Transcultural Intellectuals Throughout the Cultural Revolution in China

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“If poisonous weeds are not removed, scented flowers cannot grow.”
- Mao Zedong

**Summary/Overview**

Nien Cheng and Yang Xian Yi were intellectuals that lived through The Great Proletariat Cultural Revolution of China that lasted from 1966-1976. Being of upper class, educated abroad, and transcultural, they were victims of the People’s Communist party’s regime under Chairman Mao Zedong, who aimed to purge the country of all capitalistic fervor. Nien Cheng and Yangxianyi both tapped into different western and Chinese values during their oppression and imprisonment throughout then cultural revolution.

“Otherwise, all the prisoners were treated right. Those who were ill and got a fever were sent to the clinic. The guards were very disciplined. They had strict orders never to beat or kick prisoners, nor to commit and form of bodily assault.

“All Chinese have this feeling of attachment to our native country. No matter how far we travel or how long we are absent, eventually we want to return to die in China.”

Conclusions

These two intellectuals individually took different approaches against the political pressure they were receiving to survive, both tapping into their transcultural wisdom and intellect aiding them in their survival. Niencheng used her Christianity, dichotomy of right and wrong, and love for her daughter. YangXianyi tapped into more Communism and Chinese social order harmonious relationships with his home country. Whether a western or Chinese audience, all can take inspiration from their determination and will to live.