Addendum: Metro Line Two Halted During a Heavy Rainstorm

Xiaobo Wang

It was Friday afternoon, September 13, 2013. A thunderstorm hit Shanghai at lightning speed and removed all dirt. After having lunch, I wondered whether I could go to work in the heavy rain. I have to, another voice said in my head. Therefore, I wore a raincoat and slippers and went to work, with an umbrella in my left hand and a knapsack in my right hand (carrying my sneakers, socks, and a towel). Wow. I waded into the deep puddles on the street, hearing my footsteps. I was in a good mood in the heavy rain.¹ I could jump in the water puddles. However, some scenes were unpleasant. It was gross to see rubbish floating in these puddles. It was common in certain streets in Shanghai. I finally reached the metro station. I took out the towel, dried my feet and changed my sneakers when entering the Metro Line 2 Station.

I started my work in my orange uniform. It was raining heavily with lightning. We, metro station assistants, arrived in advance as usual to wear our uniforms and voice amplifiers. We were energetic and delighted to engage in work.

When I was promoting the escalator etiquette among passengers, I heard news broadcasted repeatedly: (general idea) Metro Line 2 has suffered a malfunction and will stop operation for a period of time. Passengers in a hurry can select ground transportation means. Those that have already bought a ticket may return the ticket in a nearby metro station within 7 days.

I suddenly heard that I was called by Mr. Yang, our Manager. It was raining heavily. Nonetheless, he still came to cheer us on. He has often encouraged us spiritually. In cases of emergency, all staff at the metro station worked at the front line under the instruction of the Manager to guarantee safety of passengers and normal operation of the metro line.

¹Xiaobo Wang likes reading and writing. This is an essay he wrote when he worked as a part-time metro station assistant. The editor has made no modification.

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After we were off duty after the evening peak, we could still hear news broadcast from time to time at the People's Square Station: "Metro Line 2 heading Pudong has stopped due to a malfunction. Passengers in a hurry may select ground transportation means..." I put away my uniform and voice amplifier in the Manager's office. I noticed that other assistants were leaving. There was no sign for us to work overtime due to the heavy rain. As a result, I followed them and left.

It seems that only Metro Line 1 and Metro Line 8 operated normally. Other lines were halted due to a reverse flow of rain. Passengers stuck at the People's Square Station waited in order and followed the instructions of staff. They either returned their tickets or waited for the metro to start again...

It was late. As a result, I followed other passengers and walked out of the metro station. I walked onto the street after the heavy rain, with my footsteps sounding like rapping bamboo clappers in a comedy. I walked for a long time and was hungry. I bought some light refreshments and milk and walked to the bus station of Tunnel Route 9. A bus came after over 2 h. It was dark, crowded and stuffy in the bus. It was rainy. As a result, the window was opened. The air conditioner was not on at full capacity. Despite that, all passengers, after waiting for such a long time, were exhausted and grateful that they were on a bus in the end. I was proud of myself. I was one of the office workers. We were patient and energetic to go out, work and return home through heavy rain. I could feel strongly that everyone believes in the same things and passes on the same power, that is, hope is not far. We will arrive at home in the end if we are confident and overcome obstacles.

I was home by 22:20. Zhangdan thought I worked overtime. I told her that I was off duty at 19:00. I had to take a bus and waited for over 2 h for the bus, just like others did. She replied that I was stupid. She said that I could take Tunnel 3 near People's Square and return home. She said, Xiaobo, we support you working, and hope that you can learn to handle emergencies and find solutions.

It was hard to go to work. I felt strongly about that today. It reminds us that we must keep fit. Thank God for every blessing. Today, my physical condition ensured that I could handle the emergency with ease.

After I returned home, Zhangdan filled the tub with hot water and prepared warm ginger water in the foot sauna. After a bath, I drank goji berry and millet porridge while taking a foot bath. I felt her warm love from head to toe. I had a dream at night. In the dream, I also experienced heavy rain with lightning.

Go in grace. I can finally lie in bed comfortably and fall asleep...

Written on September 14, 2013 Cloudy

Translated by Weizhen Yang

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