

Kuei-Hais Tseng (Taiwan)

bio (from TU M Y FB Feb 1, 2023 post)

(1946-)

Taiwanese poet and doctor. Started his career as a lung specialist in 1973, Seng Qui-Hai had a stethoscope in one hand and pen in the other: stethoscopes for patients and pen for the world. Through poems he expressed his desire for the motherland. He proposed and participated in mass affairs, Taiwanese politics and social reform. In 1982, he founded Literature Taiwan magazine in collaboration with other literary writers; in 1988 he participated in social movement including Taiwanese literature subjects to Weiwing Metropolitan Park, Co-pin River Protection, Anti-Dam Movement, Kaoshiung Central Park Reconstruction, Kaoshiung Central Park Protection, Kaoshiung Central Park protection, Yun family hall. None of these movements yielded immediate results, as each lasted for almost twenty to thirty years.

For thirty years he devoted his life to the social movement. At the same time, he retained his literary practice and published 23 books so far, including a collection of 19 poems. With his pen he spoke about the Sun land and the people and the intentions of Taiwanese writers through the history of the colonies in Taiwan. He believes that "the true voice of literature should express the world's sadness, compassion, destiny and human feelings and hope. "

He is the President of Takaw Green Association for Ecology and Humanistic Studies, President of Taiwan Literature Magazine, Founder President of Weiwing Park Association, Director of Chunglihar Cultural and Educational Foundation, President of South Taiwan Society, President of Tiwan PEN, President of Leh Sea Society, Director of the Luke-Toi Cultural and Artistic Foundation. Currently he is National Policy Advisor to the President. He won several major Taiwanese Awards: Wu Chuo-Liu Literary Prize Free Verse Category (1985), Laiho Medical Services Prize (1998), Kaoshiung Literary & Art Prize (2004), Oxford Award for Taiwanese Literary (2016), Hakka Contribution for Life Award (2018), Taiwan Medical Treatment Paradigm Award (2019).

Poems 1-10 Tseng

Translated by 吳淑華 Dr Shuhwa Shirley WU

1 〈某病人〉

剛被診斷出來

依約到達的那個肺癌病人

山東籍的教師

高瘦的身子不願表情的臉
倦態加上病容
黑板上寫了三十多年的白粉筆字
暗示他
家在那裡
太太怎麼沒來
朋友呢
他只是沉默地搖搖頭
漸漸地搖垂了頭
突然，一顆淚水嗤的滴在
台灣的地圖上
蔓延
－《鯨魚的祭典》，1983年5月

“A Patient”

The patient came to see me for his appointment
He has just been diagnosed with lung cancer
A teacher born in born in the Province of Shandong
Tall and slim with blank expression on his face
Looking tired with illness
Over thirty years, he has written numerous words on the blackboard with chalk.
I inquired carefully:
Where do you live?
Your wife? Friends?
He just shook his head without a word
Slowly, he lowered his head
A tear dropped suddenly
Expanding
On the map of Taiwan.

From The Whales' Festival, May 1983

Translator's Note: Suntong Province is in the northeastern part of China. This patient could be a descendant of veterans who retreated to Taiwan with the KMT army by 1949.

2 〈風箏〉

陪爸爸到紀念堂去玩吧，孩子們

把風箏

放上去

像是自己飛昇的一顆心

遠遠地離開這個城市

奮力往上爬

爬得愈高

才能更清楚地看見

童年遙遠的故鄉啊

—1983 年

—《鯨魚的祭典》，1983 年 5 月

“Let's go fly a kite”

My children! Let's go to the Memorial Plaza and fly a kite!

Fly up

Higher and higher

Like this soaring heart of mine

Leave this city behind

Soar higher with vigor

Higher for the clear view from afar

The homeland

Of my childhood in sight

From The Whales' Festival, May 1983.

3 〈眼鏡〉

習慣地拿下眼鏡

才就寢

夢中的世界

一幕幕閃現的情節

看得那麼清楚

往往因為真實得太美好，或

太可怕

而悵然清醒

二十歲以後

一直是近視患者的我

以為鏡後的世界

就是真實的世界

每天忙著擦拭

那兩片玻璃水晶球

期待顯現美麗的新希望

而且，每過幾年

現實的折射改變了眼球的曲度

造成焦距的誤差

就換一副新的

儘管我這麼努力

仍然達不到

世俗社會的標準視力

－《高雄詩抄》，1986年2月

“Glasses”

As usual, I took off my glasses

Before Bed

The scenes in my dream rolled out vividly

I woke up, troubled, regretful

Often because some dreams were too beautiful

Others too frightening!

I have worn glasses since I was twenty, a short-sighted man

I always believed the world existed

In the way my glasses showed me.

Day after day, I wipe clean those glass orbs with care

Looking forward to seeing new bright hope

However, every few years, age changes the refraction of the eye

It takes a new pair of glasses to give me a clear vision of my reality

So much efforts and troubles taken

Yet, I am not able to attain

The standard vision defined by the world.

From Poems of Kaoshiung, Feb, 1986

4. 〈作家身分證〉

窗外

交配中的花朵

惶恐的擁抱

凋零的曾為母親的枯葉

室內

流動的愛慾和私密

呼嘯著踐踏肉身
留下毫無痕跡的寂靜

堅持作家的身份
用什麼證明你還活著
用宣言掩飾
模糊的自己
用利息和施捨
支付明天生命的浪費

堅持作家的身份
貼上心靈的各種裸照
填滿愛與罪行的記錄
重新申請一份

“A Writer’s ID Card”

Outside the window
Flowers embrace and breed in agony
Those withered leaves--
Once were their nurturing mothers

Inside the room
Flow desires, love and secrets
The flesh is conquered
[Then] no trace of war
Only silent stillness

How to prove you are alive
While holding on to your writer’s identity?
Making statements to cover up

The ambiguous self

And to pay bills for tomorrow's folly.

Hold on to a writer's identity

Posting various naked expressions of the soul

Records of love and sins

All go to the forms to apply once again-the writer's identity.

First written on March 15, 1992.

From Thoughts of a Taiwanese Man, May 1999.

5 〈先知與真理〉

你們站在人民之上

但高過你們的是永恆的律則

—普希金

先知對後覺說

不要讓無知敗壞你們的心

使你們充滿狹隘的台灣之愛

在這片島國

從一八九五年的抗日

到二二八血變

從來就沒有真正的革命

也不曾出現先知

自由民主與獨立

已是人類的智慧財產

我們只是良知的仿冒者

依照舊藍圖

打造理想的獨立家園

家園尚未命名

種子正在萌芽

卻有冒牌的革命先知

日夜掛著變色的蝴蝶結

翱翔在島國上空

自認是歷史的代言人

聲稱已發現愛台灣的真理

他們堅信

那些真理超越時間

誰會相信

輕浮的謊言

誰的雙腳

還沾有泥土的香臭

誰還懂得

單純的愛

—《台灣男人的心事》，1996 年 5 月

“The Prophet and the Truth”

You stand over your own people,

But over you stand Law, even. – from “Freedom” by Aleksandr Pushkin.

The prophet speaks to those of hindsight

Don't let ignorance corrupt your hearts

Nor let it fill you with narrow love for Taiwan

In this island country

From the Anti-Japanese War in 1895

To the 228 Incident of blood
There was never a real revolution
Nor prophets.

Freedom, democracy and independence
Already were the intellectual property of mankind
We are simply imitators of conscience
Building an ideal independent home
According to the old blueprint

Our home not yet named
The seeds are budding.
There are fake prophets of the revolution
Wearing color-changing bows day and night
Reigning over this island nation
Self-confessed spokesmen in history
Claiming to have discovered the real way of loving Taiwan
They believe
These truths transcend time

Yet, who could believe
Those frivolous lies?
Whose feet
Still bear the pungent scents and smell of earth?
And who still knows
Pure love, unconditional love?

From Thoughts of a Taiwanese Man, May 1999.

Translator's note:

In Taiwan, colors such as green, blue, and white represent DPP, KMT, and Chingming Party respectively. In this poem "wearing color-changing bows" on one's shirt indicates that some

politicians change their political stance, from pro-independence of Taiwan to the opposite, for the sake of gaining political resources.

6 〈土地刑場〉

消失的先後秩序登錄在刑場

荒野疏林沼澤濕地

平埔阿嬤父母女兒

河川溪流鱸鰻鯽魚蟹蝦

田雞青蛙螢火蟲蚯蚓

野兔田鼠蛇鷺鷥

農藥化肥鋪成的地表

長出水泥樹柏油路和工廠

農民消失後

土地也失去了慈悲

—《台灣男人的心事》，1999 年 5 月

“Executive Ground”

Order of Extinction as Listed on Execution Ground

Wilderness, Sparse Forests, Swamps, Wetlands

Plain Aboriginal grandmas, parents and daughters

Rivers, streams, perches, eels, carassius, crabs, shrimps

Sora Rails, frogs, fireflies, earthworms

Hares, voles, snakes, herons

(These are the order of extinction as listed on execution ground)

Soils made of pesticides and fertilizers

Form sprouting cement trees, asphalt roads, and factories

Soon after the farmers are gone

The land will lose its (nurturing) kindness too

From Thoughts of a Taiwanese Man, May 1999.

7 〈夜合—獻分妻同客家婦女〉

日時頭，毋想開花

也沒必要開分人看

臨暗，日落後山

夜色跼山風湧來

夜合

佇客家人屋家庭院

惦惦打開自家個體香

福佬人沒愛夜合

嫌伊半夜正開鬼花魂

暗微濛个田舍路上

包著面个婦人家

偷摘幾蕊夜合歸屋家

勞碌命个客家婦人家

老婢命个客家婦人家

沒閒到半夜

正分老公鼻到香

半夜

老公捏散花瓣
放滿妻仔圓身
花香體香分毋清

屋內屋脊

夜合

花蕊全開

—1998 年 5 月 10 日母親節

—《原鄉·夜合》，2000 年

註：

1、日時頭：白天

2、惦惦：靜靜

3、圓身：身體

“Blossoms at Night - for my wife and every Hakka woman”

Your flower buds are covered during the day

No need to reveal to strangers

At dusk, the sun sets behind the mountain

With night comes the mountain wind

Quietly the night lilies

Start to open fragrant blossoms

In their own Hakka backyards

The Hoklo people do not like night lilies

They think of them as haunting flowers spirits

On a dimly lighted farm lane

A face-covered woman picks few night lilies

And secretly takes them home

The Hakka woman toils all day

The Hakka woman was born to work hard like an old maid

Only till midnight

Can her husband discover the fragrance

In the middle of the night

He pinches the petals

And spreads over his wife's body

The scent of her body and of the lily blossoms fuses

Inside the room, around the house

Night lilies

In full blossom

From Homeland, Night Lilies, 2000

8 〈平埔福佬客家台灣人〉

有人問我係麼介人

我馬上回答係客家人

從小佇客家庄到大

阿姆對竹田溝背客家庄嫁過來

當我三十零歲

堂伯同我講

阿公係河洛人分過來个

我當場感覺到蓋尷尬

五十歲出頭

自家正查出阿婆係平埔族
一粒炸彈炸開血緣个地雷

有人再問我係麼介人
我還係講客家人
毋顧有兜歹勢

有一日發夢
看到三個祖先
佔著圓身三個部分
牽手唱歌跳舞飲酒
伊等喊我小猴仔
汝係平埔福佬客家台灣人

四百年歷史像一條索仔
纏著我身上
平埔福佬客家結結相連
－《原鄉·夜合》2000 年

註：

- 1、阿姆：母親
- 2、發夢：作夢
- 3、圓身：身體

“A Pinpu, Holo and Hakka Taiwanese”

Whenever people asked me: What is your ancestral heritage?

I always answered immediately: I am a Hakka.

In a Hakka village I grew up

My mother was born in *Zutian Gobei*, a Hakka village,

Then lived in *Jiandong* after marrying my father.

When I was thirty, Uncle told me my grandfather was adopted into our family Grandfather was born a Holo.

At the time, I felt dreadfully embarrassed.

In my early fifties

I have discovered that Grandmother is from a Pingpu tribe

Thus, my bloodline shattered like a bomb blast.

When people asked me who I am,

I still said I was a Hakka

Nonetheless, still with some embarrassment.

One day I had a dream

There were these three ancestors

Each holding a different part of my body.

Holding hands, singing, dancing and drinking

They called me 'little monkey':

You are a Pinpu, Holo and Hakka Taiwanese.

Four hundred years of history

Wrap around me, like a rope

Pinpu, Holo and Hakka all tie together.

From Homeland, Night Lilies, 2000

Translator's note:

"Pinpu" is a general term for assimilated Taiwanese Aboriginal Peoples. They have been lived in Taiwan more than 5000 years. 70% Taiwanese are Pinpu's descendants, including Holo and Hakka.