

S.A.

# CHINESE LITERATURE



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*Mo Ying-feng*

## A Conversation Overheard at Night

Night had fallen in the small mountain village; no more smoke could be seen drifting above the roof-tops. As the moon emerged from the hills, the trees cast misty shadows. Rice shoots in the terraced fields were greedily lapping up the dew, while frogs in the pond set up a lusty croaking to lull the village to sleep.

I had just come here to learn about the village's production, and the hospitable brigade leader had insisted on my staying with him and sharing a bed with his son, a middle-school student. The room where we slept had been lively earlier that evening; but now the visitor had gone, the schoolboy was sound asleep, and the brigade leader and his wife had retired behind a partition to their own room. I fetched some water to wash my feet before turning in for the night.

As the partition was thin, I could clearly hear the sound of a stool being moved. Evidently my hosts had not yet gone to bed either.

"Really, the way you treat people!" the woman exclaimed.

I had no idea what she referred to, and there was no reply.

"How are you going to face him next time?" Still there was no reply.

"Didn't you hear me? Don't just sit there like a block of wood!" In her exasperation she had raised her voice so that her son turned over in bed and muttered something in his sleep. Since it was no

concern of mine I tried not to listen; but I could not help overhearing their conversation.

"Are you deaf?"

The man laughed. "I was thinking about something else."

"Laugh. Go on, laugh. Other people must be cursing you."

"Who's cursing me?"

"Well . . . I am."

"You?" The brigade leader chortled.

"You can't laugh your way out of this," his wife went on. "Let me ask you: Did you notice when I tipped you a wink?"

"Sure."

"And when I trod on your foot?"

"Of course."

"Then why did you . . . Really, you are the limit."

I realized that they were talking about what had happened earlier in the evening. This brigade leader's cousin, head of a neighbouring brigade, had come to him for help. It was the time for planting sweet potatoes and the cousin's brigade was short of manure; so, hearing that this village had several hundredweight to spare, he came to ask for a loan, promising to return it at the end of the season. He was obviously taken by surprise when he received a non-committal answer. The brigade leader simply said: "We'll call a meeting and discuss the matter." His wife, the woman brigade leader, felt her husband was being too uncooperative and that if he consulted the other cadres they would certainly agree. However, instead of making any move, her husband went on chatting about this and that till his cousin grew quite frantic. Yet the brigade leader pretended not to notice. She got so worked up that she dropped strong hints to her husband, while entertaining the visitor and hoping that he wouldn't be offended. When the latter rose to leave, looking thoroughly sheepish, it was difficult to know what he was thinking.

"Naturally he must be annoyed with you," she said.

"He'll get over it," her husband answered.

"I dare say. But we're neighbours. Shouldn't neighbours help each other?" She mimicked the brigade leader: "We'll call a

meeting and discuss the matter.' H'm . . . Fancy snubbing him like that, just fobbing him off."

Her husband laughed. "So you got the idea, did you?"

"However stupid I may be, it was obvious."

"Good." The brigade leader went on more seriously, "In that case I hope you'll help me."

"Your head needs examining," retorted his wife. "Help you snub a neighbour and a relative?"

"Oh, so you didn't get the idea after all." The brigade leader chuckled, making her even more angry.

"Wipe that grin off your face!" She plonked down a stool, and I heard the bamboo creak under her weight. "Come on. We must thrash this out before we sleep."

"Fine." Her husband moved his stool closer, prepared for a verbal contest.

I was wondering whether to intervene or not, but already they were at it hammer and tongs.

"In running our brigade, we must rely on Party leadership and on help from neighbouring brigades," the wife began confidently.

"Agreed. But first of all, we must have a correct line and correct policy," he amended.

"If you're such a know-all, it's no use my talking."

"You talk well. Carry on."

"What use is talk? You know all the right ideas but you won't put them into practice. Won't even lend manure to a neighbouring brigade."

"It was right to refuse them," her husband answered slowly.

"Right?" She flared up again. "You mean I'm wrong?"

"No, what you said was right too." Again he laughed.

"I'm fed up with arguing with you." A stool creaked. I guessed that she had turned her back on him.

The brigade leader, however, seemed unperturbed. His wife's show of temper only made him more good-humoured. With another laugh he got up to pour out some water. "Don't sulk," he coaxed. "Come on, have some tea and cool off. We must straighten this out calmly . . . Remember what our brigade was like at the start?"

"Sure." A note of pride crept into the woman's voice. "I remember the jingle they made up about you:

Our brigade leader has no rest,  
He's up before the sun;  
Coping with problems right and left  
His work is never done...."

"Why was that?"

"You don't have to ask me."

"But I value your opinion," he said gently.

"Well, at that time you relied solely on the men, making no use of us women. Naturally you couldn't cope."

"Quite right. That's how it was."

His wife suddenly went off at a tangent then. "Ha!" She slapped her leg. "Tell me this. As brigade leader you're doing better this year than last, aren't you?"

"Sure."

"Who've you got to thank for that?"

"The masses."

"Put it more specifically."

"Our women members have made a great contribution. The credit goes to you in the first place, comrade."

"Why mention me?"



The brigade leader laughed again.

"Stop that!" She added quickly, "Since you know it's thanks to the masses that we're doing well, you shouldn't ride the high horse."

"Who says I am?"

"I do. You're just out of the wood yourself, but you won't lift a finger to help other people in trouble."

"Who won't lift a finger?"

"You! Why didn't you help that other brigade? You're riding the high horse." She emphasized the last words, confident that she had hit the nail on the head.

"You've got me wrong," he objected.

"I haven't. You should have lent him the manure."

"No. I was right to refuse him...."

But this time I felt thoroughly confused. Surely his refusal was nothing to boast about. How could he defend his case? His wife seemed to feel it was no use arguing, for she lapsed into silence. And the frogs outside took advantage of this respite to croak more loudly than ever.

"I won't argue with you any more," said his wife presently, sounding disheartened. "Anyway it was us women who collected the manure. We have the right to dispose of it as we think fit, whether you agree or not. I'll discuss it with them tomorrow." Her bamboo stool creaked again. She seemed to be about to go to bed.

"Wait a moment," her husband said. "You made a good job of collecting manure, but you must realize that the reason you women became so keen and have shown such initiative is that we've carried out the Party's policy. If we hadn't insisted on equal pay for women, you'd still be jogging along in the old way."

The place grew so still I could almost hear their breathing. She must be mulling over what he had said.

"Our cousin is the way I used to be," the brigade leader continued. "Man-power, to him, still doesn't include the women. It's because his brigade is half-hearted about carrying out the policy of equal pay for equal work that their women haven't shown their mettle." He struck a match to light a cigarette. "Building socialism is a job for the masses. How can we do it well without a mass line? With-

out carrying out the correct Party policy? I learned this through my own experience. I've tasted both the bitter and the sweet. He doesn't see it yet. To lend him a few hundredweight of manure is easy, but it won't solve his problem in the long run."

"That's true enough," she conceded. "But just now he's up against it. It's not right not to help."

The brigade leader laughed again.

"Why are you laughing now, idiot?" she protested.

"How about this?" he proposed. "First thing tomorrow take your whole women's team to their brigade and help them collect manure."

"Collect manure?"

"They have plenty of resources they haven't tapped. They just need to bring their women's initiative into play."

"You mean that we should..."

"Set them an example. That'll teach our cousin a lesson."

"Fine!" His wife slapped her thigh.

"Show them what women can do, eh?" In my mind's eye I saw him raising a clenched fist.

"I know, I know. Don't you worry." She was in high spirits again.

The brigade leader, pacing the room, continued: "Equal pay for equal work for men and women — only in a socialist country like ours can this be truly achieved. Don't take your job tomorrow lightly. It has great significance."

"Just leave it to me. And now let's go to bed." As she busied herself clearing up the room, she grumbled: "You're so stupid. If you'd explained yourself earlier, we'd have been in bed long ago."

"Well, sometimes it's worth sacrificing a little sleep. It's up to you tomorrow. And you'll need to use not only your hands but your head as well. You'll need to be clear what you're going to tell them. Right?" The brigade leader laughed.

So their argument was bearing fruit. And I too was very pleased, because my involuntary eavesdropping had proved so edifying.

Suddenly there came a knocking on the door. The brigade leader opened it. The man who came in announced breathlessly: "Cous-

in, no need to discuss my business with your committee. We won't be wanting your manure."

"Why not?"

"What you said set me thinking." The visitor seemed out of breath after running. "I've talked it over with some comrades. We'll rally the masses, especially the women, and use our own resources. Rely on our own efforts."

The brigade leader laughed. "Sure you can manage in time?"

Just then his wife called from the inner room: "Hey, cousin! Tomorrow you must boil plenty of water and prepare some good tea."

"Why?" asked the visitor.

"Our women are sending a shock team to your brigade to help you collect manure."

"You mean that? Really?"

They exchanged a laughing "good night". Then the cousin left at a run. In the chicken coop outside a cock started crowing. Roused by the visitor, it must have thought it had forgotten the time. Several other cocks followed suit. The frogs were apparently shocked into silence, for they abruptly stopped croaking. Perhaps they were wondering: What? Is it dawn already?

Summer nights are short. A new day would soon dawn.

*Illustrated by Chen Yu-hsien*

## **Master and Apprentice**

The day that Meng Chiang started his apprenticeship, his master Yu Tao-ming took him round the different workshops to have a look. Young Meng's quick glance darted this way and that, revealing his keen interest in the whole factory, where work was going with a swing.

When they came to No. 2 Workshop, in process of being expanded, the Party secretary was holding a meeting on the construction site. Pointing to the high scaffolding he cried: "Now that No. 2 Workshop's output's gone up and they've twice as many distillers as before, can No. 1 Workshop keep them supplied with timber? This is the crucial point." Turning to Yu and his new apprentice, he told them: "It's up to you to keep them well fed."

Yu nudged Meng and whispered: "Hear that? We've got a heavy job."

No whit disconcerted, the boy raised his fist and bluntly promised the secretary: "We guarantee to keep them well fed."

This announcement made everyone stare. But the boy simply folded his arms and gazed back at them, bold as brass. Then all eyes turned to Yu. Yu seemed pleased, however, by this show of

spirit. Instead of reprimanding his apprentice, he simply remarked: "All right, kid. Don't talk big."

After the meeting Yu and Meng went into No. 2 Workshop, and there the boy pulled a thermometer out from one of the distillers. "What a length!" he exclaimed.

Yu patiently explained that each machine had someone in charge of it, and others could only look at it, not touch it. Young Meng wiped his hands and smiled sheepishly. Then he started asking questions:

"Master, how is the timber fed into this machine? How's the oil extracted from it?"

"What's this gadget, master?"

"Master, what's this? . . ."

Since Yu approved of the boy's inquiring spirit, he gave detailed answers to all the youngster's questions, to Meng's great satisfaction.

But when they came to the control room, young Meng completely forgot his master's instructions at sight of the big control panel with red and green lights flashing on and off, and pointers shooting up and down to an accompaniment of clicking and humming. Fascinated, he stepped forward and reached out his hands. At once Yu pulled him back. Again Meng smiled sheepishly, slapping his forehead.

Yu thought: "This boy's smart. If only his energy can be directed into the right channels, he's decidedly promising material."

He led Meng towards the shop where they would be working together, sounding him out on the way.

"Well, what do you think of our factory?"

"It's terrific."

"In what way?"

"Just terrific."

"Use your brain. Think."

"No need to think. It can make a contribution to the revolution."

"Well, Meng, from today on you'll be a member of our working class. You must understand the relationship between your own job and the revolution."

"Right. . . ."

When they came to No. 1 Workshop, Yu pointed at the five rows of electric saws stridently rasping. Raising his voice to make it audible above the din, he said: "This is our post."

Meng watched raptly as the whirling blades cut through all sorts of timber. There was only one snag: the wood had to be carried by hand. At one side two cutting machines were chopping up timber. There were many workers in this shop, nearly all engaged in carrying timber in their hands or on their shoulders to the saws. It was heavy manual labour. And Master Yu had told him: "This is our post."

Though Meng was keen to operate a saw, his master made him carry timber instead. Itching to get his hands on a machine, the boy started fiddling with one during the break; but at once he was warned off. He had to content himself then with drawing diagrams in his notebook. But someone cautioned Yu: "Watch out. This kid made trouble in his school workshop, wrecking a machine and very nearly causing an accident. If he makes a saw-blade fly off here, it may kill someone."

When Meng heard this he turned his head away huffily and said nothing. Yu, however, took note of this.

Four days after Meng's arrival was their day off. In order to encourage his young apprentice to devote his energy to technical innovations, Yu told him to attend a meeting of the technical research group that morning. They waited until after eight, but Meng failed to show up.

"What does it matter whether he comes or not? He's just a new apprentice," someone remarked.

Another man commented: "Even tiger-cubs can be tamed, but Old Yu's got his work cut out with this meddlesome kid."

Hearing these remarks, Yu said: "Yes, a new apprentice needs education. You go ahead with the meeting while I find him."

In no time Yu reached Meng's house. As he paused at the door he heard children clapping and calling: "Do it again, Brother Meng!"

Unnoticed by the children who had eyes for nothing but what Meng was doing, Yu quietly slipped in to watch the fun. His apprentice, facing the *kang* which was littered with toys, raised his

hand for silence and said: "All right. Once more. But this is the last time. I'm a worker now, with no time to fool about." He plugged a wire attached to some toy chicks and ducks into a cardboard box, then pressed the switch, setting the small creatures into jerky motion. Again the children clapped and called out in glee.

"Is this honestly the last time, Brother Meng?" asked a small boy.

"You heard what I said, Pillar. Don't keep on about it. From now on I'll be fixing up real big machines. See?"

"But won't you show us those trucks moving timber again?"

"All right. But after that you're to stop pestering. I've got to go to a meeting." With that Meng produced two small wooden trucks painted black. When he pressed the switch on them they started running over the *kang* with their load of logs. The children jumped for joy, applauding loudly.

"Be quiet!" shouted Meng. At once the noise died down. Then looking at the alarm-clock he exclaimed in surprise: "Is it not yet half past seven?"

"Didn't you take a cog-wheel out to fix on the truck?" The boy called Pillar pointed at the toy.

"I'm late then." Meng was appalled. "They'll all be waiting for me."

Yu realized then that Meng's reputation as a meddler stemmed from his passion for machines. He reached out for the toy truck.

"Who's that?" Meng whirled round to see who it was, then stepped back in confusion.

"Ah! Master Yu... I'm... I'm just coming..." As he attempted to hide the toys behind him, Yu laid a hand on his shoulder and made him sit down while the other children quietly slipped away.

Sitting next to his apprentice on the edge of the *kang*, Yu examined the toy truck. Inside it were dry batteries and some cog-wheels taken from a clock. He pressed the switch and the wheels started revolving. "H'm. How about another demonstration for me?"

Meng took the toy from Yu and pleaded: "Master Yu, let me have a go at real machines in our workshop."

"Why?"

"My hand itches when I see those machines."



At sight of his eager, expectant face, Yu thought: "This boy's clever and energetic, a real live wire. That's all to the good. But I shall have to put in a lot of work on him before he can operate our saws." He asked: "Did you make all these toys yourself?"

"Yes."

"Really?"

"Of course," Meng protested.

With a laugh Yu stood up to go. Meng followed, locking the door. Walking behind his master, he asked: "Well, master, how about it?"

As Yu pushed his bike along, instead of answering directly he said: "Didn't you guarantee that we'd keep No. 2 Workshop well fed? Well, the machines in our workshop aren't up to it."

Meng turned this over in his mind, then suggested: "We could ask for more machines."

"No, we don't want to spend money. We should be self-reliant and find a way out ourselves."

"Will you let me help?"

"Sure. If you can make toy machines, you should be able to make big ones too."

"Then how about letting me examine our saws first?"

"You'd better watch how other people operate them before handling them yourself."

"So you'll really let me learn? Fine!"

Yu burst out laughing. The boy felt rather a fool. Still, this was reassuring. He had expected a lecture on punctuality, but it seemed his master was going to let him off lightly.

"You've studied Chairman Mao's works," continued Yu. "What does Chairman Mao say about knowing and changing the world?"

Without any hesitation Meng recited a passage from *On Practice*: "**Marxist philosophy holds that the most important problem does not lie in understanding the laws of the objective world and thus being able to explain it, but in applying the knowledge of these laws actively to change the world.**"

"H'm. Nothing wrong with your memory. But our main task, as I see it, is not just being able to explain things; it's applying

the knowledge we have to change the world." Yu laid special emphasis on the last words. "So when we study Chairman Mao's works, we should use them to guide our practice. Now give your mind to this problem: We haven't got much equipment; our workshop isn't fully mechanized. In this case what should we do?" Before the boy could answer, Yu went on: "We must change the external world; that's the answer."

"But our workshop is still. . ."

"Four years ago, we were still chopping wood with axes and sawing with bow-saws. It wasn't till the cultural revolution that we made those cutting machines, those big circular saws. So now we are much better off than before. Of course this isn't enough. We must become fully mechanized, with every process automatic. . . ." Laying a hand on Meng's shoulder, Yu added: "Provided we follow Chairman Mao's revolutionary line, we can certainly transform our workshop. We can certainly modernize our factory."

Yu's words made the boy's heart beat faster. It seemed to him no time at all before they reached the factory and entered their own workshop.

To spur his apprentice on, Yu said: "Since you can make automatic toys, why not think up a way to deliver wood automatically to the saws?" Meng nodded with shining eyes. Clenching his right fist he pounded it on his left palm.

A month passed. With help from his master, Meng had learned how the different parts of the saws worked. Whenever he had a moment to spare, he would make notes and drawings. He was tinkering with knives and saws, screws, iron plates and cog-wheels all the time.

One day during the lunch hour, Yu went to the rest room to look for Meng, wanting him to read some news items to the workers. When he failed to find him there he went to the workshop. Sure enough, there was Meng so hard at work all by himself that he did not notice when his master came in. He was hoisting a block of wood suspended on a chain to the revolving saw. Whoosh! The block slipped out of the chain flying towards the boy's head. In the nick of time Yu warded it off with a rod, then switched off the

electric current. Meng saw with dismay that the wood had struck Yu's arm, making it bleed. He urged his master to go and have the wound dressed.

"It's only a scratch." Yu smiled. "Did you get hurt?"

"No."

"Are you going to give up?"

"No."

Meng stood with lowered head, fidgeting with his fingers, and tears welled up in his eyes. Then he turned to dismantle the saw, but his master stopped him.

"Leave that."

Meng hesitated, then went on dismantling the saw.

"Stop that, I say."

Meng straightened up, eyeing Yu's wounded arm. He was sweating.

"Write out a report of this accident," ordered Yu.

His master's stern look of displeasure was nearly too much for Meng; but he kept a stiff upper lip while Yu picked up the newspaper he had dropped and went away.

After Meng had written the report, Yu took it to a trade union meeting for discussion, to hear the other workers' views on how this incident should be dealt with. The general opinion was that young Meng was shaping up very well and that a minor accident while he was working on a technical innovation should not be considered a breach of discipline, provided he had learned a lesson. There was no need to penalize him. Yu concurred with this. So the matter seemed to be closed. But before long Yu heard someone remark: "Old Yu always stands up for that young apprentice of his. . . . Maybe he's afraid of losing face himself." Yu just smiled and said nothing.

Then Meng came to him and said hoarsely: "Master Yu, why didn't you punish me for that accident? I want to be penalized."

Aware that the boy had heard some gossip too, Yu patted his shoulder and answered calmly: "The purpose of dealing out punishment is to make one recognize his mistake and learn a lesson from it. Since you have already learned your lesson, that's all right."

"But now there's talk. . . ." Meng did not know what to say.

"You should analyse what others have said. Accept the criticism if what they say is right. All new things must emerge through struggle. Some people may not understand what we are doing, but gradually they will, for truth will prevail," said Yu. Turning to look at the pine forest in the distance, he thought back to his own young days.

"What's on your mind, master?"

Yu turned his gaze to Meng and answered seriously: "The Party and the people have entrusted us with a task. We must advance resolutely along Chairman Mao's revolutionary road. At all times we must hold firm, able to stand up to any storm and prove ourselves true sons of the working class."

His heart filled with gratitude and admiration, Meng responded earnestly: "I shall try to learn from you, master, and to be a true son of the working class."

"In that case you must make a good study of the Marxist classics and the works of Chairman Mao. Try to make a good contribution to the world revolution and to overcome our country's backwardness." After a slight pause he added: "I'm all for you trying to figure out innovations, but you should work at this with other comrades, getting help from those with more experience under Party leadership."

"Right, master. I'll remember." Meng clenched his fists, and Yu clasped his hand fondly. Then the boy said: "Master Yu, I still want to improve on the saw."

Yu was all for this. "All right. We'll go into the various problems again," he said. "I've sketched a rough diagram. . . . Let's go and talk it over with the technical research group." With that he produced a drawing from his pocket.

Meng was so bucked, no words could express his thanks.

Another two months passed. When they knocked off work one evening, Yu asked Meng to go home with him to fix up the model for their new saw. While doing this they discovered that they were short of a sprocket-wheel and a chain. Pointing at his bicycle by the wall, Yu said: "Dismantle that."

"But you'll need it tomorrow when you go to work."

“If it’ll help to mechanize our workshop, I’ll gladly walk to work for a few days.” Yu’s action and words made a deep impression on his young apprentice. Meng’s spirits soared.

The next day when Meng went to work, his mates saw that he was carrying a bulky bag. Having put it down on a table he looked at Yu, and at a nod from his master he opened it. The workers crowded round to look. It was a well-made wooden model of a saw with an automatic feed.

Standing behind his apprentice Yu explained: “It’s our job to keep No. 2 Workshop well supplied: that’s why we made this model. There are still many problems we haven’t worked out, so all of you must help. It’s the masses, after all, who are the true heroes.”

They all admired Yu’s spirit. Yes. What they saw before them was much more than a model—it showed the eagerness and determination of Yu and his apprentice to serve the revolution. First one, then another offered suggestions and comments; then everybody pitched in to make the machine. In this way in about three weeks they finished the job.

When the new machine had its trial run, compliments were bandied about.

“Young Meng’s really smart.”

“This young fellow should go far.”

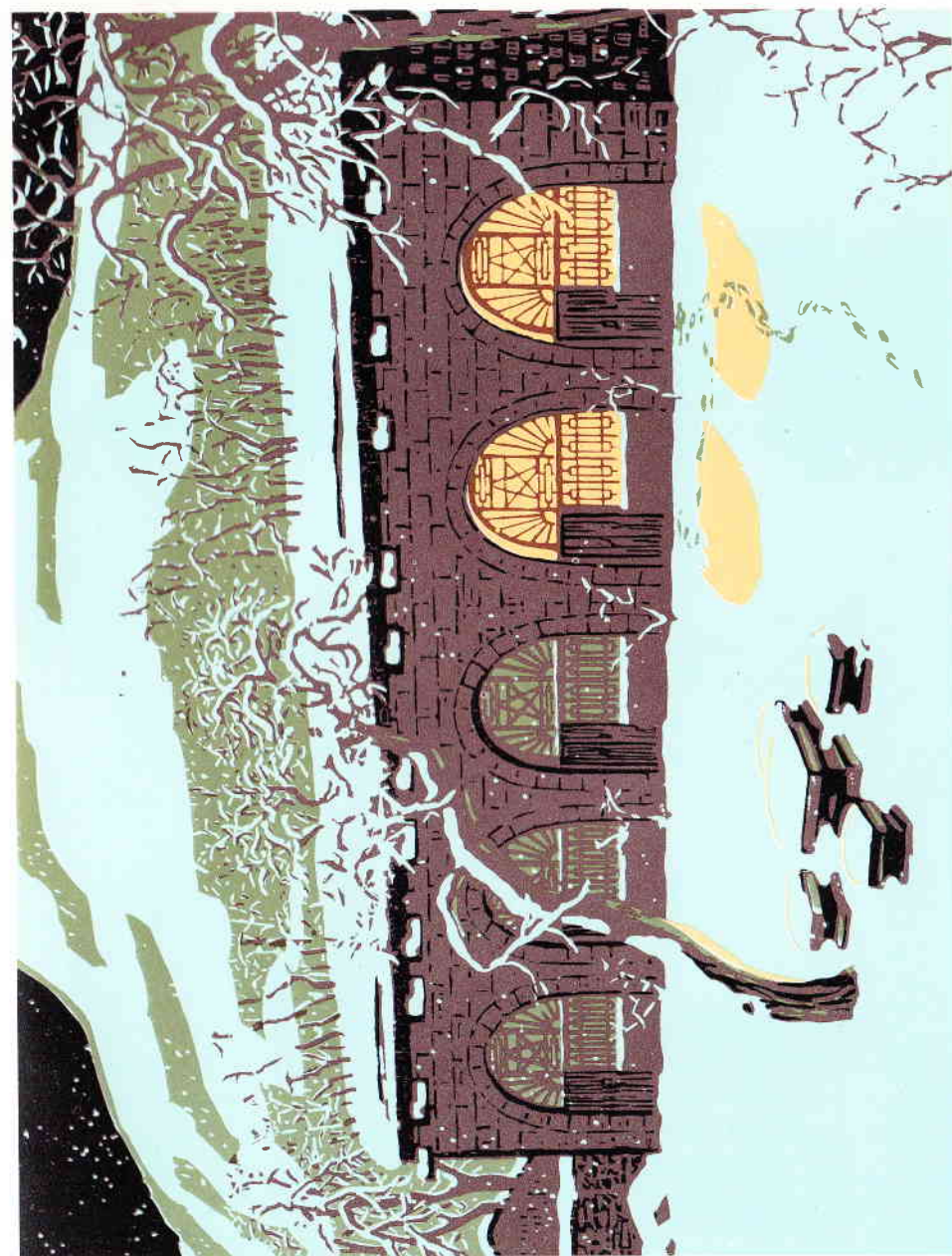
“After all it’s book-learning that counts.”

Yu made a mental note of these comments and decided to have a good talk with Meng, reminding him neither to lose heart when criticized nor to let praise go to his head.

That Sunday Old Yu called on his apprentice. He found Meng at home distributing his toys among his young friends, who were wild with joy and excitement. Smiling, Yu stepped through the doorway. And when Meng saw who it was he rushed to greet him, gripping his hands and exclaiming fondly: “Master!”

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*Light from Date Orchard* (coloured woodcut)  
by Ku Yuan ►



## **Sister Lily**

Last year, I came to the countryside to settle down as a commune member. The day I left home, my mother went to the station to see me off. "Though your father and I work in a government office now, we both grew up in the countryside." Grasping my hands, she added earnestly, "Our vast countryside provides endless scope for young people; you must strike root and grow there."

At the time, I didn't know how to respond to this.

### **1**

I realized what a great change was taking place in my life the moment I set foot in Green Hill Village, which nestles against the mountains beside a stream.

The grey-haired Party secretary and some enthusiastic commune members, beating drums and gongs, escorted me to their pig farm. They left me in a hut there with only a girl about my own age.

"I'm Little Bramble," she said. "What's your name?"

I told her, then asked, "Do you take care of the pigs?"

She tossed her head. "Yes, of course!"

"How many people work here?"

"Three."

"Who are they?"

"Well, there's our old farm head. She's been expecting you for several days, but she had to go to a commune meeting today."

"Who else?"

"Me."

"And the third one..."

"Why, you!"

So, they had counted me in even before I had arrived! What would my new life be like? Gazing through the open door, I was lost in thought...

The doorway framed an early spring landscape. What a wide expanse of fields and what high mountains! Close to the village there was a clear swift-running stream. Where was it going? How fresh and strange my life here would be...

The picture came alive as someone approached the hut. As the figure came into focus, against a background of green hills and blue sky, I snapped out of my reverie. A woman in her late thirties was standing outside the door. Her face, beaded with sweat, was pleasant.

Little Bramble flew to greet her. "Sister Lily! How I've missed you!"

The woman put down the heavy hamper of tender young grass she had been carrying.

"Why bother to cut grass when you're out on important business?" the girl asked. "You must be tired out."

The newcomer smiled. "It's getting warm and the mountains are turning green. It's time to give those gluttons of ours some fresh food." She produced a small red envelope. "Here, this is for you!"

Little Bramble opened it, exclaiming with delight, "A paper-cut of a swine-herd! Look, she has a whistle in her mouth. How fat and fine the pigs are! Our little hut will look good when I paste it on the window-pane." She put her head on the woman's shoulder, then started skipping about.



"Don't make such a racket, you crazy girl!"

How close they are! I thought to myself.

Little Bramble, abruptly remembering me, called me out. When I stepped out of the hut, the woman straightened up to look me over.

I was a bit embarrassed by her scrutiny.

The girl ran over to me and said, "I was so excited, I forgot to introduce you. This is Sister Lily, our old farm head."

My eyes met Sister Lily's. Why call her "old"? She didn't look old to me.

## 2

At dawn the next day I followed Sister Lily along a stone-flagged path, all slippery with dew, to fetch water from the brook at the foot of Green Hill. When we reached the pigsties and I put down my carrying-pole, I was panting for breath. Sister Lily wiped the sweat from my face, saying, "Everything is difficult in the beginning. Let's have a break. Come and have a look at our pigsties." I followed her to one where a mud-spattered creature was rooting in the earth with its ugly snout and snorting now and then.

Sister Lily laughed. "Isn't that a handsome porker! This is one of an improved breed we have now. He's filled out like a balloon in just a few months! Isn't he fine?"

In the next sty was a litter of pink, white-haired piglets tumbling around a sow. Their squeals set my teeth on edge.

"Aren't they duckies? They'll soon be weaned yet they're still so naughty," Sister Lily remarked. "Do you know that a young pig taken from the sow is just like a baby separated from its mother. It loses its appetite and sometimes has indigestion. That's when they need special care."

In another sty a great boar lay on the ground. All of a sudden, he flapped his ears and cast a surly sidelong glance at us. I was scared.

Pointing to the boar, Sister Lily told me, "This fellow's very fussy about his food, and furious if it isn't just to his liking. Pigs are like people that way: each has different tastes. Some like their food dry,

some like a swill. . . . We have to take care to give each what it fancies."

Pigs are only pigs, I thought. How could she compare them with people?

As we walked from one row of sties to another, the stench nearly made me vomit.

Sister Lily fixed her bright black eyes on me. "You're not used to this smell, are you?" she asked.

"No," I answered, but right afterwards I was sorry I had admitted it.

"You'll soon get used to it," she said kindly. "It won't be long before you'll hate to leave here. . . ."

Back in the little hut again, Sister Lily took out a pair of neatly folded sleeve-covers and an apron from under her quilt. "Here, try these on," she urged. "I made them by guesswork last night." She helped me put them on and fastened the strings. Then standing with arms akimbo she surveyed me with a smile. "Not bad. They're just right, eh?"

When she went out with a bucket, I looked after her and said quietly to Little Bramble, "Good-tempered, isn't she?"

Tilting her head to one side the girl answered rather sharply, "Good-tempered? It depends who she's dealing with! That year when an ill wind blew over rumours that all commune pigs were to be divided between different households, some scoundrels came with pickaxes to smash the pigsties. Sister Lily blocked the gate with a bench and sat herself down there. She shouted at them, 'Whoever dares to move a single stone of these sties will have to fight it out with me!' Those wretches just gaped at her and slunk away. . . . She can be tough when she wants to!"

Good old Sister Lily!

## 3

Spring brought frequent rain and the little stream filled till it washed against the rocks at the foot of Green Hill, then broke into foaming whirlpools.

One day at noon when I was feeding the pigs, Little Bramble came running up, shouting, "Someone to see you . . . a schoolmate of yours . . . she works in one of the commune factories. . . ." This threw me into a tizzy. I snatched off my apron and sleeve-covers in a hurry and ran down the hill to meet my visitor.

"I'm an electrician now," my schoolmate told me happily when we met. "What about you?"

What could I say? I felt that my work was much less important than hers.

While I was cudgelling my brains for a reply, Sister Lily came along with a pair of buckets. What bad luck! I was afraid she would call out in front of my schoolmate, "Hurry up and feed the pigs!"

Tossing my plaits back I turned my head aside.

Sister Lily said nothing. She called the piglets and they swarmed around her. Some of them lifted their heads and jumped up to snatch the food; others caught hold of her apron with their mouths, flicking their small curly tails from side to side. A laggard who failed to squeeze in, though he tried with might and main, doubled back to nuzzle my foot with his little muddy snout. I dodged aside angrily.

Sister Lily looked at me and said with a smile, "This is your schoolmate's first visit here. Why don't you take her for a look around? But mind, don't go too far off."

I relaxed at once.

Arm in arm, we climbed to a hill-top, laughing and chatting.

"Is your job interesting?" I asked my friend.

"I'll say it is!" she answered. "But I don't know nearly enough. I'm studying in the factory's spare-time class to qualify myself better."

I compared this with my own work — carrying buckets of water or warming up pigwash. . . . I was certainly out of luck.

The mountain scenery was very beautiful. Fluffy white clouds floated so close above us it seemed as if by stretching up our hands we could catch them. An eagle, wings wide spread, hovered overhead. We sat there chatting about everything under the sun and forgot the time.

A sudden nip in the air made me realize that the sun had set already beyond the far peaks. It was late: long past the time to feed the pigs. Since Sister Lily thought so much of those pigs, she would probably be annoyed with me.

After seeing my schoolmate off I hurried back to the sties. Little Bramble pursed her lips the moment she saw me. "You've been fooling around for half a day, and getting us worried about you. Don't you ever think about your work? I've never seen anyone like you before!"

I was out of luck all right, being scolded by Little Bramble before I'd even seen Sister Lily! I decided not to take it lying down. Frowning, I retorted, "So, you've never seen anyone like me before? Well, let me tell you, I hate this job! I want. . . ."

"You want what?" she cut in.

"I'm going to ask Sister Lily . . . to let me be transferred to work on the land."

Little Bramble pointed a finger of scorn at me. "I wonder you have the nerve to face Sister Lily," she scolded. "Then she told me what had happened."

Sister Lily had waited a long time for me. When I didn't turn up, she began to worry. "She doesn't know her way about these mountains," she said. "Maybe she's lost."

Little Bramble had disagreed, "She's forgotten all about her work. She's just playing around. Don't worry about her."

Sister Lily kept silent but from time to time while working she turned to look at the mountains. After a while she remarked, "I noticed that she looked upset when her schoolmate came to see her."

"Why didn't you criticize her on the spot?"

Sister Lily answered rather curtly, "Not everyone's like you, saying whatever comes into your head and not thinking of the consequences." She glanced thoughtfully at the girl, then continued, "Chairman Mao has given us the task of training these youngsters fresh from school. This isn't an easy task. It's tough for her to come to the countryside. We must be patient and help her to take the first step. It's

not enough just to have good intentions. Good seedlings need careful cultivation, you know."

My heart filled with warmth and contrition when I heard this. Sister Lily! I knew you loved the commune and the pigs. Now I see that you're concerned about us youngsters too. I was at fault today.

"Where is Sister Lily?" I asked.

"She didn't go home to have a meal. After giving the pigs their last feed, she mopped the sweat off her face and went straight up into the hills to look for you."

I dashed out of the door and began climbing a slope. Cupping my hands to my mouth I shouted at the top of my lungs, "Sister Lil—y!"

My voice drifted far away through the silent night. Instantly the mountains and the valleys answered. From all sides came the echo of my call — "Sister Lil—y!"

#### 4

The May sun threw its lustre on Green Hill and the slope beyond the piggery was gay with mountain flowers, each as red as fire. Sister Lily told me these were wild lilies, which had first appeared the year the farm was set up. They had increased from year to year until now there were seventeen fiery clumps of flowers.

I began to admire Sister Lily from the bottom of my heart and never tired of chatting with her. I asked one day, "Where's your native village?"

"At Peach-blossom Ravine beyond the mountains to the north," she answered. "About twenty-three miles away."

"How did you come here?"

"On foot of course!" She laughed. "I was a Youth League member when the first co-ops were set up. The Youth League called on us girls to set an example by not accepting betrothal gifts. So, in a new blue tunic with a small bundle under my arm, I set out for Green Hill Village."

"But how did you come to the pig farm?"

"What a question!" She chuckled in spite of herself. "I'm a poor peasant's daughter. Any job in the co-op was the same to me. When I entered my in-laws' house, I sat myself down before my worse half and said, 'Well, here I am. Go and tell the co-op heads I'm ready for work.' So, the next day I was sent to take care of the pigs."

I found this very intriguing.

Coming back to the present I asked, "How about your husband and children?"

She answered cheerfully, "My worse half works in the commune veterinary station. He's as busy as I am. Our two children go to primary school."

"Who cooks for the family then?" I asked out of curiosity.

"I do, of course!" She raised her eyebrows. "Why not come home with me and see for yourself after work?"

Sister Lily's small compound was not far from the piggery. The house, facing south, had three slate-roofed rooms. Two pomegranate trees in full bloom stood in the yard. There was not a soul in the place.

Sister Lily promptly set to work to light the stove, knead dough and do other household chores. I wanted to lend her a hand but didn't know what to do. Obviously the moment Sister Lily knocked off work at the pig farm she had to start work at home.

When the water boiled she put rolls of dough in a steamer. Fishing out a pen, stroke by stroke, she wrote the words "ten o'clock" on a slip of paper which she placed carefully on the lid of the steamer.

What was this for? While I was racking my brains Sister Lily took from the cupboard two cold rolls, leftovers from the morning. "Let's go back now, eh?" She nodded to me as she spoke.

"The rolls aren't steamed yet." I was puzzled. "Why don't you wait and have a hot meal?"

"No time. . . ." She laughed at my expression. "It's time to feed the pigs. They must have their food on time or they won't grow fat. My husband and I are on different shifts and can't have meals together so I prepare things for him and the children and eat the left-



overs myself. When he sees the note he'll know when the rolls are cooked and ready."

I glanced again at the words "ten o'clock" and thought to myself: That's ingenious.

But knowing that Sister Lily had worked whole-heartedly for the collective for ten years and more, my admiration for her was mixed with concern. "It won't do your health any good, eating cold leftovers all the year round..." I muttered.

"Now we have white flour and rice for meals every day. It's very different from life before Liberation..." Her black eye sparkled. "Although I've a family to care for, I mustn't just think of my private affairs. A worker raising pigs for the commune should have a broader vision."

## 5

July rain brought mountain cataracts. It was the first time I had ever seen such a breath-taking sight.

One day during a thunder-storm, the rain poured down in sheets. It was a real deluge. Before long I heard a noise like a herd of horses stampeding down the mountains. Dark clouds blotted out the sky; the rain gathered in strength.

Sister Lily stood by the window of our hut, her fine features and frowning eyebrows illuminated by the dazzling lightning. After wrapping herself in a plastic sheet, she reached for the door handle. I tried to stop her, protesting, "It's raining too hard. You'd better wait till it lets up a little."

She smiled. "With more than a hundred pigs outside, how can we sit comfortably indoors? Let's go!..."

I followed her out of the hut and was astonished to see that the former dry ditch to the west had turned into a fierce water dragon, racing along with outstretched claws and lashing tail. The sty at the northwest corner had become a pool where a sow was afloat but several young pigs were floundering about squealing desperately

as they tried to keep their heads above the water. Sister Lily jumped over the wall into the water and began to grab the piglets. Inspired by her example, I got ready to follow suit.

"Don't jump in, you silly girl!" she yelled. "Here, take this piglet into the hut!"

I took the little creature from her and ran back to the hut. Finally all the young pigs, one by one, were taken out of danger. Drenched through with rain and sweat, I was returning to the sty again when a boulder rolled down the hillside and crashed into the wall of the sty and the big sow was swept away by the rushing torrent.

Sister Lily dashed downstream after it. The wind howled, the lightning flashed. Her plastic sheet flapped like the wings of an eagle. As she drew near the sow, a great wave rushed down with the force of an avalanche. I lost sight of her.

My heart sank. I staggered along to search for her. Frantically I called her name. Tears welled up in my eyes...

As the rain lessened and the wind died down, I heard people talking and laughing as they climbed uphill. The man in the lead was the hoary-haired Party secretary, and with him were several youngsters carrying the lost sow, who squealed and twisted in vain. What's more, there was Sister Lily laughing gaily!

I took a flying leap towards them and hugged her. She stopped short and stroking my wet hair she asked, "In tears? So you worried about me!" She held me tightly in her arms and I felt our hearts beating in rhythm...

## 6

Some piglets caught a chill while out in the cold rain that night. Sister Lily tended them devotedly. I heard her murmur to herself now and then, "The veterinary station's beyond the mountain ridge... It's difficult to get there in bad weather. We must make shift ourselves in future and learn how to treat sick animals."

Not long after, Sister Lily began to study. Books on various diseases of pigs were always piled on a corner of her *kang*.

Later, one of the boars became seriously ill. Sister Lily didn't go home but insisted on spending the night in the hut with Little Bramble and me. Little Bramble fell asleep and began to snore the moment her head touched the pillow, but Sister Lily tossed about restlessly on the kang. She began to mutter to herself, "If only I had a chance to study in the county town. But, at my age, would they accept me? ... No, maybe it's not too late!"

The wind rose in the small hours. I was wakened by the door blowing open with a bang. Outside, the wind was whistling in the trees and it seemed as if the whole of Green Hill was swaying.

I got up to shut the door. As I slipped my quilt around me, I found Sister Lily had disappeared.

I hurried into the courtyard. In the faint starlight, I inspected the row of sties one by one and found her at last in one at the far end. She was squatting there in silence. "Come back to bed right away, or you'll catch a chill," I begged her.

She didn't even raise her head. "It's been touch and go with this boar for several days now. I went to see the vet and I've given the animal all the medicine he gave me. But there's no improvement. And I can't even find a case like this in my books. ... I've found a local prescription though and made some herbal medicine. He's just drunk it. I wonder if it will help or not. ... I think we should try to learn those old-time methods that haven't yet been written up in books."

So that was what she had done! I was deeply moved. Even the whistling wind in the trees seemed to have died away. ...

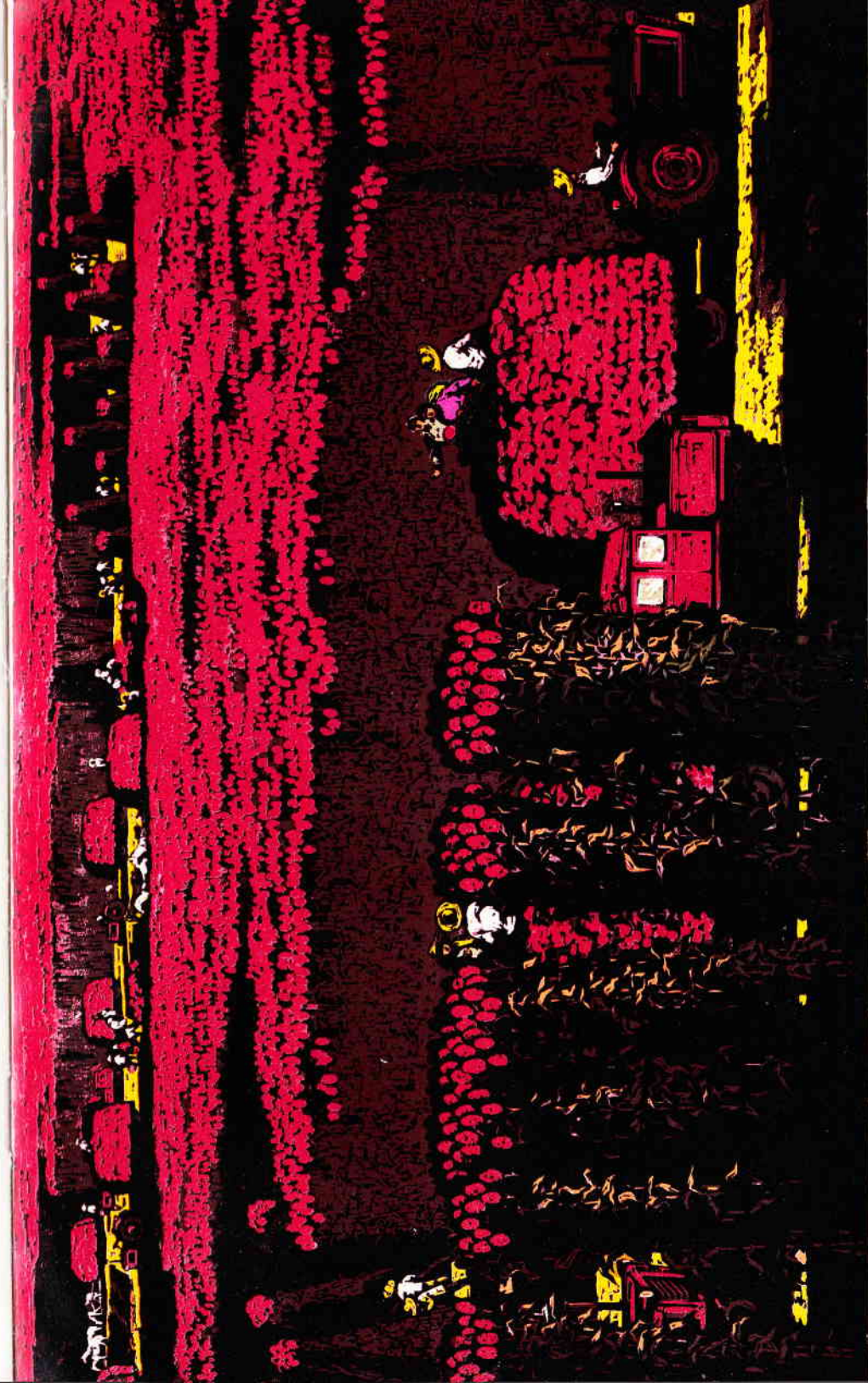
One bright afternoon when Sister Lily came back from a Party branch meeting, she waved an envelope at us, her eyes sparkling. "Come and have a look. It's a notice from the county! They're going to run a veterinary training class and the old Party secretary says we can send someone there to attend it."

I was delighted and grasped Sister Lily's hand. "What a piece of luck, Sister Lily! Now your wish will come true."

She shook her head. "No!" Putting the notice into my

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*Autumn Harvest in the North* (coloured woodcut) by Chao Mei ►



hand, she looked at me earnestly. "You're young and well educated. You'll learn faster than I could. Little Bramble and I between us can manage the farm."

The day I started off for the county, Sister Lily went with me quite a long way and encouraged me to study well. It reminded me of how my mother had gone to the station to see me off to the countryside. Only then did I begin to understand what my mother had said. I held Sister Lily's hands tight in my own but could find no words to express what was in my heart.

Plodding along the highway I looked back towards Green Hill. Under the blue vault of heaven Sister Lily was still waving her hand. All of a sudden, a flash of red caught my eye. It was a wild lily in full bloom beside her! It blazed like a burning fire, like the fiery revolutionary youth of Sister Lily....

*Illustrated by Chen Yen-ning*

## **Li Mu**

My friend Li Mu and I were on a surveying trip in the mountains. Clutching at small bushes growing from rock crevices, we skirted perpendicular cliffs, crossed deep valleys, and at times ascended high peaks that shot right up into the azure sky. I was acting as Li Mu's guide.

Excavations were being made on the other side of the mountains; explosions reverberated across the wild terrain. Here and there a white haze shrouded trees and rocks, after the explosion of a charge.

Suddenly we heard a shout from another peak. Two surveyors waved red flags at us as a sign that Li Mu should set to work.

Li Mu immediately took out his instruments and started. As he darted from one rock to another, his unbuttoned white shirt billowed out like the wings of a stormy petrel.

The surveyors were seeking the best route for a new railway, one which would be of vital importance in developing the lumber industry as well as for general transportation. Already ten days had passed but they had not succeeded in finding a suitable route. The explosions must have sounded like battle drums to them. Sweat oozed from Li Mu's forehead.

"Believe it or not," I told him, "experienced surveyors came here in the past but, after looking around, left without finding a suitable route. Some even lost their lives here. This place became known as a forbidden area."

Putting down his surveying instruments, Li Mu stood erect, arms akimbo. He breathed deeply, glancing around with a confident smile.

"New roads must be opened up where formerly there were none. Hasn't our great leader Chairman Mao led the Chinese people to break through into many forbidden areas?"

Li Mu's ruddy face weathered by sun and wind was shiny with perspiration. The down on his upper lip was as yet untouched by a razor; his thick hair was ruffled by the breeze. He was a good looking young chap, full of verve.

After completing his work Li Mu waved his red flag to the men on the other peak and we went on. There was no path. Inching our way along we came to the brink of what appeared to be a huge chasm. The pebbles dislodged by our feet clattered down into a dark forbidding gorge.

As guide, I was responsible for Li Mu's safety. Edging my way forward on my belly, I warned him, "Don't look down. It'll make you dizzy. Here, take my hand."

What I said only stimulated his curiosity. Turning with his back to the sheer face he actually bent forward to look down. In spite of himself he let out a cry of amazement. Then grinning at me he exclaimed, "It's a real forbidden area all right."

Mad at this dare-devil, I shouted, "What are you trying to do, hey? This is no place to fool around. Even hunters like me who spend the whole year on these mountains never look down there. If you become dizzy and fall, you're finished. Understand?"

With a good-natured smile he said, "Don't be mad at me, please. I wanted to test my nerve. Tomorrow I intend to survey that forbidden area."

I glared at him, then demanded, "What are you talking about? Those men who went down there before were never seen again."

"Times are different now. Chairman Mao says we are engaged

in a great and most glorious cause never attempted by our forefathers. Our job is part of it. I'm confident we shall succeed," he answered calmly.

After a moment's silence I said, "There must be other places to survey."

"If our other teams do no better than us today, we shall have to tackle that gorge."

As the golden evening clouds began to gather and the peaks turned purple against the evening sky, we made for our tents, while distant explosions still echoed among the mountains. Perhaps as a last resort they would have to risk their necks in the gorge, I realized.

Guessing what was on my mind, Li Mu said very seriously, "Making revolution isn't a soft job. It means battling against storms."

Stars were glittering overhead. After the explosions ended, we could hear the rushing waters of a big river not far off. Mountains, forests and peaks were swallowed up by the dusk. The only sound breaking the stillness of the night was the angry roar of the river which sounded almost at our feet.

When we reached our tents, the members of the other teams had already returned. None had found a suitable starting point for the survey. They decided to tackle the gorge the following day.

After supper the surveyors usually held a meeting in their tent. I went to look for Li Mu, hoping to talk the matter over with him. Although I was no longer a young man, since they were determined on this venture I meant to accompany him.

My friend was sitting on a rock outside his tent, with his head in his hands as if he had a headache. Before I could reach him he stood up and, without looking round, went into his tent. Had he changed his mind? Was he afraid? I was worried. It's strange the way one's mind can change! At first I had wanted to dissuade him from going into that forbidden area, now I was eager for him to go. One of his mates told me quietly, "Your friend Li Mu has just received a letter which seems to have upset him."

"What's the matter? I'd like to know." But he shook his head and entered the tent to attend the meeting.

I went into the tent we guides shared with other personnel, but I found it difficult to fall asleep. It was not for nothing that others referred to Li Mu as my friend. Though we had been together for only ten days I felt I had known him for ten years, for we had talked about everything under the sun. I learned that he had started as a worker then been promoted to technician. His father was an old collier, his mother a Party secretary in a printing works; his young sister and brother were still at school. He had a girl friend, also a technician. Had he received bad news from home? I lay awake, wondering whether I should ask the youngster about the letter, hoping I might be of some help to him. Finally I got up and went to the surveyors' tent. But since they were still at their meeting, I went back and dozed for a while. When I returned to their tent, Li Mu and some other Party members were deep in a discussion outside. The third time I went there the place was dark; everybody had turned in.

I stood on a rock, watching flares in the distance lighting up the sky. The sound-waves set up by the blasting swept through the darkness above us as if thousands of huge birds were winging past overhead. From below came the thunder of the turbulent river. The moon had not yet risen. The twinkling stars could hardly be distinguished from the camp lights on a distant peak.

Suddenly I was aware of a man standing motionless on a rock higher up. I climbed up and found it was Li Mu. When I asked him why he'd not gone to bed, he told me, "I'm a little keyed up. I'm wondering how to survey that forbidden area tomorrow."

"I'll go with you," I said, clapping his shoulder. "Your old friend will lend you a hand."

At that he turned and hugged me.

"In the meeting all the comrades wanted to be the one to come down with me," he said. "But I told them I'd rather have my friend the old hunter. There are said to be eagles in that deep gorge. What shall we do if one attacks us?"

"Never mind that now. I've been told you have something else on your mind. What is it?" I asked, watching the glint of his eyes in the dark.

He let go of me at that and after a moment's silence replied rather flippantly, "Oh that, I'll get over it."

We sat down on a rock. It was rather chilly in the mountains at night, but his jacket was unbuttoned. He told me that his girl had written to say that she would marry him only if he got a job in the city.

"Well, she wants you both to have a cosy home together. What are you going to do?"

He bit his lips. Gazing at the stars overhead, he said slowly, "In the great, surging river of life, instead of looking out for a snug harbour, we should brave the stormy waves."

The moon was rising, shedding its white light over the peaks and forests. Some unknown birds were calling in the night.

"She'll change her mind. Probably she's already sorry she wrote like that," I said in an effort to console him.

He rose to his feet, looking across at the moonlit mountains and twinkling lights on a distant peak.

"We only live once, so the path we choose in life is all-important."

"People of different classes see different meanings in life, of course," I said.

As I lay down that night I looked out through the open flap of my tent. The moon was gliding through a veil of clouds high above the serene peaks. My thoughts were still on my friend Li Mu and his fine ideals.

The following day, after breakfast, all the surveyors set out with their instruments and ropes for that forbidding gorge. Three teams were formed. If the first was unsuccessful, the second would follow and, if necessary, the third. Li Mu and I were the first team. Wang Hai, a tough young fellow, together with his guide made up the second. Old Ma, another young man in his early twenties, taller than Wang Hai, headed the third team. Old Ma liked to sing as he climbed up and down steep cliffs, and to stop after each line to listen to the echoes. Now he patted Li Mu on the back and cried, "You're doing me out of the first prize!"

We climbed two peaks before we saw the river. Low-hanging clouds screened the surrounding heights, but a brilliant red sun sailing above the horizon tinged the distant mountains with crimson.

The roaring of the great river sounded like thousands of cattle stampeding. We stood on the edge of the precipice and, looking down, caught our breath. For the cliff plunged straight and sheer under our feet to the unfathomable depths of the river below, its waters dashing against stupendous rocks. The wind howled through the gorge.

Everyone started to speak. But their words were either smothered by the wind or drowned by the river.

I led Li Mu, Wang Hai and Old Ma away from the precipice to warn them, "In the old days a few men lowered themselves from that pine tree leaning out from the cliff, but none of them ever returned."

The three young surveyors breathed deeply, their eyes glistening, as they walked to the brink of the cliff. The rest of us followed them. One of them looked at the river below, pointing at the pine projecting from a rock, and shouted into my ear, "Is that the place?"

I nodded. They exchanged glances. Then all present helped the members of the three teams to bind ropes around themselves. Since it might be very cold down below Li Mu had a woollen sweater over his white shirt. He put on a brimless wicker helmet, tightened his belt, stuck a dagger into it then picked up his surveying instruments. By this time he seemed to me to have grown in stature and was holding himself proudly like a general just about to go into battle. I also put on a fur jacket and carried a dagger in addition to my hunting rifle and supply of bullets. I was to be both guide and guard.

Wang Hai, Old Ma and their guides wore similar outfits. Their guides were very young. I was the eldest in the party.

Ready for action now, we were given a bowl of warm antelope's blood to drink, to prevent dizziness. Li Mu glanced at the red flags fluttering on the height and the two ropes hanging over the precipice. Like a diver ready to plunge from a great height he had set his lips in an expression of keen concentration. He exchanged glances with Wang Hai and Old Ma, then made a sign with his hand. Above the howl of the wind and roaring waters he shouted, "Let's go!"

The others started to let down the ropes.

Li Mu and I, each gripping a rope, went over the top and began to descend the perpendicular cliff step by step. The cold air pierced our



lungs. The fierce wind seemed bent on flinging us down the abyss into the river.

"Hold tight!" I shouted at Li Mu. "Don't — let — go —"

He opened his mouth to reply, but the wind seized each word and hurled it away.

Li Mu paused at a rock sticking out of the cliff and began to work. I watched him from a little higher up, having found a foothold there. From this position the narrow gorge appeared a yawning gulf. The

river below roared like a ravening beast. But Li Mu carried out his survey regardless.

The thunder of the water was a deafening cannonade. Spray wetted Li Mu's face as he worked on steadily. When I called out to him, he could not hear me.

I glanced around anxiously. Suddenly a huge eagle appeared from the upper reaches of the gorge. Like a streak of black lightning the great bird of prey swooped towards us. Its iron claws could crush a man's skull; one flap of its mighty wings could hurl a man down into the abyss. If my first shot missed the mark, both Li Mu and I were done for.

My hunting rifle, however, did not fail me. Caught by my bullet while plummeting down at us, the huge bird hurtled out of sight. I found myself soaked with sweat. But Li Mu, intent on his surveying, seemed not to have turned a hair. At the sound of the shot he looked up and followed the falling bird with his eyes. Then he edged eastward, getting on with the job.

I kept a vigilant watch as gusts of wind swept through the gorge.

From Li Mu's expression and the glint in his eyes I knew that the surveying was going well. . . .

Now, our express is speeding through mountains shrouded in mist. It thunders on through the clouds, crossing ranges, skirting cliffs, racing over ravines and forest-clad mountainsides. An old hunter in my carriage has been telling me about the construction of this railway. As the train passed through one fearsome gorge he told me this story of his friend Li Mu. Finally, with his bearded face close to mine, he whispered, "You know, in the end his girl came to the work site to join him!"

I gaze out of the window at the magnificent scenery and think over Li Mu's words: "... We must brave the stormy waves." Whistling, the train speeds towards the distant mountains. . . .

*Illustrated by Tang Hsiao-ming*

Niu Kuang-chin

### *The Pine Before Our Sentry Post*

Hundreds of miles I travelled to Shaoshan\*  
And brought back a precious pine-cone;  
I planted it on the summit of the mountain  
To keep us company at our frontier post.

Before going out on patrol I water it  
And add earth after target practice;  
Tending it with such loving care  
That now it grows green and strong on the cloud-wrapped peak.

The weight of snow makes the branches sturdier,  
The biting frost makes the needles glossier;  
Its boughs are green with spring the whole year round  
Like the spring sunshine in a soldier's heart.

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\*Chairman Mao's birthplace.

Beside the pine I read Chairman Mao's works,  
The fire in my heart burns red in the morning sun;  
Loud, loud I sing the *Internationale*,  
And world revolution surges in my heart.

Together with the pine the soldier grows,  
Glorious with youth and strength both pine and soldier,  
Strength at the service of our motherland  
Where every year brings in more glorious springs.





*Li Fang-yuan*

*Good News  
from a Mountain Village*

At the season when whirling snow brings in the spring,  
To our factory comes a visitor from afar,  
From a people's commune in the Khingang Mountains,  
Where his village has set up a new machine plant.

He comes to buy machine tools for their plant,  
For mechanization will give their village wings,  
Starting his journey under a skyful of stars,  
Each step bringing farm and factory closer together.

Our manager grasps the visitor's hand  
And to hear their talk warms our hearts  
Like the quick beat of a marching song,  
Like grain cascading on the threshing-floor.

A village far off in the hills has built a machine plant:  
This news spreads through each shop like a breath of spring;  
At midnight, eyes bloodshot, we put in an extra shift,  
Going all out to help the commune.

Sparks from the grinding wheel like sprays of blossom  
Dance round the tools made for the village plant,  
While the cutter slices through steel  
Making gay ribbons to bind close hammer and sickle.

The blazing furnace spurs us to step up production,  
Pneumatic hammers insistently urge us on,  
As shoulder to shoulder, worker and peasant brothers,  
Advance along the course charted by Chairman Mao.



*Lu Ming-cheng*

## *A Shipment of Sugar-Cane*

On our poles the moon rides at dawn,  
Our oars cut through the mist,  
Steady strokes breaking the stillness  
As forward sweeps  
Our convoy of sugar-cane.

Overnight we have folded away  
Our emerald screens  
And made our beds  
On this cargo of sugar-cane;  
In spring we set up these green screens,  
Now, our dreams come true,  
We gather them in again.

Down the stream green hills are floating,  
On the hills girls are blowing tunes  
On the leaves of the cane;  
The leading boats of the convoy  
Are bathed in sunlight,  
Those behind still wrapped in mist.

Forward, green dragon, faster!  
Carry us down to where river and ocean meet.  
Sweet as honey is life under socialism,  
And with ten thousand tons of sugar-cane  
We make it yet more sweet!

*Illustrated by Ho Chen-chiang*



Huang Min

## Our Quota

The sun had risen. Its golden rays, skimming the tree tops, cascaded on the blackboard outside our workshop, making the flag on it glow as red as rubies.

My spirits soared at the sight. We'd made it! Yesterday the cadre responsible for setting work quotas had wondered whether our quota for heat treatment of a new type of cog-wheel wasn't too high. They were small, delicate cog-wheels but our commune's little workshop had neither high-frequency equipment nor the right sort of jigs to fit them, yet a high standard of precision was required. So, as Master Shih put it, it was up to us to wire them securely before applying heat. However, Old Shih with another apprentice and I had the very first day overfulfilled our quota by twenty per cent, and all the finished products were up to standard. Now these figures had been posted up on the blackboard. So naturally the sight of the red flag won by our team made me feel pretty pleased with myself.

In high spirits I walked into the workshop. As usual, Old Shih was there before me. Squatting on the ground, he was peering

thoughtfully through his spectacles at some cog-wheels in his hand. By his feet lay a bundle of the wires used the day before. What was on his mind now, I wondered?

"So we won the red flag yesterday, master," I said proudly.

"H'm." He seemed unimpressed. Putting down the cog-wheels he stood up and said: "You can start work now while I go and see Wang the welder. I shan't be long."

With that he walked off, as if winning the red flag meant nothing. Gazing after him in his faded grey overalls, I felt rather dashed. Old Shih had no use for people who talked big. My boastful tone must have displeased him.

He had laid out all the tools needed. I shoved aside that bundle of used wire and took out some new wire already cut to the right length, with which I started binding the cog-wheels. I made one knot, then another... The bright new wire encasing the small cog-wheels reminded me of the little New-Year lanterns I had loved as a child.

I was too engrossed in my work to notice Old Shih's return, till I heard his deep quiet voice: "Why aren't you using the old wires, Young Lin?"

"This is a new product," I said, rather taken aback. "Do we have to use the old wires?"

"We must stick to our rules even with new products," he answered, moving the bundle of used wires back again.

This was one of the rules he had set. The wire which secured metal parts during tempering must be used a second or even a third time before it could be discarded as waste. Of course this was not as convenient as using new wire; knots had to be untied and the wire straightened out, which held up the work and made it more difficult. Normally we had special fixtures for mass-producing cog-wheels, but this time we had to wire them by hand. Using old wires was bound to slow us down.

"Won't that make it hard to fulfil our quota?" I asked.

By way of reply Old Shih straightened out a piece of used wire, picked up his pliers and firmly wired a cog-wheel. After a while



he muttered: "We want to speed up our output, but does that mean we needn't practise economy?"

I had no answer to that. Unwillingly I picked up a used wire too.

The next morning another crowd gathered before the blackboard. The red flag had gone to a different team. The figures showed that our team had produced only ninety-five per cent of its quota. I scanned the board with a sense of exasperation. We wouldn't have lost the red flag if we'd used new wires.

In the workshop I found Old Shih examining cog-wheels just as on the previous day. However, he seemed in high spirits. At sight of me he beamed and said: "Cheer up, lad. You look as if you had the whole world's cares on your shoulders."

I asked glumly: "Are we to use the old wires again today?"

His smile vanished at that and he answered curtly: "Of course."

I blinked, swallowing the retort I wanted to make. Sitting down at my bench, I took up the pliers. Grimly I undid knot after knot, straightening the wires....

Old Shih, sitting opposite me, took the wires I had straightened and fixed them round the cog-wheels. He devoted as much care to this mechanical, monotonous job as if he were producing a work of art. Soon cog-wheels wired ready for heat treatment lay in neat rows by his side.

Practically everybody in the factory knew our master. To his face they called him Master Shih, but behind his back they had different names for him. Some referred to him as "the old man" because he was nearing sixty. Others called him "Old Faithful" because he was known for his conscientiousness. But most of us youngsters called him "The Martinet" and I thought this name the most apt. I'd been serving my apprenticeship under him for nearly two years, but he had only commended me three times. Some fellows were commenting on his nicknames once when the manager, overhearing them, said with a laugh: "'Old Faithful' suits him best." After losing the red flag I thought I understood why.

While my mind was running on these things, I gashed myself on a wire. Angrily I chucked it away. Old Shih looked up and saw that my hand was bleeding.

"How did you do that?" he asked with concern. "Go and have it dressed."

"There's no time for that," I answered sulkily.

"Why not?"

"Why not? We didn't even fulfil our quota yesterday. We lost the red flag."

As if this were news to him, Old Shih took off his spectacles and asked me: "What is our quota?"

"Two hundred," I snapped back. As if he didn't know that! He shook his head. "No, it's not."

"It's written on the blackboard."

Putting down his pliers, he lit a cigarette and motioned me to a seat.

"I want you to work out a sum for me," he said.

Puffing at his cigarette, he stared at the pile of cog-wheels beside him, thoughtfully wrinkling his forehead. Then he said slowly:

"Each cog-wheel takes .75 metres of wire. How many metres for two hundred?"

"A hundred and fifty."

"Divide that by two. We save seventy-five metres of wire a day. How much would that come to in a year?"

I did not answer.

"Every little counts, lad. In our socialist construction, we must boost production but economize too. If we can save seventy-five metres of wire a day, shouldn't we consider this a part of our quota?"

This made me see light. Old Shih certainly took a more comprehensive view of things than I.

"Right. I get it," I conceded.

"You do?" He took off his specs again to look at me closely, as if not entirely convinced. "In that case, should we save wire or not?"

"We should," I responded firmly.

"That's still not good enough," he countered equally firmly.

I eyed him in surprise, wondering if this was his idea of a joke. Old Shih, however, was looking perfectly serious.

"Didn't you say we hadn't fulfilled our quota? So, that's still not good enough."

Not knowing what to say, after a moment's thought I temporized: "We're already economizing on wire and we're not far short of our quota. Once we get into our stride, we'll do all right."

Old Shih smiled and shook his head. "Our quota's not two hundred a day."

"What is it then?"

"Didn't you say it was written on the blackboard? Let's go and have another look."

He led me to the blackboard and pointing at it said: "Read the first line."

There it was clearly set down: Quota for heat treatment of cog-wheels — 200 per team. I turned to him in bewilderment. He pointed at the blackboard again.

"No, you didn't read the first line. Read what's written above."

Neatly inscribed at the top of the board was the quotation from Chairman Mao about China making a greater contribution to humanity.

"That is the goal we ought to aim at," Shih said decisively.

So that was our goal. Suddenly those characters chalked in vivid red seemed to me to be alive and growing in size.

Our quota, the cog-wheels and wire, our contribution to the revolution — in a flash I saw them all in a new light. Too moved to speak, I turned and met Old Shih's eyes. There was much for me to understand, much for me to study in those serious eyes. Like a soldier asking for a battle assignment, I appealed to him:

"Tell me, master. How should we go about our work?"

"Increase output, improve quality, work faster and more economically," was his quiet reply.

During our meeting after work that day Old Shih got Wang the welder to come over to help us design a new fixture for our cog-wheels so that we could save on wire and speed up production. As Old Shih sketched a diagram on the ground the other apprentice and I watched carefully, and I realized why he had made such a study of the cog-wheels these last few days and why his eyes were red for lack of sleep. While all I could think of was winning the red flag, he had been considering how to make innovations in the working process, to eliminate manual labour. Once again I saw our "quota" in a new light.

That evening Old Shih, Wang and we apprentices stayed on in the workshop, determined to make a new jig even if it took us all night.

The other apprentice and I sawed and hammered out metal parts, while Old Shih squatting on the ground pointed out how he wanted the welding done. The rasp and clang of our tools and the roar of

welding broke the silence of the autumn night. Sparks from welding and the blue electric arcs added colour to the half-deserted workshop. Somewhere sounded the dull thudding of a pneumatic hammer and, further off, the long whistle of a train.

Just before dawn we tested our new fixture. When Old Shih lifted the jig out of the brine bath, from the cog-wheels drops of brine dripped like red pearls. The red-hot metal parts cast a rosy flush over Old Shih's wrinkled face. And just then the sun rose in the east, flooding our whole workshop in the splendour of dawn.

*Illustrated by Lin Po-shu*

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*Watching over the Paddy Shoots* (woodblock print)  
by Wang Wei-pao ▶



## My Future Daughter-in-Law

Take a seat, sister, and let's have a good chat. Many's the time you've asked me about my future daughter-in-law, but you always picked a day when I was busy. Now at last I've time to tell you all about her.

To tell the truth, at first I was dead against the engagement. Not that the girl was bad-looking; no, indeed. Nor did she have a bad reputation; far from it. What bothered me then was something "odd" about her. Honest old folk like us, who've always kept on good terms with our neighbours, don't want a cranky daughter-in-law with no respect for other people's feelings. Don't you agree?

I was tickled pink when Hsiang-chun first told me the news. The girl's family had been poor peasants and she was branch secretary of the Youth League besides running a diesel engine for her brigade. Though I'd never set eyes on her myself, I trusted my boy's judgement.

How did they come to know each other, you ask. Well, I'll tell you from the beginning.

It all started three years ago when Hsiang-chun came home on leave. Passing through the wheat fields by Chang Family Village, he felt

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The writer is a peasant working in a commune.

thirsty and decided to get a drink at the well there; but the engine pumping water out had jammed. The girl in charge — yes, you've guessed right — was my future daughter-in-law. But she was only a green hand then, just learning to operate the machine, and the breakdown had driven her frantic. She examined that engine first from one side, then from another, but just couldn't find out what was wrong. As you know, our Hsiang-chun works in a power plant. So he rolled up his sleeves and helped to check the engine. Before long he located the trouble and set it right, then switched the thing on and started it going again smoothly. That's how they became acquainted. Anyhow, they hit it off together.

But before the summer harvest this year, I was thoroughly aggravated by the girl.

It was when workers from town came down to help fight the drought. Hsiang-chun was one of them. He was too busy to go and see his girl, but just before he left I sent word to invite her over to see him off, thinking that would be a good chance for me to meet her, as all this time I'd never yet set eyes on her. I bought some lentil noodles, beancurd and beef, and steamed some buns using my best white flour. In between all these preparations I kept running to the end of the village to look out for her. But she failed to appear. When the time came for Hsiang-chun to leave, she still hadn't shown up. That's when I lost my temper. I decided, before it was too late, to call the whole thing off.

But when I told my old man, he flared up.

"Some important business must have kept her," he bellowed. "How can you blame the lass, not knowing the facts? If you want to call it off, that's your affair. I wash my hands of the business."

What way was that for the boy's father to talk? It made me madder than ever. We had no folk of our own in Chang Family Village, nobody to give me the low-down on the girl. After all, breaking off an engagement is no laughing matter. I decided to go to her village to make some inquiries myself. Hsiang-chun's father didn't care, but his mother did.

After the midday meal I hurried off. Chang Family Village lies less

than two miles away from us, but it belongs to a different county. Because of this, I didn't know many of the villagers there.

As luck would have it, as soon as I reached the village I came across a woman about my age.

"May I ask you the way?" I hailed her hurriedly.

Instead of answering, she looked me over.

"Visiting relatives, eh? You must be hot and tired," she said at last.

"This is Chang Family Village, isn't it? . . ."

"That's right. Whom are you looking for? I'll show you the way."

"Do you know a girl called Hsin-hsin? I . . ."

Before I could finish, she smiled all over her face and cut in, "I'm her mother. We've never met before. Which village are you from?"

That took the wind out of my sails. I'd come to spy out the land, instead of which I'd bumped into the girl's mother. I was so flustered that I blurted out, "Well I never! Fancy that! I'm Hsiang-chun's mother."

Overjoyed, she gripped my hand and exclaimed, "Just the guest we've been longing for. What good wind blew you here?"

With that, she led me off. Since this would give me a chance to see the girl, I decided to follow her home.

We hadn't gone far when a voice rang out behind: "Mum!" I turned and saw a girl running towards us, smiling. I looked her over carefully as she came up. She was neither tall nor short, with a round face, two plaits and thick, attractive eyebrows. Her green jacket was clean but faded and under it she was wearing a red sweater. Her corduroy pants were dark blue and her black corduroy shoes had white plastic soles. A neat but not gaudy get-up. A fine girl, I thought.

As the girl was about to speak, her mother cast her a fond glance and cried: "Just look who's come!"

"Oh! One of our relatives, eh?" The girl darted a look at me from under arched brows. Her curved lips parted and she let out a chuckle.

I was delighted by her.

"Your sister's future mother-in-law has come to see her."



That took my breath away. Wasn't she Hsin-hsin then?

The girl turned square on me and asked, "How are you?" Then, lowering her head, she flushed.

Smiling, I took her hand. "I do declare, lass, I mistook you for Hsin-hsin."

Her mother burst out laughing and explained, "She's Jung-jung, my second daughter. She doesn't behave as well as her elder sister, though the two of them look alike. She's a spoilt child with no sense, just likes playing around."

But it was no joke, sister. What I said was true.

Then explaining that she had something important to do, she apologized for not keeping me company and told her mother, "I'll be back very soon." This said, she rushed off like the wind, calling back over her shoulder, "The tea's in the cupboard, mum."

I followed Hsin-hsin's mother into their house. She led me first to the west wing which the sisters shared. On the table and under the bed stood rows of bottles and pots, while beside the bed I noticed a first-aid kit.

"Is Jung-jung a doctor?" I asked.

Not Jung-jung, I was told. It was Hsin-hsin who had been training to be a peasant doctor ever since the "co-operative clinic" was set up there. She was so engrossed in this new job, her mother said, that she was always going off to collect prescriptions, gather herbs, prepare medicine and learn from others with more experience. She never had a moment to herself.

As she was telling me this, the door curtain was raised and in skipped Jung-jung. Hearing that we were talking about her sister, she joined in eagerly.

"Sister, eh? She's as busy as busy can be. That day when her fiancé was going back to town after helping us fight the drought, I urged her to see him off. But she said, 'Lo-cheng's dad has taken a turn for the worse, I can't leave him because of my own private business.'"

I learned that Hsin-hsin had nursed the old patient for five days and nights as if he were her own father, brewing his medicine for him and cooking his meals. I felt really ashamed of myself. My old man had been right to scold me for condemning the girl without reason.



I was so busy thinking, I quite forgot my tea. Where could she be? "Do ask Hsin-hsin to drop in on us. I'd love to see her," I told the girl's mother.

At that she urged Jung-jung, "Go and find her, child." Then she said to me, "She means to go and see you as soon as she can find time. . . . She mentioned something only last night about asking you for some clothes."

Since their engagement I hadn't given the girl a single gift. In the old days, of course, betrothal gifts were the rule; and even if girls didn't want them today the man's family still ought to offer something. It was all the fault of my old man and Hsiang-chun, who insisted that this was to be a new-style wedding. A wedding's a wedding when all's said and done. Besides, we were well-off now. When a poor couple married before Liberation, they did without fine clothes and a bridal chamber. Why, I myself got married in a "beggar's coat". But times had changed now and we poor and lower-middle peasants were our own masters. Life was getting better and better from year to year. While it would be wrong to throw money about or to give a grand feast, it was surely quite reasonable to make the bride some new clothes.

Jung-jung's return just then saved the situation. She told me that her sister had gone to North Village to take medicine to Aunt Chang, so she wouldn't be back yet awhile. Although I was sorry to have missed my daughter-in-law to be, at least I had met her younger sister who looked like her, and that was better than nothing. I saw through the window that the sky had turned dark.

"I must go or I'll get caught in the rain," I told my hostess.

In spite of her objections I insisted on leaving, explaining that our sow was due to farrow and my old man was out at a meeting. Tearing myself away at last, I hurried off.

What clothes should I get for my future daughter-in-law? This was all I could think about on the way home.

The rain was pelting down now. I'd been too preoccupied to borrow an umbrella from Hsin-hsin's mother, and she'd been so intent on keeping me that she hadn't thought of it either. The older we grow

the worse our memories, as you probably know for yourself. And excitement makes me specially absent-minded.

I was wondering what to do when a cyclist rode up.

"Where are you going in weather like this, aunt?" he asked with concern, dismounting.

"I'm on my way home."

Now that the cyclist was nearer, I discovered that "he" was a girl.

"At your age, aunt, you may easily catch cold in this rain. Let me give you a lift to our place," urged the kind-hearted girl.

"Thank you, lass, but it's only a mile to my village. Don't bother."

Since I was firm, she parked her bicycle, took off her raincoat and draped it over my shoulders, so genuinely anxious to be helpful that I could hardly refuse her. Then she called out "goodbye" and rode off before I'd so much as thanked her. The young people raised in our new society by our great leader Chairman Mao are really fine! But I hadn't asked her name or where she lived. By the time this occurred to me the girl had gone. How could I return the raincoat to her later? Just think, sister, we'd never met before. I stood there at the crossroads quite at a loss.

Once home, I changed into dry things. Soon my old man came back too. Seeing the dripping clothes on the bench, he asked, "How did you get so wet? Where have you been?"

"Chang Family Village," I replied curtly.

"What? You've broken off the engagement?" He started up.

"Since you refused to go, I went," I teased him.

My old man bristled with rage, his lips quivered. Shaking his finger at me he bawled, "Woman . . . you're out of your mind!"

At that I could no longer hold back my laughter. While I told him all that had happened from start to finish, he lit his pipe and a smile spread over his face.

Suddenly I remembered the clothes that Hsin-hsin wanted.

"Give me the bank-book," I said.

"What for?" He shot me an inquiring glance.

"I'm going to buy her some clothes." I told him then what Hsin-hsin's mother had said.

He frowned at that and rapped out, "She wants clothes, so you buy her clothes. All right, now you reach me down the moon from the sky."

I ask you, what way is that to talk? I snapped back, "My son's wife will be my daughter. If you don't care for her, I do!"

My old man has a sharp tongue and he's pig-headed. "First you want to call the whole thing off," he grumbled. "Now you're talking about your concern for the girl. It seems you always know best!"

"Get away with you," I scolded, inwardly pleased. "This isn't like our marriage in the old days, when you took me out begging with you straight after the wedding and we'd only a cave to sleep in. Spring, summer, autumn and winter, I'd nothing but the one ragged jacket to wear. . . ."

By this time my old man was properly worked up too. "Very well, give that beggar's coat of yours to your daughter-in-law," he cried. "The young people today haven't been through the mill like us. They need to be taught a lesson."

Give a beggar's coat to one's daughter-in-law! Have you ever heard of such a thing, sister? "You give it her yourself," I fumed.

Guess what he said. "Very well. That's what I'll do."

I flared up again. "I'm going to buy her new clothes. No matter what you say, you can't stop me."

But I'd caught a chill after my drenching that day and I had to take to my bed. My old man was so worried, he fetched a doctor. I told him, "My illness isn't one you can cure. It comes of my old man being so aggravating."

The doctor said, "You're joking, aunt. You've caught cold. A few doses of medicine will soon set you right. But you must stay at home for a couple of days."

I did as I was told and stayed in bed for two days. I was lying there thinking about a trousseau for Hsin-hsin when I heard steps in the courtyard. Then someone called, "Mum!"

At first I thought I was dreaming. Apart from my son, who would call me "Mum"?

"Mum! Anyone in?"

I sat up and looked through the window. There in the yard stood a lad, just putting down a load of manure. He's come to the wrong place, the scatter-brain, I thought.

With firm steps he crossed the yard and came to the house. The door curtain was raised and he was in the room.

"Oh, you're in bed, mum. Why didn't you answer? Still angry with me?"

He took off his gauze mask and the white towel wrapped round his head, revealing neat bobbed hair. So it was a girl — the girl who had lent me her raincoat.

Noticing the surprise on my face, she introduced herself, "I'm Hsin-hsin, mum."

No wonder she looked so familiar, she was so like her younger sister. You can imagine how pleased and excited I was.

Holding her hand, I asked her to sit down beside me.

"Are you ill, mum?" she asked with concern.

I said quickly, "It's nothing. Only a cold."

"It's all my fault. I didn't know it was you until I got home." She paused, smiling shyly, then went on, "I'm to blame. If I'd been more considerate, you wouldn't have fallen ill."

Why, sister, at those words I tingled with warmth from head to foot as if I'd drunk a bowl of hot ginger water.

While we were talking, there came a patter of feet out in the courtyard. Some children popped their heads through the open window.

"Behave yourselves! Run away!" When I called out, the children took to their heels. One of them ran back though to chant:

A girl visiting her  
Future mother-in-law  
Brings with her a carrying-pole  
And a load of manure. . . .

Before I could box his ears, the imp scampered off.

"Why are you collecting manure, lass?" I asked Hsin-hsin.

"More fertilizer, more grain. We must catch up with the high yields of the Yangtse Valley," was her answer.

"That's the spirit," I exclaimed. "Hsiang-chun's dad would be glad to hear that."



A gruff voice sounded in the outer room, "My sentiments exactly. Spoken like a true peasant's daughter. The girl has guts." I knew, of course, that it was my old man, and the next moment in he came.

Hsin-hsin rose to greet him, saying, "You're back, dad."

He nodded, smiling from ear to ear. "High time you came. Your mum's been longing to see you. Day in day out she talks about nothing else. See, she's fretted herself ill."

It's no use trying to humour me, I thought. No matter what you say, I'll expose your true colours to your future daughter-in-law. Let's see how you wriggle out of it this time. I pulled a face at him, then turned to the girl. "Don't listen to the old fellow. I didn't fret myself ill because of you, but because somebody was so aggravating." I stressed the word "somebody". Then I went on, "Your dad's so concerned about you, when he heard that you wanted some clothes he hurried to the bank, then kept pestering me to buy some good material. I told him not to worry, I'd buy it all right, but I wanted to be sure it was something you fancied. 'Wouldn't it be better to wait and go with the lass to buy it?' I said. Then he accused me of being miserly and having no feeling for my daughter-in-law."

You might think, sister, that by then the old man would be sitting on pins and needles. But not a bit of it. He said calmly to Hsin-hsin, "Your mum's giving me credit where no credit's due. She has something ready for you in this chest." He tapped the chest beside him.

This put me on the spot. First I'd thought the old fellow was bluffing; now I remembered that my "beggar's coat" was in that chest. So he meant to have his own way after all.

In a fluster I said to Hsin-hsin, "Don't listen to him. I've not bought the material yet. Let's go to the co-op right away and get it."

But the provoking old thing stuck to his guns. "If she won't take it out, I will," he said.

Before he could do this I jumped off the bed, pushed him aside and plumped myself down on the chest.

But Hsin-hsin acted as a peace-maker. Leading me back to the bed she said, "Why buy new clothes for me? I'm not short of any. We want to carry on the poor peasants' tradition of industry and thrift in running our homes. Isn't that right, mum? Right, dad?"

I liked the way the girl spoke. It showed good sense. But in that case why had she wanted clothes?

My old man cast a triumphant glance at me. "Right!" he boomed. "Hsin-hsin is absolutely right. Caring too much for food and clothes is against Chairman Mao's instructions. That's the landlords' way, the way of rich peasants."

To spare my feelings, Hsin-hsin changed the subject. "Ever since Hsiang-chun and I got engaged, I've been wanting to see you," she said. "But I was so busy I just couldn't find the time. Even when he left for town that day, I didn't come. You must be annoyed with me."

My old man, riding the high horse now, told the girl, "Nothing of the sort! Young people have new ways of doing things, I know. Times have changed, so we old people have to change our ways too. Someone was upset by your failure to come, it's true. That someone even complained that you had no feeling for your future in-laws."

Of course, I knew very well whom he meant by this "someone". So my old man had begun to take the offensive. Never mind, now that I was sure of my daughter-in-law, I didn't care what he said.

Sensing this, Hsin-hsin turned to me with an earnest look. "I've come to ask you to give me a jacket, mum. Not a new one, but that 'beggar's coat' you wore before Liberation."

How on earth did she know about that? I was amazed.

With a smile the girl told me, "The young people in our village have never known really hard times, so we aren't on our guard against bourgeois ideas. To help raise our understanding, our Youth League Branch has decided to start a campaign for 'pouring out the bitterness of the past'. Hsiang-chun told me that you have a beggar's coat stained with your blood and sweat. It's a token of your bitter life in the old days. That's the jacket I want. Facts speak louder. . ."

Before she had finished, my old man opened the chest and took out the ragged coat I had worn when begging. It was nothing but a mass of patches. My heart bled to see it. The dog's life I had led flashed across my mind. Tears coursed down my cheeks.

Gazing at Chairman Mao's portrait, I said to Hsin-hsin, "My bones would have rotted away long before now, if not for the leadership of Chairman Mao and the Party."

"Why not get your mum to go to your village and tell the young people all she went through?" my old man suggested.

"That would be fine," said Hsin-hsin. "We thought of that too, but I didn't like to suggest it for fear mum mightn't be willing. Will you come, mum?"

I'd better end my story here today, sister. I'll tell you about the meeting to pour out past bitterness some other day, when both of us have time.

*Illustrated by Tai Tun-pang*



## The Party Secretary's Bed-Roll

This was the fourth time I'd carried Party Secretary Shih's bed-roll. It was an ordinary bed-roll: a worn army cotton-padded quilt, an army blanket, a patched sheet and a pillow made up of clothes bundled together. The whole thing turned the scales at less than twenty pounds, yet it seemed to me I was shouldering a great weight. For this bed-roll had accompanied Shih during the War Against Japanese Aggression, the War of Liberation and the Korean War, and after all those arduous years of fighting it had come with him to the industrial front.

Shih was the Party secretary of our mine where I had come after being demobbed to work as a clerk in the ore-dressing plant. And the first thing that struck me about him was the way he insisted on living with the workers.

The first time I carried his bed-roll for him was last summer. Because our plant was a new one, it had not enough housing to go round. Some workers with families were allotted rooms; but as for the bachelors, apart from a few assigned to tiled adobe houses, the majority were temporarily lodged in sheds with asphalt roofs. In hot weather these sheds were as hot and stifling as ovens, while the tiled tamped-earth

houses were relatively cool. But Old Shih insisted on living in one of these sheds.

It grew hotter every day. The blazing sun shone relentlessly over our work site. One day Party Secretary Li of our plant came to me and said:

"Look here, Lin. This place is a furnace, yet Old Shih's still living in a shed. That's too much for a senior cadre with high blood pressure. We must find a better place for him."

"Right," I answered. The same idea had occurred to me, and other fellows in our shed had suggested it too. The problem was how to persuade him. Soon after I came to this plant, my work-mates had warned me that Old Shih was very stubborn, impossible to persuade him to do something he felt was wrong. They told me various stories by way of illustration.

For instance, his daughter Kuei-wa had joined the army. After a year or so she was sent to study and, since her journey to the school took her through our mining district, she was given three days' leave to visit her parents. However, as soon as she reached home Shih asked her: "Kuei-wa, do all new recruits get home leave?"

"Not all, no. I'm getting special consideration," said the girl ingenuously, laying proud emphasis on the last two words.

"Special consideration, eh? That's the problem." Shih frowned. "Of course this shows our leadership's concern for us, but you must never think yourself somebody special, entitled to privileges. If you do, you'll cut yourself off from the rank and file. The children of cadres must make strict demands on themselves."

Kuei-wa lowered her eyes and said nothing. But the next day she left.

Then there was the business of the hose. Shih's wife lived with some of the workers' families in temporary housing with few amenities and no running water. Since her health was poor and her husband seldom had time to go home, fetching water was a problem for her; so her neighbours fixed up a hose leading to her kitchen. As soon as Shih discovered this he removed it. "Whatever difficulties we may have, we mustn't accept special privileges," he said. "Besides, if we monopolize this hose, how are others to get their water? I'll keep



the water vat filled for you. We mustn't make extra trouble for other people."

Because of this stubborn streak in his character, we weren't at all sure whether he would agree to move.

Then I had a bright idea. I was living in a house with a tiled roof. If I changed places with him, he could hardly object.

No sooner said than done. I was just walking off with Shih's bed-roll when he came back, pouring with sweat, from the work site.

"What are you up to, Lin?" He barred my way.

I had meant to present him with a *fait accompli*, telling him after the exchange had been made. His sudden return took the wind out of my sails. "Well . . . I want to swap berths with you," was all I could say.

Shih saw through my scheme at once. Seizing hold of the bed-roll, he said: "This place suits me fine."

"It's too hot here."

"Don't you mind the heat?"

"I'm younger, I can take it."

"So?" He winked. "In that case, you can change places with Old Hsiao. He's older than I am and his health isn't good."

Old Hsiao, an old worker who hadn't yet been joined by his family, was also staying in one of those sweltering sheds. Since he was nearly sixty, he certainly deserved special consideration. I therefore had to agree to Shih's proposal, at which he beamed all over his wrinkled face.

The second time I tried to move his bed-roll was last winter.

As production expanded, our plant built new housing. The old asphalt-roofed sheds were demolished and we all moved into new brick houses with red tiled roofs. Party Secretary Shih lived with us in one of these new buildings.

Then our plant's Party Secretary Li came to me and said: "Lin, now we've better accommodation, we've got a separate room for Old Shih. I want you to move his things in there."

I agreed to this readily. However, I was prepared for some opposition. After my last lesson, I decided to "negotiate" with Shih first before moving his bedding from our communal quarters.

Since he was then at a meeting, I first bundled his things together. When he came back and saw the bed-roll his face fell. "Now what do you think you're doing, Lin?" he asked.

"You see it's like this." Very patiently I set about persuading him. "Following the rapid development of our socialist construction, our people's standard of living is steadily rising. Here, just as in the rest of the country, the situation is excellent and our production is making a big leap forward. Naturally our staff's living standard should improve too. Now that we've built these new hostels, we feel it's not convenient for your work for you to share a room with other people. So we've set aside a small room for you and we want you to move over there."

I had rehearsed these arguments until I practically knew them off by heart. When Shih had heard me out he laughed, then said seriously: "Look here, Lin, why do you keep worrying about me? You youngsters should give more thought to the welfare of the workers, the welfare of the masses. Young Kao's family has just arrived, hasn't it? You ought to give them that room."

There he had me again. I didn't even know of the arrival of Young Kao's family. Once more I had to fall in with his suggestion.

The third time I moved Shih's bed-roll, I felt very confident. Shih had been hospitalized for three months with high blood pressure; now the hospital had telephoned to say that he was well enough to come back. During these three months there had been considerable changes in our mining area. Our plant's construction work was finished; the big dormitory we bachelors had shared had been turned into an assembly hall, and we had all moved to smaller rooms which were bright and comfortable. We had set aside a room for Shih where he could be quiet. I cheerfully swept these new quarters, brought over Shih's bed-roll and made up the bed for him, meaning to take a car to fetch him back from the hospital after lunch. However, before noon he arrived back on foot. Asked why he hadn't waited for the car, he simply grinned and retorted: "What do we have legs for if not for walking?"

As soon as Shih got back, without even going to his office he hurried off to the work site on the hill opposite — the site for a new plant for

the electrostatic separation process. Construction was in full swing there. Bulldozers had already levelled half a hill and tall scaffolding was springing up. Near the site stood rows of those asphalt-roofed sheds put up for the building workers.

Shih did not come back till late in the evening. It was early spring and quite chilly, but beads of sweat were glistening on his forehead. As soon as he saw me he said: "I want you to move my things for me, will you, Lin?"

I was very glad to hear this. So this time he was willing to move without any persuasion. I responded cheerfully: "You want to move, eh? I've moved your things already."

"You have? Where to?"

"Why? Where do you want to move to?" My heart sank.

"Over there." Shih pointed at the sheds on the opposite hill.

I was staggered at first. Then, realizing what this meant, I was deeply moved. In the war years when Old Shih led his men into action he had always insisted on going to the front, to where the battle was fiercest, where conditions were hardest. He was doing the same today. I said with feeling: "But . . . your health isn't up to it."

"I'm better now." Seeing my dismay, he seized my hand and said earnestly, "Chairman Mao has always taught us that leading cadres must go to the forefront and share the life of the masses; we must keep close to the grass roots and always show concern for the needs of the people. It's only by going to where conditions are toughest that we can integrate ourselves with the masses and understand the real situation. That's the only way to lead production."

His incisive, forceful reasoning convinced me.

So for the fourth time I picked up Old Shih's bed-roll.

*Illustrated by Chen Yu-hsien*



*Wang Shih-hsiang*

Poems of Army Life

*Night Patrol*

Swift-footed as a tiger,  
Light as a floating cloud or breath of air,  
With eyes far brighter than the harvest moon,  
Brilliant as silver stars. . . .

By touch they find their bearings,  
In whispers pass the word from man to man,  
Treading the stone-strewn track without a sound,  
Cutting without a trace through bush and vine.

Listen! The crickets at their feet  
Are shrilling loud and clear;

The whistle of a distant train  
Voices their proud resolve for all to hear.

Our men are arrows fitted to a bow,  
The tautened string this track;  
Should enemies molest our land by night  
Our guns in unison will answer back.



## *Ambush Drill*

On night manoeuvres in the hills  
We lie in ambush in the undergrowth:  
Behind each leaf a pair of watchful eyes,  
Behind each rock sharp ears.  
What can you hear, men?  
In soft falling dew  
We hear great rushing rivers,  
In the breeze  
Rustling seas of paddy,  
In the whistles of trains  
The storm rending the Five Continents,  
In the thunder of wheels  
The songs of victory over the Four Seas.

All under heaven we hear,  
The whole earth our ear-drum,  
And when the warning sounds  
We shall charge from these heights like tigers  
To smash our enemy.

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*Minority Girl Becomes Tractor-Driver* (coloured  
woodcut) by Teng Tzu-ching ►



## *Army and People Together*

Rain pelts, wind cuts like a knife  
On a hillside muddy and steep;  
Pitch dark, yet we bypass the village  
Unwilling to wake them from sleep.

Falling, we scramble up without a sound  
To tiptoe through the night;  
The village passed we gaze around,  
Amazed to see a rainbow on the height.

No rainbow this we soon perceive  
But lanterns, beaming faces. . . .  
Folk here keep up the custom  
Of old guerrilla bases.

They pass their own straw hats to us  
And hand us bowls of tea;  
Old men point out our shortest way,  
While lads stand guard beneath a tree.

“Good folk, how can we thank you,  
Come out in such foul weather. . . .”  
“We want no thanks. Joint drill this is,  
Army and people together.”

*Illustrated by Ho Chen-chiang*

Tan Shu-jen

## Some New Woodcuts

The four woodcuts reproduced in this issue are chosen from a number of recent works by professional and amateur artists.

*Light from Date Orchard* is one of a series of woodcuts by the veteran artist Ku Yuan, based on his recollections of life in Yen-an during the war years. Date Orchard is where Chairman Mao lived during the War Against Japanese Aggression and the early period of the War of Liberation; there he led the Chinese people's revolutionary struggle and wrote many important works of Marxism-Leninism. This woodcut depicts the light in the cave-dwelling where Chairman Mao worked one winter night when heavy snow was falling. The light streaming through the window on to the snowy ground imparts a sense of radiance and serenity. Drawing on his experience of life in Yen-an, the artist has made good use of the woodcut medium to recall fond memories of those war years, years of revolutionary struggle under the leadership of Chairman Mao.

*Autumn Harvest in the North* is a new work by Chao Mei depicting the transformation of the "northern wasteland" in the northeastern province of Heilungchiang, where hard work has turned this formerly

barren region into a rich granary. In this woodcut the artist pays tribute to the heroism of the workers on the farm. We see tall sturdy sorghum, solid as a city wall, with purple ears drooping under their own weight; busy reapers, swift-moving tractors transporting the grain. . . . In this exhilarating scene of a bumper harvest the figures stand out vividly, so that we can enter into the joy of the man on the tractor pointing at the fine crop. Chao Mei has lived and worked in the "northern wasteland" and knows it intimately. For many years he has made woodcuts of the changes in this district, which is one of his favourite subjects.

In recent years many youngsters fresh from school have gone to the countryside to farm, to help forward our socialist construction and to integrate themselves with the peasants. This is the theme of *Watching over the Paddy Shoots* by Wang Wei-pao, which shows a girl spraying insecticide. She has picked up a young shoot to examine it, and from the placard behind her on the ridge we see that this is an experimental plot where she and her mates are carrying out scientific experiments. The terraced fields on the hillsides are turning green. The artist has used the special features of traditional woodblock printing to produce an effect of moisture and variations in light and shade, conveying the lushness of the southern mountains and the luxuriance of the crops.

*Minority Girl Becomes Tractor-Driver* shows the new spirit in Hainan Island where the Li and Miao minorities live. Before Liberation these minority districts were kept backward by the rule of feudal landlords and the cruel exploitation of the Kuomintang reactionaries; but now that the people have become their own masters they have made great strides in socialist construction. In the old days the farming here was most primitive, but today they are using tractors, while a new generation of peasants is growing up with political consciousness. This woodcut portrays a young Li girl who has just learned to drive a tractor and is looking back with pride and confidence at the hills which have slumbered for centuries but are now awakening as diligent hands transform this rich and lovely minority region.

This woodcut was done by an amateur, Teng Tzu-ching. Its lively characterization, apt, glowing colours and vigorous lines have made it one of the recent works to attract favourable attention.

Keng Chien

## Critique of the Film "Naturally There Will Be Successors"

In the first half of the sixties, two works with main characters having the same names appeared on China's screen and stage. One was the film *Naturally There Will Be Successors*, the other was the modern revolutionary Peking opera *The Red Lantern*.\*

These two works are diametric opposites.

*The Red Lantern* is a triumph of the great revolution in Peking opera. From the first day of its creation, a clear line of distinction was drawn between it and *Naturally There Will Be Successors*.

Work on the opera began in November 1963 when, after repeated study, research and careful selection, Comrade Chiang Ching

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\*The story of *The Red Lantern* takes place in an enemy-held city during the War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression (1937-1945).

Li Yu-ho, a railway switchman, is a member of the Chinese Communist Party and a seasoned underground worker. He and his mother and daughter are actually from three different worker families, brought together during the February 7, 1923 railway strike, when the workers rose to oppose the northern warlords for their slaughter of workers.

From a higher Party organization Li Yu-ho receives a secret code which he must deliver to the guerrillas in the Cypress Mountains. Before he can fulfil

decided that the Shanghai-style local opera *The Red Lantern* should be rewritten into a Peking opera. In the course of years of class struggle and artistic creation it was completely transformed, through repeated rewriting, into a model work of China's proletarian art and literature. Today *The Red Lantern* is known and loved in every Chinese family. It is being staged all over the country and has been made into a colour film.

The opera is acclaimed by China's workers, peasants and soldiers as a pioneer work in both content and form. It creates noble images of typical proletarian heroes — Li Yu-ho, Granny Li and Li T'ieh-mei. It is a concentrated image of the Chinese Communists' heroic struggle during the War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression with new forces constantly joining to carry the fight forward. It extols the loyalty of the working class to the revolution and the courage with which the Eighth Route Army and the people fought. It reveals the important role of the rural base areas in the war.

*The Red Lantern* is a victory of the creative method of integrating revolutionary realism with revolutionary romanticism. It is a victory of the policies: "Let a hundred flowers blossom; weed through the old to bring forth the new" and "Make the past serve the present and foreign things serve China". It is a triumph of Chairman Mao's line for literature and art.

Every step forward in creating a proletarian art and literature involves intense class struggle. From the very beginning, swindlers like Liu Shao-chi attempted to sabotage *The Red Lantern*. On the one hand, these revisionists tried to twist the opera according to their line and make it into a reactionary work. On the other, they forced

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his mission, he is betrayed to the chief of the Japanese gendarmes, Hatoyama, who invites him to a "feast", tries persuasion and threats and then arrests and tortures him to make him give up the code. But the Communist meets the enemy with unflinching courage. Both at the feast and on the execution ground, he defeats Hatoyama with righteous rage. At his wit's end, Hatoyama executes Li Yu-ho and his mother, Granny Li.

Li's daughter T'ieh-mei takes over the mission from her martyred father. Led by the Party and helped by her neighbours, she succeeds in delivering the secret code to the guerrillas.

through the production of the film *Naturally There Will Be Successors* from a script which had already been criticized by the Party and the masses. They set it up as something "divine" in a vain attempt to offset the new-born revolutionary Peking opera *The Red Lantern* and the other model works of revolutionary stage art.

The successful creation of *The Red Lantern* marked the defeat of these schemes. Now it is time to settle matters with regard to the film *Naturally There Will Be Successors*.

What kind of thing is this film? The title itself gives a clue. Do successors in the revolutionary cause come about *naturally*? If not for the Communist Party's leadership and Chairman Mao, the heroic struggles of the older generation of revolutionaries and the Party's careful nurturing of the younger generation, where would these successors come from?

The film claims to draw its title from the words of a Communist martyr Hsia Ming-han who, just before he was killed by the reactionaries, wrote a poem extolling the truth of communism and envisaging the future with the broad vision of the revolutionary. His words run:

What matters it if you execute me?  
Communism is Truth.  
When you've killed Hsia Ming-han,  
There will still be successors.

But the film is a brazen distortion of the idea of the poem. By substituting "naturally" for "still", they cut out its soul. And the resulting title of the film is in itself a preposterous statement.

Is all this accidental?

Let us see how the film writers expound their theme and what their real intention is.

Whom does a work of art or literature serve? What main idea does it convey? The people it extols — to what class do they belong? These questions are determined by the kind of character the author chooses for its hero.

The fundamental task of socialist art and literature is to create images of worker, peasant and soldier heroes. *The Red Lantern* follows this principle. It takes for its hero the worker Li Yu-ho, a

member of the Communist Party, who is the core of a fighting collective of three generations and the mainstay in safeguarding a secret code for the revolutionary forces. Thus it immortalizes a revolutionary martyr. Thus it reflects the truth that the Chinese Communist Party is the force at the core leading the people's cause forward, and that the working class is the vanguard of the revolution.

This is the objective reality of the history of the Chinese revolution. Only by choosing such heroes can socialist art and literature fulfil their fundamental task and so serve the workers, peasants and soldiers and serve proletarian politics.

In *Naturally There Will Be Successors*, on the contrary, the revolutionary martyr Li Yu-ho is pushed down into a secondary role while his daughter Tieh-mei, twisted into a "middle character",\* is made the heroine. This turns history upside down and distorts the truth; it is in complete opposition to the fundamental task and aim of socialist art and literature.

Even more intolerable are the vilifications of the character of Li Yu-ho. His first appearance on the screen is meant to set the keynote for his character. He lies in bed languidly, while Tieh-mei tickles his face with the end of her braid. Suddenly he feigns a tiger's roar, bringing a scolding from Granny. He is a do-nothing philistine. This is no Communist or working-class fighter!

The film shows Li Yu-ho habitually stealing liquor. With relish the script writers provide repeated descriptions: "As soon as he awakes he cuddles up to the bottle." He "lovingly" pours the liquor into the cup. When he cannot get a drink he "gulps" and "his eyes rest longingly on the bottle". He knows which distiller mixes water with his product. Even at a banquet prepared by the Japanese aggressor Hatoyama as a trap, he cannot refrain from reaching for the cup! This is no Communist working in secrecy, it is a tippler drooling at the sight of his booze.

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\*The revisionists in literary and art circles opposed portraying worker, peasant and soldier heroes and, instead, advocated depicting "human beings of a 'middling' kind, neither good nor bad, both good and bad", in fact backward characters.

"A drink first thing in the morning and you're a hero for the day," Li Yu-ho says emphatically in the film. Its writers make drink the moral support and source of strength of their hero.

The term "hero" has different meanings for different classes. The proletarian hero has an unending devotion to communism, firmly carries out Chairman Mao's revolutionary line and loves the people whole-heartedly. His Marxist-Leninist world outlook is the determining factor that makes him a hero.

In *The Red Lantern* aria "My Spirit Storms the Heavens", Li Yu-ho sings:

*Once the storm is past flowers will bloom,  
New China will shine like the morning sun.*

This and his other words and actions at death's door are a clear manifestation of his Marxist-Leninist outlook. It is this fundamental factor that enables him to deal with the enemy coolly and with ease, the factor which defeats Hatoyama. The Li Yu-ho of *The Red Lantern* is not a "hero for the day" but fights all his life.

Such heroism is not visible in the Li Yu-ho of *Naturally There Will Be Successors* for "a day", or even half a day. Besides being endowed with various ugly traits, he is presented as casually leaking the Party's secrets to his family. And when he sees that he is being surrounded by the enemy in the market place, he all but plays into their hands by edging toward his Party contact man, the knife-grinder, with the secret code hidden in his lunchbox. Portrayed as a novice in the struggle against the enemy, he breaks the discipline essential to secret work, and throughout the struggle is forced into a passive position by Hatoyama. On the execution ground, when the enemy shouts "Stand up!" he obeys as if galvanized. Without a scrap of integrity, he all but kneels. What else can be expected from a character motivated by alcohol? Veritably an image of someone from the dregs of society!

Before the cultural revolution, counter-revolutionary revisionists in art and literary circles — Chou Yang, Hsia Yen, T'ien Han and Yang Han-sheng — raved about "writing reality". In this film there is "reality" enough. But it is the reality of a drunkard, a philistine, certainly not the reality of a Communist Party member or revolution-

ary martyr! Yet the writers of the film insist that such a character is a vanguard fighter of the proletariat, a revolutionary hero! If this is not malicious slander, what is it? However, the reactionary nature of the film extends beyond this.

"China's problems cannot be settled without armed force," wrote Chairman Mao. "In the present period, the War of Resistance, all organization and struggle in the rear areas of the anti-Japanese forces and in the areas occupied by the enemy are directly or indirectly co-ordinated with the war." (*Problems of War and Strategy*)

This principle is correctly embodied in *The Red Lantern*. Through the characters of the courageous knife-grinder and the guerrillas of the Cypress Mountain revolutionary base and the scene in which the enemy is ambushed and annihilated, the opera correctly reflects the relationship between the Party's secret work and the armed struggle as a whole. By portraying Aunt Tien's family and other members of the masses who resist the Japanese aggressors, it shows Li Yu-ho as fighting shoulder to shoulder with the working people, sharing their sufferings and having the broad vision expressed by the clarion call, "Workers of the world, unite!"

In *Naturally There Will Be Successors*, by contrast, not a glimpse of the resistance war or a flag or gun of the revolution can be seen from beginning to end. Though the base area is mentioned, it is as intangible as the old poet's "mountain floating in mystic clouds". The knife-grinder is made to look shabby and disreputable. Audiences said he was like a thief sneaking around on the screen.

Armed struggle has been cut out. Moreover, the character of the masses is distorted in many ways. In the original script there was an old woman who made herself a laughing-stock, now watching a shadow play, now spending a lot of time in the streets. When T'ieh-mei asked to escape through her house, the old woman was speechless, "scared out of her wits".

In the film no member of the masses even has a name. The revolutionaries are miserable and alone, getting no help or sympathy from anyone. The Communists, instead of fighting in the flames of the re-

sistance war on China's soil and among the people, seem to be struggling alone in some cold, uninhabited polar region.

Such descriptions are the height of falsehood and revisionist through and through. They are at variance with the actual history of the great heroic years of the resistance war guided by Chairman Mao's revolutionary line of armed struggle and people's war. The film propagates the line that Liu Shao-chi and other swindlers advocated for Party work in regions under reactionary rule, a line that ran counter to Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought, the line of traitors and renegades designed to sabotage revolutionary resistance against aggression and lead China into an abyss of darkness. The Party and the people have always fought this line and have never allowed it to prevail.

The concoctors of *Naturally There Will Be Successors* even made up arguments to justify such distortions. The "Director's Explanatory Notes" speak of "a broad expression of human emotion", "a tone that is basically lyrical" and so on.

In his *Talks at the Yenan Forum on Literature and Art*, Chairman Mao writes, "**All the dark forces harming the masses of the people must be exposed and all the revolutionary struggles of the masses of the people must be extolled.**" This is the correct stand in proletarian art and literature. This is the Communist principle for the expression of emotion. Expressions of feeling have a distinct class character.

*Naturally There Will Be Successors* either fails to express the feeling of the proletariat and the masses of the people inherent in Li Yu-ho and his family (this being impossible because of the writers' bourgeois outlook) or combines, as Marx said, "**the pathetic and the vulgar in a comical tangle**" (*Moralizing Criticism and Critical Morality*). It is like a cup of water which, though it contains a bit of sugar, is poisoned by arsenic.

On the execution ground, the Li Yu-ho of the film is overcome with remorse and says sadly to Granny Li, "Your son will not be able to support you to the end of your days." Tieh-mei also moans, "Dad, I have come to bid you farewell." The film's director characterized Granny Li as a "weak" character "with old moral concepts" whose

"feelings are habitually at odds with her ideal" and so on. This is purely an expression of the bourgeois "theory of human nature", and its ugliness is sharply exposed when we compare it with these words of Li Yu-ho's in *The Red Lantern*:

*People say that family love outweighs all else,  
But class love is greater yet, I know.*

The script writers went on and on in their own vein and finally, in their original manuscript, they even killed off Tieh-mei after the death of her father. That script started with the death of the liaison man and ended with the death of all three generations of Li Yu-ho's family. Neither the older generation of revolutionaries nor any successors were left to carry on the cause. When workers, peasants and soldiers strongly objected to this, the makers of the film finally had to let Tieh-mei live on. But at the end they still left her on a lone boat amid the waves, not knowing where she would end. Actually the concoctors of this film created a lot of graves and then pointed to them and lamented, "How cruel, how sad is revolution!"

No! That is not the way things are! If all the revolutionaries had died, how could the people have won the war of resistance and the war of liberation? How could there be today, the new, socialist China? War is harsh. Revolution undoubtedly has its cost in blood. But, as Chairman Mao says in his poem, "Shaoshan Revisited".

**Bitter sacrifice strengthens bold resolve  
Which dares to make sun and moon shine in new skies.**

The opera *The Red Lantern* makes it clear that the martyrs' sacrifice brings victory in the revolution — like a mighty torrent, the guerrillas of the Cypress Mountains fight the invaders with guns in their hands and broadswords flashing, cutting down Hatoyama. All this rejoices men's hearts. How grossly the concoctors of the film *Naturally There Will Be Successors* overrated themselves in thinking that with a stroke of the pen they could wipe out the victory of revolutionary war and the bright future it opened up!

The sincerity of these authors is reserved for expressing the feelings of the imperialist aggressors and the traitor. With emphasis



the camera pans down a row of fascist troops standing stiffly at attention, to create the impression of their power. Hatoyama, chief of the Japanese gendarmerie, is glorified as having "a wide range of emotions", "motherly kindness and fatherly justice", and being an excellent artist and calligrapher. When the police officer Wang betrays Li Yu-ho, he is described sympathetically with the phrase, "Even a sage makes one misstep in a lifetime."

What kind of feeling do these writers express? Is it not the feeling of the traitor whom the Li Yu-ho of *The Red Lantern* castigates as "a mangy dog with a broken back"? They defend the renegade's betrayal of the revolution and boost the ruthless aggressors. They depict the revolutionary proletariat as "slow-witted and foolish" in order to highlight the character of the criminal militarist as "well-bred" and "cultured"; they contrast the "failure" of the Communists and the masses resisting aggression with the "victory" of the invaders.

"Broad expression of emotion" indeed! The class prejudice in the film cannot be covered up. The bourgeois "theory of human nature" is a tinny spear bound to be broken by the powerful weapon of the class theory of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought.

The real purpose of *Naturally There Will Be Successors* is very clear. In essence, it was an attempt to negate the leading role of the Chinese Communist Party in the anti-Japanese war, to negate the revolutionary martyrs, to negate Chairman Mao's revolutionary line.

Truth is revealed by comparison. The ugly essence of *Naturally There Will Be Successors*, which the revisionists consider "divine", stands out sharply by the light of the proletarian *Red Lantern*. Worker-peasant-soldier audiences see the film and the opera as two works which portray characters of two different classes, express two completely incompatible themes and represent two opposing lines. *The Red Lantern* is itself a forceful critique of *Naturally There Will Be Successors*.

The struggle is not ended. Today, Chairman Mao's revolutionary line has won a great victory and people throughout the country

are making a deeper criticism of swindlers like Liu Shao-chi. Yet there are still some persons trying to summon *Naturally There Will Be Successors* from its grave and dreaming of using it to denigrate *The Red Lantern* in order to negate the results of the victory of proletarian art and literature.

Dung cannot be turned into gold; poisonous weeds cannot pass as fragrant flowers. The buzzing of a few political flies nauseates and angers the people, but it plays another role as well: it teaches, through negative example, that the struggle between the two classes and the two lines will still be long, sharp and complex. We must, as Chairman Mao says, "**Read and study seriously and have a good grasp of Marxism**", heighten our consciousness of the struggle between the two lines and do a thorough job of criticizing revisionism and rectifying our style of work. Only so can the gains of the revolution, paid for in sweat and blood, be safeguarded and carried forward.

Jen Chieh

## Militant Art

Early this summer a Fine Arts Exhibition from Albania, "Every Man a Soldier", was held in Peking. It displayed more than sixty oil paintings and over thirty engravings. These works in the socialist realist tradition were infused with revolutionary fervour and a strong flavour of real life. Masterly in composition, rich in colour and powerful in line, they presented the fiery struggles of the Albanian people during the war of national liberation and in defence of the socialist motherland now that every man is a soldier. They paid passionate tribute to the heroic Albanian people and their army, and to their tremendous achievements in liberating and defending their motherland as well as in safeguarding the fruits of their revolution as they fight on, a pick in one hand, a gun in the other, under the brilliant leadership of their Party and their great leader Enver Hoxha.

Guri Madhi's oil painting *The General Headquarters Is Set Up* depicts a major event in the history of the Albanian revolution, when Comrade Enver Hoxha took charge of the Labinot Conference on July 10, 1943, and leading cadres of partisan contingents and of the national



*The General Headquarters Is Set Up*

anti-fascist committee for national liberation came from various fronts to this simple adobe house to hear the speech delivered by Comrade Hoxha in military uniform. At this historic conference, they unanimously passed a resolution to set up a general headquarters for the national liberation forces, and Comrade Hoxha was appointed its political commissar. That opened a new chapter in the history of their national liberation struggle, for under Comrade Hoxha's leadership the Albanian people finally destroyed the aggressors and liberated the whole country.

Fatmir Haxhiu's oil painting *In the Days of the Spring Offensive* shows how Comrade Hoxha and his comrades-in-arms inspected the positions at the front and made plans to start the offensive and deal a crushing blow to the enemy. The resolution and confidence of the figures in this painting impress us with the infinite strength of a people fighting to liberate their motherland. Another oil painting by the same artist, *The Heroic People of Hekal*, deals with a well-known scene from revolutionary history, showing how the villagers of Hekal chose

to die as heroes rather than surrender to the enemy. The artist's handling of the background here skilfully brings out the main theme. Dark lowering clouds show that a storm is about to burst, while rugged rocks symbolize unshakable resolution. All seeing this work are seized with the conviction: 'The people of Albania are invincible! *The Heroes of Vigut* by Sali Shijaku is another fine painting in praise of the dauntless sons of Albania. Besieged by the enemy, the five heroes of Vigut fought on to the end for their beloved country. We realize that fighters of this calibre are a true wall of iron which no enemy can break through.

In those arduous years of resistance to the German and Italian fascists, the whole people of Albania, men and women, old and young,



*At the Frontier*

took part in the struggle to wipe out the enemy. This testifies to the resolution and revolutionary spirit of the Albanian people and is also a special feature of people's war. This is clearly brought out in the works exhibited, being the theme of Chirim Ceka's *Three Generations*. Here a brave fighter in the prime of life stands with a white-haired old man on his right and his left hand resting on the shoulder of a youngster. All three bear arms and are fighting in the mountains. This stirring depiction of three generations of partisans epitomizes people's war in Albania.

These paintings not only portray past struggles but bring out vividly the Albanian people's revolutionary character. Each work, indeed, breathes revolutionary heroism. During the war of national liberation, the Albanian people fought with magnificent courage; since victory they have shown the same fighting spirit in socialist construction and the creation of a better world, keeping firm hold of their weapons to defend the fruits of revolution. Nexhmedin Zajmi's oil painting *At the Frontier* depicts a militia woman, with a gun vigilantly guarding the frontier. The lifelike portrayal of her character and the sense of vigour imparted ably sum up the theme "every man a soldier" and successfully personify the toiling people in arms.

These works by Albanian artists have educated and inspired their compatriots, and we in China find them equally inspiring. This exhibition has deepened our understanding of the life and struggles of the fraternal Albanian people, has enhanced the friendship between us, and has afforded Chinese artists a good opportunity to learn from their Albanian confrères.

## Art Treasures of the Mexican People

During the visit of President Echeverria of Mexico to China, we were further delighted to have the exhibition "Mexican Culture and Art Through the Ages" on display in Peking. The ancient cultural relics together with examples of folk art and modern art showed us something of the life of the Mexican people during the last few millennia, leaving us with a deep impression of the rich national culture and heroic struggles of the people of Mexico.

Mexico, a country with an ancient civilization, is one of the cradles of American culture. Since very early times, its various peoples have made outstanding contributions to the development of world civilization. The exhibits shown here were only a few specimens taken from the treasure-house of their Olmec, Maya, Toltec and Aztec cultures, yet we were amazed by their richness and variety. The painted pottery, stone sculptures, sacrificial objects, figurines, drums and ornaments all possess strong national features, revealing a wonderful sense of form and exquisite workmanship. Whether simple objects with economy of line yet immense vitality, or delicately delineated and beautifully carved works of art, all reflect the wisdom of the toiling masses.



*The Partisan* (oil painting)

Three exhibition rooms were devoted to coloured reproductions of eighth-century temple frescoes discovered in the dense jungles of Bonampak. These magnificent frescoes depicting dramatic scenes such as initiation rites, battles and dances of celebration are the pride of ancient Latin American culture and rank among the finest achievements of world fresco art.

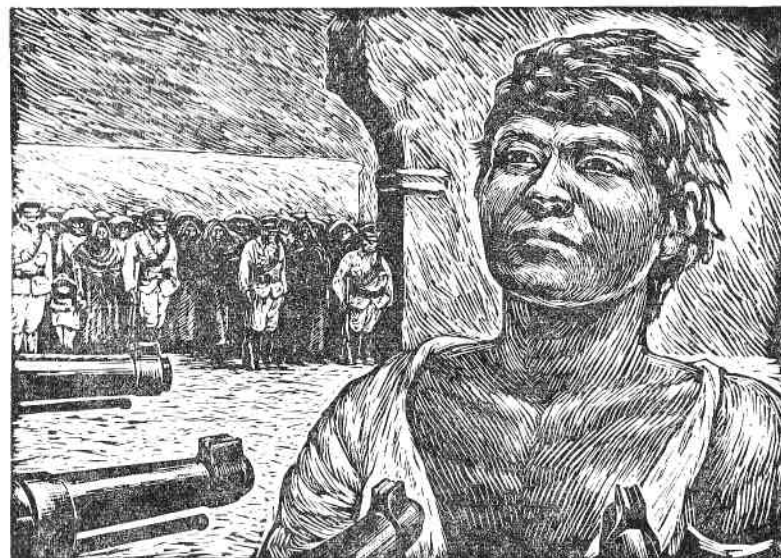
Existing alongside traditional Mexican art was the Mexican folk art embodying the talent and skill of the handicraftsmen and peasants. This includes a wide range of pottery painted in gorgeous colours as

well as lovely lacquerware and woven objects for daily use. Vivid folk paintings and clay figurines show the optimism and humour of the labouring people. As Mexican artists have said: 'To gain a true understanding of Mexican art and the genius of the Mexican people, we must study folk art as well as professional works. This is why our people pay great attention to Mexican handicrafts.

In another hall we saw more than one hundred exhibits of graphic art, oil paintings and stone sculptures representing modern and contemporary Mexican art. From these it was apparent that the superb heritage created by the people of ancient times is being carried on and further developed by Mexican artists today.

In 1956 two exhibitions of Mexican painting and graphic art were held in our capital, and many works by famous Mexican artists won high praise from our general public and art circles. David Alfaro Siqueiros is noted for his handling of revolutionary themes, and his painting *The Partisan* in this exhibition which depicts a guerrilla fighter galloping forward is done with great force and vigour. The outstanding graphic artist Leopoldo Mendez has produced many memorable, militant works which are familiar to the Chinese people such as *Cruelty of the Bosses*, *Execution* and *Cuauhtemoc*. In these stirring compositions he eulogizes the indomitable spirit of heroes and exposes the savagery and cowardice of the oppressors, depicting sharp conflicts in a concise, simple style. *Fighting on Horseback*, *Hidalgo*, *Loneliness* and *Lonely Woman* are moving examples of his masterly technique and passion.

Works on patriotic themes occupy a most important place in modern Mexican graphic art. In this exhibition, various art forms were used to depict the heroes of the national democratic revolution, and to spur the people to rise up and fight. Seven of the exhibits had as their theme Zapata and his men. Zapata was a peasant revolutionary leader of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, who worked and fought all his life to win back the land for the toilers; he was finally assassinated, but the legend grew up that Zapata had not died and would return again, riding his white horse. One artist has depicted this immortal hero riding on his charger, once more leading the peasants to carry on the struggle. One woodcut depicts Hidalgo, a national hero during the War of Independence in the nineteenth cen-



*Execution* (woodcut)

tury. It was Hidalgo who set ablaze the flames of revolt against colonialism; thus the day on which he started the revolt has become Mexico's Independence Day. Another woodcut is a portrait of Juárez, the president of American-Indian origin who led the Mexican people to defeat foreign aggression. In this portrait, his firm lips and resolute gaze show his indomitable spirit. The late Mexican president Cardenas, a good friend of the Chinese people who during his presidency won the respect of his people by upholding national sovereignty and independence, was also portrayed in the exhibition. Portraits of heroes and leaders of other countries, such as the great leader of the Vietnamese people Ho Chi Minh and the Cuban national hero Jose Marti, showed that the Mexican people not only gain inspiration and strength from their own glorious history but also from the struggles of other nations, which inspire them to defend and consolidate their national independence.

The peoples of China and Mexico have suffered long from imperialist aggression. Now we are faced with the common task of opposing interference by the super-powers, of defending our national in-

dependence and sovereignty and of developing our national economy. Having so much in common in our experience, in art we see eye to eye also. Hence the Chinese people can well appreciate works satirizing the former Mexican dictator Porfirio Diaz, and works depicting the life of Mexican workers, peasants, fishing folk and artisans. We need no explanation to grasp the meaning of works such as *Land and Freedom*, *The Laundry-Woman of Huilulco* or *Clocking In*. The long tradition and militant style of Mexican art are interwoven with the people's feelings and life. The great Mexican people have created a splendid ancient culture; they have also produced a modern art with a distinctive national style and militant spirit.



*The Laundry-Woman of Huilulco*  
(lithograph)

## Pakistan National Dance Ensemble in Peking

We have been very happy to welcome the cultural emissaries sent by our good neighbours, the people of Pakistan. The visit of the Pakistan National Dance Ensemble has given us a better understanding of their traditional folk art and ancient culture, and has conveyed the profound friendship of the Pakistan people for the people of China.

The varied repertoire of the ensemble reflected many different and colourful aspects of the life and struggle of the Pakistan people, impressing us with their proud determination to preserve their national dignity and oppose foreign interference.

The Pakistan artists believe that art should be a mirror reflecting reality. Thus the head of the ensemble Zia Mohyeddin has said: "If art does not reflect the life of the people, it is not true art and has no artistic value." On the basis of this principle they have carried out many experiments and successful innovations in order to express the people's industry, courage and wisdom in their art.

One stirring item, the Khatak Dance which originated in the magnificent Khyber Pass region, has been danced from ancient times by

intrepid tribesmen there. Throughout long years of struggle, this dance symbolized their pride and fortitude, reflecting the militant spirit of the local people in their stubborn resistance to aggression. The young dancers whose vigour, resolution and agility reveal the strength of the people of the Khyber Pass also personify the fearlessness of the whole Pakistan people determined to defend their national sovereignty.

The Sindhi Dance depicting the celebration of a good harvest and the Bhungra Dance describing sowing with their beautiful, lively movements conjure up a picture of the Pakistan countryside, enabling us to enter into the joy of the peasants as they plough, sow and gather in the harvest. The Fishermen's Dance performed after a good catch of fish has a strong flavour of real life and skilful characterization. We see two hard-working young fisherfolk in costumes worn on the Makran Coast cheerfully weaving nets and



The Fishermen's Dance



The Khatak Dance

catching fish. Their honest simplicity as they help each other is humorously presented, while the way they catch fish with their nimble fingers almost makes us see fish leaping and splashing in the water. The whole dance is so lifelike that the audience enters heartily into its spirit, applauding loudly when the young couple go happily home with their nets and baskets filled with their good catch. The Snake Charmers' Dance, which mimics the deft passes made to hypnotize a poisonous snake, in a larger sense depicts the Pakistan people's fighting spirit and their contempt for all that is evil.

The national culture of Pakistan has a history of several thousand years, and this visit to China of Pakistan artists has provided us with a good opportunity to study and learn from their traditional culture. From this performance we can see that their dancing embodies great variety, for they have a wealth of solo dances, dances for two, group

dances and dance dramas, all possessing a distinctive national style and performed with consummate skill.

What impressed us most in the performance was the care taken by the artists to preserve and develop their traditional culture in such a way as to retain its healthy national features. Most of their items were popular folk dances handed down from the distant past. Thus the Kathak Dance represents a classical school of dancing with a history of several thousand years. "Kathak" means a tale, and this originated as a simple dance which developed into something more elaborate and polished. The solo Kathak dance performed in Peking is known for its lively rhythmic patterns and beautiful supple movements of the hands and arms. The highly original performance given by the celebrated dancer Perveen Qassim was deeply moving. Her graceful use of her hands, the spirited cadence of her ankle-



The Snake Charmers' Dance

bells, her swift, light turns, the beauty of her expressive glance and her highly controlled halts and forceful starting movements all went to make up a distinctive style, revealing technical skill of a very high order. Perveen Qassim has done much to give this traditional dance form a new lease of life while preserving the purity of its style, and her art is acclaimed both in Pakistan and abroad.

The dance drama *Heer-Ranjha* based on a Punjab folk-tale is neatly constructed and skilfully produced with simple graceful dancing movements. The characters are well delineated and the accompaniment is apt and striking, combining ancient Punjab folk tunes with new melodies. Both the music and the dancing have distinctive national features and they blend naturally to form one harmonious whole.

The ensemble orchestra uses the *tabla* drum, the *sitar*, the *sarangi*, the *rabab* and other traditional instruments, and has adapted the most typical rhythms and melodies of Pakistan folk music to create a unique musical atmosphere. The virtuosity of the performers, the lilting melodies, the harmony of the music and the clear-cut rhythm all combined together in a most stirring performance. The *tabla* drum in particular, with its varied tempo and tone, played a distinctive part in enhancing the beauty of the dancing. Although there are only fourteen musicians in this orchestra, their musical accompani-



The Kathak Dance



ment was highly effective and entirely appropriate for traditional dances.

In short, the successful performances of the ensemble have given us a fairly comprehensive picture of the special features of traditional Pakistan dancing and folk music, compelling our admiration for the superb artistic talent of the Pakistan people.



## *Chronicle*

### **New Publications of Lu Hsun's Works**

To meet the demands of cadres, workers, peasants and soldiers, new editions of the great writer Lu Hsun's complete works and selected volumes of his writings are being republished by the People's Literature Publishing House, Peking. The twenty-four individual selections include the collections of stories *Call to Arms* and *Wandering*, the prose poems *Wild Grass* and the collections of miscellaneous *Essays of Demi-Concession Studio*, *More Essays of Demi-Concession Studio*, *Last Essays of Demi-Concession Studio* and *Two Hearts*, which have already come off the press in Peking and elsewhere in China. The publication of the complete works and other single volumes will soon be completed.

### **New Upsurge of Mass Literature and Art**

Under the guidance of Chairman Mao's line on literature and art, a new upsurge of mass literature and art in different parts of China has resulted in the appearance of many new works.

In Yulin, a district in the Kwangsi Chuang Autonomous Region, the local authorities pay considerable attention to literature and art, encouraging spare-time writers and artists to attend political classes and to study technique, and enlisting the services of professionals to help the amateurs. Since last year, members of communes, factories, mines and schools in Yulin have produced more than

6,300 new works of literature and art as well as songs, many of which have appeared in magazines or art exhibitions.

Minghsing Brigade of Changsha Commune in Hsunyang County, Shensi Province, has encouraged amateur literary and art activities for about a decade. The writers and artists of this brigade, taking new events and model workers in the countryside as their subjects, have turned out many lively short stories, poems, paintings and sketches.

Tsouping County in the province of Shantung has more than thirty groups of amateur writers who draw their material from real-life happenings and struggles, swiftly reflecting significant new trends and the new spirit of the people of that locality. Their work is very popular with the peasants, who call it "our village literature".

Hsinchi Brigade of Chungho Commune, Wuchang County, is situated in the mountains of Heilungchiang, but it too provides another example of wide-spread amateur literary and art activities.

### New Stage Entertainments

New variety shows have recently been staged in Tientsin, Chengtu, the Paiseh district of Kwangsi and many other parts of China.

In Tientsin in 1973, shows were put on by about three thousand amateur artists working in industry, mining, communications and commerce, as well as in cultural and health organizations. They performed nearly four hundred items in all, including songs, dances, instrumental music, dramas and other stage shows. From different angles these mirrored the revolutionary spirit of the workers engaged in socialist construction, and acclaimed significant new developments since the cultural revolution.

In Chengtu nearly four thousand amateur artists from more than 120 organizations recently staged 360 items, full of vitality and true to life, depicting our worker-peasant-soldier heroes.

Paiseh, Kwangsi, is a region inhabited by national minorities. More than five hundred artists from twelve counties here recently performed more than sixty items including local operas, songs and dances. These expressed the minority peoples' heartfelt love for

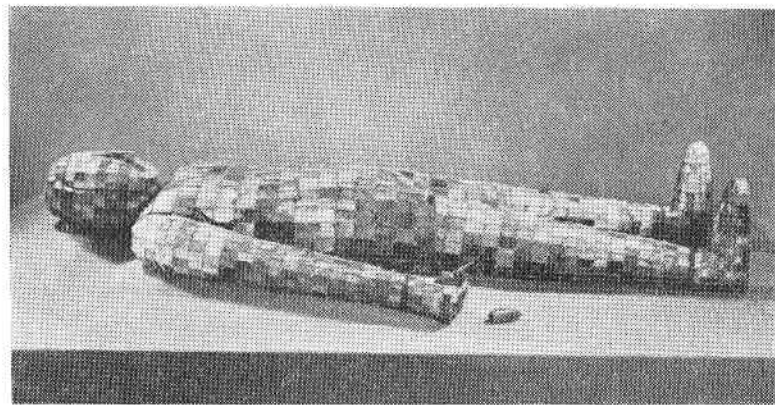
the Chinese Communist Party and Chairman Mao, to whom they owe their happiness today, and reflected the stupendous changes in the minority areas.

### Funerary Coat-of-Jade Found in Hsuchow

A silver-wired coat-of-jade for the dead dating back some 1,800 years was discovered in 1970 in an Eastern Han tomb in Hsuchow, Kiangsu Province.

This type of jade shroud was used by great nobles of the Han Dynasty, the small jade pieces of which it was made being linked by gold, silver or copper wire according to rank. Since Liberation, coats-of-jade linked with gold and copper wire have been discovered, but this is the first silver-wired specimen yet to be found.

When excavated, this relic had disintegrated; it has now been restored. The whole suit is 1.7 metres long, comprising more than 2,600 pieces of jade each with holes in the four corners through which the wire was threaded. The silver used weighs about 800 grammes. This coat-of-jade covered the dead body completely. Most of the jade pieces are rectangular, but a few are square, triangular or irregular in shape. Thus lozenge shapes were used for the eyes, a crescent shape for the jaw, and cylindrical pieces for the fingers. The workmanship is of a very high order.





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**Electricity Comes to the Yao Mountain Village (woodcut) by Huang Li-sheng**



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