

中東 The Middle East

我是西元 1981 年十月首次到沙地阿拉伯工作，最後一次離開中東是來美國之前，取道約旦拜訪家姐，那是 1987 年八月的事。所以說我與阿拉伯世界的實際接觸前後有六年的時間，出出入入有四次之多。

The first time I went to the Middle East was October of 1981. That was when I got the job to work in Saudi Arabia. The last time I left the Middle East was when I came to the US. I came to the US by way of the Middle East on purpose, so that I could visit my sister's family in Jordan. That happened in August 1987. Conclusively, I spent on and off for six years in the Middle East, entered and left four times each.

又加上以下比較特別的兩次：第一次是 1982 年的一個假期，我曾經搭野鷄計程車過沙地阿拉伯和約旦的國境，進入約旦，然後繼續前往約旦首都安曼，因為我姐姐住在那裏。沿途看到亞拉伯世界牧野的景象。第二次比較特別的是 1984 年，在約旦住了六個月之後，我出埃及。原想是祇要出境再入境，便能再居留六個月，沒想到被埃及情報當局當成有間諜嫌疑，不准我入境，於是在紅海的一條渡船上被拘留了三星期。然後被‘破例’准許回到約旦的阿卡巴港。那是我自己的‘出埃及記’。

But the four times did not count the two times that were very, very special. The first of these very special visits was in 1982. I took my first vacation there. During the vacation, I took a cross-border 'prairie chicken' taxi cab. [In Taiwan, when you share a taxi with other passengers, we call that taxi cab a 'prairie chicken taxi cab'.] The prairie chicken taxi cab had to cross the border between Saudi Arabia and Jordan. I still remember the deserted sceneries between rolls of rolling barbed wires. When the taxi cab inched its way toward Amman after having crossed the border, I sensed more and more what had been written in the Bible; flocks of goats here and there with shepherdesses herding them. The second of these special visits was in 1984. That time, I already spent six months with my sister's family in Amman, Jordan. In order to stay longer, according to what I heard people do, all one had to do was to exit the country and then re-enter, and he would be allowed to stay another six months. I tried to do accordingly, and I went to Egypt. While off-boarding from ferry boat, the Egyptian police took me for a spy and did not allow me to enter. I was thus 'imprisoned' onboard the ferry boat for three weeks, and then set free at the Aqaba port of Jordan. That was my own version of the 'Exodus'.

我出了渡船走進阿卡巴港的市街，連護照都沒有在身邊，因為被扣留了。居然還能找到旅館。隔一天才依照警察指示，到他們的派出所拿到護照。更妙的是，我回到安曼之後，到他們的外交部辦理居留。連護照都忘了帶，你都不相信，經辦先生跟我說，“沒關係，把表格填好，一關一關辦好，明天拿護照來蓋章就可以了。”我真的就這麼辦成了。

When I left the ferry boat and entered the city of Aqaba, I did not even have a passport with me, because it was retained by the police. It was a wonder and I did find a hotel that allowed me to stay for the night. The next day, I went to the port police station to reclaim my passport according to their instruction, which I did without trouble. The funniest part was when I got back to Amman and went to their Passport Office to obtain visa, I forgot to bring my passport with me! That dude said to me, "No problem. It is ok. All you need to do is to fill out this form, get the signature from every department required. Tomorrow, bring your passport with this piece of paper and you will get your visa." I did.

1985 年，我哥哥從美國學成歸國任教，也是繞道約旦來看我姐姐家人，我在那裏當成導遊。也發生了一些奇妙的事。在拙著 'The Story of My Family' 之中有詳細記載。我也曾經把在沙地阿拉伯及約旦前後六年的經驗寫成了拙著 '阿拉伯的回憶'。我還是學習中的作家，寫的不好。以上僅供參考。

In 1985, when my brother finished his study in the US and came back to Taiwan to teach in the university as a professor, he also did that by way of Jordan to visit my sister's family. I became a tourist guide for him. Quite a few amazing things

happened during that visit. I covered those in details in my humble writing 'The Story of My Family'. I also included things that happened to me during the six years in Saudi Arabia and Jordan in my humble writing 'I Remember Saudi Arabia'. I am not a good writer and am still learning to write. The above are only for your information.

基於上述，今天聽到 Terry Gross 訪談今年年初的伊朗-沙地阿拉伯風波，我一聽，十分關切，也十分欽佩。我欽佩的是受訪的工作 43 年的老練記者中肯的發言。畢竟美國還是標榜的民主精神和言論自由。這位記者坦誠美國入侵伊拉克是美國歷史上最錯誤的一次國外軍事行動。其影響將比越戰的後遺症還嚴重。這點我舉雙手贊成。另一點，更是金玉良言。她說，美國祇會把人家的政權打到，對於重建一個新的政權一點概念都沒有，追究其原因，在於‘美國祇知道把自己的思想模式硬加在別人身上，對別人的想法一點概念都沒有’。假如我有第三隻手，我也要舉起來贊成。

Because of my special relation with the Middle East, when I heard Terry Gross's interview today on the radio, about the conflicts in the Middle East between Iran and Saudi Arabia, I became very much concerned. I was respectful also on the other hand. I really admire the reporter that was interviewed by Terry Gross, having spent 43 years reporting on the Middle East, speaking honestly and courageously. That is also why I am in the US today, where you enjoy freedom of speech. This reporter openly admits that the invasion into Iraq was the most serious military mistake the US has made so far, and that the consequences will be more severe than the Vietnam War. On that point I completely agree. What a truthful statement! The other point that she makes is even more important. The US only knows how to destroy a regime, guys in the US simply have no idea how to build up a new one. They only know to inforce their ideas upon other people, and do not have the slightest idea how other people are thinking. Had I a third hand, I would raise it to voice my agreement with her!

這是好幾個月以來，清新之音最好的一個訪問了。我也等了好久了。

It has been some time since I last heard a good interview by Terry Gross. I have been waiting. And this is it.