

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

Zhou En Lai was the leader who occupied the top leadership of the Chinese Communist Party for the longest period of time. He entered the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party in 1927 until the end of his life, never leaving the top position, and was appointed a member of the Political Bureau for 49 years, a member of the standing committee of the Political Bureau for 43 years, and the premier of the State Council for 27 years.

Zhou En Lai's diplomatic career had almost been equivalent with his Premiership for a period of time too. If the advent of the PRC government, the international meetings which he attended on behalf of the CPC Central Committee, the long-term negotiations with the KMT, and his time as a CPC Representative stationed in the country to serve as president, were all taken into consideration, his actual "diplomacy" career was even longer. He had a famous saying, "Diplomacy is no small matter (外交无小事)." ¹ He meant that even small things may have significant consequences. In February 1958, he handed over the post of Foreign Minister to Chen Yi. Later, he remained concerned about foreign affairs and had frequent visits abroad to meet with foreign dignitaries and friends.

He had an excellent quality of diplomat, in addition to the instruments of grace and eloquence, and he was almost always a model of humility. He also possessed a kind character and this helped him to win the respect of the Chinese Communists, the New China's (新中国) government. Foreign leaders also admired Zhou Enlai's diplomatic talent. He believed diplomacy was of great importance, and thus held it in very high regard. Although China's Cultural Revolution period (1966-1976) (中国文化

¹ Zhou Enlai (ed.), *The Collectanea of Zhou Enlai's Diplomatic*, Vol. I & III, (Beijing: the Central Literature Publishing, 1990), p. 366. (周恩来(著),《周恩来外交文选》(第一、三卷),中央文献出版社,1990,第366页。)

大革命时期) affected the domestic political and economic conditions, China had really begun to exert their influence in the world. With Premier Zhou En Lai's full direction to the diplomatic work, when China and the majority of countries had established the diplomatic relations and restored China's legitimate seat in the United Nations, the normalization of relations with the US and Japan could occur. In May 1972, when Zhou En Lai had a medical check up, cancer cells were found in his urine, and this was subsequently diagnosed as bladder cancer. His ill health left him weighing only 30.5 kilograms and he suffered enormous political pressure from inside and outside of the Chinese Communist Party to continue to shoulder the heavy work that ordinary people would find unbearable. Moreover, he was supported by Mao Zedong to recommend Deng Xiaoping to return to the leadership of the party and nation post and to gradually become his successor, making a significant contribution to China's future and destiny.

Zhou Enlai was hospitalized from June 1, 1974 to his January 8, 1976 death. He underwent a large number of operations; so many that it was averaged out to be about 40 days to one operation. As long as his body could support him, he continued to do persistent work. During this period, except for marking and dealing with documents he was given, Zhou En Lai was still drafting the documents by himself. He conversed with the central persons in charge 161 times, central department and the parties concerned people in charge 55 times, and met 63 batches of foreign guests, talked to accompanying people 17 times. He convened meeting at the hospital 20 times, out of the hospital meetings 20 times, and visited someone or called someone to visit 7 times.²

At 09:57 on January 8, 1976, Premier Zhou Enlai passed away in Beijing. When the news came people felt an incomparable sadness. A telegram came praising the work he had done, and the Chinese people began to fondly remember as well as mourn his loss (**Picture 6.1**). His ability, wisdom, and personal character were known

² Deng Zaijun and Zhou Erjun (ed.), *Zhou Enlai 100 Years* (Jiang Su Literature Publishing, 1998), pp. 346. (邓在军、周尔均(编),《百年周恩来》,江苏文艺出版社,1998,第346页。)

to all, whether it be Chinese, Thai, Asian, African, or Latin American. His care for, and contribution to, the people of the world are irreplaceable.



敬爱的周总理，山河与您同在，人民和您共存。

Picture 6.1 The Chinese people deep-felt mourned for Premier Zhou Enlai's death.

In consideration of Zhou Enlai's character, morality, and achievement, on the day January 8, 1976, the headquarters of United Nations which was based in New York dropped the flag to half-mast for Zhou Enlai. The United Nations had never done this for any chief of state in the world since the UN had been established in 1945. What the UN did made some countries dissatisfied. Their diplomats gathered in the square in front of the United Nations, and spoke indignantly to the UN headquarters, "Our head of state died, United Nation's flag rises that high, China's premier died, why has dropped half-mast for him?"

Kurt Waldheim (库尔特·瓦尔德海姆), Secretary-General of the United Nations (联合国秘书长) at the time stood up and made an extremely short lecture in front of the stairs of the UN building, altogether just a minute long. He said, "the United

Nations hang a flag at half-mast to mourn the death of Premier Zhou Enlai of the People's Republic of China, this decision, for two reasons –

First, China is an ancient nation of civilization. She gets lots of gold and silver and jewels. The RMB (Yuan) she used too much to count for us. But, her Premier Zhou Enlai has not one cent deposits (一、中国是一个文明古国，她的金银财宝多得不计其数，她使用的人民币多得我们数不过来。可是她的周总理没有一分钱存款！)！

Second, China has one billion populations, and accounts for 10% of the population in the world. But Premier Zhou Enlai no own child (二、中国有 10 亿人口占世界人口的百分之十，可是周总理没有一个自己的孩子。)！

Head of your any country, if anyone can achieve one of both, the date he passed away, the UN headquarters will half-mast for him in the same way.” When his speech finished, he turned around and left. In the square all diplomats were speechless. Afterwards, thunderous applause resounded.

Kurt Waldheim's smart and sharp remarks reflected not only his resourceful diplomatic skills, but also that the noble character of Premier Zhou was unparalleled.

A top leader of the People's Republic of China, Zhou Enlai, has been eager to have friendship and peace. In a friendly way he was devoted to the China and Thailand friendly relations construction. The establishment of Sino-Thai diplomatic relations is an important part of the history of these two countries. The normalization of relations between the two countries is of great importance. It may be said that Zhou Enlai has made an indelible contribution to promoting bilateral relations between China and Thailand. He is the bridge of Sino-Thai diplomatic relations, and he paid a lifetime of hard work and effort up to the end of his life.

Thailand and China went through turbulent relations during the Cold War. Ideological differences, suspicion and Cold War politics enhanced antagonism and

conflicts. As the triangular relations between the US, the Soviet Union and China changed in the 1970s, it triggered an adjustment in Thailand's policy towards China. On 1 July 1975, the Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai and the Thai Prime Minister M.R. Kukrit Pramoj signed the Joint Communiqué Establishing Diplomatic Relations between China and Thailand which opened a brand new page in the thousand-year history of friendly exchanges between China and Thailand.

Relations between Thailand and China changed from antagonism to friendship. The convergence of security interests over the Vietnamese invasion and occupation of Cambodia transformed the relationship into a strategic partnership in the 1980s. The mutual economic interest of the two countries in development and industrialization, given the role of the Thai entrepreneurs in trade and investment, consolidated the economic partnership between the two countries in the 1990's. Sino-Thai relations were entering a crucial period, as the 21st Century approached. Thailand at present is encountering an economic crisis while China increasingly plays an important economic role in the region.

Sino-Thai relations have strengthened continually, based on a firm foundation at the people-to-people level. Beginning with political motivation, Sino-Thai relations have evolved into a longstanding partnership, especially now that China has emerged as such powerful force internationally, both politically and economically. Thailand, meanwhile, strives to play a more prominent role in the world.

Over the past 30 years, the tree of Sino-Thai friendship grows healthy and strong with abundant fruits. Exchanges of people from both countries are becoming more frequent, with annual two-way visitors reaching 1,200,000 for purposes such a tourism, business, study and relative-visiting; and the two countries have conducted friendly and fruitful exchanges in various fields such as politics, economics, science and technology and culture, etc. The Sino-Thai friendship and cooperation are

characterized by being all-dimensional, high-level and multi-tiered, and regarded as the model of friendly cooperation between countries of different social systems (补贴社会制度国家友好合作的典范). The concept of "China and Thailand, Two Lands and One Heart" (中泰一家亲) is deeply rooted in the hearts of the two peoples. The two countries have become good neighbors, good friends and good partners.

What happened between the two countries propelled the further development of Sino-Thai relations. Thailand and China must continuously consult each other and come up with a comprehensive plan for cooperation in the 21st century, in various fields including politics, economics, culture, communications and transportation. Future relations should not only be mutually beneficial but should also contribute to the prosperity, stability and peace in the East Asian region.

Presently, the world is undergoing tremendous change. But, peace and development are still the mainstream. Improving relations; focusing on the development of the national economy has become a strategic goal. China and Thailand are developing countries and are committed to their own and the other's economic and social development. Sino-Thai political cooperation is comprehensive. China has agreements both bilaterally and multilaterally with ASEAN countries to express its determination that it will cooperate with Southeast Asian countries to bring peace, political security, trade activities, culture and academic exchange.³

Although the two countries have different social systems, they both pursue the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, in the maintenance of peace in Southeast Asia. Support for each other on issues of mutual understanding, mutual trust, have helped China and Thailand establish a close, friendly and cooperative relationship. Chinese-Thai relations have a strong foundation, and in the future it can only be hoped that these relations will continue to develop and prosper.

³ Pana Janviroj, "A Solid ally and a Sound Example" in **Thai-Chinese Relations: 3 Decades of Trust**, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand (Bangkok: the Nation publication, 2005), p. 51.