

# *In Memory of Ed Yang*

By Dan Chen (陳德玉)

**When** the sad news hit, I first felt completely numb but gradually spiraled into deep sorrow. The last time we met was in the summer of 2005, right before he left for Cannes Film Festival to serve as a judge. We had a truly delightful evening reliving through college years in the home party of classmate Larry Chiang(蔣澤蔭). He was as rugged, humorous, and vibrant as in his youthful days, showing no sign of illness at all. Since the sad news arrived, I have been trying to retrieve small detail of the fond memories with Ed, wishing to relive the occasions.

The first time we met after graduation was in the 1972-1973 period. On his way from Florida to Seattle, he drove an Italian-made two seater (MG) via Duke University and stayed one night with us. With hippie hair, he looked remarkably well. His free spirit thrived in that era and resonated with America. Again, he told me about his wishes to make a film. But like many other things with Ed, he was way ahead of me and I therefore didn't pay serious attention to what he had to say. However, this time he seemed to be more prepared. Some years later, I received a letter from him informing me of his study at the University of Southern California Film School. And the next time I heard about him was from a newspaper reporting his award-winning film "That Day on the Beach".

Many years later on one occasion when I visited Taiwan, I gave him a call. A lady answered the phone and took my message. Later, I realized that she was Ms. Tsai Chin (蔡琴). Ed called back and invited me to, in his words, "lim shir jiu" ( to drink warm liquor) at a Japanese restaurant on Lin-shen North Road of Taipei. I still remember comments he made during that dinner. He said he was proud of the numerous talents nurtured by Taiwan and appreciated the opportunities Taiwan had to provide. He truly believed that Taiwan could become the shining example of the Pan-Chinese world. He attributed that potential to the cross fertilization of different cultures and genes brought together to Taiwan



▲左起楊德昌、孫芳國、陳德玉學長於福華飯店用餐(陳德玉學長提供)

throughout history. That sounded like an old stereotype but was, surprisingly, uttered from within Ed's heart. Looking back now, how true those comments were!! He genuinely believed that he could make a difference and he really did, in hindsight.

Beaming in the afterglow of the first real success of his career, he was totally immersed in well-deserved pride. That was truly a happy moment in his convoluted career path, a moment of confirmation and redemption! However, in a moment like this, especially as this was our first meeting in many years, I was hoping that he would talk a bit about his marriage life but he never did. I learned much later that his marriage was one of those with two superb individuals who can't get along.

In the late nineties, I visited Taiwan more frequently and met him quite a few times. Unable to hold back the nagging requests of my children to see him, I finally took them to meet him in his office. He was patient, warm, and inspiring, showing his talent to handle children. That reminded me of his experiences as an enthusiastic coach of a little-league soccer team back in Seattle. Beyond the curiosity and the respect for Ed, my children genuinely like this “cool guy”. Who wouldn’t? Standing in front them was a handsome accomplished movie director wearing a pair of trendy sneakers, tight jeans, and a baseball cap while their father looked straight and nerdy watching on the sideline! Many years later when his son Sean was born, his brief email message said it all: “Dan, you don’t know how happy I am!” Every time that voice went through my mind in the last couples of days since Ed’s death, I got lost in sorrow and emptiness. Talking about his office, we noticed that at the corner of his office, there was a small bucket full of the trophies and awards he received from numerous film festivals. Those honors and accomplishments were thrown into the bucket like junk. I couldn’t help cracking a joke on him: “Yi-jin duo sau chern (How much for a pound)?”

On another occasion, I was invited to watch the pre-screening of one of his films in the Taipei movie district. I can’t remember the title now, but frankly, I didn’t like the ending, and couldn’t comprehend why he did it that way. But, some time later, Voila! Ed won another award with that film! Also memorable to me that night was that Ed kindly introduced several of his director friends to me, including Mr. Wu nian-jeng(吳念真).

On yet another occasion, he called to meet me. Without any warning, he brought with him Kaili whom I met for the first time. A few days later, the three of us met again through a last-minute arrangement in a typhoon night at Hsinchu. I happened to be there giving a short course at ITRI while they came to stay in the residence of his brother who was a high-ranking ITRI official at the time. We were left alone because his brother couldn’t make it back from Taipei. We had a wonderful conversation which lasted well past midnight. I also remember we listened to the music tape “Days of Crayons” composed by my son. That piece and perhaps the title seemed to bring a bit of emotion from us in that typhoon night. Knowing then what Ed had gone through, I felt so happy for him

that he had finally found his true love.

Ed seemed to take after his mother with his artistic talents and his father with his temperament. On one totally unexpected occasion when I attended a conference at Seattle, I had the opportunity to visit his parents' home with a close friend of Ed's brother. Ed wasn't in Seattle then. It's obvious from his parents' home decoration that Ed's talent came from his mom. I was particularly impressed with her simple but expressive arrangement of flowers and elegant choice of furniture. That reminded me of Ed's cartoon style. That same feeling hit me again when my wife and I visited their new nest at Taipei, Ed's and Kaili's that was. In their spacious living room stood a grand piano, a guitar and flowers sitting on simple furniture but the room was artistically and beautifully done. During our visit with his parents, I was surprised to find out that Ed's father was originally from "Plum County" of Canton. So we happily exchanged in Hakka language and cracked a few jokes on each other. I like them. They were both loving and caring parents. I believe that's why several times in Ed's life when he really felt tired, he went to Seattle seeking rest in the refuge of mom and dad. During my conversation with his mom, she told me a story about Ed. She said when Ed completed his master degree from University of Florida, he nicely wrapped his degree diploma as a gift and said to her with a joking tone: "Mom, I did it for you and now it's done and I want to make a film." When I told Ed later about this story, he responded with a grin: "My mother is the best director of the story!"

In the later part of Ed's career even when he won the best director award at Cannes, he couldn't hide his frustrations and disappointments about the Taiwanese film industry and talked about totally giving up traditional film making. He started to talk about making an animated film, a totally new adventure for him. Given my previous experiences misjudging him, I dared not to take him lightly then. Years later when he, classmate FK Sun(孫芳國) and I met for breakfast at Taipei Howard Hotel, his dream seemed to me much more realizable, more than ever. I was actually excited for him and looked forward to his redemption day, only to find out with a broken heart that his life cut short and his ambition remains unfulfilled. This is his "unfinished melody", and is indeed a loss for Taiwan and, for that matter, the world!



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Again and again in his movies, Ed had shown his hatred for injustice, defiance of traditions, and compassion for the oppressed. I am happy to see he broke loose from the bondages of traditional values and found his genuine passion and true love. His legacy will be remembered. His friendship will be missed.

May you rest in peace, Ed!

July 4, 2007 友聲

中譯如下：

## 追憶故友楊德昌

文·電工 58 級 陳德玉／譯·彭琬靜

**當**我聽到德昌過世消息的時候，彷彿遭受晴天霹靂，失去知覺，回過神來，又不禁陷入陣陣哀傷。

最後一次和德昌相見是在 2005 年的夏天，就在他出發擔任坎城影展評審之前。在那個夏日傍晚，我們一起參加蔣澤蔭同學的家庭聚會，那真是令人難忘的一夜，大夥兒彷彿回到求學時代那樣愉快自如。他當時看來積極活躍、充滿活力、很是幽默，就如同他年青時一樣。自從聽到他過世消息，就一直希望找回所有和他一起快樂的回憶，更希望能重溫舊時的快樂時光。

從交大畢業之後，我們第一次相見大約是在 1972、1973 年之間。當時他開著一輛義大利製的雙人座汽車從佛羅里達州開往西雅圖，途經杜克大學（編按：當時陳學長於杜克大學攻讀博士學位），在我們家過宿。那時候的他留著一頭嬉皮髮型，看起來神清氣爽，精神得很。我猜他追求自由的靈魂應當受到當代美國文化的啓發，也與之產生不少共鳴吧！我們聊到他的夢想，也聊到他想拍電影，但這已非第一次。我當時並不太在意，然而，比起以前他似乎對導演這一途已有所準

備。幾年後，我突然收到他的來信—他已經在南加大電影學院了。1983年，更從報紙上得知他拍的《海灘的一天》得了獎。

又過了好幾年，有一次我趁回到台灣之際。打了一通電話去他家，是一位女士接的，也幫我留言，後來我才知道這位女士就是蔡琴小姐。德昌不久回電，跟我相約到林森北路一家日本料理店「飲燒酒」（台語「喝酒」）。我依然記得他當時給整個台灣的大環境下這麼一個結論。他說，他以台灣為傲，台灣孕育了非常多優秀的人才，也給這些人才不少機會。他深信台灣有潛力成為華人世界最閃亮的典範，他認為這潛力肇因歷史因素形成多元文化和族群基因的融合，肥沃了這塊土地，這些雖都是老生常談，但卻出自德昌的內心。現在回頭來看，在在印證德昌真有先見之明。他發自內心的認為他可以有一番作為，事後證明他果然是。

德昌成名了，他的名聲響遍國際，他的才氣絕對直得這樣的榮譽。那是一段他事業上快樂的歲月，他的才華受到各界的賞識肯定。在此快樂時刻，尤其多年來我們第一次重逢，我本期望他會談到他的婚姻生活，但他並未提起。後來我才知道，他的婚姻出了問題，兩顆閃耀的明星無法同在一個屋簷下。

1990年代後期，我比較常回台灣，也和他碰過好幾次面。德昌是我孩子們的偶像，拗不過他們多次的要求，終於有次帶他們去見他。那一天我非常驚訝，德昌對孩子很有一套，有耐心，愛心又很有激勵作用；而那一幕也讓我想起他在西雅圖工作時，曾經擔任過少年足球隊的義務教練。

除了對德昌的好奇與尊敬，孩子們非常喜歡他這個「酷傢伙」。誰能不喜歡他呢？站在他們面前的是一位瀟灑的傑出電影導演，身著最新流行的運動鞋，緊身牛仔褲，頭戴著棒球帽，而他們的老爹卻總是一板一眼，有點礙眼的杵在一旁。

他對小孩的喜愛更可從他的兒子 Sean 出生時，他給我的一封簡短的 email 看出端倪：「Dan, you don't know how happy I am!」自從他去世之後的這幾天，每次想到這句話都讓我傷心與茫然。談到他的辦公室，我發現在他辦公室一角落一個桶子裡，堆著許許多多他在各地影展得到的獎牌，他竟視這些為破銅爛鐵，我忍不住開他一個玩笑：「一斤多少錢？」

有一次，德昌邀我去欣賞他在台北的試片會。我已不記得片名，但說真的，我不喜歡電影的結局，也不了解他為什麼用這樣的手法拍攝，但是，不久之後，天啊！這部片子又得獎了！那個晚上的試片會，德昌也介紹給我他的幾位導演朋友，包含吳念真先生。



又有一次，他來電說，要見面聊聊。但沒有事先知會我，就把鎧立帶來，這是我第一次見到鎧立。幾天後的一個颱風夜晚，我們三人又不期然一起在新竹相見。那次，我剛好到工研院教一個短期課程，他們倆則到工研院拜訪擔任高層主管的哥哥。記得那個颱風夜晚，我們三人暢談過去未來，還聽著我兒子錄音的創作曲〈Days of Crayons〉(憶兒時)，在颱風夜晚，這曲子似乎勾起我們一點情緒，想到德昌經歷過的風風雨雨，我感到欣慰他終於找到真愛。

德昌的藝術才華似乎是母親的遺傳，而性格卻像父親。我有次在西雅圖開會時與德昌哥哥的一位好友一起拜訪他的父母親，那時德昌不在西雅圖。從他父母親家裡頭的佈置就可感受到他的藝術天份來自母親，特別是花的擺設和傢俱的選配，令人印象深刻，這也讓我想起德昌一貫卡通式風格的自我表現。這又讓我想起日後有次我和太太拜訪德昌和鎧立的新家，偌大的客廳只放著一架大鋼琴、一把吉他，幾件簡單的傢俱以及一盆美麗的花卉，卻彷彿渾然天成極具藝術之美。回到那一天在德昌父母家時，我意外發現德昌的父親原籍廣東梅縣，我們改用客家話暢談，彼此還開了些玩笑。他們都是慈祥的父母，難怪在德昌的生命裡，幾次真感到疲累時，他總會回到西雅圖，在父母親的老巢尋獲溫暖。

當我和他的母親閒聊時，她老人家跟我說了一個小故事。她說，德昌拿到電腦碩士學位後，他把畢業證書包得美美的當成一個禮物送給她，並開玩笑地說：「媽！我幫您拿到學位了，現在我要去拍電影！」當我轉述這個故事給德昌時，他咧嘴笑說：「我母親是這故事的最佳導演。」

其實在他生涯後期即便拿到坎城最佳導演時，對台灣的電影環境已感到挫折與失望。他不想再拍傳統電影，他開始想要從事動畫電影，一個全新的挑戰。過去我老是錯估德昌的實力，這次我再也不敢輕忽他的決心。幾年後，他、同學孫芳國和我三人一起在福華飯店吃早餐時，我發現他與夢想有可能實現，我真的為他高興，也期待那一天的來到。只是，很令人心痛的是他的生命突然結束，他親自編導的動畫片《追風》壯志未酬，這是德昌的「unfinished melody」，是台灣的損失，也是世人的損失。

一次又一次，德昌把他對不公不義的厭惡，對傳統束縛的不服，對弱勢族群的悲天憫人，呈現在他的電影裡頭。身為他的好友，我很欣慰他打破了傳統的束縛，找到他最真摯的喜好，也找到了他的真愛。他為世人留下的這些珍貴的遺產，將永遠為人懷念。而我們將永遠記得這份珍貴的友情！

安息吧！德昌！友聲