

A Catastrophe Called the Cultural Revolution

By Ji-Li Jiang

A revolution happened from 1966-1976, led by Chairman Mao. For some, it was the best thing that happened to China, but not for me.

It started when Chairman Mao wished to prevent 'capitalism' in his country. He began a revolution. This article is in part about him, his armies, and how they all came together in a catastrophe called the Cultural Revolution. I'm writing it, from my home in America, so people will know what I have experienced for ten years of my childhood. This revolution destroyed many spirits, but killed even more lives. Here's what happened and how.



CHAIRMAN MAO WISHED TO ELIMINATE THE "FOUR OLDS"

Chairman Mao wished to eliminate the 'Four Olds'; Old ideas,

old culture, old customs, old habits. With people following these principals, he would have a new China, or so he thought. Sadly, like most human world ideas, there's always something unjust, or there's some other problem with it. For the Cultural Revolution, it was unjust and discriminatory.

People wearing or showing rich things, were viewed as bad and counterrevolutionary. Even people with a "bad family" history, like mine, example, a landlord as a grandfather, or a teacher as a mother.

Having valuable household things, such as heirlooms, you were seen as rich and cruel.

My family had to paint over gold covered cars in black, and throw away priceless silk dresses, with many precious stones and pearls.

Such valuables were taken by the people who patrolled and gave out punishment and orders. They were called Red Guards.

The punishments ranged from humiliating talks with Red Guards, (called 'thoroughly remolding'), to climbing factory chimneys, (which are scolding hot when in use), to torture or public hangings. All of which I've either experienced, heard of, or seen.



PROTESTERS MARCH THE STREETS

However, not only the Red Guards involved in the humiliating. The students of all the schools, instead of learning, wrote 'Da-zi-boas'. Letters made to criticized one and all.

The letters criticized teachers, students, and even residents of the town, for being "unjust", and favoring students. In my case, claiming I have an intimate relationship with my teacher. It was horrible.

Red Guards were the Chinese military of Chairman Mao. After a while, high school and college students could volunteer as well. After that some of my classmates and many others, wanted to be Red Guards, but were too young. That's how the Red Successors started in younger schools.

These groups conducted 'searches'. It's when they did a raid.

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Reasons being that the objects taken were of bourgeoisie living. In other words, too rich.



SUPPORT FOR MAO

They announced the searches with a big gong that would sound, telling others and warning everyone at the same time.

Sometimes, they would do two searches in one building, one after the other.

Such occurrences were called "searches in passing". That's exactly what happened to me.

They went through all my personal things, and took my stamp collection I've had for years! My brother and sisters were crying. Everyone was. Not the

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Red Guards.

None of this ended until Chairman Mao's death in 1976.

From this devastating life experience, I have learned much of the good and bad of this world. How people can suffer greater than imaginable, endure longer and actually recover. It's amazing! I've learned to accept what has happened to me in my childhood, but I pray to the gods every night, may this never happen again.



JI-LI JIANG WAS THE AUTHOR OF "RED SCARF GIRL"

