



子. 棍
子頭
兒出
孝

Gunzi tour chu xiao zi.

From the end of a stick comes a filial son.

- Chinese Peasant Saying.

Chapter Forty-Seven

The Ax Falls

A few days before Christmas in 1964, Kingman Brewster made good his threat to cancel the contract for training Air Force students at Yale. However, the circumstances were unusual, to say the least. For him, perhaps, it was a well-chosen moment, but for everyone at IFEL it brought about a very bleak Christmas.

During the previous year the Defense Department, to coordinate more effectively its overall language training requirements, had established a new agency, the Defense Language Institute (DLI). It was originally staffed by a commandant, a full colonel in the Army. Under him were a small number of military officers who represented the different branches of the military services, as well as a handful of civilians.

The Navy Language School at the Anacostia Naval Annex in Washington housed DLI Headquarters and the East Coast branch and the Army Language School in Monterey was named the West Coast branch. In addition, there was an English-language school in San Antonio for officers from allied nations, as well as

numerous small language schools overseas. The whole thing came about as a bit of a surprise, but for us at Yale, the only real change was that we now had to deal primarily with people in Washington and the Army, as DLI's executive agent, instead of Air Force officials. As a matter of fact, the Air Force and the other services from that point on had little say in the matter of how or where their students were to be trained.

Our Christmas break had started, and I was alone in the office one day catching up on some work when I got a telephone call from the commandant of DLI in Washington asking me if I could come down the next day for a conference. In strictest confidence he told me that in an attempt to save money, they were seriously considering pulling all language training for Air Force students out of the various universities and moving them to the DLI facilities in Monterey. He wanted me to give serious thought to accompanying the program to Monterey, should it move.

In the back of my mind I still remembered Mr. Brewster's statement two years previously about the inevitable termination of the program at IFEL, and it had become increasingly obvious that it would come about sooner or later. So, even though the news from DLI was unexpected, I was not surprised, given the overall controls that were already being exercised from Washington. One side or the other was going to have to give.

I wasn't happy about the thought of the program being moved to Monterey; nonetheless, I left for Washington the next day with mixed feelings, aware that our days at IFEL were numbered. As I thought over the probability of the return to Monterey, my experiences 15 years earlier at the Army's Monterey school made me seriously doubt that, should the course be moved there, it would prove to be successful. I thought it highly unlikely we could ever be afforded the same freedom in Monterey that we experienced at Yale, but I intended to make that freedom of action a strong point in any negotiations I might have with DLI in Washington.

When I reached Washington and was invited in for a private talk with the commandant, I found myself having an increasingly difficult time following his line of thought. He appeared to be talking about something entirely different from what he had said to me on the telephone the previous day. I finally asked him, "Do you know something that I don't? What you are talking about seems to bear no relationship to what the DLI intends doing."

For a moment the colonel was taken aback, then he blurted out, "Of course! They said you weren't to be told, so you obviously know nothing about it. They were afraid that if you were informed, it would get back to the Chinese staff at Yale and then there might be serious problems."

He went on to tell me that, since talking with me on the phone the previous day, he had received a phone call from Mr. Brewster telling him that the contract with the Air Force would not be renewed, and DLI had been told that it should make plans for withdrawing the program as soon as possible. He, in turn, had not let on to Mr. Brewster that he already intended to do just exactly that.

It was now a whole new ball game. Now it was not the Army's decision to move the program, but Yale's. From Yale's point of view DLI's hand had been

forced, and so, to a certain extent, had mine. Little as I wanted to return to Monterey I decided then and there that for the sake of the program, and in order to try and retain its integrity, I would do so. After briefly discussing it with the commandant, I told him I would go, but under certain conditions.

I insisted that in order to maintain the current high degree of success our program enjoyed, it should be treated as an entirely separate department from the existing Chinese department there. I also insisted that as far as it was possible to do so, I would be permitted to take my own staff with me, depending, of course, on their individual desires, and in the event that none of my Chinese staff wanted to go to Monterey, I would have the authority to choose my own Chinese staff once we reached Monterey.

I further told him that, knowing well the inner workings of the Monterey school and the civil service system, I would go only if I were given the rank of a GS-13, which was one grade higher than all the other department heads. That demand was not for financial considerations, but because I wanted to be able to have direct access to the commandant of the Monterey branch without having to go through someone higher in rank than myself. Without that, I felt sure the program would have no chance of success.

To my surprise, and without the slightest hesitation, he agreed to all my demands (not that it did me much good in the end), and we began discussing the logistics of the move. I wanted the facilities for the program to remain as similar as possible to what we had at Yale, including at least two large language laboratories and an auditorium, preferably in a building remote from the existing Chinese department, since ours was a totally different sort of program. He told me they already had a building picked out for our use, and it would be converted in any way that I wished. What more could I ask?

Because remodeling the building and equipping the language laboratories would take some time, we realized it would obviously take the better part of a year to make the move. In addition, to preserve the continuity of the program and meet the needs of the Air Force, we would have to gradually phase out the three classes then in session at IFEL. We would have to take aboard the class already selected for January, and possibly another one in April. Then at some point we would have to start a new class in Monterey to avoid

