

Trudging Towards the Plateau

Journalist Guo Chaoren

走向高原

新闻记者郭超人



党建读物出版社

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*To cross the tundra covered with snow and ice
Please consult the antelopes in the north
To seek the benchlands offering warmth
Go and ask the wild geese migrating to the south...*

— Excerpt from interview notes in Tibet

Luc Chacien

走向高原

· 郑 鸣 ·

最先感到分量的是你的呼吸，一只看不见的魔掌压迫着你的胸脯，紧攥着你的喉管，你需要用很大的力量，张开嘴，吸入你需要的空气。你的腿也愈来愈沉重了。严格地说，不仅是腿，而是你的全身。每一步都变得不轻松——并不是你的腿酸疼或者无力，而是你已经没有力量把你这双几乎已经麻木的腿移动。

雪山的峰巅在阳光下闪烁。

——《登山日记》1960年3月25日

为了编辑这本画册，我翻阅了岳父郭超人在其44年新闻记者生涯中留下的160多个采访笔记本。当我从一个蓝色封皮的笔记本里读到上面这段文字时，心中不禁为之震撼：整整40年前，也是这个季节，也是这个日子，郭超人所记录的随中国登山队从大本营出发，向珠穆朗玛峰挺进第一天时的生理感受，竟与他40年后走到生命终点时的体验一模一样！

莫非这是阳光下闪烁的雪山峰巅对他的又一次召唤？

莫非这就是他走向高原永恒的纪念？

从2000年3月下旬到6月上旬，整整70天的时间，郭超人以超人的意志和顽强的步履，极其悲壮地走完了他生命最后的旅程。

由于他的病情一直未得到明确的诊断，因此没有更好的手段能遏制住他胸腔内快速增长的积液——胸水，只有靠穿刺双肺抽出胸水，才能缓解他被压迫的心脏和肺部承受的重负。开始，每周抽出1000毫升左右的胸水；到了5月中旬，几乎每两天就要往外抽1500毫升以上的胸水，才能使他的呼吸顺畅一些。

渐渐地，他的双腿开始浮肿，从办公室到家里大约200米左右的路走起来也愈加吃力了。但他执意坚持半天工作、半天休息。虽然他已不再具备40年前健壮的体魄，却依然怀有燃烧着激情的心，并自信激情能蒸发掉一腔胸水。他说：“闯过这难关，又可以写一部《驯水记》。”

当他投入工作状态之后，无论同事还是家人都不会相信他已是一个病弱之躯。因为他专注，因为他在工作中享受着快乐。

他就是这样以快乐和坚韧构筑他攀登生命新高度的阶梯。

5月下旬开始，由于病情进一步恶化，郭超人已不能平躺，甚至不能在躺椅和沙发上仰坐，他只好反身躺在书桌前的一把椅子上，双臂搭着椅背枕住他不停地冒着虚汗的头。胸闷难忍的时候，他会把头悄悄地埋下，他不愿让任何人，特别是自己最亲近的人看到他痛苦的面容，只要有家人、朋友在身边，他的嘴角总会露出浅浅的笑。

精神好一点的时候，他像往常一样谈笑风生，也会久久注视着挂在书桌对面墙上的一幅油画。

这幅画出自俄罗斯一位不知名的街头画家之手。画面是由晨曦中陡峭的冰峰、冰峰下茂密的森林和林间的一汪深潭构成。在森林与冰峰之间，弥漫着雾霭。郭超人喜欢这幅画，是他亲自选好位置挂在墙上的。

他还特别留意墙上的另一样东西——挂钟。稍微有些不准，他马上去把它调好。病重以后，他再也不肯摘下腕上的手表，或许他有某种预感，他对时间格外地敏感了。

5月31日，为了帮助6岁的外孙在“六一”儿童节小朋友联欢时背诵《昆明大观楼长联》，郭超人抑扬顿挫、一字一句地教，孩子一字一句地跟着学，他用录音机录下了一老一少的长吟。当然，孩子稚嫩的声音再模仿也很难领会：“只赢得 / 几树疏钟 / 半江渔火 / 两行秋雁 / 一枕青霜”的内涵，而深谙生命要义的郭超人已领略了：“莫辜负 / 四围香稻 / 万顷晴沙 / 九夏芙蓉 / 三春杨柳”的情怀。

录音机里还留下了他在这一天背诵的另一首宋词，柳永的《雨霖铃》：“……多情自古伤离别 / 更那堪冷落清秋节 / 今宵酒醒何处 / 杨柳岸晓风残月 / 此去经年 / 应是良辰好景虚设 / 便纵有千种风情 / 更与何人说”。这段录音是在郭超人去世后才发现的，这也是他留下的最后的声音。

无独有偶。也是在那个蓝色封皮的登山笔记本里，我找到了“今宵酒醒何处 / 杨柳岸晓风残月”的词句，这是郭超人在海拔5000多米的高山营地写下，不知道40年前他是在什么情境下想起了这句词？

6月9日，星期五。医院告知家属最后的诊断：肺癌。记得那天傍晚，当我得知了这一结果后忐忑走进他的书房时，他正坐在躺椅上吸氧。见我进来，笑了笑对我说：“医生让我下星期开始住院治疗，16号你的生日恐怕赶不上了，只能提前把生日礼物送给你，就在书桌上。”

我极力掩饰着自己，快步走到他身后的书桌旁，泪水夺眶而出。

礼物是一件T恤、一支笔和一张裁下一半的旧贺卡，上面依然是他隽永的字迹：生日快乐！

我不知道此时应该说什么，不知道怎样与他对视，不知道如何感激他的厚爱。

正在艰难吸氧的岳父已经无力转过身来看见我拿到这份礼物时的状态了。

6月13日上午，郭超人像往常一样主持了一上午的会议。吃过中午饭，就赶到医院去了。下午，医院为他进行化疗。

6月14日上午，他的身体突然像雪崩一样全面衰竭，经过10个小时的抢救仍未奏效。晚10点开始，深度昏迷。

又是10个小时。他的血压在下降，心跳在减弱，生命在离去。

他从雪域高原、黄土高坡、西南林莽一路走来的双腿肿胀得发亮。

蓝冰和蓝雪一直守候在病床的两侧，她们用颤抖的手，也用女儿全部的爱来温暖父亲正在变凉的双脚。

6月15日早晨9点零5分，抢救室的磨砂玻璃门关上了。逆光下，惨白的玻璃门上是一些忙乱、虚幻的黑影在晃动。岳母呆立在门前，零乱的白发与那扇生死相隔的惨白的门融为一体……

郭超人又到那个寒冷的世界去了。他一身洁白，一枕青霜，嘴角还是带着浅浅的笑意。

一个挺拔、瘦削的背影渐渐远去，消逝在冰天雪地，走向他精神的高原。

Trudging towards Plateau

· Zhong Meng ·

The very first thing you felt difficult was your breathing. An invisible evil hand repressed your chest and pinched your throat so hard that you had to try very hard to open your mouth and inhale the air needed.

Your legs were growing heavier and heavier. To be exact, not just the legs, but the whole body. Each step you took was not easy — not because your legs ached or lacked strength, but because you had no strength at all to move the almost numb legs.

The top of the snowy mountain shone in the sun.

—— Mountaineering Diary Mar. 25th, 1960

In order to compile this picture album, I have looked over my father-in-law Guo Chaoren's more than 160 interview notebooks written during his forty-four-year career life as a journalist. When I was reading the above words from a blue-covered notebook, I was shocked by the coincidence: a good forty years ago, in the same season, on the same day, the physiological experience Guo Chaoren recorded on the first day he joined the Chinese Mountaineering Team to press onward from the base camp towards Mt. Qomolangma was exactly the same as his experience forty years later when he came to the end of his life!

Was it another call for him from the glittering snow-capped mountains?

Was it an eternal memorial for his trudging towards plateau?

During the seventy whole days from late March to early June 2000, Guo Chaoren had heroically trudged through the last passage of his life with his exceptional will and indomitable steps.

Since the definite diagnosis of his health condition was not obtainable for a long time, no better means other than puncturing his lungs and extracting the thoracic hydrops in his chest—could be sought to check the rapidly increasing thoracic hydrops. Only in this way could the heavy burden endured by his constricted heart and lungs get relieved. At first, around 1,000-ml thoracic hydrops was extracted each week. By the middle of May, however, over 1,500-ml thoracic hydrops had to be extracted out every two days to ease his breath.

Gradually, his legs got swollen. He had much difficulty walking from his office to home, a distance of around 200 meters. Yet he insisted on working in the office for half a day and then having the other half off. Though without a strong build as he used to have forty years ago, he still had a passionate burning heart which he believed could evaporate the thoracic hydrops in his chest. He said, "Batting through this, I may write another *Taming Torrents*."

As he threw himself into work, neither his colleagues nor his family would believe he was a sick and weak man, for he was so absorbed in work and was enjoying it so much.

In this way, he constructed the ladder for climbing the new heights in his life with joy and perseverance.

From late May, owing to the deterioration of his illness, Guo Chaoren could not lie on his back or even sit on his back on a lounge or a sofa. He had to bestride the chair at desk, with arms laid on the back of the chair to support his sweating head. When the choking sensation in the chest was unbearable, he would bury his head in the arms quietly, for he would not let anybody, especially those who were dearest to him see his painful countenance. As long as his family or friends were around, a light smile always appeared at the corners of his mouth.

When he felt better, he would talk in a jovial mood or gaze at an oil painting hung on the wall opposite to the desk.

This picture was painted by an unknown street artist in Russia. It is composed of a steep icy peak in the first rays of the morning sun, a dense forest at the foot of the icy peak and a deep pool in the forest. Mist spreads between the forest and the icy peak. Guo Chaoren was so fond of the picture that he himself chose the position to hang it on the wall.

He also paid special attention to another thing on the wall — the wall clock. Whenever there was slight inaccuracy, he would

immediately adjust it right. He also refused to take off his wristwatch after his illness took a turn for the worse. Perhaps a certain foreboding in his heart made him especially sensitive to time.

On May 31st, in order to help his 6-year-old grandson recite the Long Couplet on Daguan Tower in Kunming in the get-together on Children's Day, Guo Chaoren taught the couplet word by word with a cadence, while the boy imitated it sentence by sentence. He had recorded their chants. Of course with the childish imitation, the boy could not understand the meaning of *"Only winning / several chimes / half a river's lights on fishing boats / two lines of wild geese in autumn / one pillowful of grey hair"*. But Guo Chaoren who had understood perfectly the gist of life could well appreciate the feeling of *"Do not miss / four gardens of fragrant rice / patches of fine sands / nine summers of hibiscus / and three springs of willows"*.

Recorded also was another Ci poem from the Song Dynasty recited by him on that day, Liuyong's Yu Lin Ling, *"... Since time immemorial, lovers have grieved at parting / Made more poignant in the fallow season of autumn / What is this place where I have sobered from my drunken stupor? / The riverside is strewn with willow trees; The morning breeze wafts in with a waning moon / Our parting will last for years / Fine hours and scenes of beauty have no appeal / Even though my heart is filled with tender feelings / But, with whom can I share them?"* We didn't find this recording until Guo Chaoren passed away. This was the last sound he left.

It so happened that I found the words *"What is this place where I have sobered from my drunken stupor? / The riverside is strewn with willow trees; The morning breeze wafts in with a waning moon"* in his blue-covered mountaineering notebook. Guo Chaoren had written down the poem in the camp on the mountains over 5,000 meters above sea level. I can't help wondering under what condition did the poem occur to him?

June 6th. Friday. Doctors' final diagnosis reached the family: it was lung cancer. I remembered when I entered his study with much grief and anxiety that evening, he was sitting on the lounge, inhaling oxygen. Seeing my arrival, he smiled and said to me, *"Doctors asked me to stay in hospital from next week. I am afraid I will miss your birthday on the 16th. So I have to give you the birthday gifts in advance. They are on the desk."*

I tried my best to conceal my feelings and walked in a hurry to the desk behind him, tears gushing out.

The gifts were a T-shirt, a pen and half of an old greeting card. On the card were still his meaningful words: Happy Birthday! I didn't know what to say, how to look at him or how to thank him for his deep love.

Inhaling oxygen with much difficulty, my father-in-law had no strength to turn around and see the state in which I got the gifts.

On June 13th, Guo Chaoren presided over a meeting during the all morning as usual. After having lunch he hurried to hospital. In the afternoon, he received chemotherapy.

On the morning of June 14th, his health collapsed completely just like avalanche. Even ten hours' emergency treatment could not stop the collapse. He was in a deep coma from ten at night.

Another 10 hours passed. His blood pressure was decreasing, his heartbeat was weakening and his life was waning.

The legs that had walked the Snow-Covered Plateau, Loess Plateau and Southwest Wild Forest were so swollen that they were shining.

Lan Bing and Lan Xue, his two daughters, were always waiting on him at the bedsides. With trembling hands, and with daughter's full love, they warmed their father's cold feet.

9:05 in the morning of June 15th, the frosted glass door of the emergency room closed. Under the backlight, some busy and illusory black shadows were swaying like a muddle. My mother-in-law stood in front of the door blankly. Her messy white hair blended with the ghostly pale door that separated life from death...

Guo Chaoren had gone back to the cold world. He was all in white, with one pillowful of grey hair, with a light smile still at the corners of his mouth.

A forceful and thin figure was slowly going afar, fading away in the world of ice and snow, trudging towards his spiritual plateau.

要过冰雪的台原，

送我北方的羚羊。

要穿温暖的河滩，

去问南飞的士雁……

——摘自西望东归笔记

郭超人



一九五六年九月，当未名湖畔的垂柳又一次被满秋色的时候，
我终于结束了四年的大学生活，不得不同北大挥泪告别了。

——《从北大，我带走了一把钥匙……》（1988年2月6日）

*In September 1956, when the weeping willows on the shore of the Lake Wunamed were again
coated with autumnal tints, I came to the end of my four-year college life and had to, in tears, say goodbye
to Peking University.*

——From Peking University, I took away a key... (February 6th, 1988)



大学时代 / 1953
College days / 1953



记得还是在三年级的时候，我有机会读完了著名的瑞典探险家斯文赫定撰写的《亚洲腹地旅行记》一书，我一方面赞赏他只身翻越崇山峻岭深入西藏高原的冒险精神，一方面又为他竭力丑化藏族人民的资产阶级偏见而深感愤懑。

——《从北大，我带走了一把钥匙……》（1988年2月6日）

*I remember when I was a junior, I had the opportunity to finish reading the book *Travel in the Hinterland of Asia* by the renowned Swedish explorer Svenhedin. While admiring his venturesome spirit of tramping over mountains and dales all alone and going deep into the Tibetan Plateau, I couldn't constrain my resentment at his capitalist prejudice for his every attempt to vilify the Tibetans.*

—— From Peking University, I took away a key... (February 6th, 1988)



读大学三年级时到中国青年报实习（后排右二）/ 1954

Working as a trainee journalist with China Youth Daily when he was a junior (second from right, back row) / 1954



作为中文系新闻专业的一名学生，我当时就暗下决心，毕业后一定要到西藏去，我要通过自己的实地采访，写出一本针锋相对的新书，连书名都想好了，叫《亚洲腹地新风景》。为了表达自己的志愿，我利用学习文学创作课的时间，赶写了一个话剧剧本《到远方去》，描写了一位大学毕业生不顾师长的挽留，恋人的劝阻，毅然抛开北京的舒适生活走向遥远的边疆，剧本里的主人公实际上就是我自己。

——《从北大，我带走了一把钥匙……》（1988年2月6日）

As a major in journalism of the Chinese Department, I had secretly made up my mind to go to Tibet after graduation. I was determined to write a diametrically new book based on my own field interviews. I had even figured out the title—New Stories from the Hinterland of Asia. To express my wish, I worked out a drama script Going afar by making use of the time in our Literary Writing course. It tells the story of a graduate who resolutely leaves behind the cozy life in Beijing and heads for the remote frontiers in spite of the persuasions from his sweetheart and teachers. The hero of the drama is virtually myself.

——From Peking University, I took away a key... (February 6th, 1988)



毕业前夕 / 1956
On the eve of graduation / 1956



当我几经申请终于被获准到西藏工作以后，一种惜别之情突然像火山爆发一样，达到了难以抑制的程度。我简直不敢相信自己有勇气离开自己曾经度过一千多个日夜的地方，不知道有多少个清晨和黄昏，我长时间漫无目的地在校园里踟蹰，我一次又一次地穿过那松林里蜿蜒的小径，踏过荷塘边古朴的石桥，迎着拂面的轻风，领略着扑鼻而来的花草和泥土的气息，这时我才意识到我是多么珍爱和多么难舍这眼前的一切啊！

不久，去西藏工作的通知书下来了。为了抢在大雪封山以前赶到拉萨报到，我无法等待与其他同学一道去领取毕业证书（这份毕业证书直到二十八年之后才领到，多谢学校为我妥善地保管好它），也来不及参加学校组织的隆重的欢送会，只是带着一件我自认为最有象征意义的纪念品——我曾经居住过的学生宿舍的房门钥匙，便匆匆忙忙登上了西去的列车，踏上了从此使我倾注了十多年心血的艰难的旅程。

——《从北大，我带走了一把钥匙……》（1988年2月6日）

After several applications, I eventually got the permission to work in Tibet. The feeling of reluctance to part, all of a sudden, erupted like volcanoes, which could hardly be restrained. For me, I could barely believe that I had the courage to leave the place where I had spent more than a thousand days and nights. I could not remember how many times I wandered long on the campus at dawn or dusk. Over and over again I walked through the pinewood along the winding path and across the plain stone bridge near the lake pond, being caressed by the gentle breeze and greeted by the fragrance of the flowers, grass and soil. Only at that moment did I come to realize how much I valued all these, and how reluctant I was to part from them!

Soon came the letter notifying me of my assignment to work in Tibet. In order to get to Lhasa before the snow blocked all the mountain passes, I could not wait until the moment when I was supposed to receive my diploma together with my classmates. (Thanks to the university for safekeeping it, I received my diploma 28 years later.) Nor did I have enough time to attend the grand farewell ceremony at the university. Taking with me the only memento which I thought to be of great symbolic meaning—the key to the dorm room where I used to live, I hurried onto the train bound for the west, and started off on the hard journey of over ten years' devotion.

——From Peking University, I took away a key... (February 6th, 1988)