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Phone interview, Helsinki-Copenhagen

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Interview conducted by Dusica Ristivojevic

Transcribed by Dusica Ristivojevic

DR: Thank you so much for accepting the interview. Let's start with the question: how would you introduce yourself?

HT: (laughing)

DR: (both laughing) How would you professionally introduce yourself?

HT: Ok..I'm 72 years old, and I retired from the Danish Institute of Human Rights in 2014..So it's five years ago...So, what I would say is that I identify myself as China scholar. I studied Chinese at the University of Copenhagen in the seventies, and then went to China one year to study the language. And then I came home, and since then I've been working on China issues all the time. I'm mostly actually interested in social sciences, I have a bachelor in history, so I've been teaching also modern Chinese history at university. But the last 17 years, I think, of my career, I was engaged in the human rights situation in China, where I did research, and I also did some project collaboration with Chinese institutions. And this was done in what's called the Danish Institute of Human Rights. I started back there in 1997 because I got a scholarship, or research funding, for studying the situation concerning social and economic rights in China, which I think was a very interesting project (laughing). So I took it up with some Chinese sociologists, I made interviews with Chinese citizens... or, they did... because, you know, at least at that time it was difficult for foreigners to conduct interviews in people's homes.

DR: It is again difficult (laughing)

HT: (laughing) So, this was in 1997, and we were interviewing some normal people, citizens, in two or three Chinese cities, and we asked them about how they cope with their work situation, and the situation concerning their residency, and situation concerning education and health. I'm very interested in social policy, and especially also how the right to health and the right to retirement pension, how is that fulfilled in different societies, and what kind of models are there. So that was how my human rights work started. And then I stayed in the Institute, and we got the funding from the Danish Foreign Ministry, we got funding for project work, and it started in 1998, I think. And ever since then, we did cooperation with funding from the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs - we did the cooperation work with some Chinese universities, and the Academy of Social Sciences, and also with law firms and some women's groups. We also had some cooperation with the police, and we had some cooperation with the prosecutors.

DR: Can we go back a little bit? (laughing) Can you tell us a little bit about your family background?

HT: OK! My parents were academics, you could say, they were in health care... No, not really...my mother was a psychologist, and my father was a psychiatrist.

DR: Wow! (laughing)

HT: Yeah (laughing)...there was a lot of talk about that in my home... And I have a sister and a brother, brother was two years older, sister, who is two years younger than me, and...My childhood was kind of very quiet, and a bit boring (both laughing), but then, not so much was happening. I myself have three children, with two different men, one son is forty seven, and then two younger ones, one daughter who is thirty eight, and a son who is thirty six. I have five grandchildren, my son has three children and my daughter has two small children.

DR: So how do you feel that your family influenced or did not influence your career in China studies? Either in a positive or maybe in a little bit troubling way?

HT: No, I don't see any direct connection...I don't really know... But my parents were very... sort of, liberal... and then...I was 20 in 1968... I was 20, 21 years old... So I was

part of this whole uproar, and a lot of activities, and I lived in collectives...And, of course, we were studying, or learning a lot about the experiments in China and so on...But, it didn't have anything to do with my parents...But... When I think about it now...I studied psychology, that was clearly influenced by my parents... But, I think I needed to bring something else into my life. And then, I was always very fascinated by going to various foreign countries, and seeing people living in other ways than we do... So, I wanted to go far away (laughing)... And I thought then, when I studied Chinese, that it would offer great opportunities to be familiar with and to get into another world.

DR: And what about your children? Did you feel that having three children influenced your work? How did you make it?

HT: That was also why I sometimes regret it, because there was the dilemma all the time. I very much regret, for example, when I went to Beijing to study in 1977, my son was six, and I really regret that now, because I think that it wasn't very good to leave him...But, we all did that... It was kind of another time... And then I coped with it in a way that I tried not to travel too much...I never wanted to take my family to China... Of course, take them to China for shorter periods and to be with me and so on, but I never wanted to live in China with my family and with my children... Because, we had to live in these kind of embassy areas, and, it's just a lifestyle, because you couldn't live in the normal surroundings in China at that time, when my children were small. We would have to live in these surrounded areas, and, having Chinese servants, and... I just didn't want my kids to live in that kind of setting. So I just traveled back and forth...But it was the kind of dilemma all the time...I don't know if they were harmed by it...They haven't scolded me for being so much away, except for my oldest son, who said that he really really missed me, because that was long time I was gone. But the others haven't really...Maybe I was away for a month, or three weeks, or maybe six weeks at a time...But that's... I think it's the kind of dilemma we all face. I mean, China people, how to have both family life and children and... I did it, but I don't know, going back and forth all the time.

DR: Can you tell us a little bit more about your education?

HT: Because my father was a doctor, we moved quite a lot, so I was in Copenhagen for the two first years of my primary education, and then we went to a small town nearby Copenhagen Roskilde. And then we went to Aarhus. So I went to high school in Aarhus, we

lived there for five years, and then my family returned to Copenhagen, my father got a job in Copenhagen, so we all moved there. So when I was 18, 19 years old, when I finished high school, I came to Copenhagen, and then... for one year I was just having some different jobs and enjoying myself and earning some money, and then I began to study psychology at the University of Copenhagen. I did that for two years, and after that, I switched to China studies at the University of Copenhagen, which was at that time called East Asian Institute. I studied there from 1971, or 1970, and then I had my bachelor degree in 1972 or 1973, and then I went to China in 1977 to 78. I think they opened up for scholarships in around 1974, but then I went, together with two of the interviewed men from Denmark, we went for one year at Beida. And then I went home and then I took a bachelor in history at the University of Copenhagen, at the Institute of History in 1979, 1980. Then I began to teach at the Historical Institute, I taught modern Chinese history, and I did that for quite some years...Then I got my two youngest kids, in 1981 and 1983, so I had them and then we moved into the countryside, and (laughing)... I was working part time, mainly I was teaching at the University, on the short term basis. And I was offered teaching sometimes at the Institute of Anthropology and at the Institute of Chinese Studies, kind of different classes but all on modern China, in one way or the other...Then I got my PhD in 1993... I also had some research grants, different kinds of research grants, So, yeah, I did a lot of teaching and I did a little bit of research. And I had wrote some smaller books, at that time we were writing books for high school and things like that...The first time I got a stable job at the Danish Institute of Human Rights was in 1997. I also had some research grants, but it was all sort of short term things...Actually, the Institute announced that they had some research positions. And then I applied for that because, actually, there was really no one in Denmark at that time who dealt with human rights in China. So I applied for research position, but I did not get it...it was just because it was mainly lawyers...But then I went up to the director of the Institute and said to him that I think that really they should do something on China. And he was very courageous, and he was a very open minded, so he said, Yes, go get some money and you can come here (both laughing). So I applied to the research foundations to fund this project on social economic rights in China...And then I got there. Then I got a research grant, and then after three or four years, I think, they just said, Oh, we just... Because my director at the Institute was very interested in doing something on China, so he helped very much... We went to China on research visits, and then we reported to the ministry, and then finally we got this cooperation grant. And then I also had got some research money, so I stayed

there, and gradually, after five or six years I think, I got a permanent position. And then my salary was paid by the grant from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

DR: Was it a stressful at that time for you to have these temporary jobs?

HT: Yes, it was stressful. It was really stressful, I think, because you are very unsure, and thinking about, oh, should you do something else?...

DR: Yes.. Yes.. (both laughing)

HT: ...should you use your education like a librarian, or should you do something quite different, because, you know... you seem so unsecure... And, at the same time, it was at the time when I had small children, then it's even more stressful because you don't have the security of having the job...But in Denmark we have quite, we had at least, quite, I think, quite generous sort of subsidy also for academics, so that helped, but it's still... everybody knows that it's just for a short time. So, yeah, I think it was very stressful actually..

DR: I know what the situation is nowadays, and academia is a very precarious industry (both laughing) and I was really wondering, is this situation something new, or we just didn't know that this is waiting for us?

HT: Yeah yeah... no (laughing) It's not new. It's not new at all...I remember also during the eighties, there were lot of us...What they did at the universities was that you were hired for half a year at the time...But you could count on being rehired after summer vacation because, you know, it was you had these courses, they were running, and you were probably to be rehired...But you never knew, because then, every year, twice a year, your position expires...

DR: Yeah, it sounds so familiar (laughing)... I know this from the interviews, but before the interviews, nobody talked about it. In Finland, I do see around me the professors who are in their mid-50s, who get the permanent positions only then. And I am like, OK, I am not the worst one (laughing) But still, it is really sometimes pretty hard, emotionally hard, and intellectually obstructing, to be in the insecure working position, to have life cut into pieces..

HT: Yes yes, I remember, there were many colleagues at the Institute of History, in the Academic Trade Union... There was a lot of talk about that, and I mean, a very, very essential part of the university education was done by this precarious work.

DR: But how it is possible that the precarious academic situation persists? I mean, at least in more organized states, as the Nordic states have been perceived, it could be expected that there would already be some interventions into the system that would change this problematic situation that lasts for so long. It is even more confusing if we think about Chinese studies, because it is very not easy to study the language, and there are many, many sacrifices already at the bachelor level, not to mention on the Masters and during the work on PhD.

HT: Yes yes...

DR: And it's not fun so many times (laughing)

HT: No no (laughing) ...

DR: What do you think, how it has been possible that this precariousness of academic and research work on China remains for so long?

HT: Basically, I think it was because it was cheaper for the university...And they were also pressed because there were cuts in the university budgets, and there has been ever since. So now universities are sometimes firing permanently hired people...So it's not getting better... I think maybe in the sixties it was different, and maybe a bit in the seventies, but in the eighties, it was very bad actually...But, what could be comforting is that we survived (laughing)

DR: Yes... Yes...You did survive... (both laughing) But let's go back a little bit...Do you maybe remember what were the books or any kind of pedagogical material used when you were a student, either in Denmark or at Beida?

HT: At Beida we just got this sort of home-made kind of material, I can't say much about it. But in the China Studies in Copenhagen we had language books, and we had to study classical Chinese.

DR: Do you remember what were the books about Chinese anthropology or Chinese history? What kind of books did you read for Chinese history as a student?

HT: For history I think we had one called Goodrich maybe. It was very very simple. And then we read Fairbank of course, but that was maybe later...And then we read about China's opening to the West...Now I remember the French historians Marianne Bastide and Etienne Balazs especially because he was writing a lot about...you know one of the questions at that time was why capitalism didn't develop in China? Why it did in the West? And I know that the whole idea has been questioned since then (both laughing)..But at that time we took it for granted that capitalism didn't take root in China, but it did develop in the West...We also read Jonathan Spence, I love some of his book, a kind of anthropology I was very interested in. Actually, one of the first books I wrote was called the Golden Bough, which was also an anthropological study of a family in the 19th century...historical stuff... And there was Paul Cohen, the student of Fairbank, who discussed historiography of China, and how the historians tend to interpret history of China in view of their own ideas about China. But that was what I read myself, I don't think they were included in our study program.

Actually, we had a seminar once a week, which was the only time where we sort of actually had some discussion and learned something about modern Chinese society. And that was by lady Roenboel who used very much the publications from Hong Kong, translations of articles from Chinese journals. They were called Chinese studies in sociology, Chinese studies in whatever, whatever...And they were really interesting, we thought, because they were written by Chinese, they were just compiled and translated. And also, for our bachelor studies, we had a seminar where our teacher used these sources. And she also used a small pamphlet called China News Analysis. It probably doesn't exist anymore, but it was a print, on a very thin paper, with an analysis of what happened in Chinese media. And that was very interesting, she was very competent...So she used these maybe a bit not so traditional sources.

DR: And do you maybe remember what kind of books, what kind of pedagogical material did you use when you were teaching?

HT: I used different things...There was this three volume by Jean Chesnaux, he wrote three volumes on China from the Opium wars on. And I also used mostly general introductions to Chinese history kind of books...I was teaching mainly history students, they were often not especially interested in China, I mean they could choose between different topics, and then they would have lectures for half a year in that specific topic like mine was China...So they had no background, so you had to start with Confucianism, and imperial dynasties..

DR: Were these books published in Danish?

HT: We were reading books in English mostly.

DR: Over the time, did you maybe notice the change among the students who took the courses on China you were teaching? Were the students becoming more interested in China over the time? Were more ambitious students taking courses on China?

HT: No, not really. They were mainly history students, and I would not say that they were not interested in China, but it was only a very little thing for them in their studies... I didn't experience that there was a lot more students interested in China, or that they were more interested in China than before. Usually in the class that I have, out of maybe 10, 15, 20 students there would be one or two in each class who was really interested. And many of them would go on to China studies.

DR: Were you acting as a supervisor to the students?

HT: Yes, I was supervising the thesis, for bachelor degree they should write a kind of short paper which was part of the exam...later on, I had also supervised some PhD and masters theses..

DR: Do you remember the topics of these dissertations?

HT: They were very different. I mean, there were all kinds of things from, Taoism to modern gender identity in Chinese films. So... (laughing) there was a great span of topics, because they would come to me and say, Well, I've read about this or I have read about that, and I would like to write my thesis about this and that...So there were all different kinds of topics...And of course, because a lot of things were happening in China so, you know, you could write about homosexuality in China, which you couldn't have done 10 years before.

DR: Did you maybe notice the change of topics over time of the dissertations or thesis that your students have been writing...

HT: Well, it became possible to write about more things, there was a lot more information available than it was in the 80s for example...But then, I haven't taught university students since the mid-90s...

DR: And have you maybe noticed, were there some wider contextual events, either in Denmark, or in China, or between Denmark and China, that influenced your research and teaching on China?

HT: Well, I was very upset by the attitude of both European scholars and European civil servants or European bureaucrats in the sessions of Human Rights Dialogue between European Union and China – this is just in general. I was upset by the attitude of Europeans during the sessions. Often, it was not China scholars who participated from the European side, so the participants did not know anything about China and many of them had a picture of China which was very biased. That would be, for instance, lawyers or sociologists from different European countries, they were coming to China where they were meeting with the Chinese scholars with such arrogance...They thought they knew that China was such a horrible country and that kind of things...I would just say that it showed me how difficult it is to get an atmosphere where you can get true information, where we can meet each other with a kind of confidence. And I think that in the big picture, that influence also the research possibilities. And that's, of course, also because this was a human rights area, which is, of course, very, very sensitive.

DR: From your point of view, how was your work developing over the years when it comes to human rights and social and economic rights after you got the position at the institute?

You started to work at the Institute in the late 90s, at the time when China was getting more and more central place at the global political stage. It was already clear that a shift in global geopolitical power division was underway, the shift after which China would want to participate more actively and to have a say in global affairs. And it was pretty clear, especially after Tiananmen, that human rights became the key in China's symbolic global repositioning. Since you were a witness of the whole process, how do you see these developments in terms of your research, in terms of the wider context, and of your work at the institute?

HT: I think that we shouldn't say "especially after eighty nine". I think that it was only after 1989, after June 4th, that there was a total shift in the international recognition or the international attitude to China, because, as I remember, during the eighties, everybody was so excited about China coming into the market...I mean not everybody, of course, but most governments, at least European governments, they were very positive towards China after 1979 and the new economic policies... So, during the eighties, everybody was happy about it, and very positive. That was my opinion at least. But it was completely changed after June 4th, and that's actually strange because, not so much changed. I mean, all these human rights violations, they were also happening before, but it was like nobody was really... So I think, during the 90s, and after, the atmosphere was very tense exactly on human rights... China was sort of branded as the most horrible government in the world. And I think it was really a bit strange that it was such a big and so sudden shift. And also, I think that the human rights world, the UN circles where we from the Human Rights Institute were involved - and we were involved with the Human Rights Commission and with the Human Rights Council, and with the whole system of Universal Periodic Review - well... this whole system we were involved in, it was very hostile, I think...Not only from the European side.. If you went to Geneva to these human rights related sessions, there was such a struggle, such hostility both from the side of China and from the side of the UN and the other countries...And there was really no kind of mutual respect, the appreciation of different conditions...I think it was a very hostile atmosphere.. And it was also difficult to work in in the Danish setting, and I think in Finland also, and also in Sweden and Norway and other countries, a lot of other countries we work with, it was difficult to work because you were easily accused of being collaborating with a brutal regime, and of blood on your hands, and things like that.

DR: So how did you deal with that? What was your strategy or the motive to carry on?

HT: The kind of strategy we developed in the institute was that it was very important that somebody was trying to understand what was happening in China...Not to condemn it... The mandate that we had - and we stressed that very much in relation to China in the Danish public debate - that the mandate we had was not to condemn or to monitor human rights situation in other countries. I mean, the one sort of the task the Institute had was to monitor the human rights situation in Denmark and to advise the Danish government. That was one thing. But when it came to other countries, it was said in our mandate, actually in the law - there is a special law for the institutes like that - and it said that in the cases of foreign countries, our mandate was to advise, to improve, to cooperate and give advice and support to activities which could improve the human rights situation in another country. And this is quite different. And that's also why we had to stress a lot of things, because we were very often attacked because we didn't strongly enough condemn things in China, when different things were happening...concerning Dalai Lama for instance, we wouldn't officially have him visiting the institute...We wouldn't do that, because we thought that it would be really counterproductive in relation to the work we were doing.. Of course, it was all on the premise that we believed that there were forces and groups and institutions in China, which were seriously trying to improve the human rights situation...And they were serious, and they were competent...We also had to argue that actually some of these groups and the academics and those we supported in China, that they actually had some kind of influence. And I think they had in the 90s and also up to up to maybe 2008 or something, but... But in the in the 1990s, I think from the mid-1990s on, and then 10 years after, there were lots of possibilities in China, there was lots of things that could be done...up to 2008 or 2010... And I remember, a lot of our partners, sometime around 2010, 2012, when they came here, they were shocked! They were shocked by what they were told at, for instance, at the Chinese Academy of Sciences...We did a lot of work with the Law Institute...And some of our friends there, they came, and they were just in shock, because they told us what kind of directives they had got from the leadership of the Academy.. I mean, what was said about...all this thing about the foreign influence...

DR: Did you publish your work in China?

HT: Yes, I had. I was involved in the work on a textbook on social and economic rights which was published by the Law Institute, and there were a lot of publications which were

the results of the project we from the Institute had with Chinese institutions...A lot of publications came out of the institutions we collaborated with, such as *How to Eradicate Torture, Comparative Research on Juvenile Justice, Human Rights and Administration of Justice...*

DR: How do you see your relationships with your Chinese colleagues? What do you think about those collaborations?

HT: I think it was not very close, actually. I mean, I didn't do like Cecilia [Milwertz] who really worked very closely and wrote many things together with Chinese colleagues. I didn't do that. I was more apart I would say... I did something which was translated into Chinese...But there were always a lot of complications involved... I mean, we were talking about what did our partner want to do, and what did they think would be possible and helpful, so they would always include research publications in the project results. And then we create these manuscripts, but we didn't really have a say in the content... And we got them, sort of, for improvement, or, sometimes, when we thought it was very important, we got them translated... Because, my colleagues at the Human Rights Institute didn't read Chinese, so, for instance, we had for some years a project on amendment of the criminal procedure law...The partners included lawyers and researchers and prosecutors, they together made recommendations for this amendment of the law, and then we've got the whole manuscript translated into English just because my colleagues, my lawyer colleagues could read it and could comment on it also...But that was not always, of course, we didn't have money for translating everything, and it was not meant for Western public in the first place, it was meant for the Chinese... So we had some kind of discussions and we got the list of contents and so on, and I was sort of reading it more or less closely... But I wouldn't say it was a very close cooperation...Of course, in their publications it was mentioned that it was done in collaboration with the Danish Institute of Human Rights, so we had to somehow have some kind of hand on, to be sure that there wasn't something that would get us into trouble, basically...What was very important to me, both very interesting and also influenced me a lot, was that this whole human rights system and thinking, it's so law-related, and in my younger years, I didn't pay much attention to law, so I didn't know legislation or jurisprudence, I didn't know all these concepts...what's common law, or soft law, what's hard law...all these concepts I learned at the institute, and I found it very fascinating.. And the Chinese colleagues, the

lawyers we worked with, they were very competent, very, very knowledgeable about this whole area of law.

DR: And did you have any relation with the Chinese government through your work?

HT: We didn't have much relationship with the Chinese government...Very little... I mean, the projects in the institute had very little relationship with the Chinese government, but, of course, during the human rights dialogues there was a heavy involvement of Chinese government officials. And it was also part of the... sort of...how to say...trauma...or the conflict around it was that in the human rights there was really a lot of influence from the Chinese government...And also my director was involved with government officials, with the ministries in some ways, because I remember at least once, he was actually sent from the EU, the European Union had asked him to go to China and to talk to the Chinese government about the death penalty, because we had a lot of activity around death penalty issues. And so he went there, and I remember I was with him but I didn't went with him to the meetings... But, I was with him and he went to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, to the Ministry of Justice, and also to the judges, to the Law Society and the institutions which are very much government controlled. So he had a lot of meetings on this issue. But that was the part of sort of government to government relations... At that time, we were a part of different relations: government to government, which also included EU relations with China. And these relations mostly happened through the human rights dialogues, which took place every twice a year. And then there was the academic cooperation, and we had also cooperation with some social groups, some NGOs, Chinese NGOs... We had quite a lot of cooperation with women's groups, and also had a long term projects together with a small group of migrant workers in Beijing...They did a lot of work on protecting migrant workers rights...

DR: And now, when you look back, what were the problems when it comes to your research and work in relation to China over the years?

HT: There were many problems! (both laughing) One was the problem of access. I think access, as access to sources, and also language problems, because, even though I studied Chinese and speak Chinese at some level, it was difficult for me when we were conducting interviews.. Also, English is not my mother tongue, and then I had to write

down or think about... I still think in Danish...So I had to think about it in Danish and then somehow translated into English and then into Chinese...It was very tiring...

DR: Yes yes (laughing)

HT: ...It's not something we have talked much about among the colleagues, but I think for me at least it was tiring...And then, also...I had some very good cooperation, especially with those sociologists that I talked about, that was very, very satisfying and inspiring.. These people, they were very, interesting... But then I think also that the Chinese researchers who were willing or were allowed to work with the foreign scholars, they were sought by many many people, so they were very busy...There was too few of them, so they were very busy and they didn't really have time to... or.. I think what I encountered a lot in China was that they promise you a lot of things, and then when it comes down to it, it's not so easy...I mean, they can say, Well, yes, I can take you there, and we could do this and we could go to my family and we can go to this village to do this and that, and then, it doesn't really happen..

DR: (laughing)

HT: ..Maybe they said this because maybe they just want to be polite...So, sometimes it was good, but there were also the problem of access at many different levels, both physically and language wise, and also in relation to the point of view... At least with some scholars, they had a different tradition, I think, maybe not so analytical as we are supposed to be...some Chinese scholars at least...so...I think it was not very easy...but then I haven't found it very easy to work with Danish scholars either, so..(laughing) it's just me...(laughing)

DR: (laughing) Or scholars in general (laughing)

HT: (laughing) Yeah...

DR: Ok, I don't know how should I ask the following question, because I heard that you are very modest and that I should be prepared (laughing) But, if you would really have to say something about your influence and contribution to the knowledge and the attitudes

about China in Denmark, or in Scandinavia or Nordics more regionally, what would you say?

HT: (laughing)...Well, I can mostly talk about the Danish setting...I think that it would be the sort of insistence on the fact that we have to respect, and we have to try to understand... So, I think our contribution, at least what we did at the Institute, was to very much stress that we have to respect people in China, and to respect the colleagues in China, and to understand more of what's going on... Because it's awful how people, also well-educated people in Denmark, what they can say about China... It's so horrible, they can say most stupid things, and they don't know anything about it...So, to insist on understanding... Not that we have to accept what's happening there, but we have to understand it better, we have to try to understand it...And that's been a struggle...

DR: And, when it comes to China studies, or China-related communities, did you get an insight into the situation of your colleagues from other countries?

HT: I don't know if I can compare, but the Danish Institute had an ongoing close cooperation with Swedish and Norwegian human rights work in China, not so much with Finland. We also built what was called the European Association of China Law Studies...It was actually very successful, I was actually in the board for some years...There was a big seminar conference every year, or every second year, and it was very successful and a very good way of communicating. It was in different places, in Italy, in Paris, in Oxford, in Copenhagen, in Germany a couple of times...I think it's still going on actually...There were very lively debate, and several hundred people participating, from Hong Kong, also some Chinese scholars residing in Europe..

DR: Just as a curiosity, was there anyone from Central and Eastern Europe? From postsocialist areas?

HT: Yes, I think there was from Hungary once, but it was very few.... It was very few, and we tried, or at least we talked about that we should try to reach into these countries... But I don't know how much we did, we didn't succeed very well. And European Association, I think that after I left, I think I remember they had a meeting in Prague actually...

DR: Very interesting...But not to keep you any longer, let's end this conversation with the final question: how do you see China's future? What do you think about it? What do you hope that it will happen?

HT: I think that in theory, on principle, when looking at the big history, one must say that the situation that is now, that it must change, that it will change...I think that this is mostly theoretically, because I don't feel very optimistic about it...And I think that it is very very difficult to say what will happen because we don't know...Would there be some kind of revolution in China if the suppression gets harsher?...There's so little, as far as I know, so little organized opposition to the Communist Party...Then you have the dissidents, the people who left after the June 4th, and they're just quarreling among themselves, and they don't have any idea about what can be done. There's no organized thinking, or, at least as far as I know, there are no groups or forces who are trying to make a program for transition to a more democratic kind of government...It has always been lacking... When people talked about that there would be gradually more political freedom and freedom of speech, but how should this transition go? I mean, if the situation in the nineties and after, if that has continued, I think I would have seen a gradually more open government and better protection of human rights in general. But that did not happen...And then one has to start again, and it can take a long, long time, I think, because there's no tradition...I mean, the tradition is not there, the political tradition, and therefore people's thinking I guess...I actually think that totalitarian or authoritarian tradition is very strong, so I don't think it would change dramatically. And I don't think it will be any sort of sudden or violent change, that's impossible I think, that would be a disaster.

DR: Thank you very much!