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THE STAR FROM JAPAN

Wang Anyi



Translated by Dehui Deng

PREFACE

The story, *The Star from Japan* by Wang Anyi, is about the aftermath and lingering effects from the Cultural Revolution in China. Its far-reaching effects are written and described from the perspective of artists in this piece, showing the state of music and the mindset of the public. There are several subtleties that Wang Anyi tries to get across, with each of her characters being in some way or shape affected by the Cultural Revolution, and whether these effects are good or bad. The book's vivid description of music, and the characters and experiences are deeply engraved in one's memory. The people and scenery are described in many words and great detail. I would like to acknowledge my friends and family for their help and support, as well as the advice from my senior project advisor Professor Liu Haoming, the previous years of Chinese language study under Professor Anne Parries, and to my major advisor Professor Du Wenwei.

The story regarding the new stars of the Japanese song world, along with mainland China's small cities' song and dance groups, working together for a moonlighting performance tour, was told to me by my husband. This song and dance group is where my husband and I worked before, within mainland China the small city's theater had an orchestra pit. That is the place where we were married. I worked in music just to make a living, and because we traveled everywhere to perform, we did not have a registered permanent residence. My husband sincerely loved music, even though loving music was the biggest mistake he ever made. He has experience from first being the conductor of a small symphony, to playing the violin in a general orchestra, and finally to just transcribing the music they played, with his position slowly worsening, he unwillingly left the group, drifting to my city Shanghai. Within the group was a life's worth of love and hate, this love-hate affected him deeply. He was trying to leave the group, and never go back, but he could not bear to forget the past and so felt lost and depressed. [187] Therefore, he adopted a compromising attitude, that is, often keeping in touch with former members from the orchestra. The members at the orchestra also gradually left their positions, some going to Children's Palaces to guide cultural activities; some going to Cultural Centre to lead cultural arts activities; some worked at libraries; some worked at various levels of administration for the government departments; of course, some still stayed with the group, busily performing. The profession of a performer is very resplendent, bizarre and motley. Hearing any news about them can bring happiness and laughter, but also sadness. A person from the performing group said, "Right now, we no longer rehearse!" My husband asked, "No longer rehearsing?" "Yes, no

longer rehearsing, everything is seen on stage.” Answered the performer. As a result, tonight, my husband reminisced about the former days of rehearsing, with the A note of an oboe resounding through the music hall, people from all directions shouting, ”Oboe, give a A note!” The sound of setting the pitch slowly rising, the tremendous enthusiasm, and bursting of happiness filled the atmosphere.

That singing star came to mainland China from Japan, the one that joined and performed together with our group, that story was told to my husband by Ah Xing. Those years, Ah Xing was part of our music group, and he left behind a mark among our shrinking numbers. He used to play clarinet, now he plays the saxophone. Starting from the age of ten, he learned from a Shanghai Symphony Orchestra’s clarinet player, that was near the end of the 1950’s. This professional clarinet player used to be an instrumental performer in the municipal council (工部局), a relic from the colonization period. We have been friends with Ah Xing for many years, the beginning and end of it is not clear, but in that year, Ah Xing did not learn any other instruments, only the clarinet. However, this was not the age of clarinets, not like the later times, when Western instruments became widely used throughout China. Ah Xing told us before, the reason why he learned the clarinet, was because the son of his teacher wanted to learn drawing from his father, and so it became a sort of an exchange. His father was the designer for an advertising company, and in his early years he went to Liu Haisu’s Art College. However, the real reason for why Ah Xing wanted to learn the clarinet was never told to us. It was as if, starting from the age of ten, in the moment he picked up the clarinet, with the reed in his mouth, he could no longer bear to part from his clarinet. The process of mastering an instrument is both mechanical and dull, with scale, arpeggio, along with the complicated groupings of notes. In order to practice his

fingers and mouth, he wasted countless mornings and evenings. These mornings and evenings are typically set aside for boys to play tricks and be mischievous. [188] Practice will increase the fluent, pure, and smooth notes, so how did they affect Ah Xing? Due to Ah Xing's neglect of Chinese literature and language over a long period of time, he was not able to express himself clearly. People from other countries know how this is. While Ah Xing was part of the performing group, he had to switch to playing the saxophone. This was his compromise so that he could stay in the performing group and not be sent off to the Children's Palace or the Cultural Centre. We imagine this change must have brought a period of sadness to Ah Xing.

Japanese singing star Yamaguchi Jōn was recommended to Ah Xing by Big Lin, Ah Xing then recommended her to the group. Who is Big Lin? Big Lin was a worker at a famous shipyard company in Shanghai. Because of his family's poor financial situation, he started working right after graduating high school. That year he started working was exactly 1965. This made him avoid being a university student forced to rusticate, instead, he became part of the working class, elevating his social status. Big Lin was stationed at the Shanghai School of Music, and from then on he started his music career. I should say that Big Lin was naturally gifted in music. If he had not been born in a worker family from the shantytown, and instead was born into some wealthy family alongside the Huaihai Road, that had some contact with music, he may have even been a great master in music. It's a pity that up until he got stationed at the School of Music at the age of 19, the only instrument he had seen was the bamboo flute. While being stationed in the School of Music, with the speed of lightning, he shocked everyone with his playing on the piano a string of chords. These different forms of arpeggios matched with his right hand playing the melody, there was not a song that was too difficult for him. During the performance for Mao Zedong's

Thought (毛泽东思想) propaganda, Big Lin's impromptu accompaniment was not matched by any student. Afterwards, he learned to play the accordion, the violin, and flute. Just as he picked these instruments up, he began to compose songs and study harmony. His teacher was the director of the music school, a famous musician of China, who had written a famous piece about partisans. During the period of national salvation, his piece spread widely from the crops along the bank of the Yellow River, to the enemy occupied area, people sung in low tones about him, encouraging each other, it was like seeing the dawn of victory. During the day, Big Lin lead the students, making an empty show of strength criticizing the director, giving him a capitalist label on top of his hat; at night he investigated the director's house in Hubei, like a model student. Just like that when the entire nation suspended classes, [189] Big Lin completed his music education. He still used his authority as a leader with both a modest and studious attitude, making friends with many of the professors and teachers, and getting to know many of their children and students. Little by little, he became friends with every professional musician who had a public presence in Shanghai. Later, when the entire country's soldiers theater company was learning model opera (样板戏) in a time of mass revival, the theatre troupe went place to place looking to recruit people and buy horses (idiom), when they came to this city, not knowing what they wanted, some people recommended that they go visit Big Lin, since Big Lin knew all the musical talents in the city. Afterwards, more and more people knew of Big Lin, any group coming into Shanghai looking for recruits first went to find Big Lin. Eventually, Big Lin controlled the entire country's literary and artistic institutions affairs. Eventually, unemployed youths who sought work in theater troupe must first look for Big Lin. That was the golden age of Big Lin, it was during this time that Ah Xing and I knew Big Lin.

This one day, Big Lin said to Ah Xing, there was a singer from Japan who was looking for a theatrical troupe in mainland China. She wanted to perform about a dozen or so shows to get some experience and mature before performing along the large coastal cities. He asked Ah Xing if he could help him find a theatrical troupe in mainland China. He also confided in Ah Xing saying, "Actually, she could build up a theatrical troupe herself, however, dealing with an outsider like her is more troublesome, and so she wishes to not take part in that." Big Lin had a long history with the Japanese singer and so felt obligated to help. The reason why he asked Ah Xing was because he felt that all the performing groups Ah Xing was in, were national organizations, if anything came up, it would also be the nation's responsibility, and not Ah Xing's responsibility. Besides, a Japanese singer coming to mainland China, is a major cultural exchange, and benefits song and dance groups. Hearing this, Ah Xing agreed. He went back and talked with head of the troupe. Hearing this information, the director of the troupe was inwardly delighted, but outwardly displayed indifference. He was thinking to himself a single thought, "How does this benefit Ah Xing?" He answered himself saying, "This must benefit Ah Xing greatly." In front of him Ah Xing appeared very excited, and so the director said will think it over. The decision process was very slow, on one hand the group told Ah Xing that they were still discussing what to do, while on the other hand they quietly sent people to Shanghai [190] to observe Ah Xing's behaviors, in order to understand if this was some kind of plot. During this time, the troupe leader's situation was in a miserable state, he had been swindled many times, each time not learning from previous mistakes. The swindler's methods kept changing, with many tricks. The troupe leader had several years of experience in revolutions, yet was not able to make enough money to pay the salaries of his troupes, and they were earning less and less. He

became very cautious, every bush and tree looks like an enemy soldier (草木皆兵-a state of extreme suspicion and fear), in the dead of night he would keep his eyes open contemplating problems. News of the leader secretly observing Ah Xing spread quickly to everyone. When word of this reached Ah Xing's ears, Ah Xing indignantly thought, "In this world, being a true good person is so difficult, with so much pressure pushing you towards the wrong path. Willfully choosing not to follow, this is incredibly difficult!" He vowed to never be concerned about this matter, and so this matter was ignored for half a year. After half a year, the leader went to find Ah Xing. This time, the group was on the verge of bankruptcy, and the leader was watching helplessly, not being able to pay the salaries. He was only able to write promises of payment at a later date, and upon receiving this note, every day workers would harass him at his doorstep. Ah Xing at first said "Don't care, don't care", but then unable to bear the continuous requests of the leader, could only take another trip to Shanghai, to look for Big Lin. Then, Big Lin and Ah Xing both visited our group, and standing in Yamaguchi Jōn's stead, signed a contract with us.

One day in the early morning at 8:30, Big Lin and Ah Xing got on a train heading towards inland China. The train slowly left the station, increasing its speed, with the wind blowing past Big Lin's hair, suddenly many mixed feelings welled up in his heart. He said to Ah Xing, "Do you know so-and-so from so-and-so group? That year I introduced them outside; do you still know so-and-so place and so-and-so people? That year I also introduced them." He then told Ah Xing these recent names of famous people, and how they started in front of him back then, every detail, the male and female stars, and anecdotes about these stars. Big Lin became more talkative, rattling on endlessly. He also expressed interest in traveling on train, upon reaching every small stop, he would open his window, put his head outside, and see if there was

anything good to buy. He would pick and choose through every little basket of the merchants, bargaining, and as the train slowly moved, he would taste all the different food. The small table between those two in an instant was filled with different kinds of food. [191] Big Lin eating it up like a wolf(狼吞虎咽), and kept talking about his exploits(夸夸其谈), made Ah Xing feel embarrassed, he pretended to nap, but was awakened by Big Lin, who was joking about the outlanders. Ah Xing suddenly thought about that year in Heilongjiang, when the Production and Construction Corps returned to Shanghai to visit relatives, his teacher told him to look for Big Lin. That day's scene suddenly appeared before his eyes: It was the 5th day of the first month at night, his hands holding the letter of recommendation, arrived at the fourth floor music chamber of the school of music. The music chamber became a simple and crude bedroom, with a bed inside. Other than the piano, the room also had two kettledrums, with some people sitting around the kettledrums, with things like seeds and candy on top of the drum. Big Lin sat on top of the stool, read two or three paragraphs of my letter, and then said, "Did you bring your instrument?" Ah Xing said he did, and then Big Lin let him play a piece. Ah Xing asked, "Play what piece, a practice piece or a work of art?" Big Lin did not answer. Someone on the side said, "Play a small piece." And so Ah Xing played a short song, the feeling of hot sweat flowing down his back and then back into him as he felt nervous. After playing, Big Lin did not say anything at all, rather looked around at the others, faintly smiling, as if saying, "What do you people think?" Then, many voices started filling up the room as everyone talked. Around here, Big Lin said something else, "The music was a bit rough?" Just this sentence, Ah Xing felt as if he got shot, his eyes got fuzzy, and he thought, "There is no hope." However, he did not immediately leave the room, and instead squeezed past other people and sat on the bench. It felt as if Big Lin had some sort of

spell, that was irresistible, with everyone following. He felt strange, and awkward sitting there, with his clarinet in hand, listening to them discuss about matters, on topics such as music, and also about the situation of enrolling new students into various groups. Da lin smiled as he asked a girl, “Would you like to go join a music group in the Shanxi province?” The girl said: “Who goes?” “Who goes” these words were dragged out, loud and clear and very mild and indirect. Later, the girl sang a song, Big Lin personally played accompaniment for her, her voice was very powerful, rich and elastic, where is she now or what group is she playing for now? Ah Xing thought about this, and suddenly said, “Big Lin, why don’t you become a chief broker for performances (unauthorized)?” Big Lin gnawed on a hard piece of chicken before answering this question. [192]

About becoming the chief broker, this was how Big Lin responded. He said, his at the root of it is that he was different than the other chief brokers. He upholds the arts, values talent, looks at money like dirt, and deeply sympathizes with misfortunate people. This is the start of how to behave as an upright person. And yet what kind of people are head brokers? Every action they take, can be summed into two points: one is to seize money, two is to corrupt the arts. Arriving at this point, he asked a question in reply to Ah Xing, “Do you actually think this singing star is an artist?” And then, he talked about the Japanese singer Yamaguchi Jōn. He said for the sake of helping this singer, there is no benefit in doing so, is was all purely for helping her. There was nothing in it for himself, because this singer was introduced to him by his respected teacher. When she was still a little girl, when people would call her “JōnJōn, JōnJōn”, that was when he knew her and saw her as his own little sister. If she had any difficulties, he could not turn away and ignore them. “Listening to her,” Ah Xing asked, “a well known honest

singer, would have what difficulties?” Big Lin stared blankly for a second, as if he accidentally said something he shouldn't have, and said, “Who doesn't have any difficulties? After all she is a Chinese person with a Chinese heart, living away from her homeland, and would be homesick.” Talking to her, Big Lin sat upright with his chest out with an air of righteousness, looking Ah Xing in the eye, as if blaming Ah Xing for something. And then, he told Ah Xing about Yamaguchi Jōn's childhood.

She was born into a family of musicians, her father was a violinist, mother was a cellist, her parents were both married during the cultural revolution. At the time, they were Shanghai School of Music's students, when the tide of rebellion calmed down, they did not know what they should do, and lived within the music chamber. One year later, they gave birth to Jōn Jōn. Jōn Jōn's diaper was dried on the railings of the window overlooking the street, colourfully waving, with roused trumpet music. When people walked past the oriental plane (tree), the shade from the leaves of the tree covered the road, these people would stop in their steps, raise their head, and hope for the sunlight to bathe the flags of all nations, under the high-spirited music of the trumpet they thought about how there was an infant up there. Later, Jōn Jōn was learning to walk on dried grass field of the school, with her small hand making a fist and putting it in her mouth, drops of saliva dripping down. Waiting to be allocated for reform, the lost college students would encircle her, would shout at her from all directions: Jōn Jōn, come here; Jōn Jōn, come here! Jōn Jōn stood there pondering, creasing her brow, think for a while, before deciding on a direction [193] and stumbling but determinedly walking forward. Within the ruined building, new and out-of-date pianos were everywhere. At night, shadows flickered, at dawn became bright and gold. Jōn Jōn walked between the shadows and light, the wooden stairs

creaking and groaning. During the Cultural Revolution, large breeding groups of rats ran about. In each student dormitory, past suicides occurred, such as a schoolgirl smothered her flowering life, her fellow classmates lightly carried her pure corpse, walking over the wooden stairs, as if parading through the corridors. An infant's shadow lightened up the dusty rooftop, later on when this infant grew up, her parents were sent to the countryside, and so she went to live with her grandmother. This was a very crowded house, at night, she squeezed in with her grandparents on a single large bed, during the day, she would play in the narrow back lane. Every child in the city has a story about their back lane, this was their childhood paradise, but was also their childhood hell. The back lane concealed obscene, terrifying stories, such as abducting children, seducing women, moribund old women who heard ghosts calling every night, stray cats shouting and mating. Children all played games in the back lane, after the sun reached its peak at around 3, dyeing the ground yellow. At night, the children would not dare to go to the back lane even if pushed, they would hide in their grandmother's blanket, with their eyes open, before slowly falling asleep. In Jōn Jōn's grandmother's corner of the room, there was a "Steinway" with loose keys, two out of every three keys would not make sound, the cotton cloth piano cover stacked on top, one strip covering the other side. "Steinway" became her great-grandmother's inheritance. Great-grandfather was a Chinese doctor, who married the daughter of one of his patients. This daughter received a Western education, liked to play huqin and sing. After Jōn Jōn grew up, she had thought, "What did my great-grandmother look like?" Great-grandmother died during the year she was twenty when she caught diphtheria. Great-grandfather had practiced medicine for half a lifetime, yet could not save his wife, and so the decline in the family business started from here. Great-grandmother's love for plucking (a musical instrument) and singing genes, within her

grandfather developed into a love for Beijing opera, and he became an amateur in Beijing opera. When the gene reached her father, he had a pair of ears that were extremely good at distinguishing musical notes, and a pair of slender strong hands, requesting a tutor to teach him piano for two years. In elementary school starting from the third grade, he enrolled in a primary school for children that was attached to the Shanghai School of Music up until middle school, where he further took college courses. This is Yamaguchi Jōn's family history as well as childhood.

Big Lin said, the next time he saw Jōn Jōn, she had grown into a young girl. [194] She was not very tall, but was very sturdy, with a small stature. Because her posture was straight, it was easy to gloss over and pass her by. Her round face, cheeks were full, covering a layer of fine hair, large eyes, thick eyelash, her nose a bit short, with her upper neck sticking up. Big Lin said, "She was not beautiful, but was very cute." That was at the examination venue at the Shanghai opera house, where she sang a song 《江姐 (Sister Jiang)》 interlude: "People of the world laugh heartily together". That year she was 16. A young girl of 16! Big Lin sighed (with great feeling), not saying any further. The train stopped at another station, it was a large station, and so Big Lin walked off the train, stepped onto the platform, and looked all around. Ah Xing did not get off, sat next to the window, and watched the busy platform. At this time in the afternoon at 4 o'clock, the sun was setting, slowly falling level with the earth. Ah Xing's heart felt empty, he did not know that this feeling is called "sorrow", his face stuck looking outside the window, thinking to himself, "It is going to be dark soon." Actually, it was getting close to dusk, however Ah Xing thought to himself, "It's going to be dark soon."

Everytime my husband takes the train back to the small city in inland China, he visits his family. Early in the morning in high spirits (兴致勃勃), at dusk however his mood gets gloomy. He usually around winter, during Chinese New Year Eve goes back home, this was the time to part while other families reunite. This train traveling along the line, is like tunnel of time, thinking about his past music self drawing it close to him. He thought he had to go back to the small city once again! Traversing through that town's streets, left behind his footprints, some footprints of his livelihood, such as buying food for his mom, or going to the post office to send his wife (me) a letter; other footprints are with respect to his music, walking to and from rehearsal, walking to and from a performance. In the end he did not achieve success in music, but still hopes that it will keep flowing (源源不断). Sometimes he thinks, "He, the child of an average household from inland China, why did he have to do something like conducting a symphony?" The world of symphonic music is distant from his own world, it is the wave from the Cultural Revolution that washed the world of symphonic music in front of him. The Cultural Revolution was something detestable as well as potent, its force raised and snapped the lives of the peasantry and cultural life, just like the beginning of the century when Western missionaries brought the teachings of God to the eastern remote hinterlands, so many illiterate woman faced music staff singing Christian hymns. Under the model opera that blotted out the sky and covered the earth in an all-out attack, my husband became a captured prisoner of war. He was as if intoxicated and stupefied as he listened to each passage of the Cultural Revolution, called 《Red Detachment of Women》 music score, horizontally crossing 4,200 measures, vertically [195] 25 lines of stave all memorized by heart. At the time, he was still a school graduate sent to work and live in the countryside as a rural member of the production team, as they were packing up and

returning, pulling the bellows listening to the commune radio broadcast it, he revelled to himself thinking, “symphonic music sure is a good thing; symphonic music sure is a strange thing!” This is how my husband started down the path of symphonic music, he spent his most precious youth all on symphony, even dreaming (梦寐以求) about a real symphonic group, which let him write a 4-movement music score. Within the 10-something years of struggle, the best orchestra he had was with 2 trumpets, 2 french horns, 1 trombone, 1 clarinet, 1 oboe, 1 bassoon, 2 flutes, 8 violins, 2 violas, 2 cellos, 1 bass, 2 kettledrums, 1 army drum. He fully set his mind to think about how to make use of wind and string instruments, and how to create a balance and harmony. He thought that although it was a variety of instruments, the result was still not what he wanted. He was always in a terrible fix (焦头烂额), disheartened in the end. Nowadays, those terrible fixes and disheartening endeavors are looked back upon with nostalgia. When returning home, early in the morning at 8:30, the train left my city---Shanghai station, slowly starting off, my husband’s mind would be happy and in a excited mood, approaching his childhood nostalgia. However, at the time when the sun sets, as the train got closer and closer to his small town, my husband would gradually get more depressed, as he thought, “What else is there?” According to what his music friends said, the music group has mostly disbanded, only a few who play blowpipes and looking for pleasure. They had found two guitar players, and formed two sets of performer groups. His comrades from the orchestra were all distributed across various places and organizations, they spent their free time either holding their children, or lighting the stove, never touching their instruments, since picking up their instruments would make them feel depressed. To avoid recalling the passed-away years, they seldom saw each other, rarely do they bump into each other, but if they did they would keep smoking, and then say, “What kind of matter is this?”

No one could answer them. My husband at the time when the sun was setting thought about a scene with their mischievous kids causing trouble. He said, “trombone, please play a little softer, softer.” Trombone would say, “Brother, this time around I guarantee you won’t hear anything.” As the sun set he thought about this, my husband would feel sorrowful, as he thought, “what is that turtle’s grandson doing right now?” One time when my husband went home, he went to find the turtle’s grandson, my husband found him doing crane style qigong. As he practiced, he moved his arm from right to left, the rhythm losing crescendo, then slowly diminuendo down, arms swinging above his shoulder the sound of crackling like rain [196] drops thin and even. After watching him practice qigong, my husband said to him, “Brother, your rhythm has improved a lot.” They both laughed heartily, seeming very happy. My husband then thought about once a long time ago, hoping to thank them for trying his new piece of music, he had invited them all for a bath. The bathhouse steam rose in front, eyes were getting moist. The way back home made my husband have all kinds of feelings well up in his heart (百感交集), little by little he did not want to return home. He stayed in Shanghai for Chinese New Year year after year, a holiday for families to gather around. After celebrating, he would go out and inquire everywhere for news about that small city music troupe. My husband learned from Ah Xing that there was a Japanese singer that wanted to join together with his performing group, this was after one of the Chinese New Year celebrations.

Right now, outside of the window of the train where Ah Xing and Big Lin sat, the day was already dark. Big Lin was feeling a bit languid, grumbling about not having anywhere to stretch his legs, he kept trying to shift his legs into a more comfortable position. He also complained about his back being sore, making a fist and thumping the small of his back, and

yawned. His implication was blaming our group for not inviting him onto the soft bunk bed seat or an airplane which would have been a more comfortable journey. Afterwards, he acted like he didn't care, asking Ah Xing where we were going to plan to have him sleep. Ah Xing said, how about my room. At this, Big Lin's face really did change, becoming very gloomy, no longer saying anything, sat on top of his seat moving about his legs and back, making the people next to him watch him with annoyance. Later, while representing Yamaguchi Jōn and negotiating with the group, that was probably why the conditions kept being raised. Big Lin stretched his leg and back, the anger slowly draining from his face, even getting a somewhat happy expression. Ah Xing did not notice this suspicious shift. With disaster omens heavy, Ah Xing slowly sank into sweet dreams, as innocent as a child sleeping with his mouth open, softly snoring. At this time, the train arrived at the station, the lamp lights and noise shined directly at his face, the train intensely shook all of a sudden, making everyone standing sit back down, everyone sitting down stood up. The train had stopped.

The light from the platform was not enough to illuminate the dark, Big Lin felt that the lights in Shanghai were probably all out, blending the city with the dark sky. Big Lin suddenly felt a sense of evil, he thought: those years, I lead so many boys and girls into the dark small city. He thought back to how he first met our group, [197] who brought our group's recruiter cadre into his instrument room? He vaguely remembered this is a singing and dance group that came from a local opera theatrical company, the organization of the orchestra was a mess, the person who came to look for him was a stage lighting personnel, and also an organizer cadre, he even brought a little girl who played the accordian. This girl was the daughter of the culture director's comrade-in-arms friend, she was assigned to live in an impoverished Huaibei countryside. This

girl had a big head and narrow shoulders, carrying a heavy 120 bass accordion on her back, and needed to ask for help using handkerchiefs to support the belt and make it stay in place. Her finger skills were pretty good, her ear for music was not too bad, however, she lacked strength, the timbre was superficially weak, and the bellows always follow with heavy breathing noise. This kind of skill with the accordion could be found anywhere on the streets of Shanghai. However, the handkerchief on the back of the girl used to support her while carrying such a heavy instrument, made Big Lin feel compassion for her. He said, “Not bad, not bad.” He even made a joke, “Go back and eat some more, grow some physical strength.” Everyone laughed, the girl’s excitement turned her face red, as if relieved of a heavy load (如释重负). Later, Big Lin and that girl became close friends, everyone all called him “Big Lin, Big Lin”, only she called him Teacher Big Lin. Everytime she returned to Shanghai to visit family, she would bring some area’s special local product: peanut, sesame, a kind of sponge cake as sweet as honey. Big Lin dislikes accepting presents, especially this kind of small gift. However, towards this girl, Big Lin broke his own rule and accepted her presents. Afterward, when this girl grew up into a woman, she became an author. That woman is me. That was my first time visiting Big Lin’s music room, anxious and fearful, trembling with incense smoke blurring my eyes, I could not count how many people were inside that room. I felt extremely inferior, felt that everyone was wiser than me, that they were all my teachers and judges. After finishing the song, I heard quiet murmurs start up all around the room. I felt that my fate was in their hands, they could produce clouds with the hand and rain with the other (翻手为云, 覆手为雨). On this day, the fate of two children was decided, one was me, the other was Ah Xing. It was on this day that Big Lin recommended Ah Xing to our group. Ah Xing’s clarinet coming into our group, is indeed a pity due to his skill,

however his confidence was low after being rejected many times by other groups so he was willing to join. There were many reasons for his rejections, such as family members refusing, and also problems with household residence registrations. His outward appearance became more dispirited, even though Big Lin portrayed him as a talent, our group was still suspicious towards him. Also, since Heilongjiang was so far away, our group's recruitment [199] officer thought, "What point is there to going to such a faraway place to recruit a clarinet player?" Clarinets, in their view, was something that was not needed. And so at the same time that Big Lin recommended Ah Xing, Ah Xing began taking classes on symphony music, and about the use of a wooden pipe. Big Lin right now walked under the dim light of night, the stony road of the small city, his heart filled with suspicion thinking, "This kind of place, how could it have a symphony? This kind of place, does it really have a Japanese singer come?" Big Lin was born and raised in Shanghai, never leaving Shanghai as a child. His family lived in the back of Shanghai's flourishing downtown streets, leading to the crisscrossing roads. They often walked on foot for a very long time, to the Bund (in Shanghai), leaning over the breakwater along the river bank, behind them were buildings from the colonial times, steamboat steamwhistle tooting sailing into the river bank from the ocean, the customhouse sounding the alarm from the bell for the time, reverberating along the surface of the river, especially during the moment when the sun sets, the sound of the bell and the setting sun together envelop the city, fate approaching. Children would develop wild ambitions, wanting to be the owner of this city. He went from the huge city of Rome styled columns beneath the columns walking back and forth and playing hide-and-seek with the soldiers on duty. Lofty rise like Europe's historical artistic style building towering under the sky of Shanghai, the children with ambition would think: This is my city, this

is the only city. all the cities outside of this city, according to them they don't count as cities.

Later, he was stationed at the school of music, the school let him have the music building, which was the blockhouse of the city he captured, the residential quarters, which in former days were given away as concessions to foreign powers, was now used to decide the fate of boys and girls, where within the snap of his fingers Big Lin could decide if they would fly or be ash. Sometimes he played it like chess, arranging these boys and girls from outside Shanghai to be put over here, or arranged over there. Right now, coming into this inner China city, he resented that the street lights were too dark, night was too quiet, and all was quiet and still. He joked about how the streets of this city appeared and disappeared cattle, sheep, donkeys, and the like, the howling of the chickens, this comforted his disappointed mood. He thought towards Ah Xing: How unlucky is he! And so, his attitude towards Ah Xing became a lot warmer. Many years in the future, he assumed command within the army, to set the world to rights in a pleased-with-himself state of mind, slowly coming back. And then negotiations regarding the Japanese singer Yamaguchi Jōn and our group working together and the terms of contract started.

The negotiation carried on for three days, with them arguing back and forth. Yamaguchi Jōn's tape was played many times, just as [199] the negotiation from both sides felt body and mind tired out, they listened to her voice as they rested. Listening, her voice was between a pop singing and artistic singing, her voice was not flat like the common pop singers, but was much more well rounded. However, pop singing was the kind of like crying to your ears, it was like not having enough air. Her voice was more high-spirited, bringing the music of revolution and its lingering sound, singing pop songs with a strong beat was good. However, waiting until she really wanted to sing a pop song with a strong beat, would reveal the value timbre with the

greatest of care, she refused to be uncontrolled, often being careful with the entire music. This showed traces from her receiving instruction in bel canto, making her pop song have a strong beat could not reach frenzied effects. They listened to the sound-recording while passing along a picture of Yamaguchi Jōn. The picture of Yamaguchi Jōn made her appear more experienced than her actual 22 year old self. The corner of her eye already showed wrinkles. She appeared to smile often. One moment they said she looked like this person, another moment saying she looked like that person. They put the negotiation on the side for now, all looking a bit excited. The woman in the picture somehow touched them, making them not bear to let it go. Big Lin even brought out some information, about how Yamaguchi Jōn captured the newcomer award at some audiovisual company holding the Grand Prix, and he had Yamaguchi Jōn's cassette tape advertisement, along with her also taking part in some Church charity meeting's programme. Big Lin arranged these papers here, and then arranged them there, explaining this, explaining that. He took the Japanese trending singing circles and exaggerated into a life-or-death arena, which highlighted Yamaguchi Jōn's achievements. He portrayed Japanese notes as if he was like a Japanese person himself, when talking about China even using "you all, you all" to replace "us". He said: Japan is not like how China is, with pop singers are as few as morning stars. Japan, at night, has a whole sky of stars appearing, yesterday's stars are not today's stars. today's stars are not tomorrow's stars, the rankings list changes three times in one day. Elvis Presley, John Lennon, Masashi Sada these Kings of Songs' time is already past, and being able to stay in the circle of singers is by no means easy. People open their eyes every morning, and will always ask: Who is a star singer? At night, people will be in weary mood. Singing stars are like fireflies, they have a one day and one night lifespan, this is today's Japanese circle of singers, this is today's

singer circles in the world. Big Lin talking about Japan, made everyone's mind well up with a solemn and stirring intense feeling, it was like he was no longer Big Lin, but instead he was the prophet of the world standing at the peak of a mountain. He seemed to not only be representing Yamaguchi Jōn in the negotiation with our group, but also representing an open world [200] where he was the only announcer for the nation. Big Lin painfully thought to himself: How could you people know about the outside world!

The circumstances of the negotiation talks were told to my husband by Ah Xing. On the discussion table, Ah Xing was just the supporting role. The director of the group hoped that Ah Xing could, at the time when both parties refuse to budge, serve as the mediator between both, but Ah Xing wrongly thought mediate was just echoing this now, the next moment echoing that, and so he was easily swayed and went whichever way the wind blows, favoring both the right and left sides, making the discussion take even longer. He often did not wait to understand the entire situation from each direction before hurriedly chiming in with his thoughts, making both parties baffled, as if a third party had appeared with different interests and views. In short, Ah Xing increased confusion within the negotiation. the difficulty increased, delaying it longer, and from three days it was dragged on to 5 days. Not until the negotiation entered the last stage, when Big Lin put forward some problems with the music group, that Ah Xing had a clear stance. He advocated that the music group had to rehearse, orchestras that do not rehearse would have no way to work together with the Japanese singing star. Both parties agreed with his suggestion, however he did not notice that. He gave examples of the disadvantages of not rehearsing and the advantages of rehearsing, summed up as, one path is correct, the other path is unorthodox. He suddenly thought back to many years back one time an unsuccessful rehearsal, with the

conclusion being how not seriously rehearsing is worse than not rehearsing at all. He talked for a long time, when the negotiation could have ended that afternoon, and instead pushed it to the next morning. After the negotiations were finished, Ah Xing was immensely proud, he depicted this talk to my husband as wind and cloud suddenly appearing, again turning danger into safety, mountains multiply and streams double back (化险为夷), again dark willows and blooming flowers (柳暗花明), with he himself the deciding hero. Listening to his account, my husband then recognized his literature and military talent, he said Ah Xing while practicing his clarinet, at the same time must have been idly done some light reading, *Three Kingdoms* 三国, *Water Margin* 水浒 and such.

Listening to so many matters regarding Yamaguchi Jōn, my husband unconsciously thought: Why would a Japanese star come to mainland China to perform plays, to be famous? Why not go to Hong Kong, Macao, or Shanghai? A woman from Shanghai, with the surname Yamaguchi, climbing atop the Japanese singing circles? These questions lingered inside him, I said he could go to Big Lin to ask about the actual situation, because she was recommended by Big Lin, and Ah Xing only had a small connection with her. However, when my husband heard Big Lin's name it showed dislike, he said, "I won't go." My husband's grudge with Big Lin started continuing from the earlier story. [201] I was too meddlesome and brought one of my husband's older works for Big Lin to see, wanting to hear Big Lin's opinion of them. The beginning I already said, I always called him Teacher Big Lin, even now. After seeing the work, Big Lin said: Unorthodox! And on that same day, I brought a recording of one of Big Lin's songs for my husband to appreciate, it was one of those video tape films from 1961, after listening to it he only said one word: Unorthodox! Their words, I do not know how, somehow

reached the other's ear, but from then on they both had a grudge against each other.

“Unorthodox” comment was like a stab to each other's heart, and I suspect this kind of wound is like hitting their vital area with a piercing blow. I comforted my husband saying: “What is wrong with unorthodox? Unorthodox implies a self-learned talent.” And then I told Big Lin, “Since he is unorthodox, him saying that you're unorthodox means that you are on the right path, based on correct reasoning.” However, this did not remove an iota of their grudge against each other, and gradually, my connection with Big Lin grew more and more distant, and we have not seen each other in many years.

My husband's teacher entered the Shanghai School of Music in 1955 as a student, in 1957 he was sent down to the countryside and became a middle school teacher. The place where my husband was sent to work (during rustication) was about 70 *li* away from the teacher, about once every two weeks my husband would ride a ding-ling-dang-lang (onomatopoeia for clank and clang) car, carrying on his back some red potatoes, buckwheat, and other fresh food grains, to go over there to study. He taught my husband the piano, harmony, and composition, filling out workbook after workbook. My husband's attitude when doing the workbooks was both serious and earnest, conscientious and meticulous, tight calculations, with the discipline in mind like a mathematician, one two, three, four, five, six, seven, the horizontal and verticals lines were all rational. After class, the teacher wanted to drink a bowl of wine, my husband who neither smokes nor drinks, was in charge of pouring the wine. After drinking the wine, the teacher would think back, recall his hometown- his childhood in an enemy occupied Dong Bei, in the morning standing on the playground singing “The divine light opens the universe, outside and inside of the magnificent mountains and rivers” this scene; and then think back to his time living in the

Shanghai School of Music, and also putting on theatrical plays. These stories, he would tell them over and over again, and my husband would listen to them over and over again. After my husband was familiar with one part, he would forget another part, and after being familiar with this part, would again forget the other part. However, each time he would seem like it his first time listening, paying close attention, in the middle would ask some questions as if he was listening to it the first time, this story that stirred up the hearts of people. My husband slowly realized that this was the best way to repay his teacher's benevolence, and so, [202] my husband little by little from listening to the stories over and over again was able to hear some other information, such issues with fate and life. Unconsciously, in the bottom of his heart as a boy, suddenly emerged a kind of similar to motherly love feeling of compassion. And so, while learning music, he would be the teacher's student; after learning music, he would be the teacher's mother, hearing him chatter, pouring wine for him, advising him to not overdo it. Their student teacher sentiments continued up until my husband was appointed the conductor of our music group. The opera that my husband directed 《小二黑结婚 (*Little Er Hei Marries*)》 when it was performed at his teacher's town, the teacher refused to see it, if we gave the teacher a ticket, he would refuse the ticket; giving him two tickets, he would refuse two tickets. When our music group left the town, my husband felt incomparably sad. Later, he took a special trip to pay a visit to his teacher, the teacher locked the door and refused to see him, one moment saying he had this to do, the next moment saying he had that to do. However, someone told my husband that during those two days, everyday he would go fishing at the canal, until the sun set below the western mountains. Afterwards, when my husband left the music group, drifted to my city Shanghai, and from this time on left behind all his music endeavors. Later, on one night, he

suddenly understood his teacher's feelings. After leaving the music orchestra, for a long period of time he could not go to a music concert, he could not listen to the orchestra setting the pitch. When the orchestra set the pitch, there was a peculiar feeling, like the sound became a living thing, of every description, looked around running everywhere, as if twisting one's heart. Music, with regards to teacher, my husband, and Ah Xing, what in the world is it? It is like a defeated lust, affecting their feelings and emotions throughout their life.

For his teacher, my husband could not admit that he was unorthodox. My husband even said: My teacher's harmony teacher was so-and-so; teacher's composition teacher was so-and-so; my teacher's piano teacher was so-and-so. Those were all authorities not found within music circles, and he was the student of a student of the authorities, it was passed down to him from orthodox teachers, knowledge was passed on like this, from teacher to teacher. I also thought about Big Lin's teacher, following this logic, Big Lin is also an orthodox teacher's knowledge being passed down. However their path is not the right course, rather it is along the unorthodox path, this can be said as "unorthodox" right. During a time where culture was becoming extinct, as a result of the power and influence of one woman's romantic habit, after passing through an unorthodox propaganda, in the end became real symphonic music. This was how I got renamed many years past, some time within 1966 to [203] 1976, in China a great mass fervour for symphonic music came out. Almost within a night, remote areas of inland China the sound of western musical instruments could be heard, many people took their children to professors of music, hoping to escape the fates of rustication and unemployment. Many of the educated youth like me from Shanghai, arriving at inland cities, became much sought after teachers. Twenty-seven *yuan* for a violin lesson, became great demand commodity, so much so that every

middle school and primary school purchased western instruments, becoming Mao Zedong ideology propaganda symphony orchestra. Model orchestra was like guns, shooting symphonic music into thousands upon thousands of remote areas, my husband is an example created out of this symphonic orchestra music movement. It was during this movement that my husband was able to grow in the direction of a young intellectual, and also everything he hoped for and was enthusiastic about was placed on top. Just as the heat wave from this new movement like our heat wave sweep across, never coming back, he really became one who does not own anything in the world. The song about not having anything to one's name should actually be sung by my husband. Yet again the song became a lost, it became more miserable, more sorrowful, much more unknown. And I, became more crafty, I took advantage of the receding tide, looking for the relics on the beach left behind by the tide, the dead starfish, or the empty shells, became my personal collection. Later when they improved their works, this became my future occupation: a writer. This was how I saved myself when I had nothing, made me have qualifications to call vigorously the save oneself movement.

Big Lin brought the Japanese singing star Yamaguchi Jōn and our group together and signed the contract, afterwards he returned to Shanghai by himself. Arriving in Shanghai it was around morning, the sky was filled with rosy clouds of dawn. Yamaguchi Jōn was about to arrive from Japan. Our song and dance ensemble was bordering on bankruptcy while both anxiously and patiently waited for her arrival. The building for our music, for the first time in many years, had a working atmosphere, people walked hurriedly passing through the corridors, going to the director's office to report their work. The door to the director was surrounded by a map, as if discussing major battle strategies and tactics, laying down route north or south that the group will

go. While still forming a general idea from the strategic thinking, they finally gained something, and that is, their entrance should be those not too large and not too small cities. In the cities that were a bit larger, news is quite fast, they understood chasing the newest trend, a moment Paul Moria, one moment Michael Jackson, The Beatles was often their topic, [204] “Elvis Presley’s feeling and love” these kinds of videotapes were circulated among themselves, one that is young and inexperienced star cannot draw their attention. But in the small cities and towns, Japan is so far away from them, this kind of place, will be an attraction, they will say: Japan? What kind of a thing Japan? Only middle sized cities would not understand the world that well, would cherish and appreciate this performance, Japanese star Yamaguchi Jōn would pique their interest. And so, Yamaguchi Jōn should follow this path with those cities that are not too large nor too small. But about whether they should head north or south, they argued for a while. Supporting going north, people said, the people in the north compared to those from the south are more generous, ten yuan, eight yuan ticket prices is not below what they would pay; those supporting going south said, the middle sized cities are closer together, from small profits but quick turnover principle starting off, the result in the south would be better than the north. They each claimed they were on the right side, while precious time was slowly being consumed, Yamaguchi Jōn’s arrival was imminent. Afterwards, the director said, thinking over Japanese star Yamaguchi Jōn was born in the southern city of Shanghai, she would be more suited to the southern climate and land, and so it is only right to go south. At this time, it was as if everyone just learned that Yamaguchi Jōn was actually a Chinese person, stunned and a bit disappointed. Actually, initially Ah Xing already said Yamaguchi Jōn was an overseas Chinese, however for a long time past, people kept calling her “Yamaguchi Jōn” “Yamaguchi Jōn”, commenting about this thing, and

slowly it faded from memory. People still more or less generally felt goodwill, treating Yamaguchi Jōn into a purely Japanese person. And when faced with reality, a kind of feeling similar to disillusionment and moodiness started to arise, this foreshadowed what was to come.

The route south was determined, the Japanese star Yamaguchi Jōn would go along Beijing and Shanghai, city by city getting closer to Shanghai. Finally whether or not to go to Shanghai, was undecided for the time being. Our group and Yamaguchi Jōn both decided on this question, all had some hesitation, it was hard to decide. The performance route had to be approved by Yamaguchi Jōn's representative Big Lin. In line with the earlier talks and conditions, in these cities, Yamaguchi Jōn would stay at an inn, and someone specifically assigned to be responsible for her daily life. Whoever was to look after Yamaguchi Jōn was decided upon during the last few days, our dance performer Xiao Hua was picked. Xiao Hua did not say anything face to face [205] but behind our backs would curl her lip and never stop chattering, saying: What is so great about a star from Japan? It could even be an outdated singer! When she gets here, she would probably tear the skin from a tiger and use it as a flag. Her speech, in someplace like our group, was extremely provocative. In the recent ten to twenty years, those people that were left out in the cold had their morale aroused, and those that performed on the same stage as her had a lot of issues. "Pulling the skin from a tiger to make a large flag" this phrase stayed in the bottom of their heart, they said: "Is it not because of the Japanese? Is the moon in China not as round as the moon in other countries? And Japan is the worst of all the foreign countries, they used military force to invade us, they are our number one enemy! An anti-Japan sentiment spread quickly throughout our group, people looked down at our director, like he was a traitor to our country, and they did not treat Ah Xing any better, since he

took on a role similar to a traitor. This anti-Japan movement, in later time when Yamaguchi Jōn and Xiao Hua met each other, would manifest itself in many trifle matters. Ah Xing could not be any more dull to know that others were discontent with him, he told my husband: this is called the less trouble the better; the less trouble the better is such a wonderful philosophy! His trip to Shanghai was especially for Yamaguchi Jōn and our group, at the same time, he also came to attend to some private matters.

In our city Shanghai, these recent years rose a kind of family vocal performance grand prix, sponsored on television, once a year, the winner receives a prize: A Yamaha electric keyboard. And so, with the grand prix and Yamaha became heard, many families were excited due to this grand prix, working hard at rehearsing. The chances of winning a prize being so low, people dared not even think about winning, they only wanted to participate to add some color to their lives. They did not just want to bring some happiness to their homes, but to also bring happiness to those families close to them. When they saw that these same families were also participating in the grand prix, they were overjoyed, they would excitedly point at the television screen saying to their families: Look, I know that person! And then, their family on the next day at work in the office, or the workshop, or the store counter would tell their fellow workers: Yesterday the people in the television, is someone our family is acquainted with. Within these ordinary people suddenly arose a star singer, making them dispel the willingness to be mediocre [206] in the hearts, increasing a sense of honor. Just like how this provided a means for ordinary people to be known, in our city, they were like bamboo shoots after spring rain. Karaoke became popular, everyone expressed their desire and there was a way to realize it, each person wanted to be the one on stage, the problem arising next is: Who would appreciate these stars? What do stars

depend on to live? Yamaha family singing in grand prix can say they are basic singing stars, they uncovered the prologue to the withering away of singing stars. Of course, this is later part of the story, for the time being we will not discuss it. Within the groups competing in the Yamaha Grand Prix was a Bai Ming family, they had within the last year became known in Shanghai, anyone who said the word “Yamaha”, would immediately know you were talking about them. But during the second year, another family rose, when their name slowly diminished, the few brothers and sisters, had the idea of making a performance group. All together they had three brothers and two sisters, born starting from the 1966 to 1969 era, before living in Mao Zedong Thought era propagating on stage. That year caused a sensation in the Shanghai with a large scale song and dance “Advance, Chairman Mao’s Red Guards”, they had two members participate in the performance. The five of them were experts in performing, instrumental music and dance they could all do a little bit, the eldest had also written some ballads and small plays. The Red Guards movement after disappearing into dust and clouds, they had two who joined the army, at the division headquarters or propaganda, they were sent off, they were cut off for a few years, joining the commune and production brigade propaganda team; another one worked at a Shanghai factory, becoming a member of the labour union propaganda team. That was during the time when political reform was surging forward, they were a generation of writers and artists raised by propaganda, they had fighting traits, they could rapidly effectively give service if needed, carry battlefield art troupe and mounted troupe (Inner Mongolia) characteristics. At the same time, can not deny, in that cultural life financially difficult time, they gave several contributions for the entertainment of the people, during the time in propaganda team after some years to now, sometimes, when we think back to that year the red flag was waving, the loud and

clear singing on the street stage, can't help the surging fervour, romanticism battle zeal again filled our minds. Especially in the present age, the advancing economy and buildings make us feel more and more nervous, machinery, printing blocks, exhausted, making every second count, these changing years freedom and poetry feeling came to attract us. Concerning many commoners, not knowing anything kids would say, the major trait of the revolution, is the street literature and art. Bai [207] Ming family grew up and developed into artists with this background, their artistic ability nowadays is already yesterday's chrysanthemum flowers, popular music and its sentimental music taken over the entertainment stage for the people, "stage" this word has slowly been replaced by "market". The Yamaha Grand Prix singing competition gave them another opportunity. Their simple and unadorned performance brought a feeling of fresh air to people, and so, they set up a family singing group from the idea of the eldest brother. In half a year they attained a jazz drum, electric guitar, and a electric keyboard. All they were missing was a saxophone. Through connections, they found Ah Xing, and they agreed to let Ah Xing be their sworn brother, thus he was added to their sibling singing competition group. Working together with this kind of vocal performance group during his off hours, to Ah Xing was unwilling to do. However, their plans to go to Shenzhen to win interested him. Ah Xing thought: Right now there is not a place making art, and Shenzhen is such a special place. He heard many people talk about Shenzhen, everything there was very peculiar, giving the feeling of a mirage. Slowly, Ah Xing put his hopes of art placed onto a place like Shenzhen, someday having to go to Shenzhen lingered in his thoughts. Right now, the brother and sister singing competition group came to find him. Ah Xing met with them, afterwards he went to

Hongqiao Airport (Shanghai) to receive the Japanese singing star Yamaguchi Jōn. The next day in the morning, he got on the 8:30 train and left.

It was late autumn, Yamaguchi Jōn put on a white skirt, put on a pair of small white sandals. She seemed thinner than the pictures, a bit more pale, with faint green around her eyes. She carried two large heavy suitcases, in her hands was a leather handbag with some scattered items. And so Ah Xing became a labourer, dragging the suitcases along the rugged path. The small wheels under the suitcases two broke in an instant, pulling tipped the suitcase. Ah Xing appeared to have a fight with the suitcases, struggling before reaching the platform, and got onto the railway carriage. Ah Xing's seat was a hard seat, he helped Yamaguchi Jōn settle down, before going back to his seat. The railway carriage with soft seats, most of its passengers were rich small business owners, using large snakeskin bags to carry their goods, fingers wearing pure gold rings, ignoring the "No Smoking" signs, puffing away on their cigarettes, spitting sputum and saliva everywhere. The white dress of Yamaguchi Jōn sitting in the middle, [208] was like a daffodil among a roaring ocean. After Ah Xing left her, he went to see her again two times in the evening and at noon. One time she was sleeping, wearing dark colored sunglasses, with her mouth slightly open; the second time she was putting on make-up while looking at a mirror, taking advantage of whenever the train stopped shaking, little by little touching up the rim of her eye. After noon, the sunlight was disappeared from the railway carriage, with moonlight showing, the north countryside cloudy, raid clouds filling the sky, the rain clouds were like large birds, flying over here from far away other side, the train moving with great speed underneath the cloudy sky. Ah Xing stared blankly outside the window, his heart filled with a sense of shock, he did not know that this feeling is called fate, he was just thinking while frightened: A

thunderstorm is arriving. Actually, the thunderstorm season was already past, and would return next year during the summer, but Ah Xing still thought: A thunderstorm is coming.

When the train arrived, this inland city already rained for half a day, the floor was rough and bumpy, with many stretches of mud, the temperature was frigid. Yamaguchi Jōn put on a thin yellow overcoat, slightly shivering, stepping on her own feet wearing the white sandals, like a small deer moving through the mud and hurrying along its way. In the pitch dark of night, the white clothed Yamaguchi Jōn looked like a fairy from heaven, flawless and pure. She nimbly avoided the mire, her silhouette like a gymnast. Ah Xing was surprised to notice, on top of Yamaguchi Jōn white shirt and white shoes, there was not a speck of mud, while Ah Xing's trousers were covered in mud. Many people in the carriage talked about the rain, saying how it inconveniences travellers. These people looked back towards Yamaguchi Jōn, this ancient city never saw a woman like her, this kind of woman that reminded them of movies and fashion. The remaining wheels on the suitcases were left in the mud, and just as Ah Xing gave up hope, the person from the group coming to pick them up saw them, and called out to them while running over. Everytime I arrive at this city, my mood is always terrible. A person walked along the deserted streets, a small street lamp shone on them, their shadows hanging. The city noise of Shanghai from the distant past, rushed forward like waves, that this was now someone else's city, and has nothing to do with me. The sorrow of losing a city filled my heart, since I was sixteen and sent to the countryside, I became depressed and weighed down with heavy heart. The summer wheat field made me feel boundless, void of any humans. I, the daughter of this city, wanted to be free [209] but there was no longer a return path, the bridge back home already broke. I miss the city, I think about it during the day and night. From when I was sixteen, a sense

of being abandoned by the city crept into my mind and body, changed my joy for the city, my self-pride and arrogant disposition, made me feel inferior, disheartened, seeing myself as three-tenths of a person. In the countryside no matter if it was sunrise or sunset I would feel sick at heart. I liked the scenery, with the sun shining along the streets, the traffic going back and forth. In the early morning at seven within a quarter of the hour, there are people who go to work, there are people who go to school, there are people who go buy groceries, there are people strolling the streets, there are people travelling on a journey, there are people returning from a trip, there are people seeking a thousand years of revenge, the coffin pulled across a heavy curtain, the newly born baby crying. The city is symphonic music, the countryside is solo performance. The people in cities are all notes in a piece of music, note with note, part (in concerted music) and part, compact unit whose effect is grand. In that year that I was sixteen, I was expelled from this symphony. Everyone boy and girl of similar age to me, were all expelled. The fate of being expelled was a shared fate for all of us students in the city. The countryside living made us feel lonely, and it was dangerous. People surrounded our house, spying on us, watching our every action, and move we make was noticed and then immediately reported. The entrance gate had to be left open, until nightfall came, otherwise if the entrance gate was closed during the day, slanders and rumours would start up everywhere. Every morning, the east dawn, the rooster would crow, the women would get up and wear their clothes, open the doors, and the day would begin. The underclothes that we brought from the city were hung outside the fence in display for everyone flowing through to see, we did not know how to conceal and hide ourselves, resist the invaders. We missed the memory of a person walking on the street of our city, with the all the people flowing around being his background, making us feel more lonely. being leisurely

and carefree. The quiet black night in the countryside made us thoroughly bored, a year a season of wheat, soybeans made it hard to get past the long days. On top of the assembly line a steady stream of products made us feel elated, all-embracing department store, was someplace we had to go every week. Our group of quarrelsome children, did not hope to run wild, the path of history moving forward, there was no retreat. We want to return to the city! Under the burning sun of the countryside and the cold dark night, we mutually [210] supported each other. Had the resolve to go back to out, that is how we got past the depressing and suffering days and nights. The idea of returning back to our city filled our hearts, we would not forget during the day, nor during the night. For returning to the city, we fought amongst ourselves, relatives became enemies. Recruiting workers and students information became the bugle call of the war, each battle made us tired and exhausted, worn out in body and soul, and opposed by all and deserted by one's friends, becoming utterly isolated. I knew I was not a match for my fellow countryman, because from I was little I lacked exercise, my life was too soft and sweet. I always cut myself off from the masses, being a set my myself. During third period of the day in class, my housemaid would often be there, sent from my mother, to take me home, help me wash and change clothes, go participate in a grown-up evening party, or a grown-up banquet. The old housemaid never called my name correctly, "Little sister" "Little sister" was what she called me. To thoroughly root out the exploitive system in Shanghai, "little sister" form of address was equivalent to "young lady". My parent's lifestyle enveloped me. let me believe, the discipline and honor of the school just had superficial meaning. Living in my parent's society, that was during the most flourishing time of my parents, their world was glorious and magnificent. I bathed in their light, I left from my own society. Now, the sunshine disappeared, I could only

enter my own world, like a late student, or a person who joins the class mid-semester. I did not have the ability to get along with kids my age, I did not know how to share a bed with them, use the same stove, I did not know how to let other students enjoy my candy or enjoy their candy. Without anyone beating me I left the competition to return to the city. I had to carry my accordion on my own, going everywhere to sign up for literary and artistic institutions. All my exams, did not bear any fruit, others were more skillful than me, my ability was not good enough, impromptu accompaniments experience was poor, they also disliked that I left right after taking the exam, did not make friendly contacts, make friends greet teachers. I went to many small and medium cities song and dance ensemble examinations, run into a stone wall became routine, The fate of losing binded to me and did not let go, I hardly believed in my own ability. Losing did not make me disheartened, I decided that this was fate making it so. The reason why I kept practicing my accordion and taking examinations, was because other than that, I could not do anything else, the agricultural lifestyle I was upmost weary of, I could not bear the heavy task. Every morning when I open my eyes I think: What should I do today? Today I will practice accordion and take examinations, I would say to myself. Later I met Big Lin, he changed my fate. How he changed my fate, I do not know it it was a good thing or not. Because, when I entered our group [211] after half a year, Shanghai set a 30 point article, ruling that people in the same situation as me who were rusticated student, could settle back in Shanghai. Since I just recently left the countryside, I was no longer a rusticated student, the policy had nothing to do with me. I again lost my city Shanghai, everytime I go visit relatives time period ends, when arriving at the little inland city, my mood was terrible.

However I do not blame Big Lin, because it was him who let me taste the joy in fulfilling my wishes, even if it was for a short period of time. I feel grateful for Big Lin treating me like a sibling, every time his music chamber had a get-together, he would always call for me, introducing me to many people. He said that this girl plays the accordion very well, but would never have me perform in their presence, in order to avoid people being disappointed in me. He drew me into this strange circle, where everyone was playing out their dreams of music, while at the same time they were thinking about the practical uses of music and the means to make a living out of it. In Big Lin's music chamber, there was an experienced talented male tenor, who sang a piece of music from Chairman Mao's poetry called "The Fort of Mount Lou", making people's blood boil with excitement. Now he lives in South America, a country well known for their straw hats, and has learned Spanish while trying to find work. In Big Lin's music chamber I met an extraordinary mezzo-soprano woman, her singing voice was ordinary, however it was imbued with her feelings. She is now a third class film star, bustling about in exterior shooting and interior film shootings. In Big Lin's music chamber I met each and every type of person, sometimes they would act out the tragedy and comedy of romantic love, I was an observer for all these. I was different than everyone, the most basic being that, they loved music, while I just wanted to return to the city, music was my tool for returning. Also they are talents of music, and I was not, the accordion in my childhood was just a play thing, when I grew up it became my meal, I did not have any musical talents, practicing was always ineffective (I get half the result with twice the effort). Why did Big Lin think so highly of me? Many years later did I understand, within the depths of Big Lin's inner heart, was the wish to control all girls and boys.

Girls and boys like me, grew up in times gone-by in a comfortable lifestyle. We never knew the bitterness of life, in this city we lived the most elegant lifestyle and environment. We lived in affluence, without any special skills; pampered and spoiled and fond of eating and averse to work. As Big Lin watched the setting sun alongside the Huangpu River, he saw many boys and girls like this, dressed in tidy clothes, arrogant expressions, lead along by adults, during that year at the international seamen's club [212] where the marble flight of stairs had them walking up and down. We did not do anything, but were like the owners of this city. Big Lin arranged all kinds of strange things for us to do. There was a boy who played the piano, who was rusticated in Jiangxi, his body was thin and weak, he looked pale, with an impetuous expression, played the piano like the sound of ping pong. He played a piece “黄河 Yellow River”, the performer and the audience were both exhausted, puffing hard at the end. Later, Big Lin introduced him to a song and dance troupe from Jiangxi, the condition being a “Strauss” gift. Children like us, could stir up Big Lin's sympathy. He saw us being confused, in a great panic appearance, and in his mind he would gently think to himself: Look at you all like this. Generally, our skin colour showed good nutrition, fine and elegant temperaments, which made Big Lin happy. Big Lin upheld this beauty, it was a classical romanticism, since he liked style, elegant, and noble things, and has always hated vulgarity and coarseness. He hated where he lived, where women were like men using foul language, wearing their faded undershorts on their heads flapping in the air like flags. He hated that during the summer, women would wear men's tank tops, and whenever they bent over, the tank top would pull up exposing their undergarments and the sanitary belts that made him sick. Everywhere he looked were broken jars and dirty cotton waddings. Shanghai was a rainy city, every year during the rain season in March, this was a world of mud, dark clouds

shrouding the sky. During the rainy season, Big Lin was sick of the environment and depressed, day by day, night by night, waiting for the sunshine after the rain. When he sees beautiful things it would cause his heart to miss a beat. He was like a collector, taking in boys and girls like us, like buying valuables at a reduced price in markets. Seeing people like us made him relaxed and joyful, at the same time a sense of responsibility rose in his mind, he said: I will help you think of a way. Each and every one of us had faith in him, waiting for his new ideas. However I believed that Big Lin treated me differently, one time he showed me his palmistry, said my business line was complicated and very long. He said music was just my temporary transition period, there was yet another career waiting for me, and this was different than everyone, he jokingly said: I see you in a different light. Later I understood, I was different than all of them in: Others went to paddle in the sea, I owned the sea.

The Japanese star Yamaguchi Jōn stayed at that inland city's most luxurious hotel, to walk into this [213] kind of hotel, the boundary between cities disappeared, even the boundary between countries disappeared. The director, assistant director, Xiao Hua, and Ah Xing took her to her room, and sat down to exchange greetings. The director wore a three piece suit, wearing a tie, because of today's public functions involving foreigners, made serious preparations. he first expressed his enthusiastic welcome, and then apologized for the poor state of the city, at the same time pointing out how he wanted to develop this city. He kept calling Yamaguchi Jōn "miss, miss", talked endlessly without getting to the point, with some unnecessary and over elaborate formalities. Others were impatient, but they all endured it, unexpectedly that Yamaguchi Jōn interrupted the director, directly saying: It is already so late. Close people don't talk like strangers, why don't we talk about the the plans for the performance? The director all of

a sudden started to sweat, right away could not speak. The resourceful assistant director continued the thread of discourse, talked about the schedule arrangements. After discussing everything, while saying goodbye, Yamaguchi Jōn packed up her direct cutting way of talking, and became a soft spoken Japanese woman, she deeply bowed and said look after yourself, took them to the elevator. When everyone entered the elevator, right when the doors closed, she suddenly said to Ah Xing in Shanghainese: Come here tomorrow morning, I have something to ask of you. After that, the elevator went down.

Ah Xing later thinking back to Yamaguchi Jōn's request, realized that it was a trap, at the time only thought it was strange. Sitting on the train all day, she did not have anything to say to him., but here, all of a sudden had something to ask of him, what was it? The next day in the morning, Ah Xing arrived at the hotel extremely suspicious. The carpet swallowed up the sound of his footsteps, it felt like walking on top of the clouds. Without a sound he arrived outside Yamaguchi Jōn's room, like a thief. After knocking on the door, Yamaguchi Jōn came and opened it. She wore a pink morning clothes, loosely tied the waist belt, the opened collar band revealed the edge of her nightclothes. Her eyes still heavy with sleep, hazily looked at Ah Xing. Ah Xing said: You wanted me to come. Yamaguchi Jōn asked: What time is it right now? Ah Xing said, 8:30, it is the starting work time! Yamaguchi Jōn said: For me this is still midnight! This segment was in Putonghua (Mandarin Chinese). Afterwards in the midst of their conversation, Shanghainese was used, any diplomatic language was spoken in Putonghua. At this, both people stood outside the door for a while, Yamaguchi Jōn then let Ah Xing inside. Ah Xing sat on top of the couch, seeing the unmade bed, he heard the sound of water in the bath. From high up in [214] the windows looking out, could look down upon the entire city, the white

smoke coming out of the chimney, the antenna for the television broadcast could be seen far away in the mountains. When Yamaguchi Jōn walked out of the bathroom, hair wet, messily wrapped up, the smell of the fragrant soap and hot water. She sat next to Ah Xing on the couch, asked if Ah Xing smoked, Ah Xing said he had his own, she did not insist, started lighting up a mahogany colored cigarette. She had a pair of hands with slender and strong fingers holding the the cigarette naturally and unrestrained. Ah Xing somewhat could not sit still, said you asked me to come here last night, said you had a question for me, what exactly do you want? Yamaguchi Jōn looked at Ah Xing astoundedly, like someone was framing her for something. Ah Xing embarrassingly lowered his head, mumbling: did I hear wrong? Yamaguchi Jōn broadly smiled saying: it doesn't matter. Ah Xing did not know what this "it doesn't matter" referred to what "didn't matter". And then Ah Xing said he had to go, at this Yamaguchi Jōn used Shanghainese to say: Sit a bit longer! After Ah Xing sat down, once again seriously asked: you yesterday did say that you had something to ask me, or else I would not have come. He said this in Shanghainese. Yamaguchi Jōn did not reply, stopped for a little while, before asking: Why don't you return to Shanghai? Ah Xing did not know how but he let out: I want to go to Shenzhen. Yamaguchi Jōn sneered and said: You think going to Shenzhen is leaving the country! Ah Xing defended himself saying: I did not say I wanted to leave this country. This thread of conversation each line did not match the next line, but in their hearts they understood what each other meant. They became silent, each thinking about their own worries, a kind feeling between old friends and acquaintances meeting in a foreign land developed between them. Ah Xing sick at heart thought about: That year the people from Shanghai who came here together have all separated and dispersed.

Ah Xing thought back to when they rehearsed *Red Detachment of Women*, the orchestra half was filled with rusticated graduates from Shanghai. This was when Ah Xing and I entered the group. For the sake of rehearsing *Red Detachment of Women* our group looked everywhere for recruits, many types of talents were found and formed a group. This was the golden age of our group, other than replacing the piano with a harp, the model opera score, from beginning to end photo composed it. Among us there were a few who were sons and daughters of public figures in music of Shanghai, some came from attached primary schools to conservatory (of music), while we went up mountains into the countryside separated throughout north and south of China, at this we walked together. The director gave each of us issued papers saying we were from this province, commune, brigade [215] third level certificate, and in the countryside found a distant relative to each of us. The director said: As long as the registered permanent residence is of this district, the song and dance group could go recruit and then register them in the same district. We had faith and transferred our residence, the temporary residence being set to our distant relative's home. And then we felt at ease sitting in the orchestra pit, performing the entire *Red Detachment of Women*. The prelude made everyone excited, the climax of life was probably just like this. Ah Xing felt an extremely satisfied sense of recompense, he felt that all his past failures did not amount to anything, and that he could now justify all the time he spent practicing his instrument. Ah Xing up until now could not listen to *Red Detachment of Women* music, once hearing it his eyes would brim with tears. He persistently took great pleasure in the model opera, with his mentality being the opposite of the entire nation's at the time. In the orchestra pit, loyally playing his own part of the music the happiness time was gone forever, symphonic music then returned to the minority. The masses sang loudly the popular piece. *Red Detachment of*

Women epilogue was finally finished performed, at this time, our group found out, the Education Bureau gave an empty cheque, what was 20 people became 10. On one hand the 20 of us when unified, hold off the external forces; on the other hand each shows off his or her special prowess. The result, 10 names remained in the group, the other 10 went to work in a collective ownership knitting mill. Thanks to a friend of my father who had a friend in the military, who held an important post in the education bureau, and so I was able to stay in the ownership by the whole people group that we had. This was our group orchestra first became divided, and was also the first time us companions from Shanghai were divided. Afterwards, we kept dividing and dividing, making us numb to our sense of looking forward to our hope and happiness spirit. Ah Xing was the last of our group, left in this unlucky group, which was the reason why his clarinet was changed into a saxophone. Ah Xing's aspirations, was to join a symphony orchestra, unorthodox or orthodox was not that important to fuss about. He was like a solitary wild goose that strayed away from the group, looking for the group of geese, not being able to find it there was no way to find piece. Any who has joined an orchestra were unable to forget the magnificent experience delight of playing in symphonic music, that had a kind of a thousand rivers crashing returning to the ocean momentum. Having experienced symphonic music could not be satisfied by solo performance; solo performance is just a little sorrow, symphonic music is a great tragedy. A solo performance is just a short interlude, symphonic music is life. We are just like motionless, rigorous, providing a small space to operate, combined to form a gigantic force to push them forward. All the strength in the world [216] rigorously organized and meticulous rhythm. Like rock and roll, popular music was this impromptu, at will, a simple combination of interest and pleasure, that can only lead to excitement on the surface layer. No matter how they

used electroacoustics and metal it was deafening, this type of music can only stimulate lust that is physiological, like animals reacting. The depths of human nature is stirred, and can only depend on symphonic music. Day after day we pursued a efficient life, this life is what the depths of human nature needs, and so fell into a numb state. We did not have patience and attentiveness learned through personal experience deep in one's heart that was fast asleep and not waking when needed. We only felt tired, sleepy, sick-of, depressed, wavering, these all needed deafening rock and roll to stimulate, like dying patients being treated with a defibrillator, to linger on in a steadily worsening condition. We were extremely lazy, popular music was easy to understand and its explanation increasingly simplified our sentiments. The time of symphonic music was past, all that was left was just waiting while not knowing when the next revitalization movement of symphonic music would arrive. Ah Xing was of the previous generation, he held his clarinet as a weapon in life, he practiced this weapon since the age of 10, other than clarinet he did not having anything else. Once again, not owning a thing in the world is the song sung by people in Ah Xing's generation, having a little something compared to completely having nothing was much more tragic, much more torment, more of not owning anything. It makes people vainly hope without stopping, nevertheless attempting to do one kind put up a last-ditch struggle, it makes people not achieve peace for life, nevertheless looking here, looking there; touching here, touching there, using up their whole life. Alas, symphonic music, symphonic music, those people who have experienced the excitement of symphonic music, was difficult to be stimulated. And so, this generation of people, these people could not find comfort, they lost comfort. This kind of dull and heavy life, people without comfort are so unfortunate. These people without comfort spread among the vast sea of people, one over here, one over these,

extremely lonely. Ordinary days, Ah Xing came here confusedly, once in a while, a feeling of heartbroken arrive in his heart. Ah Xing did not know the name of this feeling is “loneliness”, only secretly thinking: I am unable to get by.

Right now, Ah Xing suddenly really wanted to say something. He happily smiled and said that our music group could not be compared to Japanese music group. Yamaguchi Jōn did not answer, only smiled a little. Ah Xing then said: We are very unorthodox, I am unorthodox, I originally played the clarinet. Yamaguchi Jōn said: I know. Ah Xing thought: It must be Big Lin who told her. Stopped for a little while, [217] he said: I want to go to Shenzhen, is to look around, they needed a clarinet player there; many foreign large businesses large groups, all supported symphony orchestra; a place like Shenzhen, may be like this; right now in inland China, symphonic music did not have any “花头” meaning anymore; “花头” meaning do you know? It is a recent popular jargon in Shanghai, showing- Ah Xing just thought over this popular jargon proper definition, unexpectedly Yamaguchi Jōn yawned loudly, she used that kind of overseas Chinese specific soft putonghua said: At night I need to perform, I want to rest now. Ah Xing was embarrassed and stopped talking, looking at her. She stood up, the front of her skirt made a sound, Ah Xing kept sitting, raised his head and watched her, she was like a proud princess. Then Ah Xing stood up. She took Ah Xing outside her room, bent over and bowed saying: Good day, instantly, she changed into soft Japanese woman. Ah Xing in panic entered the elevator, because he was a bit late in entering the door clamped on him. The first visit with Yamaguchi Jōn ended. Ah Xing walked along the road back to the group, was a bit indignant, he thought Yamaguchi Jōn one moment told him to come, the other moment telling him to leave, he vowed to never visit the Japanese star Yamaguchi Jōn.

We do not know Yamaguchi Jōn living by herself during the stay in the hotel, what she did, what she thought, Xiao Hua asked her what she needed, was often locked out and refused to see her. The first time Xiao Hua did not understand the “Do Not Disturb” meaning, knocked on the door. Yamaguchi Jōn opened the door, did not say anything, just pointed at the sign outside her door. From then, as long as Xiao Hua saw that sign, even if it said “Please clean the room”, she would then turn around and leave. Maybe once or twice, she warmly greeted Xiao Hua, inquired with interest about her well-being, even praised Xiao Hua’s being pretty, this removed Xiao Hua’s prejudice against her. felt that this foreign Chinese citizen was not bad. But the next time, Yamaguchi Jōn would be as cold as ice, telling Xiao Hua to not disturb her. “Do not disturb” sign always remained on outside on her doorknob, like a protective talisman, telling everyone to stay away. The director arranged her to visit local historic sites, were all declined by her. After she entered the hotel, she never stepped foot outside of it, even when they practice, everyone brings their instruments to her hotel to practice.

Their practice was not excellent, that was because both sides were nervous, reserved, could not let go. Everyone had sentiments of being on guard against something, not knowing if the other one was better or worse, in fear of their real image [218] being seen. Both parties proceeded very cautiously, feeling out the other side. The entire night, feeling did not get better, everyone felt like they did no play their best, forming into a phase where both parties did not work together well. This result put Ah Xing in the middle between both fires. Performers complained to Ah Xing, saying he brought a false singing star; Yamaguchi Jōn complained to Ah Xing, said the the performers electroacoustics was not quality, distance from the current age. Both sides felt they were cheated, vented their anger on Ah Xing. Ah Xing once again thought

about his philosophy: the less trouble the better. Ah Xing thought about how he acted as the go-between for the popular singing star, already made clear he sunk into what a plight, to keep receiving their pent-up frustrations. The director complained a lot about Ah Xing, he unfairly thought: If we did not have Ah Xing, we would not have this problem with the Japanese singing star. During the joint practices at night, the director could not sleep peacefully, he thought about how this time he risked everything on a single venture! “Risking everything on a single venture/putting all his eggs in one basket” this phrase reverberated through his mind all night.

Ah Xing was in a sorry state, when his will and temperament depressed, he would think again about Shenzhen, Shenzhen became star of hope, during this gloomy stage of his life, shined Ah Xing’s lone and wretched heart. He thought: No matter what you all do, in any case I am going to leave to Shenzhen. During practice, he was there physically, but another place in mind and heart, on one side blowing the saxophone, on the other side thinking about Shenzhen. In the still of night, he quietly crawled out of bed, not turning on his light, felt his clarinet case under the window. He opened the case, piece by piece assembled it, pressing his fingers on the keys, the keys creating a scraping sound, glittering in the moonlight. He felt the keys bringing a slight chill to his fingers, a burst penetrating his heart miserable rose within his heart. In front of him suddenly appeared a 10 year old boy, just as school lets out in the afternoon at three o’clock, facing the window in the garret unceasingly playing triplets. In the backyard children were playing “Cops and robbers” “We are all wooden people” “Old wolf old wolf what time is it” each and every game, the shrieks and noise. This scene surprised upon him, he could but feel pained, bent his waist. He pressed his face against the ice-cold clarinet, he felt himself becoming suddenly becoming an infant, helpless soft and weak. He this way face against clarinet, bent

over, he stayed in this uncomfortable position for a while. This posture was unsightly and hurt his heart and lungs. In his heart he said: If it were not for you; if it was not for you! He thought about being 40, yet was still all on his own, the clarinet was his only companion. Other people said: This person is so odd! He again thought back to [219] his home in Shanghai, not even three days past without arguing with his parents, not knowing why, Each fit would last several days without talking, passing in and out, like a stranger. When his temper was fierce, he would not eat his mother's cooked meals, go outside on the street and eat dumpling soup at the vendor's stands. Coming into door leaving through the door, would slam the door loudly. His father came to the end of his patience, went to find his teacher, asked his teacher to find out what was wrong, ask what his complaint towards his parents were. While the teacher talked with him, he lowered his head, taking a long time before saying: you don't know. In this vast moonlit night, Ah Xing again thought about his teacher, he suddenly from the bottom of his heart a sentence extremely sick at heart: Teacher you taught me all for nothing.

Ah Xing was the kind of person to be tossed off track by the turns of history. He defined his life too narrowly. He seemed to be an idealist, but was actually muddle headed and unaccepting of changes. This type of person lacks the ability to change their actions according to the circumstances, standing as firm as a pine tree, yet without the flexibility of a willow tree. They would rather follow one path until dark, and refuse to draw back. They also do not have a clear view of things, not knowing what to do during this age, what to do during that age. He does not know that the times are everyone's, ideals are each person's, each person's ideals must submit to everyone's times, can be compared to Communist Party within the few members who obey the majority. What he must never lack, once lacked would be extreme terrible and that is:

He is but a nobody resisting against the times, that is overrating oneself, like a mantis trying to obstruct a chariot, an ant trying to shake a tree, like an egg hitting a rock, in the dictionary of Chinese idioms there are dozens of phrases that describe the wide gap between these two forces. He does not understand, we are all insignificant, persistently meet the turbulent times, today is one kind, tomorrow is another kind, we must give it our all, to adapt and to follow, or else become rubbish in history. Ah Xing's fault is that he did not see the world with both his eyes, only saw himself. He did not see the noble symphonic music era already past far away, the recreation activities of the common people fashioned after the world. He insisted on some people deal with his art, the others come to enjoy, and yet did not know walking together in the artistic path turned the tide of history. By himself resisting the tide, like Don Quixote still having symbol farming society with the pinwheel, to engage with his imagined enemy, Ah Xing did not even have a pinwheel, he could not get through himself, using his own life and his own feeling of being wronged, to but the blame [220] on his own family. In this world, other than himself, he only has his father and mother. He made up his mind to go to Shenzhen. He thought Shenzhen was a cluster of wealth, could it really not support a symphony orchestra? Shenzhen was still a free place, registration or permanent residence was not a problem. Whatever was said about Shenzhen, he only gathered the good things about it, take the cream, discard the dross. Shenzhen became more and more glorious in his heart. So, he suddenly had a worry, worried that the older brother and little sister vocal performance group would, while he was not there, find another saxophone player to be their brother. He then wrote a letter to my husband, asking my husband to go find the brother and sister vocal performance group, to make sure in advance again. My husband went to a remote place Tianlin new housing development to find Bai Ming siblings, all

around was farmland, toads croaking non stop. The light of Shanghai in the horizon glimmered, like a faint flame. My husband looked all around in each building, before finding the one he was looking for. This evening only the oldest brother was home, the two younger sisters were away, the other two brothers, one was at Lanzhou army, another was at the capital Beijing iron and steel works, currently waiting for vacation. Their parents were plain workers, did not talk much, when people came, close the doors to their rooms. According to what my husband said, the oldest brother was hard pressed to avoid giving a feeling of exaggeration, and indulged in exaggerations, with his speech filled with untrue factors, using the popular words, with some “大兴(going in for something in a big way)”. “大兴” this word rose, it is said it has a long history origin, first came from “imitation goods”, bringing commodity economy trait. The oldest brother spoke of Shenzhen in a brilliant view, but by husband thought, someone like him, if he said something was 80%, then it actually means 50%; if he said there was 100% hope, then only 30% is left. My husband mentioned Ah Xing’s situation, asking whether or not they should sign a paper contract, both parties would have evidence. Oldest brother Bai however smiled, said: Us brothers who were rusticated still need to discuss this? This phrase made my husband experience on a grand and spectacular scale the Red Guards Using irregular means to gain ends and the turbulent rustication campaign, comrades with comrades, students with students, “If in this world one has an understanding friend, the the ends of the earth seem like next door” deep feeling, he did not bring up the contract anymore. But as he left he Bai residence, suddenly he felt unease, he thought about how in this world public morals were declining day by day, public morality is not what it used to be, he thought: dear brother, we will work out the accounts later. He rode his bike home, however, the night got darker, crows [221] clouds covered up the moon, he was

never able to find the Bai resident house. He went through all the buildings, then went on the road back home. This time going to find Bai Ming siblings, gave him an ominous premonition about them going to Shenzhen, he felt ill omen thick and heavy.

Yamaguchi Jōn at that small city the day of her first performance arrived. Posters were posted everywhere, the city's broadcasting station also specially announced this performance. Everyone ran around spreading the news, while telling each other some even changed Yamaguchi Jōn's name to Yamaguchi Hundred kindness, and then Shan Kou Bai Hui became Momoe Yamaguchi, because Chieko Baisho and Gao Xingjian recently performed *Happy Yellow Handkerchief* (幸福的黄手帕) in the city. This warm enthusiastic atmosphere infected all of us in group and the director, with regard to this performance renewed and filled us with faith and confidence. Instrumental performers were all eager to have a try, perform with a foreign singing star on stage. Inevitably there will be a international interest. On the morning of that day, instrumental performers stepped up their rehearsal, music deafened their ears; on the afternoon of that day, the entire group did not make a single sound, before the performance they all took a midday rest. Yamaguchi Jōn all day closed herself in her room, with "Do Not Disturb" sign hanging outside her door, breakfast, lunch, and dinner were all delivered to her room. Seeing her window from the streets, the curtain was always closed, when calling her can only hear ringing of the phone with no one picking up, she may be unplugged her phone cord. Some people felt uneasy, walked back and forth in front of her hotel, but could not receive any news about her. And so, this performance was filled with strong, intense suspense, everyone guessed: what kind of performance is this, would it be a success or failure? Yamaguchi Jōn's performance was placed at the end, when night fell, the performance started, our own singer, while singing her

first song, from the Japanese movie *Story of the Fox*: “Sun, good morning; good morning, how are you” Yamaguchi Jōn walked out of the elevator, sat in the car with the director personally picking her up. She wore a black autumn overcoat, collar upright, covering up her face. Her original full and round body in this overcoat seemed small and empty, with the appearance being thin and weak. Seeing this overcoat makes people think of mourning apparel, this increased the suspense of everyone like a ominous feeling. She got into the car, at first did not say anything, when the car was halfway, she suddenly said: It gets dark early here. Director then [222] explained this geography and latitude, she did not say anything else, all the way to the theater.

Outside the theater, there was still a group of people who were not able to buy a ticket, they did not notice the car go past them to the backyard. Backstage supporter gave her her own dressing room, Yamaguchi Jōn after entering the dressing room, closed the door. The sound of enjoyment and applause rang from the front stage, people were patiently and joyously waiting for the appearance of the Japanese star. The backstage no sound came out, people walked past her dressing room, did not say anything, talking with their eyes. A uneasy and serious atmosphere in the backstage spread rapidly, reaching the front stage. this performance suddenly became unusual, hold the balance, everyone’s action seemed a bit artificial in all seriousness, like some calamity was about to befall them. One after another successful programme, mechanically passing the frontstage, Yamaguchi Jōn appearance was getting closer and closer. Everyone saved their happiness, waiting to erupt when she would break out. Yamaguchi Jōn was so unfavourable! Theater was filled with nervous excitement, welcome famous star arrive preparation were all successful, everyone rubbed their palms, they could not sit still, wanted to be properly delighted by the thought made them very anxious, many ardour collected at the stage

below the footlights. Yamaguchi Jōn appearing on stage was so unfavourable! This in part is her own fault for creating such a mysterious atmosphere, the other part is spectators preparing to see more than what was offered. Right now, Yamaguchi Jōn is coming out.

Big Lin once said to Ah Xing, Yamaguchi Jōn had a habit since she was young, and that is not reaching Yellow River not give up. If she wanted to do something, she must finish it, by fair means or foul, any hindrance to her strength, she would recklessly get rid of. This spirit was shown during her childhood when they played games. For example when playing “Catch person” in the backyard, when she decided to catch a boy, she would chase without letting up. That boy would be faster, but her mentality of exerting all her strength to chase scared the boys. Making them shout like scared, regardless of everything, rascally run into the house, lock up the door, back to the door breathing heavily fearful. Yamaguchi Jōn broke through the window with blood running down her hand, eyes violent, hair in a mess, sticking to her sweaty neck and cheeks. That boy’s entire body shaking, legs went soft, trembling a smile. Yamaguchi Jōn rushed in front of the boy, used her blood covered fist to hit his face, grabbing his collar, dragging him back and forth. The boy was both scared and embarrassed, cackling to himself non-stop. This happened in the kitchen facing the backyard, four in the afternoon the sunlight just shone through the oil and gas misty back window, the boy smiled bending over to himself with his back against the wall, twisting himself. Yamaguchi Jōn finally hit him enough times, she did not open the door, still climbing out through the window, could only here her shout furiously: I’m not playing anymore, I’m not playing anymore! Her voice became very rough, like a man. Another time, she was playing ping pong with some people, on the open playground. Her opponent was a member of the ping pong sports team of the school, often participates in district and city each and every

competition, one-on-one, doubles all able to. However Yamaguchi Jōn already decided that she wanted to win. Her opponent at first thought it was very funny, thinking to herself what wishful thinking, daydreaming, not knowing the height of the heavens or the depth of the earth, she frivolously paddled the ball, forcing Yamaguchi Jōn run from this side to that side, that side to this side, attend to one thing and neglect another. She clenched her teeth, her complexion turned cloudy, moody, and grave. Her opponent could not but feel a bit restrained, and began proper manner and stopped drop shotting, and even sometimes driving the ball, Yamaguchi Jōn could not even touch the ball, for a period of time, she was either serving the ball or picking up the ball from the floor. Yamaguchi Jōn did not submit or yield, she really surely wanted to win. The children watching the battle one by one went home, the sky started to darken, only the two of them were left. Her opponent said: Go home! Yamaguchi Jōn said if you go home then it counts as my win! Her opponent could only continue playing. Dusk slowly arrived, all the adults went home one after another. The both of them drenched in sweat panting. Her opponent said: Count it as my lost, let me go home. Yamaguchi Jōn said: You have to really lose before going home. Her opponent could secretly let her win some points, however she found out. She was furious, used her paddle slap that other girl's face. At this time, outside noise of parents shouting for their kids to come home, as one falls another rises, the birds also returned to their nests. Quiet and deserted weather beaten playground, only the sound of the ping pongs could be heard, the triangle ceiling was dark compared to everything. The glorious school player at this dark time thought about how dangerous it was walking back home, she decided that this competition had gloomy prospects, not knowing when to end this, cannot but be choked with tears, tears spilled on the table, her

steps staggering. Finally in the end because she had no more strength, lost to Yamaguchi Jōn.

[224]

The time that Yamaguchi Jōn was born was a time of killing and plundering, reign of terror (foul wind and rain of blood), while she was running around playing in her grandmother's backyard, was when she understood the principle of being strong and capable. Her parents laboured in a Subei farm, sending her letters telling her to make a good showing, fighting for air was an abstract concept, the juvenile Yamaguchi Jōn seemed to be able to completely understand it. Each and every thing she did she wanted to be in the lead, no matter big or small. She was the “woman ruler” of the backyard, all the children called her that. The backyard games for her was as serious as life and death, she never treated anything lightly. What she hated extremely bitterly were those who did not take the games seriously, she ruthlessly dismissed them. Those that were dismissed by her gradually became new troops, played on the other side of the backyard relaxing and playing games. And so, Yamaguchi Jōn brought her group to go fight with them, chasing and wrestling them, along with name calling. The narrow playground made the sky so high and so far away, the backyard being a split in the building. All the older kids in the backyard, were like the grass squeezing out of the cracks, tenaciously holding onto life, being able to adapt to every kind of living environment. From the frequent fights in the backyard to back home, was always after it got dark. The courtyard had a small loquat tree, when the wind blew, vague, rustling noise. Yamaguchi Jōn drew back in her blankets, at the end of her blanket there was a brass hot-water bottle, with thread like steam warming her small feet. She her her grandparents talking of long standing old sayings, some mentioned her great-grandmother. Yamaguchi Jōn thought of her great-grandmother as being very beautiful, and extraordinarily intelligent, and a

pleasant singing voice. Thinking about this, Yamaguchi Jōn little soul suddenly became warmer, gentle like flame. No one talked to Yamaguchi Jōn about princes and princess fairy tales, she had no way to compare her great-grandmother as a princess, and then create many instances of a prince coming to ask for marriage. Yamaguchi Jōn compared her great-grandmother to a queen, many girls were jealous of her, hated her to death but without being able to do anything. Boys were obedient and docile to her, completely at her bidding, whatever she said, they followed. These boys and girls all brought playground pale, frail, sharp looks, nervous appearance and looks. Great-grandmother was Yamaguchi Jōn childhood's only fairytale, she was Yamaguchi Jōn never stop fighting childhood a way full of tenderness ray of light. Right now, Japanese singing star Yamaguchi Jōn is about to come onto stage.

Some people were unable to wait, a small disturbance started, someone shouted her name: Yamaguchi Jōn, Yamaguchi Jōn! She still did not come out, people were getting very anxious [225] Yamaguchi Jōn's entrance was so unfortunate!

Big Lin had even said to Ah Xing before, an incident Yamaguchi Jōn in middle school had created a vicious fight. At the same time with two other male students had the present would call it as puppy love. On Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays she would go with one of them to the movies, stroll along the streets; Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays would go with the other to watch movies, stroll along the streets. When leaving she would sing *200 Foreign Folk Songs* (外国民歌二百首) the parts about romantic love for them to hear, making them relaxed and joyful. She would secretly reveal this to both sides, her and her relationship with them, making them feel animosity against each other. Their conflict became clearer and clearer each day, she not only did not choose one of them, even doubled her indecision with one foot stepping on each

boat. Both these boys were tall and big early-matured, and both had a group of close friends who would risk their life for each other, at this point, the two armies faced each other, got into a fight. This fight was carried out in an alleyway, this alleyway was part of the industry and commerce capitalist owned, the property was searched and confiscated in the past has broken their courage, they closed their doors and windows, when they spread the brick on the wide front yard, it became a gathering place for kids who did not go home after school. As the fight progressed for a long time, both sides had serious injuries, in a towering rage, this was a fight without any rules, victory or defeat was undecided. Yamaguchi Jōn found pleasure in this, she felt like she became an empress, considered herself the best in the world. Both groups of boys bustling about crowding the front yard, she thought, these were all her servants, her captives. She thought highly of herself, extremely proud. She thought, one must conduct themselves like this, being a woman one must be like this kind of woman.

Yamaguchi Jōn since she was young towards inferior and superior boundary lines blurred, she very early on established the concepts of effects. When she wanted to go do something, what methods to use was less important, the important thing was realizing the objective. During the time she was growing up, good or bad was difficult to distinguish, the idea of virtue was divided by the class struggle. Continuing on, evil is the principle that history uses as a lever, and it was widely spread among the young philosophers, many people once realizing that this was part of history, it became a part of life. Yamaguchi Jōn among them, her actions were all based on intuition, a natural style, her speech was her weapon. Out of intense vanity, she often considered bluffing people. She did not have the concept of honour or disgrace, she was willing to try anything, as long as the result was good. She could go above or below, stoop or

stand. If her objective is set very high [226], she would begin from the very bottom. In the night of winter, leaning next to the brass hot-water bottle, listening to her grandparents talk about her great-grandmother, was the warmest night of Yamaguchi Jōn's youth. These nights softened her heart, made the real Yamaguchi Jōn produce made up fantasy, these fantasies made her harsh life become gentler. Right now, Yamaguchi Jōn has at long last appeared on stage.

The lighting shone, Yamaguchi Jōn wore a silvery white skin tight long skirt, skirt covered the stage, silver light of the stage twinkled brilliantly. Yamaguchi Jōn bowed deeply to the audience, her exposed back and shoulders appeared pale and delicate. She stood on top of the silvery pool of her dress, seemed weak. Should be said, Yamaguchi Jōn's appearance overwhelmed the audience with its long flowing silvery skirt. Her usually full cheeks became level, like a thin paper mask. Yamaguchi Jōn's entrance lacked proper overwhelming momentum, only some hesitant clapping. the electroacoustics started, lifting a wave, people slowly dispersed ardour slowly got excited again, waiting for Yamaguchi Jōn's voice. The morale among the orchestra was already warmed up from the first half of the performances, they were high-spirited and vigorous, swayed excitedly, ready to jump around. All by herself Yamaguchi Jōn overpowered their momentum, almost hopeless. Right before Yamaguchi Jōn started to sing, this hopeless feeling spread, the front stage and backstage gradually an ominous premonition, people quietly thought to themselves: Be done for the night! They were utterly groundless, yet absolutely thinking about this. Yamaguchi Jōn slowly without moving, thought to herself standing there. As if waiting for the atmosphere to increase another level. We later analyzed, Yamaguchi Jōn from this morning began, getting ready for the beginning and end. prepared her essay, have the aid of the audience, to make her stand out more. Because fans going

to hear a star sing, is actually borrowing the name of the singer to vent out their heart filled with zeal. The enthusiasm of a fan is a lot and not little only if used properly would be more than enough. Star is actually a projection of the fan, the benevolent see benevolence, the wise see wisdom (different people have different views), each person has their own view, and so, listening to a star sing, is actually the fans themselves singing. Yamaguchi Jōn knew this truth very well, she wanted to audience to hold their breath, only need her to lightly incite them, they would raise their voices and sing loudly. She suffered [227] the audience, making them become a pile of dry firewood while she can fan the flames. Yamaguchi Jōn always believed when the river rises, the boat floats high, but overlooked a different situation that happened, and that is what happens if the dyke bursts. The feeling of the fans accumulated fully, their expectations for the star increased, even harder to satisfy. That's the reason why Yamaguchi Jōn doing it this way, ordinary stars would not dare to do. Large singing stars achievement was already well known, as long as they got on stage, even without opening their mouth, can already satisfy fans. Yamaguchi Jōn over did the preparations backstage, putting herself in a dangerous situation. The feeling of the crowd greatly exceeded her, she fell into an encirclement, like the basin beneath a dyke, faced with drowning. Yamaguchi Jōn had the audience wait too long, the suspense was too strong, between her and the fans, gradually produced a feeling of hostility that no one was aware of yet, Yamaguchi Jōn's unfavourable situation was indeed very very dangerous. At the most dangerous point of time, Yamaguchi Jōn opened her mouth and started to sing, she sang a line quietly, some people heard, some people could not hear, this could not relieve the already anxious fans, the theater became restless, the disturbance increased with great speed. Yamaguchi Jōn singing voice slowly became loud and clear, but she could not catch up to the growing

restlessness. The orchestra on instinct and experience detected Yamaguchi Jōn's inability to match the mood of the audience, they gave her a hand, performed with more enthusiasm, this swayed their body to the music, became a lively dancing background. But it backfired, they accidentally stood on the side of the fans, encouraged their mood. Yamaguchi Jōn was all on her own. The light dazzling the eyes made her melt, she appeared to shrink. She understood the danger, she somehow was able to find the root of the problem and removed it, redeeming some of the night. She began to sway her body, stamped her foot, amplified her voice, moving the atmosphere back to the peak.

Big Lin told Ah Xing, Yamaguchi Jōn all her life came across three dangerous situations, they all had to do with fire and water (two things diametrically opposed to each other). The first one was when she was still an infant, living in the Shanghai Music School instrument room. One night, because the fuse burned out the power went out in the whole school. This happened almost twice every three nights. People secretly using the electric stove very many, fuse kept burning out, everyone prepared with candles, to light when the electricity went out. At this time, the school's candle flickered, [228] making people think about peaceful days, this city would hold many birthday parties. When the electricity stopped due to the fuse, the sound of instruments could be heard, rising one after the other. People at the head of the stairs, the antechamber carelessly lay aside piano people sat down, opening the piano cover, playing all kinds of music. In this moment, people liked to drop in, moving from this room to the next, that room to this room. When the fuse went out it was a night, few people wanted to go fix it, in the lampless night made people have thoughts thronging their mind, relaxed and joyful, made people think about distant past, when mankind hunted and gathered for a living. Yamaguchi

Jōn's parents lit a candle next to her bed, and then went outside, went to someone else's room and forgot their home and duty, they did not go back for a long long time. Unexpectedly, wind tipped the candle. The table cloth was full of candle wax stains, immediately caught on fire. The fire spread slowly from the tablecloth to the bed-curtain, bed curtain caught on fire. Yamaguchi Jōn was fast asleep and did not wake up. People walked over from the street, seeing the pitch-black no power building, there was a window brightly lit with flames, strange and beautiful. Some people passed by from the corridor, seeing the dazzle of the flames from the crack in the door, push opened the door, stunned to see a baby under the tent of flames sound asleep, this is a fire baby! The person was seized with terror for a second, thinking about this, then screamed. The second time she was in danger, Yamaguchi Jōn was a third grader in elementary school. In the winter, she and a fellow student went to take a bath in a public bathhouse. Public bath houses had many people who were living difficult times, many weak and spoiled adults and children never went the a bath house. There, you need to be able to wait patiently, endure the damp and hot suffocating, as well as the odor of human bodies. In the winter the cotton-padded jacket lining covered many days the body gave a sweet and sour smell, making people stifle their nose. After that, you have to put up with a sense of shame, being naked in public, walking into the steaming bath house. At this time, you will see each and every kind of ugly body, beautiful bodies were covered up by the vast majority of mediocre bodies submerged. This is a shocking picture, a weak soul could not bear this picture. These bare human bodies did not know shame squeezed through here squeezed through there, fighting for the shower nozzles. So after removing a sense of shame, we must also have the strength to fight. In the winter those people taking a shower by far competed for the shower nozzle for more often,

some tenfold, many people encircled a single shower nozzle, you must remove your scholarly dignity swept into the dust, it will be exposed. Otherwise [229] you will always only come into contact with the water droplets spraying from other people's body. In the 1950's and 1960's, many people bathed at their own house, we wiped clean the bath, went to the large kitchen range and asked 2 buckets of water, the hot faucet on top of the bath has long been a decoration, the business of kitchen range was thriving. Hot water from the cracks in the cask slowly sent out steam, using a self made wooden cart pushed on top of the deck, kitchen range always at the entrance of the deck. Right now, more and more people used the public baths, like Yamaguchi Jōn generation of children, always bathed in the public bathhouse. One day, Yamaguchi Jōn was able to snatch a shower nozzle, she excitedly twisted off the faucet, unexpectedly jet of scalding water came out. This incident left a scar on her thigh. One more calamity was from her Grandmother's hot-water bottle, like a soldering iron, left a mark on the underside of her foot.

Right now, the audience stopped forming heavy upsurge, Yamaguchi Jōn was far from being their match, however her first song was not over yet, she had three songs to sing in total. The three songs, the first one was faster paced and enthusiastic, the second song was slow and emotional, the third song was a frenzied pop song, this was similar to symphonic music third movement. However, Yamaguchi Jōn used up her enthusiasm in the first song, she could not push the atmosphere to the peak, she knew that if the atmosphere does not reach a certain height, along with losing the basis for the slow emotional song, she originally wanted to maintain a feeling of peace and slowly brew their feelings, before performing the last dash. And while the atmosphere was fatigued and weak, gentle and slow second song even more lowered the excitement of the audience, making the final dash thoroughly fail. After the first song was

finished, Yamaguchi Jōn made a split decision to sing differently, she used the intense mood sing the emotional song, making people find everything fresh and new, the mood of the audience slowly became stable, revealing a sense of reconciliation between the singer and audience. As things having reached this stage, Yamaguchi Jōn made great efforts was similar to tearing down the east wall to repair the west wall (reinforce one place at the expense of another), she temporarily tide over this crisis, but made herself at the end of one's rope hopeless situation, and that was: How to sing the third song? Use what to sing the third song? While singing the third song, everyone was unusually calm, this calm included danger, the people backstage were all listening on the side, expression all looking nervously at the stage. At the last part of the third song, like usual circumstances, had a quick and abrupt stop, and then the orchestra and singer exerted all their strength, like on a football field, entering the restricted zone at maximum speed running, rushing up to the peak. [230] At this tense just like the night before a great battle, from the audience in the last back row, a hiss came from the ground, like a reed swaying in the wind, maintaining under the frenzy of the singer and orchestra, in the low pitch part , continuing uninterrupted. Yamaguchi Jōn among the hiss deeply bowed, lithely withdrew from the stage. At this time, the audience sarcastic applause sounded out, this applause carried a clear ill intention or mockery, Yamaguchi Jōn told the announcer: I want to give an encore. Everyone looked at each other in blank dismay, at a loss at what to do, Yamaguchi Jōn raised her voice and again said: I want to give an encore. After saying that, straight away walked back to the stage. Afterwards she told Ah Xing: Being a singing star, cannot not give an encore.

My city Shanghai, was my husband's Waterloo. He once from a random magazine understood the present age famous composers timid and soft since their birth. He without limit

sighed with emotion discovered Qu Xiao Song first half of his life was just like my husband's: Same birthdate, same year sent to the countryside, same year joined art troupe and played the viola, before becoming a conductor. My husband and composer Qu Xiaosong path diverged in the year they signed up for an examination into the conservatory of music. In this year, Qu Xiaosong made it into Central Conservatory of Music to be a composer, my husband did not get into the Shanghai School of Music. From there, lives developed in opposite directions: Qu Xiaosong future grew more and more ambitious, glorious and magnificent; and my husband was unparalleled dark and gloomy, having a very hard life. My husband often analyzed the divergence in path between him and composer Qu Xiaosong, in vain summary experience of history. He said, he was wrong in how he made his choice, he should have chosen the Central Conservatory of Music, because always situations is Central Conservatory of Music, while Shanghai School of Music placed importance on ideology. Fact is that he lost points based on piano and solfeggio upon these two. These kind of people, other than having more ideas than others, they are lacking in everything else, and he persistently took the exam for the Shanghai School of Music, exposing his weakness. And so he picked the Shanghai School of Music first was because of my motives, and second was because central was less attainable than Shanghai, he a person from inland China small city his mentality dared not place such high hopes. Both these two reasons two profound lessons of history: first the path of struggle ought to get rid of romantic love tied up; second behaving oneself it is okay to be overambitious, bold and reckless. This was probably how my husband lost, while Qu Xiaosong's real reason for succeeding was this also. Upon this second point, [231] it also included the factor that he had an education. Qu Xiaosong came from the mountainsides, free and easy-going, full of dreams, dare

to thin and dare to act, to look at a dangerous road as smooth road, a powerful bold and unconstrained vitality, filled his body and mind; while my husband was filled with the teachings of Confucius from a small town in the Central Plains, his self-cultivation was refined, strictly disciplined himself, practical and realistic, less fantasies, cautious in his actions, conducting oneself is the foundation, harmonize and adapt to the world outside. Of course, perhaps there was a third reason, but this reason has not been proven, and that is: Qu Xiaosong is what my husband is not- he does not have the makings of a musician. This hypothetical reason is what pains my husband the most, but at the same time this reason also consoles him. He often said: I picked the wrong rice bowl, to calm himself down. Meanwhile he paid careful attention to the compose Qu Xiaosong's whereabouts and trends, Qu Xiaosong was a way for him to see what could have happened to himself. Moreover, Qu Xiaosong's successes, proved that the time in symphonic music movement, at least produced one or two outstanding figures, in our country's weak symphonic music career there are a few who can continue symphonic music, this comforted many like my husband misunderstood by history who sacrificed himself. Those days after separating paths with Qu Xiaosong, my husband many times wanted to rise from defeat, but it was unsuccessful, he sadly became aware, at this age, he could not obtain standard training, engaging in music could not be done. Music is a science, only relies on thinking, could not help him. He also saw, in the year where he and composer Qu Xiaosong took the school examinations, their generation of people last test had ended, from then on, young people endlessly came to take the exams, those like my husband from the previous generation left over examinees were pushed out the door. My husband's teacher never wanted to teach him again, and could no longer teach him, the last time my husband went to see him, he did not dodge my

husband. Because that time the music group split into smaller groups that moved from place to place, performing those songs that had won universal praise, no longer needed composers and conductors, my husband's post became a false reputation. His teacher criticized Schoenberg, using Beethoven as his weapon. And so, my husband understood, he finally lost his teacher, his last hope to study music was now gone. These were the days when my husband was unemployed, he only kept 80% of his earnings.

His last conducting, was in the theater of a neighboring county, was a song from Tianjin: “唐人街的传说 (The Legends of Chinatown)”. It was a Chinese style opera, sing one part, talk one part, act one part, do a part. In the section without music, the orchestra members bantered amongst themselves, gossiped, drinking tea from a large mug, the girls were looking at small mirrors pulling their eyebrows, touching up the make up along the rim of their eyes. At this time my husband indifferently watched them from the stage, even after watching the performance dozens of times, he again watched it. The last performance making a fool of themselves, everyone was waiting for the curtain to be lowered, for the show to be over as early as possible. My husband thought: Human heart has broken, that is what truly broke. This day, even the hearts of the audience had broken up, not knowing why many children came in, shouting loudly running from the front stage to the backstage, from the backstage to the front stage. Even popsicle sellers came in, wantonly beating a wooden board, shouting: Popsicles, red bean ones, mung bean ones. This last performance became a havoc opera, on stage and off stage everyone in high spirits, with boundless joy. The actors were not like actors, audience not like an audience. The curtain was finally lowered, time to clean the stage. People laughing and playing while throwing the stage props and costumes here and there, in a flash all the heavy iron was gone,

days afterward they were found in many people's homes, next to their chicken coops. Many light bulbs were broken into pieces, shot out a loud noise, as one falls another rises, like festival firecrackers. The next day he went home in a car, filled up with hens of all sizes, the hens laid an egg here and an egg there, like a carnival. My husband thought: The end has come! The car drove along the dusty road, getting closer and closer to his destination, this was a defeated land. The performance returned, again reorganized, divided into Qing Song and Dance troupe, assuming all trades and professions worked for the group, this is later moonlighting movement predecessor.

My husband once in a performance played his old profession- viola, performing from place to place for three months, after he came back he told me what he saw and heard during these performances, the most interesting was one about theft. 400 yuan was lost by someone, it was previously in an envelope, the envelope inside a suitcase. Once he came back from a show, discovered that his suitcase was in a mess, the envelope was empty, the 400 yuan gone. 400 yuan was not a small amount of money at the time, the moonlight group still had not had the opportunity to make a fortune. After reporting to the police, the police immediately sent out their track and arrest group. The track and arrest group arrived it was like a kind of theatre or drama, accompanying them was a police dog, tall and large, posture was powerful, tall and straight, both eyes bright and piercing. It sat on its hind legs, forelegs standing up, [233] looking from this face to that face, disdainful expression sniffing the envelope. Then, it slowly got up, four legs on the ground, stopped lost in thought. Suddenly, both ears stood up, faced one of my comrades and rushed at him, the color of my comrade's face changed, he tried hard to smile, said: This son of a bitch! Police dog held onto his shirt with both paws, nose sniffing up and down his body, all

around became quiet, everyone silently watched. His comrade's face slowly lost his smile, beads of sweat rolled down his forehead, he stood uncertainly, staggered back and forth. Police dog suddenly fell to the ground, left, sat on the ground, eyes became gentle and soft all of a sudden. That comrade's last sentence was: Son of a bitch! Then collapsed onto the floor. Next part was to check everyone's fingerprints, everyone lined up pressed their fingerprint onto a piece of white paper. The next day, regarding who stole the money rumours spread everywhere, people were saying this to him, saying that to them, chattering nonstop. The disunity emerged, everyone was friendly in appearance but estranged at heart, secretly formed enemies. After two months, my husband again left to perform, this next story was about intimate and passionate lovers. The third time he left, the story was about embezzling public funds, the contractor gave a false report about the profits, distributed it unfairly, as a result of the uneven distribution, the plot was leaked. Our group dismissed the contractor and formed a new group. This time among the group, my husband was not accepted. From this time on, career in transcribing music began.

At this time, popular music surging forward, sound-recording tapes were everywhere. Transcribing music job was the melody in each tape-record, orchestration are all noted down, delivered to rising singers and musicians. This continued the tide of symphonic music with another wave, that tide of symphonic music brought autocratic and powerful meaning, this time possessed mass movement quality, on some kind of meaning, was progress of the times. However, like my husband insignificant generation progress and theirs was separated very far, It was not his brief ordinary life could enjoy the benefits. He hated bitterly pop songs, for the sake of making a living he had to transcribe job, and contact with each and every kind of singer and instrumentalist from the dregs of society to above. Transcribing music people a little while there

would be a lot, a little while there would be a little, and so the work compensation was sometimes a lot, sometimes a little, my husband was drawn into this commodity economy tide, suffering and humiliated, during the days he had nothing to do, [234] day and night he would sleep on his bed, window covers drawn closed. This was his lowest point in life. At this time, he was a temporary resident of my city Shanghai, he had not completely decided to leave his inland city, he was still expecting our group to take a turn for the better, and be brought up again. Staying in our group, he could wait for the orchestra to rebuild; leaving our group, he would not be able to wait. What else did he have? He slept everyday to forget “what else does he have” this kind of question. This was after the path diverged between my husband and Qu Xiaosong, he retreated again and again in defeat, finally had nowhere to go. He sometimes would think: If that year he went to Central Conservatory of Music, he would have gloriously been students with Qu Xiaosong. Fortunately, my husband was someone who liked to live an illusion, he was practical and realistic, he understood that even if he wanted to be a mediocre person in symphonic music, there is no longer an opportunity, and firmly separated from our group and drifted into my city Shanghai.

Moving to Shanghai beset with difficulties, how many Shanghainese hopeless dreamed of returning to their native place. While my husband’s transfer order finally as spring has come and the flowers are in bloom days came. Under the budding leaves of the Wutong tree the application proceeded. My husband’s feeling were joyful, one witty remark following another, the funniest sentence he said: I am sorry, I took one of the places of someone else. This day, I bought a green silk dress, even though it was early spring still far away from summer. This day, together we recollected some past memories, all about the happiness of former days in the performing tour,

these performing tours were full of romantic atmosphere, gave our times of youth increased the splendour. Our recollection moved forward little by little, to the moment before I met my husband, that time we were separated to different parts of the countryside. I depicted my time in the countryside as dull and depressing, my husband depicted it as beautiful painting: in the summer rice field, water in the rice field flowing, stars filled the sky, insects singing in a chorus. He even described the dusk wheat field barbecue wheat smoke and fire, spreading in the sunset glow changing in the sky. It became clear to me then that: my husband liked nature, he grew up in a small city next to the Yellow River, the Yellow River was his friend. This kind of nature loving person wanting to enter city life in Shanghai. This is the outcome of the divergent paths between my husband and Qu Xiaosong.

Right now, Japanese star Yamaguchi Jōn is walking our old path, beginning [235] her moonlight performing route. She is walking along a long road, with an unpredictable future. From one city to the next city traveling, she was always the only person riding on the soft seat carriage, bringing her two heavy suitcases with her. Within the suitcases is filled with her clothes, she had to dress differently everyday, she never repeated an outfit, many women were jealousy waiting for the day she repeated her clothes. At every stop, she lived in a hotel, door knob hanging the sign “Do Not Disturb”. Gradually, the rumour that she indulged in excessive drinking circulated around. Every night after returning from a performance, she had to drink large amounts of alcohol, drinking while crying at the same time. People said: This is style of foreign women. Following on people said: this is from picking up the style of foreign people. People sometimes let her hear them on purpose, ridiculing her national identity and racist remarks, must use hang up a sheep’s head and sell dog meat to describe her (saying that she is

inferior and not worth paying to watch). Especially those that performed with her on the same stage, they were equally matched in singing, some even slightly better than her, but could only serve as her accompaniment. They often got great pleasure from seeing an error she made, and they would exaggerate her errors, saying that her performances were flat. But face to face they flattered her, saying how this performance was better than the other, that performance better than this performance, she felt pleased with herself. She even happily during the performance, the cold reaction broke that into pieces. Yamaguchi Jōn no matter how cold the reaction atmosphere would persist in giving an encore, she smilingly, in high spirits went back on stage. Using Chinese and Japanese to say “thank you”. When she spoke Japanese it seemed mysterious and unpredictable, the theater would be silent and solemn, when she spoke Chinese fluently dispelled the mysterious and unpredictable atmosphere, everything became simple and easy to understand and commonplace. After giving an encore the applause was scattered with obvious sneers, she left the stage in this kind of applause. Some performances were in the gym, the stage was like from a mountain range to a basin, path to leaving the theater was very long, people looked down at her from their seats, like being pressed in by troops outside. Yamaguchi Jōn leaving the stage her pace must have confidence, calm, distinguish an air of elegance and coquetry. This was her hardest path, she had to have self-esteem, self-willed, spoiled stamped beneath her feet, this moment must train your flesh and blood to become steel and iron. The orchestra performed in the background for a long time, that intense electroacoustic was like sending her to a funeral. She ran back into her dressing room, whole body broke up, had no more strength left, only wanting to lie on the floor. This kind of moment, Xiao Hua especially attentive to her, [236] one moment knocking asking her if she needed hot water, the next moment knocking and urging her to not

catch a chill when changing. If she did not answer, Xiao Hua would keep knocking without stopping. Yamaguchi Jōn felt that what Xiao Hua was not knocking on the door, but rather knocking on her head, she would then shout from her room: Quiet down. She would first shout in Japanese, then in English, finally use Chinese. Xiao Hua would merely quiet down for a few minutes, before coming back and knocking on her door again, saying that Yamaguchi Jōn may need her help. Yamaguchi Jōn would say in a stern voice: When I really need your help, no one knows where you went. Xiao hua said she did not know when Yamaguchi Jōn needed her, hoping in the future if she was needed, to call to her in Chinese, it is not like she does not know Chinese. Before this Yamaguchi Jōn changed her face, after she proudly laughed, saying: She is here to service her, without needlessly opening her mouth, should already know what she needed and what she did not need. This time, Xiao Hua's face changed, saying, you need to be clear about something, this is socialist China, not capitalist Japan. Yamaguchi Jōn coldly smiled, Why would socialist China want a capitalist singer to decorate the front of one's store? Xiao Hua was beside herself with anger, nationality self-esteem and inferior feeling combined, made her shout this out: It is you using Japan to decorate the front of your store, if it was not for the fact that you came from Japan, barely worth any money! Their quarrel drew many people over, their mouths telling them to make peace, but they were happy in their minds. Xiao Hua enraged Yamaguchi Jōn, she threw herself at Xiao Hua wanting to slap her face, resulted in people pulling them apart. She shouted at the top of her voice wanting her to make reparations for soiling her name, or else she would appeal to the law. Xiao Hua said she must first make reparations to our group's name, or else she will not have a good end. Yamaguchi Jōn stamped her feet, hoarsely shouting, while Xiao Hua clever and fluent in speech and had a clear head. People berated her, telling her

to stop talking, and pushed her out, however she knew all these people stood on her side, and that they are her back up. She pleased of herself thinking: She helped vent anger for the Chinese! And so all the more she spoke with the force of justice, tongue like a knife. This evening, Yamaguchi Jōn hysterically had a fit of anger, she ripped her clothes to shreds, and broke mirror. She finally laid down on the floor, like a pile of mud, some instrumental performers carried her onto a car, and took her back to the hotel.

During the days our group traveled around, quarrels often happened. Xiao Hua and Yamaguchi Jōn dispute, was only a small part of the history of quarrels in our group, only because of Yamaguchi Jōn's background from Japan, made this quarrel bring nationalism, brought great waves among the people. The director ordered Xiao Hua to apologize to Yamaguchi Jōn in public, because Yamaguchi Jōn threatened to cancel the contract with our group. Xiao Hua for the good of all, agreed to all of Yamaguchi Jōn's conditions, including additional etiquettes, for example she had to say good morning to Yamaguchi Jōn in the morning. Yamaguchi Jōn became more and more isolated in our group, she was clear feeling everyone's hostility towards her, redoubled her arrogant attitude as a way to oppose the hostility. She was still too young to understand not to anger the masses, she felt that she had strong backing, using her airs of a singing star, her addiction to fame satisfied her. She even did not know she should win over her instrumental performers connections, she made it public her scorn and nitpicking of the performers, we do not know if she really did not know or pretended to not know, once the performers harassed played with her, but was not playing, the director observed it, but was worried inside, he reassured and calmed everyone, thoroughly saying to everyone. He said: In any case we must carry this moonlighting performance to the very end, our comrades all

have broad mind, do not argue over such a trifling matter; right now the morals and manners of the world indeed are ruined, Chinese goods are difficult to sell, Japanese goods sell well; people rush in to buy 8 yuan, 10 yuan priced tickets just to watch Japanese star, after watching they shouted how they were fooled, they were already fooled and could not return their tickets, and we can not look forward to them buying a ticket a second time, what we are doing is a “once-for-all” deal, we must accomplish and finish this deal; invite respectfully bear with it, cross a river in the same boat, pull through this difficult time. The director kowtowed to everyone, made everyone stir to sympathy. This is what made Yamaguchi Jōn’s performance smoothly progress, without any mishaps. However, everyone treated Yamaguchi Jōn hostility unable to be removed, she did not have any friends, no one to chat with, she lived alone in the hotel, other than sleep, she just drank wine, and wept. Her crying became a common occurrence, not at all surprising. On one side she drank Remy Martin cognac, XO this expensive famous wine, tears and wine filled her face. While she was slightly drunk, she would softly sing some Japanese songs, no one understood the lyrics. Sometimes she was tipsy, sitting in the bar on top of the high stool, unable to return to her room, two attendants supported her back to her room. Her long hair draped over her shoulders, one of her shoulders was exposed in her white loose woolen sweater, she muttered to herself no one could understand what she was saying in Japanese, sometimes her voice would rise, sometimes it would lower. At this time, Yamaguchi Jōn often was half awake, half drunk, half of her was real the other half fake to become a tragic feminine lead, this way, her lonely and wretched heart could obtain some solace, gradually calming down. [239] She overcame her own depression through means of pushing it to the extreme, making this depression theatrical, before accepting it. While accepting it, she created a

self-admiration mentality, this mentality saved her from not going as far as to sink into depravity. But drinking wine made her face look pale, expression wan and sallow, seemed older. Sometimes, she paid attention to the crowd among them a pair of eyes, gazing at her with pity and compassion, that was Ah Xing's eyes. Once, when working with the orchestra to sing a new piece of music, she suddenly picked a fault and rained curses on Ah Xing for some while. This break out came out all of a sudden, unable to make heads or tails about why. Instrumental performers said to Ah Xing: Japanese star takes a fancy to you! Recently Hong Kong and Taiwan film and television not being able to love would turn to hate this plot ran rampant, Ah Xing always the target of everyone's ridicule. Everyone overwhelmed with joy saying, Ah Xing has hope to go to Japan! This was just "blah blah" the time where everyone wanted to leave the country. The performers were all younger than Ah Xing by half a generation, electronic instruments were played with high proficiency, Ah Xing seriously played the saxophone appearance, looked like an antique among them. They felt like Ah Xing played the saxophone not like a saxophone, they liked those playing saxophone to have a more rogue appearance. Ah Xing was ridiculed until he was red in the face, every time he saw Yamaguchi Jōn he would avoid her. Unexpectedly, Yamaguchi Jōn persistently shouted at him, using 100 percent noninterference tone and said: You are scared of me? That I will eat you" She said this using Shanghainese, making Ah Xing feel more close, he apologetically smiled and said: I did not see you, I beg your pardon. Yamaguchi Jōn said: Tonight escort me back to the hotel! Ah Xing thought: with everybody watching, traveling with Yamaguchi Jōn in the same cart together back to the hotel truly embarrassing, and so said: Returning, you must return on your own, I will wait for you at the hotel.

This was Ah Xing's second visit to Japanese star Yamaguchi Jōn, its shaped like a secret meeting of lovers. He arrived a little earlier, and then Yamaguchi Jōn arrived. Yamaguchi Jōn wanted Ah Xing to drink with her, Ah Xing drank a little and then felt full of joy. He chatted with Yamaguchi Jōn about everything and anything, Yamaguchi Jōn did not reply, only smiling at him with her eyes narrow. Ah Xing became like a child, talking endlessly, wine and lighting making him drunk, like arriving in another world. A long time, before Yamaguchi Jōn said her first sentence, she said: Ah Xing, are you lonely? She used Chinese Putonghua, she used Putonghua, not only used for business diplomatic language, also using it for dramatic scenes. Ah Xing felt that this sentence was from the bottom [239] of her heart, he was taciturn, and then said: that is why I want to go to Shenzhen! Yamaguchi Jōn said: Shenzhen is not the Land of Peach Blossoms. Ah Xing said: I did not say I wanted to go to the Land of Peach Blossoms. Their conversation was like from a drama the actor's lines, they had both entered into the scene, feeling like they understood each other really well. Once about 60% of the wine was finished, Yamaguchi Jōn let Ah Xing escort her back to her room. Along the way she pulled on Ah Xing's arm, head falling on his shoulders. Entering the elevator, her head gradually slipped from Ah Xing's shoulder to his chest. Ah Xing was still, his heart beating like thunder and drums, we hoped for the elevator to move faster, but also wanted it to move slower. Leaving the elevator, Yamaguchi Jōn tripped and fell onto the floor. Ah Xing could only carry her, she wrapped her arms around Ah Xing's neck, nestled against Ah Xing, Ah Xing lifted her up, felt that she was both light and heavy. They finally entered her room, Ah Xing set Yamaguchi Jōn on her bed, Yamaguchi Jōn suddenly opened her eyes, her eyes were large and round. She wrapped her arms tightly around Ah Xing's neck not letting go, and then said: Kiss me. At this moment, A xing

was no longer tipsy, his whole body shaking. He struggled, but could not remove the iron-like grip Yamaguchi Jōn had, locking him in place, moreover moving closer to his face, lips searching for Ah Xing's lips. Ah Xing's lips dried up, really thirsty, he said: We can't, we can't! Yamaguchi Jōn looked at him intently with her eyes, like a wolf expression on her face. Ah Xing was completely frightened, he went all out and pushed aside Yamaguchi Jōn's arms, letting her fall onto the bed. Yamaguchi Jōn jumped up, pointed at his nose and started cursing him: Despicable! She was using Shanghainese, “瘪三” these two characters were often used by Shanghai people to swear. She repeatedly said: Despicable, despicable! Ah Xing's face turned pale, his voice quivered, and used Shanghainese to say: What kind of person do you take me as? I am not that kind of person! Yamaguchi Jōn argued: You are not even a person? Come strike at my plan! Ah Xing turned pale with fright, he did not think such a shameless false charge would be framed against him. Yamaguchi Jōn then cried loudly: are you a man? Ah Xing retaliated with “are you a woman?” and then stumbled out the door to the path back to the theater, heart full of dejection, pulled his hair out, in his mind saying: So it was a trap, so it was a trap! He thought in this life how has he conducted himself? Being made a fool of by a little girl! Ah Xing almost started to cry.

The next day rumours circulated around about Ah Xing's evening visit with Yamaguchi Jōn. On the day my group set out, these rumours about lovers was always a lot. [240]

In order for my husband to adjust to Shanghai, he was beset with difficulties. Every morning at 8 when he goes to work the system tied up his free spirit. He thought back to this half a lifetime, never being restrained like this, When he was sent into the countryside, when he was engaged in the orchestra, these were all free times. Freedom in a city is a concept of literature,

and has nothing to do with reality. When we were still young, from 1966 to 1967, this was a special time in history. We were within the crack of history, it was a time of freedom and romance. However, it can be compared to the thousands of rivers flowing into the ocean, We walked onto the path of reality. The time of chaos was past, peaceful and prosperous time has arrived. From the woods communism was just an abandoned recollection. We experienced a overflowing disorder period, in one way we lost a lot, in another way we gained much. We used our losses in education and the city as the cost, obtaining freedom. We were children without restraint, wild head wild minds, ran to the production team's melon garden to pick melons, we went to fellow-villager's backyard to steal chickens and dogs. We happily committed these crimes, hiding in a small cabin listening to Beethoven's 5th Movement, window covered with a thick curtain, we even had someone keeping watch outside, the old gramophone needle scraping on the recorder moving ruggedly, while enjoying the music we also enjoyed pleasant sensation of the revolution, being a traitor to the times surely excited the human heart. My husband was raised next to the old pathway near the Yellow River, every spring, yellow sand would fill the sky like crooning ancient melancholic songs, about the Yellow River recollection my husband small city was always a subject of conversation, passing down from generation to generation. This was immersed in deep thought within the cherished memory of the ancient city, full of nostalgia. Yet my city Shanghai is a bustling city, chasing efficiency. The city was like a large machine, people were like the screws, once twisting into the machine, would involuntarily follow track, without any freedom. Lei Feng's comrade advocated "be a screw that never rusts", this is actually the concept of large industries, from this meaning considering, Lei Feng has the characteristics of a modern person. In my city Shanghai, a very long time ago a song was

circulated, sung like this: We are all wooden people, cannot talk and cannot act. Seeing this now, this childhood song is subconsciously about the city. A city person, is just a small dot in the course of history, a country person has experienced the entire course of history. This is what we mentioned before: The city is symphonic music, countryside is solo. Solo is the dream of every performer, in the midst of a large orchestra, this was a dream within a dream. In concerto having a solo is a hero, hero from the countryside, cities did not have heroes. The city does not need heroes, if the city had heroes there would only make things worse, Hero is head and shoulders above everyone willpower would destroy the rigorously enforced public order, putting everything in disorder. My husband entered my city Shanghai, like a drifting shooting star entering a new planet's orbit, at first he felt strong rejection force, always saying this was no good, that was no good, thus to realize purpose of staying away from work. He disliked the small spaces, not being able to see patches of greenery, feeling like he was being suffocated. However my city Shanghai output value made him startled, my city Shanghai rich commodities also shocked him, to get a diploma he studied for the examination on his own, "Political economy" this course made him gradually understand manufacturing and consumerism was mankind's most essential way to live, from the angle of productive forces he recognized Shanghai was magnificent. In the morning going to work the powerful current of bikes made him feel the pulse of the times, this conformed to the romanticism ideals in his head. He gradually acclimated to this man made world, this world's speed encouraged his downhearted energy.

During the winter at night when it was better to stay inside, recollected our younger days in symphonic music. That time, I was 18, he was 19. My recollection could not do without Big Lin's music room, his recollection his teacher was always there. Regarding Big Lin I no longer

have any information; regarding my husband's teacher, the last bit of news was, he had a cerebral haemorrhage and is paralyzed. My husband said, like my teacher that kind of person, can only contract two kinds of diseases, one is a heart disease, the second is a cerebral haemorrhage. Leading to both these diseases is the same reason, his innermost being underwent too much surging intense emotions. Intense emotion is a poison that can make people lose their lives, it is safer to not have any intense emotions. Safety is the first thing required by people, we must never lose it. Actually, my teacher already knew the dangers of having intense emotions, his hobby of fishing was to think over and absorb these intense emotions. He went fishing in the morning and cooked the fish at night, he and his family members in just a few short years ate thousands of fish, almost disrupted ecological balance. I thought back to my guide Big Lin, he was so different from the teacher, power and ambition mixed with kind heart and upholding beauty, mixing all these together, formed that symphonic music movement force pushing it forward. I also thought about Ah Xing's clarinet teacher, that year on the board of musicians. the Board of Musicians was our country's first symphony orchestra, was the result of being a colony, the talents in symphonic music in Shanghai at that time were produced, [242] one generation after another. This kind of night, the wind blowing outside, within the blankets it was very warm. Because our city was south of the Yangtze and Yellow Rivers, according to rules a heater was not installed. In former days Europe styled rooms had a fireplace as decoration, provided was just a dream for the middle class. This kind of night doing anything else was not appropriate, it was all tough, it was best time to look back at history. We looked back at this half lifetime years, we spent time indulging in fantasies, dreaming about illusions, this age of revolution had a poetic quality to it. We were upload vitality, looking forward to the creation of a beautiful world, we

were in the great filled with poetic quality suddenly have a thought actively started, from the great strange idea again developed each person's idea. Each and every person became like a poet, rich in connections, broad mind, filled with good aspirations. We went everywhere composed poems using "symphonic music" "fantasia" these types of music words and phrases to give a name to our times. Our era had many changes of many kinds, changing very fast, making it every 5 or 6 years a new generation. Respect the aged and cherish the young tradition smoothed our transition from generation to generation, happy warm and harmonious. We recollected that romanticism revolutionary period, from the forests communism carried away people. we finally returned onto the the development in history of regulations, we finally ended our no responsibility childhood, early youth, young people, entered into burden laden tired middle age period. We can never do as we pleased, we need to get rid of illusions, and establish a scientific approach.

Yamaguchi Jōn is following our route of performing tours, continuing along the moonlighting path. City by city she was getting closer and closer to my city Shanghai, these cities that she was passing through compared to our time have already changed beyond recognition. International Grand Hotel, Karaoke, foreign exchange department stores, could be found everywhere, wide road covered with Volkswagen Santanas, Citroën, Mercedes-Benz. Yamaguchi Jōn entered each hotel, no longer feel like a foreigner in a foreign country. The bars had every type of imported wine, the mixing cocktails and other drinks technique was not as good, but was not a major problem. Yamaguchi Jōn's name traveled from this city to the next city, each city had its own broadcasting station, television station, newspaper, all spread the news about Yamaguchi Jōn's performance. About her singing performance, there were mixed reviews,

some people said this, some people said that, and some people said this or that. At the same time, even circulated all sorts of anecdotes about her. Yamaguchi Jōn gradually became legendary characteristic, increasing her box office value. Yamaguchi Jōn's performance started to have a full house, the result of a full house was hissing sounds of displeasure. The full house significance Yamaguchi Jōn confronting thousands upon thousands of men, she had to defeat millions of fans expectations, curiosity, as well as those becoming restless with unpeaceful sexual passion. She was hopelessly outnumbered, but her will to fight was indomitable, she gave an encore among the hissing, using Japanese and Chinese to say: Thank you everyone, I will sing another song for everyone. She kept remembering that a star must always go back for an encore, her every word every action followed what a star should do, about how stars come into being, she had her own unique understanding. She followed our path that year we sang merrily performing on tour, like how she is now moonlighting performances, beset with difficulties. Sometimes she was accompanied by the director, renting a bus with our group, also going to some tourist attractions, such as Zhenjiang's Jiao mountain, Jinshan, Chu county and Langya Shan. She sometimes would be recognized by fans, surrounding her, wanting her autograph. She never completely signed her name, or signed for everyone, she would pick and choose to sign for three or five people, making those who did not get a signature have a hard to bear itch, unable to wait, squeezing to get ahead, forming crowd creating disturbance. She purposefully built this disturbance, and then among the spit and curses of those who did not get a signature, drive away quickly. In each and every way she had an aspect of star effect, unyielding. People were fed up with her actions, her public praise was worse and worse. The director for the sake of the survival of our group, would be partial to her, rumours spread about the director and her having an illicit

affair. The director once drank some wine and said to some friends: I am accompanying the Buddha to the Western Paradise! He thought Yamaguchi Jōn was younger than his youngest daughter by a year, he bent his knees and was servile to her was for what? Sometimes he felt compassion for her, thinking how she was by herself in a foreign country, her parents must keep thinking about her? He once took her to the Mochou Lake in Nanjing, she stood on the side of the lake, suddenly said a legend about the lady of Mochou Lake. she said Lady Mochou's husband went to fight in a war for dozens of years, Mochou shut the door and refused to see her husband, because she did not want her husband seeing her as old and feeble image, she wanted her image to forever be young and beautiful in her husband's heart. After saying this story, she was taciturn for a while, and then said: Director, do you know why Japanese people like the oriental cherry blossom? The director said he did not know. She said that cherry blossom right as it blossoms, it withers and falls, honour permits no turning back. Regarding Mochou's story, and the explanation of the cherry flower, made the director mood feel heavy, he thought: Yamaguchi Jōn is still a child and yet has already thinks about being old. His heart felt like something obstructed it, feeling a lump in his throat, he thought if she was his own daughter, he would teach her how to be a person [244], however the difference in nationality drew an uncrossable line between them. Yamaguchi Jōn advised people to collect every booklet about her performance, the photocopied posters, and all the newspapers and magazines with articles about her. She meticulously collected and stored these clippings, decorating her path to famous star. If one was left out, she would stamp with fury, and boil with rage. If some newspapers published pictures that harmed her image, she would threaten to prosecute them. This shows that she was from a country with a legal system, she would always talk about "enact laws" "enact laws". In our small

and medium city abusing her power as a famous star, her personal relations with everyone was terrible, everyone looked at her with askance. That year when we traveled to perform our path was full of unity, even though there were some quarrels, it would not affect the situation as a whole or our ties of friendship. Yamaguchi Jōn did not care about that at all, she was pushy and arrogant, arrogant and domineering.

In the hot summer weather in Shanghai, we stopped looking back in history. We used electric fans, cold drinks, and also the old maxim “a calm heart make one cool”, tenaciously building a cool and refreshing world. Even though China State Council decided to cancel midday rest, however when it was noon, each person would doze off in their office. The newspaper said, an afternoon nap is important for health; the newspaper also said, sleep could not add any essential nutrients to the human body, it was just a habit. The common people said, let those who eat beefsteak work at noon, those who ate grains go take a midday nap. My husband came from an inland city where midday nap was extremely important, when his hometown entered summer, would change the working hours in the afternoon to three o’clock, to let everyone leisurely nap at noon. The three o’clock sun started to set, with the nice and cool dusk approaching. People are an aestivative animal, aestivation is a great happiness of people. Canceling noon nap was for making the best use of everyone’s time, wealth makes people happy, midday nap can also make people happy, and is more simple and easy. It is said that we had a state leader who went to visit the Japanese Shinkansen Line, asked a question that made everyone stare tongue-tied. He said: Why does it need to be this fast? What he asked was actually concerned outlook on life, after World War Two the Japanese who rose to prominence at full speed development have obscured the meaning of life, and the pondering Chinese people always reflect on the problems in life.

About human life, we have many schools of thought. For positive views on life, we use Confucius and Mencius; when we are negative, we view life from Daoist point of view.

Yamaguchi Jōn moonlighting path is almost to a close, this was the second closest city to Shanghai. She [245] just about to ask Big Lin to help her plan and prepare join an art festival in Shanghai. Each showing she appeared in along the way, the number of people in the audience, all the articles appraising her, was to help her become star important resume. In the midst of busily performing, told others to photocopy and organize her materials, wanted the director to specially assign someone to deliver the papers to Big Lin, these were the papers needed to apply for the art festival. Going to Shanghai was what inland city residents looked forward to, but no one was willing to run errands for her, no one wanted her to succeed, looked forward to her letting slip this golden opportunity. Getting closer and closer to the day of the art festival, delivering the papers became extremely urgent. People did not say they were not going, but kept pushing it away. People liked seeing Yamaguchi Jōn become impatient, like defeating a Japanese foreigner, for the aspirations of their own nationality. People today said they would go tomorrow, tomorrow they said the next day, slowly depleting her time. Yamaguchi Jōn wanted to go on strike to coerce them, but she did not want to go on strike which would damage the number of showings and her fame. She hoped for Big Lin to come and take her papers, but on the phone Big Lin said it was difficult, saying that he was busy with work, and household duties were busy too. Yamaguchi Jōn realized that originally the commission for Big Lin to be the broker was not enough, but mentioning that right now was too late. Having no alternative, she decided after performing, she would ride a night train to Shanghai. The director after hearing this came to stop her, saying first thing the next morning he would send someone to Shanghai.

Yamaguchi Jōn scornfully and drearily smiled, saying: Director, rest assured! After she changed, on top of her thin skirt she put on the black overcoat from before. She walked down the back stage, walked into the dim light of night, got onto a taxicab. Her back was miserable, but was also solemn and stirring. This late autumn night, many leaves dropped from the tree. Yamaguchi Jōn sat in the car bound for the railway station, closed her eyes and rested. She wanted to take advantage of every opportunity to rest, to have the vitality for the splendid day tomorrow. Stars could not not have the vigour splendid appearance, stars must be constantly smiling impression, stars must be young, beautiful, qualities to enchant people, unique personality. A little while, Yamaguchi Jōn really fell asleep, corners of her mouth revealing a smile. The car late at night under the bright leaves drifting down the street traveling quietly, the driver from his seat looked at this unusual woman from his mirror, thinking to himself where this woman who hailed a taxi this late at night could be going? This city recently widely known kidnapping and selling women and children strange stories, girls never travel by themselves at night, and would never journey on their own. This was a season of many strange things, unemployed idle personnel gathered at stations, creating shocking incidents. The car stopped at the station, [246] Yamaguchi Jōn got off the car, took out her identity and money from her purse, and walked towards the ticket booth for soft seats. At this time, she saw Ah Xing. Ah Xing did not look at her stood in front of her, said he could make a trip to Shanghai for her, we are all Shanghainese. Yamaguchi Jōn was reticent, expression was dark and dull. Ah Xing talked endlessly saying how outlanders repelled Shanghaianders, Shanghaianders even more needed to unite together was a general principle. While talking, his eyes kept looking away at other things, Yamaguchi Jōn remained silent, Ah Xing finally finished talking, they both stood, it became awkward. Ah Xing stopped a bit before

continuing: He cannot be at ease the matter about going to Shenzhen, he originally wanted to return once to Shanghai, Shanghai was where he visited frequently, riding the train was like riding public bus. Yamaguchi Jōn took out her papers from her leather handbag, delivered it to Ah Xing's hands, from beginning to end, she did not say anything, it was all Ah Xing talking. Ah Xing talked while smoking, the cigarette ash fell to the floor, and then spit on the floor. This night, Ah Xing's demeanor especially in high spirits, poured out words in a steady flow, was an excellent speaker, many things he said without thinking, he was lead by his eloquence, talked without rest. Yamaguchi Jōn did not say a word, she wrapped her overcoat closer to herself in the frigid cold, crossing her arms, eyes watching Ah Xing's back moving into the distance.

Ah Xing this time returning to Shanghai only stayed for half a day, next day he returned to the performance place. He did two things within the day he stayed in Shanghai, first was to deliver the materials and papers from Yamaguchi Jōn to Big Lin, extravagantly describing Yamaguchi Jōn's performance, successful beyond compare, making Big Lin interested in Yamaguchi Jōn again. He indeed made a trip just for Yamaguchi Jōn, helping her obtain a seat among the other performers. Participating in Shanghai's art festival, became an important part of Yamaguchi Jōn's resume. For the sake of letting Yamaguchi Jōn capitalize on her accomplishments in China. The second matter that Ah Xing attended to in Shanghai was to look for Bai Ming siblings, finally decided on the matter about going to Shenzhen. They told Ah Xing about how in Shenzhen they experienced many dark stories, shattering Ah Xing's illusion about Shenzhen, Ah Xing is the type of person where dreams come really fast and also leave very fast, from now on Shenzhen became his wound. And so, Ah Xing this time returning to Shanghai determined the fates of two people about whether it would be fortunate or unfortunate. At the

time, he did not know, after finishing his business, he hurriedly got onto the train. The performance continued as usual. The gym was brightly lit up, people were climbing the stands like a mountain, making a lot of noise. In the singing party at the gym was a kind of symbol, it stood for [247] songs and music had become a consumer product for the masses. This was the most efficient product, one person a night could satisfy the needs of a thousand people. The performance arrived at the city closest to Shanghai, everyone was tired, unable to stand the strain any longer, strong feeling of homesickness, husband and wife living apart brought some difficulty. Everyone became a bit nervous, actions were strange, morale was tense. Quarrels and fights happened repeatedly, relation between the two sexes became chaotic. And at this very moment Yamaguchi Jōn was unusually calm and at ease, with strong self control. She stopped having conflicts with Xiao Hua and the other members, breaking out in fits did not occur again. She seemed unusually composed, peaceful. So much so that each day's performance took everyone by surprise, it brought little effect. Her voice, breath, was more experienced than her first performance, even though it did not cause a stir, but it was still normal. After the performance was over she would return to the hotel to rest, she wholeheartedly thoroughly exhausted, however the performance in Shanghai was still waiting for her. She used sleep to cure everything, she ate many different sedatives, making herself sleep peacefully. She did not lose her temper, because getting angry would consume too much energy. She no longer drank wine, because drinking would make her lose her self-control, she made herself both tense and loose state, this was the best condition to be in.

We waited in Shanghai for the day Yamaguchi Jōn would come to perform, about Yamaguchi Jōn we only knew this much, we really wanted to meet her. While waiting for

Yamaguchi Jōn to come perform, we met the stars Fei Xiang, Tong Ange, Zuo Tianyazhi; we even saw the stars Mao A'min, Wei Wei, and Cai Guoqing. There were many people who resigned or retired and went into rock and roll, there was one rock band who wanted my husband to join, because they were missing someone who knew orchestration. my husband politely declined, he declined because of two points: First, he did not have the spirit to take risks, he could only under all the distribution system of all the people feel at ease and go back into music; second, he really could not take a liking to rock and roll, people who did symphonic music how could they get into rock and roll! Isn't there an old saying in China that said "There are no rivers to one who has crossed the ocean?" This day, my husband also said: What kind of people are we? We are the ones washed over by the high tide, the empty shells left on the beach, relics left behind. Our group often had someone say: It is Wang Anyi who is intelligent! When the light meets her it lies on the kettledrums writing and writing! Wang Anyi [248] is me, when I was eighteen, my guide Big Lin looked at my palm and said, I was different from everyone in his music room. The difference was: they went to paddle in the sea, I owned the sea. The happiness of paddling in the sea, I did not have that at all. The days waiting for Yamaguchi Jōn's arrival, many things occurred in my city Shanghai: Pudong was opened up, the Nanpu bridge beginning construction, the strawberry harvest, household appliances were reducing in price, the movie "The Last Aristocrat", the film was shot in Venice, television and newspapers combined each part of the city into a single picture, like commanding which part to rise, pass on to us. We never left the house, but in one day could travel thousands of miles. Wheat and rice were sprouting leaves far away from the city in the fields, the toads were croaking. My husband moved further away from old natural self. One day, he said to me: you know what electronic instruments

implies? It signifies that music has entered the machine age, and has become a product of the assembly line. At this time, Yamaguchi Jōn was getting closer and closer to our city, the art festival in Shanghai and its fame and power was already starting, in the sky above our city, colorful banners were waving.

Afterwards, Ah Xing and the siblings left to Shenzhen to participate in the singing competition. In Shenzhen, currency control was chaotic, many types of currencies were exchanged, “change money” was the most widely used phrase. The Oldest Brother Bai after the performance, wanted to make a business deal. During the day when there were not any performances going on, walked back and forth on the streets and lanes, looking for an opportunity. As a result he got to know some youths, these youths agreed to exchange for Hong Kong dollar at a “5:9” ratio. The youths said because of the cash flow problem, urgent need of the renminbi, so they had to suffer a loss before making a profit. What they said was reasonable, making Oldest Brother Bai not quite convinced. He came back to discuss with the others, and they all decided that it could be profitable. They thought that recently prices of commodities has gone up, inflation would hurt the China State Council’s head, renminbi would have an uncertain future. They decided to go complete the business deal with the youths, looked right and left, scraped together 10,000 yuan, and put it into a suitcase. On the day they went, The sisters stayed at the hotel, Oldest Brother Bai called Ah Xing over, saying more people more eyes, not be afraid of any tricks. Ah Xing followed the three brothers to the arranged location, they were all nervous, and acted like they had nothing to do. The high towers of Shenzhen constrained their mood, the neon lights glistened. Beautiful displays on the windows [249] The meeting was at a small street in the depths of an alley, entrance had a cloth canopy over it, pulling the well lit

electric lamp, shining on the table. Bare-back, neck had a thick heavy gold necklace, appearance of a labourer youths were gambling. The boss was pale, hair was greasy, all skin and bones, his gaze was gloomy. Ah Xing's heart started to beat rapidly, he did not know that this heart beating is known as "premonition", he was just baffled and thought: Cannot go back. His palms were sweaty, back was cool. They reached the end of the alley, and knocked on the wooden door. The wooden door opened, a long haired youth poked his head out, he looked at them, and then said: Three vs three. Ah Xing said: Why? Are you about to fight? This was the most intelligent, most vigilant, most foresight, most "pierced the truth with one pertinent remark" sentence he ever said, it's a pity that he was stopped. Bai eldest brother even revealed a look of shame on his face, deciding that he did a nonprofessional mistake, he felt that he was like a countryside bumpkin, not knowing any rules, his eyes not looking at Ah Xing and said: Ah Xing, you wait outside. And then the three brothers one followed the other into the building, the door closed. Ah Xing waited by himself in the dark alley, the ground was damp, greasy. He lifted his head and saw a narrow patch of the night sky, like the dark edge of a knife. He put both his hands into his pocket, standing in place. No sounds came from the door, fear surged into his heart. Recently there were Hong Kong television shows about murder, in a split second appeared in front of his eyes. He was unable to wait, repeatedly thinking: Why have they not come back yet! At this time, he firmly believed that this was a swindle, he thought: Shenzhen this place, Shenzhen this place! Should say, Ah Xing had a kind of instinct towards shady deals in cities. He was the kind in Shanghai middle class that grew up in a newly styled house, his path in life was always in the front stage, around him were loyal and honest staff, having a stable monthly pay. He was the kind to never use vulgar language, well behaved. He never understood, behind the flourishing

streets, in the railway stations many people, shipping dock, had innumerable occupations. These types of occupations he had never experienced before, so one sniff and he knew something was wrong. Just as Ah Xing was worried and could not wait any longer, the door opened, the Bai Ming brothers walked out in single file. Ah Xing could not help but had his eyes brimming with tears, rushing forwards and asking: Why did it take so long? Oldest Brother Bai pushed him away annoyingly, saying: it was just one hour. All three [250] of them silent, the suitcase was lighter than it was before. Their footsteps were fast, Ah Xing had trouble keeping up with them. He had a stomachful of questions to ask them, but their cloudy expressions stopped him from talking. They finally got back to the hotel, and went into their room, they placed the suitcase on the bed, and then entered in the passcode to unlock it. Oldest Brother Bai's hands were trembling, he spun the passcode a few times that were wrong, and could only start over. Finally, the suitcase was opened. Inside the suitcase were packages wrapped in brown paper, each package organized neatly, underneath the packages were newspapers piled up. Oldest Brother Bai was terrified for a second, and then lost his voice and started crying, all the siblings started to cry. Ah Xing became dizzy, he was extremely surprised: He already knew this was going to happen, this vision coming true scared him and he started shaking, teeth were chattering. Afterwards, the three brothers no matter how much they thought, they could not figure out when the suitcases were swapped. They had counted each bank note, and had tied each bank note together, watching them put the notes into the suitcase. The second brother Bai full of animal spirits, wanted to go find out how, but was stopped by his sisters desperately holding him back. Business deal has always been once the goods are sent out nothing can be said about it, a bad

play can your life, it seems like they were not new to this line of work, we will treat this as a financial loss which prevented a disaster, we do not want the money.

After returning from Shenzhen, Ah Xing was reticent, avoiding everyone. Later it is said, Ah Xing worked as a musician for a dance hall, working every night from eight to eleven, pay was 10 renminbi plus some light refreshments. In our group he still kept his position, but without any pay due to his long leave of absence, our group found a new saxophone player, young, pretty, lively, like a snake twisting himself while playing. From this time on, Ah Xing never went to look for my husband, and my husband never went to look for Ah Xing. Because my husband worked during the day, and Ah Xing worked at night; while my husband rested on Sundays, Ah Xing was especially busy on those days. The last time he came to look for my husband, was to tell the news about Yamaguchi Jōn in the arts festival. We waited for Yamaguchi Jōn's performance, waited a long time, when it was about to happen, but because we had to attend a friend's birthday party, we could not see the performance. However Yamaguchi Jōn in Shanghai's gym with ten thousand people there performed scene would always appear before my eyes, like being there on the spot, deep impression. I saw, Yamaguchi Jōn posture was melancholic as she walked up the stage. Her singing did not bring any special reaction, many people did not even remember her name. This performance, with many stars gathering, some from United States, Canada, France, Taiwan, Hong Kong singing stars, from Japan was [251] a real star, even having roles in movies and television shows. No one paid attention to Yamaguchi Jōn, no one would especially request a Yamaguchi Jōn. This night, many singing stars sang in my city Shanghai, Yamaguchi Jōn's voice among them, was not the best, and was not the worse, no one paid special attention to her, after she was done that was all, like a shooting star passing

through the night sky. However, I found out this night understood why Yamaguchi Jōn joined with my group from thousands of li away. She wanted to be in a small place, to begin the path to stardom. She always placed her goals really high, and started from the bottom. The last time Ah Xing came, why Yamaguchi Jōn was called Yamaguchi Jōn. Yamaguchi Jōn's father and mother when she was eighteen they divorced, her classical beauty playing the cello mom found a Japanese businessman to be her husband. Mother after crossing to the east for a year, managed to bring her daughter out of China, following her step-father's surname "Yamaguchi". What her original surname was, Ah Xing did not know, only heard Big Lin call her "Jōn Jōn, Jōn Jōn". Ah Xing this time came to look for my husband, was to bid him farewell, he was going to Shenzhen. Regarding the beginning of Ah Xing's trip to Shenzhen we already talked about it, in the days to come he never visited again. He worked in the dance hall situation we never saw, Shanghai had thousands upon thousands of dance halls, wanting to know which dance hall Ah Xing worked at, was like looking for a needle in the ocean. With regards to missing Ah Xing always brought grief. My husband up to now still remembers the first day he came from Heilongjiang, all of his luggage did not arrive, he calmly used my husband's toothbrush to brush his teeth, my husband then gave him the toothbrush. Ah Xing also often left his keys at the hostel, and waited outside before his roommate came back to open the door for him. Ah Xing has even had his case stolen from him, when he woke up, his clothes were all carried away. Our group often said Ah Xing fell in love with so-and-so girl, so-and-so girl once seeing him would run away, like a mouse seeing a cat. Ah Xing even pulled our group's oboe player to practice with him the wind instrument duet *阿妹上大学 A Mei Goes to College*, when the oboe player saw him, it was like a mouse seeing a cat. For a long time after Yamaguchi Jōn left, we never saw Ah Xing, and did not have

any news of him. Sometimes my husband would go back to visit family, listen to our group members say, Ah Xing was working accompaniment at a ballroom. Like Ah Xing this kind of temporary worker with residential paperwork, in modern Shanghai there were millions, [252] they arrived in Shanghai from all parts of the country, looking for opportunities in Shanghai, actually Shanghai does not have that many opportunities. The group members also said, Ah Xing seemed to have returned to Shanghai, however he must be engaged in music, so he could not find a job. Ah Xing this year is already 43, his hair is starting to turn white. His temper is extremely weird, cannot get close to him, cannot stay away from him, in this world he did not make any friends, worried he had no one to talk to. His heart was not happy, and could only vent his anger at his parents, when he saw his parents his temper would flare up. Getting angry is harmful for the body, he would only get more and more afflicted. Sometimes we said, we should go look around for Ah Xing. But thinking about how Ah Xing never came to look for us, we insisted on looking for him, would make him angry. At night after eight o'clock, saxophone was like a golden snake dancing, going up and then going down, we would think: This night where is Ah Xing?

My husband worked for a publishing house in Shanghai, for five years he edited music scores. Every year only about ten are published, wholesale sell hundreds. While reading the music scores, my husband could relive the days when he was a conductor. While reading the score, sound would appear next to his ear, stirring his body and mind. However it was easy to make mistakes like this, one mistake after another, which would affect the money award. Work as a proofreader did not make enough, most of the time, he would have to proofread manuscripts. Over a long period of time editing manuscripts raised a habit, when reading a book or

newspaper, he often did not pay attention to the meaning, just paying attention to mistakes. Afterwards, ended his job as a proofreader, arrived at *Song Fan* magazine's editorial department. When it was his turn to send manuscripts to the press, make a rankings list of the newest songs and write them down, he brought in his skills back when he was an unemployed transcriber for music, he would listen during the day, listen at night, even listening on Sundays. These songs poured into his ears. These easy explanations on life and everyday state of mind gradually moved him, the unalterable "one four five" chord made him among the confused noise electronic sounds after understand a brief emotion. He thought about our extremely aristocratic Chinese culture; our language was so mysterious and profound; our poems, essays a small number of people's wisdom so we could enjoy the art; our philosophy depended on "comprehension" open doors, not having machines the keys, we rarely had shared joys movements, [253] the vast amount of people could only stop and sing vulgar tunes that pleases themselves. My husband thought about people like us who received influence from the Cultural Revolution are much more profound, we think highly of ourselves, and do not associate with the masses. My husband thought: Since fate did not let him find a profession in symphonic music, but instead returned him among the majority of people, si, he should stay with the masses, and accept their fate. Editing *Song Fan* days were the days my husband changed. Of course, merely changing thinking is not enough, sometimes he would encounter difficulties. Just at this time, another incident arose regarding the composer Qu Xiaosong, saying that he has switched to pop music. My husband hearing this news did not know if it was happy or sad, he thought that Qu Xiaosong deciding to change to pop music, could have these two results: One, being the world has lost a serious musician Qu Xiaosong; the other result is pop music has at last become a minority art. While he thought this

was like the man of Qi who feared the sky might fall, what kinds of people do what, what kinds of people should not do what, they have divine will. The development of history has its own inevitability, we are all insignificant, we paddle in the waves skill is riding morning and evening tides rising and falling. Like how my husband experienced the turbulence of high tide, in the next high tide, there can only be one contrasting role.

Yamaguchi Jōn after leaving Shanghai for a while, the scene of her performing at the gym still appears before my eyes, a myriad of lights shining, her entrance bringing a melancholic feeling. In any case I could not forget the word “melancholy”. That night, although I was not there, but because it was Yamaguchi Jōn’s entrance, in front of my eyes she always brings a sorrowful expression, regarding all the details said about her all passed through me clearly. I even thought about what Ah Xing said before, in Tokyo Japan where she worked was in Shinjuku. I have been to Shinjuku, lived in the kabuki called “Crown Prince Hotel”. Night faced my window, the vast amounts of neon lights, the waves tossing about, pouring out words in a steady flow. People are like ants and insects, on layer upon layer neon lights dark slots walking past. Kabuki lane was long and narrow and winding, voices were loud. Early morning Shinjuku was peaceful, shop doors all closed, streets were clean, windows hanging signs looking to hire women workers, every hour pay varied from 600 to 1000 yuan. Shinjuku’s bare branches sat paper oriental cherries, never withering, only withering in the rain. Many things happened in the week we stayed at Tokyo, [254] there was one matter regarding a 27 year old Filipino woman, because of mental and physical efforts being exhausted she died in her apartment, her room was securely locked, television was on, and was only discovered 10 days later. One month earlier, she arrived at a bar looking for work, the boss did not hire her, but let her live in the apartments

that he usually rented out to workers, because she seemed to be very ill. This is what the boss of the bar told the police. The police searched through her room, found her passport, her passport indicated that three years ago she had a tourist visa to come to Japan, what happened after no one knew. The sky in Tokyo passed like a crowd of crows, making people's moods gloomy, gray sky filled with crows flying up and down like black specks. I asked people about the crows, everyone was at a loss, making me think the crows were just my imagination, I even heard the crows calling, cawing cawing. The boys' koinobori (carp-shaped windsock) called to people to be happy, rouse their moods. I spent time in Tokyo passing time boy's festival, the koinobori fluttering in the sky.

Japanese star Yamaguchi Jōn and our group moonlighting performance has ended, when it finished, my husband was editing *Song Fan*. In order to catch up with the due date for the manuscripts, worked day and night, always wearing headphones, writing down the music composition and lyrics. Many fans were waiting for this issue of *Song Fan* to be published, if this issue was postponed, many fans would drop their subscription. Publishing the newest songs demanded immediate attention, singing circles the new superseding the old made people could not wait to look at it, ranking list changed every week, everyday. Pop songs most important thing was advancement, unable to move backwards, it chased wave after wave, tide after tide, days passing fast and long nights. Many songs became hackneyed and stereotyped expressions. Those who ride the waves finally have a day when they sink, those who owned the ocean were safe. Since I was young I was most afraid of danger. I was too scared to light a match, I was too scared touch electric lamp, I was too scared to go outside at night, during the day I was too scared to pass through heavy traffic streets, the world of farming and industry dangers I feared, I

was scared of ghosts, scared of people. When I was young, I went to my friends house to do homework, his house had a madman lying at the head of a flight of stairs, I asked someone to support me downstairs, I bowed and scraped, doing anything to get someone to escort me. My house's backyard did not have a street lamp, coming back at night, I would frighteningly yell to make the alleyway lights open, making all the doors and windows open. When crossing a bridge I was afraid of falling into the river beneath, when I walked I was afraid of hitting a wall. Anything I did I was scared of defeat, I would rather not do anything than be defeated. When things began to happen was when my scared started to end, [256] and so I did not start. I was scared of one's wish coming to an end, feeling dejected, I would never get together. I was scared of my youth never coming back, and so while still young I wore older people clothing. I was scared of losing my parents, and was envious of orphans. I was scared of being disappointed in a love affair, so I did not make romantic incidents. Riding the tides, this dangerous work, I avoided to the depths of my being. Protecting myself is what I was born with, knowing what kinds of things I can only do in my imagination. My imagination developed, I could push things profound and lasting conditions, and my not doing anything power, accordion played very ordinary. In my imagination of a free and easy life, my life was safe, that is where me, my husband, Ah Xing, Big Lin, my husband's teacher, and the Japanese singing star Yamaguchi Jōn difference lies.

When I wrote this novel, my husband was editing *Song Fan* already published, in it the most popular song is Taiwan's Zhao Chuan's *I Am A Small Little Bird*.

1990/2/11

