

第 31 篇 [假期的回憶] [Recall a Past Vacation]

命題大意：寫出以往某一假日的學習和經歷

寫作大意：敘述1941年在柏溪中央大學分校暑假時的生活

ASSIGNMENT: 1/29/2003

Recall a past vacation and write an essay about what you learned and experienced during it.

WRITING: 2/5/2003

In my life before retirement in 1985, I had experienced many different types of vacations. I think the one of the following most unforgettable and beneficial, if not the most enjoyable.

It was the three months' summer vacation which I had in 1941, from August to October, after I had finished the freshman schooling in the National Central University in the war time Chinese Capital Chungking (重慶). The place, called Peishi (柏溪), was a river side hilly, fertile rural place originally full of orange groves and broad bean planting. It was hastily transformed to the branch school of NCU for the freshman use because of the war. That was the time when the war entered the fourth year since the breaking of the Sino-Japanese war in 1937, a prelude of the World War II. I was among those poorly supported students, most of whom had their families in the Japanese occupied or attacked areas. There was no place to go in the vacation but staying at the school, fed with government subsidized meal for living.

Our food was very bad. We occasionally had picnics with the wild vegetables and broad beans stewed with a little minced pork meat to improve the taste. A part of our time was spent near the air raid shelter caves at the air raid alarm. Whenever seeing the enemy propeller aircrafts approaching in our direction we rushed into the cave shelters. Sometimes we sat at the cave openings to watch the fighters' dog fighting in the sky, or the bombers passing by not in our direction surrounded with some white smoke circular dots from the anti-aircraft firing.

We had not enough electric lights in the evening, so we usually spent our evenings chatting on the moonlight field or in the very low cost tea houses. We bought some post cards and cut them into halves to make poker cards to play bridge games. In the lengthy day time, we mostly were absorbed in studying in the library, or part of the time hiking on the hilly terrain and swimming in the Jialing River (嘉陵江). We did not have TV (not invented) to watch. Radios and movies were scarce, not available to us in the hastily constructed war time campus area. We lived very simple, primitive, rural, austere, quiet lives. We got used to the hardship of the war time and enjoyed the leisure of the vacation.

In that three months' vacation, since there was not much to do to kill the time, I had the drive to read a lot of books, which I find very useful to my life. Besides, on that occasion, I had spent a short time on a self made wooden typewriter pattern to practice finger typing as well as to play it as a toy. Half a century later at my 70s, I amazingly found my fingers easily get the proficiency on the keyboard operation when I engaged in PC learning.