

1948 was a busy year. In the family, my eldest brother and eldest sister got married. While my eldest brother remained living with his bride at home, my eldest sister went to her new home in Hangzhou. Then in August, my eldest brother got a scholarship to go to US for graduate study, and my sister-in-law, who was pregnant by then, went to Taipei to stay with her parents. Her father was at that time the president of Taiwan University.

Outside home, while war was raging in Northeast and North China, Nanjing, in April and May, was busy in the election of the President and Vice-president of the Republic of China. There was only token competition with Chiang Kai-Shek for the presidency. But the competition for the vice-president was very fierce and had quite a few up and downs. Eventually, LI Tsung-jen beat SUN Fo by a narrow margin to get elected. The inauguration of the president and vice-president was held on May 20.

Soon afterwards, on May 23, the siege of Changchun in Northeast started, and on June 30, the Communist army led by LIU Po-cheng and DENG Xiao-ping forced across the Yellow River to the south.

The inflation was so bad that the Nationalist Government decided to carry out financial reform and to issue new currencies on August 19. One new 'gold dollar' (金元卷) was to exchange three million old 'legal dollars' (法币). After a month's relative stability, the inflation returned and got worse. By the time of May in 1949, the inflation went up five million fold within eight months.

In the school, the first indication of something very wrong was food. Only rice was offered, and no more dishes even of vegetables. I was on duty one day for food service and went with a truck to get rice in the outskirts of the city. We had to have two soldiers armed with rifles to escort us. Otherwise we might be mobbed by hungry people.

By December, war was getting close to Nanjing. Classmates started to leave school. My family were also thinking of moving. Where to? Sichuan? Guangdong? Taiwan? Finally, the family decided to go to Shanghai first. My father had to stay with the government in Nanjing, and my second brother would accompany him there. At that time, my grandmother was still in Shengxian, my eldest sister in Hangzhou, my eldest brother in America and his wife in Taipei. Family members were scattered in six places during this chaotic period.

Train tickets were very hard to get, and train station was extremely crowded. People had to get into the compartments through the window. So we decided to go to Shanghai by boat. Even by boat, we could only get third class tickets with berths in a big common room.

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1948 年是忙碌的一年。在家里，我的大哥和大姐相继成婚。大哥和新娘住在家里，而大姐则去了杭州她的新家。8 月，大哥拿到奖学金去美国进研究院，大嫂当时已怀孕，去了台北娘家与她父母同住，她父亲当时任台大校长。

家外，东北和华北战争肆虐，而南京在四五月间忙着选举中华民国的总统和副总统。蒋介石的总统竞选只是表面上有点竞争，但副总统的竞争则非常激烈、起伏动荡。最终，李宗仁险胜孙科。总统和副总统的就职典礼于 5 月 20 日举行。

但几天后，5月23日，长春包围战开始，6月30日，刘伯承和邓小平率领的中共部队强渡黄河、挺进南方。

通货膨胀十分严峻，国民党政府乃决定进行金融改革，8月19日发行新货币。1元金圆券可以换3百万元法币。大约有了一个月左右的相对稳定之后，通胀又回归甚至愈演愈烈。到1949年5月时，8个月中通胀5百万倍。

在学校里，显示情况不妙的第一个迹象是伙食。只有饭，没有下饭菜肴。有一天轮到我值班，跟着卡车去郊外取米，我们有两个持枪士兵护卫，否则会被饥民抢劫。

到了12月，战事逼近南京。同学们开始离校。我家也考虑逃难。去哪里？四川？广东？台湾？最后，家里决定先到上海。我父亲得留在南京的政府，二哥也陪他留下。那时，我的祖母仍在嵊县，大姐在杭州，大哥在美国，大嫂在台湾。乱世之中，一家人散居在六个不同的地方。

火车票极难买到，车站拥挤不堪。乘客得从车窗钻到车厢。因此我们决定乘船去上海。即使这样，我们也只能买到三等船票，挤在大统舱里。