

From Such a Seed (Passover part II)

"From such a seed comes such a tree"

Mexican dicho

"Be careful who you ethnically cleanse, you may need them one day."

DNC Platform 2024

Xiang,

Hello, forgive me for not having written recently. I would claim to be so busy, but its mostly just aggressive sloth on my part. It looks like I can squeeze another two semesters away from any connected teaching in order to do the history. I am doing it a generation at a chunk, and I think it will eventually take about seven chunks. That will get us back to the time without records, at least on the Mexican and American sides. A lot of the background is stuff I had already dug up for Currents, so I have plenty of time on the VR courses. Crank up Torrey Pines and I'll meet you there Thursday at 5. I'm calling up Hank and Gufang too. We haven't had the old foursome together in a while.

Are you reading anything interesting lately? I have had to bone up on 21st century stuff mostly. Just finished Helger Jung's "History of the Balkan Dog Wars". His take on the Germans as the bad guys and the poor little Greeks as the maiden in distress is pretty standard economics but it's odd to hear a German say it. Trying to read some more lyrical stuff from that time too, just for the tenor of the language. "In Time of Darkness" by Zhen is good but jeez, is it sad. I need some huys.

OK so back to the grind. Shoot me back a thingy with any gossip attached.

Only Later.

Zhutou

Ok, try this out for my next chapter outline:

I have never been a lucid writer. Forgive me. I know its selfish. I suppose those us guilty of the sin think some claim, even if only to ourselves, of innate brilliance, will buy us the forgiveness and accommodation of others. Not likely. Not likely from either side. But if my writing was lucid, with Miltonian stateliness, or "like reading (or, yeah, "watching theater") by flashes of lightning, or more important to the issue, mere Cartesian regularity, this is the story I would give you, a brief biography of President Li Virgil.

Li Virgil arose streakingly through the Committee structure. Elected through the People in 2136 to the office of Chairman of the Central Committee, at the age of 38, younger by 24 years than the previous, youngest holder of that office.

Scion of an illustrious family, great nephew of Nobelx winner Wang Victoria. His father and mother, Wang Mai, had both been creatures of the political world rather than the one of everyday Newtonian vs

high end- particle physics. Especially she had been active in anything pertaining to individual rights with the history trailing back to the Enlightenment.

After serving in the Border Conflicts as a young sub-ensign, Li Virgil came back to Harvard First College where he wrote of his experiences, summed up by State Review as, "Lucidly showing us the war and its alternative at a personal level. The highest use of personal license." It broke the back of the old rigid Central Committee and signaled the sudden movement of an entire generation, like those of Goethe or Dylan.

As a graduate student in linguistics he was recruited into the New Intelligence service. By 2126 he was dispatched in mufti to accompany the 2125-26 Harvard/Oxford Central Expedition under cover of collating a list of languages sequentially all the way from the British Isle back to Ayran-Han, in biopsies across Eurasia, the Indian sub-continent, across our Central Land, all the way to the vista of Japan against the rising sun. He was also officially tasked by the Central diplomatic service with discretely contacting several specific individuals along that route, which coincidentally ran along the middle of the Belt's longest and most problematic leg.

Making one of these contacts required that he drop away from the Expedition (which apparently received instructions to sabbatical in place until now Captain Li should reappear) to spend 7 months living under a ragged cloth sun-brake moored against the back of an outhouse that was itself lain again the back of the sepulcher/hovel of a Sufi-mystic teacher. There he passed time learning Arabic by saying out the Koran under tutelage of the Sufi, whose tomb-home was itself in the dead {sic} center of the nearly 2000 year old cemetery of Fallujah, which has no reckoning of just how large it is by now. Li blended in to the strange lives of the citizens of this isolated city of the dead. Other than the traces of jet wash in the sky above, Li could have been fixed in the year 1800, or 800, with nothing to anchor him to the outside world. He later explained the transformative effect of this time on him in his second book, a semiautobiographical novel/log of Eurasian travels.

Completing the Expedition with distinction, he proceeded to write that second prizewinning journal, "Home to the Eastern Sun" in which he first propounded the ideas of the Rights Bill, claiming they came down to him "like mother's milk". "A man's first schoolroom is in his mother's heart" as he is fond of saying.

In the first three years of his term in office he has concentrated resources on the New Planet Shot, while not neglecting the completion of the Great Water. His next seven years are crucial to the future of the nation, "We are standing on the cusp, just at the topping of the hill, we need only move forward with one more simple act of will, in order for The Rights Bill to pass into written and enforced law to re-animate the People." In order to be able to build back anything like a normal size world population after the great sequential plagues of the 21st Century, Li feels that we must once again trust deeply in the ability of government to steer the careening raft that is civilization, but for the first time in forever we also simply wish as individuals to be protected by law from arbitrary oppression whether by the state or by any individual. The Rights Bill.

There is still time. My travels have led me to believe that William Faulkner has been proven wrong in his famous Nobel Prize Speech where he said 'I think that man will not merely endure, he will prevail.' We must endure for a while longer, perhaps finding a comfortable stability once again here on planet, in order to give us time to lift the soul of our civilization out of the eventual mathematical inevitability of further planetary degradation, and to address that inevitability with the New Planetary Mission." As a special honor, when the Simple Genetic Insertion Route won out over the manned Long March plan, President Li's skin cells, and thus his DNA, the only sample singled out by name, will be in the mix of cells otherwise swept up randomly from the floor of the United Nations main lobby.

Ok Ok I know I need some edits. Like this last stuff to keep my happy ass out of jail. I still don't know what to think about The Big Shot. Meaning the space program. I was, as you know, a big fan of the Long March... even put in for a slot on board. Yeah, Right. Stuff.

But this is the basic second chapter and I think it covers everything at least superficially. Hopefully leave them wanting to read the further details or (gasp) the books that Li wrote. You read 'em? Not bad. "Tithe" is a little rushed, possibly by youth. The thing in "Eastern Sun" about the year in the cemetery gives me the willies. I know the place. I went through it briefly, and over it, doing an assignment a couple of years ago. I was there this time during the first few days of the first news about Bird Flu 2 back in 2086. Big as that place was, it got a lot larger. It has grown kind of like a tree, with concentric zones, some thin, for years of plenty and peace, big fat rings that you walk through for the better part of an hour. As comparison, the ring formed around the time of the Black Plague, is a tenth the size of the first Avian flu stripe in the 20's. Puts that sumbitch into some kind of perspective. A third of the population each time. In 1350 that was, what, half a bil, tops, for the world in all, ergo, maybe 200 million dead. The Flu took one third of 9 billion in the Epidemic of 2026, and then in '31 another third of the 5 or so billion left. Even with the uptick in some countries around that time, overall, the planet has not yet recovered to anything like the same population. In a way we all knew it was coming, and as individuals, outside of the personal circle of perhaps fifty people, all the casualties were really just numbers to everyone, and the inconvenience of disposing all that meat, and down deep represented more open apartments than fellow souls-we-had-lost. Cynical? You make the call.

Are you and the Missus still planning on a vacation soon? If so keep the line open for at least one email a day, as I may need further opinion and edits. I promise not to push you any faster than the speed of a swizzle stick.

Thanks again for the read and SWAK to Yu Yan.

Here are some of the old press reports from the first flu just for interest.

September 30, 2026
Ho Che Minh City

Reports are circulating that a radically lethal form of influenza, probably genetically based upon the lethal-to-birds avian strains, now crossed in the wild with the much more communicable human form. "They are stacking bodies like cord wood in the basements of large hospitals." Singapore has reported "many" cases, equally as lethal, killing 7 out of every ten victims. The first cases have appeared in Europe and North Africa. The Phillipines is especially hard hit. It is expected that the Southern Hemisphere will follow suit in six months during its own winter, normally the time of year of much more influenza contagion. Manufacturers have been rocked back by the scope and speed of the outbreak and have yet to formulate an effective vaccine. The whole capacity for making an effective vaccine is much more in order and ready to scale now than 3 to 4 years ago.

Hospitals are packed and people are pulling every scrap of food and water from the stores and stations. Schools have been closed in nearly every major metropolitan area in the Northern Hemisphere out of an abundance of caution. People are advised to tune into the various civil defense channels available to them, and to follow the official advice.

April 15, 2033
Atlanta, Ga
Morbidity and Mortality Weekly

New CDC today declared the second wave of Great Avian Flu to be officially suppressed; that is to say, that humans can return to their pre-epidemic activities as they wish. "Unfortunately" opined

New CDC Director Wang Min,' The pre-epidemic activities 'as they wished', was what got us here to begin with.

Poor hand sanitization, as dull a subject as it is, is absolutely vital to making this monster go away. The vaccination rates are high in the population, thanks largely to Central Law, but it is the duty of every citizen to be immunized. Agricultural practices have been overhauled to help prevent future crosses of especially worrisome virus combinations. It is felt that along with changing the face of human to human contact in all aspects from schools to entertainment, to businesses, this watershed event will put much pressure toward the conversion from "wild" meat and poultry to manufactured equivalents.

It is thought that the first actual cases of the Great Flu may have occurred in Vietnam, home of the greatest number of affected fowl. However, there is a theory that the actual physical mixing of the avian and human genomes may have been abetted by the blood sport of rooster fighting, which remains popular in the countryside outside of Greater Manila. There is frequent very close contact between the trainers and their birds, including blowing in rooster's face in order to increase his agitation and aggressiveness before a match. Pair this with sometimes actually sucking blood directly out of the throat of a bird wounded in the lung, in order to keep his bird on its feet even one second longer than its opponent and the opportunity for "seeding" the basic virus from one species to the other is almost perfect. It only remained for the strain to mutate to maximize human lethality and ease of communicability. Much money changes hands and little attention is paid to the public health, or even basic social, amenities in the "cock-pit" of the rooster fighting trade..

Chinese Minister Wang Mai, daughter of Wang Victoria, Nobelx Prize winner, was named to head the committee on Committees to be formed to address this health threat effectively. Though criticized early on in the emergency, as the weeks and months passed, the effort gelled and grew in reach. It was Wang Mai who brought calm to the heated arguments over whether the population would have to self-isolate for indefinite periods of time by law, or whether that would represent trial and incarceration without benefit of Habeas Corpus and unlawful seizure of the use of property. "We are recovering important laws that were once felt to be merely indulgent, and beginning to understand that the liberty of the individual stands along side the needs of the People, and is not automatically superseded by those needs." She allowed citizens to go about their daily lives to the greatest degree possible, while balancing the needs of the public square. "We must accept that at least a portion of the dead might still be alive with stricter quarantine. But incarcerative quarantine is harsh on the very spirit of man and is to be avoided if at all possible. Those deaths therefore are as though laid upon an altar. Liberty can be a demanding goddess."

APRIL 5, 2079 New Life News

Wang Victoria P. Named Winner of this year's NobelX Prize in Physics

Wang Victoria Prieto has been awarded the 2089 NobelX Prize in Physics for her work in understanding the "weak" and "strong" forces in relation to gravity and magnetism. Her breakthroughs have permitted the amalgamation of these forces such that we are now on the cusp of a great new age finally free of the need of fossil fuels.

She is on the faculty of Stanford University Coordinated Pacific Campus. "I am most pleased and gratified that our work here has been recognized", she commented. "I know that my parents are quite happy."

Her story and that of her family are remarkable enough in themselves. Her mother Wang Veronica married then Captain Wang Ji, who is now the General in Charge of the Eastern Division of the Pacific.

Her own father was one of the immigrants from Latin America to the United States in the Great Return of the 2020's and worked as a common laborer to put Victoria's mother through college, the first in her family to achieve that honor.

More distant still was Victoria's great grandfather Prieto Jose, after whom she is named. Family legend has it that he was committed to an American psychiatric facility for much of his adult life, but at one point escaped long enough to return to his family and father Victoria's grandfather. The great grandfather was a diagnosed paranoid schizophrenic who maintain throughout his life that he had been a prisoner in an American "death camp" somewhere in the Southwest of that country in the mid 1900's.

Wang Victoria P. , who is also an accomplished pianist, graduated from Shanghai First Polytechnic University at the precocious age of 16. "As I looked at the world of that time, the late 60's, I could see that unless we addressed this problem, the clock was working against us and that it was my job to mitigate the deleterious changes occurring in the Earth. I could not change the force of nature itself, the great natural oscillations in the climate. But if we could understand the Four Great Forces, and enable the world to have all the energy society demanded, but without the downside exhausts we might at least slow the progress of those climatic changes at the margins. This would flatten the curve of the change and give people more time to make the changes necessary to build successful societies.

"When the Great Atlantic Ocean mixing off the coast of North America and Greenland began to fail because of the ice melt and it became apparent that the Gulf Stream had ceased to flow, I saw, as a young woman, the havoc wrought in places like England as the climate change to that of Canada. As a people we can make the appropriate changes and adaptations to such shifts, but the less abrupt, the less society will be interrupted."

Her elucidation of the unified field theory has allowed an essentially unlimited source of clean power. That mitigated the first physical problem, the use of fossil fuels, and also decreased the attendant competition amongst nations. The centerpiece of the use of this power has been the Great Waterways. Using this power source, we are now able to move water through a great channel and pipe system regardless of the uphill grade. This has allowed redistribution from places such as the inundated American South to drier places in the West of the country. This has corrected two problems at once and allowed society to continue in its regular activities for many more years to come. The same is now being done in parts of India, Africa, and Australia.

Have just been rereading Jung for mid-century

From The Balkan Dog Wars by Helger Jung

By the middle of the century, multiple stresses had built within society, largely dissolving the structure it had known for the last thousand years, leaving in its place a viable but rigid structure with a great deal of disparity shot throughout. At the level of nation states, severity had become almost a curse, with the "nation" on one hand a simple bag of liabilities with almost no power to affect one's situation, and on the other, a few stronger coalitions of states whose main occupations were to pick the remaining flesh off the losers. Greece suffered. Then Italy and coming as the greatest shock, the Iberian Peninsula sank into fiscal bondage as well by 2045. Germany's demands on the South to meet their debt obligations in spite of the severest austerity led to social unrest within and without the debtor nations. German troops and stand-ins began to move south in the spring of 2047 occasioning protests from the legations of Austria and the Balkan countries. Then suddenly on the 1st of June 2047 Russian troops staged from the Ukraine, swept south in a kind of race to Greece, ostensibly as protectors of

Greek liberties. In fact, Russia wanted to counter the influence of China, which had long owned and operated from the Athenian port of Piraeus. Russia also wanted to finally have a port for its own operations which was outside the straightjacket of the Dardanelles. The flashpoint erupted in the fall of that year when tactical nuclear weapons were first employed, on both sides. Though the Europeans were not successful in holding back the Russian designs to their south, they did stand resolutely in the face of a flank column of Russian armor sent by a route farther to the north and west. It is unclear who first unleashed the short-range nuclear tipped missiles, but they both fell in the same vicinity in the old Cold War entrepote at the German Fulda Gap. Death had been waiting at the Fulda Gap for many decades, but Death it seems, was patient.

At the same time this movement was occurring, farther East, the Turks, now thrown solidly in with the Russians, had begun an almost complementary move to the North and East of Greater Anatolia. They rolled over the Armenians and anchored the Russian expansion with a firm Southern ally across cooperative east-west borders. The Turks supplied muscle to protect the soft underbelly of the Russian throw for consolidated power in Eurasia. They too, employed nuclear weapons, assumed to have been supplied by Russia. The Turks however did not scruple to require a nuclear-armed opponent. The Azerbaijanis and the luckless Kurds submitted where they survived. The Straights Declaration that guaranteed the freedom of Gibraltar and the Suez to the Russians was the price for the end of the war.

China rode out these most destructive wars, having declared herself to be in a purely defensive footing on all fronts, including their now extensive trading hubs in North Africa and South America.

There were several moderate sized clashes along those defensive perimeters during the course of the longer war. The Chinese Navy clashed with the Japanese over rights in the waters around their countries. Taiwan became a minor flash point when its old permissive capitalist model faltered sufficiently that the business class shifted political allegiance and essentially "held out open arms" for co-union with The People's Republic after nearly 100 years of tension. The fighting that followed for the next year cleaned out remaining resistance to the idea of one nation, and ratified the new governmental fit.

It was in that campaign that the Li Family began to rise, as the great-grandfather of the current Chairman began his career as a callow lieutenant in the People's Army.

And farther back, notes on Li Virgil's maternal lineage:

By 2020 violence had so disrupted the economies of several Central and South American countries that many people fled.

Mexico essentially fractured, with the more prosperous north shunning the more economically leaden south, and manufacturing a Line of Responsibility just south of Mexico City. This created a veritable no man's-land buffer between Costa Rica, the most northerly non-failed state, and the southern approaches to Mexico City, now an extended city of perhaps 30 million. Conditions in the economy contracted and fell into soft sand. The pace of Hispanic re-assimilation back across the US border continued at an irregular pace, depending on the vagaries of elective politics. It was during one of these swings, this one occasioned by a Democrat being elected president that the tide toward the north was strong and Guadalupe Prieto decided to head north on it. Her father had fled the U.S. in the 1980's to avoid legal persecution, going back to his home in Sonora, where Guadalupe was born, before the turn of the 20th Century. When Guadalupe was old enough she decided to go to the U.S. to pursue greater opportunity there. She had great hardships in the great migratory disruptions of the 2010-20 era but eventually arrived and settled in to become a prosperous local business person, establishing an empire of nursing care facilities for the growing elderly population, and able to send her children to college by the early 2030's.

The 2030-2045 period in the world was one of relative stability, coming in time to be known as An Era of Good Feelings. The Great Belt and Road project was in full function and prosperity thus flowed more easily and generally. Migration pressures slowed as the B&R allowed native economies to provide jobs for their own people. This in turn brought about lessened social stress on both the potential refugee but on the citizens of potential receiving countries.

There was much more general movement of immigrants in the world, only in this era it was much more likely to be for business or even higher social reasons, rather than randomly fleeing war or famine.

It was the era when the nations had balanced so long on the edge of war that they essentially fatigued and began to try the so called Second Way under the influence of China. This involved much more bilateral assimilation of people into respective countries. The social footing of these immigrants was much different however than that of the wave of immigrants a generation before, who were displaced, resourceless, disruptive, and stressful for society. To the credit of all parties, overt war was avoided, The Belt and Road Project was extended to include the US and all of Europe and increased social exchange became the norm. Many American, Latin American, and African women chose to marry Chinese men, many of whom had been sent to various parts of the world on their military service. At that time, the 2020's and early thirties, the pervious mania for gender selection of children occasioned by the one-child policy left the population statistics very skewed. Where normally, apparently for millennia, the number of humans attaining adulthood was roughly split between male and female. (50.1% women, as boy babies tend to be more fragile in the first moths of life and die off at a slightly greater rate then.) Childbearing, for much of history, was the equivalent of male warfare for lethality, keeping the sexes in essential balance numerically.

But by 2030, there were 24 million more eligible Chinese men than women in the native population. Social stress had become intense and there were increasing outbreaks of rage by individuals termed "Incels" for involuntarily celibates. The People's Liberation Army had full complement of fully trained troops numbering perhaps five times the number of the US and its allies combined.

The Chinese presence in the rest of the world blossomed with broad introduction of Mandarin. Indeed, the American politician Angela Huntsman, who later became President, in a graduation address at Radcliffe College put forth the idea given the simple overwhelming facts of Chinese demographics, that "Young American women should begin to learn Mandarin and proper comportment. And the Bill of Rights. Fathers can take their sons to the rifle range, if they just need something to do while time passes." We have seen how these source political documents, today being applied more and more generally, were introduced into the Chinese body politic from this source. "A man's first schoolroom is in his mother's heart", it is said. There was a reason for the trope "mother wit".

Adelita Prieto, daughter of American health care business magnate Guadalupe Prieto, was one of the "world brides" when in 2036 she married Wang Ping, who became the father of Wang Victoria. After his tour of "embassy duty" in the US Southwest the couple returned to extended Shanghai where the family history continued to flourish.