



Chapter 20

Oh my God!

The screenwriting teacher says that there are three potential reasons a person can become a tragic figure: fate, character, and environment. If running the "Heaven Monthly" could be considered a tragic endeavor, it relates to all three of these factors.

"Heaven Monthly" was first published on January 1, 1988, and it ceased publication on August 1, 1989, producing a total of nineteen issues. Whenever I think about this, I

cannot help but sigh lightly,
"Oh my God!"

"Heaven" is another form of
"Malacus." Friends who knew I
ran "Heaven" and saw every
issue, and who also knew
"Malacus," told me that
"Heaven" was more practical
than "Malacus." But there were
also friends who thought
"Heaven" was merely a
fantasy. Since it's a dream,
why not dream bigger and
more beautifully? Right or
wrong, comments about
"Heaven" after the fact are just
hindsight.

At that time, during the preparation period, I had enough reasons to convince myself, and I could also persuade my supporting friends. There were too many reasons to run "Heaven," really hard to list them all. Let me mention a couple.

Heaven represents the universe. How can a person not know about the universe? We had a slogan saying: "Modern people—why are your steps so hurried? Why are you troubled, anxious, and unhappy over things that might never happen? Allow us to

take you to a peaceful and wondrous realm. The world is vast, truly vast, and the universe is even broader. Modern people, you don't need to imprison yourselves."

An astronomer said that if the universe were divided into a million parts, humanity currently understands less than one part. Sometimes I would say, "Dear reader, have you ever felt bewildered, like 'I see no ancients before me, no followers behind: thus, in my solitude, heaven and earth transcend time itself, alone and tearful over their

fathomlessness'? If so, look up at the sky. The night sky has endless romantic stories and profound mysteries. The stars will fascinate you, intoxicate you, and enlighten you—to realize who you are, what you are, how you are, and why you are."

Since the universe's allure is so great, why hesitate? Let modern, solitary people escape the urban concrete jungles' mental imprisonment and embark on a spiritual voyage into the great void.

Heaven can also be very

practical, such as the weather changes that constantly affect everyone. Elections, stock markets, job markets, and oil prices are significant, but the immediate factor affecting your work and mood is the weather. I often urge people to accept the weather. If someone dislikes the heat in summer, fears the cold in winter, complains about slippery roads on rainy days, and worries about suntanned skin on sunny days, wouldn't life become a hardship? Since we can't change the weather, we can only cope by installing air conditioners in summer and

staying in heated rooms in winter. However, we need to know the weather, especially tomorrow's and longer-term weather changes. If a severe typhoon has formed off the eastern coast of the Philippines, and college students still plan a mountain hike, ending up stranded and requiring many people to rescue them—how could such things happen to college students?

Workers, business people, farmers, fishers, and tourists, including street vendors selling vegetables or beef noodles,

are all affected by the weather. Isn't the weather of utmost importance? Explaining typhoons, earthquakes, rainy seasons, and cold fronts in popular science form and informing people about monthly temperatures, rainfall, and rainy days through statistical methods should meet consumer needs, right?

Environmental protection was also a theme explored by "Heaven." Back then, environmental issues worldwide were not as numerous or severe as today. The first World Environmental

Conference was held from June 3, 1992, in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. My "Heaven" was already in preparation in 1986. When discussing environmental protection, some might immediately think of pollution, species extinction, increasing carbon dioxide, and ozone layer depletion. "Heaven" once had the main title: "The Earth is Sick!" Viewed as an illness, environmental issues make sense. Just as human sickness involves physiological and psychological factors, so does environmental protection, considering human

psychology. Many moral philosophers, religious leaders, ambitious individuals, politicians, and even pharmacology experts have always sought to reform human psychology. The humble "Heaven" monthly also aimed to reform minds through environmental topics. As an esteemed and revered old monk from the San Francisco Bay Area once said, "Such hubris!"

More than that, Heaven, beyond its tangible meanings, also carries greater metaphysical significance.

"Heaven's English name is "of Man & Heaven," founded after Taiwan entered its nouveau riche era, when gold worship dominated society. We thought, aren't there things more lovely than money in the world? Why not take people to the mountains to look at stars, listen to birds in the forest, or enjoy clouds at the water's end? We titled ourselves a "spiritual leisure" magazine. Today, that's no longer novel; there's already "Chicken Soup for the Soul," even more convincing than spiritual leisure. "Psychological Viagra" might follow, emphasizing

people's psychological numbness. "Heaven's" high ambitions naturally led to its failure without matching material civilization's rapid advances.

Actually, before religious thought matured, Heaven was humanity's common and sole belief. Since the Industrial Revolution, with ever-progressing times, people vigorously assert "man can conquer nature" or even "conquer nature." Life has become much more convenient. Traveling to America doesn't require drifting

on a ship for months; fresh fish and fruits from around the world are airlifted to your home in Taipei. But at the core, we ask: "Modern people, are you happy?" This was the title of a "Heaven" article. The ratio of happy modern people indeed decreased, primarily because everyone wasted their entire energy pursuing wealth. Wealth, like food and water, makes the first glass under a scorching sun feel like nectar. The second glass stops your thirst. Remaining wealth beyond personal needs may invite envy and even jealousy but is meaningless and adds

no happiness. Unfortunately, in an era of ever-rapidly evolving material civilization, there's no matching spiritual civilization. How can people be happy?

Could it be that your "Heaven" even wanted to tackle this? No wonder it failed.

When "Heaven" announced its closure, I suddenly recalled an article, like folk literature, titled "Asking Heaven." It said:

"Heavens, if you can't be Heaven, then just collapse. Why do sly and crafty people own more land?"

Good people lack rice and salt.
Those like pigs and dogs wear
minks,
Gentlemen are cold without
clothes.
Heavens, you're old and deaf,
with dim eyes,
If you can't be Heaven, just
collapse,
So we won't worry ourselves
sick over worldly matters."

That's how my "Heaven"
collapsed, crumbled.

After announcing the closure, I
still went to the office daily to
handle refunding remaining
subscription fees, apologizing

and returning submissions to authors, and responding to letters from devoted readers. Naturally, my mood was down. One noon, while

After announcing the cessation of the magazine, I still had to go to the office daily to handle leftover tasks such as refunding remaining subscription fees, apologizing to authors and returning their submissions, and replying to letters from readers who were particularly fond of the magazine. Naturally, my mood

wasn't good. That noon, as I headed to the office, I thought about the tiresome tasks waiting for me upstairs—the need to return the rented house, books and items scattered all over the desks and floor. Books could easily be dealt with by hiring a car to send them home, but items...every item discarded caused me pain. Each one had accompanied me for almost two years and held a piece of memory. Disposing of one felt like cutting away a part of my memories, so it was very hard.

Perhaps with a feeling of

escapism, I did not go upstairs but instead entered a café downstairs. Upon entering, I saw an elderly lady with white hair sitting at the back, and she looked very familiar. Yes, it was her—it was Sunflower! How long had it been since we met? She had grown old, her hair had turned white, and she had wrinkles. With tears in my eyes, I sat opposite her. Behind her was the café's gaudily painted wall, which in contrast made her look even more noble.

“Heaven ceased?” she said.

“Yes, it’s my incompetence, I suppose.”

“No need to blame yourself. You should regain your confidence. The seasons change in cycles, nurturing all things. What does Heaven say? Heaven itself does not boast. Isn’t it absurd to insist on being Heaven’s spokesperson?”

“Yes, yes, I admit defeat. If even Heaven itself doesn’t help Heaven, then I am powerless. But... but seeing you old, with white hair and wrinkles, it hurts me, truly!”

“No need for that, my old friend. Everyone ages. If someone's ideals cannot be realized, they feel distressed. If they discover they have aged, they also feel distressed. How much concern can a self-indulgent and self-pitying person really give to others? Old friend, you wouldn't be such a selfish person, right? Wipe away your tears!”

“Thank you, Sunflower, you always support me.”

“My support for you isn't just constant but everlasting.”

"Heaven" may have ceased publication, but you can continue to ponder its questions—so many questions worth contemplating for a long, long time."

"Really? Sunflower, I will listen to you. I won't forget to care about the real world."

Yes, I shouldn't feel hurt. "Heaven" has ceased, and I'm not hurt. Sunflower has aged, but I'm not hurt. Whose life doesn't face setbacks?