

A Tribute to Professor Wang Tieya

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Professor Wang Tieya and I were several generations apart. Yet we had something in common. We were co-editors for two projects: a book in honor of Li Haopei,¹ a dear friend of his and a kind supervisor of mine, and the *Chinese Journal of International Law*. To some extent we were both rebels. We both had done things that might be perceived to go against common wisdom.

Despite the fact that he had been such an eminent scholar when I, a fun-loving undergraduate at Peking University, was introduced to him, Professor Wang displayed no air of importance or stature that normally one might see in a person on Olympic heights. Soon we developed a friendship that in Chinese would be called “Wangnianzhijiao”, friendship defying the gap of age. We shared stories. We exchanged arguments. He critiqued my works. He appreciated a good argument when he saw one. He criticized a questionable one when he found it. He gave credit where it was due. I benefited greatly from his wisdom.

Then in 1998, it was suggested that Professor Wang and I co-edit the memorial collection for Li Haopei. Professor Wang immediately accepted the task, despite the fact that I was still a very young man then, although older than I was when I was introduced to him.² That project was completed in 2000 and the book was published in 2001.

In the course of editing that book, some of the disputes between some authors and me were put to him for final decision. It was during those discussions on the phone that Professor Wang told me that it had been his dream since 1980 to launch in English a *Chinese Journal of International Law*. He then asked whether I would be willing to assist him in trying to realize the dream, as his co-editor-in-chief. Of course such an honor should not be lightly declined, if only because it was from Professor Wang, but should not be lightly

¹ Sienho Yee & Wang Tieya (eds.), *International Law in the Post-Cold War World: Essays in Memory of Li Haopei* (Routledge, 2001).

² I described all this in: Sienho Yee, *Professor Wang Tieya: My Friend, Critic, Colleague and Example*, 4 *Journal of the History of International Law* (2002), 230-35.

accepted, either, since I was so young and since there was no shortage of capable and willing people in Beijing. I hesitated and told him that I was not sure whether I should accept that task, although I appreciated very much the fact that he was willing to reach out to the very young and to the world beyond the confines of the capital city, without regard to seniority or my lack thereof, and without regard to the feelings that his suggestion might ignite in others. Looking back now, and having had been in contact with some of these human chemistry issues, I not only appreciate, more than before, what he did, but also admire him greatly for that. These days it is easy or even tempting for one to be afflicted with considerations extraneous to merits and scholarship for reasons such as jealousy, vengeance, or simply the thrill of being in a position to stop something from happening, thus failing to see the larger picture and the more noble goal. Professor Wang always had his eyes on the larger picture, while others busied themselves with other intrigues, forgetting that life is short and they might have to say goodbye to the world without achieving any goal, noble or petty.

Subsequently the topic came up again, and I said that I was not sure whether the Chinese Society of International Law would give such a task to a young man like me. Professor Wang said that the most important thing was to ensure that there should be a steady source of articles and that he would take care of the rest. At that point, he said that among many of the things he would like to do, the dream of publishing a journal in English had proved to be one of the most difficult, that I should take the task, and that I should give him a hand, because it would be a contribution, particularly when China is playing a more and more important role in the world. We then related our similar experiences as users in foreign libraries where one could find international law journals from many countries but none from the mainland of China.³ At that time, I agreed to act as his co-editor-in-chief, not fully realizing what I had undertaken to do.

Not too long after that, Professor Wang informed me that I had the greenlight to go ahead. He said that he had spoken with the officials of the Chinese Society of International Law. He suggested that I immediately start inviting manuscripts, and that I write to his friends around the world to ask them for help.

I followed his suggestions and went about making the arrangements

³ See Foreword, Chinese JIL (2002), iv (“The publication of the *Journal* also gives the Co-Editors-in-Chief some personal satisfaction. Many times we have been asked, “Where is the *Chinese Journal of International Law*?” Many times this question has brought tears to our eyes. Today one finds an answer to that question, finally.”).

for the publication of the *Journal*. As soon as the inaugural issue saw the light of day, I asked his daughter to give him the message that I had received 5 advance copies, and that the *Journal* was here: “It is for real.” Shortly after that I learned from afar that his health had deteriorated dramatically, and then he passed away. I hope it was not because he was disappointed.

Professor Wang Tiewa and I were several generations apart. Of course we were very different from each other. In a previous tribute to him on the occasion of his *last* retirement, I pointed out the chief difference: he had achieved so much and his pursuit for excellence was so stubborn and so pure, while I was so new to the world and have weathered so little. Although he was retiring then, I said I was sure that “his pursuit for excellence will not retire. Neither will the example he has set for me.”⁴ Now that his pursuit for excellence must retire, the example he has set for me will remain forever.

⁴ Ibid., 235.

Wang Tieya Prize

In order to honor the memory of Professor Wang Tieya, a great scholar, a great person, and a founding co-editor-in-chief of this *Journal*, the *Chinese Journal of International Law* is pleased to announce the establishment of a *Wang Tieya Prize* for the best article by a young author (age 45 or below) published in the *Journal* each year, starting in 2004. We plan to award the prize to young authors for their excellence in order to honor Professor Wang Tieya for his unrelenting pursuit of excellence in scholarship and for his exemplary efforts in cultivating the younger generations of scholars.

There is no need for application, but those authors who are interested in being considered are asked to make a declaration of age to the *Journal* at the time when the final page proofs are returned to the *Journal*.

A cash component of the Prize will be determined from time to time.

De Heng Prize

The Chinese Journal of International Law is pleased to announce that in 2003 it will award a prize for an article published in the *Journal* in 2002 and 2003 on a topic relating to the Third World and international law, broadly conceived, such as sustainable development, the contribution of the developing countries to international law-making. All articles published in the *Journal* during the relevant time period will be considered, without regard to nationality. There is no need for special application. The Prize will be one thousand US dollars (US\$1,000). Information about submission of manuscripts and other matters can be found at: <www.chinesejil.org>.

The Prize is being sponsored by the DeHeng Law Office, and is named the DeHeng Prize, on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the establishment of the Law Office in Beijing.

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