

EDITORS' INTRODUCTION: TOWARD A SPIRITUAL REVIVAL

Journal of East-West Thought publishes three articles by Liu Yazhou as its special edition. Liu Yazhou's articles address China's history, culture and national character written over a time span of a decade. We publish them as an anthology at a time when Sino-US relations are at a crossroads. In the United States the preparations for the general election are gaining momentum and in China the sentiments are high in reasserting itself as a world power after years of keeping a low profile. While no one denies that the United States remains the only superpower in the world, people should also recognize and respect the fact that China has emerged as a new power, strong in economic and political influence in the world. However, it looks as though China and the United States are still learning how to cohabit in the global village while keeping their differences in beliefs and values, because oftentimes one country will be demonized by the other, sometimes with ulterior motives. Public figures of both countries at one time or another are guilty of such practices. Editors of this special edition believe such practice is unwarranted and unnecessary, because it is based on suspicion which in turn gives rise to distrust, hostility and finally hatred.

Suspicion comes from ignorance and lack of transparency. Political scientists in both countries have been complaining about a total lack of transparency with regard to who are policy makers and what are top leaders of each country really thinking. This sentiment was widely shared at a recent conference at the Carter Center, Atlanta Georgia.¹ It is precisely with this general concern in mind that we have decided to publish Liu Yazhou's works.

Liu Yazhou is a three-star general in the Chinese military, the highest rank a career officer can attain in China. While he has risen through the ranks, from a foot soldier to general, he is also a well-known, in fact one of the most well-known writers in the 1980s and 1990s. During those years he wrote profusely, in literary form, on China's first peasant rebellion, mystery, the Civil War of China from 1947-1949, Taiwan, the Middle East, and international issues and had a huge following. As his responsibilities expanded in the military he had to give up creative writing. But his essays on Taiwan, and on domestic and world affairs, often unpublished, were still fervently sought, read and talked about. In our view Liu's voice, though maybe lonely, reflects the mindset of his generation from ordinary people on the street to the highest leadership

¹Editor's Note (EN): The author refers to China's Reform: Opportunities & Challenges, held from May 6-7, 2015, at the Carter Center, Atlanta Georgia. For more information on this forum, see <http://forums.uscnpm.org>.

group, which necessarily includes their dreams and aspirations as well as their deep-seeded frustrations, shames and nightmares.

The three selected works by Liu Yazhou are *On Spirit: "The 70th Anniversary of the Victory of the War of Resistance against Japan," "Recommemorating 1644: The 360th Anniversary of the Jiashen Year"* and *"National Shame: On China's Defeat in the War of 1894."* They all take readers back to China's recent dark past when the Han Chinese were completely defeated and subjugated, first by the nomadic Manchuria, and again in 1894 when the Qing Dynasty was defeated by Japan. With the onset of World War II Japan attacked and invaded China which had been plagued by bandits and warlords. China had no place on the world theater and the Chinese were looked down upon everywhere, even in their own country. Such national humiliation and shame haunted Chinese for generations. Sometimes it almost seems cruel for Liu Yazhou to paint with graphic details those sorry situations when the Chinese were cowardly, treacherous, indifferent and submissive. He, we suspect, was trying to make a point, that is without a spirit or strong mental will, regardless of one's physical strength, one is unlikely to stand up to bully, humiliation, aggression and subjugation. Liu Yazhou often refers to the Chinese writer Lu Xun, who is arguably regarded as someone who had the courage to be highly critical of the Chinese national character, including his own. Lu Xun was among that group of students who went to Japan to study after China's defeat in the War of 1894. While studying as a medical student, it was widely believed, that one day he saw in class a film which showed that a Chinese was being killed by Japanese while a crowd of Chinese simply stood there watching, motionless and expressionless. He decided then and there to leave the medical field to become a writer because he believed what his fellow countrymen needed was not cures for physical ailments but a spiritual revival. Lu Xun then spent his whole life trying to wake up his fellow countrymen from their slumber of complacency and indifference and their blind insistence that China only needs to learn Western skills not their ideas.

Liu Yazhou, in his essays, attributes China's defeats in previous wars to its culture, tradition, belief, or lack thereof, with sometimes scathing criticism, but he has also provided rationale for why Chinese reacted in a certain way against the historical background. Readers, especially western readers, will begin to understand the strong nationalist sentiments, complete with pride and joy, as expressed in the victory over Japan in World War II, the birth of the People's Republic of China, China's participation in the Korean conflict, China's acquisition of nuclear weapons, China's return to the United Nations, China's speedy economic rise and more recently China's hosting of the Olympic Games and the World Expo.

Though Liu Yazhou and his writings are well known in China very few of them are available in English². Through his writings it is our hope that Western readers will get a different slice of China, provided this time by a member of the higher leadership echelon, which can serve as a beginning to disperse misconception, suspicion and most importantly, distrust.

Acknowledgements: The editors would like to thank translators Ray Wang, Stacy Mosher and Guodi Sun for their work, and Brenda Arnold, Cheryl Meaux and Robert Kapp for taking time to polish and proofread the translated texts.

²*The Chinese Law and Government, A Journal of Translations* (M. E. Sharpe, Inc.) published the following three articles by Liu Yazhou: “The Voice of A Fifth Generation Leader: Lieutenant General Liu Yazhou on Sino-American Relations, ” (March-April 2007); “War Against Taiwan, A Strategic Evaluation by Lieutenant General Liu Yazhou,” (November-December, 2007); and “The Dilemmas and Prospects of China’s Military Modernization and Air Power Strategy, The Views of Lieutenant General Liu Yazhou” (January-February 2008).