

On the eve of the Dragon Boat Festival, 3 June 1984, there was a sudden downpour in Muzha, Taipei. Consequently, the water level rose drastically to one floor high on the campus of National Cheng-Chi University on the banks of the Jingmei River. Many postgraduate students, working hard before the June graduation, were not able to rescue their dissertations from the rising water. There was even one student who returned late to the dorm because he worked till midnight elsewhere. The fact that he needed to break a window and flee from his ground-floor room shows how strong the flood came to the area.

On the next morning, the water level was still about one's height. The whole campus was under water! At that time there was a military major studying for a postgraduate degree who lived in an area close to the campus but at a relatively higher elevation. Although he avoided the flood, he still changed into a pair of red shorts early in the morning and went to help his landlord clear and clean the flooded ground floor. While working, he had a sudden thought: he wondered whether Hsiao-Fang, the girl he always fancied, was still in the dorm. The phone in the dorm didn't work so he called her house instead. He heard her sleepy voice saying that she went back home for the Dragon Boat Festival. He quickly told her: 'There has been a flood on campus so don't come back to the university anytime soon.'

After finishing the call, he went back to cleaning, but it soon occurred to him: 'Many times when I waited outside the girls' dormitory for Hsiao-Fang, there were sympathetic girls who gave me ice-pops and fruit. Sometimes when I waited there for a long time, they even came to talk to me. I would be ungracious if I simply left them there stuck in the dorm because Hsiao-Fang is not there!' After this thought, he immediately went upstairs for some money, rushed to the grocery store at the foot of the stairs to Chih Nan Temple, which is on higher ground, and bought packets of instant noodles, biscuits, and bottles of mineral water.

Seeing him buying all these things for the people hit by the flood, the shopkeeper suggested that he buy a big bathing tub. He put the relief inside and carefully moved himself into the water, pushing the filled bathing tub while half walking and half swimming towards the girls' dormitory. While worrying about the safety of what he carried, he ran into, rather unexpectedly and quite a few times, things like water snakes on his way – the difficulty of the journey was indescribable. Afterwards, he finally got to the front door of the girls' dormitory. Noticing that there were dozens of pairs of eyes on him from upstairs, he told himself that it would be better to avoid an accident! 'Sir! The food is for whom?' some girls couldn't hold back and asked loudly. 'I am not a Sir, I am just a clerk, these are for those who need them...'

Humoring the girls, the major tried to downplay the hardship. Yet all the girls,

after hearing him, stormed downstairs grabbing the long-awaited necessities, some in pajamas, some barefoot. On the half-flooded stairs, the major chivalrously handed them the whole tub of food. What he had not expected was that all was gone rather quickly. There were some girls who came slightly late asking sadly: 'Is there anything left?'

He couldn't bear their looks of disappointment. The major instead smiled: 'No problem. Please wait here for a bit. I will get some more.' He then risked his life again, pushing the tub ahead in water without thinking whether he would encounter any more water-snakes. He just thought that there were so many eyes on him, so much expectation for more food – he had to complete his mission at all costs. When he arrived at the grocery store for the second time, he took all the remaining food and carefully swam back to the dormitory. When he made it to the front door, he successfully restored the smiles on all those worried girls' faces. But it seemed that no one was thinking at all about paying him.

Afterwards, the dormitory warden praised his generosity and earnestness, especially because, after the major twice delivered the relief, there were others who – rather unethically – used the opportunity to earn money by selling over-priced food to students stuck there. The major originally thought that he would ask around to see whether there are any students willing to pay him for the money of the food. But after hearing the praise, he decided to stay quiet.

However, this heroic delivery of flood relief soon caused a sensation and became well-known and widely talked about among students, and no one foresaw what entailed. Several days later, Hsiao-Fang, the girl the major fancied, came back to the dorm. She was repeatedly told by those who had got food on the day the thrilling stories about how that guy who always asked you out came – shirtless and only in his red shorts – to the dorm twice. Some even asked: 'Why on earth did you not go out with him? If you keep avoiding him, there are several of us willing to have him as boyfriend!' Hearing all this gossip, Hsiao-Fang was intrigued: why did a person risk his life to send relief to her classmates stuck in the dorm when the water level was still high? Was it simply an extension of his love?

Because of all this gossip surrounding her, this unplanned heroic act of the major moved Hsiao-Fang. 'Damsels-in-distress' in the flood on 3 June 1984 thus had a happy ending and became a beloved story.