Mercy in Bosom No Forgiveness
No Future—Forgiveness In Traditional
Chinese Culture and Western Culture

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November 1, 1991, Lu Gang, a Chinese student studying in the USA, did a tragic murder. Just after getting his Ph. D in outer space physics from University of Iowa, he shot three professors, a Chinese student Lin Hua who got the Ph. D at the same time with him, and the Vice President of this university, Ann Klary.

Anne Klary was one of the most authoritative ladies in the University. Long ago her father came to China as a missionary so she was born in Shanghai, China. She, unmarried in her life, had special love to Chinese. She treated Chinese student as her own children and gave them meticulous care and help. In each Thanksgiving Eve and Christmas Eve, she invited her Chinese students to her family. However, pitifully, she was shot down by a Chinese student.

November 4, 1991, 28,000 staffs and students in UI stopped working one day for the funeral of Miss Anne Cleary. In this day, Miss Cleary’s brothers bore the sadness and wrote a letter full of love to Lu Gang’s family.

We experienced accidental extreme sorrow, losing our sister in the best time of her life. She, our greatest honor, had a far-reaching
impact on her family, neighbors, her academic colleagues through the country, students and relatives. She was respected and loved by everyone who met her.

Our family came here from far way, not only standing the sorrow with numerous friends of our sister but also sharing good memories left by our sister.

When we got-together in sadness and recalling, we reminded your family and prayed for you because this weekend must be sorrowful and shocking for you.

Anne believed in love and forgiveness deeply. We wrote this letter to you when you were sad because we would like to share your sorrow and wished that you would pray with us for love between each other. At this moment of sadness, Anne must hope that our hearts would be filled with sympathy, forgiveness and love. We know that at this time only your family can be sadder than we are. We are willing to take this sadness with you together, in which case, we can get comfort and support from each. Anne must hope so!

Sincerely yours,

Doctor Anne Cleary’s Brother,
Frank, Mike and Paul Cleary.

When I teach in Nanjing University or give lectures in Beijing University, Qinghua University and other universities, I talked about this letter for countless times. I always consider this letter to be the most moving letter for me and a letter which cannot be from a Chinese. There are three most well-know collections of letters in China, *Letters between Two Places* by Lu Xun, *Collection of Family Letters* by Fu Lei and *Collection of Family Letters* by Zeng Guofan. However, compared with that letter, all of them were in the shade. In
front of the letter, we should lower our heads and give our respects to
the three Cleary’s brothers.

However, the real problem has not been solved for this yet. The
last letter written by Lu Gang to his family was full of “hatred
without sake”[1], so called “I cannot hide my angry in any case” and
“I will find several accompaniers even if I will go to die” and so on.
Here we will not discuss his letter. What puzzled me extremely is
“the love without reason” flowing in the letter of Cleary brothers.
This, has never been heard in Chinese cultural traditions.

Of course, there is so-called “mercy in bosom” in Chinese cultural
traditions but why can’t this “mercy in bosom” lead to “love without
sake”? Moreover, if this “mercy in bosom” cannot lead to “love
without sake”, is this so-called “mercy” the real “mercy”?

Because of this, facing three Cleary brothers, we should lower our
heads. This is not only for showing respect to them but also for
rethinking this accident after it happened.

I

To be exact, “mercy in bosom” should be called as “forgiveness”.
Yet, the so-called “mercy in bosom” is more vivid than “forgiveness”.
The “bosom” here implies a kind of sentiment, which has no business
with rational or irrational, neither law which defines “crime” and
“punishment” [2]. This “bosom” is the endowed sentiment—the
ultimate care, which makes a human being to be a human being.

So different “sentiments” leads to different “mercies”. Different
“sentiments” leads to different views about “forgiveness” in Chinese
cultural tradition and western cultural tradition.

The mere stone distinguished the two kinds of “forgiveness” in
Chinese cultural tradition and Western cultural tradition is the "loyal forgiveness" in Confucianism. The core of Confucianism can be concluded by one word "humanity". This humanity can be divided into two parts, "loyalty" and "forgiveness". "Loyalty" means "one's own will". It is "to do one's best with whole heart" to practise "humanity", as the saying "you yourself desire rank and standing; then help others to get rank and standing. You want to turn your own merits to account; then help others to turn theirs to account." [3] "Forgiveness" means "the opposite of one's own will". It is "to treat other people as you would yourself" to practise "humanity", as the saying "Do not do to others what you would not have them do to you." [4] But "loyalty" can be contained in "forgiveness", because "one's own will" is to want the things oneself does not want, and "not one's own will" is to not want the things oneself does not want. So "Tzu-kung asked, Is there any single saying that one can act upon all day and every day? The Master said, Perhaps the saying about consideration: 'Never do to others what you would not like them to do to you.' " [5] However, "to treat others as you would yourself" here is limited in the range of ethics, even the meaning of "excuse" was not in it, nor covering such questions as "what should I do if others enforce the things I do not like to me?" So Confucius said, "Justice in return of injustice." It is obvious that the explanation of loyalty and forgiveness by Confucius is basically corresponded to "ration" not measured by "love". It is the real care not the ultimate care, or false ultimate care. In Mengzi, because the main problem concerned is "do as one's own will", even "forgiveness" is seldom mentioned [6]. Daoism who ignores ethics turn a total deaf ear to "forgiveness".

Undoubtedly, "condone" in Western cultural tradition does not
appear in China. The “condone” developed from Confucian’s idea of “forgiveness” is just a rule to deal with ethics. This “condone” completely esteems conditional rules and correspond attitudes. It is “to defend those who belong to one’s own faction and attack those who don’t”. To condone those who can be condoned is “to defend those who belong to one’s own faction” and never to condone those who cannot be condoned is “to attack those who don’t belong to one’s own faction”. “Putting humanity into government practice” is just a makeshift and finesse. It does not come from “excuse” but “bestow”. “Men of honor do not remember flunkies’ faults” is because “flunkies” are beyond the definitions of “enemies and friends” and “love and hatred”. Their defects and offences can be ignored so men of honor might as well show magnanimity but this does not mean to really “excuse” their contradicts and disobedience. Even to “excuse”, condoning those who cannot be condoned, still has some pre-conditions. That is the person who cannot be condoned should first “confess”. After this confessing, the relationship between “the one who condones” and “the one who cannot be condoned” is changed to the relationship between a winner and a loser. As a result, “to condone” is replaced by “to absolve”. It is easy to see that condoning does not appear even when it is in greatest need.

The idea about “condoning” in Chinese cultural tradition is completely consistent with the value of “original goodness”. As a hypothesis about human nature, Chinese culture tradition cognizes: human beings are born with goodness. The born nature of human being is goodness and the human nature can be relied on. If one can follow his own nature, he can achieve the greatest happiness. Human beings can also be saints for goodness (so called “in the streets are all
Confucians can get freedom from the self-satisfaction of personality of human nature and Taoists can get dizzy with the self-satisfaction of will of human nature. The so-called free-will has never been mentioned[^9], and it was even labeled as human nature. In this case, in China, human nature is not a developing procedure but a “state”, an unchangeable naïve state. The growth, development and change of human nature are the decline of ethics, the backward of human nature. It can only be avoid by strictly sticking and maintenance. In the real life, not everyone is saint. This is the result of exterior impacts. The advocation of ethics means to clean the pollution from the outside world to return to human nature and real heart sincerely. So in China, the redemption of soul is not necessary. The only thing needed is the returning to human nature. Here, the key of the keys is that oneself is the savior of oneself and human nature is higher than deity, so human beings should depend on self-examination and self-redemption, namely self-help. So does the discussion of goodness and evilness. Starting from the point that human beings are born with goodness, Chinese cultural tradition believes that the goodness or evilness is congenital and the free-will cannot get rid of it. A good man does evil things because he corrupts to an evil man while an evil man does good things because he has been altered to a good man. Otherwise, everything is impossible. That is why Chinese prefer to say “good will be rewarded with good, and evil with evil”. They like to distinguish a good man and an evil man. Everything of a good man is good. Even he makes a mistake, it is “making a mistake by good-heartedness”. Everything of an evil man is evil. The whole clan of the evil man is involved in his class and should be killed, or the evil man is rebuilt and stung by conscience. So it is impossible for
Chinese cultural tradition to observe the limitation of human beings from a higher level and remorse the absurd existence of the theory why a human being can be a human being. Chinese cultural tradition criticizes the weak-points of human nature from the points of the sympathy of "self-nature" and calls for make-up from the perspective of ethics. No common responsibility exists but ethic responsibility. This criterion seems not to be according as the motive but the result. Results decide motives, just as old sayings "winners are kings and losers are bandits" and "the error of a moment becomes the regret of a lifetime". Because human beings are born with goodness, the person who sticks to and maintains it can naturally become a saint. If one does not stick to or maintain it and corrupts to an evil man, he should take his own responsibilities and should not be sympathized but "be treated with fierce brow" and "be pointed by thousands of fingers". The seed of hatred hereby rooted, burgeoned, bloomed and fructified in Chinese cultural tradition.

If "condoning" in China is the ignorance of human beings' limitation, "condoning" in the west is the self-awareness of human beings' limitation. The view of "condoning" in the western cultural tradition is in accordance with the value of original sin. As a hypothesis of human nature, western cultural tradition thinks human beings are born to be evil. It holds that because human nature is deprived of free will it cannot do goodness naturally. Free will itself is much more fundamental than original nature and can lead to both goodness and evilness so driven by free will human beings' first action can only be to break innocence and commit crimes and the crimes can never be eliminated. This is all the greatness and sin of human beings lie in. Obviously, this original sin is the symbol of
human beings’ nobility[10] and the symbol that they are equal to God. The consciousness of original sin is the consciousness of human beings’ absolute right, absolute dignity and absolute duty and they further proceed to consciously confirm and undertake their absolute right, absolute dignity and absolute duty. In other words, the “original sin” makes the “sin” absolute and natural, and consequently makes human beings’ dignity, right and duty absolute and natural. Also, since the real life results from human beings’ original sin, human beings have no reason to refuse to undertake it bravely which is also their absolute dignity, right and duty. What is more important, the fact that free will can lead to both good deeds and evilness will inevitably result in the existence of belief standard.[11] The existence of the belief standard is the fundamental guarantee of the change of free will from the evil to the good. Therefore, different from Chinese cultural tradition, the key of the western cultural tradition lies in that God is His own savior and divinity is higher than humanity; therefore, human beings depend on God’s savior and their own confession. The exploration into the good and the evil is also like so. Since it has been emphasized that both the good and the evil come from free will, the exploration must base itself on the foundation of evil nature. Of all the civilizations, including the Greek civilization, the conception of sin is limited to the legal level, but finally the western cultural tradition changes its foundation. The evil nature does not mean the evil of “incompleteness” or “being not good”, but the evil which undertakes all the responsibility of being incomplete or not good, not this or that crime in real life, but the “first sin” as the origin of all the sins; therefore, the whole human history is considered as the history of atoning for human sins. Therefore, the evil nature has not only set
the beginning of history, but also pointed the hope to put an end to
the history. Furthermore, what is more important, the evil nature does
not come from the fall of humanity but from the departure of
humanity from divinity. If it is because of the fall of humanity, then
people can face crimes and pains, guiltless, but if it is because of the
departure of humanity from divinity, people have no excuse to face
cri mes and pains without guilt. In this aspect, the original sin is
undoubtedly a basic hypothesis aimed at the absolute duty. Through it,
everybody realizes that crimes closely connect with each other and
the toll rings for everyone. And what can save this all is only love.
Therefore, the seed of love roots, sprouts, blossoms and bears fruit in
the western cultural tradition.

Logically, the “forgiveness” in western cultural tradition is not a
kind of rule of moral principles, but a divine standard of spiritual
freedom. Forgiveness pursues unconditional principles and unequal
attitudes. It is to forgive not only the forgivable but also the
unforgivable. In the west, when mentioning good people or bad
people, one is just talking about their deeds: one honor cannot make
one honorable all through one’s life and also one crime cannot make
one guilty all life long. Therefore, forgiveness is unconditional and to
turn both friends and enemies into basic human beings. And this is
the unconditional principle. As for the unequal attitudes, it means to
turn human eyes into divine eyes. Usually Chinese people cannot
understand the western forgiveness. For instance, when Peter who
thinks seven times already too many asked Jesus how many times one
should forgive others, Jesus answered, “seventy times”. If it is put in
the Chinese tradition, it is completely inconceivable, because it is
from the human aspect; while put in the western tradition, it is
without doubt for it is from the divine aspect. Obviously, human view and divine view are not symmetric. The unforgivable from the human aspect must be forgiven from the divine view. Derid always emphasizes that if people only get ready for forgiving the forgivable, the conception of forgiveness itself will disappear. What forgiveness faces must be the impossible possibility, or else, it is not the real forgiveness. It is right based on the divine view that Socrates faced death calmly because he believed in the judgment of the gods; Jesus said when somebody beat your right face, you should give him your left face because he also believed in the divine judgment. Bad methods cannot achieve good results and the final judgment will arrive sooner or later so one needn’t revenge by oneself or require others’ confession. All one needs is to love. And this is what Jesus Christ says, “Love your enemies!” and what Paul says, “You can only give others good wishes, never curse.”

II

In a word, “to bear mercy in one’s mind” of the traditional Chinese culture obviously cannot lead to “love for no reason”; thus, is the so-called “mercy” actually “mercy”?

The answer is no.

The so-called mercy is not to forgive those who can be forgiven, but those who cannot be. Only when those who cannot be forgiven is existent can mercy exist. Mercy derives from divine and love. However, it is not like this in China where mercy is only shown on those who can be forgiven. This opinion is impotent when we are faced to the evil, greed, cruel and bloody human nature. It probes into the human nature superficially; besides, it is of no positive
significance as resources to know the human nature. If those people can be forgiven in fact and they are forgiven, what is the significance of “mercy”? As for the opinion that mercy can not be shown on those who cannot be forgiven, it indicates that Chinese “mercy” is not the real “mercy”. Although the Chinese mercy includes “pity”, the so-called compassion, shame for one’s evil, condescension, and justification of right and wrong, there is no love in it. To show no mercy means to decline the world of love. Therefore, the absence of love will lead to the feeling of nothingness and the unbearable burden as a result of the absence of love in one’s mind; accordingly, it will lead to an impulse to escape from the common responsibility. It’s impossible that the common responsibility is finite. Once it is finite, it is possible to feel no regret, and then there will be no innocent sinner or innocent murderer. In this way, I am finite, ignorant, and imperfect, but those infinite ones forgive me; so why shouldn’t I forgive others who are as finite, ignorant, and imperfect as me? I am so sinful, but those infinite ones forgive me; so why shouldn’t I forgive others who are as sinful as me? Of course, it does not mean to give up animadverting, but to remind us never to forget that we have the same sin when animadverting. The animadverted is not none of our business, instead, they might also be latent in our minds. Everyone is sinful, and everyone is imperfect, and everyone is probable to corrupt. Everyone might be the devil. That’s why Diderot sighed with emotion, half of a man is angel and the other half is devil. Thus, mercy is a must when we are animadverting, and we also ought to confess when complaining. My animadversion is not to prove that I’m right, but to show the preciseness of animadversion itself. However, the Chinese mercy averts love by averting the common
responsibility. On the one hand, we tend to refuse, to say no. We tend
to beautify ourselves, eulogize ourselves on the height of morality,
hugging ourselves on never “associating with the evil”; supposing
ourselves as innocent as an angel. Even if we “make a mistake”[13],
we are only doing something incorrect with a good intention. Even if
I fail, that is because I am wise while others are all stupid, because
they envy and isolate me. Every time after a disaster takes place, the
conclusion would always be that, we are so good while they are too
evil; it is they who “corrupt day by day”. [14] For instance, the evil of
the Culture Revolution has to do with every Chinese’s soul, and every
Chinese should confess for our torpor, stupid, cold, cruel, coward,
hypocritical soul, but after the disaster, every Chinese turned into
victims immediately except “the four evil ones”. In the same way, it
is because of the aversion of the common responsibility that we are
totally unaware of the crime of conscience besides the crime against
the law. Chinese people of every generation only blame everyone and
everything except themselves, complain about each other, exculpate
their faulting by criticizing others and intensify their moral
superiority complex. We are totally unaware that “evil” is not
something outside us but inside ourselves. Someone once sighed with
emotion that we are so sinful as a nation, but we are never bothered
with the sense of sin. What a pertinent comment! On the other hand,
if we never make a mistake, it must be others who are incorrect; if we
refuse to admit that we are evil, it must be others who are evil. Thus,
the evil and the good are separated definitely; we are the good while
others are evil, so others become the scapegoat of our sin. Although
we have the logion “I will never impose something on others if I
don’t want it”, it is not for the infinite but for the finite “self”.

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Therefore, the actual “want” is totally subjective, and the “self” in the self-confession turns to “you” in charge against others; accordingly, the logion becomes “don’t impose something on others if you don’t want it”. The way to avert moral responsibility reduces people to evil rather easily. As a result, the evil ones become sinners of history, and they have to shoulder the historical responsibility, so the good have the right to impose despotism upon them from every aspect, “as fierce as winter wind”. People are causal to believe that evil will leaves us if the evil ones are punished; however, the fact is quite opposite to their will: the evil becomes more and more rampant, and finally becomes ubiquitous. Marx Weber found that there were two kinds of civilization: the tragic one and the non-tragic one. The tragic civilization is faced to two worlds, the eternal world of God’s, which is perfect, and the temporal world, which is imperfect, full of crime. People negate the temporal world through the perspective of the eternal one, so they improve and perfect it consistently, finally leading to a noble and beautiful world. Meanwhile, non-tragic civilization only has a temporal world, which is full of sin, and we can only indulge ourselves in the moss of sin. What’s surprising is that the tragic civilization does not lead to a tragedy while the non-tragic civilization ends a tragedy. The reason is that the non-tragic civilization is lack of a perfect eternal world. It is the same with Chinese mercy. Due to the absence of a perfect eternal world, the Chinese mercy is not mercy, instead, it is “full of sin where we always indulge ourselves”.

Furthermore, the absence of love must be the presence of hatred. In the traditional narration of our Chinese culture, it is not difficult for us to detect many exciting excuses, such as benevolence, justice, faith,
piety, morality, country, society, etc. Sometimes, those excuses can indeed deceive us, convincing us that those excuses are the truth of history. We feel happy and peaceful with these excuses, but it is not the fact. As long as we put these exciting excuses aside, it is not difficult to see the common root behind them: hatred. Just have a look at examples in Chinese history, Wu Yuan flogged his enemy’s corpses; Gou Jian underwent self-imposed hardships so as to strengthen his resolve to beat his enemy; Jing Ke tried to assassinate King Qin at the price of his own life. Behind “justice” lies hatred. In *The Girl with White Hair* and *The Red Detachment of Women*, behind “revolution” lies hatred; as to behind “a great man can wait for ten years to take revenge”, “I will take revenge even if it has been many years later, and I will redress the injustice even if it was a long time ago”, “he killed my father, and I will never forgive him”, “if I kill my enemy, I will kill his offspring as well”, “if someone knows my secret, I have to kill him/her to keep my secret safe”, “I will take revenge if I have any enmity, and I will redress an injustice if I am wronged” also lies hatred. In this sense, it is not exaggerating that Chinese country is founded on the basis of hatred. Commonly speaking, hatred is merely one of human’s feelings. Besides hatred, there is love, compassion, pity, jocundity, inebriation, admiration, and envy...but in retrospect, we will find, almost all our nation’s history has to do with hatred, which dominates our nation. Why? Hatred is a way of replacement for people to seek self-affirmation with the absence of love; it is an abnormal feeling, a pathetic way of expression. Now that we cannot affirm ourselves through love or our existence, we affirm ourselves through evil and non-existence. We seek satisfaction in this way. But what we are not aware of is that hatred is not the voice of an angel but
a curse of the devil. Furthermore, since there is no interceder, only the outcome of one's action is valid for evaluating one's existence. So hatred for the sake of revenging resistance or for the sake of resistance itself emerges accordingly. It is a pity that few people meditate carefully on the frightfulness and cruelty latent in human nature, that few people consider whether a life supported and propelled by hatred is too darksome and too horrible or not. We are used to "killing the enemy's whole family", "killing all the enemy's relatives", and "killing all the enemy's offsprings", and we are used to "killing the enemy at the price of our own lives"; what's more, the choice of hatred is supposed to be a noble behavior; it is supposed to mean devoting one's life to some noble ideal. However, hatred is like a delicious but poisonous globefish. Once we eat it up, our lives are ending, and at last, hatred will destroy everything beautiful in human nature.

Obviously, hatred is far away from mercy. It is not for mercy but for violence. Eye for eye and tooth for tooth have been characteristics of China. It is not difficult to find that bloody massacre in Chinese history is unparallel. In China, rulers such as Liu Bang, Xiang Yu, advocate, "You can replace him", "A great man should be like this". These words have become horrible ruling ways of Chinese emperors and ministers of every generation. Which rulers entitled "oracles", "wise rulers" did not make themselves remembered with the help of violence? No mercy, no love, no pity, there is only massacre and blood. A man hereby forgets that he is a man; he is reduced to a beast, to a bloodthirsty and worthless person, to a violent machine. What's more eye-catching is that advocacy of violence is not only the trump for the strong to rule, but also the manner for the weak to snatch the
power. There are bloody enmity of generations and cause-effect circulation, and the identity of killers and victims are changed from time to time. The evil aspect of human nature, therefore, is like roaring flood that gets rid of the tie of morality and destroys the last dyke of human nature of Chinese people. Nevertheless, the bloody tragedies in history shows: justice can never be realized by the manners of violence, instead, violence will get farther and farther from justice. What we must bear in mind is that a system might force a man to be disloyal, but it cannot make him unfortunate. It is not the system but the human nature that make him unfortunate. Consequently, if we do not change ourselves but only to change the system, we will only change our roles. Nothing will change in fact. Revolution, slaughter of revolutionists, anti-revolution, and repressing anti-revolution will only change the roles of killers and victims. They cannot change “misfortune” itself. Secondly, criminals solve problems in violent ways, but we cannot solve problems in the same way, or we are no different from criminals. Now that we are against the murderer who kills someone cruelly, how can we kill this murderer? If we do it, what can we get except that we satisfy the most primitive impulse to take revenge. Violence is violence, no matter how we beautify it. If we replace darkness with darkness, we will never get luminosity; if we replace violence with violence, the winner is still for violence; if we advocate blood for blood, there will be more blood; if we punish gangsters in an illegal way, we will become gangsters ourselves. Once the instrument becomes the aim, we can do nothing but use violence again and again until we fall the victim of violence, too. In a word, resistance against evil in any form is no more than the surrender to evil or the duplicate of evil. At last, it is
illegal to use violence against man in any way. Even “violence for the sake of justice” should be opposed in the manner of love, for violence for the sake of justice is still violence. In addition, violence against cacodemon is the preface of violence of we human ourselves. If violence can be applied to him, it is also able to be applied to you; if violence is able to be applied to an individual, it is able to be applied to all human beings. That’s Hemingway’s question: for whom the bell rings? And his answer is that it rings for every one of us!

III

If we want to rebuild the traditional Chinese “forgiveness”, we must advocate the “love without reason” and the real mercy.

Undoubtedly, a nation which never knows love but hatred does not begin with goodness and therefore it certainly will not end with goodness. Such a nation has the right to say, “We are not far away from civilization”, only when it starts to reconsider the word “hatred” and refuse it definitely, only when it knows that every life deserves saving, and only when it realizes the greatest importance of love, or else, civilization will always desert this nation. The real “forgiveness” is just based on love.

Of course, such love is not a kind of stimulus, but an intrinsic need that does not change with the outside world. From a worldly view, love is sacrifice so it requires return, looks forward to return and is totally aimed at return. Love thus becomes an excuse of satisfying oneself and others the instrument for satisfying oneself. To be loved and satisfied is the real goal; to be cared for, cherished and adored is the motivation. However, the love on which forgiveness is based is the choice of love. It is merely an intrinsic need, without requirements.
or payments. Eyre From in his The Art of Love distinguishes between "to be loved" and "to love", "the target of love" and "the ability to love", "falling in love" and "loving each other for ever", "I love because I'm loved" and "I love so I'm loved", and "I love you because I need you" and "I love you so I need you". Also, Amders Nygren (1890-1956), an Swedish theologian, in his Studies in Christian View of Love, distinguishes between Eros who proceeds from the interests of himself and Agape the interests of the gods. Obviously, the love on which forgiveness is based is in accord with the later ones above.

Such love is too serious, to some degree, but it is the mission of human beings. To achieve the loftiest mission in the least lofty world can best reveal human beings' essence. In this aspect, Sister Teresa set a good example. Her loving heart moved all the people. In the 1990s, when Kosovo War broke out in Yugoslavia, she went to the battlefield to rescue the women and children. When the two parties of the war knew that she was in the battlefield, they both ceased fire and after she saved out all the women and children, they then opened fire again. When she died, people from everywhere came to her funeral. When her body was lifted, all the Indians including the Indian Prime Minister, knelt down and when her body passed the street, all the Indians upstairs came downstairs and knelt on the ground, because nobody could stand higher than her. From her, we can see the holiness and dignity of humanity which is the essence of human beings. Therefore, human beings exist for the sake of love, instead of utility. From the utilitarian view, one will undoubtedly have the revenge consciousness of "blood for blood". This reminds people of the scene that when attacked animals will "make a countercharge".
However, human beings are different from animals. When others have committed unforgivable crime against one, one cannot wipe out one’s hurt through revenge; moreover, the revenge itself will bring oneself new pains. That is because the revenge itself further hurts the love itself. It must be known that love is only love which does not care about utility, and needs no reason. Furthermore, the same with the situation that brightness does not simply oppose to darkness but far above it, love also does not simply oppose against hatred, but far above it. Obviously, one must stick to love unconditionally without requiring the world to love oneself as return. Even if the whole world treated one with hatred, one should still love the world because love is all one’s life exists for.

And that means to deny and exceed evilness is not to fight against it through evil doings, but never to exist like the evil and to declare, “This is the right attitude human beings should hold”. “To surrender together with Jesus Christ is better than to win with Caesar.” Unfortunately, people always doubt about this for they think in front of violence to forgive is to commit suicide, but the key lies in that the elimination of evilness must begin from oneself: if nobody uses violence, then how can violence emerge? Of course, some people may further argue that there always exist some evil people and they will make use of our forgiveness. But they have ignored that the so-called evil people are just ourselves. Therefore, mankind can be saved only if everybody does it themselves. Obviously, there exists the difference between the aspect of individual and the aspect of human beings. From an individual aspect, evilness exists in others, but from the aspect of the whole human beings, evilness lies in everybody because human beings are composed of each real
individual. It must be emphasized that only when one realizes this, one's mercy is the true mercy. Also because of this, the power of forgiveness comes when faced with brightness instead of darkness. Darkness is only darkness: to criticize darkness cannot lead to brightness, and to eliminate darkness cannot lead to brightness, either; darkness is always darkness: at the end of darkness is not brightness and the result of darkness is not brightness, either. That's why even such people as Lu Xun who faced and fought against darkness bravely also could not win brightness. The only right choice is to face brightness and leave darkness behind. The New Testament mentions, "You must gain freedom from truth" and similarly, we must gain freedom from brightness not darkness. Specifically speaking, when we gain through revenge the fairness and justice once destroyed by others, we have first destroyed the forgiveness itself. And when we think over the trampled fairness and justice from a higher level, when we realize that to give up revenge means to achieve more, then forgiveness, "the impossible possibility" turns into a total possibility[19]. This reminds us of the pure virtue of forgiveness that can be found in many religious people. For quite a long time, people despised this virtue and called it the "dream of love", but now they finally find out that what really should be despised are just themselves.

In fact, forgiveness is by no means the "dream of love", but the "lofty achievement". When we are hurt, there are two possible attitudes for us to choose from: one is to revenge "blood for blood" regardless of the cost; the other one is to nurture the fruit of love and forgiveness on the wound like a trampled violet which still gives its scent to the foot and also like a bee which only cares about collecting
pollen among the roses with thorns, because we have realized that only love really defies evil and other things such as “fighting against evil by evil doings” and “fighting against violence by violence” actually surrender to or copy the evil. Leacock in his Ten Letters for A Young Poet mentions that a poet, like a bee, collects pains and happiness of mankind and brews them into honey for people to enjoy. In the poem “Oh, Poet, Tell Me What Do You Do”, he says the mission of a poet is to praise and the love gained from this praise is right the “lofty achievement”. Now let’s look back to the three brothers of Ann Clara mentioned in the beginning. They did not choose to revenge but to forgive and love. This choice is by no means the “dream of love”, but the “lofty achievement”. Xin Lin once wrote an article named The Story of the City of Love in which he told us:

The gun murder shocked the whole country. The Chinese students in this small town all got involved in fear, sorrow and great panic. This murder case first reflected hatred, but according to Ann Clara’s brothers, forgiveness is far better than revenge.

The memorial meeting and funeral of Annie arrived. Driven by the feeling of guilt, most Chinese students and scholars took part in the funeral. Nobody talked, all bathed in sorrow. However, there was no black curtain or white gauze in the funeral. The crucifix hang there high with solemnity; beautiful flowers crowded the portrait of Annie; the sound of pipe organ flied in the air, “Amazing grace, How Sweet the Sound.” People all sent me their best wishes, “God bless you”. The priest said, “If we let hatred surround the meeting, Annie will not forgive us”.

During the reception after the funeral, the three brothers came to the Chinese students. They knew the heavy burden of those Chinese
students so they tried to shake hands and talk with every Chinese student. Their gentle smiles and sincere love caused many girls to cry, and even one of my friends, a tall man cried, too. The stream of love ran from hands to hearts; on the faces with tears then appeared smiles. Such a life, such a death, such a happy music and such a hope are just what I have looked forward to. Frank, the eldest brother held my hand, “I was born in Shanghai and China is my hometown.” Tears filled my eyes, but warmed my heart. Suddenly, I found my previous fear and heavy burden in my heart all disappeared. A good and bright feeling entered my heart.

At the end of the article, the writer called the small town “the city of love” and said, “The river runs as usual, but I’m no longer the one yesterday.” In fact, many people who had experienced this event and read the letters of Ann’s brothers were no longer the ones of the past. Isn’t that the “lofty achievement”?

Leacock wrote, “Oh, earth, my dear earth, I love you! I want you!” That is right the significance of praise. To love is to be willing to love. If you are simple, the world is simple, too; what kind of person you are, then what kind of world your world is. Therefore, the result of forgiveness may not be paid back in reality, but everybody will see that it has aroused great echo in people’s heart. It is right the great echo that has created human being’s past, present and also future. Maybe because of this, Cardinal Desmond Tutu, once nominated by President Mandela the Chairman of the Committee of Truth and Peaceful Negotiation, cried out, “If there is no forgiveness, there will be no future.”

Yes——

“If there is no forgiveness, there will be no future!”[20]

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Notes:

[1] There might be some reasons for the hatred.
[2] It is unquestioned that criminals should be punished by lay.
[3] The Analects, Book Six.
[4] The Analects, Book Fifteen.
[5] The Analects, Book Fifteen.
[6] But advocate "not to bear other’s heart.
[7] Distinguishing enemies and friends.
[8] Distinguishing love and hatred.
[9] Xunzi referred to the problem of free-will and brought forward the question that human beings were born with evil, but the study has been developed.
[10] Nobler than animals.
[11] People pursue the infinity of spirit because of the finity of life and the sublimation of soul because of the limitation of body. This is so called the belief standard.
[12] The so-called love without reason.
[13] Self-reflection of Mao Zedong on the Great Leap-forward.
[14] Lu Xun.
[15] The idea of revolution to Ah Q is no more than “killing the traitor’s family—Caca.
[16] pp.1-2, 46, 1986.
[17] Different from the old Chinese saying, “One should love one’s parents and therefore further loves others’ parents”, Jesus Christ denies his mother in the public.
[18] To exist without evil.
[19] We must also gain freedom from this “lofty achievement”.
[20] Tutu, pp29, 2002.
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