

The Wushan Governor's Murder

By Liu Bai

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On the evening of September 22, 1998, the Governor of Wushan County, Cai Jun, was shot and killed in his own home in an attack by an assailant carrying a gun. His wife and their baby weren't injured, and nothing was taken.

Cai Jun was of indeterminate age and from Chongqing's Kaixian County. His educational background and employment career were also relatively unknown to the people of Wushan, but that year he had become the County Governor, primarily in charge of relocating people in the area of the Three Gorges dam. Before his death, he had penned a number of documents relating to population relocation.

The murderer, Tian Tejie, who was born on February 2, 1973, had enlisted in the army in 1988, without having completed high school. After injuring his leg in a fall while in the army, he was demobilized in 1993 and joined the ranks of the public security. Before the attack on September 22, 1998, he was a criminal investigator in the Vice Squad of the Public Security Bureau in Wushan County and had twice won awards for excellent service.

On September 22, 1998, Wu Nanfei, wife to the deceased, reported the crime. On the morning of September 25th, while en route to a job in Wanzhou, Tian Tejie confessed to his colleagues, "I killed Cai Jun." On the afternoon of September 25th, following a court summons, he again confessed, "I killed Cai Jun." On the 26th, he was taken into custody for criminal behavior and on the 30th of the same month he was officially arrested and sent

to the Wanzhou lockup¹ and indicted by the Wanzhou prosecutor on the charge of willful murder. For the first trial, Ren Minjie from the Yi'an Legal Office in Chongqing was appointed as counsel for the defendant.

The preliminary hearing of Tian Tejie's trial for the murder of Cai Jun began on October 16, 1998 in Wanzhou Intermediate People's Court. After a day's trial, the court determined that the accused had "committed murder in the act of committing a robbery," and sentenced him to death. When this news reached Wushan, far from treating the murderer with scorn and derision, the residents began a rescue attempt of an unprecedented scale.

An extraordinary phenomenon such as this hadn't occurred since the founding of new China. It attracted the attention of the Director of the Research Centre in Criminal Law, Chen Guangzhong², professor at the China

¹ The "lockup" or "detention house" is where suspects are detained while awaiting trial.

² Professor Chen Guangzhong is also the president of the Procedural Law Association of the China Society, lifetime professor of the Chinese University of Political Science and Law and PhD supervisor. Other major positions Professor Chen holds include: member of the second, third and fourth Law Appraisal Groups for the Office of the Academic Degrees Committee of the State Council, vice chief of the Law Planning Panel of the National Fund of Philosophy and Social Science, expert adviser to the Chinese Supreme Court of the People and member of the Advisory Committee of the Chinese Supreme Procurator of the People.



University of Political Science and Law, who thought that it was not a simple murder case. In order to clarify the background of the case, and in particular the motive for the murder, Professor Chen engaged the hardheaded senior barrister from Chongqing, Zhao Zelong, who had a reputation for his daring defenses of the common people.

Zhao Zelong, born in Chongqing in 1941, was a professor in the Law Faculty of the Southwest University of Political Science and Law and also an advisor to the Chongqing municipal government. As a lawyer with a great deal of influence in Chongqing, he was commissioned by the All China Lawyers' Association to be counsel for the defense in the appeal.

According to the legal records, the details of the case were as follows:

On the evening of September 22, 1998, the accused went to the top of the Seed Planting Company building in the Wushan Government compound. From there it was possible to see across the way into the county government staff living quarters. The accused, having confirmed that the murder target Governor Cai Jun was resting at home at the time, went downstairs, walked into the residential quarters and up to Flat 401 where the Governor lived. After putting on a full mask and gloves, the accused pulled out a pistol and knocked at the door. The door was opened quickly and the accused stepped immediately into the room, the gun pressed to the body of the victim. The accused paid no attention to the questions put by the victim, but only ordered, "Don't move," and also pushed Cai into the bedroom he shared with his wife, Wu Nanfei. The victim did everything he could to pull the gun away from his assailant and at the same time tried to open the drawer of a desk near the corner of the room. The masked man pulled Cai Jun away from the drawer and then forced him

into the corner, threatening, "If you move again, I'll kill your baby!" At that time, Wu Nanfei and their baby, still in swaddling clothes, were lying on the bed. The victim picked up a flowerpot and smashed it on the accused's pistol. The accused couldn't help raising his right hand, and shortly afterward there was a sound of a gunshot. The two men looked at each other momentarily. The victim again lunged toward his assailant, who took a step back and there were more gunshots. The accused fired three shots in succession into the chest of the victim, hitting him right in the heart. The victim collapsed slowly to the floor. The accused turned and left the Cai apartment in a composed manner. The sound of gunfire didn't attract the attention of the neighbors who lived nearby.

On the afternoon of September 25th, Tian Tejie was summoned to court by the county public security bureau, and on the 26th was sent to Wanzhou. When interrogated, Tian Tejie calmly replied, "I killed Cai Jun."

* * *

I first learned about this case in 2001 while in the Three Gorges area of Wushan. I had hired a small boat to go to Qingshitan (the Bluestone Strands) in the depths of the Wu Gorge to do some interviews, and on the way there I chatted with the owner of the boat, Zheng Chong. We hadn't spoken more than a few words when he brought up the murder of County Governor Cai Jun. He said that in the first trial the verdict was murder, and the appeal still hadn't begun. After hearing this I was shocked: a county governor had been murdered—something unheard of. So I stopped talking about anything else and concentrated on getting all the details from him. It was a shame that the boat owner just kept shaking his head, unable to exactly explain all the whys and wherefores.



He said, “It didn’t appear in the papers or on the radio, so how could ordinary people understand something so momentous? The people of Wushan just knew that the criminal investigator, Tian Tejie, was ridding society of an evil.” I asked him what the public appraisal of Cai Jun’s governance was and he answered that he only knew that during the floods in the summer of 1998, all the other county governors tried to do what they could, and Cai Jun was the only one off traveling abroad having fun. Also, quite a lot of money from the Wushan Tobacco Company had disappeared into his pocket. Everyone hated him and knew he’d been murdered, and were secretly very pleased about it.

The next day on the way back from Qingshitan, I wanted to get in touch with Tian Tejie’s father as soon as possible. I phoned him a few times but he never answered—perhaps he didn’t want to meet a reporter? Perhaps he had nothing to say? Later I found out through someone in the Wushan Public Security Bureau that the Chongqing lawyer Zhao Zelong was to represent Tian in the appeal. Even if I couldn’t talk to his family, perhaps his lawyer could explain the circumstances of the case. So I took a speed boat to Chongqing straightaway.

I met the barrister Zhao Zelong in a teahouse on the banks of the Jialing River. We chatted the entire day. Something he said made an enormous impression on me: “an unsettled case was closed through force.” I never forgot that.

* * *

This is Zhao Zelong’s narration of the events:

When I took on this case, what most perplexed me was why a criminal investigator would kill someone. Before this, Tian Tejie had been an assiduous policeman, who was not only outstanding in his field but had also won awards. Once in 1995, he actually jumped out

of a building in pursuit of a man who had assaulted someone while drunk, and pinned him down. In May of 1998, a man trying to resist arrest had strapped explosives to himself and threatened that whoever tried to arrest him would go down with him, but Tian Tejie and the head of the vice squad both leapt up and captured the man before he could react.

Logically speaking, Tian Tejie had no clear motive for this offense. The written statement from the first trial stated that he was under much stress: his parents disapproved of his marriage, the Internet café he was managing was losing money, and his work unit was pressing him to contribute more toward the Housing Establishment Fund³. So pressured, he came up with the idea of robbing the Governor, Cai Jun. But would this explanation hold water? If we say that plunder was the motive, the testimony of Cai Jun’s wife, Wu Nanfei, states that from the time he entered the house until the time he murdered Cai Jun, he never once said a single word about money. Besides which, at the time there was a sum of about twenty to thirty thousand yuan in the desk drawer that Cai Jun had pulled open but Tian hadn’t touched a cent of it, so how could robbery have been the motive?

Once the verdict of the first trial had been handed down, Tian’s father met with him to implore him to appeal. Tian was unmoved. Sobbing, his father said, “Son, you’re a good person, so why did you have to kill someone? I can’t let you accept the death penalty for no good reason. If you die, we have to really know why. Son, I want you to appeal.” That was the first time father and son met, but they didn’t go immediately to ask for an appeal and resolve the issue. The next day, Tian’s counsel at the first trial, Ren Minjie, talked with Tian

³ The Housing Establishment Fund is run within an organization (in this case the county police bureau). Staff make payments to the fund and the money raised is used to build housing for the contributors.



again, repeatedly advising him that if he didn't appeal, he would hurt his parents very deeply and they would suffer on account of him for the rest of their lives.

In the end, this convinced Tian to put his thumbprint⁴ on the appeal document.

When I took over this case, I went on a special trip to Chongqing to see Tian. He was wearing the complete prisoner's outfit and sat opposite me with a pale face after being brought out calmly under escort. I asked him his opinion of the verdict from the first trial and he was silent for some time before replying, "I've admitted to murder but it wasn't in order to steal. I did commit murder, but there was no reason for it, there was no purpose to it."

However, in the testimony taken shortly after he was arrested, Tian had confessed that he had long had a motive for killing Cai and had kept him under surveillance for some time before the murder. But after seeing me, he suddenly retracted his testimony, especially the concrete details about the stages of the murder. He explained it as follows:

At the time I wasn't thinking of killing him, but when he tried to grab me, only then did I load the pistol and told him that I had a gun, to scare him off. I never expected him to try and grab me again. I got a fright and pressed the trigger. At the time I wasn't aware of the fact that he had seized my right hand with his hand and when I stepped back, the gun went off. He never let go, he kept pulling and the gun kept firing. When I heard it go off, I didn't really realize what it was, but I was afraid.

According to the circumstances of the crime scene, Tian's explanation that the motive wasn't robbery is believable. But I still thought

⁴ A thumbprint is the equivalent of a signature and is standard on legal documents in China.

that even if things happened just as Tian said they did, why hadn't he gone to someone else's house? Why had he gone specifically to Cai Jun's house? So I asked again. Tian replied, "Why? Because I had a dream, and in the dream Cai Jun was doing all sorts of evil things, so I killed him." Tian Tejie's answer came as a big surprise to me, because this response completely contradicted his earlier statement that he "wasn't thinking of killing him" and that "there was no reason for it and no purpose to it." Now, his murder of Cai Jun seemed to have a strong sense of purpose. It seemed to be closely related to something that was going on in the background at the time. One of the first things that I chanced upon, and something that also affected Professor Chen Guangzhong, was the petition written by the retired cadres of Wushan County entitled, "Submission to the High Court of Chongqing," and signed by more than 2000 people in the county. It seemed that the head of the county, Cai Jun, had incurred the wrath of god and the people. The petition read as follows:

On behalf of the 580,000 people of Wushan County we request mercy to be shown to Tian Tejie. We beg that the high court will be lenient in its treatment of a policeman who is good to the people, Tian Tejie. The public prosecutor's office has claimed that the murder of the County Governor has had a bad effect on the reservoir area of Chongqing. But this is not the case. In the hearts and minds of the people of Wushan, there wasn't one who disliked Tian Tejie. On the contrary, the people really sympathize with him...

However, this wasn't the substance of my defense of Tian Tejie. My responsibility was to investigate thoroughly the truth behind the murder. Why would such an outstanding criminal investigator kill someone who was unarmed?

Tian had dreamt about Cai Jun, but what sort of dreams did Tian have about him?



According to responses to questions put to Tian Tejie at the time, they were mainly the following:

In the first dream it was about 1996 when I first saw Cai Jun on the road to Dachang. He was calling out to a member of the Public Security Bureau at the same time as getting into a car. I noticed that he had two very ugly protruding front teeth. I couldn't help shuddering. Wasn't this the hateful person I had seen in a dream? Asking some other people who he was straight away, I found out he was the Governor.

In the second dream, Cai Jun had come out of the county government offices in a car driving in the direction of Longmen. I was riding my motorbike behind him. Someone gave me a knife and asked me to kill him. I immediately caught up with him and killed him. My whole body was covered in sweat and inwardly I had a sort of relaxed feeling that I'd never experienced before.

In the third dream, Cai Jun had just come out of an Internet café. Someone asked me to kill him, but I said I didn't have a knife, so they gave me one saying, "You must kill him as he's your arch enemy. As long as he lives you won't be able to hold up your head." But that time I didn't manage to kill Cai Jun, instead he grabbed hold of both of my hands so I couldn't move a step. After waking up the next day I felt extraordinarily sad. I didn't speak to anyone for the entire day, and didn't reply even when someone called out to me.

And in the fourth dream, Cai Jun raped my girlfriend right in front of my eyes. That was the trigger for me shooting him.

Tian spoke about his feelings following the murder:

My main feeling was one of total relaxation from head to foot. I felt like a man who can breathe his first breath of fresh air after

being locked in a very muggy place. I was now totally free, as one feels after being tightly tied up and then suddenly released. After feeling like I had millions of ants biting me all over, there suddenly wasn't even one ant left on me.

Tian also said that after the killing he wasn't at all afraid, as if his physical body had been spurred on to do it by someone else.

It was as if I were in hot pursuit of a criminal or carrying out the death sentence on an evildoer. When I killed him, it didn't seem like it was me doing it, it was as if my mind was getting instructions from someone else. On September 25th in the lockup, I saw that everyone was discussing Cai Jun and the fact that I had killed him. To confirm what I was hearing I turned round and banged my head on the wall a few times, which was when I realized that I had really killed someone. I don't regret having killed Cai Jun. The business between us has now been settled. In a past life he probably killed me, so in this life I had to kill him.

The difference between Tian's early and later depositions was too great: a dream was the deciding factor in whether Cai Jun lived or died. One must admit that this was a strange case.

Just looking at the dreams in isolation, the logic in them was fairly standard, but they contradicted parts of the case. Earlier on he had said he didn't understand why he had murdered Cai Jun. Later he said he had to kill and subsequently had a sensation of immense relaxation. This tallied with the symptoms of depression. Therefore I submitted a document immediately to the Chongqing High Court requesting an expert psychiatric assessment of Tian Tejie. Chen Guangzhong and a number of other professors had in fact also recommended doing so. I thought that the psychiatric assessment could be the determining factor in whether the verdict might be overturned in the appeal.



In the spring of 1999, the whole of Wushan was talking about and waiting for the outcome of the appeal. As his legal counsel, I felt a deep sense of responsibility. On March 25th, I submitted an application to the High Court of Chongqing requesting an expert psychiatric assessment of Tian Tejie. On April 14th, I was unexpectedly informed that the court had carried out a psychiatric assessment of Tian on March 20th—in other words, five days before I had made the application—and they now produced a copy of the Psychiatric Assessment Report. It seems that, as early as March 16th, the Chongqing High Court had issued a letter requesting a psychiatric assessment of Tian. This was not what I had expected. I also remembered that on March 23rd when I had gone to the Chongqing lockup to see Tian, he had said to me, “Two days ago someone from the court came to ask me a few things, but apart from that no one else has come to see me.” Was that supposed to be the assessment?

I believe that the Chongqing High Court’s psychiatric assessment of Tian was very irresponsible. In the first place, I was the defendant’s appeal lawyer, so legally speaking I was the only person who had the right to request that the High Court do a psychiatric assessment of my client. After my request had been approved, I should also have had the right to choose a psychiatrist to conduct the assessment. The fact that the High Court had made the decision and organized the assessment, without prior consultation with me, the appeal counsel for the defense, was in contravention of the spirit of the law. Moreover, I could see from the Psychiatric Assessment Report I had been shown, that it was based solely on the March 23rd “talk” that Tian had told me about. Of his physical condition the report simply stated, “Healthy, normal.” It did not include anything more specific or any facts. The space allocated for writing laboratory test results had been left totally blank. In the space headed “Conversation With the Person Being Assessed” was written, “Of a clear mind, speaks normally,

no abnormal behavior in the lockup.” The place of assessment was stated as “Chongqing Police Watch House.” The final conclusion? “There is not sufficient evidence of any mental disorder; capable of taking criminal responsibility.”

Faced with this kind of judicial “assessment” my only reaction was indignation and helpless anger; it was clear that the verdict of the appeal had already been decided by the assessment report. Not surprisingly, on April 2nd, the summation at the appeal trial stated,

This court considers that the facts of the first trial have been verified, that the correct laws were applied, that the penalty was appropriate and that proper judicial procedure was followed. We accepted the request of Tian Tejie and his counsel that he be allowed a judicial psychiatric assessment. Having been assessed, this court concludes that the accused, Tian Tejie, has not shown sufficient evidence of a psychiatric disorder. He is capable of taking criminal responsibility for the murder. The court does not accept the plea by his counsel that it was inappropriate to sentence the accused for murder.

After the verdict was handed down, I asked for an explanation of the procedures from the judges, one of whom replied that nothing could be done about it, that the decision had been made by “higher authorities.”

As the legal counsel for the defense, what I most hoped to see was a just verdict. Regardless of anything else, the life of Tian Tejie should be respected. This respect entitled him to a fair psychiatric assessment, including having the assessment carried out by professionals in a scientific manner. If the proper legal procedures had been followed and it had then been proven that Tian had committed the crime deliberately and of his own volition, it would still have been possible to issue a verdict of willful homicide. A one-



off chat is surely not an assessment. This presumptuous behavior is typical of the sort of disregard for the law so common today.

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On March 17, 1999, a gunshot by the Yangtze River finished a young life, that of the 26-year-old Tian Tejie.

After the execution, Tian's father received a notice from the Chongqing High Court:

The body is to be cremated locally and the ashes are not to be taken away. If the ashes are taken back to Wushan, the perpetrator will be liable for all the consequences.

Tian's father didn't say a word. He cremated his son in Wanzhou, and with the ashes in both hands, took a boat downstream to Wushan County, in spite of people urging him not to do so.

"...a gunshot by the Yangtze river finished a young life, that of the 26-year-old Tian Tejie."

Local people from Wushan heard about it ahead of time and thousands of them went spontaneously to the harbor, lining the streets of the town to welcome this well-loved man home. In this way they paid their silent respects to the young hero and demonstrated their hatred of corrupt officials who oppress the people. How many of these people knew about the petition to the Central Party Disciplinary Committee, written by the retired cadres of Wushan County. The petition asking for leniency for Tian Tejie was also an impeachment listing 15 crimes describing how Cai Jun became filthy rich so fast.

Here is the petition:

Central Party Disciplinary Committee:

We are the retired cadres from Wushan County (in Three Gorges reservoir area) of Chongqing Municipality. We have, time and again, reported to various departments of the Chongqing Municipal Government and the Central Government on the illegal activities engaged in by Cai Jun, the late Governor of Wushan County, who was killed by an enraged local man. Cai abused his position in charge of population relocation and rebuilding the new town, wantonly embezzling relocation funds, receiving bribes, obtaining official positions by paying for them and selling government posts. The investigators who were sent down from Chongqing city and Wanzhou Prefecture probably made some cursory inquiries about the situation. However, they were so closely supervised and extravagantly entertained that they only

saw and heard the ostentatious behavior and boastful hype of the corrupt officials who looked after them extremely well. Ordinary people, or people who knew the inside story, had no opportunity to meet the investigators or report on the real situation.

In order to combat criminal activities and expose the corruption of officials like Cai Jun, the Governor of Wushan County, we are writing to you in the hope that the Central Party Disciplinary Committee will send an honest person to investigate. We



need someone of integrity, someone able to imitate Emperor Qianlong's⁵ style of investigation by going among the people in plain clothes. That would bring justice to the people.

Here are the facts as we know them:

1. During the time when Cai Jun was the Commander charged with rebuilding the county, he brought with him to Wushan many relatives and friends from his hometown, Kaixian. Having given them full control of many building contracts, other people couldn't get contracts even after trying all sorts of strategies and giving bribes of money and presents. One of his relatives, a very rich man in Wushan called Boss Xiong, was so rich just because he was related to Cai Jun and had over 10 million yuan in the bank alone. Boss Xiong led a dissolute life, openly keeping two wives, and probably other women that no one knew about.
2. Whoever came to Wushan from outside to get some of the county rebuilding contracts had to give presents or money to Cai Jun or there was no way they could get work. Whenever the Governor's name was mentioned, the contractors involved in rebuilding the new county gritted their teeth in disgust. They all asked the same thing: in what way was Governor Cai anything like a Communist Party cadre?
3. Governor Cai introduced some high-quality tree saplings into Wushan and gave his relatives the contract for the planting project. In the end, very few saplings were planted and to date none of them have survived, but the 200,000 yuan commission went into the pockets of Cai, his relatives and friends. The people in the small towns of Qingfeng and Tonggu in Wushan County reacted strongly to what had happened—they were extremely unhappy about it.
4. Governor Cai, in his official capacity, imported three ostriches and kept them in the dyke area between Guandu and Dangyang. He invested one million yuan of public funds in that county enterprise without making any profit at all. However, the 100,000 yuan commission to arrange the project disappeared into Governor Cai's pocket very early on.
5. The villagers of Beishi near east Chongqing often wrote to the higher authorities complaining about relocation issues and the situation they were in. When the Central Government sent investigators to Beishi, the Wushan County leaders said that the people who were writing the reports were being rebellious. As a result, a thousand local cadres were selected from county government departments and sent to Beishi, along with armed policemen, to confine the people in each household to their homes and to prohibit them from approaching the investigators without first obtaining permission. People got their freedom back only after the investigators left. Everyone was very angry, and even the guards thought it was unfair. They had no way to express themselves but by airing their grievances to the torrential Yangtze River.
6. After the Governor was killed, his family and the house were put under surveillance in order to crack the murder case. Thousands of Chinese yuan and US dollars were found in his home and office. There was also gold and silver jewellery everywhere, and a steel safe which could not be opened. As for the value of his assets, the county administration instructed that there was to be no leak to the outside world about this.
7. The trail of evidence of the Governor's corruption has been clearly exposed. But at the moment, all his money and valuables

5 Emperor Qianlong reigned from 1735 to 1796 when he abdicated in favor of his son, but unofficially retained power until his death in 1799. He was rumored to have used undercover investigators to flush out corruption.



are in the hands of his wife and family and nobody is allowed to talk about his wealth. Nevertheless, the 580,000 people of Wushan County demand that the Governor's assets be thoroughly verified and liquidated. A Governor's monthly salary is 400 yuan, but day in and day out Governor Cai appeared in expensive restaurants and venues of entertainment to enjoy women and spend lavishly on his own pleasures. Did his family have a factory to print money?

8. In July and August of that year,

wife gave birth and a list of amounts of money given by the contractors who were involved in rebuilding the new county capital to replace the one flooded by the Three Gorges reservoir. The minimum amount was for over 10,000 yuan. The booklet is evidence of Cai Jun's crimes and a good start for a proper investigation by the Central Investigation Committee.

10. Tian Tejie was an outstanding criminal investigator who had won several awards for tracking down criminals. He was a man of integrity and valued justice, so he

“...even death could not expiate Cai Jun's crimes.”

continuously heavy rainstorms threatened Wushan County with dangerous flooding just as county governors were scheduled to take an overseas trip that had been organised by the municipality. In the light of the seriousness of the flood threat, other governors voluntarily gave up this travel opportunity. However, our county Governor Cai decided to go anyway, even in the face of the imminent disaster. As a result, Wushan suffered great losses owing to the lack of leadership in the fight against the floods. The Governor's trip abroad at this crucial juncture made a very bad impression in Wushan. The “valuable experience” he brought back from overseas was yet another 10,000 US dollars in his own pocket.

9. After Governor Cai was murdered, an account book was found in his home, listing two major accounts. The first one was a list of names and photos of those who had given him bribes of money and presents for the purchase of departmental or bureau level positions which should have been decided by general elections in the county. The largest amounts were for 60,000 to 70,000 yuan and the smallest amounts were for 10,000 yuan. Another entry is a record of the presents that the heads of departments gave after Cai's

could not bear to see Governor Cai and the like spend public funds—the result of the people's sweat and toil—illegally on their lavish lifestyle. He decided to kill Cai on behalf of the 580,000 people in Wushan. To this day, from government offices to factories and farms, people are still talking about it and they are all saying the same thing: that even death could not expiate all Cai Jun's crimes and that Tian Tejie was the hero of Wushan. We can see clearly how the people felt about Cai Jun, when a murdered Governor continues to be loathed while his killer is respected as the people's hero. It reminds us of the respect paid to the People's Liberation Army when it fought the Kuomintang during the War of Liberation⁶. We would not have believed that a few corrupt leading officials would arouse such hatred from the people.

11. In the last two years, the people in the Lesser Three Gorges area in Wushan paid over 70 million yuan annually into the county administration's coffers. All

6 In 1946, the People's Liberation Army marched into Sichuan province to liberate the locals from the much larger and more powerful Kuomintang Army. Known as the War of Liberation, it is considered an important battle in China's democratic revolution.



this taxpayers' money was spent on a few meetings and nothing was left to do anything for the benefit of the county.

12. Last year, the Wushan Tobacco Company was charged by the public prosecutor for tax evasion of 15 million yuan. The county government intervened and the tax inspectors, who were paid 300,000 yuan in one hit, dropped the charge without making the truth known, so national assets worth 15 million yuan went down the drain. The case files are still kept in the tax inspectors' office and if you sent a person in authority to investigate, the case could be solved.
13. At the moment, the Wushan lockup is holding somebody in custody who is opposed to the way the county administrators are handling the Three Gorges dam population relocation. He wants to go to Beijing to complain but the county administration is afraid he will make trouble and has kept him in the lockup for an extended period.
14. Leaders in Wushan have not built roads but have instead spent money buying luxury cars. They have bought over 100 top-of-the-line cars such as Toyota Land Cruisers, Mercedes Benz', Crowns and Mitsubishis, plus dozens of extra ones donated, free of charge, by Guangdong Province.⁷ Whenever high-up officials came to visit, the local leaders would bring out all the fancy cars to ingratiate themselves with their superiors as much as they could. Ordinary people could do nothing but let out a deep sigh. What sort of way is this for the Communist Party to act?
15. Governor Cai came from Kaixian

⁷ It was national policy that rich provinces and municipalities in coastal areas should support the rebuilding of the Three Gorges reservoir area, whether with financing or equipment. So in some cases, cars were contributed to the counties that would be affected by the dam, especially in the early stages of the population resettlement.

County. When Cai's father died last year, a motorcade of over 30 cars carried officials from the Wushan County Party Committee, the County Government and various departments and bureaus who all went to pay tribute to him—it was quite a spectacle. Donations amounting to 200,000 yuan were received. The whole thing made a very negative impression on local people, who were furious but didn't dare say anything.

16. Secretary Liu⁸, we didn't dare to inform you directly of the situation and this letter had to be posted from outside Wushan because if it were to be found, it could have disastrous consequences for us. We are risking our lives to inform you of the real facts in Wushan. We earnestly hope you will feel that what is happening in Wushan merits your serious consideration.

⁸ Secretary Liu was the head of the Central Party Disciplinary Committee at the time.

"The Wushan Governor's Murder" is the first in a series of oral histories from China's Three Gorges region.

Banned and famed Chinese environmentalist and journalist Dai Qing has organized a team of journalists to record a remarkable collection of oral histories from the riverside towns and villages affected by the Three Gorges dam on China's Yangtze River. *Three Gorges Probe* is proud to bring you these uncensored, touching and often shocking stories. Those forcibly displaced by the world's largest hydroelectric project have been denied a voice for too long. This collection gives it back.

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