

The Chinese Reaction to the Wedding and the last Chapters

To: Dad (via modem)

March 13, 1990 © 21:00

I guess you would like some more details as to what's been happening.

Please read this carefully as there is a lot of important information.

Two weeks ago I said I was getting married.

Two days later I told you that I got fired. I wasn't really surprised by the action (or reaction), however I was worried that things would get really difficult and I didn't have much time. As a friend said, "Now you'll get a chance to see more of China's government."

A lot of things have happened, but not much has changed.

The school has fired me to basically cover their ass, but they don't seem to have done anything else. Talking to the US Consulate in Shenyang and some other Americans I was getting ready for a fight. Like I said,

though, the school doesn't seem to have done much else.

Because of the action by the school Haning and I will be getting married as soon as possible. The Civil Affairs Office in Dalian performs the ceremony every Tuesday and we have all the information and forms and medicals and whatever we need except for one. That is a letter of introduction from Haning's Unit; and her unit at this school.

Typically a unit will screw around until they have covered themselves before they get the letter and in some severe cases they harass sometimes the foreigner, usually the Chinese or both. The school hasn't done anything yet. But I don't trust them. I've heard "war stories" about foreigners trying to marry a Chinese. So far nothing has happened at all since the school has let me go. I still have a phone, I get my mail and even my newspaper, students are still able to talk to me and don't seem to know what's going on. The school hasn't said anything to her and other than gossip, no one has caused any trouble (yet...). But I still don't trust them.

If things did get touchy then I have the consulate and pieces of information that are potentially really damaging to the school. But that's only at last resort. I think they know it's in their interest to do this as quiet as possible.

So for now I'm sitting back pretty quietly.

My simple feeling is that we will get the letter from the school in a few days or so. BUT, I'm not planning on it and I am making other plans if they screw around or try to make trouble.

So I have gone all over Dalian and back up to Shenyang to the Consulate to get things taken care of. But the most important thing, the letter of introduction from this school, has yet to come. Like I said, a lot has happened, but not much has changed.

I have contacted the consulate and had to go back there because I needed another official letter. I think that they will be quite supportive. In fact they are another story in themselves. Also the American that I mentioned before, Bill Young (aka "Peg Leg"), from McDonnell Douglas (MDC) China is being really helpful.

My current position.

I feel that it is important that I remain in Northeast China until we both leave for the US together. My presence gives a form of protection that she may need. So now I am trying to find a way to do that.

My status is both good and bad.

I have:

\$600 in the bank in the US;

Almost \$300 (US) here;

About 1500 yuan RMB;

My truck worth \$2000 to \$3500;

I should receive \$477 on Federal and State Income Tax.

So I have money, but not big \$\$\$\$. The truck forms a buffer if I have a problem.

I hope that we will be married in within few weeks. Once we are married it should take three to six months to get a US visa. Within that time she should get her passport. These time lines are estimates on average. But things can always go wrong.

So I am trying to get two things. A place to live and a job to make living expenses in China. Here are my options from least favored to most favored:

1) I could return to the US on or about April 5th with the Airline ticket that they give me. (If I remain in China I don't know or think that they will give me the Airline ticket to do with as I please.)

2) I could live in her families home, if possible teach

English part time.

3) Find a part time teaching job that pays enough to live in a foreign guest house at a school. A foreign guest house around here goes for about \$6.50 a day, that's pretty expensive when a part time job might not even be able to cover this. There is a school in Dalian that I heard was looking for a part time teacher, but I'm not sure if that's correct and if the school I'm at now will blacklist me or if other schools care about that.

4) Find a full time teaching job that gives me a place to stay. Shenyang Teachers College said that they will come to visit me. Again, if the school I'm at now doesn't blacklist me then I think I have a good chance at that job. (I should know in a few days.)

5) I could study Chinese language at a school in Dalian. This is what I would like to do the most, but it is expensive. They want \$700 (US) for four months of study and \$3 (US) per day of residence and another \$3 for food. I would like to do this so I could learn the basics so I could talk to Haning in her language, although her English is quite good and we don't have any problem talking to each other. But that would be about \$1400 to \$1500 for that time; unless I want to sell my truck (if you haven't sold it already and I don't really want to) then I

can't afford it. But, if I can't find any place to stay then I can stay there they want US dollars, they don't care about much else about anyone's past!

This last one is sort of a dream, but an expensive one. If I get back into a corner it is an option, we have talked about me living at her home and studying that would knock as much as half off the costs. Number 4 is actually the best of choices, it keeps me in China, gives me a place to stay and brings in some money. So now I got to find a job!

We also have to pay for a trip to south China, Guangzhou, for her Visa interview and then two airline tickets back to the USA. We think that China Airlines will let her pay in RMB (local currency). If that is so then she has enough money to buy her own airline ticket. If I keep the US dollars I have now and I get the tax refunds I am expecting then I should be able to buy my own ticket with no problem either.

Neither one of us are poor now, but we are trying to plan for the costs later. In fact, because the school won't allow me to have anyone stay overnight and we are trying to watch our money and can't afford a hotel room, we aren't even sure if we will be able to spend our wedding night together!

I suppose someday that this will all seem really romantic. (Actually, now it is a little romantic, and a lot more interesting than romantic.)

So, if you haven't sold the truck yet then hold off on that for a while. But if money gets too tight then I might ask you to continue to try to sell it. I paid \$2000 for it and you should be able to get that pretty easily if I needed money quickly. The engine still has low miles, a new transmission(s), and mag wheels that I feel it's worth \$3000 to \$3500. But, I don't want to have to replace it if I come back to the US.

My plan for the future is try to get a full time teaching job in Shenyang or Dalian. That gets me some income and a place to live. Next, try to keep the airline ticket that this school wants to give me to leave China, but they may balk in giving it to me if they think I'm not leaving China.

After that, we wait for passports and visas to come and probably start mailing via sea mail some of our stuff that isn't important but want to have in the US.

If everything goes well then we should be coming to the US in three or so months if I don't get a job or early

July if I do get a teaching job.

I asked mom about living in the cottage. Is that possible?

I'm trying to do this without asking to borrowing any money from you or anyone. We're trying the best we can.

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Other things.

I received mom's package today. Thanks. I really enjoyed it. Please tell mom that it is ok to open my official mail, I won't call the fed's on her. I would like her to check it first. Although my tax stuff arrived here with no problems and is actually helpful, I don't think those things should get sent to China for fear they might get lost in the mail.

Taxes! I am mailing you an envelop with my taxes filled out, please forward them to Federal Government and Colorado Government. I didn't want to use the official envelopes to draw special attention. If you don't receive them before the tax deadline, April 15th, then file for an extension with an explanation of my situation. I should be getting \$367 from federal IRS and \$110 from the state. That helps!

Please let me know when you receive that letter, it will

putme at ease.

I sent a letter last week that was a one liner to see if mail was still getting through, I had no idea if my situation was bad or not. So ignore the letter, just me know if that one get sthrough also.

I will try to include a short biography of Haning so you can know who I'm gonna marry. That would be nice, huh?

I will also have a piece about that virus vaccination that I mentioned before. I understood what you meant about everyone is selling virus vaccinations, but maybe this one might be interesting. Do what ever you want and let me know and I'll send the message along.

By the way, I met another American Teacher in Dalian and we got to talking. His father was a 1950 West Pointer how went to Korea directly. His name was J.J. Baughn. I'm not sure of the spelling on the last name. Small world though isn't it. Does that name remind you of anyone? My friend, his son, is called Mark and grew up in Providence Rhode Island.

I received an amazing compliment the other day. The MDCengineer, Bill Young, asked me to help him in his writing. He said that I was a better writer then he was. Can you imagine anyone asking me to write for

them!Üj_Üœ

I guess that's about it for now. If you read this and it still doesn't answer your questions then you can give me a callback. I'm just spending all my effort to get married now! end of message

(Now the below account was first posted on Metanet's Web site in Virginia. To enlighten those who use that service. They had been fascinated to follow son Ed's adventures in China, from the time he landed there and immediately was confronted by the revolt of the students in Tienaman Square. Copied here}

THE CHINESE SOAP OPERA CONTINUES

As we last modemed into Dalian, China, Xiao Ed was in a precarious position trying to marry Zhou Haning, a beautiful

Chinese girl who teaches English at the Liaoning Foreign Trade

School, over the bureaucratic obstacles being put in his way

by officials, with his visa period running out and his

position

getting ever more precarious in that still-dangerous country.

For without an official reason to be in country he would have to leave by April 5th, and perhaps be separated from his true love forever.

And we all were left hanging over the fate of young Bin Ai, the

14 year Chinese boy left stranded when his parents became persona

non-grata back in China after speaking out in America while on tourist visas

in support of the Tienaman Square, and they could not return.

With electronic derring-do, his uncle in the United States desperately called on the Cowboy Cursor (me) to send delicate,

essentially uninterceptable, modem messages to Xiao Ed to secure

his help in getting the boy out through Shenyang so he could

join his parents before he could never leave in the face of the evermore tightening screws of the Chinese government.

In this episode, a whole series of events occurred in close proximity to each other, laying down the basis for yet other, future exiting events in this exiting true tale of

After receiving a 'last phone call' from Ed in China, I went to the Yen Ching II restaurant to see for myself if the boy was safely in the United States, before announcing it.

When I got there the lovely sister of Ligou Ai, who manages the fine large restaurant met me with a huge smile. She recognized the Stetson as I walked through the door. She said "Do you want to see Bin Ai?" I said "Absolutely". And we went back into the kitchen where standing at a sink, water up to his forearms, washing dishes as any dutiful son should be doing, and only one day after coming out of his harrowing isolation in China was the tallest, most handsome young Chinese youth I could ever imagine. Rich black hair over a smooth young face, but with a dignity and calm beyond his years that took me aback, not understanding a word being said in English, he smiled when - in Chinese - they told him I was one part of the 'modern

lifeline'

and the father of Xiao Ed who got him out.

I met his parents who were ecstatic over having their son safely with them in the great embrace of America.

All I could say was "What a fine, fine boy." I don't know what

I expected, a much shorter, smaller Han Chinese boy I guess, but

seeing his tall father I realized I was looking at a true descendant of those tall, dignified, northern Chinese whose

genetic roots went back thousands of years, who never, through

the wars and domination of first the Russians, then the Japanese

Germans, British, and Han Chinese ever lost their identity and spirit.

We then shook hands all around, and I asked what grade level he would be in, and was answered "Junior High School".

So, recovering from my emotional meeting with this handsome

Chinese lad who will begin a life in America that will change his life, and those of his distant relatives back in Shenyang Province forever, and from his striking handsome appearance that just made me realize I was looking at the world's youth, I sternly lectured his parents that, seeing it was a personal computer in the hands of a boy named Ed, who first learned in Junior High the skills that led to Bin Ai's rescue, that above all they must insure that he learns the art of computers and telecommunications just as surely as he was taught the ancient Chinese arts. So that he might help his own people break out of their long difficult past.

They nodded vigorously when what I said was translated into Chinese, the boy looked at me with his beautiful dark eyes without changing expression, sensing, perhaps, that this big American with the strange hat meant what he said,

and
that somehow he would have something to do with his
education
in computers...

The Plug is Pulled

So on the very day, that modem-rescued Bin Ai,
completed his
journey from Chinese purgatory, Ed made his last call
from
the ancient Chinese telephone in his room. And the plug
was
pulled.

For in the morning he would be moving out of his rooms
at the
Foreign Trade School. And if all went well he would be
married
on Saturday, the 24th, in a civil ceremony, to Zhou
Haning,
and would stay at the house of her parents in Dalian for
two
days. Then they would travel as quickly as possible to
Shenyang
to start the 3-6 months process of getting her immigration
papers started at the American Consulate.

But with only 12 days to go until, on his 'teaching' visa at the Foreign Trade school, which was terminated for the audacity

of marrying a Chinese national and therefore being such a bad

'moral example' before the brain-washed students at the school,

(The sympathetic US Consulate smiled and said something about

their penchant for 'Cultural purity' - a hangover from the Cultural Revolution) resourceful Ed had covered lots of bases.

Take a \$900 course in Chinese at the Dalian Foreign Language

Institute and thereby get a student visa? Fly out to Hong Kong

where Assistant Editor of the Asia Electronic Journal, Russ

Arensman - who followed the "Ed in China" story by modem while

he was a high-tech reporter in the US - offered Ed a place

to stay while getting a tourist visa to go back in?

(apartments

cost \$1,500 a month up in Hong Kong).

Or, to accept a position he had been offered a few months

before by the Head of the Electrical Engineering Department at the University of Sichuan in Chengdu China (scene of major outbreaks during the June protests), 1,200 miles away in western China, right up against the eastern end of the Himalayas and Tibet. To perform as an Engineer and set up a new (to China) Sun Workstation at the University, and establish a telecommunications link with another university in Chongqing, 500 km away to the south east. A job that could take 6 months. Separated from his new wife after only a few days. But buying the time needed for the wheels of government to grind out her permit to enter the US and return with world traveller Xiao Ed to Old Colorado City. And accepting a position which was initially itself arranged by modem through the Well, in California.

During this last direct-call exchange this morning, Ed had accepted the Chengdu position, and would be pulling the plug on his phone in Dalian in a few hours. So a period of modem and voice silence is about to descend on our

fragile

link to the western wanderer in heart of the Middle Kingdom.

So as we wait with apprehension over that still uncertain and

alien country of 1 billion people under a repressive regime

for news of the actual marriage of Ed Hughes and Zhou Haning,

and actual arrival in an unsettled city high on the shoulder

of the Himalayas, next to Tibet, close by India, to do very high tech things, we can but contemplate the first meeting

with the in-laws - a US retired Army Colonel who fought the

Chinese Army on the banks of the Yalu River 40 years ago,

and a retired Chinese Army doctor who treated the wounded on

the other side of in that bitter forgotten winter war, while young Ligou Ai, watched wide-eyed from the doorway of a

thatched roof Chinese home very near the battlefield, and neither Zhou Haning nor Edward Hughes destined to meet by

modern were even born.

I have a feeling this soap opera and continuation of Terry and the Pirates is not over.

And expect the next modem tone to come out of Tibet when

we all fervently hope we will meet the cast of Cursor Characters again, in good spirits and good health. And wonder at what the little chips have wrought.

Meanwhile there will be a big celebration at the Yeng Ching II

Restaurant next week. And all who have followed this adventure by modem are invited to attend.

We can only wonder what young Bin Ai will make of these

people who answer the call of the modem tone....