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Monthly

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Front Cover: Woodcut by Li Hua

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CHINESE LITERATURE

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New Folk Songs

The following folk songs are taken from *Red Flag Folk Songs* published last year. The three hundred songs it contains appeared mostly during the Big Leap of 1958 and 1959. Some of them were printed in *Chinese Literature* No. 6, 1958. In this issue on page 120 we present a review of this book by Yao Wen-yuan.

Chairman Mao Is Always at My Side

(TIBETAN)

Hills like golden flasks!
There may be no temple on you,
But this fine landscape is good enough for me.

Lake Hsihai like a bright mirror!
There may be no dragon in you,
But your emerald water is lovely enough for me.

Chairman Mao in Peking city!
I may never have seen you,
But you, who gave me happiness,
Are always at my side.

Today We Are Masters

(MIAO)

Green tea plantations on the terraced hills,
The Miaos' hearts are at rest;
No more press-gangs,
No more bailiffs dunning for rent;
Yesterday we were slaves,
Today we are the masters.
The sky is blue—
Chairman Mao—the blue heaven,
Your goodness is like an ever-flowing stream.

A Basket

(HOPEI)

Grandma used to use this basket,
When she went a-begging with my Dad.

Mother used to use this basket,
To gather herbs in famine years.

Sister-in-law used this basket,
To take corn-meal bread to the fields.

Now, I am carrying this basket
To fetch rolls from the commune canteen.

The people's commune is good, good;
The goodness of the Party is sky high.

The Pines on the South Hill

(SHANSI)

The pines on the South Hill grow green, green;
The communes are fast rooted in our hearts.
We'll not be willows, green just half the year,
But pines green the whole year round;
We'll not be lanterns looking this way and that,
But candles with a strong and steady light.

Bees of One Hive

(KWANGTUNG)

A gourd clings to its vine,
The commune is our home;
We won't be spiders spinning separate webs,
But bees who gather honey in one hive.

There's a Reservoir East of Our Village

(TAI)

There's a reservoir east of our village,
Reflecting the birds that fly past;
Say, gentle lass,
Is that your mirror?

There are terraced fields west of our village,
Reaching up to touch the stars;
Say, Happiness,
Is that your ladder to come down to earth?

There's a Reservoir East of Our Village →
by Chang Kwang-yu

Two Giant Hands Lift Up the Stream

(KANSU)

One spade can shift a thousand ridges,
One carrying-pole can cart two mountains away,
One blast can topple down a towering cliff,
One drill can pierce through nine folds in the hills.
Two giant hands lift up the stream
And in no time hang it on the mountain top!

That Deep Water Is Gold

(HOPEI)

The water in our irrigation ditch
Washes away the peasants' worries and cares.

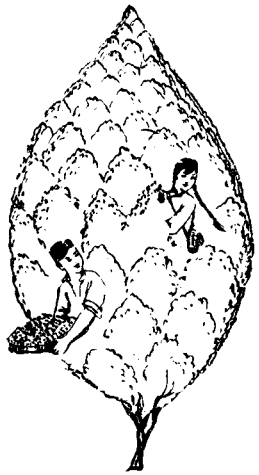
The ditch turns right and left,
This way and that to irrigate land on the hills.

The water in the ditch laughs,
Till the paddy bends with laughter too.

The water in the ditch is deep,
And to us that deep water is gold.

The Tea-Pickers

(ANHWEI)



Before the stars fade above the slope,
The hills are ringing with tea-pickers' songs;
By sunrise the piles of tea
Outnumber the hills.

Red azaleas bloom in the spring,
Girl pickers cover the slopes,
Filling their baskets with tea leaves —
Each tender leaf gives a sweet scent.

They sing as they pick the tea leaves
And glance across the bushes at the young men;
Countless the young men at the foot of the hill,
But each girl has eyes for her sweetheart alone.

Joy's Come to All the Mountainside

(SHENSI)

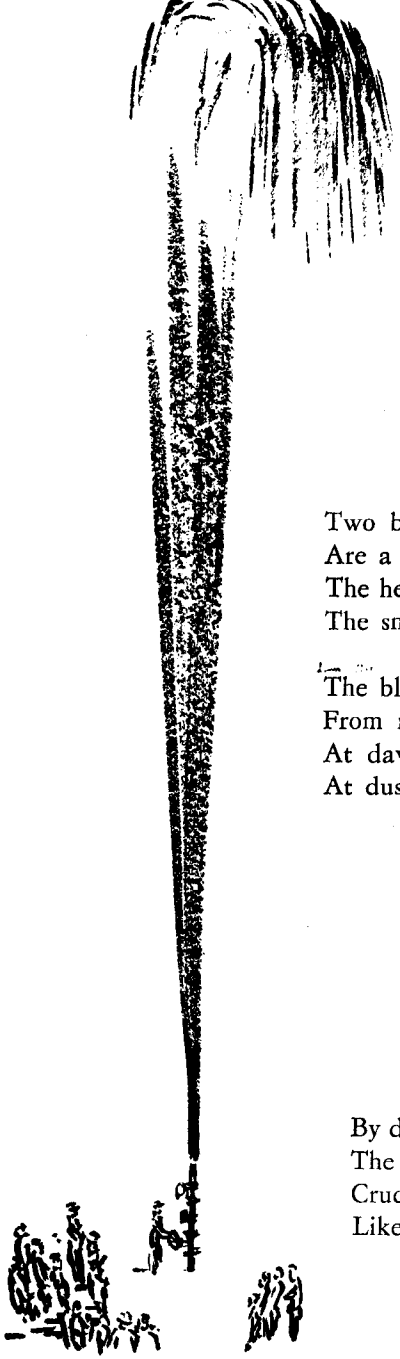
A southern hill, a southern slope,
Where songs resound on every side,
Songs of red blossom everywhere,
Of fruit trees planted far and wide.

Of co-ops on the east they sing,
And west a silver river flows;
The river gurgles on and on,
Both east and west the paddy grows.

The hilltop pines all year are green,
Beneath grows fruit of every kind;
The slopes are silver now or gold
With peach before and pear behind.

Upon these gold and silver slopes
Great flocks of woolly sheep pass by,
The shepherd boys beside the stream
Crack whips and carol merrily.

Fields, woods and orchards on the hills,
Lush grass where cattle wander wide,
The southern slope resounds with song,
Joy's come to all the mountainside!



Forging Iron

(KIANGSU)

Two blacksmiths forging iron
Are a brave sight to see;
The heavy hammer is a dragon playing with pearls,
The small hammer beats like a drum.

The blacksmiths work all day,
From morning until night,
At dawn they forge a sunrise glow,
At dusk a moon so bright.

Like Some Black Dragon Soaring to the Sky

(KANSU)

By day black spray comes pouring from Chilien,
The oil wells seem like fountains leaping high;
Crude oil leaps up three hundred feet and more,
Like some black dragon soaring to the sky.

Stand on the Mountain

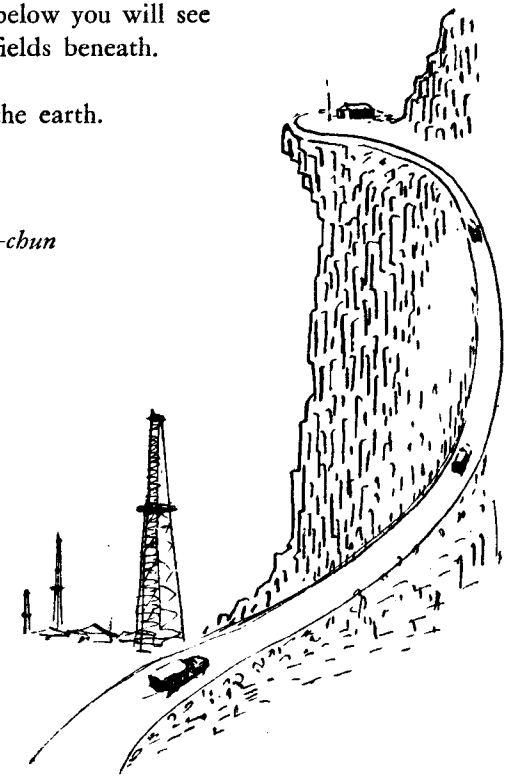
(CHINGHAI)

Stand on the mountain and westward you will see
A white belt girding the hills.
That is no belt
But a new road which has climbed the heights.

Stand on the mountain and westward you will see
White clouds floating on the hills.
Those are not clouds
But the tents of the oil-drillers.

Stand on the mountain and below you will see
Black waves tossing in the fields beneath.
Those are not waves
But crude oil flying out of the earth.

Translated by Gladys Yang
Illustrations by Huang Chung-chun



YANG HSU

The Care-Taker

The news that Tung who used to head the supply department at headquarters was coming to be their chief soon spread on Construction Site No. 208.

When the day's work was over Tsui, head of the supply section at 208, sought out Liu, leader of the first work brigade.

"Your old friend is coming, Old Liu. Aren't you happy?" he asked merrily.

Liu stood up, draping his old army tunic over his shoulders. Instead of answering, he asked, "How about you?"

"Of course I'm glad," said Tsui. "He's a comrade with more than twenty years in the revolution. He's an experienced leader. . . ."

"You needn't tell me that. We were together for many years. I've covered more than ten thousand *li* with him. I know him better than you." Then Liu smiled and lowered his voice. "What I mean to say is that he's from headquarters! Now that he's going to be chief here you won't have to write one form after another pleading for materials."

"You're quite right!" Tsui laughed. "He's known as the iron rooster. With him watching over the warehouses, no one can pull

Yang Hsu, a young lieutenant in the Chinese People's Liberation Army, writes stories in his spare time. In times of peace, the Chinese People's Liberation Army is a powerful force in national construction, taking part in many kinds of work in industry, agriculture and transport. This short story shows the PLA men in action — on a construction site.

out a single feather. Let him come here and have a taste of work on the sites. Let him see that we're not having an easy time of it."

"Hey! You seem very pleased, but it will be hard on us from now on. He's going to be our immediate superior. Just wait and see. We'll have to fight him every time we ask for a piece of timber – and probably not get it in the end." Liu seemed to be complaining, but in fact he was feeling glad. Kicking at a piece of square wood, he glanced at the piles of materials littering the construction site and said to Tsui, "I'd put these things in better order if I were you, Old Tsui. Tung won't let you off easily when he sees them in this state."

Tsui sighed in mock helplessness. "Even if I put them in order today, they'll be all over the place again tomorrow. No matter how careful a girl might be, she's bound to leave a few strands of tangled silk under her embroidering frame. And our construction site is so much bigger!"

To everybody's surprise, Tung, his old brief-case under his arm, came to the construction site early the next morning.

His arrival was so sudden that even Tsui, who had joked about the "strands of tangled silk" the day before, was caught unprepared. He hadn't had time to even start on the things he had meant to do. So he went to welcome Tung in an uneasy state of mind.

Most of the administrative personnel and People's Liberation Army men on the construction site knew Tung when he still headed the supply department at headquarters. Short, square-faced, with a pair of spectacles on his nose, he had heavy wrinkles on the forehead and around the corners of his eyes. His sparse beard had more white hairs than black. In all seasons he wore under his uniform trousers a pair of thick woollen pants. He walked with a peculiar rolling gait and rocked along like a ferry-boat.

The people on the construction site often talked about him. They said that when anyone went to him for material he would study the application slip for a long time, and then agree to give only half or one-fourth of the amount requested. Sometimes he might reject the application entirely. The applicant would of course tell him how absolutely necessary the material was, and how he simply

could not accept any deduction. Tung, however, would merely give him a look over the black frame of his spectacles. If the person happened to be a young man he would say:

"You don't know how very well-off you are nowadays, young man. Shouldn't we plan carefully and economize on every bit of material for the country? Why, back in the days when we were in the Taihang Mountains, we didn't have a single brick, but we built houses just the same. . . ."

If the person was someone he knew well, Tung would say in a serious tone: "All you can do is stretch out your hand. Anyone who doesn't run the house doesn't know how expensive fuel and rice are. . . ."

The impatient ones would walk off without waiting for him to finish his lecture. But there were also people who would not give up so easily. They would sit down to argue. Still, no one got much out of him that way. This was probably why he had been nicknamed the Iron Rooster.

As the saying goes: when you've been on a job for some time, you're bound to take a fancy to it. Tung, accustomed to being the head of supplies back at headquarters, went out on the very first day of his arrival to inspect the use and storing of materials, just as Liu had predicted. He trudged from one work site to another, brushed past busy throngs of people, dodged out of the way of heavy trucks honking their horns as they came near, and walked stiff-legged to the lots where materials were piled. Whenever he caught sight of the timber or steel or broken bricks, piled

fortress-high, he would stop and probe around. Tsui trailed behind him, explaining how one pile was left by a certain project and why another was not yet cleared away. . . .

Tung didn't seem to hear him. He went on without a word, neither nodding nor shaking his head. Only his brows were knitted more and more tightly, making deeper furrows on his forehead. He suddenly looked several years older. His sallow face grew darker and more sallow. Not even the sight of the brand-new red building which was so lovely could evoke a smile from him.

Liu was laying bricks with the men. When he noticed Tung in his area, he stopped work to watch him from a distance.

Some of the men observed the chief's awkward gait. One asked: "What's wrong with his legs?"

"When we were fighting guerrilla warfare south of the Yangtse in 1941, he was in charge of provisions," Liu answered. "The villages had been ravaged clean by the Japanese and the Kuomintang bandits and there was nothing for our men to eat. So Tung took the cooks to catch fish in the nearby streams. Though it was bitter winter he often stood in the water for half a day. That was how he got rheumatism. But he never told anyone about it. I happened to find out once when we were together on a march. . . ."

As he was talking Tung approached. Liu walked up to him and gave Tsui's jacket a surreptitious tug.

"You'll get it now for not listening to my advice," Liu whispered to Tsui.

Tsui looked at him with a downcast expression, breathing hard.

"Old Liu," Tung suddenly said to the brigade leader. "Please notify the work brigade leaders to come to my office with their supply men." Then he trudged on to another work site.

Not long afterwards, people began to gather in the tent that was Tung's office. Sensing that something was going to happen, they looked at each other blankly. But it seemed Tung had no intention of losing his temper. As he calmly put away the papers on his desk he greeted his guests and asked them to sit down. At last, he closed his brief-case and began slowly:

"Comrades, we are managing a fair sized property and it is not easy being its care-taker. When I was young my grandmother ran our house. She could use a towel for several years. When it became too worn to serve as a face towel, she would convert

it into a mop cloth. When it was completely worn out she would wash it clean and stitch it in with other rags to make shoe soles. But just look at the way you're managing the property of our revolution."

The last sentence was said in a loud voice, as he stood up breathing heavily, his cheek muscles quivering. After a while, he left his desk, one hand over his forehead. He had to make an effort before he calmed down. Eyeing the supply men severely, he asked, "Have you ever counted the years it takes for a young larch to grow into useful timber? Do you realize how much trouble it is to bring a brick produced in the people's commune in the outskirts of Paoting all the way here by cart, truck and train? . . . "

Tsui, Liu and everyone present did their best to avoid the chief's penetrating gaze. They were rather surprised to find themselves unable to answer Tung's questions, which were after all most simple. Tsui, in particular, had to admit in his heart that the construction site could have been in somewhat better order, although he used to think that there were a good many reasons for its present messy state. Now he could find no excuse for himself. There seemed to be a weight on his heart; it was so heavy that he couldn't breathe naturally. . . .

A fortnight later, the construction site looked much better. Most of the materials were stored in warehouses; those left on the site were stacked neatly. The chief began to devote his attention to the engineering work. But probably because of professional habit he still spent a certain amount of time supervising the giving out and management of materials. And so, added to the usual hubbub in his office, were heated arguments when people came for supplies.

One morning a young man was again compelled to argue hotly over the supplies he wanted. Wiping his sweating brows he was saying in one breath:

"We don't ask much to start with. What's more, a batch of lumber arrived at the warehouse only yesterday. You'll never miss such a little bit. . . ."

"Of course we have lumber!" Tsui raised his head from the form he was filling. "But do you think our duty is simply to ask for materials from our superiors with one hand and give it away

with the other?" Unconsciously he employed the same words the chief often used to criticize people for not valuing materials enough.

"Certainly not," the young man explained. "But we do really need it. It's in our plan!"

Tung, the chief, pushed the slip away. Without batting an eye, he said calmly:

"You should find a way out yourselves."

"Find a way out? Even if we plant them ourselves, the trees will need time to grow!" the young man retorted.

"You don't have to plant them. You'll find lots of wood on your work site." Tung looked at him from over the brim of his spectacles and said kindly, "Young man, you haven't known much hardship. All you can do is to open your mouth when you want to eat and hold out your hand when you want money. Why don't you use your head and pick out usable lumber from the rejected wood? . . ."

The tent flap was lifted and in walked Liu, the work brigade leader. He brought with him a gust of wind which blew the slip to the ground.

"Aren't you going to give us some lumber, Tung?" Liu demanded loudly.

"I've already said no!" answered Tung promptly. Then he greeted Liu cheerily, "Hello there, Old Liu. You have come in person, I see. Please sit down."

Seeing that there was no use for him to stay on, the young man picked up the slip, put it on the table before Liu and stalked out. Liu took over from him, sat down and began to plead:

"We're waiting for the lumber, chief. Why are you so unreasonable?"

"You have some in your place."

"No, we haven't."

"Yes, you have. There's a big pile on the western lot."

"Those are all rejects!" Liu was beginning to get annoyed.

"At least twenty per cent is usable." Tung remained unruffled.

"That lot of rubbish isn't worth the work we'd have to spend on it." Liu again put the slip in front of Tung as he said with a smiling face:

"Aren't we old friends, Old Tung? We really need that lumber right away! As it is we are ten days behind schedule. If we have to pick and salvage what we can from that pile of rubbish. . . ."

Tung was looking at his blue prints and giving hardly any attention to his friend's appeal. Liu knew from long years of being with Tung that there was no use for him to say any more. But he still wouldn't give up. He straightened up and said solemnly, "Old Tung, you should listen to what people say about you. Many of them are dissatisfied. Even the old engineer has a grudge against you."

"Really? . . ." Tung looked up expectantly.

"He said that you didn't supply material when you should and that you pocketed the work plan without consulting him."

"Yes, that was careless of me. I'll go and talk to him tonight," Tung said seriously.

"It's only right to supply us with material specified in the plan if you want us to finish the work on time. . . ." Liu continued to grumble.

"Aha! Let's get this straight," Tung said looking at Liu. "Is it really the old engineer who's dissatisfied, or is it you?"

"I have objections too. Why, can't I raise them?" asked Liu angrily.

"Sure, go ahead!" Tung stood up. He was also upset. "I can quite understand it if Engineer Li has objections. But you — I can't understand! The state wants us to finish the work according to plan, but it doesn't ask us to be sure to use up all the materials according to plan." Staring hard at Liu, he looked like a school teacher explaining an arithmatic problem of simple addition to a dull student — disappointed, vexed and even a little cross. As for Liu, he felt that Tung had wronged him and that he needed to argue and explain. But for the moment he was unable to say anything.

Tung stood for some time before he sat down beside Liu. In an entirely different tone, he asked:

"Do you remember, Old Liu, that winter in 1948 when we were on the Huaihai battlefield?"

Brigade Leader Liu was stunned for a minute but the next instant, an excited look crept over him. "Oh, I remember. Of course!

We were billeted in a dilapidated old temple west of Suchien. You had sent all the available padded uniforms to the front. We had no warm clothes and suffered from the cold. . . ."

"Yes, and how we longed for firewood. There was a nice stack of logs just outside the door. . . . But we pulled through all right."

"The logs were for building fortifications. Not a single log could be touched," said Brigade Leader Liu, as if explaining the situation to someone else.

"Now," continued Tung, "we've plenty of lumber, a full warehouse. Isn't that so?" Liu hung his head but Tung went on relentlessly, "I've seen with my own eyes how some of the less important projects couldn't be started because they were short of lumber. That's why we must be very economical with the stuff we have, plan its use carefully and try to save so that every stick or log is used where it's needed most. Otherwise we'll be making a serious mistake. . . ."

For a few minutes Liu was sunk in deep thought, his chin cupped in one hand. "All right, I'll be going now." He stood up abruptly, waved his cap and went to the door. There he turned. "No matter what you say, Old Tung, you've got to give us just a little bit. If only. . . ."

"No. Not a single stick!" snapped Tung.

"Ho, what an iron rooster you are!"

A quiet smile appeared on both faces, smiles which widened until both men laughed heartily.

When their merriment subsided, Tung said to Liu and Tsui, head of the supply section: "Tell everyone to get ready. There's going to be a change in the weather."

Tsui gave the clear blue sky outside a quizzical glance. Not even a puff of cloud was in sight. "Did the weather forecast say there's going to be a storm?" he asked doubtfully.

"My legs have given the forecast. They're usually more accurate than the meteorology station."

Tsui followed Liu out of the tent. "Old Tsui, you must take good care of him," said Liu. "His rheumatism is very bad. On wet days it's agony for him to move about. He was also wounded once in the chest, and he has a stomach ulcer which bothers him a lot. Once all three things hit him at the same time, and he was laid up for two months. . . ."

The weather really broke. For nearly a fortnight, the sky kept pouring as if it meant to get rid of all the water it had stored. The construction site became a swamp. Work was halted. Only those few men working indoors continued. Fortunately, preparations had been made in good time and no heavy loss was incurred.

The rains kept on and on, swelling the river, unleashing mountain torrents rushing down the gorges like wild beasts, breaking bridges, flooding river banks and swallowing good fields. With the exception of the one brigade of men doing indoor jobs, everyone else on the site joined in the battle against the impending flood.

One morning, two visitors, thoroughly drenched, arrived at the construction site. One about forty was the Party secretary and the other, a young man under thirty, was the technician from the second bridge construction brigade. Since Tung, the chief, was sick at home, they were received by the head of the supply section, Brigade Leader Liu and several others. Party Secretary Chen quickly explained the reason for their visit. They had come to repair two bridges near Site 208, which had collapsed in the flood waters. But as other bridges further back along the line, had also been damaged by the flood, trains with men and material were unable to come over. If they waited until the trains could get through before they begin to repair the two bridges, it would mean a delay of at least ten more days. This would seriously affect the state's transport plans. That was why they had risked swimming across the river, in spite of the rising water, to get help from Site 208.

Everyone was stirred by the two men's appeal. It was essential to help the bridge brigade put the two bridges in good shape again. Unless this was done, not only would the state's transport plan be affected but supplies so necessary to Site 208 would be cut as well. This was so important that the approval of Tung, the chief, had to be obtained.

"Send someone to fetch the chief," suggested one comrade.

"No," said Tsui with a frown. "Poor Old Tung has only just recovered a little. Moving about now would ruin his health again."

"I know what," said Liu. "Why don't we all go to his quarters and discuss the matter there." This suggestion met with general approval. As people hastened to don raincoats and caps, Tung suddenly arrived. "Ah, he's here," cried Tsui as soon as Tung entered the tent.

The chief did not notice Tsui's air of excitement. "I suppose it was you who sent that nurse to me," he said, removing his dripping raincoat. "She's like a shadow, dogging my every step. What a time I had persuading her to leave me a few minutes!"

"Why have you left your room just when you're feeling a little better?"

"The drainage ditches round the warehouse ought to be deepened. Otherwise you'll find the logs floating off if the rain continues a few more days." Tung seemed to be muttering to himself. At last, glancing at the faces round him, he asked, "Are you people having a meeting?"

Tsui introduced the visitors, at the same time explaining the reason for their visit. Tung listened attentively. He stood close to the desk, supporting himself on his hands; his torso slightly bent. At that moment he looked as alert as a battle-tried commander listening to urgent orders. His eyes, though somewhat red, were bright and militant.

When Tsui finished speaking, Chen of the bridge brigade appealed to the chief. "Comrade Tung, this time we really are surrounded. There's no path in front and the enemy is close behind, while our reinforcements and supplies have been cut."

Tung was pensive for a second then he nodded vigorously.

"What do you need?" he asked.

"Men. We only have about forty. We need men."

"We have about five hundred," said Tung without a moment's hesitation. "They'll be under your command."

An excited buzz stirred in the tent. People began to whisper. Not that they disagreed with the generous help offered by the chief, but many of them were worried that their own project would be affected by transferring two and a half battalions to bridge repair.

Liu was thinking to himself that the rains had already held up work by nearly a fortnight. They had enough worries as it was. What was more, the work that could be done indoors was not yet finished. If all hands were sent to the bridge now, there would be a further delay in the whole construction.

"Old Tung," he said, unable to check himself. "Our own work needs men too. . . ."

"Keep one platoon at home to guard against the flood waters. Everyone else, the sick excepted, must start out at once." Tung spoke in a voice that brooked no argument. Sensing that the comrades were not enthusiastically behind him in this decision, he added, stressing every syllable, "Comrades, we are temporarily withdrawing from our position in order to launch an offensive on another front. This is to win victory for the whole campaign. Those who have come through real battles know the importance of such operations."

Liu could feel Tung's severe and expectant glance on him. It was as if the chief was saying again, "I'll understand objections from others, but not from you!" Under the chief's intent gaze, his mind went back to the war years when many battles were fought in exactly the way described by Tung. He knew Tung's feelings. Undoubtedly, the chief's decision was correct. As he swept those round him with his eyes, he saw from the expression on many faces that Tung's words have produced their effect. The PLA men seemed to have recollected their experiences in real fighting and had already begun to discuss the matter at hand: how to repair the bridges. Liu was drawn into the discussion.

"Comrades, I've never built a bridge before," he said to the visitors, in his usual strong voice. "But we're not exactly amateurs either. Back in 1949 when we were hot on the heels of the Chiang Kai-shek brigands. . . ."

With a wave of his hand, the chief checked Liu's unfinished sentence.

"Comrades, what else do you need? Speak up!" he said to the visitors.

"We also need timber," said Chen.

"How much?"

Secretary Chen exchanged a glance with his young technician. "We need a lot . . . one thousand cubic metres."

"A thousand cubic metres," was Tsui's startled cry.

"A thousand cubic metres," echoed Tung feebly, plunking himself down on a chair.

The visitors, their brows tightly knit, exchanged glances again as they too sat down.

After a fairly long silence, talk began again. "Oh my, a thousand cubic metres," said Tsui, nearly shouting as he stepped up to Secretary Chen. "Why, even if we emptied our whole warehouse there still wouldn't be enough."

"A lot of timber is necessary to repair a bridge. Unless the bridge is repaired, the traffic. . . ."

Tsui cut him short. "It takes thirty to forty years for a young larch to grow into useful timber, and you fellows ask for a thousand cubic metres. Furthermore, with all our timber gone, our own task. . . ."

"Stop shouting," snapped Tung. Quiet reigned again. Dozens of eyes were on him.

Tung picked up the telephone with a rapid move of the arm. "Get me repairs and building department at headquarters. What?" Slowly he replaced the telephone. "The line is down."

No one made a sound in the tent. Big rain drops pattered on the heavy canvas. The silence was almost unbearable. Everyone felt the urgency of the problem at hand. It had to be solved. But how?

"A thousand cubic metres, a thousand . . ." Tung muttered. Glaring at the visitors over the brim of his spectacles, he asked, "Brought your blue prints?"

"Yes," said the technician. He untied the layers of oil cloth wrapped around a roll of paper. He placed the blue prints on the desk.

"Come, let's do some calculation." Tung brushed aside the other papers on his desk and straightened his spectacles.

Visitors and host began working on the blue prints, only the three of them at first. Then the head of the supply section was drawn in. Gradually, the discussion became general, with all present taking part. Gesticulating, they calculated the number of logs down to every single stick, and argued hotly. . . .

Thirty minutes slipped by. Tung pencilled the sum total they had reached and let out a little breath. "We need only 830 cubic metres now. Right?" he mopped his brow.

The young technician eyed the blue prints with some trepidation. "Comrade Tung, I'm afraid it won't do. Reducing the amount of timber will mean inferior engineering quality. Besides, the flood period isn't over yet. . . ."

"I know, I know. Your logic is: the more the better, and using more logs will be safer than using less." He stared at the young

man over the edge of his spectacles. "Listen, young fellow, the figure we reached by careful counting of every stick of wood is certainly more scientific than your simple logic." Waving a hand as he half turned to Tsui, he said, "We have seven hundred cubic metres of wood. We'll let you have them all. The shortage we'll make up by. . . ."

"Old Tung, what about our own project?" Tsui's eyes were popping with anxiety.

"Our own, our own," mimicked Tung, standing up. "Aren't we all part of one integrated whole?" Wishing to find out what the others thought, his gaze swept the faces around him. His eye was caught by a lamp hanging from a post. "Right," he said in a tone of great relief, "we'll use the posts first."

Tsui was still standing there with a dazed look. Tung went up to him. In a gentle, fatherly tone, he said, "Don't just have eyes for only one work site. You've got to look ahead. We should see how much the repairing of these bridges means to the state's transport plan."

"Old Tung," said Secretary Chen, rushing up to the chief. Tears of emotion shone in his eyes as he grasped Tung's hands. Well might two victorious generals, meeting after a joint military operation, thus clasp hands. The same look of respect was on Chen's face.

Tung stepped smartly to the centre of the tent. From the upright way he walked no one would have guessed how hard he had had to grit his teeth when he first set his feet on the ground that morning.

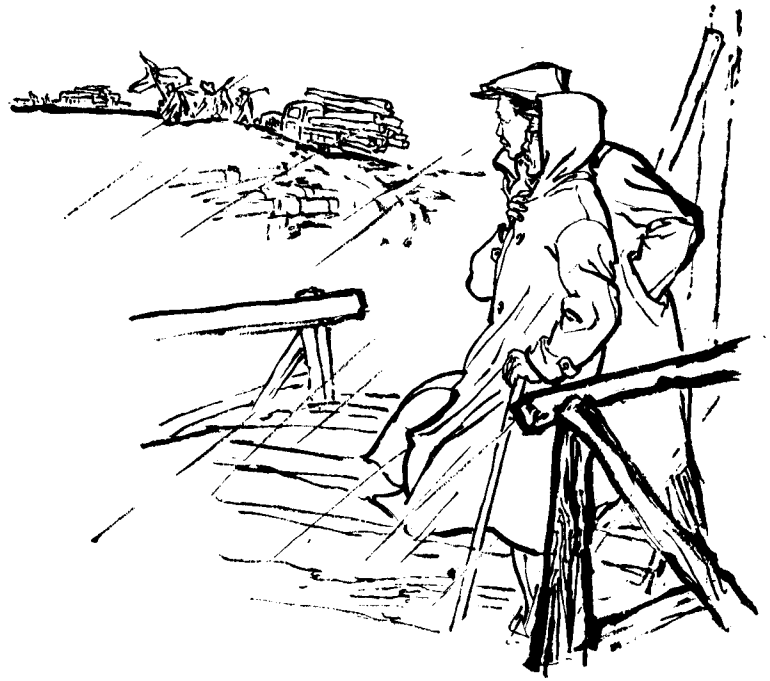
"Duty officer, assemble the men. Tsui, will you tell them to throw open the warehouse! Time is pressing, comrades, let us begin." He went to put on his raincoat.

The visitors took their leave. It was only then that the head of the supply section, recovering his composure, blocked the chief's way. "I'll do everything you order, but please don't go into the rain yourself."

"What's that?" Tung's eyes were on him.

"You're sick. Getting drenched will only add to your pain."

"Ho, ho. You mean. . . ." A smile appeared on Tung's face. "Look, I'm all right now." He stamped his feet vigorously as if there was nothing wrong with them.



Turning up the flap of the tent, Tung, with his usual awkward gait, made his way into the misty rain curtaining the road like thick fog. Motionless, Tsui stood still, ruminating over Tung's words. When he once more tried to call him back, Liu gave the hem of his jacket a gentle tug. "Forget it, Tsui, we have to let him be at a time like this."

The chief slowed his steps so that Liu could catch up. When they were walking shoulder to shoulder, he said without turning his head, "How do you feel about it all, Liu?"

"I support your decision," came Liu's ready answer. "But I'm also thinking how are we to start work when the rain stops."

"And do you think I feel easy about that? No, I'm heavy-hearted too. Time waits for no man, we have to act. But . . ." his voice was low. They went on together, until they heard whistles sounding all round them on the work site. The chief suddenly halted. "Take a motor-cycle and go immediately to the sub-district headquarters," he said to Liu. "You must do your best to

contact general headquarters. Tell them our decision and ask for further instructions. Understand?"

"Yes, I'll go right away." Liu straightened his raincoat, then plunged down the muddy road in the direction of the motor pool.

Tung turned and hurried towards the warehouse.

Everything happened at such a pace that after two hours all was quiet again at 208 Construction Site. The centre of action had moved itself to the riverside.

Having sent off the last batch of timber, Tung, dragging his heavy legs, decided to go and see to things at the bridge. As he passed the warehouse, his nostrils were assailed by the pungent aroma of pine wood. Someone was sweeping the big, empty warehouse. A closer look revealed the man to be Tsui, head of supply. Tung chuckled. "Ho, Young Tsui, why bother to clean up an empty room?"

"You see, chief, as soon as the bridges are repaired the trains will be running. We ought to get ready for the new batch of timber due to arrive."

Tsui straightened up, one hand still holding the broom as he smiled at the chief.

"That's fine. You've figured it out all pat. I'm going up to the bridge to see how they're getting on. When Liu comes back, tell him to come for me at the bridge head."

"Old Tung!" As Tung turned to go, someone hailed him from behind. It was Liu, shouting and running towards the chief. "I put a call through. I used the telephone at the sub-district headquarters."

Tung hurried up to the brigade leader. "What did the commander say?"

"He approved of our decision. The railway engineering bureau had already contacted him. He was trying to reach us," said Liu excitedly.

Tung let out a little sigh but otherwise seemed quite unmoved, as if the news was nothing much to get excited about and everything was as he had expected. Without a word, he turned and proceeded through the pouring rain towards the riverside.

Tsui came out to stand by the warehouse gate. Watching Tung's mud-plastered feet limping heavily down the muddy path,

it seemed to him that they were marching firmly, that every footfall rang with the cry: Struggle forward! Fight on!

Without knowing why, Tsui's eyes grew misty. It was Liu's tug at his sleeves which brought him back to reality. With big steps he strode after the heavy figure receding in the misty rain.

Translated by Chin Sheng
Illustrations by Yao Yu-to

SUN LI

Little Sheng and Little Chin

At the end of spring 1942, a cavalry troop came to Central Hopei. It was the first cavalry unit the Communist Eighth Route Army ever had in North China. Soon, the performances of the troop at commemoration meetings, military reviews and gatherings became a favourite form of entertainment of the villagers.

The horses were strong and sturdy, their colour good, their coats glossy. And the men were so young. Even their leader, a warm-hearted fellow named Yang, was not more than twenty-one.

The peasants loved their own army, and they were fond of horses. Whenever the cavalry passed through a village, whether in the early morning mist or the dusk of evening, the peasants would stop their lunch or supper, pick up their buckets and help the cavalrymen water the horses. If the unit went by without stopping, the peasants would gather on the embankment to watch.

"What do they feed their horses? Every one of them is so sturdy and fat. We can never get our farm stock to look like that."

"The one on the black horse is Captain Yang, and that one in front carrying three weapons on his back is Little Chin."

"Just look at the boy! He seems glued to the horse."

Little Chin had joined the army when he was seventeen. Now at nineteen he was Captain Yang's messenger and orderly. He rode a roan horse of foreign breed captured from the Japanese.

Sun Li is a well-known novelist. His story *Lotus Creek* was published in *Chinese Literature* No. 10, 1959.

The peasants from all the villages in the vicinity liked to watch the cavalry. As the last horse and rider was reluctantly allowed to depart from one village, the next village would eagerly welcome the appearance of Little Chin, who rode in front.

Today, nobody knew where the cavalry was bound. The riders looked solemn but unhurried. From the expressions on the men's faces and the pace of the horses, apparently nothing extraordinary was up.

"Are they going off to fight the Japanese, or are they just on the march?" a young peasant asked a woman beside him.

"They are going to battle, I think," answered the woman.

"How do you know? Did the captain tell you?"

"I know Little Chin. You just watch. When he pouts it means they are off on an ordinary march and he's reluctant to leave the family he's been staying with. If there's a smile on his face which he's trying to hold back, then they're going into battle. Just remember that and you'll be all right."

Little Chin, cantering in the van, was smiling broadly. He had received a delightful present before they started out. Now, he kept feeling his rucksack where the gift was hidden.

The sun had just risen above the horizon, flooding the plain with sunshine which spread like water across the wheat fields, ditches, trees and villages. The crowing of roosters echoed from hamlet to hamlet. In one village the young men of the self-defence squad had started their morning drill. Crisp commands for assembly were also heard in other villages.

Purple pompon-like flowers brushed the belly of Little Chin's horse all along the way and dew soaked the boy's trouser-legs. He seemed in no hurry though, and let the horse saunter along freely.

"Ride a little faster, Little Chin. We must get to Shihfuchen and make camp before dark," the captain urged him.

The boy turned back and smiled. "At this speed, we'll get there long before dark."

"Do you like to stay in the sun in such hot weather? I'm thirsty."

"Beyond that grave is a melon patch. I'll buy a melon. I'm on good terms with the old keeper. The trouble is he might not want any payment. The water-melons aren't quite ripe yet. I'll get you a small sweet melon."

"We can't accept gifts from the people. Give me the water-bottle."

Little Chin handed it to him and said, "I'll get you a clean, cool room free of bedbugs when we arrive at Shihfuchen."

Then he pulled something from his sack and struck his horse on the flank. The animal started galloping.

The captain charged his little black horse forward.

"What is that thing, Little Chin?" he asked.

"A quirt!" Little Chin waved it in the air. It was a short, little whip made of multi-coloured silk and cloth strips, like a child's toy.

"You imp! Where did you get it? We're cavalrymen. We don't need whips," laughed the captain.

"Who should use whips if not cavalrymen? The generals on the stage all carry whips when they go into battle."

"That's on the stage. We need both our hands to fight. We don't want this stuff. Put it away now, we're entering a village. People will laugh at you," said the captain.

Little Chin looked again at the colourful quirt, then put the beloved gift into his sack. He was a little vexed. It had been very nice of his friend to make it for him. What a pity that he couldn't show it off when he entered the village. She must have gone to a lot of trouble.

"Did you buy it, or did you ask someone to make it for you?" the captain asked.

"It was sent from home."

"Why should they send you a thing like that?"

"They must have thought that since I've become a cavalryman I'd need a quirt and would be glad to have one."

"Why is it so colourful and fancy?"

"It was made by a young girl. They like them colourful."

"Who is she?"

"A neighbour. We grew up together."

Captain Yang asked no more questions. After a while he said:

"Don't forget to thank her the next time you go home on leave or when we pass through your village."

Two days later, the cavalry clashed with the Japanese. It was a heroic battle, a counter-attack to the enemy's "general mop up" campaign. The fight raged until the sun dimmed and the sky darkened over the Central Hopei Plain. It was May. The wheat had just turned golden. Captain Yang died in battle. Little Chin was wounded. With his bare hands, he dug a pit and buried the captain. His gun empty, he broke through the encirclement that night and returned home. But he could not eat or sleep. The captain, the horses running in all directions, the comrades fighting and dying in the ditches . . . all these appeared before his eyes and would not let him rest. Day and night, he seemed to hear bugle calls, the captain's commands, and the galloping of horse. At other times he heard nothing. He was ill and getting worse.

Little Chin's father was already fifty-nine. The boy was his only son. He dug a tunnel. Its entrance was behind an old and shabby cabinet in their little house. Its exit was in the house of their neighbour Little Sheng, the girl who sent Little Chin the whip.

Little Sheng's father was a small pedlar in Shansi Province. He had been away for more then ten years. After Little Chin's mother died and there was no one to sew and mend in the family, Little Chin's father went to Little Sheng's mother with a length of cloth and a favour to ask.

"Don't call it a favour," said the kind neighbour. "Although we're not related we live so near we are just like members of one family. Whatever you want made, just bring it over. I know how difficult it is to have no one to do necessary things. Leave the cloth here, I'll cut it and sew it for you."

Since then the two households had been on very good terms.

Little Sheng's mother hugged Little Chin in her arms when he came back from the battlefield. Patting his ragged uniform, she said: "How you must have crawled and rolled in the battle, my boy! Why, you've got your brand-new tunic torn to shreds. Little Sheng, find something for your brother to change into at once."

"Aw, don't bother," said Little Chin.

"You'll have to lie down and rest anyway, you silly child," said Little Sheng's mother. "Look at the colour of your face. Take off your tunic and let Little Sheng mend it for you. Look at the blood-stains. Did you shed all that blood? . . ."

"Some is mine. Some is the blood of my comrades," said Little Chin.

That night, mother and daughter helped Little Chin's father dig the tunnel and persuaded the boy to hide in there so that he could rest and heal his wound.

The enemy started a drag-net search through the fields. The village became their base and they searched and checked each household. Little Sheng and her mother were very worried about Little Chin. They couldn't eat properly and they would not allow him to come out. Every morning Little Sheng took food to him in the tunnel.

One day, the small oil lamp in the tunnel suddenly went out. Little Sheng, her hair covered by a kerchief, crawled in with the food.

"It's me," she whispered and put the food down. She fished a box of matches out of her pocket and struck several before

she got the lamp lit. The tunnel was smoky. Little Chin reclined mutely on the damp earth, his face as white as a sheet of paper.

"How do you feel?" she asked.

"I am going to die if I have to go on like this."

"What else can we do?" She sat down on his quilt. It was virtually soaked with damp. "The Japanese soldiers seem to be settling down in this place. They're not going to leave if we don't fight." Then she inquired, "Was Captain Yang killed?"

"Yes. He's always in my mind. I was with him for two years. We were about the same age. I always feel that he is still alive. One minute I keep thinking that I should bring him his meal and the next that it's time to get his horse ready for him. Of course I'm only dreaming. I'll never be able to see him again."

"I still remember his face," said Little Sheng. "I saw him when he came to our house with you that day. Was he from the southern provinces?"

"From Kweichow Province, nine thousand *li* away. But he learned to speak perfect northern dialect. Don't you think so?"

"Does his family know about his death? How bad they'll feel when the news reaches them. Of course, he was a soldier in wartime. . . ."

"At first he and I were covering the retreat of the others. Then I was wounded. An enemy soldier rushed towards me and Captain Yang jumped out from behind the shelter and came to grips with him. No one could match his courage in battle, but he was always telling us to be careful. He was very strict with himself but very considerate of others. One day when we were marching and he was thirsty I offered to get him a melon but he wouldn't let me."

"Why? Was there anything wrong with the melon?" asked Little Sheng.

"No. He didn't like to take anything from the people. You see, he wasn't the only one who was thirsty. He always knew when I had something on my mind! That same day he criticized me for playing with that quirt you sent me."

"That was just for fun. Why should he criticize you?"

"He said it was too fancy for a soldier. I put it away immediately. But later he told me to thank you for it."

"Don't thank me for getting you criticized!" laughed Little Sheng. "We must avenge him. You have to get well quickly."

When Little Sheng came out of the tunnel she said to her mother, "Let's buy some eggs and noodles for Little Chin."

"We haven't reaped any wheat nor sown anything to be harvested in the autumn this year because of the invaders. We can't even afford to eat *kaoliang* and millet, and it's difficult to borrow money at such times."

"Let's weave a length of cloth and sell it, Ma."

"We are running and hiding all the time. How can you talk about weaving? If you set up the loom how do you know the Japanese devils won't rush in on you?"

"Perhaps we can sell something. His health is more important."

"He's not an outsider, child. I look upon him as your brother. But what can a poor household sell? There's nothing of value here."

Little Sheng raised her head, meditated for some time, then said, "Suppose we sell that coat of mine."

"Your coat! That flowered silk coat?" asked the mother. "Are you selling your wedding outfit before you are married?"

"We are in hiding all the time, I won't be wearing it for the time being anyway. It will either rot in the earth where we buried it for safe-keeping or the enemy soldiers will take it away. We had better sell it."

"I've been thinking of marrying you off," said the mother with a smile, "if we can make a suitable match. Times are bad. I am worried about you. You shouldn't sell the coat. I've set my heart on your wearing it at your wedding."

"But he had nothing fit to eat this evening. Do you mean we should give him coarse *kaoliang* meal?" said Little Sheng. "It's market day. Go and sell the coat."

In the end the daughter persuaded the mother to take the coat to market. But the market looked quite different from ordinary days. There were no young people nor proper buyers and sellers to be seen. The booths selling thread and coloured cotton cloth were not there any more. Holding the coat, Little Sheng's mother stood at the crossroads a whole morning without finding a buyer. It was only in the afternoon that a man who

worked for the Japanese appeared with a tart. He wanted to buy her a coat. Little Sheng's mother sold the coat without daring to haggle over the price. Her heart ached as if she had sold her daughter's flesh. With the money she had received, she bought a catty of noodles and ten eggs. These she gave Little Sheng as soon as she reached home. She could not hold back a sob when she thought of the coat, and that evening she was so upset she went to bed before it was dark.

Little Sheng said nothing but set to cooking supper for Little Chin. It was getting dark. She broke dry willow branches into small pieces, staring at the fire-light flickering on her face and arms. She seemed to see Captain Yang's blood and Little Chin's pale face, but quickly the boy's thin face grew plump and rosy again. She turned her mind to her cooking. When everything was ready she barred the gate and pulled the string attached to the bell in the tunnel. There was a muffled tinkling. Then Little Chin crawled out.

Little Chin ate a very good meal that evening. He finished the two bowls of noodles and four eggs at one sitting and seemed to have appetite for more. After he had eaten he wiped his mouth and said: "You should just give me whatever you have. Why do you spend extra money to feed me?"

"We haven't any money. Your sister sold the coat which was meant for her wedding to buy you proper nourishing food. If only it was sold to a nice person. It pains me to think of the coat falling into the hands of that tart. Don't forget your sister for this," Little Sheng's mother said from the *kang*.

"This is merely treating the Eighth Route Army. There's no need for thanks or repayment," smiled Little Sheng as she cleared away the chopsticks and bowls.

Little Chin lay down on the *kang*. Little Sheng covered the window snugly with a quilt and barred the door. Then she lit the oil lamp, put it in a niche in the wall and began to sew while listening attentively for any strange sounds outside. She knew that countless women and children of the Central Hopei Plain were spending the night in the fields, full of fear and anxiety as they listened to the sound of guns.

"We are luckier than others," Little Sheng turned and said. "We can still sit on our own *kang*. Are you asleep?"

"Your Ma is asleep but I'm not," answered Little Chin. "I've eaten a lot today and I feel better. Besides, I slept during the day in the tunnel. I'm not sleepy now. What are you doing?"

"I'm making a pair of shoes. Shoes wear out quicker with so much running in and out of shelters."

"I can do without shoes since I stay in the tunnel all day," said Little Chin. His woeful tone made a lump rise in Little Sheng's throat.

"You're wounded and ill. Don't think of anything now but just take good care of yourself. When you recover, you can go across the railway to look for the army. When I finish these shoes of mine, I'll make a pair for you."

Little Sheng's eyes glistened in the dark. On a night like this, the enemy was at work, setting fire to nearby villages, and searching, plundering and killing in fields, villages, forests, and haystacks the innocent people of Central Hopei.

Translated by Yu Fan-chin
Illustrations by Shu Lan

Writings of the Last Generation

YEH SHENG-TAO

A Year of Good Harvest

In front of Wan Sheng Rice Shop was a wharf, and moored at all angles to this wharf were the open boats in which the villagers had come to sell their rice. These boats, loaded with new rice, were riding low in the water. The space between them was filled with cabbage leaves and refuse, round which swirled greasy bubbles of white scum.

From the wharf climbed narrow steps, up which no more than three men could walk abreast. The rice shop stood at the top of these steps. The morning sun, slanting down through gaps in the tiles of the roof, shed broad beams of light on the tattered felt hats bobbing up to the counter.

The owners of the felt hats had risen at dawn to row here. And once at the wharf, not waiting to catch their breath, they rushed up to this counter to see what fate had to offer.

"Polished rice, five dollars. Paddy, three," was the manager's laconic answer to their question.

"What!" The peasants in the old felt hats could hardly believe their ears. Their hopes were dashed to the ground. They were dumbfounded.

"In June you paid thirteen dollars, didn't you?"

"We paid as much as fifteen, let alone thirteen."

"How could the price drop so sharply?"

Yeh Sheng-tao, well-known novelist, is Vice-Minister of Education of the People's Republic of China. This story was written in the early thirties.

"What else do you expect in times like these? Rice is flooding the market. A few more days and the price will fall even lower."

Coming here, the men had plied their oars as if rowing in the dragon-boat race, but now all the energy drained out of them. This year Heaven had been kind, rain had fallen in due season, there had been no plague of pests and each *mou* had yielded a few pecks more than usual. This time, they had thought they could have a breathing space. To end up even worse off than the previous year was the last thing they had expected.

"Let's not sell. Row it home and keep it!" cried one simple soul indignantly.

The manager uttered a sarcastic laugh. "Do you think folk are going to starve because you won't sell? The whole country's full of foreign rice and flour. Before the first lot's finished, foreign steamboats are shipping in a second."

Foreign rice, foreign flour and foreign steamboats were too remote to worry them. But not to sell the rice in their boats was unthinkable. That was simply angry talk. They had to sell. The landlord would be coming for his rent, and old debts must be cleared – they had run into debt to pay day-labourers and buy fertilizer and food.

"Why don't we try Fanmu?" It occurred to one of them that they might find a better price there.

But the manager snorted with laughter again and tweaked his sparse beard as he said: "Even if you go to the city, you'll find our rice guild has reached a common agreement. The price everywhere these days is five dollars for polished rice, three for paddy."

"It's no good going to Fanmu," put in one of the peasants. "You have to pass two toll-houses, and there's no knowing how much they'd charge by way of tax. Who's got so much money to spare?"

"Won't you raise that price a little, sir?" another pleaded.

"That's easy to ask. We've sunk capital into this business, I'd have you know. To raise the price would mean giving you something for nothing. Do you take me for a fool?"

"But this price is too low, honestly it is. Who ever dreamed of such a thing? Last year we sold at seven dollars fifty. This summer rice went up to thirteen, no, fifteen, sir, as you said yourself just now. We were sure this year we'd get at least more than seven dollars fifty. Only five dollars – no!"

"Give us last year's price, sir! Seven fifty."

"Have a heart, sir. Be content with a smaller profit."

Another merchant, losing patience, hurled the stub of his cigarette into the street. "So you think the price too low!" He glared round at them. "You came of your own free will. You weren't asked to come. What's all this fuss about? We have silver dollars. If you don't sell, others will. Look, more boats have just stopped at the wharf."

Three or four more old felt hats were mounting the stone steps, the ruddy faces beneath them bright with hope. The sunlight slanted on the shoulders of their tattered cloth jackets as they joined the group.

"Wait till you hear this year's price!"

"It's even worse than last year – a paltry five dollars!" Utter despair was on the speaker's face.

"What!" Hope vanished like a pricked bubble.

But though hope vanished, they had no choice but to sell the rice in their boats. And fate compelled them to sell to Wan Sheng Rice Shop. For the rice shop had silver dollars, and silver dollars were precisely what the empty pockets of those tattered cloth jackets lacked.

As they haggled over the grading of the rice and whether the measure was full enough or not, the rice boats were slowly emptied of their loads. They rode higher in the water, and the cabbage leaves and refuse between them disappeared. The peasants in the old felt hats carried the rice they had grown into Wan Sheng's godown in exchange for varying numbers of notes.

"Give me silver dollars, sir!" White rice should at least be exchanged for white silver dollars. If not, the bargain seemed an even worse one.

"Ignorant clods!" A hand holding a fountain-pen rested on the abacus, while scornful eyes looked at them from over spectacles. "A dollar note is as good as a silver dollar. You're not being cheated of a single cent. We don't have silver dollars here, only notes."

"Let me have notes of the Bank of China then." Judging by the design, the notes in this speaker's hand were from some other bank.

"Pah! These *are* from the Central Bank of China." The accountant levelled the forefinger of his left hand. "If you refuse them, we can take you to court."

Why should refusing bank-notes be a crime? None of them understood that. After checking the figures on the notes and exchanging half-convinced, half-sceptical glances, they tucked the money into the empty pockets of their shabby jackets or the empty wallets at their belts.

Cursing under their breath, they left Wan Sheng Rice Shop as another group mounted the steps from the wharf. More bubbles of hope were pricked, destroying all the joy the peasants had taken since early autumn in their heavy ears of paddy. They carried their precious white rice into Wan Sheng's godown in exchange not for white silver dollars but paper notes.

The streets began to hum.

The owners of the old felt hats had come to the market today intending to buy many different imported products. They had run out of soap and must take back another ten bars or so, as well as a few packages of matches. Paraffin bought from the pedlars who came to the villages cost ten coppers for a small ladle, if several households combined to buy a tin they would get much better value. Moreover it was said that the gay foreign prints displayed in the shop windows were only eighty-five cents a foot, and for months now the womenfolk had been dreaming of buying some. That was why they had insisted on coming today when the rice was to be sold, having worked out exactly how many feet they needed for themselves, how many for Big Treasure and Small Treasure. Some of the women's plans included one of those oval foreign mirrors, a snowy white square towel or a pretty knitted cap for baby. Surely this year, when Heaven had been kind and each *mou* had yielded an extra three or four pecks, they were entitled to loosen the purse-strings usually held so tightly. For there ought to be something left over even after paying the rent, their debts and the guild. With this in mind, a few of them had even toyed with the idea of buying a thermos flask. Now that was an extraordinary thing! Without a fire, the hot water you'd poured

in stayed just as hot hours later when you poured it out. The difference between heaven and earth could hardly be greater than between a thermos flask and the straw-lined box in which they kept the teapot warm.

Cursing beneath their breath, they left Wan Sheng Rice Shop like gamblers who have lost — lost yet again! The extent of their losses was still not clear to them. At all events, of the wad of notes in their pockets not half a note or ten cents was truly their own. In fact, they would have to raise a good many more notes somewhere to discharge their obligations — they had no idea how they were going to satisfy their creditors.

It was clear anyway that they had lost, and rowing straight home would not save the situation. If they strolled round the town and made a few purchases that would merely put them a little further in the red. Besides, there were some things they simply had to buy. So the streets began to hum.

In threes and fours, casting short shadows behind them, they walked the narrow streets. The men muttered over the price they had just been given and damned all black-hearted rice merchants. The women, a basket on one arm a baby on the other, let their eyes dart from shop to shop on both sides of the street. As for the children, they were fascinated by the celluloid dolls, tigers and dogs from abroad, as well as the red and green tin drums and tin trumpets — also made abroad. It was almost impossible to drag them away.

"Look, sonny, at this fine foreign drum, this foreign trumpet! Want one?" Tempting voices were followed by a rub-a-dub-dub, a toot-toot-toot!

Dong-dong-dong! "Highest quality face-basins of foreign enamel! At forty cents apiece they're going dirt cheap. Buy a basin, friends!"

"Walk up, friends! Here's a splendid variety of foreign prints selling at cut prices. Eighty-five cents a foot! Let me measure a few feet for you!"

The assistants in the chief shops were going all out, shouting to the villagers at the top of their voices, pulling at their cotton sleeves. For this was the only day in the year when the peasants' pockets were lined. This was a chance not to be missed.

After some deliberation spent in cutting down their budgets, the villagers handed one note and then another to the shop assistants. Soap, matches and the like were necessities, but they bought a little less than originally planned. The price of a tin of foreign paraffin was so shocking that they refrained from buying; they would have to go on purchasing a ladleful at a time from the pedlar. As for cloth, those who had decided to make two suits bought cloth for one; those who had planned new jackets for mother and son, bought enough for the son only. The oval foreign mirror, after being lovingly handled, was replaced on the counter. The knitted cap proved a perfect fit for baby; but his father's sharp veto made mother put it hastily down again. Those who had wanted a thermos flask dared not even ask the price. It might be as much as a dollar or a dollar fifty. If one threw caution to the winds and bought one, white-haired grandad and granny would be bound to scold: "Hard times like these – yet all you can think of is comfort! Throwing away a dollar fifty on a falderal like that! No wonder you've never amounted to anything. We've managed all these years without a thermos." No, life would not be worth living. Some mothers couldn't resist the longing in their children's eyes and bought the cheapest and smallest celluloid doll: you could move its arms and legs, make it sit down, stand up or raise its arms. Naturally, the children without one were green with envy, while even the grown-ups were much impressed.

Finally, having bought a little wine and some pork from the butchers, the villagers went back to their own boats moored by the Wan Sheng wharf. From the stern they brought out dishes of pickled vegetables and beancurd; then the men sat down in the bow to drink while the women started cooking in the stern. Presently smoke was rising from most of the boats, and tears were flowing from the peasants' eyes. The children alone, tumbling and rolling in the empty holds or playing with grimy treasures rescued from the water, were happier than words can tell.

Wine loosened the peasants' tongues. Neighbours or strangers, the same fate had befallen them all, and they drank together on the river. Raising his wine bowl one would voice his views, while another, putting down his chopsticks, would chime in with approbation or an oath according to the sentiments expressed. They needed this outlet for their feelings.

"Five dollars a bushel, devil take it!"

"Last year a flood, a poor crop – we lost out. This time a good year, a big crop – but we lose out again."

"We are worse off this year than last. Last year we still got seven dollars fifty."

"We've had to sell the rice we need ourselves. Heaven! The men who grow the grain can't eat it!"

"Why did you have to sell it, you old devil? I'd have kept some for the wife and sonny. I wouldn't pay the rent, but let them have the law of me and lock me up."

"We can't pay the rent whether we want to or not. To pay the rent we'd have to run up fresh debts. If we borrow more money at forty or fifty per cent interest, what's to become of us? Next year we'd be crushed by debt."

"There's no living to be made on the land any more."

"Give up the land, I say, and take the road. Tramps have a better time of it than we do."

"Famine refugees needn't pay their debts or guild money. A good idea. I'm for the road."

"Who'll be the leaders? Refugees always have a few leaders whom all the others – men and women, old and young – must obey."

"Seems to me it wouldn't be a bad idea to go to Shanghai to find work. Young Wang of our village went, didn't he? He works in a Shanghai factory and gets fifteen dollars a month. Fifteen dollars – that's worth three bushels of rice today."

"You're behind the times, you fool! In Shanghai the Japs are fighting. Most of the factories have closed down. Young Wang's a beggar now, didn't you know?"

Every road was closed. They were silent for a moment. Their bronzed faces flushed with sun and wine were ugly, as if dark blood were oozing through their skin.

"Who are we sweating for every year anyway?" asked one man hoarsely after a swig of wine.

"It's staring you in the face. We're sweating for them!" Someone pointed to the tarnished gilt signboard of Wan Sheng Rice Shop. "We nearly kill ourselves growing the rice and running into debt at wicked rates of interest. And without moving a

muscle they say: 'Five dollars a bushel!' They might as well tear out our hearts and have done with it."

"If only we could fix the price ourselves! We'd be fair. I wouldn't ask more than eight dollars a bushel."

"Are you crazy? Didn't you hear? The rice merchants sink capital into the business — they can't let us have something for nothing."

"Well, we sink capital into the land. Why should we give them something for nothing? Why should we give the landlord something for nothing?"

"In the godown just now I was thinking: You're sitting pretty today with all this rice stored here. But if a time comes when we've nothing to eat, we'll be back to help ourselves." The speaker kept his voice down, his bloodshot eyes flickering towards the shore.

"If men are starving, it's no crime to take a little rice from those who have plenty." This was said in righteous tones.

"This spring, didn't they break into the Fengchiao rice shops?"

"The militia opened fire and two men were killed."

"There may be shooting here this year, for all we know."

Nothing came, naturally, of this wild talk. When the wine was drunk and the food eaten, they rowed back to their respective villages. The wharf was left silent and deserted, lapped by dark, dirty green water.

The next day another batch of boats rowed up to moor here and the same scene was re-enacted in the town. This scene was being enacted in towns all over the country. In fact, it was only too common.

"When grain is cheap the peasants suffer." This old saying made the headlines in the papers in town.

The landlords, finding it hard to collect their rent, held meetings and dispatched telegrams. The gist of these was: This year there was a bumper harvest. A glut in grain has caused a drop in prices and the peasants are destitute. Public assistance should be given.

The financiers, anxious to do business, drafted a plan for relief: 1. Funds should be raised by the large banks and money-changers for the purchase of rice from all parts of the country, and appropriate places appointed for its storage. The rice was to be sold the next spring when there was a shortage of food. This would keep the rice price stable. 2. The rice should be mortgaged as security for loans to prevent the rice merchants from buying up the whole crop and hoarding it. 3. The financiers should be responsible for collecting the fund to buy grain to be stored. The funds should be paid back after the sale of grain with interest calculated according to the profit made or losses incurred.

The industrialists said nothing. The drop in the price of rice was to their advantage since it freed them from the necessity of giving their workers a "rice subsidy."

The social scientists published their views in different journals. They marshalled statistics and theories to prove that it was ridiculous to talk of a glut in grain, and not necessarily true that "when grain is cheap the peasants suffer." Even if grain were not cheap, the peasants would suffer anyway under the double oppression of imperialism and feudalism.

Since all this happened in the towns, the villagers remained totally ignorant of it. Some of them sold rice they needed for themselves, or their gaunt, half-starved buffalo. Some borrowed money at forty to fifty per cent interest to pay the rent. Some stubbornly refused to pay and were arrested. In bitterness of spirit some paid a few cents today, a few more tomorrow, depriving themselves of food. Some took to gambling, hoping for a run of luck enabling them to win nine or ten dollars. Some begged friends to put in a good word for them to the landlord, so that they might stop renting his land, for they would be better off without. Some left home to seek their fortune, buying a fourth-class ticket on the train to Shanghai.

Translated by Gladys Yang

YANG MO

The Song of Youth *(cont'd)*

THE STORY SO FAR

Lin Tao-ching, persecuted by her feudal family and society, tries to drown herself but is rescued by Yu Yung-tse, a student of Peking University who finds her a teaching post. The two young people fall in love. After the Japanese occupation of China's northeastern provinces in 1931, Tao-ching offends the school head by urging resistance to Japanese aggression. She goes to Peking and tries hard to find a job, but meets with repeated failures. Then she starts living with Yung-tse. By degrees, however, she comes to realize that he is a philistine who looks upon her as a plaything and who has dropped out of the students' patriotic movement through concern for his personal advancement. She is bitterly disillusioned.

CHAPTER 11

It was New Year's Eve by the old calendar.

Through the papered, latticed window of a Peking-style house, light was streaming. Inside that small room, more than a dozen young men and women were engaged in animated discussion.

The well-heated room was thick with smoke. All eyes were fixed on the hostess, Pai Li-ping, who had bright, lively eyes

and an attractive smile. Standing beside a square table, she raised her wine glass and flashed a smile at her guests.

"We homeless waifs are gathered here tonight to celebrate the New Year. Though the Japanese bandits won't let us join our old folks at home in the Northeast, they can't stop us having a jolly time tonight. So, kids, drink!"

Though Li-ping was younger than several others in the room, she posed as an elder sister and called all her guests "kid." She came from the province of Kirin and was a student of the Department of Law of Peking University. Ever since the September the Eighteenth Incident, like other students from the Northeast she had been cut off from her home. So she had asked some fellow provincials, fellow students and friends to her room to celebrate the New Year with her. She was a warm-hearted girl who loved company.

She had no sooner finished talking than a robust, ruddy-faced, handsome youth rose to his feet and posted himself in front of her. Excitedly seizing the wine glass from her hand, he held it high above his head and shouted:

"I protest! On this New Year's Eve, let me raise my voice in protest against the Kuomintang and the government! It's Chiang Kai-shek's policy of non-resistance that has lost the three northeastern provinces, so that thirty million of our countrymen are going through hell and living like slaves. I protest, I strongly protest against the Nanking Government!"

This young man was Hsu Ning, one of the students who had gone south to demonstrate. While shouting, he solemnly swept the room with half-shut eyes as if eager to note the effect of his words. With a wry smile, Li-ping gave him a gentle slap.

"Don't be such a fool, Hsu Ning! Why shout yourself hoarse? Chiang Kai-shek won't hear your protest, but his spies may. . . . Never mind him, kids. Let's drink to the New Year!"

But her words seemed to fall on deaf ears. Some of her friends started raging against the reactionary government and its policy of non-resistance; while others, moved by the festive scene to thoughts of home, gave vent to sighs. A slender girl student of seventeen or eighteen bent over Li-ping's bedstead and shook with sobs, adding to the general confusion. Li-ping hurried over to her and said:

"Don't cry, Hsiu-yu! You're thinking of your mother, aren't you? Her death was tragic and we must avenge it! . . ." Then lowering her voice, she continued: "Don't cry, there's a good girl! There are so many of us in the same boat with no homes or parents left, so many orphaned and widowed by the Japanese devils. We'll settle scores with them some day. You know, the Volunteers in the Northeast are fighting the enemy now. Sooner or later I'm sure we'll fight back to our homes. . . ."

Though Li-ping had seen more of life, as she was speaking, the thought of her home town and of her parents suffering under enemy occupation made her sink on the bed and mingle her tears with those of Hsiu-yu.

An oppressive silence reigned.

Tao-ching was here that evening too.

She lived in the same hostel as Li-ping, whom she had met through Lo Ta-fang, who often dropped in to see Li-ping. Yung-tse had gone home for the holidays, leaving her alone in the hostel. It was natural, therefore, that hospitable Li-ping should invite her to celebrate New Year's Eve with her.

Li-ping and Lo Ta-fang were the only two she knew in the room: the others were strangers to her. That was why she sat alone in a corner, quietly listening. Seeing Hsiu-yu and Li-ping crying, she went over to them, eager to comfort them but not

knowing what to say. Lo Ta-fang, usually so irrepressible, was sitting quietly by the window with lowered head. Even Hsu Ning, who had just been shouting indignantly, now remained silent.

" 'On festive occasions we long more than ever for home.' Tonight my parents must be thinking of their son far away. Oh, beautiful Sungari River! Are your clear waves as lovely as ever?"

The speaker was a young man in a shabby Western suit. He was short and thin and his hair was unkempt. Obviously he had drunk more than was good for him. His maudlin complaints broke the silence.

The others turned to look at him as he sat at the table with his glass raised high. Li-ping wiped her eyes and hurried over to him. Snatching his glass and waving it before his face, she cried: "Shame on you, Yu I-min! Has the wine muddled you so?"

But scarcely had the hostess restored order in this part of the room than a commotion broke out in another corner. This was caused by a man of thirty or so in a grey cotton-padded gown. He had tousled hair which badly needed cutting, and a face as ugly and long as that of a mule.

"No politics, ladies and gentlemen!" he cried. "Let's make life freer — freer. Life is like flowing water which passes in the twinkling of an eye. . . . I can't bear it, I can't bear it. . . . Life is a dream with hardly time enough for joy. I can't bear it!"

Unable to stand this moaning, Hsu Ning and Tsui Hsiu-yu interrupted almost simultaneously. Hsiu-yu sprang to her feet and went over to him. Pointing at the tip of his nose, she glared angrily and snapped:

"Is the great artist so drunk? Evidently you're so befuddled that there's nothing of the Chinese left in you. Don't you understand what times we're living in? Our homes have been destroyed by the enemy, our country is in ruins. Yet you talk such decadent twaddle! I tell you, the Japanese invaders are trying to enslave our country. Come down from your ivory tower and wake up!"

Now it was Hsu Ning's turn. Flourishing one arm and running his fingers through his thick black hair, he boomed:

"Wake up, Wang Chien-fu! Don't you know that Jehol is threatened, and that means the whole of North China is in danger? How can you hold forth in that nihilist way?"

Straining his neck to stare at Hsu Ning and Hsiu-yu with drunken, blood-shot eyes, Wang Chien-fu sniggered in a shame-faced way. He looked so like a beaten cur ready to slink off with its tail between its legs that everyone else in the room burst out laughing.

The talk became general again.

"Li-ping, let's speak about what lies closest to our hearts!" begged Yu I-min with a sidelong glance at her. "Your place shouldn't be like a tea-house with a notice 'Don't Discuss Politics' on every wall."

Li-ping smiled. "On a night like this, I'm sure that all of you have a lot to say. It isn't that I don't like to talk politics. The fact is I don't want you all to feel depressed. . . ." As she said this her eyes grew moist.

"Since it's New Year's Eve, let me tell you a story!" Lo Ta-fang had seemed rather cast down, but now he brightened up and let loose a torrent of words.

"Hsu Ning, do you remember how when we demonstrated in Nanking you and Lu Chia-chuan were 'treated with special consideration' while Li Meng-yu led his troops to storm the Garrison Headquarters? But unfortunately a hundred and eighty-five of us were sent under a strong guard to Hsiaolingwei, where we had our first taste of prison life. At night, in the wind and rain, we slept on the cold, cold ground, while all around was as silent as the grave. How could cultured young scholars like us sleep after suddenly turning into gaol-birds? Some gnashed their teeth, others sighed and moaned, while still others, inspired by the occasion, tossed off impromptu verses. . . . As you all know, I have a certain talent that way, so that dismal night Hsu Ning here and I made up some doggerel rhymes to cheer up the others who were cold, hungry and sleepless. Soon our masterpiece was on everybody's lips. In the darkness there came calls: 'Let's sing the Peking University song, chaps!' 'Encore!' So we transformed our dark and dismal dungeon into an opera house. Even Miss Jeanette MacDonald's golden voice could not have been more welcome than our rough rhymes."

"Aiya, aiya, Brother Lo! What's this masterpiece you're talking about? Let's hear it!" Hsiu-yu was enchanted, her big eyes

sparkled with wonder. This fine build-up that Lo Ta-fang was giving made her ready to stamp with impatience.

Lo Ta-fang laughed loud and long. "My dear young friends, you're easily taken in. I'm no poet, and what I wrote was the crudest stuff. But we had to find some way to kill time, you know, and to raise everyone's spirit." Then narrowing his eyes and shaking his head, he chanted with humorous bravado:

> From Peking University are we,
> All Peking students fearless as can be;
> With waving flags we've marched upon Nanking
> To save our country from the enemy!

"That's not all. Here's some more for you:"

> The police they tied us hand and foot with ropes,
> With rifle butts they dealt us many a blow,
> Two days they've left us with no bite of food.
> Are we down-hearted — No!
>
> Today though prisoners we may be,
> From Peking University are we;
> We fear no foe, nor yet the KMT —
> Hoorah for Peking University!

"That's the spirit! Encore!" Startled by a new voice, they looked towards the door and saw a young man on the threshold, listening. Those who knew him called out in welcome:

"Old Lu, here you are at last!"

Li-ping went up to him and took his hand with an engaging smile. "Lu Chia-chuan, it's ages since I saw you!"

Tao-ching's heart missed a beat. Wasn't this the youth with the fine bearing, bright clever eyes, thick dark hair and kind honest face whom she had met while teaching at Peitaiho? Brief as their conversation had been, this gifted and intelligent young man had made a deep impression on her. She had often thought of him since. Lu Chia-chuan did not seem to remember her, however, while she for her part was too shy to accost him.

Having greeted them all, Lu Chia-chuan seated himself. Then turning to Lo Ta-fang, he said with a smile:

"Go on with your masterpiece, fellow. When you're through, it'll be my turn to entertain the company."

"All right then, let me go on with my tale." Lo Ta-fang smiled broadly, cleared his throat and continued: "It rained harder and harder as the night went on. With the general morale raised, people gradually calmed down. By midnight there was nothing to be seen in the Hsiaolingwei Barracks but some stray lamps flickering in the distance, nothing to be heard but the sentries squelching through the mud as they made their rounds. Suddenly our pickets came to report: 'The KMT have sent more than thirty trucks and over a thousand policemen. They intend to send us back to Peiping by force.' This startling news aroused us again and we started shouting fresh slogans." He had been speaking almost casually but now he grew serious and his voice, though low, rang out clear and strong. "We shouted more powerfully and strongly than ever. 'We won't go! We refuse to go! You must set us free first! Since we came here bound, we may as well go back bound! You want official promotion, riches and the blood of the people! We want happiness and freedom for our land! Freedom! Freedom! We won't go!' " Lo Ta-fang shook his fist, his face was flushed. His audience remained silent; not one of them laughed. Their young blood was seething. All fastened their gaze upon Lo Ta-fang, and many had tears in their eyes.

Again silence reigned in the room.

Wang Chien-fu, the artist with the mulish face, left early. After a few moments the others began to eat and drink and chatter freely.

"Let me tell you something amusing." Lu Chia-chuan smiled at those around him. "I heard it only recently, and I think it is as good a joke as Chiang Kai-shek's boast to the cadets of the Central Military Academy that our lost territories would be recovered in three years. A few days ago, when the situation in Jehol became critical, T. V. Soong, Chiang's brother-in-law, flew to Chengteh. The moment he stepped down from the plane, he delivered a speech full of noble sentiments to the garrison troops of Jehol. He said: 'Just go on fighting! I promise you that the Central Government will stand by you. Wherever you go, there T. V. Soong will be too. Even if you drive the enemy to the uttermost ends of the earth, there you will find T. V. Soong too. . . .' But on the first day of the battle of Jehol when the enemy was still far away, this big shot Soong, instead of

going with the troops to the uttermost ends of the earth, quietly flew back to Nanking in such secrecy that nobody had any idea that he had left."

Strange to say, instead of evoking laughter, Lu Chia-chuan's anecdote seemed to tear open old wounds and revive sad memories. Without a word the others looked at each other, and it was not until some minutes later that Hsiu-yu broke the silence to say:

"That's terrible! If Jehol is occupied, the whole of North China will soon be. . . ."

Hsu Ning could not control himself any longer. Clenching his fists and pushing Hsiu-yu aside, he begged Lu Chia-chuan:

"Brother Lu, tell us more about what's going on! Ever since the crisis started, I haven't been able to sit through lectures."

"Yes, Lu! Go on!" Hsiu-yu and Li-ping called together.

"But I don't know any more than the rest of you." Lu Chia-chuan shook his head with a smile.

"Go on, Lu, do as you're asked." Lo Ta-fang gave him a significant look.

The expectancy in the air and the general respect shown to Lu Chia-chuan made Tao-ching observe him more closely. She wanted to go up to him and greet him, but was too bashful. All the others in the room knew so much more than she did, and they were quite different from the people she had met in the past. They had ideals and a sense of responsibility to their country and people. Among them she was all too conscious of her own shortcomings. So she hid herself in a dark corner and kept silent.

"The present situation is enough to make your blood boil!" Lu Chia-chuan spoke quietly, glancing from face to face. "Every Chinese with any conscience has come to the end of his patience. Ever since the January Twenty-eighth Incident* the government,

* On January 28, 1932 the Japanese attacked Shanghai. Led by the Chinese Communist Party, 100,000 workers went on strike and a Volunteer Corps of workers and students gave whole-hearted support to the Nineteenth Route Army stationed in Shanghai, which had risen to resist the invaders. For over a month the Japanese were unable to enter Shanghai. Later the Kuomintang reactionaries sabotaged the united resistance of the people and army and gave secret information to the Japanese, enabling them to take Wusung, a strategic outpost of the city. The Nineteenth Route Army was forced to withdraw.

though professing to be carrying on resistance during negotiations, has actually pursued a policy of non-resistance. Recently, after only five days of fighting at Shanhaikuan, General Ho Chu-kuo received orders to evacuate; while seven days after the fighting began in Jehol, the provincial capital fell into enemy hands. Now the Japanese are preparing to attack the passes along the Great Wall. . . ."

Lu Chia-chuan pulled out a handkerchief to wipe the sweat on his forehead. Gone were the composure and presence of mind he had shown a few moments ago. He continued in passionate, rousing tones: "The Chinese nation has reached a pass where its very existence is at stake, yet Chiang Kai-shek still maintains that our enemies are not the Japanese invaders but the "communist bandits.' Instead of fighting the Japanese, millions of Chinese troops are now ruthlessly encircling the Red Army and killing Communists and young patriots. . . . But the Red Army led by Mao Tse-tung and Chu Teh has dealt a telling blow against this encirclement personally directed by Chiang Kai-shek. A great victory has been scored. . . ."

" 'Better give the country to a neighbouring state rather than let your slaves have it.' " Hsu Ning broke in vehemently, shaking his fist. "Don't you know what this means? This is what's called, 'we must settle troubles at home before driving out the invaders.' "

The dozen or so young men and girls in the room embarked on a heated discussion. Only Tao-ching remained in her corner without a word. She was listening intently to all they were saying. Like gentle rain falling upon parched rice shoots, their words went home to her lonely, frustrated heart. She was stirred by passions completely new to her. She longed to identify herself with the other young people and to join in their discussions, but force of habit — she was used to being alone — as well as a certain reserve kept her silent in the background.

"Brother Lu!" Hsu Ning called out again. "What do you think we should do? What way out is there for us?. . ."

All the rest, including Tao-ching, turned to Lu Chia-chuan, as if their salvation was in his hands. Irrepressible anxiety clouded their faces.

Lu Chia-chuan looked round those young expectant faces, including Tao-ching in his glance. In a low, grave voice he said: "You want a way out? That's right, we're all looking for a way out — the whole Chinese nation is looking for such a way. Where does it lie? I believe our way out lies in resistance and struggle. Our way out lies in linking our own fate with that of the nation and the people. What other way is there for the intellectuals of a semi-feudal and semi-colonial China? Today, our first task is to win the liberation of the Chinese nation. Only then can there be liberation and a way out for us as individuals. . . ."

"To find a way out for ourselves we must first find a way out for the nation. . . . That's right." Hsu Ning brandished his fist and nodded vigorously.

"Yes, that's how it should be!" Hsiu-yu murmured, her eyes on Hsu.

"Still, I just don't know what to do . . ." someone else muttered.

Again a clamour of voices broke out as everyone gave his or her opinion.

Lo Ta-fang leaped to his feet and pounded the table. "Listen, everyone!" he shouted. "What's the use of empty talk? We should do something practical and useful!" The others began to crowd round him, making their comments. Lu Chia-chuan stood up and slipped over to where Tao-ching was sitting.

"Miss Lin!" He held out his hand. "Remember me?"

Tao-ching rose swiftly to shake hands with him. Blushing, she said: "Of course I do. . . . We met at Peitaiho. . . ."

"So now you're back in Peiping! When did you leave Yang Village?" Lu spoke in a warm and natural manner, as if to an old friend whom he had not seen for years.

"More than a year ago. How are you? Are you still in Peking University?" Tao-ching smiled. She, too, felt as if Lu Chia-chuan were an old friend.

Before he could reply, Li-ping joined in their conversation:

"Well, I never thought you two knew each other!"

"We met more than a year ago. At a most critical time and in most beautiful surroundings." Half jokingly, Lu told Li-ping of his first encounter with Tao-ching. "Miss Lin was arguing with my old brother-in-law. It's odd to think back to it now!"

Turning to Tao-ching, he added: "By the way, what made you stop teaching there? What are you doing now?"

Tao-ching flushed to her very ears. How could she tell him that she had given up teaching, that she had become the mistress of Yu Yung-tse and that everything was over for her! Tongue-tied, she could only look at him, blushing, with a smile.

"You want to know how things are with her? Well, there's a big stumbling-block in her path!" Realizing Tao-ching's embarrassment, Li-ping made a face and went on: "Tao-ching's a good girl, a good, sweet girl. But that old pedant of hers is holding her back!"

"Li-ping! Li-ping! Come here!" Someone was calling. Before joining the others, Li-ping beamed at them both. "Well, you must have a good talk if you're old friends!"

Left to themselves, Lu Chia-chuan and Tao-ching found a great deal to say.

CHAPTER 12

Before daybreak, Tao-ching went back to her lonely lodgings. Tired as she was, when she lay down she found she could not sleep. The New Year's Eve firecrackers gave her no peace, and her heart was in a tumult after her experience that night. The strange yet congenial faces flashed before her mind's eye: Lu Chia-chuan, Lo Ta-fang, Hsu Ning, Tsui Hsiu-yu, Pai Li-ping. . . . What delightful people they were, warm-hearted, eager to find a way out for China, so that people could lead real, worthwhile lives. Thinking of the party and her conversation with Lu Chia-chuan, she gazed at the papered windows growing white in the dawn, and hugged herself with an involuntary smile. . . .

Firecrackers had been bursting merrily and the stove in Li-ping's room was aglow. Though it was already two o'clock, the young people at her party were talking excitedly or amusing themselves in different ways. Hsu Ning and Tsui Hsiu-yu went out into the courtyard to let off some firecrackers, while Lo Ta-fang and Li-ping sat arguing together in low voices. He seemed to be pleading with her and she was crying. Then Lo Ta-fang looked depressed too. Finally he said nothing more but leaned back

alone against the edge of the bed while Li-ping went off to join Hsu Ning and the others. It was said that Lo Ta-fang had been Li-ping's lover, but they seemed to have fallen out for some reason or other so that both were moody now.

All this time Tao-ching and Lu Chia-chuan sat in one corner talking. From the impression gained in a few hours, Tao-ching felt greatly drawn to this new friend. He was sincere, clever, lively and warm-hearted. What impressed her most was his views on politics — she had never listened to anyone like him before. They sat side by side, and his manner was completely natural and friendly. He asked her about her family, her background and experience, some surprising questions too about her views and ideas. For her part, Tao-ching flung to the winds her usual pride and reserve, and poured out her heart to him as to an old friend. What amazed her was that every question he put to her or every simple statement he made seemed to open her eyes, enabling her to understand more fully the inner meaning of things. So she talked on with him, losing all track of the time.

"Brother Lu," — she had borrowed Hsu Ning's form of address — "can you tell me something about the Red Army and the Communist Party? Are they really for the people and for the country? Why do some people call them — bandits?"

Lu was sitting in the shadow, a mischievous smile on his face. He turned slowly to fix large, sparkling eyes on her.

"A thief is most likely to accuse others of theft; a moralist with three wives and four concubines is most likely to attack women for not remaining chaste. The rulers of China, who have slaughtered tens of thousands of young men, denounce others as cut-throats, incendiaries, robbers and bandits. . . . Is there anything surprising in that?"

Tao-ching smiled. She appreciated his sense of humour. She began to feel bolder and more at her ease.

"Brother Lu," she went on, "you just said that we must resist and struggle in order to find a way out. But I can't quite believe it."

His eyes widened in surprise. "Why? You think we should be law-abiding citizens?"

Tao-ching rumpled the white handkerchief in her hands. In a low sad voice, she said: "You don't know. . . . I have resisted and struggled, but I didn't find a way out."

Lu brushed this aside with a laugh. There was something especially intimate and warm about his frank, open laughter.

"So that's it, eh? Well, Tao-ching, let me give you an example. . . ." He glanced round the roomful of cheerful, noisy young people, and sketched a character with one finger. "See, Tao-ching, it's like this. The character *mu** is only a single tree, but two *mu* make a wood like your name, while three or more form a huge forest that no storm or wind can destroy. When you struggle along on your own in isolation, naturally you meet with nothing but knocks and rebuffs; but when you pitch into the collective struggle, when you link your own fate with that of the people, you will stop being helpless and become part of the great forest."

Tao-ching couldn't help chuckling. "Brother Lu, how well you put it! In the past, all I cared about was my own integrity – I seldom thought about anything else. Tonight after listening to all of you, I feel I've been . . . been. . . ."

"Been what?"

"Been a proper fool!" Tao-ching was a little surprised to find herself speaking so freely to a man whom she knew so slightly.

"That's probably because you've stayed too long in your ivory tower," he said casually with a smile. "Tao-ching, in stormy times like these, you must leave that small personal circle of yours and have a look at the wide, wide world. It's a tragic world and yet so beautiful too. You must come out and have a look round."

His talk had indescribable charm, for he combined a lively concern for others with a ready wit and the power to open men's eyes. . . . The more Tao-ching remembered of what had happened, the happier and more relaxed she felt.

"What an innocent you are, Tao-ching, and how honest!" He had praised her with evident sincerity. "It's good that you want to know about so many things. But we can't talk of everything in one evening. In a day or two I'll drop in and bring you some

* *Mu* 木 means "wood" or "tree." *Lin* 林 means a "wood" or "forest." *Shen* 森 means "a large forest."

books – I don't suppose you've read much on social science, have you? You can read them. Soviet literature is good too. As you love novels, you should read *The Iron Flood* and *The Nineteen,** as well as Gorky's *Mother*.

This was the first time Tao-ching had been encouraged to read. She gazed with gratitude at him.

They were deep in conversation when Li-ping came up and said:

"Old Lu, Tao-ching is a thoroughly honest, intelligent kid. But we must help her to get rid of that millstone round her neck. It's too bad to see a fresh flower on a heap of cow-dung. He'll be the ruin of her!"

Blushing scarlet, Tao-ching cast an imploring glance at Li-ping. She had no wish to hear Yu Yung-tse's name at such a moment.

In the early hours of the morning, Tao-ching and Li-ping saw Lu Chia-chuan and Lo Ta-fang off. In the cold street Li-ping talked with Lo Ta-fang while Tao-ching and Lu Chia-chuan walked side by side.

"I feel so bad, Brother Lu, because I know absolutely nothing about the revolution or what we should do to save the country. Do bring me some books tomorrow!"

"I will. Goodbye for the present!" Lu gripped both girls' hands warmly. Tao-ching felt a strange reluctance to part.

"What clever, talented people they are! . . ." As she smiled at the thought, outside her window sparrows chirped to greet the dawn. But then she remembered Yung-tse. He had gone home alone to spend the New Year holidays with his parents. Tao-ching had not accompanied him because she dreaded meeting Yu Ching-tang. It was because she was left alone in their lodgings that she had been invited to Li-ping's New Year party. But now the thought of Yung-tse weighed heavily on her.

"Compared with them, how unlucky I am!" Sighing, she tugged the quilt over her head.

After parting with Li-ping and Tao-ching, Lu Chia-chuan and Lo Ta-fang had walked along the deserted street talking.

"Why were you so depressed today, Ta-fang? I suppose you must have quarrelled with Li-ping." Lu turned to smile at his friend and threw an arm round his broad shoulders as if to comfort him.

* By the Soviet writers Serafimovich and Fadeyev respectively.

"That's it!" rejoined Ta-fang excitedly. "What's come over that girl? Or was I mistaken all along? . . . Jilting me doesn't matter so much, but she shouldn't run after Hsu Ning like that. Hsiu-yu and Hsu Ning have been friends for years, they might have been made for each other; but she's quite shamelessly trying to break it up. Don't you agree, Old Lu, that once someone becomes politically backward he's bound to degenerate in his private life too? Li-ping used to be really keen. She had ideals, that girl, that's why I loved her. But now she's not doing any work and won't attend meetings of any kind. Play-acting, becoming a movie star and love affairs are the only things that interest her. . . . Naturally someone of my type doesn't appeal to her any more."

Lu Chia-chuan nodded in silence. Glancing down the deserted street, he whispered: "Comrade, I'm sure you will get over it — after all, love isn't everything! . . ." He cast a quizzical look at Lo Ta-fang.

Ta-fang gave him a punch and walked on, muttering:

"Right! I see what you mean. It strikes me as strange, though, that a man who has so little to do with women should take such a keen interest in Lin Tao-ching. Why, you talked with her for several hours! Don't you know that she's got what Li-ping calls a 'millstone round her neck'? I know that lover of hers. A faithful disciple of Hu Shih. I tried to win him over, but it was no use."

"Don't talk rubbish!" Lu was genuinely displeased. "I learned something about her from my brother-in-law last year. She's got a strong sense of justice and plenty of courage. Instead of letting her sink deeper into the mud, we should lend her a helping hand. At Peitaiho, she had a heated argument with my brother-in-law over the September the Eighteenth Incident. She said that China could never be enslaved. I was very taken by her spirit and the serious tone in which she spoke. Why should you make it out to be something personal?. . . You should watch that tongue of yours! Stop talking rot!"

Ta-fang laughed. "It was a joke! Can't you take a joke? As if I don't know you! For the sake of our cause, you've never considered your own personal interest. You're a regular Puritan,

though you're with girls all day long. I wish I were the same! Li-ping — oh, well! Let's not mention her."

"I'm no Puritan," replied Lu thoughtfully. "But under the circumstances I can't let personal considerations count. Ta-fang, that girl — Lin Tao-ching — is charming because of her pluck and her innocence. She's a rebel! It's our duty to help her and show her the right path. Don't you agree?"

Ta-fang turned to him with a grin.

"Of course! We should show her the path of revolution!"

Though it was New Year's Eve, at this hour there were not many people about. A few passers-by only came into sight from time to time under the dim street lamps. Before parting, the two friends spoke about their work. Since Lu Chia-chuan's return from Nanking after the big demonstration, it had been unsafe for him to remain in Peking University. The Party had transferred him to do underground work among the students. He advised Ta-fang:

"Use your father's influence to stay on in the university, if possible. As the reactionaries bring more and more pressure to bear on us, it's becoming impossible for most of us to carry on openly. So you and Hsu Hui should do your best to throw dust into the enemy's eyes in order to strike hard when the chance comes. Oh, another thing — Li Meng-yu is now in the Tangshan mines working among the miners."

"You don't say!" Ta-fang stood still and fixed eager eyes upon Lu. "Old Lu, I'd like to go there too. It's no joke working among intellectuals."

"Quiet now! Goodbye!" Seeing someone approaching in the distance, Lu nudged Ta-fang and they separated. Then swaggering like a drunkard, Lu started chanting:

> On this Lantern Festival night
> I meet my lover in the bright moonlight. . . .

He lurched about, singing, till he disappeared into a narrow lane.

Before the new term Yung-tse came back to Peiping. His first impression on entering the room was that all remained unchanged: bed, book-cases, flowers, curios and crockery. But Tao-ching had changed! She who had been so silent and moody, now surprised

him by sitting by the door to sing like any lively young girl. What astonished him most was her eyes. For though they had always been beautiful, they had usually had a lack-lustre sorrowful look; but now they were radiating joy and sparkling like an autumn lake in which happiness and enchantment seem to ripple.

"You can tell from a young woman's eyes if she is in love. . . ." Yung-tse, recalling this statement in *Anna Karenina,* was seized by a foreboding. He stole uneasy glances at Tao-ching. He seized the chance, as soon as she went out to shop, of rummaging through trunks, drawers, book-cases and even the waste-paper basket. He found nothing, however, except a few leftist books on the desk and by her pillow. Nervously rolling his eyes, he muttered to himself:

"I'm sure of it — someone's been making love to her."

Now that Yung-tse was back, Tao-ching cheerfully cooked for him. She sat by him while he was eating and told him of her new friends, of the change in her outlook, of the happiness she had found. She would have thought it wrong to keep any of this from him. But as Yung-tse listened he turned pale. Putting down his bowl, he said with a frown:

"Tao-ching, I can hardly believe you've changed so quickly. . . ." After a moment's silence he continued: "I implore you not to go on like this — it's too dangerous. Once you're branded as a Red they can cut off your head!"

This struck Tao-ching as quite uncalled for. After all, she had done nothing but make some new friends and read a few progressive books. Why should he try to frighten her? She stared with contempt at his frantic face and, as soon as she could trust herself to speak, gave vent to the thoughts she had never yet expressed:

"Yung-tse, what makes you so hyper-sensitive? You're dissatisfied too with the rotten old society and you know that the Japanese are trampling over China — why can't you go a step further and do something useful for the people and for the country?"

"Because . . . I think. . . . I think this is beyond us, Tao-ching. This is up to the government and our armed forces. What can pale-faced scholars with bare hands accomplish? Of course, it's easy enough to shout empty slogans! As you know, I took part in the students' patriotic movement too, but that was some time ago. Now — now I think the best thing is to concentrate on

studying. We have a home, we'd better keep out of harm's way. . . ."

"How can you be so short-sighted?" She cut him short angrily. "You're the one shouting empty slogans! I never thought you would turn out such a coward!"

Yung-tse was thunderstruck. For some minutes he remained speechless, his beady eyes fixed on Tao-ching. Then his face turned pale, his lips quivered and he laid his head on the table to sob convulsively, apparently even more distressed than she. It was not his pride that was hurt — he was suffering the pangs of jealousy.

". . .Cruel . . . how cruel she's become! She must have had a change of heart and fallen in love with someone else. . . ." Tears streamed from his eyes at this thought. In his view, love was the only thing in the world capable of changing a woman.

After this quarrel Tao-ching and Yung-tse were not on speaking terms for several days, yet she remained quite cheerful. She would hum a tune while preparing the meals or washing. Her dark eyebrows were merrily arched. When the housework was finished, she would take out a book and read it avidly. The hours slipped by, yet she neither moved nor looked up. Absorption in her studies seemed to make her oblivious of Yung-tse's existence and the dullness of life within these narrow walls. Her spirit soared out into the wide, wide world beyond. As for Yung-tse, he was in no mood to attend lectures. All day long he shut himself up in their small lodgings to keep a watch on Tao-ching. He had planned to ferret out her secrets, but was bewildered to find her so frank and open, with no sign of a new lover.

In the evening, Tao-ching would bend over her desk quietly to study Lenin's *The State and Revolution,* taking notes and underlining important passages. When she grew tired, she would read Gorky's *Mother.* And the boundless ardour that this book aroused in her with its vision of a happier world filled her with joy and contentment such as she had never known. On the other hand, Yung-tse, bored to distraction in the little room, had recourse to the Chinese classics on which he had been carrying on research work for more than a year. Sitting by Tao-ching, he would read aloud his favourite passages. His little desk was littered with paper-backed, thread-bound volumes of this kind. He would

read on and on until he was completely absorbed in the distant past, immersing himself in old scenes and rare editions. When he needed a short rest, he would start building castles in the air — he would "found a school," become a great scholar and a well-known figure, and create conditions for a life of affluence. Ambitions like these would spur him on to bury himself yet more deeply in his books.

Tao-ching, however, in her eagerness to read was inspired by revolutionary enthusiasm. Not caring whether she could assimilate all these Marxist classics or not and not knowing how to combine theory with practice, she read on in the hope that from these books she might catch a glimpse of the new world and the truth she had long been seeking. Thus the two young people — one looking forward to what was new, the other looking backward to what was old — would sit reading the books of their choice till late at night. Since New Year's Day when Lu Chia-chuan had brought Tao-ching the books, her outlook on life had undergone a sudden transformation, and no less swift was the effect of these books on her feelings. Many years afterwards, she still remembered clearly that the first book Lu Chia-chuan recommended to her was one entitled *How to Study the New Social Science.* She could recall how, late on New Year's night, she lay curled up in her quilt reading, regardless of the cold — the stove had gone out and a piercing wind was whistling through the cracks of the walls. Yet she read on and on through the night, entranced, until she finished the slender volume.

Lu Chia-chuan merely gave her four standard Marxist works on social science, yet it took Tao-ching five days of concentrated study to finish them in the seclusion of her room. Little did she think what a far-reaching effect on her life these five days would have. These books revealed to her the trends of development of human society and its future; they showed her the light of truth and the road she must take; from them she understood how the rich exploit the poor and what had caused her mother's death. They banished the pessimism and despair that had so often assailed her, filling her heart with an irresistible revolutionary ardour that impelled her ever onwards.

When she had finished reading Lu Chia-chuan's books, she hoped he would come and lend her more, but he failed to appear.

Then from Pai Li-ping and Hsu Ning she borrowed other books on politics, economics and philosophy, as well as some works of literature. Many of these she could not understand. For instance, she could make nothing of Engel's *Anti-Duhring* and Marx's *The Poverty of Philosophy*. Yet her youthful craving for knowledge, her aspiring spirit, made her read on avidly whether she understood or not. Since Yung-tse was away at the time and she was all on her own, she would devote fifteen or sixteen hours a day to reading. She would read even during meals. As her money ran short, all she could afford to eat was coarse corn-flour dumplings. She grudged the time to prepare dishes, and the corn-flour dumplings were not very palatable; but she often finished them without knowing it, so absorbed was she in her books. After discovering this "relish," she was scarcely parted from her books for a moment.

"Hsu Ning, do tell me: Are metaphysics and formal logic the same?"

"If the three principles of dialectics can be applied to every situation, what is the meaning of the negation of negation?"

"Why hasn't the Soviet Union started a communist society yet? What will China be like under communism?"

". . . ."

Since Hsu Ning often called on Pai Li-ping, he took to dropping in on Tao-ching too. And each time she asked him about questions which were puzzling her. He was frequently forced to shake his head and ward her off with a smile.

"Steady on, miss! Don't you think you're biting off more than you can chew? How can anyone absorb so much in such a short time? I'm afraid it's beyond me to answer all your questions." Yet when it actually came to discussing theory, Hsu Ning gave her enthusiastic and systematic explanations, and all he said made sense. Tao-ching was extraordinarily pleased and proud to have made new friends like these. She regained the youth which had seemed to be slipping away. Without knowing it, she often sang or hummed for sheer happiness, and all day long she was as busy as if she possessed an over-abundance of energy. Such happiness was beyond Yung-tse's comprehension. That was why he grew suspicious and suffered the agonies of jealousy.

CHAPTER 13

Tao-ching was lighting the stove in the courtyard to prepare the midday meal when, raising her head, she saw Lu Chia-chuan come in. Immediately she put down the dustpan of coal-balls and hurried to usher him into their room, ignoring the fact that the firewood was alight.

"What's the hurry? Why don't you put in the coal-balls first? The firewood will burn itself out soon." Standing smilingly beside the stove, Lu picked up the dustpan and put the coal-balls on the fire. At once thick black smoke curled up from the small stove. Tao-ching felt embarrassed to be caught doing such trivial housework. Lu Chia-chuan's deft help simply increased her confusion.

"Brother Lu, I haven't seen you for so long," she reproached him. "Come in! How have you been? You can't have known how eagerly I was waiting. . . ." She stood there quite incoherent in her excitement. Lu shook hands with her calmly, however, and then moved a chair next to the door for himself. Smiling at her he said:

"Well, how have you been getting on, Tao-ching? I've been rather busy — that's why I didn't call."

Tao-ching did her best to calm down. An uprush of respect and indefinable delight at this meeting made her eyes sparkle. Leaning against the table, still suffering from shyness and awkwardness, she told him softly:

"Brother Lu, I've read a good deal these days and learned a lot. It's changed me. . . ." She flushed, not knowing how to express herself. After a moment, seeing that her confusion had passed unnoticed, she quieted down enough to tell him of the books she had read, of the effect they had had on her, and of the changes in her feelings. Her spirits rose as she talked, until finally all trace of her nervousness vanished. Then her head tilted to one side, her face aglow, she confided: "Isn't it strange, Brother Lu! In this short time I've become quite a different person — I feel much younger now!"

"You weren't old to begin with, how can you feel younger?" He surveyed her through half-closed eyes. A teasing smile was playing round his lips.

"I assure you it's true." Tao-ching was completely in earnest. "You don't know, Brother Lu, but though I'm only twenty, my . . . my past life made me feel like an old woman. Everything in life seemed meaningless and hopeless. I was in such despair that I'd even thought of doing away with myself. . . . But since New Year's Eve when I met all of you and you encouraged me to read those books, there's been a sudden change. . . ."

She turned round to find Yung-tse in the middle of the room, his beady eyes fixed reproachfully on Lu. Tao-ching stopped abruptly. Before she could speak again, Yung-tse turned to her with a frown:

"The stove is blazing away. Why don't you see to your cooking? Can high sounding talk fill our stomachs?" Without waiting for a reply, he strode out of the room and banged the door behind him.

Tao-ching felt like a plant blighted by a sudden frost. She flushed and could not speak for anger. Lu Chia-chuan was the more experienced of the two, able to cope with a delicate situation. He looked at the door which had slammed shut, and then quietly cast a glance at Tao-ching's pained face. Standing up and walking over to her he said:

"I've met Brother Yu before. . . . Since he's in a hurry to eat, you'd better get his meal for him at once. We mustn't let our conversation inconvenience him. Why not bring the stove inside, so that we can talk as you prepare the meal?"

Tao-ching agreed gladly. She had been afraid that Lu would take offence and go away. As she brought in the stove and put on the rice, her indignation gave way to depression. With lowered head and eyes on the ground, she said: "Brother Lu, you must find a way out for me. I'm so cut off from things, I can scarcely breathe! . . ."

Then she looked up, her eyes preternaturally bright. "Will you recommend me to join the Red Army, or the Communist Party? I feel ready to join the revolution, or the Volunteers in the Northeast."

Lu gave an exclamation of astonishment. How simple this girl thought it was to join the revolution! He looked at her reflectively for a second. "Why? Why do you want to join the Red Army?" he asked.

"Better be a broken piece of jade than a whole tile! I don't want to waste my life in a humdrum, meaningless way. Ever since I was a child, I've been determined to live to some purpose. If this wicked society wouldn't let me live happily, I preferred to die!" Her cheeks grew rosy and her black eyes sparkled as she continued: "But after reading the revolutionary books you lent me I began to know the truth and made up my mind to die for the truth. I believe that to make life worthwhile we must live like the heroes who go to their death as if they were going home. Brother Lu, do let me plunge into the thick of the battle! I can't go on living like this!"

Lu sat there, gently tapping the table as if to punctuate Tao-ching's remarks. He shook his head with an almost imperceptible smile.

"Tao-ching, let's first discuss this problem. By the way, if you don't stir the rice it will stick to the bottom of the pan. In the past you had some clashes with your family; you became dissatisfied with this dark society; now you are in a hurry to join the revolution and fight on the battlefield. What, after all, is your purpose?"

Tao-ching was puzzled and did not know what to answer. As she bit her lips thoughtfully, she forgot the rice. A smell of burning filled the room. So lost was she in thought that she did not even notice when Lu stirred the rice and moved it to one side of the stove to simmer slowly. After a few moments she said hesitantly, looking at him in some bewilderment:

"I've not thought it over very carefully. But I don't believe it's for selfish reasons that I want to join the Red Army. I hate those self-centred people who think of nothing but their own interests."

"Are you sure your thoughts and wishes aren't determined by personal considerations?"

Tao-ching sprang to her feet. "Do you mean that I'm an individualist?"

"No, I don't mean that." Lu fixed his bright eyes seriously on her. "I have this question to ask you. Why did you wander east and west snapping your fingers at this and turning up your nose at that? Why did you feel miserable and depressed? For whom were you sorry? For the toiling masses or for yourself? Now you want to join the Red Army and the Communist Party and

become a heroine. . . . What is your motive? To deliver the people, or to gratify your own ambition — your desire to live a heroic life and escape from your present humdrum surroundings?"

Tao-ching felt dazed. After a slight pause she could not help smiling appreciatively. How well Lu Chia-chuan understood her deepest secrets! Rather ashamed, turning slightly away, she faltered:

"Brother Lu, you're quite right. All I wanted in the past was to be a good person — not to take advantage of others or to let them take advantage of me. I suppose that's what's called 'preserving personal integrity.' It's true that I didn't often think about others. But still I don't altogether understand. I often saved my pocket-money to give to ricksha-men and beggars. I like helping the poor. Can you say that I was doing this for myself too?"

Lu nodded and said:

"I think that to assess anyone's behaviour — including all his efforts and struggles — we have to look not only at his motives but also at the effect of his actions. Does he help society to move forward, or does he just cover up some of its rottenness and help to preserve it?" A kindly, significant smile flashed from his eyes. He glanced swiftly out of the door and then back at the neglected rice pan. "You may have helped a few ricksha-men and beggars, Tao-ching. But can you provide food for thousands of ricksha-men and beggars? Apart from gratifying your desire to be 'good,' what use is your charity to the toiling masses? — As for joining the Red Army and going to the battlefield, your intentions are good; but you must take the real situation into account. After all, there are different kinds of revolutionary work. There is fierce fighting against the enemy and there is also the struggle in daily life, which appears so commonplace that people hardly notice it." Stopping to stir the rice which was burning again, he shot Tao-ching another glance. "Take, for instance, the work you are doing now. Of course, household chores like cooking and washing are trivial and may seem of no account, but suppose we are doing this for the people and for the revolution, suppose it is something that must be done and the task is required of us, then we should do it. Joining the revolution does not necessarily mean fighting on the

battlefield. . . . What do you say to that, Tao-ching? Do you still insist on dying like a hero at the front?"

Lu Chia-chuan smiled, and Tao-ching smiled too. Like a little skiff drifting on the waves, her spirits had risen and fallen with all he said. When she saw that he was giving her sincere, candid and friendly advice, she stopped feeling upset over her loss of face and the blow to her self-esteem. His cheerful laughter and warm concern for her made her heart tingle with delight.

"Brother Lu, I'm most grateful to you!" A smile irradiated her flushed cheeks, and her lovely eyes sparkled.

"What! Isn't lunch ready yet? It's noon." Yung-tse had slipped slyly into the room. Flinging his hat on the bed, he seated himself there stiffly and glared at Tao-ching.

Tao-ching turned suddenly pale. She looked at Yung-tse in bewilderment, unable to say a word. She did not want to quarrel with him in front of Lu.

Lu Chia-chuan had tact. Sensing the tension in the atmosphere, he picked up his hat and nodded to Yung-tse with a smile. With the same quiet smile he said to Tao-ching:

"Well, we've had a good talk today. Now it's time for you to have lunch, I must be going." With a final nod at Yung-tse he went out. Tao-ching followed him in silence to the gate, then came back biting her lips without a word. Turning round, she found Yung-tse behind her, his face lugubriously long.

That night Tao-ching went to bed supperless, confused by thoughts and feelings which she found hard to define. For a long time she could not sleep. On opening her eyes, she saw Yung-tse brooding under the dim lamp on the desk, his head lowered. Tears started to her eyes.

"Can this be the man I loved so dearly and gave my heart to?. . ." She covered her head with the quilt to muffle her sobs.

Still Yung-tse sat at the desk deep in thought. He had known for some time that Tao-ching was friendly with Lu Chia-chuan. The frank, familiar tone of their talk today made him understand all the more clearly why Tao-ching had changed. He did his best to restrain his anger, however, for he considered it undignified for a man to vex himself on account of a woman. Yet when he saw in his mind's eye Lu's handsome, alert figure and unconventional manner and the brilliance in Tao-ching's passionate eyes as she gazed at him, he was tormented by sorrow, anger and hate. Sitting restlessly at his desk, he racked his brains, but he was at his wit's end to know what to do. Tao-ching was headstrong and stubborn: she would go her own way. He could neither appeal to her reason nor move her by tears; still less could he make her submit by a show of force. What was to be done, then? At last he hit upon a brilliant scheme. He would write to Lu Chia-chuan, warning him to watch his step if he had any moral scruples at all.

This missive read as follows:

March 1933

Dear Mr. Lu,

In view of the fact that you and I are fellow students of Peking University, that your family and mine both hail from one village, and that you and I bear each other no grudge, I find it incomprehensible that you should on the pretext of propagating certain theories poison my wife's mind till she will do all your bidding. Now that she is talking of "revolution" and "struggle" day in and day out, our domestic happiness has been undermined in the most unwarranted manner. What is most deplorable is that you should take pleasure in my distress and build your fortune on my misery, though now you may find you have your heart's desire. . . . It is incumbent on all to have moral scruples and not ruin the happiness of others by means of stirring words and flowery speeches. To act contrariwise is against conscience and against what is good in human nature. I venture to offer you these words of advice and expect you to think twice before drawing any conclusion as to whether I am in the right or in the wrong.

I beg to remain, dear sir,

Very respectfully yours,

Yu Yung-tse

After writing this letter he felt a little better, for he had given vent to his indignation. Having sealed the letter, he stretched himself, yawned and went to bed. Tao-ching was fast asleep.

Her face seemed purely sculptured marble, serene and gentle, framed in soft, short black hair. Something like a smile was lurking at the corners of her mouth, though tears still sparkled on her cheeks. "Why, she has been crying!" he thought. At once all his anger and vexation vanished, to be replaced by pity. It came home to him suddenly that she was not an ordinary girl but one with high ideals, and that he should understand her and forgive her. He stood beside the bed watching her for a moment as he thought: "She is good and honest. She will never be unfaithful to me or love anybody else. Why should I alarm myself needlessly? . . ." His heart grew lighter, as if all his doubts had vanished. He stooped to give Tao-ching a gentle kiss on the cheek, and then turned round to throw the letter he had just written into the dying embers of the stove. When he saw a tongue of flame curl up, he felt as if he had performed a great feat. Raising his arms, he hit out several times like a boxer. Then he yawned, pulled off his clothes and retired for the night.

CHAPTER 14

One day Hsu Ning, finding Pai Li-ping out, dropped in to see Tao-ching. While still in the outer room, he asked:

"Where's Li-ping? Why is she out again?"

"How should I know?" Tao-ching smiled. "She's not the stay-at-home type." She had seen the disappointment clouding his handsome face.

Hsu Ning had been on very good terms with Tsui Hsiu-yu, but after she left for the Northeast he had fallen under the spell of Li-ping's charm. Recently the two had been seeing a good deal of each other, but as Li-ping was sociable and had many friends there were times when Hsu Ning could not find her. On such occasions he would come to Tao-ching to see if she knew where her friend was.

He sat down, disconcerted, and asked: "Tell me, Tao-ching, what's really the matter with Li-ping?"

Instead of answering his question, Tao-ching asked: "Have you heard from Hsiu-yu? Has she really joined the Volunteers to fight the Japanese?"

At these words, Hsu Ning flushed. This lively and gay young man, in whose company there was always laughter and merriment, had become crest-fallen and tongue-tied. He stared for some time at a portrait of Beethoven on the wall. Then turning his head he gave an involuntary bitter smile.

"Tao-ching, I don't want you to misunderstand. My love for Hsiu-yu has nothing at all in common with my feeling for Li-ping. If not for my mother's sake and because I'm going to graduate very soon, I'd have gone to the Northeast with Hsiu-yu to join the Volunteers. . . . I know Li-ping's type. . . ."

"So long as you know," said Tao-ching gravely, for she was incapable of speaking sharply. She disapproved of Hsu Ning's attitude towards love, yet the counsel she gave him was sincere and outspoken. "Hsu Ning!" she said. "Don't forget Hsiu-yu! She's one of the best."

"You're right, Tao-ching. To tell you the truth, I constantly think of her, and the thought of her upsets me. . . ." Touched by Tao-ching's sincerity and friendly concern, Hsu Ning began to pour out his heart to her. "You see, at first there was nothing between me and Li-ping—I wasn't even interested in her. . . . But . . . she has a way with her. . . . The trouble is, our work throws us together so often, and. . . . Well, let's drop the subject. I'm sure I can get the better of my feelings." After reflecting in silence for a moment, he stood up to go.

"Hsu Ning!" Tao-ching stopped him short. "Do tell me if you've seen Lu and Lo. What's happening? . . ."

"Oh, thanks for reminding me. Lu asked me to tell you that tomorrow is the anniversary of the March the Eighteenth Massacre.* A big memorial service will be held by the students of

* On March 18, 1926, citizens of Peiping led by the communist leader Li Ta-chao, demonstrated at Tien An Men Square against the shelling of Taku Harbour by the Japanese. When the demonstrators reached the government house, guards opened fire on them, killing twenty-six and wounding more than two hundred.

Peiping, probably followed by a demonstration. Would you like to join in?"

"What's the demonstration for?"

"To oppose the Kuomintang's policy of non-resistance, to oppose Japan's intensified aggression in China, to oppose foreign imperialism as well as its flunkeys, and to support the socialist Soviet Union."

"I'll join!" said Tao-ching without the least hesitation. "Are you going too? What about Lu?"

"Of course Old Lu will be there!" All Hsu Ning's gloom had gone. Making a fierce face, he shook his fist at Tao-ching. "And of course I shall be there too. Furthermore, Tao-ching, you must do all you can to persuade your friends to join. Lu wants us to stir up the masses. I must be going now. See you tomorrow. We're meeting in the Peking University campus at eight. Mind you turn up."

Tao-ching, standing alone at the threshold, did not take her eyes off Hsu Ning till he was some distance away. She was smiling. She had never taken part in a mass meeting or parade. What would it feel like? A mysterious excitement gripped her. It took her a long time to calm down again.

When Yung-tse trudged home with a pile of books in his arms, Tao-ching went up to him and said coaxingly: "Yung-tse, I'm going to join the March the Eighteenth demonstration tomorrow. Do come with me!"

"What? What are you going to do?" He stared into her face in alarm.

"Join the March the Eighteenth parade. Why, don't you approve?"

In a listless manner Yung-tse put his books down. Some time passed before he could bring himself to speak, and his voice was almost sepulchral.

"Don't go, Tao-ching! Listen to me this once. I've heard many arrests are being made. . . . Saving the country is all very well, but why make a fuss over March the Eighteenth which isn't worth commemorating? If anything happens. . . . Tao-ching, do be reasonable! A storm may blow up at any moment, and who knows where the lightning will strike. . . ." There was an imploring look in his fixed eyes, and anxiety on his face.

"No! We're not all cowards like you, afraid a falling leaf may crush you to death!" Tao-ching usually stood Yung-tse's lectures and nagging patiently, but when it came to anything connected with the revolution she flared up easily and would brook no interference. "Forget it," she said. "I wanted you to go with me, but now I see you don't even want me to go. Well, let's say no more, but each mind his own business." With that she ran out of the house.

She went to see her friend Wang Hsiao-yen, eager to persuade more people to join the parade. But Hsiao-yen would not go either, as her father had told her this would be unwise. Tao-ching returned home disappointed.

That night, in bed, Yung-tse began to talk to her. In a low, affectionate voice, he spoke of the lives and loves of the world's great artists and writers — how they had delighted in the beauty of nature and sacrificed everything to love. Then, stroking her hair, he whispered tenderly:

"Tao-ching, do you still remember the beach at Peitaiho? Remember that night when we sat there listening to the lapping of the waves? The sea was sparkling in the silver moonlight. I gazed into your eyes — eyes as deep, as bright, as beautiful as the sea! I felt drunk with your beauty. I was longing to take you in my arms and kiss you. I'll never forget that night; I'll never forget the time we spent together in Peitaiho. If only we could live for ever in such beautiful, poetic surroundings!" Immersed in memories, he closed his eyes. After a moment, he reopened them with an expression of pain. "But when one is brought face to face with reality — the weariness, the tension, the vain strife and the smell of gunpowder everywhere — how can one help feeling a deep bitterness at heart? . . ." With eyes shut, sighing, he dreamily put his arms around her neck.

Listening to Yung-tse, Tao-ching had seemed to see the beautiful and boundless ocean rippling silver in the moonlight. Grasping his hands, she had gazed at him lovingly, murmuring: "Yes, how beautiful it was!" But when she heard the end of his dissertation in which he lamented the vanity of life and the imminence of war, she grew more sober. Gently withdrawing her hands, she said under her breath: "Yung-tse, don't make things more difficult for me, please! Surely you can understand me. . . .

Of course, I'll never forget Peitaiho, where we first met." Her heart was like a tangled skein, for she loved the future yet could not forget the past. In her inmost heart, the past and the future were utterly opposed, and yet they were intermingled and existed side by side.

"Darling!" Yung-tse caressed her hair. "I haven't the least objection to your standing up for the right. I know we must make our life more meaningful. But you are too young and inexperienced to cope with the pitfalls and snares of this evil society. That's what worries me. If we hadn't met at Peitaiho, Heaven knows what trouble you'd be in by this time! Don't you realize that in Peking University alone there are Trotskyites, Nationalists and Anarchists, not to mention different cliques of the Kuomintang. There are very few real Communists, on whom you seem to pin your faith. I hear their number has dwindled almost to nothing since the purge. Where is the revolution in the real sense of the word? Are the people you are so close to reliable? Are you sure they're not wolves in sheep's clothing? Tao-ching, I'm not the die-hard you imagine. You just don't understand me, considering me selfish and conservative. . . . It makes me so unhappy!" He broke off to heave a deep, sad sigh.

The chill of early spring had penetrated their small room, for the night was cold. Outside a heavy sandstorm, so common in the North, was raging, rustling the papered windows. Tao-ching, nestling her head against Yung-tse's thin shoulder, felt her heart grow suddenly cold.

"Wolves in sheep's clothing! Can that be true of Lu Chia-chuan, Lo Ta-fang and Hsu Ning? No, impossible!" She tried her best to brush aside the dark shadows conjured up by Yung-tse. "I won't believe him! I won't!" protested her heart. She was torn by conflicting emotions till tears welled up in her eyes.

But in no time she pulled herself together to say firmly: "No, Yung-tse, don't try to destroy my faith. You've been very cruel — but I trust them and I mean to go on trusting them. If I'm wrong, I'm willing to take the consequences. If some day I go to the bad or die as a result of this, I won't blame you."

"That won't do!" Yung-tse, in his shirt sleeves, sat up abruptly. The despair in his small eyes made him look like a wild beast at bay. "You are mine! Your life and mine are joined in one. We

shall live and die together — no force on earth can part us! No, nothing can part us! I won't let you rush about blindly like this, Tao-ching. On no account must you join that parade tomorrow. Understand? This is the first time I've interfered with your actions, but this is my duty."

"Your duty! How dare you!" cried Tao-ching, who had sat up too, facing the wall. "Now I understand the purpose of your bed-time lecture! What right have you to meddle in my affairs? Am I going to commit arson, robbery or adultery? At first I was taken in by your sweet words; but now I see what you were leading up to — you wanted to make me change my mind and lead me astray. . . . Oh, you'll be the ruin of me!" They quarrelled so vehemently that their neighbours could not sleep. Not till someone coughed loudly by way of protest did they stop arguing.

Tao-ching could not sleep all night. As day was dawning she crept out of bed, glancing at Yung-tse who was sleeping soundly. Without stopping to wash, she tiptoed out of the house. She was afraid he would keep her in by force if he awoke, and how dangerous it would be if all the neighbours knew!

She went to Wang Hsiao-yen's room in the girls' hostel of Peking University and had a wash there. Finding that she could not persuade Hsiao-yen to join the parade, she went alone to the campus behind the Red Building.

CHAPTER 15

It was a spring morning. Perky sparrows were flitting from one green branch to another. When the soft, fresh-scented breeze blew by, one felt that spring had really come at last. The red rays of the rising sun were slanting across the big campus behind the Red Building of Peking University, where students were gathering in twos and threes. After the September the Eighteenth Incident, the anti-Japanese patriotic movement which had been spreading like wildfire throughout the country had been checked by the bloody massacres of the Kuomintang. As it was impossible, under the circumstances, for the students to stage large-scale demonstra-

tions, they began to hold small-scale parades and "flying" meetings, assembling and dispersing with all possible speed.

More and more young men and women, very diversely clad, were gathering on the sports ground. By the low university wall stood a row of weeping willows, their tender green leaves swaying in the breeze. Under one of these Lo Ta-fang was strolling up and down, his broad shoulders now in strong relief against the morning sun, now advancing boldly towards it. His thick, dark eyebrows were contracted in thought. But when he looked at the swiftly gathering, tumultuous crowd, his face lit up with boyish delight. Soon a song reached his ears:

We must fight our way home!
We must fight our way home!
Drive out the Japanese imperialists!

This stirring song warmed his heart. Clenching his fist, he muttered to himself:

"Old Lu might as well send me to an old folk's home!"

The fact was that Lu Chia-chuan was now leading the Party work in the university. Time and again he had warned Ta-fang not to expose himself unnecessarily but, in critical times such as these under the White Terror, to do all in his power to conserve his strength and work underground. Furthermore, he had told Ta-fang not to make a speech during this mass meeting to commemorate the March the Eighteenth Incident, for he thought it more politic to speak himself. Because he was no longer in the university and had no fixed residence, it would be easier for him to go into hiding if need be. Lu's reasons notwithstanding, Lo Ta-fang was depressed. Something seemed to be stifling him. His powerful body contained a vast store of energy and a passion to destroy and burn up all abuses. But now he had no scope for his energies. . . .

The sight of several hundred people on the campus reminded him of the time when tens of thousands of students had gone south to stage a demonstration, fighting their way into the Kuomintang Headquarters in Nanking, smashing the offices of the *Central Daily* and storming the Garrison Headquarters. That had been a magnificent, epic battle. He drew a deep breath at the thought of it.

"Party discipline — obedience, absolute obedience! . . ." he muttered to himself. After some further reflection, he strode quickly into the crowd.

Tao-ching had also reached the sports ground. But she tried in vain to find Hsu Ning, Lu Chia-chuan or Lo Ta-fang among the crowd. Not knowing anyone there, she could only stand apart. She felt excited, but rather bewildered too. The gathering grew till there must have been three or four hundred people there, yet she was still standing alone on the fringe of the crowd. All of a sudden slogans burst forth, loud and strong, from different sides. This sent a thrill of indescribable joy through her.

"We oppose the invasion by Japanese imperialism!"

"We oppose the Kuomintang policy of surrender! Set up a people's government!"

"In memory of March 18th, students should organize! Down with Japanese imperialism!"

These brave, defiant cries stirred the hearts of all. Standing at a little distance from the main, somewhat ragged, ranks, Tao-ching longed to raise her fist and shout with the others. But somehow she was unable to open her mouth. She began to wipe her perspiring forehead with a white handkerchief. Then she noticed beside her a girl student in a shabby blue cotton gown. She was small, rather thin and dark, and had bobbed hair. But she seemed quite composed and was shouting clearly and strongly — evidently leading the others with the slogans. "How brave she is!" thought Tao-ching admiringly. The other girl, noticing her embarrassment, nodded to her in greeting.

"Is this the first time you've attended a meeting like this? Are you alone?"

Overjoyed because the other had broken the ice, Tao-ching drew nearer and answered: "Yes, I came here alone. I haven't found anyone I know yet. . . . To which school do you belong?"

"Peking University." The girl took Tao-ching's hand in a friendly and natural manner. "The first time I joined a meeting like this, I was scared too. I stopped being afraid when I started shouting slogans with the others. Come on, do join us!"

Many pairs of young, eager eyes fell on Tao-ching. Their warm, friendly glances seemed to be welcoming this stranger to join their ranks and become one with them. At once Tao-ching gained

courage. Hand in hand with the girl student, she rushed forward to a platform on which were a few stools. There a short young man in spectacles was holding forth in impassioned tones, helped out by gestures.

"Fellow students! Comrades! The Kuomintang is on the verge of collapse! The high tide of the revolution is coming! We must arm ourselves to fight Japanese imperialism! Down with the Kuomintang! Support the Chinese Communist Party! Support the Soviet Union! Support the Chinese Soviet Government! . . ." While he was shouting these slogans, red and green leaflets began to flutter above them. Tao-ching's clear, ardent voice mingled with the strong, resolute shouts of the crowd to float in the spring sky above the ancient capital. She followed the lead of the girl from Peking University. Her bright eyes shone, her heart beat fast in excitement. For the first time in her life, she felt the tremendous power of the masses. She was no longer alone, no longer afraid, for she was now part of this immense gathering. As these thoughts raced through her mind, police whistles sounded in the distance. The speaker faltered, then jumped down from the platform. At once someone else jumped up calmly to take his place. Tao-ching stared — wasn't that young man in the black cotton-padded gown Lu Chia-chuan? Jogging her companion's arm, she whispered:

"Look! My friend — he's my teacher too — is going to speak!"

"You mean Lu?" Apparently the other knew him, for she pressed Tao-ching's hand in reply.

Lu Chia-chuan climbed on to a stool. The warm spring breeze ruffled his short trim hair. He swept the audience with glowing, magnetic eyes. As the wailing of the police whistles came nearer he began to speak in a low, compelling voice:

"Fellow students! Comrades! Open your eyes to see reality — to see bloodshed and murder!"

This arresting opening held his listeners spellbound. All conversation died away. With bated breath, the gathering of several hundred raised their heads and fixed their gaze upon his imperturbable, expressive features. "All of us who are young have high aspirations and long for our country to become strong and prosperous, so that we can have a great and brilliant future. . . . It was for the sake of our country that the revolutionaries of old

one after another laid down their lives! For this, the heroes of the March 18th Incident gave their lives! Now we are working hard, applying ourselves to our studies; we are exerting ourselves unceasingly solely to bring about an ideal society in China. How different we are from our rulers — they are leading a life of shameless dissipation. They bow and scrape to the foreigners like slaves before their masters, willing to sell the country for their own selfish ends. But at home they lord it over the people, resorting to such measures as imprisonment, enslavement, arrests and massacres. . . . Since the Kuomintang came into power, the people have been reduced to abject poverty, hundreds of thousands of young men and women have been massacred or murdered. Hundreds of thousands! If these dead were to line up here, there would be no room for them even if our university grounds were many times larger than they are. In dealing with their own people, the Kuomintang have proved themselves both 'brave' and brutal; but let's see how they stand up to foreign powers. Now the Japanese aggressors are attacking Lengkou Pass, Hsifeng Pass and Kupei Pass. The garrison troops there, whose patriotism has been thoroughly aroused, have of their own accord taken up arms against the Japanese invaders. They are at this moment fighting the enemy. But what does Generalissimo Chiang say? What is he doing? He has ordered some forty divisions stationed near Peiping, Tientsin and other areas along the Great Wall not to resist Japan but to watch those troops fighting the enemy. In a brazen decree issued to the troops and people anxious to resist the Japanese, he threatened: 'Those who talk wildly about fighting Japan shall be executed without mercy. . . .' "

"Down with the Japanese invaders!"

"Down with the shameless Kuomintang traitors!"

No sooner had these indignant cries cut short Lu Chia-chuan's speech than a volley of shots rang out. The students looked around in alarm.

"Fellow students! Comrades! The rule of reaction must soon come to an end. The people are standing up!" Lu Chia-chuan, still erect on the platform, dignified and unruffled, seemed oblivious to the shooting as he calmly concluded his speech. "Well does the poet Shelley say: 'If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?' "

"If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?" echoed all the students.

"If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?" whispered Tao-ching under her breath, her eyes wet with tears of joy.

The feverish shrilling of whistles and the cracking of rifles rent the sky. The meeting was thrown into a tumult. Some shouted slogans at the top of their voices, others ran about helter-skelter. Tao-ching looked nervously at the girl beside her and then at Lu Chia-chuan – still standing there calmly. They remained where they were, as if waiting for some signal. The sight of them steadied her nerves and she edged nearer to the platform. Looking up at Lu, she wondered: "Why doesn't he make a move?"

Then Lu, who had now heard reports from their scouts, waved his arms and called for order. He cried: "Fellow students! Comrades! The reactionaries are resorting to force again: we are encircled. But brave fighters can never be intimidated. With bare fists or stones we will fight them to the bitter end. Let's break through this encirclement! To the street! On with the parade!"

The students, who had been so confused a moment before, rallied at these words. With stones in their pockets they marched forward, eight abreast and arm-in-arm, to the gates in front of the Red Building, shouting slogans as they went. The girl from the university, who was now the leader of the small group in which Tao-ching found herself, fearlessly headed the way. Close to her was Tao-ching, who with head erect was also marching boldly forward.

Arise, ye prisoners of starvation!
Arise, ye wretched of the earth!
For justice thunders condemnation,
A better world's in birth. . . .

The passionate strains of the *Internationale* burst forth like a mountain torrent amidst the intermittent rifle fire, to float through the wide expanse of the spring sky. The students, thoroughly aroused, formed more regular ranks.

"Halt! Or we fire!" In the face of these defenceless young people the police, with their rifles and crow-black uniforms, acted as if confronted with a hostile army a million strong. Brandishing their bayonets, rifles and clubs, they rushed up from all directions.

Lo Ta-fang could contain himself no longer. Suddenly appearing at the head of the students' ranks, he thundered:

"Press on! On to the streets! Forward on the trail blazed by the March 18th martyrs!"

As with one voice, the young demonstrators echoed his cry.

But before their vanguard reached the gates they had to come to grips with the police and soldiers. Both sides were reduced to utter disorder in the mêlee which ensued as, amidst clamorous shouting, stones were pitted against rifle butts and bayonets. Unable to check the demonstrators' advance, the police and soldiers began to fire over the crowd, while the students to answer this challenge hurled more stones. As they were engaged in this battle, more gendarmes emerged from an ambush and set about making arrests.

"Beat these hangmen to death! Down with the Kuomintang!" shouted the furious students indignantly.

"Seize all the Communists working for Russian roubles!" yelled back the police.

In the fracas Tao-ching lost sight of Lu Chia-chuan and of the girl student who had been beside her. Having thrown all her stones, she did not know what to do next. By this time the police, some with pistols and others with clubs, were laying about them savagely. Many students were bruised and bleeding from wounds on the head; some were tied up by the police and dragged away. Tao-ching received a blow from a club. A policeman was on the point of seizing her when she dodged into another group. The next moment she saw with horror that the girl from Peking University was engaged in a scuffle with a fat man in a handsome uniform. The thin, frail girl had turned into a spitfire. She had hold of the fat fellow's collar and was scratching his face and biting his hands like a fury. Her opponent, panting hard, reeled and struck back, ripping her faded gown.

"Yen Keng! You cur! How many young patriots have you and your cursed Sixth Ward arrested?" Her voice was hoarse, she looked ready to kill the man. The fact was that Yen Keng, chief of the Sixth Ward, while directing his underlings' activities had caught sight of this slender girl and fancied he could amuse himself at her expense. Much to his dismay, however, his scheme was foiled; for this slight, delicate girl proved more than a match

for the fat chief of police. When he realized that his minions were not at hand and that students with flashing eyes were rushing up, he squealed like a pig being slaughtered.

"Here, men! Quick! Arrest these people!"

"You cur! What are you yelling for? Now you'll see what iron fists the people have!" Several students sprang upon him, kicking and cuffing to such good effect that in a few moments he was black and blue. His features contorted, he grovelled before them, unable to rise.

"Help! Help! I'm done for!" His terrified shrieks mingled with the angry shouts of those belabouring him.

The students laughed loudly. Rushing over to the brave girl student, Tao-ching caught hold of her, meaning to wipe the blood from her face; but at that moment a volley of shots rang out and in the confusion which followed they were separated. By this time the police, having heard Yen Keng's shouts for help, came to his rescue. Angry and humiliated, the fat chief of police, still shaking with fright, pointed towards a group of students and croaked hoarsely:

"Arrest her first! Arrest her first! The bitch!"

The girl darted through another group and made off like the wind, her pursuers hot on her heels. Tao-ching watched with fearful anxiety. But just as the police were about to lay hands on her, the student whirled round and with all the strength left to her knocked full tilt into the foremost of her pursuers. The impact made him stagger. Then she turned to make good her escape, running as fast as she could through the crowd, still followed by the police and their fat chief, who had no eyes to spare for any of the others. Tao-ching, who had been running after her new friend, saw that she was making for the Red Building.

"Stop her! Stop her!" At the entrance to the Red Building the girl was seized by large, ruthless hands. In the nick of time, however, this policeman received a vigorous kick which sent him staggering. Tao-ching, rushing to the scene, saw that this feat had been accomplished by Lu Chia-chuan. Her joy knew no bounds. Forgetting their common danger she ran up to him, crying:

"Brother Lu! Brother Lu! . . . " But instead of answering, Lu Chia-chuan looked right and left, then motioned the girl, Tao-

ching and two men students to a wooden door. Pushing them through this, he said urgently:

"Quick! Go through here and down to the cellar. Then turn right. In the printing house you'll find yourselves in safe hands."

Without allowing Tao-ching time to speak, the other girl caught hold of her and, acting on Lu's instructions, the four of them groped their way in the dark down to the cellar of the Red Building.

It was murky in the cellar, for there were few lights. The moment they turned to the right, they were accosted by a printer who whispered:

"Hide here till all's clear again."

"Thank you!" said the girl student, taking the workman's hand without any constraint. Together they went to a small room cluttered up with odds and ends. The workman, having ushered the two girls in here, put out the light, locked the door and led the two young men elsewhere.

Though Tao-ching was glad that they were now out of danger, her heart sank when she thought of Lu Chia-chuan and Lo Ta-fang, who had been leading the others in shouting slogans. The police had been close behind them. Could Lu and Lo Ta-fang have managed to escape? In the darkness, she felt for the other girl's hand and asked:

"Do you think anything will happen to him — I mean Lu and Lo Ta-fang?"

"I think they'll be all right," answered the student, taking Tao-ching's hand. "The policemen today were mostly from the Sixth Ward, and they're a set of stupid fools. Old Lu is clever and cautious. He knows how to deal with them. I'm sure he won't let them catch him. So you know Lo Ta-fang too?" She sounded surprised.

"Yes, I do." Tao-ching's thoughts were in a whirl again. Sitting silently on a packing case, she relived the furious struggle through which they had just passed, and a fierce passion she had never known before welled up in her heart. For the first time in her life, she had seen with her own eyes the brutal measures adopted by the reactionaries against honest young patriots. She appreciated better the courage of Lu Chia-chuan, Lo Ta-fang and the others who had shed their blood and stared death in the

face without a qualm. What a sad contrast her own timidity and hesitation made! Thus musing, she glanced involuntarily at the girl beside her. Though her companion's face was invisible in the dark, her resolute eyes and her small hands that had wrought such havoc on the chief of police gleamed like diamonds in Tao-ching's mind. Then a sense of uneasiness and shame weighed heavily on her.

"What is your name?" This softly spoken inquiry cut short Tao-ching's reflections. After giving her answer, she in turn asked the other girl her name.

"Hsu Hui."

"Hsu Hui?" Tao-ching was delighted. "I know about you! When the students went south to stage that demonstration, you were one of the leaders. . . ."

"Don't talk so loudly! Don't get too excited! . . ." Hsu Hui put her hand over Tao-ching's mouth and spoke under her breath. "I suppose you've heard of me from Hsu Ning? I've known about you for a long time too."

They lapsed into a friendly silence. Now that the ice was broken, they felt as if they had known each other for years and in the dark clasped hands more firmly than ever.

Two hours or so passed. It must have been after noon when a printer unlocked their door and switched on the light. That same instant Tao-ching saw Lu Chia-chuan in a worker's overalls standing by the door. Beside herself with joy, she seized his hand and said:

"Brother Lu, are you all right? . . ."

As calm and composed as ever, Lu smiled and shook hands with her.

"Come on out. The worthy police have beaten a 'victorious' retreat."

Hsu Hui also stepped eagerly to Lu Chia-chuan's side to ask in a low voice:

"How did it go? Are the casualties heavy?"

"Forty arrested, two dead . . . we have no figures yet of the wounded. Lo Ta-fang was among those arrested. . . ."

"Lo Ta-fang!" Lu, the workman and Hsu Hui bowed their heads without a word. Tao-ching, her head lowered too, could see in fancy the strong heroic figure of Lo Ta-fang.

"The struggle — the struggle involves bloodshed. It's a fight to the finish between you and the enemy. . . ." The theories she had read were being borne out by facts.

Some time after the others had gone, Lu Chia-chuan led Tao-ching out by the back gate of Peking University. Keeping to small alleys, they by-passed Ti An Men and made for the highway leading to the West City. At first they walked at a good pace without a word; but when they were some distance from the university, Lu drew closer to Tao-ching and asked:

"Did you come to the parade alone today?"

"Yes!" Tao-ching nodded, somewhat abashed. "Hsu Ning told me to get others to join, but — they refused."

"Why did they refuse?"

"When I spoke of our principles and supporting the Soviet Union, I suppose they were too backward or afraid to join."

Lu said nothing. Apparently he was deep in thought. He stared straight ahead, absorbed in some difficult problem. Tao-ching, stealing a glance at him, wondered whether she had said something wrong. Soon they reached the back of the Winter Palace.

"Tao-ching, you've reminded me of something," said Lu as they strolled past the desolate bank of Shihchahai — an odorous pool of stagnant water. "It is true that people can't accept all our slogans. Each time we have memorial gatherings or parades, there are many arrests and casualties. What is the real reason? . . ." As if forgetting that Tao-ching was beside him, he was quietly talking to himself. She looked at him in astonishment, at a loss.

"What was your impression of today?" Lu asked her presently.

"My impression? Well, I hardly know where to start!" Tao-ching did her best to keep her excited voice down. "I feel I've learned much more than from books or even from all you've told me. It was as if I suddenly grew wings and was soaring high up in the sky so that I had a broader vision of the world. . . ." She smiled, a very naive smile. After a pause she asked: "Why didn't Hsu Ning join the parade? He told me he was going to."

Lu chuckled. "It's no good growing wings and soaring up to the sky. It's far better to keep your feet on the ground and steel yourself in the crucible of the mass struggle. As for Hsu

Ning, I dare say he was enjoying himself in Pai Li-ping's company. Or maybe he was afraid. Weren't you afraid, Tao-ching? Next time we take action of this kind, will you join in?"

Tao-ching, who looked up to Lu as to her teacher, was like a child in his presence. She pouted now, as if misunderstood.

"Brother Lu, you ought to trust me and understand me. . . . I'm not such a coward. I often vow to myself that I'll learn from you brave revolutionaries — I've learned a lot during the last two months, and today I learned even more. . . . You don't know how grateful I am to you all for giving me such happiness." Pearly tears sparkled on her long lashes. She was too overcome with emotion to say more.

Lu stepped up to her and could not help taking her hands. He was deeply touched by her enthusiasm, courage and revolutionary ardour. For some time he gazed at her without a word.

"Tao-ching, I've some business," he said at last. "I'd better leave you here." Lu had himself under control now — for at heart he was greatly attracted to this girl. "Go home quickly. Old Yu must be frantic with worry."

Tao-ching blushed and murmured in some embarrassment:

"Brother Lu, why do you tease me? It hurts. . . ." She was silent for a moment, then continued: "Don't go yet. Tell me how Lo Ta-fang was taken. I remember him leading the others to sing the *Internationale*."

"Well, some police were just going to carry off two girl students when Old Lo rushed to their rescue. With two heavy blows from his enormous fists, he sent two of them sprawling. That made him the chief target of attack. So the girls were able to escape while he — was arrested." Though Lu's tone was as calm as usual, Tao-ching could clearly sense the anguish in his heart. Without giving her a chance to reply, Lu went on hastily: "Sorry, I've some business to attend to. Let's say goodbye."

"Goodbye! But do come to see me whenever you've time!"

She was reluctant to part with Lu. With someone like him she felt safe, intrepid and strong. Still, they had to separate. When Lu looked back and saw her quiet, distressed face, he said with a smile:

"Yes, I promise to drop in some time, but. . . ." Without finishing, he strode away. Today many people had been arrested

and killed, many others had been wounded; he had urgent matters to attend to. That was why he had to leave Tao-ching so hurriedly.

Standing under a willow, Tao-ching watched his receding figure till it passed out of sight.

CHAPTER 17

At dawn the ash-trees that lined North Canal Road were veiled in a heavy mist as the ancient capital still slumbered in silence. But Lu Chia-chuan, who had spent the night in the Third Dormitory of Peking University, was already up. He had slept for a few hours in Hsu Ning's room on the first floor, sharing his friend's narrow iron bed. When he got up, Hsu Ning was still fast asleep. Passing his fingers through his dishevelled hair, Lu gently pushed the door open. A breath of fresh air drifted in and, standing on tiptoe, he vigorously began some deep breathing exercises. Though he was tired and his eyes were bloodshot owing to lack of sleep, his face was as full of vitality and youthful cheerfulness as this fresh spring morning. Standing alone in the corridor, he seemed completely relaxed, but his keen and observant eyes were piercing the mist-shrouded university grounds, glancing over the wall and in every direction. Living under the White Terror had taught him to be constantly on the alert. He was all the more wary since during the last few days the premises of certain Communist Party organizations had been raided and more comrades arrested. Since Chiang Kai-shek had sent the Third Regiment of Military Police and his faithful henchman Chiang Hsiao-hsien to Peiping, revolutionary bodies had suffered heavy losess. The situation was critical. Every revolutionary had to be always on his guard.

He looked round silently for some time, but noticed nothing amiss. Just as he was about to turn back to the room, however, he saw a motor-car speed up to the Third Dormitory and stop at the gate. In an instant several suspicious-looking individuals in Western clothes as well as some plain-clothes police appeared as if from nowhere. Lu had no need to look further. He slipped

behind a pillar and shot back to Hsu Ning's room. Shaking his friend to wake him, he said:

"Hsu Ning! The bastards are here to make an arrest! Tidy things up a bit, quick! I mustn't stay here."

"Where can you go? It's already too late for you to get out safely." Hsu Ning's lean arms barred the way.

"No. I can't stay here. They don't suspect you yet. . . . I mustn't remain in this room. If they get me, please tell Hsu Hui as soon as possible." Ignoring all further protests, he hurried out.

The whole dormitory was soon seething. Contingents of police armed with revolvers appeared on the scene, and after failing to find Lu in Wu Ta-kang's room, where he often spent the night, they divided themselves into small groups to ransack the whole building. Three of them, followed by a special-service man in plain clothes, rushed into Hsu Ning's room and found him still sleeping, curled up in his quilt.

"Wake up, damn you! Get up!" A scrawny hand seized Hsu Ning by the throat.

Hsu Ning, apparently startled from his dreams, gazed blankly at the police standing before his bed.

"Is there a fellow named Lu in your room? Not a student of this university."

Hsu Ning was relieved and overjoyed to deduce from this that Lu had not yet been arrested. But where could his resourceful friend be hiding? Without answering the question, he muttered: "What's that? Do you mean that someone has sneaked into my room? Well, go ahead and look for him! I'll help you." So saying, he jumped out of bed.

The police made a thorough search, looking into the bed and under it. Then, convinced that there was no one hiding in this small room, they rushed out like a swarm of bees, banging the door behind them.

Upstairs and down, the dormitory was in utter confusion. The thud of heavy boots, loud curses and the crash of objects flung on the floor made a discordant symphony, disturbing the quiet of this seat of learning and striking terror into the hearts of all.

On the first floor landing there was a small room marked "Janitor." The door was ajar and the place appeared deserted. A young policeman came up, scrutinized the sign, kicked the door

open and entered. With its window shut, the room was dark and fetid. The policeman recoiled to pull the door wide open. Then on a bed of boards he saw an old man lying with his face to the wall. He wore a small night-cap and had a towel wrapped round his forehead. Muffled in a heavy quilt, he was groaning – he might well be suffering from some serious contagious disease! At this sight, the policeman frowned and spat. Giving the door another violent kick, he turned hastily away.

The search started at six in the morning and lasted till ten. Yet though the dormitory was ransacked from top to bottom, these experts in "wiping out communism" from the Third Regiment of Military Police and the Kuomintang City Headquarters failed to find Lu Chia-chuan, whose arrest would have brought them some pecuniary reward or commendation. In the end, taking some students with them, they left the university in anger.

On the first floor, the janitor's door remained half open. Though the police had been passing back and forth, Lu lay quietly on Old Wang's bed for four hours.

When indignant protests and angry curses from the students carried indistinctly to the janitor's room, Lu knew that the police had left. He jumped out of bed. Just as he was about to divest himself of the night-cap and towel, in came Old Wang. The strange apparition of a young man in his long grey gown and night-cap gave the old janitor quite a shock; but when he recognized Lu Chia-chuan, who often came to that compound, he grasped the situation. He took Lu by the arm and said:

"What a narrow escape! Those men were from the Third Regiment of Military Police. Perhaps you were one of those they were after?"

"Perhaps. If they don't make arrests, how can they grow rich?" So saying Lu took off the long grey gown, folded the quilt, swept the floor and opened the window. Old Wang, a kettle in his hand, looked on nervously, thinking: "What a tight spot to be in! Yet this young fellow can smile at me in such a friendly way. And he's calmly helping to tidy up the room." The old man was tremendously impressed. In his long life, he had seen a great deal and met all sorts of people, but few like Lu Chia-chuan. Forgetting his duties, he hobbled up to Lu and muttered:

"Pah! This bunch that call themselves the national government and followers of Sun Yat-sen, they're worse — if you'll let me speak my mind — even worse than bandits! I've seen a thing or two, I don't mind telling you. If an honest young fellow says anything about saving the country and fighting Japan, or reads a book with a red cover, that gang fumes as if someone were digging up their ancestors' graves! Then they label people communist bandits, Reds or trouble-makers in the universities. A man's only one head to lose — so that's the end of him. The number of fine young chaps I've seen taken off one after another before my eyes!" Heaving a deep sigh, he continued: "I can't stand it! Tell me, Mr. Lu, what are we coming to? . . ." The old man talked on and on, saliva spraying from his mouth. Lu stood there, listening with interest, till the old janitor opened his eyes wide, as if recollecting himself. "But you must be very busy, sir. I mustn't waste your time talking. I think the world of men like you. I've had several friends among the students, all your sort, but they've all been arrested. . . . Well, I mustn't run on like this, I'm keeping you. But don't go just yet. If you must, let me have a look first to see if the way is clear. Just wait a moment."

Taking up the big kettle, Old Wang crept out of the room.

Lu sat waiting there till the old man came back and told him that several spies were hanging about the gate. So there he had to stay till evening. But seven o'clock found him in a student's room in a smart Western suit. Then, taking advantage of the bustle at dusk, he swaggered out of the university gate, whistling. He could easily have passed for a young dandy.

Lu Chia-chuan was born in Loting in the province of Hopei, where his father taught in the village school. Owing to the activities of Comrade Li Ta-chao* and his popularity in that area, Lu came into contact as a boy with the revolution. Later, studying in a middle school in Peiping, he often went to see Comrade Li Ta-chao. Thanks to the patient teaching and influence of this outstanding Marxist, his theoretical knowledge matured and he

* Li Ta-chao (1888-1927) was one of the founders of the Chinese Communist Party. He was a professor in Peking University before he was killed by the warlord Chang Tso-lin.

became a staunch revolutionary. He worked for the revolution even in middle school, while as soon as he entered Peking University he became a responsible member of the Communist Party. After his return from the demonstration in Nanking, the enemy began to keep an eye on him and attempts were made to capture him. Thereupon he was transferred to lead the revolutionary movement in middle schools and universities in the East City.

In the summer of 1933, the Party organization in Peiping suffered terrible losses at the hands of the enemy. Those Party members who survived under the White Terror were in constant danger of arrest. Consequently Lu Chia-chuan had no fixed residence. One day he would put up for half the night at Chao Yang University and the next would find him at the Catholic University. In the face of well-planned raids, his ingenuity and resilience, combined with the loyalty and courage of a true Communist, time and again snatched him from the jaws of death.

It was dusk when he left the Third Dormitory. The streets of the ancient city were thronged with people. Picking his way through the crowd, he set off for the place where a meeting of the Party's East City district committee was to be held. While walking he casually looked back and, finding no one following him, put on speed. When he passed a food stall, he felt a pang of hunger and realized that during all the day's adventures he had not had a bite to eat. He smiled and, fumbling in his pocket, found that twenty cents was all the money he had. As this sum must last him for two days, he bought only three small baked cakes at the next stall and tucked them in his pockets. Though his stomach was clamouring for food, he must wait. To start eating on the main road in this borrowed finery would look too out of character.

Presently he turned into a small lane and stopped at a shabby entrance. When he saw a broken brick resting against the gatepost, a hardly perceptible smile passed over his face. He pulled out the baked cakes and ate them ravenously.

When he reached the inner courtyard and the room facing north, he waved his hat and shouted:

"Hey! It takes four to play mah-jong. Have I kept you waiting?" In that instant he was a gay young spark again.

A thin, delicate-looking woman of between thirty and forty was the first to rise and grasp his hands. Looking at him intently, she whispered:

"Comrade, you are late. We all thought something must have happened to you."

"No, Big Sister Liu – how could it?" His glance turned to the square table with the mah-jong set. The three others sitting there – one woman and two men – nodded and smiled at him too. The woman, who was young and smartly dressed, stood up and motioned to him to take her seat. Then she withdrew with another nod and smile.

The mah-jong pieces clattered for a few moments. When the noise died down, Lu looked at his comrades and said under his breath:

"Everything is as it should be – shall we begin?"

The Party secretary of the district committee was a young man of twenty-five or six called Tai Yu. It was he who had spoken before Lu Chia-chuan at the meeting to commemorate March 18th. Behind his spectacles, his eyes bulged like those of a goldfish. He solemnly declared:

"The meeting is open."

First they discussed how to celebrate May 1, International Labour Day. But before they reached any final decision, Tai Yu, his eyes fixed on Lu, began to speak sternly:

"Comrade Feng Shen's* mistakes have become more and more serious. I propose that we discuss this question now. We all know that the reactionary rule of the Kuomintang is facing a crisis graver than at any previous time, and that the high tide of the revolution is near. We should be preparing for large-scale action such as arming the masses, organizing strikes among the students, the troops and the tradesmen, making known to all the victories that our Party has scored and expanding our membership. Yet instead of doing these things we are now discussing empty theories and ideological questions with petty-bourgeois intellectuals. We should know that these middle-of-the-road elements are most unreliable and vacillating. They are the reserve forces of the bourgeoisie!" He angrily took off his spectacles and shuffled

* Lu Chia-chuan's alias.

the mah-jong pieces with a loud clatter. Then he proceeded: "We mustn't allow things to go on like this. Feng Shen's rightist opportunism has developed to intolerable proportions. Furthermore, it is said that he has become involved with a certain Lin Tao-ching, wife of a reactionary university student. Is that right? Why should we waste communist education on such a woman? I disapprove strongly of Comrade Feng Shen's behaviour here. . . ."

Big Sister Liu kept her head bent and did not look directly at anyone, the mah-jong pieces in her hands grating softly. The other man, Wu Fang, a somewhat plump and sallow individual, was also silent. Lu looked Tai Yu steadily in the face, yet his bright eyes were gentle. He listened intently. And only when Tai Yu had finished did his face become solemn and stern.

"Comrade Tai Yu," he said slowly, "your opinions are one-sided and subjective. I hope you will open your eyes to look calmly at conditions in our country and see them in their true light. At present the whole nation is clamouring for resistance to Japan, so it is the duty of the Party to lead the resistance to Japan. Any other high-sounding slogans or demands will alienate us from the masses." His features worked with emotion, he turned very pale and his voice became almost sepulchral in his distress. "You've got to understand what the people need most and what they are most concerned about. . . . As for carrying on propaganda work among intellectuals, that is the job given me by the Party. In his *Analysis of the Classes in Chinese Society,* Comrade Mao Tse-tung tells us that our first task is to distinguish friends from foes. He says that the petty-bourgeoisie are the friends closest to us, while even the left wing of the middle class may be won over. . . . And don't forget, Comrade Tai Yu, neither you nor I are of working-class origin."

As for Lin Tao-ching, he said nothing in her defence, considering this accusation beside the point.

"What! What's that you say?" Tai Yu's sallow face flushed with rage. "This is rank opportunism! You say the middle class can also be won over? What a fearful idea!" He stopped for breath, rolling his protuberant eyes behind his glasses. Then he launched into a long, high-sounding speech to refute Lu's contention that the Party should patiently and conscientiously try to

educate intellectuals. He babbled on like a brook, as if forgetting that they lived under a brutal reign of terror, when it was essential to save time and solve problems. When Lu could stand this no longer, he shoved the mah-jong pieces aside and rose abruptly to his feet.

"Comrade Tai Yu, one moment!" he cried. "Would you mind listening to my opinion?" With a sweep of his arms, he took his seat again. He did his best to speak as mildly as possible. "I agree with you in some respects. It is true that we should work hard to carry out our Party's plan to enlist more members. This is the task assigned to us by the Party. But in the light of the present situation, how can we enlist large numbers of Party members? Ever since the arrival of the Third Regiment of Military Police, the White Terror has become more and more menacing. Furthermore Chiang Kai-shek, with the help of German and Italian fascists, has trained all these special-service men who are doing everything they can to hunt us down. The people are afraid. Most of the organizations sympathetic to us have broken up, the remainder are so disorganized that it is equally difficult for them to expand. Under the circumstances, I think the Party should adopt a safer and steadier policy for the time being. Instead of isolating itself completely by fully exposing itself, it should do its best to preserve some of its forces. But —"

"But what?" Tai Yu again cut him short. "Comrade Feng Shen, the present tension is only temporary while the possibility of victory encourages all revolutionaries to stride forward. . . . Should we halt our steps for fear of losing our lives? . . ."

"Wait a moment, Comrade Tai Yu! Allow me to say a few words!" Big Sister Liu could contain herself no longer. Her thin, slightly lined face had flushed with excitement, and she was panting. "Don't just quote dogma, comrade! I think Feng Shen's views are worth considering." Pushing the mah-jong pieces towards Tai Yu and Wu Fang, who was sitting motionless, she said resolutely: "In the main, I agree with Feng Shen. Comrade Tai Yu is making dogmatic statements without understanding the actual situation. For a long time I've been as depressed as Feng Shen; for a long time we have shared the same feelings. Though our Party leadership has overcome the rash, adventurist

line of Li Li-san,* are all our policies equally sound? To fight Japan and save the country is what the people want with all their heart, but the slogans we put forward are often so abstract that with the exception of a few enthusiasts the masses find them unacceptable. For this reason I believe. . . ." Her voice dropped till they could not hear what she was saying, and she did not explain her views further.

The four of them fell silent. Even the irascible Tai Yu kept his mouth shut. Nothing could be heard but the intermittent, monotonous clacking of the mah-jong pieces. To break the silence, Big Sister Liu looked round and said in a low tone: "Speaking of the girl whom you say Feng Shen should have nothing to do with, let me tell you something about her, for I know her. She is a progressive girl who has fought the old society and been longing for the help of the Communist Party. It is our duty to help and educate her. I think Feng Shen is right."

"It depends on the situation," Wu Fang spoke up at last. "If that woman married a reactionary student her ideas must naturally be questionable. At any rate, our Party's class line is very important. So I, too, want to warn Feng Shen to be particularly vigilant when dealing with petty-bourgeois intellectuals. We'd rather be leftist than rightist."

"Yes. Rather leftist than rightist," agreed Tai Yu hastily.

Lu Chia-chuan gently fingered the mah-jong pieces as he shook his head calmly. "Rather leftist than rightist? No, we shouldn't put it that way now. We should combine the class line with analysis of the actual situation, if we want to find the correct rules governing the objective world. However, I accept your warning. I'll be more on my guard. If there is nothing more important to talk about, I propose we resume our discussion as to what to do on May Day."

"Yes, let's talk about how to celebrate May Day!" Wu Fang's eyes brightened.

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* Who was responsible for the Left opportunist line in the Party from June to September 1930, which caused heavy losses to the underground organizations of the Party in the Kuomintang controlled areas.

The fashionably dressed girl now entered the room and, glancing at the four of them, said softly: "Everything is all right. Carry on!" Then she went out.

Tai Yu seemed to have much more on his mind, but he contented himself with saying: "All right. We'll discuss this question some other time."

Once more they discussed the May Day celebrations. In Tai Yu's opinion, the Communist Party, the Communist Youth League and such progressive organizations as the Social Science Research Association and the League of Left-wing Writers, should mobilize all their members for a large parade. After some thought, Lu raised his head to look at Tai Yu and said:

"Several days ago, at the parade to commemorate Comrade Li Ta-chao's funeral,* we suffered many arrests. We are now in a critical position. I am sure that on May Day the enemy will take greater precautions and resort to drastic measures. I hope you'll talk the matter over with the city committee. I'm afraid that. . . ."

"This is fear of White Terrorism!" cut in Tai Yu, without allowing Lu to finish. He ripped off his glasses with a frown. "Feng Shen, are you trying to sabotage the work? . . . This is a sacred task assigned to us by the Party. Any doubt concerning this mission is shameless vacillation!" He dabbed at the corners of his mouth with a handkerchief before furiously pushing away the mah-jong pieces. When the others followed his example, a loud clatter took the place of their heated argument. After the noise died down, Lu's pale face resumed its natural colour. Looking at Tai Yu's prominent eyes, he said in his usual, measured tones:

"Comrade Tai Yu, you needn't worry about me. Whatever task the Party gives me, I will do without argument. But you must allow me to express my own views. Maybe they are wrong. Maybe my estimate is not entirely correct. But at least you should be clear-headed enough to see whether I am really a coward or not. . . ." Unable to speak on, he bent his head.

* A funeral parade was held in April 1933 to commemorate Li Ta-chao's death six years before.

"Well, let us resolutely carry out the instructions of the city committee," said Wu Fang. "The more people we can arouse the better."

"It is all very well to arouse people," put in Big Sister Liu quickly, with a worried air. "But it's not so good to let them go to gaol once they've been roused."

There was silence, during which a mute argument still went on in their blazing eyes. At last Tai Yu calmed down and said:

"Well, if Feng Shen and you others don't object to a large-scale demonstration, we'll stir up the people to gather at the Bridge of Heaven on May Day. You'll be notified later of particulars."

And so the meeting broke up.

As they rose to go, the smartly-dressed girl went to the gate and, seeing no suspicious characters about, came in with a smile to tell them that the coast was clear. Tai Yu and Wu Fang were the first to leave. After they had gone, Lu and Big Sister Liu walked slowly to the gate in the dim light of the new moon. At the entrance, Big Sister Liu stopped and grasped Lu by the hand. Her voice was low and measured.

"Cheer up, Feng. The Party understands you. We all understand you. . . . On May Day you must be more vigilant. And remember, try to arouse as many people as you can."

For a long while Lu, his head low, did not utter a word. When he raised his head to look at Big Sister Liu, his eyes were moist.

"Thank you, dear comrade!" He pressed her thin fingers gratefully. "You needn't feel anxious about me, big sister. To my mind, a Communist's noble ambition to devote himself entirely to the Party precludes all personal considerations of loss or gain, glory or shame. I'll do what's expected of a true Communist. . . . Well, let's say goodbye!"

Leaning against the mouldering gate, Big Sister Liu watched him walk off with firm, steady steps, and not till his figure vanished round the dark corner of the lane did she gently close the gate. She murmured, so low that none but herself could hear:

"Feng is a fine comrade! But why doesn't Tai Yu open his eyes and look round a bit more? . . ."

CHAPTER 18

One morning, after putting the steamed bread on the stove, Tao-ching seated herself by the window to read *A Short Course of Dialectics.* But when she found the small strip of red cloth hidden between the pages, she could read no longer. Putting aside the book, she contemplated this fragment of bright red cloth as if it were a treasure. A smile illumined her face as she murmured to herself:

"Ah, May Day! What a day that was!"

On May Day, that great memorial day, she had again been asked by Lu Chia-chuan to join the demonstration. She and several others who constituted a temporary group concealed themselves in advance in an alley in the neighbourhood of the Bridge of Heaven. Lu Chia-chuan, who had come to give them a pile of leaflets, asked if they had brought small flags and lime-powder with them; and having received an answer in the affirmative he immediately went on, leaving them to loiter in the alley for some time. But eventually liaison officers came to ask them to gather immediately on the road leading to the Bridge of Heaven. They hurried out of the alley to be joined by other groups, disgorged simultaneously from other alleys, which soon formed an impressive gathering. Tao-ching longed to be near Lu Chia-chuan, for she felt safe in his proximity. But he had a great deal to attend to, and the next instant she saw him in the van again. While she was marching in the tightly packed ranks, a great red banner was unfurled to flame against the sky like a bright red sun rising out of the mist. Throwing back her head, she saw written in black ink on the banner:

"Workers of the world, unite!"

Her heart began to beat loud and fast. The enthusiastic shouting of slogans, the leaflets hurled into the air, the shaking fists and the innumerable red flags fluttering in the breeze — all these seemed to make the earth tremble under their feet. . . . This scene lasted for a few moments only, however; for in its wake there came the piercing blast of police whistles, the roar of motorcycles and the cracking of rifle-fire. Once again, soldiers and police armed to the teeth charged up from every side.

Tao-ching's brows contracted as she fingered the fragment of cloth. Lu Chia-chuan's brave, handsome face rose vividly before her. The soldiers and police had dispersed the throng and were making arrests. It was Lu's duty to protect the standard-bearer. So when the pole was broken and the standard-bearer was on the point of being arrested, Lu rushed up and dealt the thug a mighty blow, at the same time scattering lime. This created a sort of smoke-screen under cover of which the standard-bearer escaped; but the police then turned their attention to Lu Chia-chuan. Tao-ching was running after him — he had waved her away but she had ignored the signal. Lu was turning into a lane when a gendarme in grey fired two shots at his head. It seemed that in a few seconds he must be captured. But he whirled round and emptied a package into the air. Again the lime worked wonders, for its choking white mist made the soldiers and police close their eyes and he succeeded in shaking them off. Tao-ching used the same means to secure her own escape. Finally, as previously arranged, she met him at Tao Jan Ting, where they strolled arm in arm like lovers; but after exchanging a few words they parted in haste. While they were walking together, she saw in his pocket a fragment of the torn banner. She took it as a precious souvenir of that glorious day.

"How brave he is, and how resourceful!" The thought of Lu Chia-chuan's exploits on March 18th and on May Day compelled her deepest respect and admiration; indeed, other and more complex feelings entered into her attitude to him. She could not

analyse these herself, but she longed to see him more often and to learn more from him.

That evening, dusk fell before she remembered to prepare supper.

"Tao-ching, how lovely you are! Like crab-apple blossom or a beauty waking from a dream in spring. . . ." These words were murmured by Yung-tse, who had slipped quietly into the room and was gazing at her recumbent figure.

Tao-ching, ignoring him, picked up a book. He went up to her and took the book from her hand, glancing at the cover with its title, *Das Kapital.* He pulled a face, then smiled:

"What problems is this great disciple of Karl Marx studying now?"

"Why must you make fun of me?" she cried, her glance resting on his face for a moment. All at once she felt that the Yung-tse whom she had loved was no more: he had turned into someone vulgar and loathsome. Seized with indignation and despair, she could not help blurting out: "Anyway, a disciple of Karl Marx is far better than a disciple of Hu Shih!"

"What did you say?" Yung-tse lost his temper too. "What's wrong with being a disciple of Hu Shih?"

"Oh, it's an admirable thing! His line is to lick the feet of the ruling class and of the imperialists, and to help Chiang Kai-shek ride roughshod over the students. What's wrong with that?" Tao-ching flung the book on the bed and turned her back on him contemptuously.

Yung-tse leaned against the desk with his head in his hands. Though he did his best to restrain himself, in the end he raised his head and sneered:

"Revolution! Struggle! What high-sounding terms! But I've never seen any of these young gentlemen and ladies who profess to be revolutionaries going down into a mine. For after all it's much more comfortable just to shout about the proletariat and the bourgeoisie!"

"How dare you!" Tao-ching sprang up, her eyes fixed angrily on him. "I've had all I can stand from you. I'll count it a kindness if you'll let me go."

At once the tension in the air melted away. Yung-tse looked thoroughly wretched. In a husky voice he implored:

"My darling! My life! You mustn't leave me!"

Tao-ching suffered agonies again. She knew that between her and Yung-tse there was already an irremediable rift which her pursuit of a new life was deepening daily. And yet she pitied him. Her compassion bound her to him. Meanwhile, believing that no revolutionary should be concerned about personal problems, she bore as best she could the suffering caused by this emotional conflict. She tried to swallow her discontent, hoping in this way to get along better with Yung-tse.

Before retiring for the night, the couple were reconciled. Looking into Tao-ching's face, Yung-tse brightened and said:

"I came back this afternoon in high spirits, because I had a piece of good news for you. Unfortunately we fell out over nothing and quarrelled. Don't let's quarrel any more, dear. . . . But enough of that. Do you know that I'm assured of a job after graduation? Isn't that good news?"

"What job? You won't graduate for a couple of months yet."

"Yes, but it's better to plan well ahead. You know what competition there is for jobs nowadays." In a voice in which triumph mingled with the fear of giving offence, he continued softly: "Li Kuo-ying knows Hu Shih well — now, please don't be angry. It's not that I worship Hu Shih, but I have to think of our future. At my request, Li was good enough to show Hu Shih one of my research papers. And Dr. Hu was so pleased with it that he told Li to take me to see him. This morning I ventured to call. He encouraged me, told me to study hard and gave me some tips on how to carry out research. Finally, he promised to find me a job when I graduate." Taking Tao-ching's hand in a firm grasp, his small eyes gleaming with joy, Yung-tse concluded: "Darling, I've heard that any student he approves of is assured of a brilliant career."

"Hmm." Tao-ching bit her lips at the sight of his complacent expression. "So you've really become a great disciple of Dr. Hu Shih."

"Darling!" Yung-tse put his hand over her mouth. In mock-serious tones he scolded: "You mustn't let yourself be obsessed by these revolutionary illusions. After all, facts are facts. Hu Shih's scholarship has been recognized ever since the May the Fourth Movement. How can he harm young people? By casting in your lot with me, you've had a hard time for the past two

years. I often feel I've let you down. Some of my friends have said: 'Old Yu, your wife is quite good-looking. Why don't you dress her up?' If I really get a good job after graduation, the first thing I want to do is make you two gowns of velvet and a few of silk, as well as a smart overcoat. What colour would you like? Darling, I'd love to see you in buff or light green, for that would bring out all your youth and beauty. Then people will see what a marvellously lovely girl my Tao-ching is. . . ." He was so carried away that he pushed her under the light and stepped back to stare at her as if he were seeing her for the first time. With his head on one side and narrowed eyes, he complacently surveyed her beauty. "Tao-ching, you're quite perfect except that your shoulders are the least bit too broad and your mouth a hint too wide. The beauties of old all had narrow shoulders and small mouths. Do you remember the verse: 'A mouth small and red as the cherry, a waist slender and pliant as the willow'? What! Are you angry again? Why are you frowning? Come, let's go to bed now. You can slap me if you like, but don't sulk all the time!"

Tao-ching was on the point of losing her temper. She could not stand being treated like a toy in this senseless way. But she was too tired to protest. She fell into an uneasy sleep and woke again after a series of nightmares. In the dark she turned to look at the man beside her. Could this be the youth whom she had respected and loved with all her heart? He had saved her, helped her and loved her — all for selfish reasons. . . . In a flash she thought of Lu Chia-chuan . . . a revolutionary . . . courageous. . . . "There's a real man for you!" She smiled to herself. The dark branches outside the window were swaying gently. "Does he know how much I admire him?" she wondered.

A Meeting on Production by Shao Yu →

Born in 1919 in China's Northeast, Shao Yu is one of China's well-known contemporary artists. Now director of the People's Art Publishing House, Peking, he is also a council member of the Union of Chinese Artists. One of his water colours, *General Election*, was reproduced in *Chinese Literature* No. 2, 1959.

A bitter-sweet sensation flooded her heart, and she savoured keenly a happiness mingled with sadness.

That night she had a strange dream.

Under the dark dome of the sky she was rowing a boat through the foam-capped, storm-swept sea. The wind and rain, the great waves and the louring clouds pitted themselves together against her small craft. She was seized by terror. In this fearful ocean she was utterly alone. Sheer billows swept against her; monstrous clouds pressed down on her. She shrieked and trembled. Her boat, buffeted to and fro, must surely sink the next instant into the depths. Pulling hard on the oars, she turned her head and saw a familiar figure. A man in a long gown was sitting in the bow, smiling calmly at her. Desperation goaded her to fury. She swore: "You scoundrel, will you let me drown?" Yet he went on sitting there calmly and even took out his tobacco pouch. In a passion she dropped the oars and threw herself at him. But when she seized him by the throat, she found that he was a strong, handsome young man. He was smiling at her, and his passionate eyes entranced her. She loosened her grip. By this time the storm had died down and the sea was blue. They sat silently face to face, gazing at each other. It was Lu Chia-chuan! In her amazement she let fall an oar. Lu Chia-chuan plunged into the sea for it, but was swallowed up by the waves. At once the sky became dark with clouds again. Weeping and calling out wildly, she threw herself into the sea. . . .

She woke to find Yung-tse shaking her gently.

"What's the matter, Tao-ching? Why were you calling out? I couldn't sleep for thinking about my second dissertation. When it's finished I shall show it to Dr. Hu. It should help me to get a better job after the summer vacation."

In bewilderment, Tao-ching was still recalling her dream. Turning over, she answered vaguely:

"Let's sleep. I'm so deadly tired."

But like Yung-tse, she was so engrossed in her thoughts that she could not sleep all night.

(to be continued)

Illustrations by Hou Yi-min

LIN MO-HAN

Raise Higher the Banner of Mao Tse-tung's Thought on Literature and Art

Comrade Mao Tse-tung is a great Marxist thinker and theoretician. Integrating the universal truth of Marxism-Leninism with the practice of China's revolution, not only has he led the Chinese people to victory and to transform the face of our country, he has also creatively developed Marxism-Leninism. In philosophy, in political economy, in scientific socialism — in all these fields he has made important and creative contributions. Comrade Mao Tse-tung has also expanded upon Marxist thought on literature and art, further systematizing it, making it highly scientific and powerfully militant.

People of different classes and different standpoints adopt different attitudes to Mao Tse-tung's thought on literature and art. Some agree with it, these are the majority. Some disagree. Still others underestimate it; there are quite a number in this category. Those who agree with it of course recognize its significance, but the extent to which they do so, varies. The dissenters hate Comrade Mao Tse-tung's ideas virulently. Why is their hatred so intense? Because their class instincts tell them that Mao Tse-

Lin Mo-han, literary critic, is the Vice-Minister of Culture of the People's Republic of China. This article is an address he made at a recent meeting of writers and artists.

tung's thought on literature and art is an extremely sharp weapon which is extremely disadvantageous to bourgeois concepts and world outlook. They therefore try to negate it in every conceivable way. They positively detest it. Knowing that it would be difficult to come out in open opposition, they chose two other methods. The first was Hu Feng's way: He instructed his adherents to pretend agreement while actually attacking. The second method, used by certain others, was a desperate attempt to revise Mao Tse-tung's thought on literature and art in order to make it conform to their own bourgeois concepts. Some rightists in the field of literature and art operated in this manner. Ostensibly in celebration of the anniversary of the *Talks,* they wrote articles preaching the "human nature" theory* and advocating "exposure" and satire directed against the people themselves.

There is an excellent editorial note in "The Third Collection of Material Regarding the Hu Feng Counter-revolutionary Clique" published in the *Renmin Ribao* (People's Daily) in June 1955. It states: Some people "do not realize the importance of the *Talks* because they have bourgeois literary and artistic ideas. But Chang Chung-hsiao, that Hu Feng disciple, thanks to his counter-revolutionary sensitivity, is all too conscious that the *Talks,* now that the whole country has been liberated, will win the hearts of the masses on a much wider scale, and will have an annihilating effect on every brand of reactionary literary and artistic thought. And so he and his kind urgently sought to sabotage the *Talks* and prevent their influence from spreading." This quotation shows very clearly why certain persons opposed Mao Tse-tung's literary and art theory so vehemently, or attempted to revise it.

The facts prove that Mao Tse-tung's ideas have given literature and art a completely new look. We have been able to do so well in literature and art in the ten years since liberation because we have been carrying out the policies formulated by the Party and Comrade Mao Tse-tung and upholding his ideas in these fields, because these ideas have taken root among an ever widening number of people, first of all among literary and art workers, the

* According to this theory, in class society human thought and emotions are universal and unaffected by class limitations.

vast majority of whom have accepted them. This is the basic reason for our success.

How has Comrade Mao Tse-tung further developed Marxist literary and art theory? In order to discuss this, I must of necessity first give a rough outline of the ideas of Marx, Engels and Lenin on literature and art.

In the time of Marx and Engels, although the working class had made its entrance on the stage of history, the proletarian revolution had not yet matured. The Paris Commune demonstrated the fervid revolutionary spirit of the proletariat, but it was quickly defeated. As Lenin said, it was a time when the revolutionary spirit of the bourgeois democrats was dying, and the revolutionary spirit of proletarian socialism still was not mature. No truly proletarian author had yet appeared. Writers living in the days of Marx and Engels, writers whom Marx and Engels acclaimed or with whom they had direct contact, were probably the following kinds:

Authors like Balzac. Balzac began his literary career before Marx started his activities. But by the time Balzac died in 1850, Marx was already an active revolutionary and writer. Marx and Engels praised Balzac because Balzac penetratingly revealed the true character of capitalist society, and its law that money is everything. Balzac exposed, through vivid types, characters and incidents, the same cruelties of capitalist society which Marx and Engels, using scientific language, exposed in the *Communist Manifesto*. But we know that Balzac was not a proletarian writer. His revelations of the cruelty and ugliness of capitalist society were based on a regret for the demise of the aristocracy. From the same standpoint, he proved that both this demise and the birth of capitalism were inevitable.

A second kind might be called revolutionary democratic writers, or perhaps democratic writers with socialist illusions – people like Heine and George Sand. Marx was on intimate terms with Heine, and he recommended George Sand highly. Marx liked them for their sympathy with the labouring people, for their protests against social inequities. Of course they were not proletarian authors either. Heine, for example, had no understanding of real communism.

The third kind appeared somewhat later. Most were writers with whom Engels had contact – such as Minna Kautsky (Kautsky's mother) and Margaret Harkness. Although they called themselves socialists, actually they were petty-bourgeois socialists. They sympathized with the workers, but they neither really knew nor understood them.

Because there were no genuinely proletarian writers in Marx and Engels' day, and because the literature of that period catered "mostly to readers of bourgeois circles" (Engels), Marx and Engels were able to advocate and demand only the following:

First: They demanded that a work of literature, ". . . by conscientiously describing the real mutual relations, breaking down conventional illusions about them . . . shatter the optimism of the bourgeois world, and instill doubt as to the eternal character of the existing order . . . although the author does not offer any definite solution or does not even line up openly on any particular side." If a novel could do this, then it was beneficial; it could be deemed to have "fully achieved its purpose." (Engels) That was all Marx and Engels could ask of most authors at that time. In relation with these ideas, Engels was quite revolted by the poems of certain German "true" socialists, because these "true" socialists were in fact petty-bourgeois writers whose poems prettified and bolstered the capitalist system.

Second: Marx and Engels demanded that writers reflect the life of the working class. Engels pointed out, "The revolutionary response of the members of the working class to the oppression that surrounds them, their convulsive attempts . . . to attain their rights as human beings . . . may therefore lay claim to a place in the domain of realism." Because the working-class struggle against oppression and for liberation had already become "a part of history," Engels believed that this struggle should be reflected in realist literature.

Third: They further demanded that literary works not only portray working-class life and struggles, but that they portray the working class accurately – not as some passive mass unable, and even unwilling, to save itself. They felt that the working class had to attain its own liberation, without relying on any gods or heroes. This was a fundamental tenet of Marxism and one of the major points of departure from the ideas of the utopian

and petty-bourgeois socialists. The utopian socialists sympathized with the working class but did not believe it capable of liberating itself. They thought this would have to be done from outside or above. Engels was dissatisfied with the writings of Margaret Harkness because she described the working class, already steeled in scores of years of struggle, as nothing but a passive mass. Engels maintained that, despite the fact that there still were many backward workers, viewing the era as a whole, such a description was not typical.

Marx and Engels expressed many very valuable ideas on literature and art which are still worthy of our repeated study today. They voiced warm hopes for the proletarian literature of the future. This greatly encouraged later generations. In their own time, it was not possible to call for a "proletarian literature," let alone talk about the principle of literary partisanship. Only in Lenin's day could this be done. Lenin's famed article *Party Organization and Party Literature* defined the ideological basis for proletarian literature. For the first time he called clearly for a proletarian literature and raised the principle of literary partisanship.

Party Organization and Party Literature was written after the first Russian revolution of 1905. The world proletarian revolutionary movement was by then much further advanced than in the era of Marx and Engels. The 1905 revolution was the first serious attack by the Russian working class against the autocratic czarist regime. Although the revolution did not succeed, the situation in Russia was as Lenin stated, that is, although the revolution was not strong enough to overthrow the czarist regime, the czarist regime no longer had the power to defeat the revolution.

His article began by saying: "The new conditions for Social-Democratic work in Russia created after the October Revolution* have brought the question of Party literature to the forefront." These so-called "new conditions," in addition to the surging workers' movement, included the concessions the czarist government had been forced to yield. Some reforms were instituted; the people were given a certain amount of freedom of the press and association. Formerly "a difference had existed between the legal and illegal press"; "the entire illegal press was a Party press." Now, the Party could publish legally. Lenin, therefore, pointed out that literature should be plainly partisan to distinguish itself from those other writings that were so muddled and inconclusive.

It was under these circumstances that Lenin advocated that literature should serve the Party. He said, "What is this principle of Party literature? It is not simply that, for the socialist proletariat, literature cannot be a means of enriching individuals or groups, cannot in fact, be an individual undertaking, independent of the common cause of the proletariat. . . . Literature must become *part* of the common cause of the proletariat. . . . Literature must become a component of organized, planned and integrated Social-Democratic party work." Therefore, literature must accept Party supervision.

In his article, Lenin devastatingly refuted the bourgeois theory of "absolute freedom" of literary creation. First of all, he said, bourgeois writers and artists cannot free themselves from the bourgeois publishing houses. As long as they are dependent upon the money bags, on corruption and prostitution, their so-called "absolute freedom" is a fraud. Secondly, while an author has the freedom to write about anything he likes, the Party also is "free to expel members who use the Party's platform to advocate anti-Party views." You have freedom of speech; the Party has freedom of association, freedom to preserve the Party's purity. Lenin also made it clear that only proletarian literature is truly free literature, because it is written by politically conscious persons with the intention that it serve the labouring people, because it is a literature in the service of the millions, a literature freed from the shackles of bourgeois individualism. Lenin also pointed out that the advocacy of Party literature should by no means act as a hamper on individual creativeness. The literary side of the cause of the proletarian party is certainly not to be equated mechanically with the other sides of the cause.

Lenin expressed another important concept in his conversations with the revolutionary German writer, Clara Zetkin, namely, that literature and art belong to the people, that they must serve the toiling millions, be things which the people understand and love. He said, "Should we serve exquisite sweet cake

* Meaning the All-Russian Political Strike of October 1905.

to a small minority while the worker and peasant masses are in need of black bread?" He believed that literature and art must be brought to the masses, literature and art of the highest artistic level. "Indeed, our workers and peasants deserve something better than spectacles."

As you all know, Lenin also stated the theory of the two kinds of culture. "There are two national cultures in every national culture," he said. One is "the Great-Russian clerical and bourgeois culture." The other is "the ideas of Great-Russian democracy and social-democracy." At the same time, he said that the proletariat must absorb and improve upon all that is of value in human thought and cultural development.

Proletarian literature and art should be the Party's literature and art; they should serve the worker and peasant masses. At the same time, it is necessary to have a correct approach to cultural heritage. This is the main content of Lenin's views on literature and art. Quite plainly, by Lenin's day the partisan and mass nature of proletarian literature and art had been definitely established. The great literature of the Soviet Union — socialist-realist literature — developed in keeping with precisely those principles advocated and demanded by Lenin.

Mao Tse-tung's thought on literature and art creatively expands upon Lenin's views. Its expression is concentrated in Comrade Mao Tse-tung's *Talks at the Yenan Forum on Art and Literature.* The *Talks* were given under the following circumstances: On the one hand, both the world-wide anti-fascist world war and the nation-wide people's war against Japanese aggression were entering a bitter, stalemate stage. On the other hand, the revolutionary forces led by the Party were unprecedentedly strong. Not only did the working class have its own armed forces, it had its own bases. Large numbers of writers and artists had gone to these bases, where they were confronted with new masses, "new characters to portray and a new public." Should the writers and artists portray these new people, new ideas and emotions, and serve this new public? Or should they continue to portray the old characters they liked so well, the old ideas and emotions, and put this fare before their old readers? That was the problem which faced writers and artists at that time.

Many did not solve it. Although most of them were revolutionary writers and artists, and some were even members of the Communist Party, their world outlook was not a proletarian one; they still had a bourgeois or petty-bourgeois world outlook. They approached the masses, and literature and art, still clinging to their old world outlook, old thoughts and emotions. Inevitably, they came into sharp contradiction with their new environment and masses, with the new demands upon literature and art. Unless this problem was settled, literature and art could not go forward correctly. In other words, they not only would be unable to serve the revolution, they might even harm it. The Yenan Forum on Art and Literature was convened under these circumstances in order to solve this contradiction.

Lenin had pointed out that literature and art must be part of the Party's cause and serve the great mass of the workers and peasants. But Lenin did not have time to explain in detail how they should truly become the Party's literature and art, how they should truly serve the worker and peasant masses. The thorough solution of these questions was the great contribution of Comrade Mao Tse-tung. His *Talks* are a complete scientific treatise on Marxist literary and art principles. Indicating with superlative clarity the lines along which proletarian socialist literature and art should develop, they creatively solve a whole series of fundamental questions in regard to the Marxist approach to art and literature.

Mao Tse-tung's thought on literature and art in this regard is so rich that each time we read his *Talks,* or other articles by him on these subjects, we obtain new enlightenment and education. I therefore cannot hope to encompass all his views here. I believe the most important of all is his solution of the following basic problems.

First: Comrade Mao Tse-tung completely settles the question of the relation between literature and art and the revolution. At their very outset, the *Talks* state that the purpose of convening the Forum was to "exchange views and ascertain the proper relationship between artistic and literary activities and revolutionary activities in general to determine . . . how they can give better help to other revolutionary activities, so that we can overthrow our national enemy and accomplish the task of national libera-

tion." Elucidating Lenin's ideas in this connection, Comrade Mao Tse-tung expresses the idea that literature and art ought to be " . . . a component part of the whole revolutionary machine . . . a powerful weapon for uniting and educating the people and for attacking and destroying the enemy, and to help the people to fight the enemy with one heart and one mind."

"Art and literature are subordinate to politics, but in turn exert a great influence on politics." The relation between literary and artistic activities and Party activities in general is that revolutionary art and literature are a part of the over-all revolutionary cause, they are cogs and screws in the whole machine; their task should be to serve the revolution. This is the most fundamental principle. The major difference between us and bourgeois writers and artists is that they, consciously or otherwise, always hide their political objectives behind the signboard of "art for art's sake," whereas we frankly advocate art for the revolution's sake. Since literature is part of the Party's general revolutionary cause, it naturally must accept leadership and supervision by the Party. To deny that literature and art are a part of the revolutionary whole, leads necessarily to rejecting the Party's leadership in these fields, and to the delusion that it isn't politics which leads art but art which leads politics; it leads to believing that — as the Yugoslav revisionists put it — "antagonism" exist between "art and the state."

Comrade Mao Tse-tung tells us that literature and art are parts of the whole revolution, but indispensable parts, cogs and screws that are necessary to the machine. "If we had no art and literature even in the broadest and most general sense, then the revolutionary movement could not be carried on to victory." That is to say, literature and art are not things which the revolution can either take or leave aside. They are active, propelling parts of the complete mechanism. It is for this reason that the Party's Central Committee and Comrade Mao Tse-tung have always attached particular importance to literary and art activities, not just as matters of personal interest, but because of the huge influence literature and art exercise on the people and their great value to the revolution. If correct, literature and art serve a good function; if wrong, they can be harmful. That is why Comrade Mao Tse-tung indicates that in appraising works of literature and art, the

political criterion should be foremost. "There are two criteria in art and literary criticism," he says, "political and artistic." As to the relation between the two, we should ". . . place the political criterion before the artistic." Giving precedence to the political criterion means that the first tests of a literary or art work is whether it benefits the revolution. If you admit that literature and art should serve the revolution, then you must concede that political standard is the primary critical yardstick. To deny the latter is, in effect, to deny the former.

Second: Comrade Mao Tse-tung solves the problem of the relation between literature and art and the masses. In this connection also, Comrade Mao Tse-tung expands upon Lenin's thought. As Lenin said, formerly literature was something in which "the writer does the writing, the reader does the reading." In the past, writers neither considered whether they should or should not portray the workers and peasants, nor were they concerned with the question of whether the workers and peasants would accept their works. But proletarian literature had to deal with this new question. "The characters you portray and your public" are no longer the same, says Comrade Mao Tse-tung. Literature and art must serve the workers, peasants and soldiers, he states emphatically and he explains in what manner. This vital problem is also one of the major themes of his *Talks*.

The manner in which literature and art should serve the workers, peasants and soldiers is as follows: A writer should observe and depict phenomena from the standpoint of the proletariat; that is, he should strive to portray workers, peasants and soldiers; that is, he should seek to strengthen their unity of heart and mind, not to weaken it; that is, he should try to bring the people closer to, not further away from, the workers, peasants and soldiers. To serve successfully, the writer must correctly integrate "popularization" with "elevation." Comrade Mao Tse-tung defines dialectically the correct relation between the two: Elevation on the basis of popularization, popularization under the leadership of elevation, but both with the purpose of serving the worker, peasant and soldier masses, of serving their needs today and tomorrow. To stress elevation and neglect popularization is wrong because it is a departure from the masses. It is equally wrong to stress popularization and neglect elevation.

Comrade Mao Tse-tung says: "It is possible to popularize some works of higher quality." Moreover, ". . . the cultural level of the people will continue to rise. . . . The people demand popularization to start with, and elevation and further elevation." Comrade Mao Tse-tung also points out that in addition to serving the people it is necessary to serve their cadres. For these, although small in number, are the cadres of the people, the advanced members among them. "Anything done for the cadres is done wholly for the people, because it is only through the cadres that we can give education and guidance to the people." And so "the elevation needed by the cadres" is indirectly "the elevation that meets (the people's) need. . . ." And ". . . it would be a mistake to ignore this need."

While solving the question of the relation between popularization and elevation, Comrade Mao Tse-tung also solves the question of the relation between specialists and popularizers and between professionals and amateurs. "Specialists are very valuable to our cause and should be respected," he says. But specialists should keep in touch with the people, pay attention to their wall-newspapers, their reportage, their songs and art, on the one hand ". . . to help and guide them," on the other to ". . . learn from them." If a specialist regards himself as "an aristocrat who lords it over the 'lower orders,' then the people will have no use for him, however talented he may be and there is no future for his work."

These principles laid down by Comrade Mao Tse-tung correctly solve the problems of direction, method and road to be followed in serving the workers, peasants and soldiers.

Third: Comrade Mao Tse-tung settles the question of the relation between art and life, and he settles it thoroughly in conformity with dialectic materialism. First of all, he says, human society is the sole source of literature and art, and literary and art works are reflections of life, ". . . the only source; there can be no other." Literature and art, therefore, cannot divorce themselves from life, they cannot "uncritically borrow and copy" the works of ancients and foreigners. What is more, "ideological expressions in the form of artistic or literary work are the product of the human brain reflecting the life of a given society," and life, reflected through the brains of individuals, is bound to be

influenced by their world outlook and ideological stand. In every person's brain there are reflections of life, but not every person reflects life correctly. Only those with a correct world outlook and a correct ideological stand can do so. That is why Comrade Mao Tse-tung says, "Revolutionary art and literature are the products of the brains of revolutionary artists and writers reflecting the life of the people." This same life of the people, reflected through the brains of reactionary writers and artists, cannot become revolutionary literature and art; it inevitably will be counter-revolutionary.

Furthermore, since works of literature and art are products of the brains of writers and artists reflecting the life of the people, that means these reflections have been subjected to analysis, selection, judgement and synthesis. "Life as reflected in artistic and literary works," therefore, "can and ought to be on a higher level and of a greater intensity than real life, in sharper focus and more typical, nearer the ideal, and therefore more universal." This kind of reflection cannot be purely objective, because it is the result of selection, analysis and judgement by the writer or artist, such being the case literature and art can in turn serve to arouse life and propel it forward. Life is the source of literature and art; literature and art come from life. At the same time because they are on a much higher level than real life, they can influence it and urge it on. This is Comrade Mao Tse-tung's fundamental view of the relation between life and literature and art.

Fourth: Comrade Mao Tse-tung excellently solves the problem of the relation between the writer or artist and the masses. The key to literature and art serving the revolution and the workers, peasants and soldiers and correctly reflecting their lives, lies in literary and art workers going into the midst of the masses, and in the course of so doing, reforming their own ideology while tapping the source of creative works. This is one of the important principles of Comrade Mao Tse-tung's thought on literature and art. If a writer or artist makes up his mind, says Comrade Mao Tse-tung, studies Marxist theory, throws himself into the revolutionary struggle for a long period of time, becomes one with the people, and repeatedly integrates theory with practice, he will be able to succeed in changing his old ideology and developing a proletarian world outlook. Comrade Mao Tse-tung points out for

writers and artists the bright road to remoulding their thinking and merging with the people. This is an extremely valuable contribution. Many of our writers and artists have become deeply cognizant of it. Since proletarian literature and art are something entirely new, and their ideological outlook, the characters they depict, and the audience they serve, are all different from those of the old days, writers and artists today can no longer follow the same old road taken by writers and artists of the past. Only by solving this problem can we have genuine socialist literature and art.

Fifth: Comrade Mao Tse-tung settles the question of the relation between literature and art and national cultural traditions. Proletarian literature and art have not dropped to us from the sky; they are built on the foundation of traditions. Developing Lenin's "two national cultures" thesis, Comrade Mao Tse-tung asks that we first subject our national cultural traditions to scientific analysis. In our cultural legacy are both democratic revolutionary qualities and feudal reactionary qualities. We should "throw away their feudal dross and absorb their democratic essence." Traditions should be analysed from the standpoint of historical materialism and be given their proper place in history. We oppose cutting ties with history or rejecting traditions, just as we oppose extolling the ancient and spurning the modern, or kowtowing before whatever is traditional. Comrade Mao Tse-tung tells us that the purpose of critically carrying on our traditions is in order to expedite our new culture, for the sake of innovation and creativeness, not for the purpose of clinging to the old so blindly that traditions impede our steps. They should help us look forward, not backward. Comrade Mao Tse-tung's phrase "weed through the old to let the new emerge" vividly and comprehensively expresses the dialectic relation between criticizing and carrying on, between reforming and creating.

Comrade Mao Tse-tung wants us to study critically and absorb all that is useful in foreign sources; we must assimilate them and coalesce them into our own, making them full of national flavour. Literature and art are not the same as technical sciences, which study the laws of nature. Literature and art portray the lives, thoughts and emotions of the people; they cannot but be imbued with national flavour. Our literature and art must have their own

national characteristics, national style. They should "create what is new and extraordinary" – but these new and extraordinary creations should be national in character. Only thus will the people love them, only thus will they be able to make a uniquely national contribution to world culture.

In a word, we learn from the dead ancients in order to benefit the living moderns, we learn from the foreigners in order to benefit the Chinese. Any blind worship of things foreign or traditional is very harmful.

I believe that the foregoing problems are the most fundamental in literature and art. These problems Comrade Mao Tse-tung has accurately, comprehensively, systematically and dialectically solved.

(to be continued)

Book Review

YAO WEN-YUAN

On Red Flag Folk Songs

Red Flag Folk Songs, edited by the well-known poet Kuo Mo-jo and the literary critic Chou Yang, was published by *Hongqi,* Peking in 1959. The songs in this collection reflect the Big Leap of 1958 and are a product of the Big Leap. They are, in fact, the most concentrated expression in art of the spirit of the age of Mao Tse-tung. The writers of these songs have passionately and truthfully voiced the lofty aspirations of China's labouring people in their conquest of nature and the construction of their mighty country; they have used the freshest colours to depict life in the period of the Big Leap. This is the first anthology of poetry in China to have translated labour so superbly into poetry, to have brought out so movingly the beauty of socialist labour, the nobility of the labouring people and their splendid spirit.

The publication of *Red Flag Folk Songs* is of great significance in three respects.

First, this collection provides a profound and comprehensive reflection in art of the unprecedented Big Leap of 1958. It forms the epic of the Big Leap. The heroic spirit of China's toiling millions, who have moved mountains and seas, their daring communist style, their lofty moral stature, their unprecedented creativeness — all these are vividly and skilfully epitomized in these

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three hundred poems. When we open this book, we hear resounding echoes of the bugles of the Big Leap; the whole is filled with the enthusiasm and laughter of the labouring people, the praises which pour from their hearts. This record of our time will go down brilliantly to history. *Red Flag Folk Songs,* together with many other fine new folk songs, constitute an immortal monument to the Big Leap, which will stand for ever mighty and triumphant at the threshold of this new era.

Secondly, *Red Flag Folk Songs* is the voice of hundreds of millions of labouring people expressing their heartfelt praise for the General Line of transition to socialism, the Big Leap and the people's communes. A work of art, it is also a fighting weapon. It has power to stir men; it has a strong partisan spirit; in propagating the General Line its influence is profound and widespread. In fact, many poems in *Red Flag Folk Songs,* already widely circulated, are frequently quoted by newspapers and are becoming part of the language of our people.

Thirdly, *Red Flag Folk Songs* is a notable achievement as poetry. It represents the cream of millions of folk songs, is the *Book of Songs** of our socialist age, and will exercise a deep and enduring influence on all our new poetry. The appearance of this anthology augurs further and greater development for our socialist literature.

The spirit of the age of the Big Leap may be seen in the following poem:

> I am seventy-nine this year,
> My arms are of steel, my hands of iron;
> I go all out, then make another spurt,
> Stronger than the engine of any train.
>
> My shoulders carry two hills,
> My hands prop up two buildings;
> Tempered in the fire since I was young,
> I have hard bones.

In the course of the Big Leap the labouring people with their hands of iron and arms of steel have literally torn mountains apart

* One of the well-known "five classics" and China's first collection of songs edited by Confucius.

and ridges asunder, accomplishing uncounted miracles. No difficulty can crush our indomitable workers and peasants. The old man in this song stands for the millions of hardworking labourers who are driving the engine of socialism and are thoroughly steeled through labour. Such songs speak the language of heroes and give us a picture of invincible heroes. Even rocks are smashed by such iron hands.

Tributes to the Communist Party, Chairman Mao Tse-tung, the General Line, the Big Leap and the people's communes, form the chief contents of *Red Flag Folk Songs*. Our labouring people are fervent in their praise of our great leader and use the most beautiful and forceful expressions to describe him: "Mao Tse-tung is like the red sun which shines bright on every side."

> Chairman Mao is infinitely kind,
> Ten thousand songs are not enough to praise him.
> With trees as pens, the sky as paper
> And an ocean of ink,
> Much would still be left unwritten.

The song *The Chairman Travels All China* puts in a nutshell the way in which the wisdom of Mao Tse-tung inspired the whole people in 1958 when he led the Big Leap.

> The Chairman travels all China,
> The mountains are happy and the rivers too;
> Mount Omei with both hands presents its treasures,
> The Yellow River wags its tail and sings.
>
> The Chairman travels all China,
> The workers are happy and the peasants too;
> Hills of cotton and grain soar up to the sky,
> Molten steel and iron flow like rivers.

Here the figure of Mao Tse-tung is linked inseparably with the great advance of the people of the whole country.

In the life and work of our people the General Line has been translated into concrete images. The most beautiful and apt images are used, as well as a variety of similes and techniques, to sing the General Line. Flat, repetitious images indicate a mental poverty and dearth of experience; but since the heroes on our different fronts have a consistently rich life and their hearts are constantly full of revolutionary enthusiasm, their songs are correspondingly rich and varied, with images as fresh as lotus flowers blooming in the light of the dawn. Thus a Shantung folk song says:

> The General Line is the whip to drive mountains,
> To drive before it big mountains and small hills;
> It drives the big mountains to fill up the seas;
> It drives the small hills to make pigsties.
> The General Line is the axe to cleave rivers,
> All our six hundred million are pacifiers of flood;
> Thousands of streams must now obey men's will,
> Pouring out their gold for us, pouring out their silver.

Whip and axes are among the implements with which peasants are most familiar. When by poetic exaggeration they compare the whip and the axe to the General Line, we grasp what a sharp and effective tool this is in the hands of the labouring people.

Similarly the Chinghai folk song *All Plants, Animals and Minerals Are Happy* skilfully describes the joyous changes in nature to show the great mobilizing force of the General Line. And while this poem does not specifically mention the General Line as a powerful weapon, the scenes of joy throughout the natural world after the General Line is carried out sufficiently reveal its potency. Here are four stanzas:

> The apples laugh till their cheeks turn red,
> The melons laugh till they grow sweet as honey,
> The flowers laugh till they split open wide,
> The peas laugh till they become full and round.
>
> The hemp laughs as it enters the factory
> To turn into artificial cotton;
> The potatoes laugh as down they roll,
> All the way down the slopes.
>
> The cattle graze and skip with joy
> As one becomes two, and two become three;
> And hearing this news the hen makes haste
> To lay three eggs in one day.

The copper-mines laugh and glitter with gold;
The crystal-mines laugh and sparkle;
The coal laughs in its fiery robe
And rushes into the furnace to smelt iron. . . .

In this description of the tremendous achievements of the Big Leap, the poet makes no mention of the record harvest, but only of peas growing round, potatoes rolling downhill, cattle multiplying, coal entering the furnaces to smelt iron. . . . All is laughter, energy and excitement, and as the rapidly changing scenes follow one another we are exhilarated by so much abundance. Nature is personified in this song, for all things in nature share the feelings of the labouring people; mobilized by the General Line, natural wealth increases and multiplies with breath-taking speed. Man is the master of nature, especially during the age of the Big Leap. The personified nature in our new works of art reflects the fact that our labour today is creative and happy. This is why the toiling people have transferred their joy in labour to the peas, the cattle, the copper-mines and the coal. The songs of the past lack these fresh, new images, because the toilers then were exploited and enslaved instead of being masters of society and nature. "If Heaven had a human heart it would grow old too!" wrote Li Ho, the Tang dynasty poet. When life was a vale of tears in which even nature wept, how could the nature in poetry be joyous? But this folk song, which starts by showing how the wishes of the people are embodied in the General Line, uses a series of lively images to present a full picture of a rich harvest and a great advance.

The Giant Dragon of the East uses different images:

The General Line is a great bell,
When this bell tolls both heaven and earth are shaken;
The giant dragon of the East uncoils,
With a crash of thunder it soars to the sky.

This powerful poem has a true nobility as it sings of the General Line's power to mobilize six hundred and fifty million people. Many songs praise different aspects of the General Line, each using original images. For since each victory in our work confirms

the correctness of the General Line, the images used by these folk poets are infinite.

This anthology is the crystallization of a high ideological content and art of a high order. In style it is both integrated and varied. All these poems are characterized by the spirit of freedom, clear images, regular forms and harmonious rhythm, as well as by lively, concise and expressive language based on the speech of the labouring people but further polished. These common features of this collection of new folk songs give it a distinctively national style. At the same time, however, we can see the influence on some of these songs of the traditional modes of expression of classical Chinese poetry, while others show the influence of modern poetry. Moreover, different themes, different nationalities, different localities and different authors all have their distinctive features. So we find magnificent songs like *The Giant Dragon of the East* as well as delicate sketches of scenery in such poems as *The Little Boat*. ". . . It passes the willow-clad shore, to melt into peach blossom hills." There are charming love songs, too, like *The Melon Vine:*

The leaves of the melons are no bigger than bowls,
The lovers are making a trellis. . . .
When the melons grow under this cover,
Then they can talk face to face.

There are satirical poems, too, like *Everyone Thinks Her Dirty:*

Her hair is neatly combed,
Her face is sweetly powdered;
But because she never does a stroke of work,
Everyone thinks her dirty.

The variety of content reflects the richness of our people's life. But, without doubt, the majority of these poems are in praise of labour. No other work has succeeded in giving such a profound, all-embracing and attractive picture of labour as this selection of songs. After reading *Red Flag Folk Songs* we feel that work is the most wonderful thing in the world and a life of creative work the most wonderful life. Such poetry can be written naturally and in truly evocative language only by working people living in the period of the Big Leap, who possess a genuine and con-

scious enthusiasm for their work, who love it and take pride in it with all their hearts.

Let us look at *The Flying Stream:*

> We cut the cliff in two and dig through the river,
> A stream flies through the east hill and the west;
> The flowing water gurgling in the air
> Is like a goddess plucking the strings of her lyre.

Here we seem to hear the clear sound of the stream flying through the air, which the poet compares to a melody — the pipes connecting the two hills are the strings of a lyre. We become conscious that this feat of cutting through the cliff to let water pass is not only a magnificent job of work but a beautiful work of art.

Similar feelings are evoked by *The Sun Comes Out at Night.*

> Everywhere songs are being sung,
> A fiery dragon has crawled up the hill.
> The girl laughs aloud and cries:
> "Look, the sun is rising!"

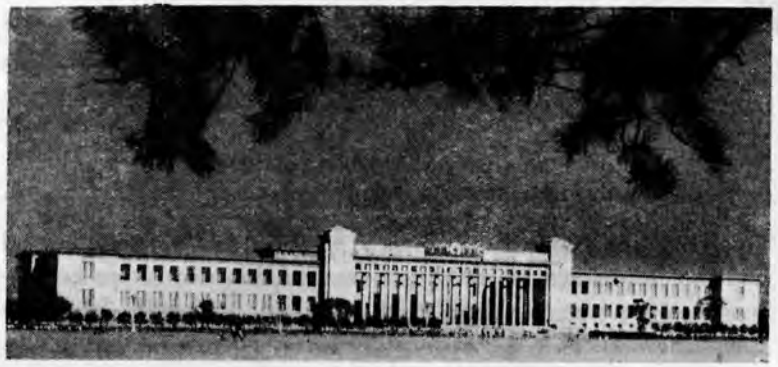
This song conveys most forcefully the inspiring sight and heroic spirit of people working at night and conquering the darkness. It is night, but torches blaze all over the hill, songs are heard everywhere and the sound of men at work. The girl standing on the hill looking out over this magnificent and beautiful scene cannot help laughing and exclaiming: "Look, the sun is rising!" For labour has created another sun, has changed the sequence of time. These are stirring moments when the working people, undeterred by any hardship, translate labour into such sublime spectacles.

We could quote many such songs. Labour has enriched poetry, and poetry has in turn enriched labour. Though much of our labour is not yet mechanized and many tasks are still heavy, the vanguard of the working people, who possess a bold communist style of work and are conscious of their own creative strength, have turned physical labour into poetry. So work inspires poems, and the folk songs appearing on all sides are as innumerable as the stars in the sky. These are not verses artificially composed, but songs which burst unchecked from men's hearts. For when the labouring people are fully aware of the beauty of life, they must

sing songs and write poems. The following song expresses the creative enthusiasm of our working folk:

> After going to evening school for thirty days,
> I am bold enough to write poetry.
> Though this is like cabbage and beancurd —
> Plain, coarse fare — still it tastes good!

Our labouring people have already produced many such splendid and immortal songs which will be handed down to future generations. When their cultural level is raised, they will surely accomplish wonders.



Notes on Literature and Art

WANG LI-HUI

The Museum of Chinese History

On one side of the Tien An Men Square, facing the Great Hall of the People* stands a majestic building, light buff in colour, which houses two national museums. Contemporary with the Great Hall of the People, it is also a child of the 1958-1959 Big Leap; that is to say, it was started in September 1958 and completed in August 1959. The southern part of the building contains the Museum of Chinese History and the northern part the Museum of the Chinese Revolution. In October 1959 a preview of the historical exhibition was held, attracting thousands of visitors.

* See the article *The Great Hall of the People in Peking* in *Chinese Literature* No. 3, 1960.

Entering the Museum between tall majestic colonnades, one is struck at once by the magnificence of this people's palace of art and knowledge. More than 8,000 items arranged in spacious galleries show vividly and truthfully five hundred thousand years of historical development in the vast land of China. There are three exhibition halls: the Hall of Primitive Society, the Hall of Slave Society and the Hall of Feudal Society.

At the entrance to the Hall of Primitive Society stands a model of the Peking Man with a deer slung over his shoulder. His low, flat forehead, projecting brows and slightly protruding mouth are reminiscent of an ape. This model was made by scientists on the basis of the unearthed fossil skull and upper limbs of *Sinanthropus Pekinensis*. Chinese archaeology has developed considerably during the past ten years and the Museum displays a number of newly discovered human fossils. The upper jawbone of Changyang Man (Hupeh) is a fossil dating from 100,000 years ago. The fossils of the Upper-Cave Men (Choukoutien, Peking) living 50,000 years ago and others dating from the same period in Liuchiang (Kwangsi), Tzuyang (Szechuan) and Chilin Mountain (Laipin County, Kwangsi) prove that in physical build these forbears of ours in the main resembled modern man.

The Neolithic period in China started five to six thousand years ago. On exhibition are relics of clan communities of this period excavated in different parts of the country. These include stone spades for digging, stone axes for felling trees, instruments for skinning animals, stone weights for fishing-nets and bone needles for making clothes. Also on display are examples of coloured and black pottery, one of the important inventions of this period. The clan communities who inhabited the upper and middle reaches of the Yellow River some five to six thousand years ago made coloured pottery of different shapes and kinds with fairly imaginative patterns. Four thousand years ago these people living along the Yellow River made thin black pottery with a fine glaze. Some pots were made on a wheel, proving that our handicraft art already existed in embryo at the time of the primitive clan communities.

Bronze Dragons-and-Tigers *Tsun*

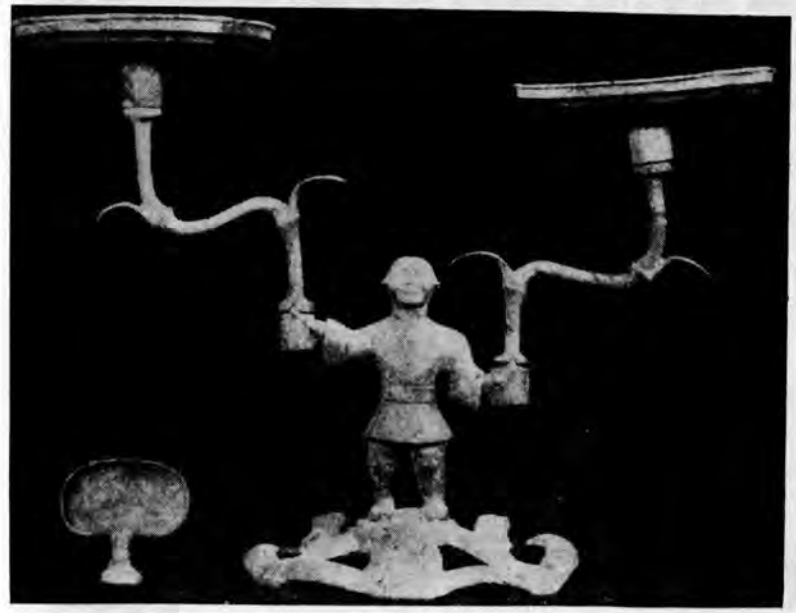
China entered the stage of slave society in approximately the 22nd century B.C. The magnificent bronzes of the Shang dynasty (16-11 century B.C.) are featured with prominence in the Hall of Slave Society. Among these the dragons-and-tigers *tsun* (wine vessel) and the four-goats *tsun* are splendid examples of sculptural art. The former vessel is decorated with four dragons intertwining with four two-bodied tigers playing in the waves. The latter is a vessel bearing beautiful designs and culminating in the heads of four goats. Another exhibit is a tripod for sacrificial purposes, unearthed in Anyang, Honan, which weighs 875 kilograms and is covered by exquisite designs. This shows that slave workshops for casting bronze were already in existence in the Shang dynasty.

The large oracle bones excavated from Shang dynasty ruins bear the earliest script yet discovered and are therefore most precious. From these bone inscriptions we know that our forbears five to six thousand years ago planted millet along the middle and lower reaches of the Yellow River and rice along the Yangtse. The oracle bones also give us an idea of the almanac then in use. Men had already learned to divide the year into twelve months with thirty or twenty-nine days in each month, and an extra month in each intercalary year.

Bronze Four-Goats *Tsun*

Feudal society began to take shape in China during the Warring States period in the 5th century B.C. and lasted for more than two thousand years, during which time our ancestors in every important period left us a rich cultural heritage. Iron tools came into use at approximately the time of the Spring and Autumn period (770-475 B.C.). Iron smelting developed rapidly during the Warring States period and this hall displays iron moulds unearthed in Hsinglung, Hopei, for casting hoes, scythes, spades and axes. Evidently the advance had been made from iron forging to iron casting and a fairly good bellows had been developed. The advance in iron smelting brought about improvements in the implements of production which gave fresh impetus to agriculture, handicrafts and water conservancy. The handicraft workshops became bigger and better organized with a finer division of labour. Here, in the Hall of Feudal Society we are shown the best of China's handicrafts throughout the dynasties: finely woven silk with beautiful designs made during the Warring States period and the Han and Tang dynasties; Sung dynasty tapestry; bright Ming dynasty brocade; the three-coloured Tang pottery, Sung dynasty celadon and Ching dynasty cloisonné – all well known throughout the world.

A Bronze Lamp-stand of the Warring States Period



However, it is the class struggle throughout the thousands of years of Chinese history that attracts the visitors' chief attention. Chairman Mao Tse-tung has pointed out: "The gigantic scale of the peasant uprisings and peasant wars in Chinese history is without parallel in the world. These class struggles of the peasants — the peasant uprisings and peasant wars — alone formed the real motive force of historical development in China's feudal society." The theme of the class struggle runs like a red thread through this exhibition showing the development of Chinese history.

Class oppression was brutal in the extreme in China's slave society two thousand years ago. Exhibited here is the model of a large mausoleum belonging to an aristocratic family of the Shang dynasty excavated in the village of Wukuan in Anyang County. Over seventy slaves were buried alive in this mausoleum with the dead while some two hundred more were buried in the vicinity. Among the exhibits are also deeds and papers drawn up when peasants borrowed grain from landlords, mortgaged their land and sold their children or even themselves into servitude. Ruthless oppression made the peasants launch large-scale uprisings time and again. In the 3rd century B.C. a great peasant rising was led by Chen Sheng and Wu Kuang. On display are photographs of Tatsehsiang, where two thousand years ago Chen Sheng and Wu Kuang raised the flag of revolt, as well as paintings of the peasants' heroic battles. An ancient folk song ran:

> Hair thick as scallion grows as soon as cut;
> Heads like the rooster's sing after they're chopped off.
> Officials are not to be feared;
> Humble folk are not to be slighted.

Many a revolutionary hero emerged in these repeated peasant uprisings. The Museum contains portraits and statues of Chang Chueh of the Han dynasty, Li Mi of the Sui dynasty, Huang Chao of the Tang dynasty, Sung Chiang and Fang La of the Sung dynasty, Li Tzu-cheng of the Ming dynasty and Shih Liu-teng of the Ching dynasty with brief accounts of their time and their heroic deeds.

The peasant uprising led by Li Tzu-cheng in the 17th century went on for seventeen years and was the largest agrarian revolt in Chinese history. We see here the gold and silver treasures

unearthed from the tombs of the Ming emperor Wan Li and nobles — relics of the luxurious lives led by the ruling class in those days. It was the luxury and extravagance of the Ming rulers that compelled the peasants to rise in continuous revolts. Here are a large statue of the peasant leader, Li Tzu-cheng — the Invincible Prince — who led the peasant army in northern Shensi and in a few years spread the flames of revolution to the upper and middle reaches of the Yellow River and the Yangtse River. Like a hurricane, the revolutionary forces smashed the government armies. Displayed here also are the slogans put forward by the peasant army for "a fair distribution of land" and "exemption from taxes," as well as folk songs welcoming the peasant army wherever it went.

> When the Invincible Prince arrives,
> No more corveé, no more taxes.
>
> As soon as we welcomed the Invincible Prince,
> Old and young rejoiced and were glad.

With wide popular support, the peasant uprising rapidly shook the foundations of the Ming dynasty. In 1644 Li Tzu-cheng at the head of the peasant army left Sian for the Ming capital, Peking, arriving in the third month of that year. That was when the last emperor of the Ming dynasty hanged himself on Chingshan (Coal Hill) in the imperial garden. Though the uprising ended in failure, the cause of the peasant army remained dear to the hearts of the people. We see on display an ink stone used by Li Tzu-cheng and one of his soldiers' swords inscribed roughly on the hilt with the words: "Protect the People." This sword was preserved by the Pi family in Ningwu County, Shansi, and handed down from generation to generation.

Another dominant theme of the whole exhibition is the Chinese people's contribution to science and culture throughout the ages.

Chinese astronomy was developing as early as the 5th century B.C. Among the exhibits of the Spring and Autumn period is a picture of a comet. This is the earliest record in the world of a comet. There were already inventors in those days. Lu Pan of that time has become a legendary figure to whom is attributed

the invention of such important tools as the plane, the drill, the grinder and the spade, to say nothing of significant contributions to architecture, sculpture and the military arts. Li Pin, the prefect of Shu or present-day Szechuan, two thousand years ago built the famous Tuchiangyen irrigation works in Kuanhsien County, Szechuan, which watered thousands of hectares of good land. The Tuchiangyen works are still serving the people today. The Museum has photographs of the temple the people built to commemorate the good deeds of Li Pin and his son as well as a statue of the prefect. Also displayed are models of the armillary sphere and seismoscope invented by Chang Heng of the Han dynasty, the compass-cart invented by Ma Chun of the Three Kingdoms period and the drum-cart equipped with a mileage-indicator invented in about the 5th century. The Sung dynasty contributed three great inventions to world civilization: gun-powder, printing with movable type and the compass. On display here are models of all three.

Chinese scientists in different ages made outstanding contributions in the field of mathematics. Two of the exhibits are books on mathematics, *Chou Pei Suan Chin* and *Chiu Chang Suan Shu* written in the Ist century B.C. and the Ist century A.D. respectively, which embody the discoveries of the mathematicians of that time. Tsu Chung-chih of the Southern and Northern Dynasties (420-589) succeeded in computing the ratio of the circumference of the circle to the diameter, arriving at a figure between 3.1415926 and 3.1415927. Here, due credit is given to his work. Finely made models of the open spandrel Chaochou stone bridge designed by the Sui dynasty craftsman Li Chun in the 7th century and the hydraulic astronomical apparatus designed by Su Sung of the Sung dynasty are two other interesting exhibits. Also worthy of note are a portrait of Hua To, the famous physician of the Han dynasty; the writings of the 3rd century alchemist, Keh Hung; a statue of the Ming dynasty pharmacologist Li Shih-chen, who gave up an official post to study medicinal plants, and a copy of his immortal *Pen Tsao Kang Mu*; the important book on agriculture — *Chi Ming Yao Shu* — by Chia Sze-hsieh of Northern Wei; the writings of the Tang dynasty monk-astronomer I-hsing; and a statue of Pi Sheng of the Sung dynasty, inventor of the printing press with movable type.

Art and literature occupy glorious pages in Chinese history. The galleries of the Museum show us some of the fine achievements of the Chinese people in art and culture since the days of primitive man. On exhibition are some of the best statues, sculpture, literature and examples of handicrafts created throughout the centuries. We are also given vivid introductions to important thinkers, philosophers, artists and writers and their works There is a picture of Confucius, great thinker and teacher of the Spring and Autumn period, and works of the Warring States philosophers: Mencius, Mo Tzu, Chuang Tzu, Hsun Tzu and Han Fei Tzu. Displayed also are a statue of the great patriotic poet of the Warring States period, Chu Yuan and his immortal work — *Li Sao*; the poems of the great Tang dynasty poets, Li Po, Tu Fu and Pai Chu-yi; introductions to the writers Shih Nai-an and Lo Kuan-chung, authors of the popular novels *Outlaws of the Marshes* and *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* written at the end of Ming dynasty and beginning of the Ching; and a statue of the Yuan dynasty dramatist Kuan Han-ching whose works are still performed on the Chinese stage. Portraits of the Ching dynasty writers Tsao Hsueh-chin and Wu Ching-tzu attract many visitors who look with interest at the finely illustrated old editions of the *Dream of the Red Chamber* and *The Scholars*. . . .

China is a multi-national country. The relics of the Warring States period (475-221 B.C.) unearthed in Szechuan and Liaoning make it clear that our national minorities both in the south and the north had reached a fairly high level of economic and cultural development at that time. Relics left by our minority peoples are displayed in all three halls, showing that the fraternal peoples of our country have worked together since early times to exploit the resources and wealth of our motherland and to create a rich culture. There are evidences of close contact and mutual influence between the different peoples of our country.

Chairman Mao Tse-tung has said, "The Chinese nation is a nation with a glorious revolutionary tradition and a splendid historical heritage." The thousands of exhibits in the Museum of Chinese History prove once again the correctness of his judgement.

LEI KUEI-YUAN

Chinese Handicraft Art

Chinese handicrafts developed over the centuries among our people. Today some of the craftsmen are old folk artists over seventy or eighty; some are young apprentices in their teens. Taking materials available locally, they make appropriate use of their medium, applying their experience and skill to create works of art which enrich the life of our people. The simplicity and genuineness of these works appeal to all who see them. These craftsmen, who live among the common people, are responsive to all that is new in life today. Using whatever material comes to hand – a piece of jade, a plank of wood, a few straws or a clod of earth – they express their ideas with great ingenuity. Thus in different materials and from different angles they have paid tribute to the Chinese Communist Party, the Big Leap, the General Line and the people's communes. They have clothed many new phenomena in China in beautiful forms and colours, making of them moving works of art.

Ten years ago our folk artists had a saying: "When the craftsman dies his craft dies with him." For often when an old artist died his skill was lost. But today, ten years after liberation, there are so many different types of handicraft in China that we cannot enumerate them all. This was fully borne out by the exhibition of handicraft art held last winter in Peking which had more than five thousand exhibits divided according to the material used.

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Thus ivory carving, jade carving, stone carving and earthen or dough figures all came under sculptural art. Another category included lacquer carving, enamelled lacquer and so forth; then there was bambooware and wickerware, as well as cloisonné, embroidery, artificial flowers, toys, cross-stitch work and so on. There were objects for decoration as well as for use. But the same spirit pervaded all these works: on the basis of preserving the traditional techniques new and original creations were made.

Ivory carving has a long history. Today our veteran ivory-carvers are using this precious material with its fine texture and purity of colour to express a wealth of different themes. The old artist Yang Shih-chun used the traditional technique to carve his *Flower Basket* on the theme "Let a Hundred Flowers Blossom," and the lifelike flowers which he produced in this noble medium are reminiscent of traditional Chinese flower painting. Another ivory carving, *The Five Heroes of Langya Mountain,* presents the five Communists who fought the enemy to the death during the Japanese war. To show the splendid revolutionary spirit of these heroes, the artist carved them above a precipice, using certain of the techniques of Western sculpture to produce a fresh and original carving. These two examples indicate something of the progress made in this field and form a vivid contrast to works of the past; for in the old society, to meet bourgeois tastes, the craftsmen sometimes dyed the pure white ivory yellow or added other colouring to vulgar representations of stereotyed old-style beauties. In technique too we see an advance over the past. This is not to say that we discount the traditional

Jade Incense-burner

Children with Pumpkin (wood-carving)

technique. A traditional Cantonese ornament, thirty ivory balls carved one inside the other, reveals the skill of the old craftsmen; but in the last few years, thanks to our workers' initiative, different styles of carved ivory balls have appeared and these were on display in this exhibition.

Two other examples of sculpture in this exhibition deserve special mention for the happy effect produced. One is an incense-burner made by the Peking Jade Carving Workshop, in which exquisite carving brings out the lustre of the jade and its translucent quality, and the fine designs make up one harmonious whole. This combines natural beauty with human art. The crystal vase made by the Shanghai Jade Carving Workshop has no ornamentation at all. The shape is as simple and beautiful as a clear fountain or a lotus flower rising from the water unstained by any speck of dust. We are impressed by the excellent taste of the two craftsmen who created these works of art, for they have brought out admirably the natural beauty of the jade and crystal, and by their skill endued this splendid but dead material with life and soul.

Other works with a distinctive style included the wood-carving of Fukien, the stone-carving of Shoushan, the clay and dough figures of Peking, Tientsin, Fukien and Kiangsu. The clay figures were interesting exhibits, for out of ordinary clay experienced old artists made all sorts of decorative or amusing human figures—

Clay Toys

Lacquerware

Pottery Tea-set

Pottery Ash-tray
and Lamp-stand

characters from the Chinese opera in graceful dancing poses, or simple gay toys for children. Though small and made of cheap material, some of these have considerable artistic value.

Lacquerware and basketware both have superb form and colour. The lacquerware of Fukien is simple in design, and the lacquer vases brightly coloured like enamelware have been freed from the usual superfluous decorations to show to advantage the beauty of the whole. The bamboo and straw baskets in the exhibition exploited the fine texture of the material to such good effect in bold and rythmic designs that they reminded us of folk dancing or folk tunes and we never tired of looking at them.

The truth that the life of the people is the source of all art is best illustrated by the embroidery of our national minorities done by deft needlewomen. This art has been passed down from mother to daughter from generation to generation. No stereotyped models are used for this work, but each woman makes something original. The designs and colours are based on nature, yet are more beautiful than nature; and since the embroidery is closely linked to daily life the result is lively, fresh and varied. But because such embroidery takes months or even years to complete, from the point of view of utility it is not very economical. Now the Yunnan Dyeing and Printing Work is producing replicas of the needlework of the minorities by modern methods. These machine-made materials retain the qualities of the original but are produced much more cheaply to reach a wider market. This excellent enterprise is helping to encourage a folk art which dates back for centuries.

Folk pottery was another outstanding feature of the handicrafts exhibition. This simple and lovely pottery, devoid of superfluous ornament, is thoroughly Chinese in style. Free from the vulgarity and showiness typical of a semi-colonial and semi-feudal society, it has retained the best of the old traditions. Last year the staff and students of the Central Institute of Applied Arts experimented in producing pottery based on folk products of Fengfeng, a district where porcelain was made in the Sung dynasty. They followed the simple original forms, trying to correct the bad influence of semi-feudal and semi-colonial art which set in towards the end of the Ching dynasty. This bad taste has its historical roots and owes nothing to folk art; hence it should be opposed by artists in

our new age. The blue and white tea-services from Chingtehchen and the coloured tea-services from Liling, which were on view in the exhibition, have successfully broken with the former over-ornamentation; their new forms and designs accord with the spirit of this age and mark a great step forward in the field of ceramics. The Sung dynasty porcelain, both in form and colour, was a healthy development from folk porcelain. Last year the famous Chun ware of Honan and the Lungchuan ware of Chekiang resumed production. This means that Chinese ceramics is inheriting and further developing the best traditions of the past and will produce many things of beauty for our people.

This renaissance of Chinese handicrafts was caused by the Big Leap of 1958, when a new chapter opened in the history of handicraft art. It is common knowledge that before liberation there was not a single school of applied art in China; yet during the Big Leap of 1958 every province and municipality saw a tremendous advance in handicrafts and many schools of applied art have been set up to train new artists. Now countless old craftsmen are teaching the younger generation their treasured skills, and under their guidance many youngsters after less than one year of hard study are already producing fine works of art — cloisonné, jade, ivory carving or embroidery. Under Party leadership old and young artists are working together with incomparable enthusiasm, striving for newer and yet greater achievements.

Chronicle

New Achievements in Mongolian Literature

Guided by Chairman Mao Tse-tung's thought on literature and art, outstanding new writers and artists are appearing among the Mongolian people. Works of lasting value published during the last two years in the Inner Mongolian Autonomous Region include two full-length novels, two short novels, three collections of short stories, five long poems and more than sixty film-scenarios. *Beacon on the Steppes,* by the young writer Ulanbagan, is an excellent novel about the revolutionary struggle of the slaves in Inner Mongolia during the War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression. Nearly 600,000 copies of this book have been sold. The film-scenario *The Grassland Bursts into Song,* by Malchinhu and Bjulanteteg, deals with the construction of the Paotou Steel Works by Mongolians and Hans under Party leadership and has been filmed by the Changchun Film Studio and the Inner Mongolian Film Studio. The new poems of N. Sayntsogt and Bren Bik and the epic *The Hero Geser Khan* by Tagje have been acclaimed by many readers. Mongolian writers of this region have prepared draft histories of Mongolian literature and the literature of the Inner Mongolian Autonomous Region, which are now being revised. They have also translated the poems of Chairman Mao Tse-tung into Mongolian — an event of major importance in the field of letters of Inner Mongolia.

Chinese Folk Songs

Chinese Folk Songs, compiled by the Chinese Research Institute of Music, has been published recently by the Music Publishing House. This collection gives a fairly comprehensive picture of our heritage of folk songs, including both the music and the words of 389 distinctive and representative songs from various parts of China. These folk songs have been selected from among a large number recorded throughout the country. The work is divided into two parts. The first contains new folk songs, including revolutionary songs of different periods and songs praising the Chinese Communist Party,

Chairman Mao and socialist construction. The second part consists of traditional old folk songs — songs of protest against feudal oppression, love songs or songs dealing with daily tasks and local customs.

New Programme of the Tienma Dancing Academy

The Tienma Dancing Academy, headed by the distinguished choreographer Wu Hsiao-pang, recently gave some new performances. These dances fall into four categories. First, there are well-known dances from the past, like the *Dance of Peace* performed at the imperial court during celebrations and triumphs, or the *Weaving Maid.* Secondly there are new and highly distinctive dances based on such ancient tunes as the famous *Swans Descending on the Sand, The Ambush, Spring Sunshine and White Snow* and *Plum Blossom.* Thirdly there are dances based on folk music and folk dancing, like *Two Cats Fight for a Ball* set to Chaochow music or the short ballet *The Butterfly,* which owes much to an Anhwei folk dance called *The Flower Drum.* Fourthly there are some of the early compositions of Wu Hsiao-pang, most of which were performed during the War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression. His *March of the Volunteers, Song of the Guerrillas, Fiery Hunger* and *A Nun's Longing* played a progressive role in those stormy years by singing the heroic spirit of the revolution, exposing the iniquities of the old society and attacking feudal morality.

Palaeolithic Sites in Northwest China

The Institute of Vertebrate Palaeontology of the Chinese Academy of Sciences has discovered a number of palaeolithic sites on the banks of the Yellow River near Juicheng and Fenglingtu in the province of Shansi. In an area about twenty kilometres in length there are more than twenty places where palaeolithic remains have been found in considerable quantities. In 1957, some palaeolithic relics were found by the Institute of Vertebrate Palaeontology while studying the geology and vertebrate fossils of the Quaternary period in this area, which will soon be under water as part of the Sanmen Gorge Reservoir. More recent discoveries include stone implements and fossils of such vertebrates as deer, ox and rhinoceros.

Chekhov's Plays in China

Recently the Chinese Drama Publishing House has published revised translations of two of Chekhov's great plays, *Uncle Vanya* and *The Three Sisters.* These plays have been known to China for more than thirty years. *Uncle Vanya* was translated into Chinese in 1921, *The Three Sisters* in 1925. In 1954 the China Youth Art Theatre's production of *Uncle Vanya* in Peking was a great success. Early this year the People's Art Theatre staged *The Three Sisters.* The translations recently published have been revised by the translators to bring them closer to the spirit of the original.

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