

Chinese Historical Figures: 1966 - 1976

Gu Zhun (1915-1974)

Intellectual and economist

Gu Zhun was born into a trader's family in Shanghai on July 1, 1915.

After his family declined in 1927, Gu worked as an apprentice at Lixin Accounting Firm. The firm was owned by Pan Xulun, who was regarded as "Father of Modern Accounting in China". At the age of 14, Gu published *Senior Bookkeeping Exercise* through Commercial Press. At 17, he became the director at Lixin Accounting School and published China's first publication of Accounting.

In 1934, Gu Published *Banking Accounting*, China's first study aids on the subject. He further published *Elementary Commercial Bookkeeping Textbooks*, *Basic Bookkeeping*, *Limited Company Accounting*, *Accounting Systems of Chinese Banks*, *Principles and Practices of Income Tax* and *Accounting System of Chinese Government* and so on.

In February of 1935, Gu joined the Communist Party of China (CPC). In October of the same year, he fled to Beiping (previous name for Beijing) after the destruction of the Military Defense Society, a Marxist organization Gu had participated.

In February, 1936, Gu returned to Shanghai from Beiping. He was appointed as Party Secretary at the Patriotic League of Shanghai Business Society., Occupation Committee Secretary as well as Jiangsu Province Party Secretary and Publicity Director for Jiangsu Province.

In August, 1940, Gu left Shanghai for an anti-Japanese base in southern Jiangsu. By then, he was already a senior leader in Lixin Accounting Firm, taught at the University of Shanghai and St. John's University, an American Christian university. He was nicknamed "The NO. 2 Pan Xulun".

In March of 1943, Gu traveled to Yan'an for further study at the Central Party School of the CPC.

After the surrender of Japan, Gu was sent back to Eastern China. Before the People's Liberation Army took over Shanghai, he was appointed Leader of Qingzhou General Brigade (a team of communist cadres) and part of the preparation team for taking over Shanghai from the Kuomintang (KMT) party.

In October, 1949, People's Republic of China was founded. Gu returned to Shanghai with Chen Yi (the first mayor of Shanghai appointed by the Chinese Communist government) and took posts in the government as Director of Shanghai Financial Bureau and Director of Shanghai Tax Bureau, Vice Director of Financial Department of Eastern China Military Committee, Deputy Supervisor of Shanghai Finance and Economy Commission. During that time, he successfully took back some well-known properties from foreigners through the levy of the land value tax, such as the Racecourse and the Sassoon House.

In 1952, during the "Three-Anti" campaign (anti-corruption, anti-waste and anti-bureaucracy), Gu did not agree with the Central Party Committee's policy in the practice of tax levy. As a result, he was dismissed from all his official posts both in the party and the government before being sent out of Shanghai.

In 1953, he was posted in Beijing as Financial Secretary in the China Central Construction Bureau, and later Deputy Director in Luoyang Construction Bureau.

In 1956, Gu assumed Research Fellow at the Institute of Economics of the Chinese Academy of Science, and wrote *On Commercial Production and the Theory of Value under Socialism*. He was the first to advocate socialist market economy at the time when the dogma of communism was predominant the country.

During the Anti-Rightist Campaign in 1958, Gu was branded as a Rightist. He was expelled from the Party and sent to the countryside to do manual labor. He was repetitively criticized and humiliated in the public.

In 1962, he returned to the Institute of Economics of the Chinese Academy of Science and was engaged in the research of Accounting.

In 1965, due to one of his nephew's "confession", Gu was brand marked as an extreme "Rightist" by Kang Sheng. After four-month isolation and investigation, Gu was officially labeled as Rightist again.

In 1966, Gu was sent to do labor works in a construction site at Dahanji village of Zhoukoudian District in Beijing. He was beaten and kicked while his head was half shaved (as a huge denigrated punitive treatment in China at that time). Finally he was sent back to Beijing after being seriously wounded. Gu arrived in Beijing only to face another wave of critics from the Institute of Economics of the Chinese Academy of Science. In order to keep his position as a historian observer, Gu had no choice but accept all the charges and accusations from the Rebellion Faction. He admitted that he was a reactionary and should never be pardoned. And he promised to do his best to remold himself and return to the track of Mao's revolutionary doctrine.

In the same year, Gu was forced to divorce his wife and sign papers to sever ties with his children.

In April of 1968, Gu's wife, Wang Bi, ended the unbearable persecution by committing suicide.

In 1969, Gu was taken to the "May 7th Reform Farm". According to his former farm-mates, Gu was the most adamant anti-revolutionist. Even after cruel torture from the Rebellion Faction, Gu still shouted, "I can't accept it!"

In 1972, Gu returned to Beijing. He began to write and probe into questions such as "What shall we do after Nara left?" seeking answers for the proletarian class after taking over the power. He examined, interpreted and forecasted on China's future reforms in the 20th and the 21st century and pluralistic modern society models. All these discourses were later collected in *Greek City-States* and *From Idealism to Empiricism*. These books, published in the 80's, were widely used in the universities.

Early November in 1974, Gu was hospitalized for his incessant coughing with blood. His mother, whom he had not seen for more than a decade, couldn't make it to the hospital in time to see him before he died from lung cancer on December 3, 1973.

On the death bed, the government rejected his final request of seeing his children.