

Another classmate was YAO Wen-Yuan. We were in the same class for three semesters. We were not very close. He was not an outstanding student, ordinary in class works, and not very athletic either. I would not remember him but for one thing. While most of us were still absorbed in martial arts fictions and light romantic novels, he was reading heavy Russian works. His father, YAO Peng-Zi was the owner of the progressive publishing house ‘Writer’ s Book House’ 作家书屋. That might contribute to his early literary maturity. Our class put out a weekly wall paper. He apparently was an editor. He did not write particularly well. But he was ambitious. He had started to write a comprehensive long novel, with the grandiose title “The People in The War of Resistance” 抗战中的人们, and appeared in serial every week in the wall paper. I do not remember whether I had ever read it.

After the victory of the War of Resistance, we parted and never got in touch again. I left Chungking to Nanking, and he to Shanghai. In 1970’s, YAO’s name appeared in both the Chinese and Western media as an important political figure during the Cultural Revolution. While the media people did not know about his background, and speculated that he was a much older person, I was almost sure that he was my classmate YAO.

In 1975, during our first visit from US to Mainland, I mentioned to our escort that I had a classmate in Nankai whose name was YAO Wen-Yuan, and that I would be glad to see him if he were willing. I received no response. It is most likely that our escort never relayed the message.

YAO was arrested in 1976, and sentenced for 20 years. He was released in October 1996, having served the full 20 years in prison. His wife died on 1996/8/19, two months before his release from prison. He apparently lived in Shanghai until his death in December 2005.

I have a high school classmate who was a high official in Shanghai Municipal Government in 1990’s. I asked him whether he knew where YAO lived. He said he did not know and he could ask. He never gave me the answer.

According to an article by the author YE Yong-Lie 叶永烈, YAO was buried in a cemetery in Shanghai with his wife. The tomb bears only his wife’s name, and was nominally set up by their children. But the tombstone was apparently designed by YAO himself.

On top of the tombstone are four words ‘For Truth With Love’ 真理真情。Below is a poem 蝶恋花 . One line of the poem: ‘always in mind the never-changing original devotion’ 不改初衷常历历.

YAO was a dedicated follower of MAO Zedong. He remained so till the end of his life.

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另一个同学是姚文元，我们同班三个学期。我们的关系不密切。他算不上优等生，学业平平，也不很健壮。只有一件事情是让我记得他的，当我们大多数人都沉迷于武侠和浪漫小说的时候，他却在读那些大部头的俄文作品。他的父亲姚蓬子开了一家进步出版社叫作家书屋，这也许使他文学上颇为早熟。我们班办了每周一期的壁报，他显然是编辑之

一。他写的并不特别好，但很有雄心。他开始写一部大型的长篇小说，篇名气魄很大，叫作《抗战中的人们》，在壁报上每周连载一期，我不记得是否读过这个小说。

抗战胜利后，我们分开而且再没见过面。我离开重庆去了南京，他则去了上海。七十年代，姚文元的名字在中国和西方媒体上作为文化大革命的重要政治人物出现。新闻界不知道他的背景，猜测他是个年纪大得多的人，我则心里有数他就是我的同学姚文元。

1975 年我们第一次从美国访问大陆。我跟陪同说我有南开同学是姚文元，要是他愿意的话我很高兴能见见他。我没有得到任何回复，最可能的是陪同就没有汇报这个消息上去。

姚文元 1976 年被捕，判了 20 年刑。他 1996 年 10 月释放，坐满了 20 年牢。他的太太 1996 年 8 月 19 日去世，在他被释放前两个月。显然在 2005 年 12 月去世之前他都住在上海。

我有个高中同学于九十年代在上海任高官，我问他是否知道姚文元住在哪里，他说不知道但可以帮着打听，但后来他一直没有给过我答复。

根据叶永烈的一篇文章，姚文元与他的太太葬在上海的一个墓地。墓上只有他太太的名字，而且名义上是他们的孩子们立的，但墓碑显然是姚文元自己设计的。

碑石上面是“真理真情”四个字，下面是一首词《蝶恋花》，其中一句是：“不改初衷常历历”。

姚文元是毛泽东忠诚的追随者，一直到生命的尽头。