution was in full swing.

A- In my village there weren't too many problems. There were two priests who continued to administer the sacraments. Now, in the village there are four or five. In the surrounding areas there are in fact thirty-eight priests. And there are also many sisters.

Q- What helped you to recognize your vocation to the priesthood?

A- What I saw in the family was very important. I had an uncle priest, and when I was very young, my mother and father showed me how to pray, reciting the morning and evening prayers. I was the youngest of the family, and my parents often told me that I could grow up to become a priest. My mother especially had great influence on me, through her spiritual life. Then a priest whom I met in the diocesan seminary in Beijing as my spiritual father also had an important role. I was there from 1987 to 1992. Our teachers were very old priests, and we studied theology using principally old manuals from before the Second Vatican Council.

Q- How has the condition of the Church changed compared with the years of your childhood?

A- When I was a young boy, the country had yet to experience the season of openness. In the villages it was the devotion of the Christians who conserved the practices of the life of faith. Now there is more opportunity to carry out pastoral work. On Sundays the churches are full, certainly more so than in many

Continued next page...

European parishes. In the villages, when the church bell rings, people come out of their houses and you see them walk together along the streets, directed towards the church. And also the daily masses, early in the morning, are very popular.

Q- How would you describe the pastoral profile of your diocese?

A- In our province there are a hundred and twenty thousand Catholics, the priests throughout the province are less than fifty. So only the larger parishes have a priest who remains as pastor of the community in a stable manner. The others circulate from village to village, from one parish to another, to administer the sacraments. The good thing is that many of them are young, and compared to them I am the "old one"... The average age of the priests in my diocese is thirty-six. At the economic level, the diocese owns some buildings in Shanghai which with their incomes help to finance the ordinary activities.

Q- What is it that most facilitates the Christian message?

A- The most important thing is the presence of lay people who proclaim and witness the Gospel in the places and circumstances in which everyone lives. And then the works of charity are very important. In our country each religious community is called upon to assist and support a minority ethnic group. We Catholics also do so ourselves, assisting some minority ethnic communities, which are not of Christian faith.

Q- Are there many baptisms of people who do not come from Christian families?

A- We have almost three thousand a year. Two thirds of them are young, then there is a third of adults and the elderly. Most are from rural villages. They request baptism mainly because they are struck by the witness of their fellow Christians and friends, or because they see the spectacle of Christians who take care of the poor and the needy.

Q- What are the sources that feed the ordinary, everyday lives of the faithful?

A- The Mass is the heart of it all, along with prayer and participation in the activities offered by the parish.

Q- Are there figures of saints who arouse particular devotion?

A- In our region there is very strong devotion to St Anthony of Padua and Little Theresa of the Child Jesus. And then, of course, the Virgin Mary. Everyone has the Blessed Virgin Mary as patroness of their own spiritual life.

Q- What are the social realities and existential conditions that you encounter in your pastoral work?

A- Because of the rapid development of the Chinese economy, many people are under pressure in their lives. They really need someone to help them. Someone to give them comfort and consolation, who will support them. Many realize that they are not able to go on without some help. This widens the range in which the Church is called to work and show the love of Christ for everyone. We can not remain indifferent to these real conditions. And we need to favor a pastoral work that is of true support for our fellow citizens who are having some problems and difficulties in their lives.

Q- Did you read the letter Benedict XVI wrote to Chinese Catholics in 2007? And what are the most important contents of that document for you?

A- From my point of view, the very fact that the Pope addressed a specific letter to Chinese Catholics has been a great encouragement for the Church in China. In particular the things the Pope suggested to the priests impressed me.

Q- You were ordained a bishop in 2010 with the consent of the Apostolic See. How do you concretely live your communion with the Bishop of Rome? And how do you express it in your ordinary pastoral work?

A- Not only I, but also the other Chinese bishops, always read and circulate not only the Pope's letter to Chinese Catholics of 2007, but also all of his talks, homilies, encyclicals, speeches. Photocopies are made and sent to all priests and all parishes. So that everyone can read and follow the Pope in his ordinary magisterium, and thus may well find inspiration for their lives in the situations in which they find themselves. In this way we share the faith of the successor of Peter, and this is really the most simple and concrete way possible to live the communion with the Pope, that everyone can see. Then we pray for him. All the bishops pray for him. I pray for him, and pray for myself also, that the Lord will help me be a good bishop.

Q- How do you see the Holy See's approach to the Chinese question? If you could speak with the Pope, what would you say to him to better explain the real situation of the Church in China?

A- It would be a great gift if the Pope could understand China, that is the concrete cultural and social situation in which the Church finds itself living in China. There is much to know, much to comprehend. Sometimes there are those who spend a week in China and then go home and begin to pretend they knew about all the events in the history of Chinese Catholics. Instead complex situations must be recognized and respected for what they are. I really hope that relations between China and the Vatican can resume in the right direction. It would be a good thing for us and for the entire Church.

Q- If you would also like to suggest to the Pope an indication as to how God has preserved and continues to nourish the faith of Chinese Catholics, to document that the Church of China shares the same faith with the Church of Rome, what would you tell him?

A- The fundamental question is how also the Chinese bishops live and express their faith in union with the Successor of Peter and the whole universal Church. So, I believe that from the beginning until now our Church in China has never changed a single iota of the Apostolic Tradition that was delivered to it. We have not changed a comma of the doctrine that concerns the faith and the great discipline of the Church. We are united around the same sacraments, recite the same prayers, in the continuity of the apostolic succession. This is the basis of authentic communion. Even with our limitations and all our failings and frailties, we are a part of, we are of the number of the Holy Universal Church, we share with our brothers throughout the world the fidelity to the same Apostolic Tradition. We do not want to change anything.

Q- Some observers argue instead that some people are still trying to build a new independent and self-sufficient Church, different from the Roman Catholic Apostolic Church.

A- This is others' thinking. These are the opinions of others, not ours. No Church is self-sufficient, no Church can live without the gift of the Spirit of Christ. I repeat, now in China no priest and no bishop has the intention of changing the Church's doctrine. In China also, the love of Christ manifests itself in acceptance and understanding. In today's world, despite the processes of globalization, there are still many differences. For example, mutual understanding is difficult between China and Europe. We need to find points of contact and dialogue, day after day; it is the only way to bring such different worlds close to each other. So I hope that the universal Church may accept and recognize the Church in China for what it really is. Without isolating it and mistreating it, so that communion grows as a sign of the love of Christ. As bishop, I only hope that the spirit of Christ's love also spreads and shines throughout all of China.

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The treasure and the vessels of clay

The coadjutor bishop of Nanchang interviewed in these pages was originally called John Baptist Li Shu-guang. His Chinese name was made up of two ideograms: ? [shu] which means book and ? [guang], which means light. When he became a priest, John Baptist chose to modify the first of the two characters, transforming it from ? [shu] to ? [su]. A slight change, almost imperceptible to those who do not speak Mandarin, created for the sole purpose of introducing the same character into his name that appears in the name of Jesus (?? Ye-su). So now the bishop's personal name can be translated into Italian as 'light of Jesus'.

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In China today, affection for Jesus by those who bear His name can result in expressing itself also through subtle details, to be grasped immediately, by interior and implicit understanding. Similarly, different passages of the answers that the bishop of Nanchang provides in these pages can also be read in silhouette. Like the one in which he hopes that the bishop of Rome takes note of 'the concrete cultural and social situation in which the Church finds itself living in China'. Or the other in which he indicates as a sign and foundation of communion with the Successor of Peter and the Universal Church the unity around the same sacraments and the same prayers, in fidelity to the same Apostolic Tradition.

John Baptist Li Suguang was ordained bishop on 31 October 2010 with the approval of the Holy See and with the recognition of the Chinese authorities. At the liturgy of consecration, besides the three consecrating bishops, eighty priests were present, including some priests of the Church related to the ecclesial area known as 'underground'. After the celebration, the new bishop publicly expressed his intention to foster reconciliation between the Catholic communities registered with the State apparatus and those who distance themselves from the government's religious policy.

Before John Baptist Li Suguang, in 2010 alone, eight other young Chinese bishops were ordained with the consent of the Pope and with the parallel official recognition of the government. At that stage, the ever troubled story of Sino-Vatican relations seemed still to be capable of moving towards promising developments.

Compared to then, the present scenario appears again to be turning out for the worse. Between 20 November 2010 and 14 July 2011, three new episcopal ordinations, without the consent of the Holy See, imposed by the patriotic apparati under slogans of the supposed 'independence' of the Church in China have reset to zero the prospects for a mutually agreed solution to the issue of appointment of bishops that has always been the raw nerve in the relations between mainland China and the Vatican. For the first time since 1958 – the year when China began the illegitimate ordinations imposed by Beijing – the excommunication *latae sententiae* of two bishops ordained illegitimately was publicly confirmed in official pronouncements of the Vatican.

Also the new group of 'child bishops' to which Li Suguang belongs (who last 14 July participated in the illegitimate ordination of Joseph Huang Bingzhuang as bishop of Shantou) is called into question by yet another negative phase of relations between China and the Vatican. The forty-year olds who with the jump of a generation find themselves at the head of the Church in China are accused by many of surrender in relation to the religious policy of government interventionism. Distrust and suspicions of lukewarm fidelity have resurfaced in their regard, similar to those reserved in past decades for those bishops who had accepted in varying degrees to subject themselves to the interventionism of the regime in the religious field. Including the great bishop-witnesses such as Anthony Li Duan and Matthias Duan Yinmin, who faced persecution and hardship to pursue to the very end their priestly vocations in the years of the Cultural Revolution.

Compared to that of their predecessors, the new generation of bishops appears to many observers as more fragile and timid. In both the 'official' and in the so-called 'underground' areas cases of clerical careerism, with young priests continuously seeking ecclesiastical and political advocacy to reach the episcopate, have been registered .

The complex situation recommends caution and thoughtful evaluation of all factors involved in the individual cases. The same eventual episodes of clerical opportunism in a Chinese context can not be separated from the obfuscation that also exists elsewhere on the nature of the episcopal ministry itself. The erroneous concept that interprets the appointments of bishops and their movements from one location to another as awards and honors granted to officials of a universal bureaucracy distinguished by their ability to cultivate relationships of power, is certainly not an exclusive 'made in China' production. ♦♦♦

China Infodoc Service [<mailto:china.infodoc@online.be>]

Thursday, 25 August 2011 12:38 AM

Subject: UCAN/JCAP: Learning in a new way

UCA News - www.ucanews.com

Learning in a new way

Father Daniel Ross SJ, director of the International Center for the Promotion of Partner Based Learning in Zhuhai, Guangdong, China, shares about the organization's work and a local student's account of his experience, on the Jesuit Asia Pacific Conference website.

China

August 24, 2011

Friends have asked me just what we are doing in Zhuhai. The answer is a little complicated, since we are trying to develop new ways to approach university students in China, and we have started several projects. Another way to put it is that we are trying to "fill in" what is lacking in the traditional education of the students. (Fr Daniel Ross SJ, Jesuit Asia Pacific Conference)

This past semester I taught a seminar in a way that would not be new for many of us, but in Zhuhai it is something that is very much appreciated by the students. Each of the 12 undergraduate seminar students wrote an evaluation and shared what they learned from the course. Below is what one student wrote. One thing to be noted is the quality of the English. They make mistakes, of course, but they can not only handle English very well, they are also not afraid to make mistakes. They are eager learners.

FULL STORY BELOW

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A Class of Life

Submitted by jceao on August 23, 2011 - 2:04pm

Fr Daniel Ross SJ, Director of the International Center for the Promotion of Partner Based Learning in Zhuhai, Guangdong, China, shares with us their work and a local student's account of his experience. Fr Ross has been teaching at Fu Jen University in Taiwan for the past 39 years and teaches seminars in Zhuhai and Fu Jen.

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tion and shared what they learned from the course. Below is what one student wrote. One thing to be noted is the quality of the English. They make mistakes, of course, but they can not only handle English very well, they are also not afraid to make mistakes. They are eager learners.

A Zhuhai student writes of her experience taking the seminar.

When my monitor told me that there was a new elective course about multi-culture study available, which would randomly choose 6 boys and 6 girls among all the students who wanted to select this course, I hurried to look at the education management website to see if I could have a chance.

Beyond my expectation, I turned out to be the lucky one chosen! I got the chance to take part in a class using different kinds of teaching methods!

And I was sure that I would definitely learn something from this class.

In my other classes, if the teacher tries this seminar form, it's just a waste of time. Students would celebrate that: Great! 45 minutes for dozing and gossiping! The reason is, on the one hand, students are not aware of the significance of this kind of class; on the other hand, the teacher uses it improperly. And the teacher might not really know the significance, either.

The evidence is that the teacher would not quite take part in the discussion, and after the students' discussion the teacher still give the "standard answers". Consequently, many students just wait as they gossip till the last minute of the class to copy the standard answers.

However, I think that Professor Ross really adopts innovative ideas about education, so he really achieved the aim of this new pedagogical method, at least partly achieved. "Teaching is not to input, but to lead out." This is what I learned in one of our classes. Also, learning should be enjoyable. In our class, after watching the video, students would receive a question from Professor Ross: What did you get from this video? We always get individualized answers, because every one of us has different experience and corresponding thinking.

Continued next page...

And we would really reflect on the video because only in this way can you take part in the class. You can also choose to ask what you would like to know.

To some extent, it's like the catechetic method in ancient Greece. I'm surprised that I really enjoy myself in this kind of class. The more you think the clearer ideas you get; the more you think the more logical you become. You correct your thoughts according to the teacher and classmates. I guess that's what "to lead out" is.

Plus, you'd be amazed at your erudite classmates. Therefore, I also renewed my definition of "Teacher". I clearly remember that in our first class, Professor Ross told us his Chinese name and inquired the implied meaning of it. I had no idea. One girl among us came up with the answer at once: the name means the four pillars of a country in traditional Chinese Literature.

As a Chinese, I felt ashamed of not knowing this. Meanwhile I admired that girl. There was another lesson in which Professor Ross raised a series of questions about languages and history. For example, which language is most similar to Finnish? (Korean) Another example, what's the root and meaning of Philadelphia? (The city of brotherhood) Those were not easy questions, but another of my classmates showed his competence and answered most of the questions. I couldn't help admire him, too. In such a seminar-like class, we are more devoted and passionate, and we can know our classmates better.

Hence you will show your strengths and deficiencies clearly. You can share your knowledge with your classmates, and learn from them. I bet that sometimes they are as good as teachers.

Thanks to all my "teachers" in the class, including those who speak in the video clips, I have enlarged my definition of knowledge. Under the influence of exam oriented education system, the Chinese definition for knowledge is clear and narrow. This means that only the knowledge on the book would count as genuine knowledge. In fact, living skills, playing and art are also knowledge. I watched a Cantonese TV series, in which a child performed an interesting magic trick to entertain his parents. However, his parents didn't quite en-

joy the show, and gave a comment to their son: "Nice show. You see, you are so clever, if you can cut your time on playing this kind of useless thing short, and put more time on your study, you will be among the top students in your school."

They said that as they nodded. It was not until their child told them that without his chemistry knowledge he couldn't do the magic trick that they started to appreciate his performance.

Though this concept is changing nowadays, I believe that it's still the prevailing fact in China. People don't care much about social science, neither did I. Luckily I've now changed. In fact our class doesn't really study a certain subject. We talk about all the things that come into our minds: educational problems, oral English skills, even meaningless imaginations. But we did get something out of them, and most of the time we basked in the shine of pure knowledge. The knowledge we learned, while not profitable like economics, or practical like physics, might seem useless to others. However, that's not true. Any knowledge is worth studying. In one of our lessons there was a video clip of Nicholas Christakis about social network, an issue beginning with the problem of obesity. Christakis found that those who are obese increase the possibility of others around them become obese. The issue, though interesting, is useless to most people. And it was not until I finished the video that I realized that it could be a "Newton's apple". See how this "useless" issue works: because of the power of social networking, FaceBook became the champion of the websites; because of the power of social networking, Twitter caused another upheaval of Internet.

These are not the only things I got out of the class. Religious issues, chances to teach in Cambodia, a taste of learning sociology are all available. After all, I will be benefited from my new understanding of learning and independent thinking all my life. So, that's not only a class of multi-cultural study, but also a class of life.

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