

Pete Chong's Life Journey

Preface

We Live in the Same Universe

**(Written by Lu-sheng Chong, Pete Chong's father,
88 years old in 2016)**

**I was born in the East Sea coast Fujian,
In 1947 I moved to Taipei, Taiwan, a beautiful island.
Pete Chong was born in Taipei in 1954,
in 1969 he moved to Seattle, an emerald city.**

**In order to get more learning experiences
he traveled to several places, including Louisiana State.
Over there he earned his BA, MBA, and Ph.D.,
he then went to teach in Spokane, Washington.**

**Several years later he taught at Houston,
then he went back to Taipei as a Visiting Professor.
He engaged in education, nurtured students,
and at the end of 2015, he came to the end of his life.**

**My grandson, Hermann, told me this news by phone.
How could that happen? How could that happen?
I could not accept this fact arising so suddenly,
time and space were frozen, and my mind is 'Empty'.**

It is me who brought him into this world,
now he returned to the outer space.
One day in the future,
he will come to bring me wandering thousands of miles.

All our relatives and friends,
all our teachers and students,
don't be sad, but seek for good health,
because we live in the same universe.

(January 2016 written on Camano Island, WA, U. S. A.)

Web-site: www.learn-chinese.org

Essay

At the end of 2015, I received a phone call from my grandson, Hermann, he told me that his father Pete passed out and was sent to hospital in a critical condition. The message comes all of a sudden, my mind could not respond, the time and space were frozen, an 'Empty' appeared in front. How could that happen? How could that happen? Hermann remained calm to bear sadness, and prepared to go to Taipei immediately, I wanted to go with him in order to help everything. During the New Year time, I could not buy the ticket, Hermann went to Taipei by himself from San Francisco after a difficult arrangement. In the hospital Pete was taken care of by a relative, Maggie Wang. She told me that Pete still has consciousness, and he is able to hear someone's talk, but he himself can not talk. She asked me to say a few words to Pete's ears, I said, 'Ping, this is Papa. You must be strong to keep alive, I am going to Taipei to see you immediately.' The only thing I could do is blessing him to be rescued, but the doctor's rescue failed, because he was short of oxygen for too long. My grand daughter, Emily, phoned me said, 'He passed away.' The words 'passed away' and 'passed out' have a different meaning. I hope there is a mistranslation from Chinese to English, if he was passed out, he could be rescued. The second day, Hermann arrived in Taipei, proved that Pete was passed away. My only tiny hope was completely broken. Twenty years ago, my younger son, Tim, passed away of cancer, now my only son has gone, only a daughter left. It is a great pain for an old person to see a younger person passing away. I am entering an old age, even my body is healthy,

my spirit is able to fly to space, but actually is like a candle guttering in the wind. I am willing to substitute for him to keep him in the world for continuing my educational work.

Open the photo books we took long time ago, all the past appeared in front of me, let me start from his birth in 1954. When I was married, my wife was young, we did not expect to have children too early. Because inspired by 'karma' (pass life deeds) from unlimited past lives, he came to me as father-son 'yuan' (relationship). When he was born, the whole family was in a great joy. Housing was short at that time, so I lived with my parents-in-law. There was another reason that I could concentrate on my work, because of my mother-in-law's help. The house was rented near by the end of Changsha Street, not far from Tanshui River. It was a rectangular old house, divided into five small rooms, and we lived in one of them. I wrote an article called 'bridal chamber' published in a magazine named The Literary Circle. Accually 'dong fang' in Chinese also means 'cave room', I just made a joke. Water was leaking in when it was raining, we must use plastic to cover the top of the bed, and we must use umbrella if the rain was heavy. Because it was next to the street, the noise came all the time. Because I need to work at day time, Pete slept with his grand parents-in-law, so we could have a better sleep. Because the environment at that area was not good, also his grandma-in-law fed him too much food, so he suffered stomach trouble, and needs to see doctor.

Pete was a very intelligent child. He could recognize the words when he was three years old. I showed him a word on the Reborn Daily, he could remember them. In order to give him education earlier, he went to kindergarden when he was five years old. Only showed him a few times, he could remember to come home by himself. One day, he got lost, maybe someone kept him on purpose. The whole family was worried very much, we hired a person to find him by beating a gong saying they will be rewarded if someone brings him back. We waited and waited, and we were very sad that we will lose our lovely Pete. After several hours, someone brought him back. We gave him some money in a hurry, and said thank you continuouly. The whole family had a great joy, I found my loved son. At that time, I wrote an article named A Record of Lost Pete published on the Supplement of Alliance Daily. Now if I beat a gong again, could I find my son Pete in this world?

Pete attended elementary school when he was not six years old. He walked to school by himself, did not need anyone to take him. In Taiwan, in order to promote Mandarin, there were speech contests, read aloud contests, and composition contests, he always won a prize, first or second. He won the contest in the whole city or whole province. His teachers like to recommend him to participate because I could help him practicing. In 1952, I worked as an editor for the Selection of Classical and Modern Chinese at the Mandarin Daily News, working on annotation and translation. I worked day time, and brought reading materials home at night, and also taught Mandarin at continuational

school. I was exhausted, I did not have time to accompany with him. The only time I had is weekend and vacation that I could bring him to have fun at the Yuanshan Zoo, Mount Yangming, and Xindian. Time passed more than half century, if we could go back to the past, I will bring him to have fun more to make up my responsibility as a father. Could we have this kind of chance?

A few years later, when I taught at Taiwan Normal University, the school assigned a dormitory for me, we moved to Pucheng Street nearby the school in walking distance. From that time, Pete got a chance to have contact with a university, and by that influence he later worked on education. At that time, it was a great competition to enter a good middle school from an elementary school. In order to do that, one must have after-school learning. He studied very hard, got up early and went to bed late, his nutrition was not enough, so he became gray and skinny. I felt painful, but for seeing my son succeed in life, it was the only choice. My work at university was heavy, I had college students and foreign students. In 1956, we had Mandarin Training Center for foreign students, I was one of the first group of teachers. In addition to, I still edited the Selection of Classical and Modern Chinese which made me busier. I could not help him with studies, actually I did not have that kind of knowledge to deal that kind of materials. Finally he entered Datong Middle School which was considered as a good school.

Later when Dr. Hu Shi became the president of the Academia Sinica, he suggested the government establishing a Committee for Long Developing Science to help people at college and government organization to study abroad. At that time, linguistics was a new course in America, but it was short of teachers in Taiwan. I applied for learning this subject, and it was approved. In 1962, I went to study at Georgetown University for two years. I got homesick, missing my family, but I could not do anything about it. After I returned home, I offered general linguistics and dialectology at Taiwan Normal University, and also taught phonetics at Furen University and Tanjiang University as part time. In addition to, I edited the Selection of Classical and Modern Chinese, helped Professor Shi-chiu Liang editing A New Practical Chinese-English Dictionary, and advised student's Language Association, Mandarin speech contest, etc. All these made me busier, I was not able to see Pete even once a day. I knew he had something to talk with me about, but I only said a few words occasionally. This also made me feel regret for my whole life. Thinking back, I should have cut my work, and accompanied him more, but time will never be repeated, regretting is useless.

In 1968, I got a chance, the University of Washington invited me as a visiting associate professor. It was an honor position. There were several famous academicians and professors who came to teach here. I was invited because I taught foreign students. In UW, I was the youngest professor when I saw those old professors. In order to learn more English, I applied to the English Department, Seattle University. The

first class was Shakespeare, my professor thought it was not practical for me, and he suggested me to transfer to the Education School. Therefore I studied Curriculum and Instruction. My professor knew I was teaching at UW, called me Professor, it made me embarrassed. At this year, Pete would be graduated from middle school. He was thinking to come to study in America, I certainly encouraged him to do so. At that time, studying abroad was very difficult, it is much easier now. For him to study in the high school in America to learn English directly, it could be a good foundation for later college study. I applied for the whole family to move to America, it was approved because it was sponsored by U W. It was the time for him to start his life for almost half a century.

In 1969, the whole family moved to Seattle, Pete went to high school, Lynn went to middle school, Tim went to elementary school. Everyone was happy to start a new life in America, and they studied hard. Their mother just brought them to hand to me for raising, she had a scheme for herself. One day after a half year, she left a note saying that she had already gone to Taiwan by airplane. When Pete saw the note, he dropped tears immediately. This is the only time I saw him with tears in my life. Our whole family was covered with sad clouds and fogs. Life should going on, Pete was an old brother, so he helped me taking care of his brother and sister. At that time, I still had one year to get my Master Degree of Education; in order to decrease my burden, he brought his younger brother to live with his schoolmates. There were other reasons, one is the place they lived was nearby the school, another one is to avoid

sadness of looking at family. One year later, I got my MA degree, and they studied in school under a hard family situation.

After Pete graduated from high school, he went to community college, then he travelled to study in several places. He studied and worked at the same time. He not only supported his own living, but also helped his brother and sister. In 1972, I applied for doctoral study at Education School, UW. I turned grief into strength, forgetting the past, and spending the energy on studies. I taught Chinese and studied, and took care of my younger son and daughter. Two years later, I passed the general examination, and began to write the doctoral dissertation. In 1974, I established the Chinese Cultural Learning Center, inviting several teachers and had several classes. I myself taught Chinese language and calligraphy. Beside this I also taught at the community colleges and acupuncture school. Most of my time was spent on the Cultural Center and teaching, the dissertation progressed slowly, but finally I got my Doctoral degree in 1979. My teacher Professor Liang Rongruo said, 'you turned impossible into possible.' It was true, high degree to me was too far away. In China, at that time, to get in to middle school for me was difficult, high school was harder, college was impossible. In Taiwan, the university offered MA and Ph.D. was after I already taught at college. I was not graduated from English Department, I was only an auditor in the English classes when I was a student over there. Of course, I made some progress when I studied at Georgetown University. During my ten years of teaching and studying, Pete traveled several places to study, later stayed in Louisiana State, and got his BA

(1985), MBA (1987) and Ph.D. (1994). At that time, of course I could not afford him to work for high degrees, because I had two children studying at UW. It was himself worked as TA and instructor to do it. He could go forward by working hard and also improved his ability, I am proud of him, but at the same time I feel sorry.

After Pete graduated, in 1994 he came to Spokane to teach at Gonzaga University, we had more chance to contact each other. He came to Seattle to see me with the whole family. His daughter and son went to elementary school and high school. Sometimes I took a bus to visit them, he took me to see the scenery. At that time, the whole family was very happy, getting together in harmony. It was the the most happiness in our lives. One day, I was sent to emergency room for the disorder of my gallbladder. My friend Gary took care of me and phoned to Pete. He drove five or six hours coming to see me at that night, I was moved by his filial piety. In the future, if I get old and sick, will he be able to come to see me? It causes me to feel very sad.

Pete paid much attention to his children's education. He often accompanied them in and out, and his two children were lovingly following him as body and shadow. When the children were young, he told them stories and accompanied them reading books. He took them to learn violin, and accompanied them practicing. Emily was a violinist at the high school concert in Washington State, and Hermann also was a violinist of a concert at UW. This is what we can see how successful he

nurtured his children. His two children already took two years college courses during high school stage, when Hermann transferred to UW, he only spent two years to finish his college courses, and he was eighteen years old when he was graduated from UW. Two years later, he got his MS Degree. Several years later, when Pete taught in Taipei, Emily and Hermann went to see him. When Hermann had a daughter, he brought her to Taiwan to see her grandpa. This was Pete's first grand daughter in the world, we can imagine how happy he was. I became a great grandpa because he became grandpa, and it is he who pushed me to be a great grandpa. Of course, I was very happy too. By comparison with Pete, I did very little on family.

My young son, Tim, studied music at UW, majoring in piano and vocal music. After he graduated, he went to the university where Pete was teaching there to study MBA, and worked as a TA. Pete took care of him, and let him have a happy family life. After Tim was graduated, he went to work in a plastic company owned by Wang Yongqing, not long he was promoted to be a middle level manager. I was happy for him to be independent and could have his own family. Unfortunately, he got cancer. They were afraid I would worry about it, they did not want to tell me this fact. After quite a long time, a friend passed the word to me. I complained to them for not telling the fact, but now I understand they were concerned about my health. When Tim was approaching his end, he told his friend, 'My father and brother will come to see me.' But when we arrived there, he could not wait but passed away. His eyes were not closed, he was waiting for us. There was a memorial meeting

over there, over two hundred of his friends came, and Pete gave a talk. I built a memorial hall for him and used as a library. On the top of the door, there was a horizontal line said, 'The Hall for Looking Tim', if you stand on the door facing out, on the left hand side of the door, there was a vertical line said, 'Above the outlet, it was the vast mists and clouds, a group of immortals wandering in the outer space'; at the right hand side of the door, there was a vertical line said, 'On the side of the hall, there are bamboos and trees screening part of each other, an old Daoist standing under the moon shadow.' Now Pete passed away, I think he is going to be wandering in the outer space with his intimate brother, and left me standing under the moon shadow.

Later, Pete left Spokane and went to teach at Houston University, sometimes he drove to Seattle to see me, sometimes I took bus to Houston to see him, but there was much less chance than before. And later, he went to Taiwan as a Visiting Professor, he taught at Chang Gung University (2005), Taitung University (2006), and Ming Chi University of Technology (2009-2015) until he passed away. In his several years of teaching in Taiwan, he guided students writing theses, helping students going abroad to study, and contacted with students intimately. From the Facebook and memorial meeting, the people's warm talk we can see it. It has been near half century ago I left Taiwan, and I went to Taiwan only once in thirty years. I have not seen Pete for eight or nine years, I planned going to see him, and reviewing my feeling of life in Taiwan, but it is too late now, I can not see him again even I go there. Taipei is Pete's birth place, and also is his home-town, there are

so many unbroken emotions. He had more classmates, colleagues, students, relatives, and friends than any other places he stayed. This is why he lingered on without any thought of leaving, because he had more people think of him. We know it when we see the touching scene at the memorial service where more than three hundred people came, from the talk of his colleagues and students we can see how they were moved deeply.

At the end of October 2013, I moved to Camano Island to live permanently. I bought a piece of land with a friend twenty-six years ago, at the beginning I just want to use it as a recreation. It is facing east, the back is a hill, the front is water, tall and erect trees are everywhere, and there was a beach for walking. I planted bamboo, rododendron, and peony, many kinds each. I called it Sunrise Garden, actually it is only a five acres garden. In those years, no matter where Pete lived, he had been here to look at it when he had the time. When he taught in Spokane, he came with the whole family. One summer, when he taught at Bothell Campus, UW, he lived here. Now I still can see his walking, through the groves of bamboo, down the slope, and reached to the beach. I hoped that he would come here to improve it after he retired. We would build pavilion, platform, tower, extend the library and build a teaching hall. We would read and write together, looking at the white wave and floating clouds, listening the sounds of the pine trees and bamboos, picking up the drift woods, and also we could offer courses for students. Now he has gone, all these were vanished like bubbles. Perhaps in the future we can build a memorial hall for him to preserve

his books of theses and translations, and used as a place for students and friends getting together. I prepared a draft couplet for it. On the top of the door horizontal said, 'The Hall for Wanderer'. If one standing in the front of the door facing out, on the left hand side vertical said, 'He is like a duckweed floating ten thousands of miles, going through all difficulties, finally return to his permanent home;' on the right hand side vertical said, 'On the shadow of unlimited traces, he is leisurely and carefree, ascending to the outer space straightly.' The beach is the starting point for him to wander in the outer space, and the ocean is a place for him to float over. The two brothers could travel over the ocean and sea to reach to Taiwan, following my path I came to Taiwan from Mainland China seventy years ago, and through the Taiwan Strait return to Fujian to meet my parents and ancestors. I wish they have a good journey, I will accompany them in the outer space and earth.

After Pete passed away, there was news on the internet, my niece, Lihong, in Malaysia saw it, she phoned me, and transferred the memorial talks by his students to my E-mail. I found in his Web-site on the Facebook called 'Wanderer's Trace' and 'White Wave'. The trailer I live now is also called 'Wanderer's Trace', which means our minds meet each other. Actually, when I made the name for him, it means I came to Taiwan from Fujian just like duckweeds floating, and qingping is the similar sound both Mandarin and Southern Fujian pronunciation. In 1997 I started my Web-site which was helped by Pete and Hermann, and I hoped he would continue my work after he retired. In my

Web-site, I still list their names as consultants. Now he has gone, I only hope for next generation.

Pete ran around here and there, our separations were more than our reunion. In 1974, I established the Cultural Center, in the classes there was a Taiji Quan course, I began to learn some. In 1980, I wanted to seek the meaning of life, I studied Buddhism and Daoism. I collected many books of philosophy, including Confucianism and others. On the practice, I chanted and meditated. In 1985, Dr. Shan-Tung Hsu invited a Qi Gong master from Shanghai to teach us, the Institute of Daoist Studies also invited a Daoist from San Francisco to teach Daoist Qi practice. By this way I learned Qi Gong, and often practiced by myself, and with the Qi field in the Sunrise Garden, my health was improved greatly. I do not drink wine, do not smoke cigarette, and eat light food. Now if I feel uncomfortable in a part of my body, I heal myself by Qi movement. It is a pity, Pete could not practice with me, otherwise he would not have passed away before me. Is this a 'relationship' between us or is it pushed by 'karma'? A sigh with regret!

Pete and I both were working on education, we follow the Confucian idea which is teaching the people without class discrimination. About our personal practice, we both worked hard for it. The only regret we had is our families were not harmony, we felt shame to mention it. I wish the people in the world take my situation as a warning, and safeguard the family in a complete success. About managing the country and keeping the world in peace are our ideas, but we can not do much.

In the theory of the Daoism, the 'Dao is doing things naturally' by Lao Zi and Zhuang Zi. The season sequence runs naturally which is birth in spring, grow in summer, harvest in autumn, and store in winter.

Zhuang Zi said, the human being at the beginning, there is only a little 'Qi', then in uterus gradually grows to form a person shape. After birth, from baby, early youth, youth, and old age, then passed away. It is coming and going like the white clouds curl and uncurl, massed and scattered naturally. In the Buddhism, the theory of the immortality of a soul, there are past, present, and future turning continuously. What a person did in the past lives accumulated as 'karma', if one did good one will be up to be a 'celiestial person', if up more one will be born in the Pure Land. Therefore one should practice in ordinary times, and when one reaches the last time one should concentrate on going up. In the outer space, there are many Buddhist kingdoms, most of the time we talk about it is the Amitabba Buddha Kingdom. If one believes this, when one comes to the end of life, passing away is just like changing a residence, should not be sad. A Monk Master, Hong Yi, in his last time he wrote 'mixed feelings of grief and joy' four words which means if one could not work to help people this is a grief, and one has a final place to stay is a joy. I myself respect Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism all three. In order to achieve a complete life, I apply them without discrimination. I annotated and translated their classical texts, promoted their ideas which is a part of the materials that were published on my Web-site.

After I moved to live on Camano Island, I have more time to do things. In order to promote the 'multi-culture', I extended the Chinese culture to all cultures. My new site named Center for Universal Harmony. I respect all the normal philosophy, religion, and they have their own kingdom. The soul of people in the universe is only one kind, there is no discrimination of religion, race, nation, and party, because we all live in the same universe.

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(The end)



