

第010 [ 設想和某名人餐敘時所作詢問。 ]

命題大意： 設想和某在世或已故名人餐敘時所作詢問。

寫作大意： 藉此說明作者父親生平和臨終時情形。

ASSIGNMENT 5/15/2002

[If you come to eat dinner with a famous person of your choice, living or dead, who would it be, what question would you ask?]

WRITING 5/22/2002

The famous person I now assumed to eat dinner and chat with is my father Xienchi Wen (1878-1925) who was living in a time in China at the transition from the old Qing dynasty autocracy to the republic. Father became famous in his time because he was taught in the old style, private school with the old classic books of the old time. He also was the number one university graduate of our native county Liling, from the only national university in China at that time called "Jing- Su- Da-Sho-Tong", the predecessor of the present famous Beijing University. After graduation, father dedicated his expertise in the education field by setting up the new educational system in our native province Hunan, and founding new schools. In his short life span 47 years, father worked partly at different times as principals of several newly founded high schools in Hunan including that school from which the Chairman Mao Ze Tung was graduated.

Father died when I was only four years old. It was a sudden death, because of taking wrongly prescribed herbal medicine by a country side, old time, medical person. This man could not be a doctor in the present standards. His medical knowledge was obtained by self study of old time classic medical books in China. This so-called doctor did not have the least modern medical knowledge. While the present human average life span in China is said to be over 70 years that of my father's time was estimated at not more than 50. My father's early death was deemed a bad fate of his own. Nobody thought

of cursing and suing the not qualified doctor at that time.

After the wrong herbal medicine was taken, father was bothered by sleeplessness and was sober and thoughtful for days. His eye pupils were enlarged and

he was afraid of strong light. He realized he would be dying very soon.

He then called all the family around him, bidding the last words before

departure. He sobbed and said, "I still have a lot of things in my mind, which I planned to write out in volumes of books but no more time to do....".

His eyeballs turned upward and he sighed his last breath.

Should I now have a chance to talk with him, I would ask him to tell

me at least some of the essentials that he wanted to write about. Sadly,

he did not have time to speak at that limited time before he passed away.

COMMENTS: You certainly are improving. It only took me about 15 minutes

to do the assignment. Usually it took more than an hour.