

Zhong Da Fu Zhong (ZDFZ) was coeducational as a school. But the classes were not coeducational. Therefore, there were very little interactions between male and female students, except in extra-curricular activities. In our class, we had an unusual fellow student CHEN Zong Zhen 陈宗振. He was a little older than the rest of us. He attended the Han Min 汉民 High School in Guilin before he came to ZDFZ. Han Min High School was a very liberal school where male and female students studied and played among each other. So he was not a bit inhibited towards interactions with girl students. In evening self study periods, he would just go to the female students' class rooms and chat with them.

During our first semester in ZDFZ, he started to organize a coeducational choral group with class mates in our class (Class B) and the Class C for the girls. There was a school-wide choral group organized by the music teachers. But our group was entirely self organized, and admit anyone with or without singing talents, so long as he/she was interested in joining. This way, many of us got to know some of our female classmates across the social barrier.

There was also a school-wide drama group and they would perform one major play each semester. In one semester, it was the "Thunderstorm" by Cao Yu. CHEN was also involved in the production of the play. The leading role, the elder young master (Da Shao Ye 大少爷), was given to a classmate in our class. I only remember his surname, YANG 杨. The leading actress was another YANG. Her name was YANG Xing Ping 杨信平. She played Si Feng 四凤. She was one year ahead of us. She later also went to Taiwan after studying one year in Zhong Yang Da Xue 中央大学 in Nanjing after liberation. That year of study could not count in Taiwan. So she ended up in the same year as mine when she enrolled in Taiwan University.

I came to US in 1955 in a charter flight. She happened to be also in the same flight from Taipei to US. We were even on the same train from San Francisco to Chicago.

That first trip to US of mine was quite memorable. We started with a charter flight from Taipei to Tokyo. On September 13, we left Tokyo in the afternoon boarding a DC-6, which had a seat capacity of 56. There was no jet passenger aircraft yet. The largest passenger aircraft was DC-7, which has seat capacity around 100. It took 21 hours to reach Vancouver, with two refueling stops, one in northern Japan and one in Alaska, on the way. We changed planes in Vancouver and then flew to San Francisco with stopover in Seattle.

My destination was Providence. I could fly. But it would cost me \$120. The Southern Pacific Railroad offered a discount of 30% for anyone who had crossed the International Dateline for the first time. Most of us took the train to go east. With discount, my train fare was \$70. I bought some bread, fruits and ham before boarding the train. The cost was just \$1 for my food for three days all the way to Chicago.

My fellow travelers left the train one by one on route towards east. By the time the train arrived at Chicago, I was the only one going further. I had to carry a suitcase and walk to

a different station in Chicago slum area, to switch to another rail line. Then again I had to change to another train in New York going northeast the next day. Finally, I arrived at Providence on September 18 at 10pm, alone in an almost deserted railway station in a strange city.

Coming back to my friend CHEN, he did not pursue his career in performing arts. He ended up being the leading world authority on the Yugu language, a branch of Turkish language in danger of extinction. His treatise “Studies on Western Yugu Language” 《西部裕固语研究》, published in 2004, is a classic in its field.

中大附中是男女同校的，但男女分班。因此，除了课外活动，男女生之间交流很少。我们班有个与众不同的同学陈宗振，他比我们其他人大一点。读中大附中之前他在桂林的汉民中学念过，汉民中学是很自由的学校，男女生一起念书一起玩，所以他一点也不顾忌和女生交往。夜自修的时候，他径直去女生教室，跟她们聊天。

我们在中大附中的头一个学期，他开始组织了男女生合唱团，包括从我们二班的男生和三班的女生。音乐老师另外组织了全校性的合唱团，但我们这个不一样，完全是自己组织的，而且只要有兴趣、不论是否有唱歌的天赋都可以加入，这样我们很多人就克服了社交屏障与女同学相互认识。

学校里还有个话剧社，每学期组织表演一台大戏。有一学期是曹禺的《雷雨》，陈宗振也参与张罗这演出。主角大少爷是给了我们班的一个同学，我只记得他姓杨。女主角也姓杨，叫杨信平，她演四凤。她比我们高一年级，后来解放后她在南京的中央大学上了一年，然后也来了台湾，这一年学业在台湾不被承认，于是她上台大的时候我们成了同一年级的了。

我 1955 年搭包机去美国，刚好她也同机从台北去美国，我们甚至坐同一趟列车从旧金山到芝加哥。

我的首次美国之行非常难忘。我们从台北乘包机先到东京，9 月 13 日下午，我们乘一架 DC-6 型飞机离开东京，飞机载客量是 56 人。那时还没有喷气式客机，而最大的客机是 DC-7 型飞机，载客量大概是 100 人。飞到温哥华花了 21 小时，中间在日本北部和阿拉斯加停下来加了两次油。在温哥华换机飞到旧金山，经停西雅图。

我的目的地是 Providence，可以坐飞机到，但机票要花 120 美元。南太平洋铁路公司对首次跨越国际日期变更线的乘客提供七折票，于是我们大多乘火车去东部。打折后我的车票是 70 美元。我上车前买了面包、水果和火腿肠，一路去芝加哥的三天中这些伙食只花了 1 美元。

东去的路上，我的同行者一个接一个地下了车。到了芝加哥的时候，我成了唯一一个接着往前走的。我拎着箱子走到芝加哥贫民区的另一个火车站，去转乘另一趟车。接着，我还得第二天再换一次车去纽约。最后，九月 18 日夜里 10 点，我到达 Providence，孤零零地在一个陌生城市的几乎空荡荡的火车站。

回过头来说我的朋友陈宗振，他后来并没有到演艺圈发展自己的事业。他最后成了国际上研究濒临灭绝的土耳其裕固语的权威。2004 年他出版的《西部裕固语研究》，是这一领域的经典之作。