

My Friend Li Haopei

Wang Tieya

On 6 November 1997, Judge Li passed away in The Hague after a short period of sickness. I was deeply saddened when I suddenly received the news in Beijing. The Chinese international law community lost a great scholar of no equal in his time, whose death was like a giant star falling from the sky.

On 20 May 1997, I was elected to be a Judge of the UN International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia. I expected to meet him in The Hague. Unfortunately he was gone before I was to go to The Hague. I lost the last chance to listen to his talk about the work of the Tribunal and his experiences. This is my greatest regret.

Haopei and I were friends for sixty years. In 1937 I went to the London School of Economics and Political Science to pursue further studies when Haopei had already been there for one year. I had a feeling that we had known each other for a long time when we met for the first time. We became bosom friends at once. He was a couple of years older than I was. We called each other brother. It has been sixty years since then.

At the London School of Economics and Political Science, I studied public international law. Haopei studied private international law as well as public international law. We were together from morning till evening studying diligently in the library. Haopei always studied until late at night. He kept up his diligence and industriousness throughout the following decades. This trait of his character is admirable and no one can match him in this regard. His great academic achievements owed a lot to his exemplary hard work.

Haopei and I taught and conducted research together on many occasions during the past six decades. I was introduced by him and recommended by Mr Zhou Gensheng to teach at Wuhan University located at Leshan, Sichuan province during the war against the Japanese invaders. Haopei was teaching jurisprudence and private international law at the Faculty of Law. I was teaching international law and history of foreign affairs at the Department of Politics. We encouraged each other and learned from each other by exchanging views, which gave me a good start in my teaching career. Haopei taught conscientiously, lectured at once simply and profoundly, analyzed issues point by point, and gave a clear presentation. This was highly appreciated by the students.

I left Wuhan University two years later and taught at Chungqing University and Beijing University successively. Haopei also left to teach at Zhejiang University. We had little contact during that period. However, Haopei came to Beijing soon after the liberation. He first worked at the Bureau of Legislative Affairs of the State Council, and then as a legal advisor at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Our contact resumed and increased as my teaching and his work were closely linked. We had more opportunities to see each other, especially after 1978. At that time international law scholarship and teaching was entering a new stage in China. We were often together to discuss international law issues and to cooperate in the work of international law development.

Haopei never gave up teaching when he was engaged in practical work. He was invited to lecture as a part-time professor at Beijing University and was well received by the students. Haopei was very much concerned about the development of international law in China. He participated in the activities of the Chinese Society of International Law since it was founded. Haopei made great contributions to improving the academic standard of the Chinese Yearbook of International Law which was launched in 1982. After Professor Ghen Tiqiang passed away in 1983, Haopei and I became the co-editors-in-chief of the Yearbook. He was in charge of going over the manuscripts in the field of private international law. He performed his duty carefully and conscientiously. In 1993, I was in charge of editing the International Law volume of the Chinese Encyclopedia of Law. I invited Haopei to be an editor of the section on private international law. He made a great effort to

make the book a unique and fairly comprehensive international law dictionary of high standard. Having collaborated with Haopei on several occasions, I deeply admired him for his profound and immense learning.

Haopei had a fine command of English, He also read and wrote French, Russian, German and Latin. He translated various classics in English, French and German into Chinese. It is rare in China that a person can use materials and references in English, German and other languages to do research on international law issues as he could.

Haopei conducted research on private international law for a long time. His research achievements were known in China and overseas. He lectured on private international law at The Hague Academy of International Law in 1989. The lecture appeared in the *Collected Courses* and has been well received.

Haopei also accomplished many outstanding achievements in public international law. His classic work, *The Law of Treaties*, contains a wealth of data and materials and firmly establishes his views. This study received favourable review in the *Chinese Yearbook of International Law* (1989, 607-24) and the *Heidelberg Journal of International Law* (*ZaöRV*, 1991, 245-46), and won a coveted prize in China. He also published a study on sources of international law and numerous articles on public international law.

His work at the ICTY demonstrated his learning and his talents. He was known as a judge of independence, having absolute integrity and deep knowledge of international law. This is evident from the comments on his work made by various contributors in this volume. He was unique in present-day China in that he was a learned jurist in both public and private international law.

Haopei was gone abruptly and unexpectedly. I felt sad and was at a loss. Only the works he left behind remain. They are our precious heritage in international law. His diligent study and profound learning set an example for us, from which we must make great efforts to learn and with which we will promote the development of international law in China. Only in this way will we not let Haopei down.

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