

# CHINESE LITERATURE



6

1975

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## STORIES

### The Sunlit Road

This story and *Tempered Steel* also printed in this issue are two chapters from the novel, *Annals of Revolution*.

Liu Mao-ching, the main character, was born in Yu Family Village at the foot of the Yenshan Mountains in north China. He herded sheep for a landlord at an early age. When he was fourteen, the Japanese invaders occupied the area around Yu Family Village and the local people were conscripted to dig trenches for them. Mao-ching was also seized. With intense hatred for the enemy, he and the other conscripts struggled against them. Helped by Ho Lao-chuan, an underground Communist, young Mao-ching later joined the Eighth Route Army and grew up steeled in the flames of the War of Resistance Against Japan.

During the War of Liberation, Mao-ching was wounded in battle. He returned home after Liberation and led the poor and lower-middle peasants of his district along the road of co-operation. After the people's communes came into being, he was active in building up new socialist villages and struggling against various bourgeois tendencies and hidden class enemies. When the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution started in 1966, Mao-ching led the revolutionary masses in resolute struggles against the capitalist roader, Lu Chai, a renegade who had slipped into the Party. Depicting various phases of real struggle taken from the history of China's revolution, the novel portrays the growth and maturity of the hero, Liu Mao-ching.

Published by Foreign Languages Press  
Yu Chou Hung, Peking (37), China  
*Printed in the People's Republic of China*

Published in December 1974 by the People's Publishing House in Peking, this novel was written collectively by worker-peasant-soldier students of the Chinese Department of Peking University. They wrote it in the course of receiving re-education by the poor and lower-middle peasants.

— The Editors

It was 1961 and time for the autumn harvest. Early that morning three big horse-carts stood waiting under the locust tree outside Yu Family Village's brigade office. The waggoners and others with them in the shade were growing impatient and discussing something. From the office itself came the sound of a heated dispute.

Just then Mao-ching came cycling down the slope east of the village, his bedding-roll on the carrier, a bulging bag hanging from the handle-bar. At once the peasants surged forward, calling out eager greetings.

"Too bad I've only one pair of ears and one mouth," Mao-ching chuckled. "How can I talk to you all at the same time?"

When they heard he had been sent back to work in the brigade again, they were even more elated.

Mao-ching had been transferred from this brigade to the commune office in 1959, after which Ho Lao-chuan took over his job of Party secretary and brigade leader. The next year a cadre called Lu Chai from the agricultural bureau in the city had come to this village to carry out the line of basing output quotas on individual households.\* Because Ho was against this, on the pretext of strengthening the local leadership Lu Chai made Yu Pen-tang the brigade leader instead.

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\*In 1958, people's communes were set up in China with collective ownership by the labouring masses of land, draught animals and farm implements. The people's commune has three levels: commune, production brigade and production team. The basic accounting level is the team. All commune members work in a team and the payment for their labour comes from its income. The basing of output quotas on each household makes individual households production units, thereby undermining the system of collective ownership. And this was one of the main points of Liu Shao-chi's revisionist line in agriculture.

Yu was a middle peasant who had joined the Party with Lu as his sponsor towards the end of the land reform, for Lu had headed the land-reform movement here. Then for a time Yu became vice village head, but after mutual-aid teams were formed he lagged behind. Yu supported Lu Chai's attempt to fix output quotas on the basis of individual households; but when this was opposed by the local cadres and masses, Lu beat a retreat back to town and did not return. Then Yu hastily changed his tune too, and started consulting Ho on everything.

The previous year, while Old Ho was ill, Yu had gained control of the Party branch as well as the administration, and people had begun to complain that he paid too much attention to sidelines at the expense of farming, so that this year's wheat harvest did not come up to target. They also objected to the way he had enlarged the village vermicelli mill and put his fifth uncle in charge, for they felt this was encouraging capitalism.

Old Ho had finally recovered from his illness but was still not fit for work; therefore he and the vice brigade leader Chao Ta-hu asked the commune Party committee to let them have Mao-ching back. After studying the problem, the committee decided that Yu was unsuitable for the job and Old Ho's health was too poor; they would send Mao-ching back to be secretary of the village Party branch again and make further investigations into Yu's case. Mao-ching had just returned to the commune after a month working in the mountains. As soon as he received his transfer order, he wound up his work and returned to Yu Family Village.

The sight of the crowd in front of the brigade office puzzled Mao-ching. The time had come to get in the autumn harvest, why weren't they out in the fields? He learned that Yu had arranged to send out carts on a transportation job in a neighbouring district, but Chao Ta-hu was against this; so the two of them were arguing in the office while the men outside waited for their final decision.

Mao-ching asked the other villagers their opinion. They told him that as the maize harvesting had started the previous day it was not right to take badly needed manpower and carts away for a side

occupation. They urged Mao-ching to go in and get Yu to drop this scheme.

Mao-ching walked into the courtyard. He heard an altercation in the office.

"I'm not against sidelines, but farm work must come first," Chao was protesting. "You're so set on making more money that you forget our main job."

"What's wrong with earning more money by working on the side?" retorted Yu. "It's in the interest of our whole brigade."

"A capitalist makes pots of money. Does that mean we should all turn into capitalists?"

"I'm *helping* our farm production with side occupations. How can you compare me with a capitalist?"

"You make it sound fine, don't you? But what 'help' are you giving us? Practically all the brigades around here have started using wheelbarrows instead of toting with a pole. I've urged you time and again to buy tyres for us, so we can use barrows too, but you haven't got a single one yet. You're not giving us the help we need. What are you doing anyway with the money we've made through sidelines?"

Mao-ching was surprised to hear this. For before going into the mountains, a whole month ago, he had heard from Old Chang in charge of the county farm tools shop that Yu Family Village had been notified that the tyres they had ordered had arrived and should be fetched at once. How come the villagers still hadn't got them? Wondering about this, he stepped into the office.

At once the argument stopped. When Mao-ching announced that the commune had sent him back to work in the brigade, Chao beamed. Pumping Mao-ching's hand he cried:

"That's grand, just grand! You've come just at the right time."

Yu was taken aback, but had to make a show of approval. Having greeted them, Mao-ching asked what they had been discussing. When they had explained he inquired:

"Has this transport job been discussed by the Party committee?"

Yu said nothing.

"Of course not!" cried Chao. "He made the decision himself."

Yu mumbled something by way of justification.

"If it's not been discussed," said Mao-ching, "better not send any carts out yet. Let them go to the fields. This is a busy season. We can't keep them waiting outside while we thrash this out."

Chao was jubilant. Before Mao-ching had finished he ran out crying, "Back to work, comrades! The transport job is off."

The waggoners laughed. Cracking their whips they drove their horses away.

Meanwhile Yu was inwardly fuming: They've made me lose face, undermined my authority! He rushed out and yelled:

"Stop! Don't go off. The carts must go out as planned."

These contradictory orders made the villagers set up an angry clamour.

"Steady on, comrades! Let me say a word," cried Mao-ching, mounting a stone block outside the door.

At this the crowd calmed down.

"This argument's gone on all morning, and our two brigade leaders still can't see eye to eye. What do the rest of you think?"

Liu Chi, one of the waggoners, said: "You make the decision, Mao-ching. We're harvesting maize. There's plenty of work in the fields. First I was sent to cart maize, then suddenly shifted to a sideline instead. They can't make up their minds, so we're stuck here. What way is this to work?"

"I've just given the brigade leader my opinion, but he still doesn't agree." Mao-ching smiled. "It's no use my insisting. We'll leave the decision to you all. What do you think is best?"

In the old days Yu had consulted other people when problems cropped up, but for a year and more now he had been acting in an increasingly undemocratic fashion, and the villagers resented this. Mao-ching's return and request for their opinion naturally pleased them all. They started enumerating various examples of Yu's undue emphasis on sidelines, his disregard for farming, his undemocratic way of doing things, and his indifference to other people's welfare. Finally they all agreed that since they were so busy with the autumn harvest they should postpone transport work for the time being.

Mao-ching thoroughly approved their sense of responsibility and their enthusiasm. He turned to Yu, who was squatting like a toad by the stone, red in the face and fuming.

"Do you agree?" he asked him earnestly.

Yu glared, showing the whites of his eyes.

"They can do as they like," he snapped. "What I say doesn't count, I'm not taking charge any more."

"The brigade leader has no objection," shouted Chao. "So let's go to the fields."

Chao and the others piled on to the carts. Whips cracked and the carts rolled off to the maize fields north of the village.

## 2

After the others had left, Yu followed Mao-ching back into the office and plumped down on the bed in surly silence, livid with rage. Mao-ching reminded him to call up the unit which had hired their carts and explain that the job would have to wait till after the harvest. Then he left the office.

Left alone, Yu flopped flat on the bed. He was thoroughly shaken by what had just happened. His mind was in a whirl. Mao-ching's unexpected return, his penetrating gaze, his attitude to him, the thought of the things he himself had done which would not bear investigation... all this made him feel panicky. Pulling himself together he thought: It doesn't matter losing face, I mustn't give up my position. He got up then and made some telephone calls in his usual hearty, confident manner. After that, taking up a straw hat, he went out to find Mao-ching to report on his work.

Guessing that Mao-ching must be helping with the harvest, he went to the maize fields north of the village.

Yu's neglect of farming in favour of side occupations had resulted in a poor wheat harvest earlier that year, to the great disgust of all the villagers. He had been criticized too by the commune committee. So to shirk his responsibility and take an easy way out, he had put vice brigade leader Chao in charge of production. Every day, in

spick and span clothes, Yu would ride off on his bicycle looking for sidelines, or else stay in the brigade office clicking his abacus, helping the accountant. Now, coming north of the village, he was surprised by the fine crops of sorghum and maize with their heavy ears and plump cobs. And just then Mao-ching appeared, carrying a big crate of maize cobs towards a cart drawn up by the roadside. Con-juring up a smile, Yu stepped forward to help him unload the cobs onto the cart.

"I'm straight on this now," he said with a show of contrition. "The others were right. We've no time just now for subsidiary occupations." Surveying the crops, he remarked with an air of complacency, "Well, this year's crops aren't bad. We'll get a good harvest for sure." He spoke as unctuously as if his hard work was responsible for the fine crop. Mao-ching smiled and made no comment.

When the peasants saw Yu, in his new shoes and new coat, stepping down into the maize fields with Mao-ching, they set up a roar of laughter. At first Yu did not know what the joke was. Then he heard two girls giggling and whispering:

"How spruce he looks!"

"He must have lost his way. He's all dressed up to visit his mother-in-law."

Yu's cheeks and neck flushed crimson. He had been meaning to go out with the carts to do more "liaison work". The sudden new development had flustered him, so that he had come to the fields dressed in his best. All he could do now was put a bold face on it. Grabbing a full crate of maize, he swung it on to his back and galloped off towards a cart.

A young fellow standing by the cart was impressed.

"He's really going it!" he exclaimed. "I didn't know he had it in him."

"This is nothing," quipped Liu Chi. "You should have seen him before Liberation, at the head of his hired hands, sweating in the field to make his family rich. Then he really set a fast pace."

Mao-ching who was passing near by overheard this exchange.

Mao-ching called a meeting of the Party committee in the brigade office that evening. It was nearly midnight by the time he went home, and his family were asleep. These days folk had been so busy, he was afraid the youngsters might have forgotten to fetch water for the old people's home. He picked up two buckets and hurried to the well. When he carried the water to the old people's home, all its lights were out and, not wanting to wake the inmates, he groped his way quietly in the dark to the vat. Suddenly the light in the west room went on, and he heard Uncle Chang's voice:

"Who is it? Haven't you worked hard enough in the fields? Why fetch us water at midnight?"

Uncle Li raised the door-curtain and looked out. When he saw Mao-ching, he immediately asked him in. Mao-ching did not like to disturb them, but they got so worked up talking about Yu Pen-tang that he found it hard to leave. Old Chang prompted Old Li:

"Didn't you make up a jingle? Let Mao-ching hear it."

"I'm afraid to," answered Old Li.

"What are you afraid of?" asked Mao-ching.

With a grin Old Li chanted:

I fear neither tiger nor snake,  
Just fear anger may keep me awake.

He continued: "It's just a few home-truths, hardly worth hearing. I'll recite it, though, as a criticism for our brigade leader.

"A tricky customer is Yu Pen-tang,  
So set on sidelines, he sets crops aside;  
His uncle runs our vermicelli mill,  
Yu sells bad wares as good ones far and wide.  
Click goes his abacus — who stands to gain?  
It's time that into his accounts we pried."

Mao-ching nodded approvingly. Old Li told him gravely:

"It was Hao Chung who works at the vermicelli mill who told me these things. When you have time, go and have a talk with him."



The next day all put in a hard morning's work in the fields. When they knocked off at noon, Liu Chi drove his cart heaped with maize back towards the village, and Mao-ching sitting on the shaft chatted with him.

"Yesterday you said that Old Yu worked at the head of some hired hands before Liberation. Is that true?" he asked. "How is it I never heard that?"

"It's true enough. You'd gone off with the army to fight the Japanese, so naturally you wouldn't know."

"I was still in the army when land reform started here. Later I heard there'd been some question at first about classifying Old Yu as a middle peasant. You were in the peasants' association then; you must know all about it."

"It's quite simple," replied Liu. "It was a question of to what extent his family exploited other people's labour. If we reckoned that orphan Iron Ball who worked for them as a hired hand, his family were rich peasants; if the boy was his father's adopted son, then they were middle peasants. The villagers said the boy was a hired hand, but the Yus swore he was an adopted son, a nephew whom they'd taken in. That's what the argument was about."

"And what was he really?" asked Mao-ching. "Hired hand or adopted son?"

"Well, that's hard to say. The fact is, Iron Ball *worked* as a hired hand and was paid wages every year by the Yus. Just think, would you pay your son wages? Besides, with Yu Pen-tang alive and kicking, why should his father adopt another son?"

"That sounds logical," agreed Mao-ching with a smile.

"You may think so, but not everybody thought so."

"Who didn't?"

"Lu Chai. He said that according to Party policy Iron Ball should be counted as an adopted son. Lu Chai was the head of the work team; naturally he understood policy better than us. That's why I said: Hard to say. Besides, Iron Ball had been press-ganged by the Kuomintang, and as he had no family we couldn't check up on the case. So that's how it was settled."

Mao-ching said no more but made a mental note of this. By now their cart had come to the mill. Taking his leave of Liu Chi, he leapt down and strode off towards the mill.

#### 4

Formerly this vermicelli mill had worked merely in slack seasons and at times when beans and sweet potatoes were in plentiful supply. Hao Chung was the only man with a fixed job there; others were sent to help him out and fetch water as need arose. So the mill did not interfere with work in the fields, but helped to accumulate capital for the brigade beside supplying the villagers with vermicelli.

At the end of the previous year, in spite of opposition from other cadres and brigade members, Yu had pushed through his scheme to

enlarge the mill. Hao Chung was kept on as chief operator but given three full-time assistants, and Yu's fifth uncle was made general manager. It was then announced that the mill would work all the year round and increase its output. Most of the products would be sold to the supply and marketing department, some to the brigade members, and the residue would be peddled by Fifth Uncle to other districts. This was called "delivering goods from door to door", whereas in fact it was blatant black-marketeering.

This fifth uncle of Yu's had worked in Peking and Tientsin before Liberation and knew the ways of the world. He had worked as a waggoner and pedlar, made beancurd and vermicelli, and he could at a pinch use the abacus and keep accounts. What he excelled at, however, was boasting, flattery and profiteering. A bachelor, he had returned to the village soon after Liberation and stayed in Yu's family. Since then, while working with the peasants, although he kept revealing minor failings, he had never been caught out in any serious offence. After becoming manager of the mill, he had made Hao Chung move out and moved in himself on the pretext that he could keep an eye on things better. With Yu to back him and egg him on, staying alone in the mill he grew bolder and bolder in his speculations. Hao Chung smelt a rat and caught him out more than once, but in their disputes Fifth Uncle had the upper hand. Raging inwardly, Hao could only let off steam by confiding in a few old cronies.

Now Hao Chung was busily urging on the donkey which turned the millstone. As he did so he kept cursing under his breath — Whether at the beast or at Fifth Uncle, who could say? In the room opposite, Fifth Uncle was making up bundles of vermicelli by the *kang* while Yu, seated beside him, went through the account-book with a frown on his face. Deftly Fifth Uncle pulled out from a basket some white gleaming vermicelli which he spread on the table. Then, from another basket, he scooped up a handful of broken bits, wrapped these up inside the good vermicelli and swiftly fastened the lot into a neat bundle which he tossed aside. He glanced at Yu, as if expecting praise for his skill. When Yu remained silent, he muttered:

"It's the dress that makes the man. Look, I've dressed up all these scraps as good vermicelli. This way, we can sell them easily at a



profit. I'm not claiming I've any great ability, but when it comes to making money I know a few tricks."

As he was boasting, he heard a sudden thump. He looked up in surprise and saw that Yu had slammed down the account-book.

"Stop bragging," Yu growled. "We've got to cover our tracks."

"What is there to cover up?" retorted Fifth Uncle. "The accounts don't show any sales at black-market prices or adulteration. As for our appropriation of cash, it's all accounted for. The books don't show it."

"Let me ask you: How did you account for the four hundred catties of beans we took to sell outside?"

"I did as you suggested: put it down as natural wastage." Fifth Uncle leafed through the pages and pointed out an entry. "Look, in the first ten days of this month, we used eight hundred and fifty catties of beans to make vermicelli, but we put it down here as nine hundred and fifty; that accounts for an extra hundred. In this way, by the middle of next month, I guarantee all four hundred catties will be accounted for."

"Don't be so cocksure. If we don't fix this right away, we won't have a chance to cook the accounts next month — we'll already have cooked our own goose."

Fifth Uncle was staggered.

"Is Mao-ching going to check the accounts?" he asked.

"How do I know? But judging by his sudden return to our village, we must be prepared for the worst." Yu threw the account-book at Fifth Uncle and ordered, "You must make out another account tonight. Sit up till dawn if need be. And mind you leave nothing unaccounted for."

Fifth Uncle stared at him blankly. How could he do the job in just one night? He was about to protest when Mao-ching came in. In dismay he thrust the account-book under the mat on the *kang*, and turned back feverishly to make up more bundles. It was too late for Yu to slip out. Acting as casually as he could, he lent his uncle a hand, at the same time telling Mao-ching:

"At the Party meeting last night you all raised so many criticisms of me, I don't mind telling you I couldn't sleep afterwards! But then

I realized that you were right. If you hadn't come back in time to give me this warning, I might even have strayed on to the capitalist road. Just take this mill for example. I've sweated out my guts to make a go of it, wanting to accumulate more capital to expand our production. I thought this was helping agriculture through sidelines. It never occurred to me that it involved the problem of which road to take. I was just discussing with Fifth Uncle here how to clear up this mess. You've come at the right time. Tell me, what's the best thing to do?"

"As long as you understand your mistake, that's what matters," replied Mao-ching. "I think the main thing for you now is to take a serious attitude and think over carefully all you've done during the last couple of years. Agriculture must come first, but we can have all sorts of sidelines too, including this vermicelli mill. It depends how we handle them. Why be in such a hurry to close the mill?"

Yu sensed the significance of this and started to panic.

"I'm not in a hurry, not at all," he protested.

Fifth Uncle made an attempt to change the subject. Showing Mao-ching a bundle of vermicelli, he said with an ingratiating smile:

"Party secretary, just see how white and fine this vermicelli is."

Mao-ching took the bundle and untied it, then shook it. The strands of vermicelli spread out like bright silver threads. They were undoubtedly top quality.

"Yes, this is good," he said.

Fifth Uncle beamed, and Yu felt rather relieved. But just then in charged Hao Chung. Without greeting them, he snatched up a handful of vermicelli scraps from the other basket and held them out to Mao-ching.

"These are even better, eh?"

Putting on a show of annoyance Yu rounded on Fifth Uncle.

"I told you to sell those scraps off cheap," he fumed. "Why are you still keeping them here?"

Fifth Uncle snorted.

"These broken left-overs are dirty and gritty. How can we sell them? People wouldn't take them even if we paid them. I suggest-

ed sending the stuff to mix with the fodder, but you stressed the need to save money for the brigade.”

Mao-ching knew the two of them were simply play-acting. But concealing both his amusement and indignation, he watched to see how they would try to clear themselves.

Hao Chung had originally meant to come out with the truth. When he saw the act the other two put on, he decided to let Mao-ching watch the whole show himself and suppressed the angry retort on the tip of his tongue. But when Fifth Uncle praised Yu for economizing, that was too much for Hao. He grabbed a bundle of vermicelli from the *kang* and smashed it so hard on the table that it burst open, scattering broken bits all over the ground.

“Stop fooling!” he roared. “Look! What’s this?”

This took the wind out of Fifth Uncle’s sails. He gaped with dismay. Then pulling himself together he lurched to his feet and, trembling all over, pleaded with Mao-ching:

“Forgive me this time, Party secretary! I’ll never play such tricks again.”

Mao-ching ignored him but looked round with flashing eyes. Spotting a bulge in the mat where Fifth Uncle had been sitting, he stepped forward to see what it was. At once Yu started cursing his uncle:

“So you’ve been pulling the wool over my eyes! You offered to go as a pedlar to neighbouring villages, delivering our goods to the peasants’ doors. I thought that was a way to serve the people by saving folk trouble, so I agreed to it. I never dreamed you’d play such dirty tricks.” He let out a roar: “You’ve committed a crime. Come clean!”

Yu had worked himself into a passion. Fifth Uncle cringed as he listened, and kept nodding his head and agreeing, “I’ll come clean. . . . Yes, I did wrong.”

Mao-ching could see that Yu was calling the tune for Fifth Uncle and at the same time trying to clear himself.

“Old Yu, are you sure this is the only trick he’s played?” he asked significantly. Yu did not know how to reply.

Fifth Uncle, listening intently, was working out his next move when Mao-ching strode over and reached out to raise the mat. Remember-

ing the account-book hidden there, Fifth Uncle frantically plumped down on the spot. This confirmed Mao-ching’s suspicions.

“Get up!” he bellowed.

Shivering, Fifth Uncle obeyed. Hao Chung lunged forward then and pulled out an account-book with a hard black cover. Levelling it at Fifth Uncle’s nose he demanded:

“What’s this?”

“The account-book.”

“Then why try to hide it?”

“These last few days I’ve been too busy to work out the accounts. I was afraid I might have forgotten something, and if you spotted it that might cause some misunderstanding.” Now that the secret was out Fifth Uncle grew calmer. He stopped stuttering with fright and spoke more clearly.

“Don’t imagine we set great store by this account-book. Even if you destroyed it we’d still get everything straight all right.” As Mao-ching said this he took the account-book and leafed through it.

Yu was utterly unprepared for this fiasco. To cover up his consternation, he snatched the account-book from Mao-ching and roared at Fifth Uncle:

“I thought you were just up to some small tricks. Now it seems you’ve been cooking the accounts as well. I can’t abide scoundrels who embezzle public funds. Now I’ve caught you! What if you are my uncle? Even if you were my mother or ancestor, I’d sever all relations with you and get to the bottom of this!”

Yu’s snatching away the account-book worried Hao Chung. He called out to Mao-ching, but the latter gave him a reassuring smile. Then turning to Yu, Mao-ching asked mildly:

“Are you thinking of checking the accounts?”

“Of course!” To sound Mao-ching out he added: “I must be off now. Shall I take this account-book with me? I guarantee to check it thoroughly.”

“All right, if you want to,” was the casual reply.

This dismayed Hao Chung but elated Yu and his uncle. As Yu turned to go, Mao-ching stopped him with a laugh.

“Wait a bit! You’ve been brigade leader all these years and you’re

experienced in accounting. How come you've forgotten to make a proper transfer?"

Though Yu was discomfited he had to turn back.

"I'm glad you reminded me," he said sheepishly. "Otherwise, once out of the door, I'd be responsible. Even if I found several hundreds of dollars short, he could deny the whole thing and I'd have to make good the deficit out of my pocket."

He walked back to the table and barked at Fifth Uncle, "Have you lost your wits? Out with your seal and make a formal transfer. I must hurry back for my meal."

Mao-ching said to Hao Chung, "You can represent all our poor and lower-middle peasants and other brigade members to supervise this transfer of accounts."

At that Hao Chung came over beaming and sat down by Mao-ching to watch Yu and Fifth Uncle.

Once the transfer was completed, Mao-ching slowly picked up a sheet of newspaper and wrapped up the account-book, then sealed it firmly with paste. This done, he took up a brush and wrote along the line where it was sealed: Sealed on 22 September 1961. Having carefully signed his name, he passed the brush to Hao and asked him to sign it too. Hao was embarrassed.

"My writing's no good," he protested.

"Our hands are used to handling heavy farm tools, so our writing has weight," replied Mao-ching. "What could be better?"

After Hao had signed, Mao-ching took the parcel and handed it to Yu.

"Take this and keep it safely. After the harvest, we'll call a Party committee meeting and discuss how best to check the accounts. I suggest we organize a team to do it, with you in charge."

Yu took the parcel so firmly sealed and signed. Inwardly he was cursing: "Dammit!"

## 5

As Yu left the vermicelli mill with the account-book, he swore at himself, "Mao-ching is no superman; how could I be fool enough to

let him get the better of me?" Feeling as if Mao-ching's flashing eyes were still following him, he stumbled and nearly fell into an abandoned well by the side of the road. The fright served to calm him. He suddenly remembered another thing which he must cover up at once. As he was racking his brains over this, he reached home. The moment he entered the door he told his wife:

"Go and fetch Wang Hua here, quick. Tell him I've some urgent business to talk over with him."

Ever since the former Party secretary Ho fell ill, Yu had gone all out to feather his own nest; but when his plan to enlarge the mill was opposed by Chao Ta-hu and the villagers, he realized he must find an able lieutenant. Fifth Uncle was not good enough. His choice fell on Wang Hua, a young peasant who was distantly related to his family. This boy's parents had died early, leaving him to fend for himself. He had received a primary school education and was quite intelligent and amenable, but young and inexperienced. It seemed to Yu he could be groomed to make an ideal assistant. So on the pretext that they were relatives, he often invited the boy to his house and showed friendly concern for him. The previous winter when the brigade's girl accountant Shu-fang married someone outside the village, Yu had Wang Hua appointed in her place. Professing to want to help the lad learn his job, Yu exempted him from farm work and made him stay in the office to learn accounting, unreservedly passing on to him all his own knowledge. He also treated the young man to food and drink, offered him money to spend, lent him decadent books which Yu kept hidden under the mat on his bed, and told his scrawny wife to find him a bride. . . . In this way he got Wang Hua completely under his thumb.

By the middle of the previous month Yu had decided that Wang Hua was now ready to join in his enterprise. And just then a notification came from the county farm tools shop to the effect that the sixty tyres ordered by their brigade had arrived and someone should go to collect them. Since all the brigades in the communes around there needed more tyres in order to fit up wheelbarrows, Yu resolved to sell this lot at a high price to some village at a distance, and make his own

brigade wait for the next consignment. In this way he could make quite a bit of money for his private use. He told Wang Hua to write a letter of introduction.

A few days later Wang Hua went to borrow a book. Yu took from under the mat a copy of the *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* and handed it to the lad.

"That's a real classic," said the boy. "I've read it."

"It's worth going through carefully," replied Yu with a grin.

Wang Hua leafed through the pages and discovered a small paper packet.

"What's this?" he asked.

"You'll find out when you take it back," said Yu cryptically. "But you mustn't let anyone know."

The boy went home puzzled and hastily opened the packet. In it was a brand-new bank-book with his name on it. The sum deposited was one hundred yuan. In alarm he rushed back to return the bank-book to Yu.

"I guessed you would refuse it," said Yu coldly. He took a slip of paper from his pocket and handed it to the boy. "If you want to return it, return this at the same time. Then you'll be in the clear."

Wang Hua saw listed on the paper the amounts Yu had spent on him for meals, drinks, film tickets and other sundries as well as spending money he had lent him. The total came to fifty-three yuan thirty-six fen. Caught in a dilemma, he accepted the one hundred yuan, a small fraction only of what Yu had embezzled from the sale of those sixty tyres.

Yu flattered himself that he had been most astute. He was pondering on how to get Wang Hua to cook up the brigade accounts on sidelines when Mao-ching was suddenly transferred back to the village. Like a bolt from the blue this shattered his fine dream.

After his two encounters with Mao-ching the previous day, Yu knew him to be a hard opponent to cope with. At noon he had gone to the mill to find Fifth Uncle in the hope of working out some counter-measures, but Mao-ching had got the better of him again. As he carried the sealed-up account-book home he realized that, apart from the trouble at the mill, Mao-ching could easily find out about those

sixty tyres — and this would be even more serious. That was why he sent his wife to fetch Wang Hua.

When Wang Hua arrived and heard what danger they were in, he took fright.

"You trapped me into this," he complained. "You assured me nothing could go wrong, but now you're scared stiff yourself."

"The situation has changed now. How was I to know Mao-ching would come back so suddenly? I tell you, he's sharp. Once he notices that we are still toting with poles instead of using barrows, he's bound to wonder; and once he makes inquiries we'll be sunk. Still, there's a way out of this. No need to panic." He whispered some instructions to the lad.

When Wang Hua heard that Yu's idea was to give him one hundred and fifty yuan with which to bribe Mao-ching, his heart sank.

"You're crazy! Frightened out of your wits!" he protested. "Mao-ching isn't the type you can bribe."

"All men are out for money, all men are human. Didn't his wife break her arm while hulling rice? He's in a tight spot. If you go and show friendly concern and offer to lend him a hundred or so to help out, why should he refuse? He often lends money himself to other people. Don't let him overawe you — he's only human!" In a wheedling tone he added, "As long as you play your cards well and get him to take the money, I'll take care of everything else. I know how to stop him talking. How about it? If by luck no one finds out, well and good. If we're caught, then neither of us can wriggle out. It was you who wrote that letter, you who put on the chop. So you'd be the first to be nabbed."

Wang Hua could think of no other way out. Reluctantly, he agreed to do as Yu asked.

## 6

From the mill Mao-ching went to see vice brigade leader Chao. Together they called on Old Ho. As soon as they had sat down he explained what had happened regarding the mill, then added that last month Old Chang of the county farm tools shop had told him

that the tyres they had ordered had arrived. Why hadn't they bought them? There must be some reason. Chao and Ho were surprised to hear this.

After discussion, the three of them decided that Mao-ching must go to town at once to find out about the tyres, then report to the commune and ask for instructions. In addition, to prevent bad characters from committing sabotage or making trouble, they must get the militia to guard the harvest and the threshing-floor. Chao would be responsible for this. They would discuss further measures after Mao-ching's return, according to the result of his investigation and their instructions from the commune Party committee.

So Mao-ching cycled as fast as he could to the farm tools shop in town. There he learned from the manager, Old Chang, that the brigade had sent a cart and taken delivery of the sixty tyres the previous month. Then Old Chang handed Mao-ching the letter of introduction from Yu Family Village. It was a sheet of ordinary stationery, on which was written:

To the Farm Tools Shop,

Please give the bearer sixty rubber tyres for wheel-barrows, and accept payment from him.

Yu Family Village Brigade

20 August 1961

This was in the handwriting of Wang Hua, the brigade accountant, and affixed to it was the official seal of the brigade. Mao-ching beamed.

"With this letter we can track down the culprit," he said.

He pocketed the letter with Chang's permission, and went on to the security bureau to report this. After that, he cycled swiftly to commune headquarters.

That afternoon, when Mao-ching went home for his bicycle and told his wife Shu-ying that he was going to town, she had hurried inside to fetch him something to eat. But he rode off without waiting, for he often went without sleep or food when attending to public business. As he had been away from home for more than a month,

Shu-ying decided to give him a treat that evening — noodles with savoury bean sauce, his favourite dish. When the sun started setting, she began mixing the dough. Her right arm was still in plaster, the wrist swollen and painful; so it was a difficult job. Still, determined that Mao-ching should have a good meal, she kneaded the dough with her left hand and when it was ready covered it with a damp cloth.

It was dusk by the time she heard his bicycle bell. The next minute Mao-ching wheeled his bicycle into the yard and told her not to wait for him for supper. Then he turned to go out again. Since he had missed his lunch his wife was worried. She barred the way.

"You must eat before you go!"

"All right, I'll find something."

Shu-ying pointed at the table.

"I've mixed the dough; you must slice the noodles yourself. I haven't eaten noodles since I broke my arm. Won't you make me some?"

Mao-ching glanced at her swollen wrist and was touched, well aware that she had taken all this trouble for him. Without a word he set about rolling the paste while Shu-ying fetched firewood and boiled a pan of water.

Shu-ying had broken her arm while hulling rice. All the villagers were worried, and Old Ho and Chao had made Liu Chi take her by cart to the county hospital. They wanted to telephone to Mao-ching to come back from the commune headquarters, but his wife would not hear of interrupting his work. On Mao-ching's return the previous day he had been shocked to see her arm in plaster, but grateful for his comrades' consideration. The last few days her arm had been hurting badly, the pain keeping her awake at night; he had therefore decided to take her to see a doctor, but with so much happening today it had slipped his mind. Now he promised:

"In a couple of days, when things are less hectic, I'll take you to a big hospital in Peking."

"That would be fine." Shu-ying smiled. "But you'd have to be prepared to spend a hundred yuan or more."

Before Mao-ching could answer they heard a voice outside:

"What do you need so much money for?"

The door-curtain was lifted and in came a rather thin youngster, whom Mao-ching saw was none other than Wang Hua.

I was just going to find you, he thought, but here you are. So much the better.

Shu-ying, who was stoking the fire, smiled at Wang Hua.

“So it’s you. What sharp ears you have!”

Mao-ching chuckled but said nothing. Then Shu-ying told Wang Hua her husband’s idea of taking her to a hospital in Peking. “I told him he’d have to find a hundred yuan or more for the hospital. Otherwise I wouldn’t need so much money. We’re not like you, worrying all the time about your wedding expenses.”

Wang Hua laughed. “When your arm’s better, you’ll feel so fine it’ll be like a second honeymoon.” Then he went on with a show of concern, “Your arm should have been better before this, sister-in-law. You really must go and have it seen to. The longer the delay, the harder to heal.” He darted a glance at Mao-ching but the latter, still busy with the noodles, made no response. “The brigade leader was just saying: now that Brother Mao-ching’s back you really ought to go to Peking to get better treatment. If you need any money, just tell me. I can advance it.”

Now the water started to boil. Shu-ying lifted the lid of the pan and Mao-ching quickly put in the noodles. He was thinking: It’s not like Yu to show such concern.

“The other day,” said Shu-ying, “Uncle Ho and Chao came to see me on behalf of the Party branch and the brigade, and they said just the same thing. I’m very grateful, but we can’t borrow money from the public fund; we’ll find some way out ourselves. Please don’t worry about us.”

Wang Hua listened with his mind elsewhere. One hand clutching the money in his pocket he thought: Here’s my chance. But stealing another glance at Mao-ching he wondered: Why doesn’t he speak? There’s no knowing what he’s thinking. If I produce the money now I may give the show away. Then he seemed to hear Yu screeching: “Don’t be such a coward. If he takes it, well and good. If he won’t, never mind. What’s there to be afraid of?” He summoned up courage and produced from his pocket a sweaty wad of bank-notes. With a sheepish smile he put these on the range.

“Sister-in-law, take this to be going on with.”

He saw with dismay that Mao-ching was staring at him, poker-faced. Her eyes on the big wad of bank-notes, Shu-ying asked earnestly: “Did the brigade committee tell you to bring this?”

“No.”

“Where’s it from then?”

“Don’t worry, sister-in-law.” Wang Hua forced a smile. “I didn’t pick it up in the street or steal it. . . .” He was trying to ease the tension by joking, but the word “steal” frightened him and he broke off. After a pause he stammered, “It’s like this. That cousin of mine who teaches in the mountains sent me a hundred and fifty yuan the other day to buy something for him. . . .”

Mao-ching had been looking on calmly. Seeing that Wang Hua was still not telling the truth, he now cut him short.

“To buy tyres for wheelbarrows, was that it?”

Wang Hua’s jaw dropped.

“No . . . not tyres. A b — bicycle. . . .” Pulling himself together he went on more calmly, “I can’t get one at the moment, so I’m keeping the money for the time being. Thinking you might be short, I brought it along.” With that he offered the notes to Mao-ching saying, “Please accept this loan, Brother Mao-ching. You can pay me back any time. My cousin doesn’t need it.”

Mao-ching did not take the money, just eyed him sternly. His heart beating fast, Wang Hua drew back his outstretched hand.

“I know you, brother,” he mumbled. “You help others in trouble, but don’t let others help you. That’s what my mother told me. She said our family owed a lot to your help. You weren’t married then, and she wanted to make you some shoes, but you wouldn’t let her take the size of your foot. Now I honestly want to help sister-in-law out, but you won’t let me. I suppose I can’t force you.” He sighed and turned to leave.

“Come back, Wang Hua!”

When he heard this call, Wang Hua turned back from the threshold. He was pleased to see that Mao-ching, sitting at the table rolling a cigarette, looked deeply moved.

“Brother Mao-ching!” he exclaimed.

Since Mao-ching still said nothing, Wang Hua sat down beside him, waiting for him to speak.

Shu-ying laid the small table on the *kang* and prepared the children for supper, then fetched in a big bowl of noodles for her husband. When she saw him smoking his cigarette lost in thought and Wang Hua sitting silently by him, she laughed.

"Hey, what's come over you two, sitting there daydreaming? I'll get you a bowl of noodles too, Wang Hua. You have supper here with Brother Mao-ching before going back to your work."

Wang Hua hastily stopped her, saying, "I've had my supper. Don't get me anything."

Mao-ching now said, "I wasn't daydreaming. I was thinking of Uncle Wang and Auntie Wang."

"What made you think of them just now?" asked his wife. "Is it because Wang Hua's looking more and more like his father every day?"

Mao-ching took his bowl of noodles and set it on the table. Instead of eating he said to himself with a sigh, "Looks are only skin-deep. Is he really like his father?"

Wang Hua was startled and puzzled by this remark.

"Yes, your dad did a lot for me," continued Mao-ching. "Every time I think of him, my heart brims with gratitude." Then he told them the following story.

The winter that Mao-ching was seven, his mother and sister were ill in bed and there was no food in the house; so he went to the outskirts of the town to beg for some rice gruel from the temple there. There had been a heavy fall of snow: fields, roads, houses were muffled in white. And on his way back the snow fell even faster, the north wind was howling as, floundering through the drifts, the boy reached Landlord Ting's gate at the end of the village. There a savage black dog sprang out at him without warning. The snow lay so thick he could find neither stone nor brick to ward it off. In desperation, he swung his broken basket. The pot of rice gruel smashed against the dog's head, and yelping it slunk off. Enraged by the loss of his gruel, he gave chase. But the landlord's three sons rushed out and started to curse him.

"How dare you beat our dog!" yelled the eldest. "If you don't stop at once we'll break your legs!"

"Why blame our dog, when you smashed your pot yourself?" fumed the second son.

The third son was even more vicious. Showing Mao-ching a steamed bun he jeered:

"Our dog eats better things than your stinking gruel. If you'll crawl on the ground and bark three times like a dog, I'll give you this as a reward."

Mao-ching lunged forward and gave him a whack on the face which sent the little bully staggering and made him set up a howl. His elder brothers were furious. And as they screamed abuse at Mao-ching, out came one of the landlord's thugs and sicked the black dog on Mao-ching again. With clenched teeth he stood his ground, braced for the attack. But just then a man rushed forward, shoved back the thug and kicked the dog into the ditch.

"I saw what happened," he shouted. "The boy was just walking past; why set your dog on him? We may be poor but we have guts. Why assault him for no reason? He did right, slapping your brat on the face. Don't think because we're poor you can bully us. If you touch the boy again, I'll smash your teeth in."

Mao-ching related this story with increasing gusto. His wife and children listened raptly. Even Wang Hua forgot his predicament sufficiently to ask:

"Who was that man?"

"Your dad, dead so many years now."

Wang Hua was deeply moved. He thought back ten years to when his father lay dying. Before Liberation his father had been fleeced and oppressed by landlords and Japanese agents, but instead of knuckling under he always fought back till the vicious beatings they gave him ruined his health. After Liberation the Party and the people's government were very good to him, and Mao-ching and the other peasants tried in every way to cure his illness. On his death-bed he had told them:

"Now that I've lived to see this day, this fine society led by Chairman Mao, and have had two happy years with all of you looking after

me so well, I shall die content. But Hua is still a child, too small to remember our sufferings in the past. He may forget his origins when he grows up. Please look after him and educate him for me. I'm not expecting great things of him, I just want him to grow up a good son of us poor peasants, to do as Chairman Mao says and follow the Communist Party all his life. . . ."

Thinking back to his father's last words, Wang Hua's heart pounded.

"Wang Hua," said Mao-ching, "I've been thinking not only of how your dad came to my rescue, but what he said to me then."

"What did he say?" asked Shu-ying.

"He told me I'd done right, that I had guts. We may be poor, he said, but we must keep our self-respect."

Mao-ching as he said this was watching Wang Hua's expression. The lad sat there looking thoroughly worked up, yet not a word did he say. Mao-ching felt both exasperated and sorry for him. It seemed the boy was so stubborn he would need stronger medicine. So he took from his pocket that letter of introduction and laid it on the table. Wang Hua turned pale, trembling from head to foot.

"Brother Mao-ching, save me!" he blurted out. "I've done very wrong. Let down my dad and all the rest of you." With that he burst into tears.

After a storm of weeping Wang Hua calmed down and summoned up the courage to pour out the whole story: how Yu had "groomed" him, told him to write the letter, played tricks to get him under his thumb, and ordered him now to come and see Shu-ying. . . .

"I've told you the main things," he said finally. "I shall fill in the details as I remember them. I swear this is the truth. You can check up on it."

Mao-ching having quietly heard him out thought the matter over, then asked:

"Dare you say this to Yu's face?"

The lad looked apprehensive and said nothing.

"I'm giving you this chance," continued Mao-ching. "You must make a clean break with your serious mistakes, make a clean break with those bad characters and their crimes, and raise your political consciousness through struggle. Only then will the masses forgive

you. In other words, I'm giving you a way out. Well, have you the nerve to challenge Yu face to face?"

Wang Hua's eyes gleamed.

"Yes, I have!"

Just then vice brigade leader Chao rushed suddenly in.

"So you're home!" he panted. "Good. There's trouble at the mill. Come quick."

## 7

The moon was high in the sky. Yu, his long shadow trailing behind him, tiptoed stealthily down the small alley towards the mill. He kept looking back and peering round furtively, feeling flustered and at a loss. The mill's gate was open, the place seemed wrapped in dead silence. He thought: Mao-ching has gone home, and Wang Hua has been there a long time. Has Fifth Uncle carried out the instructions I gave him?

Then he heard Hao Chung's voice booming inside the mill.

"When that sack of beans was lost just now, you were the only one here. Who else could have taken it? Come on, out with it."

Fifth Uncle bleated, "You're a thief crying 'Stop thief!'"

This argument pleased Yu, who told himself: "Good, this time we've got them." With a cough he strode casually in.

In the inner room he saw Fifth Uncle, a cigarette dangling from his lips, sitting cross-legged on the edge of the *kang* and cursing:

"How dare you search my things, Hao Chung! Go on! If you can't find anything, I'll pay you back in your own coin by ransacking *your* house. Then we'll see who stole those beans."

Hao Chung went on searching the place.

"You're going too far, calling me a thief," he retorted. "I've no time to waste arguing with you. This mill is public property, I'm not searching anyone's home."

"I'm all on my own," Fifth Uncle vociferated. "I've no family, nowhere to stay, no home of my own. If this isn't my home, what is?"



Hao Chung just went on with his search, ignoring him. Yu saw that, although indignant, Hao Chung still had a grip on his temper. He thought: Better get him really worked up; then in order to prove his innocence he'll urge us to search his house. That'll do the trick. So he asked:

"What's all this commotion here? Stop shouting, both of you, and tell me what's happened. Then I'll see what we should do."

Emboldened by Yu's arrival, Fifth Uncle put on an injured look and whined:

"I've done wrong, so nobody trusts me. But now that you're here you must track down the real thief. I admit I've been dishonest — I can't deny it. But I'm not going to accept the blame for things I haven't done, not when people do worse things like outright robbery and try to pin it on me."

"Let's fight open battles, not shoot in the dark," was Hao Chung's angry retort. "Whoever stole the beans knows he's a thief. What rubbish to talk about outright robbery." He glared at them both and shouted, "Come on! Let's find Mao-ching, find all the poor and lower-middle peasants. They see things clearly. Let them decide who's guilty and who's innocent."

Drawn by the din, Old Ho, Chao and others ran over.

"You've come just in time," cried Hao Chung. "You must judge between us." Suppressing his anger, he told them that he had discovered a sack of beans was missing but Fifth Uncle had tried to stop him searching for it.

"Keep cool!" said Old Ho. "We'll get at the truth, don't worry." He asked Fifth Uncle for his version of the story, and urged Chao in a whisper to fetch Mao-ching. After Chao had left Ho turned to Yu.

"What do you think we should do now, Old Yu?" he asked.

"I don't know. Since the sack disappeared from here, it does look as if Fifth Uncle should be the main suspect. Still, we'll have to investigate and analyse the problem. We mustn't be subjective."

"I'm in no position to defend myself," said Fifth Uncle to Old Ho. "But I have some doubts in my mind. Shall I raise them or not?"

"Go ahead. Let's hear them."

Still wearing an injured look, Fifth Uncle stammered to Hao Chung, "I've blotted my book, so I haven't much right to speak. But I want just to ask you this. Are you certain that sack of beans disappeared during the time when you went home for lunch?"

"Before knocking off for lunch I put some beans in to soak, so I counted the sacks then. There were five. But after I came back there were only four. I'm positive about that."

"How long were you away?"

"Need you ask? Weren't you here all the time? When I left, you were munching a maize dumpling. When I came back, you'd just put down your chopsticks and started smoking."

Fifth Uncle heaved a sigh of relief.

"Merciful Buddha! You've said it. I never left the place and that's the truth. And I paid no attention to when you went, what you took, or when you came back. How could I have stolen those beans?"

"Don't beat about the bush like that!" cried Hao Chung. "You may as well accuse me outright of taking that sack of beans. We were the only two here. No one else could have stolen them. It has to be one of us. Well, I've searched your things. Now you go with Old Ho and the rest to search my house. How's that?"

Yu had been waiting for Hao to make this suggestion. But instead of taking it up he said in a discouraged voice to Ho:

"I don't think there's any need to search Hao's things. Whoever stole these beans must have hidden them well. It's useless to make a search." Then he turned to Hao Chung and Fifth Uncle. "Calm down, both of you, while I explain Party policy to you. Anyone who comes clean gets treated with leniency; anyone who holds back the truth gets treated harshly. So whoever did this should own up — that's his only way out."

Before he had finished, they heard Chao's loud voice at the door.

"That's right. Anyone who comes clean gets off lightly. Anyone who covers up a crime gets punished severely — he'll come to a bad end!"

They all turned as Mao-ching and Chao came in, accompanied by several militiamen.

All this time Ho had said very little, waiting for Mao-ching's arrival to unravel this knotty problem. Now that Mao-ching was here he stepped forward to consult him; but Yu got in first, leading Mao-ching into the inner room. Ho followed them to the door, where Chao pulled him aside to tell him in a whisper about Wang Hua's confession, also that Mao-ching suspected Yu and his uncle to be behind the loss of the beans at the mill, but because Yu's word as brigade leader still carried weight they must remain vigilant and work together to foil any attempt of his to confuse the issue.

Then Ho and Chao went into the inner room, where Yu had already given his version of the whole incident to Mao-ching. Having questioned Fifth Uncle and Hao Chung separately, Mao-ching returned to ask the cadres:

"Well, what do you think we should do?"

As Yu remained silent, Ho challenged him outright.

"Just now when Hao invited us to search his place, you said there was no need. Have you some better plan to get at the truth?"

"I said that on the spur of the moment," Yu answered calmly. "If the rest of you think we should search, that's all right with me."

Mao-ching eyed him thoughtfully. His impression was that Yu had raised this objection to deflect suspicion from himself. However, it was also possible that instead of planting the stolen sack in Hao's cottage they had spirited it away to cast suspicion on Hao, in order to hold up the examination of the mill's accounts and stores. . . . Still, there could be no harm in making a search.

"Since both Fifth Uncle and Old Hao say no one else can have taken the beans, let's first search their things," he proposed.

Thereupon Mao-ching, Ho, Chao, Yu, the two suspects and two militiamen went together to make a thorough search of the mill. No sign of the missing sack. By then the moon was high in the sky and, in the courtyard lit by moonlight, many other villagers had gathered and were speculating together in small groups. Having given some brief instructions to the militia sentries posted near by, Mao-ching led the way to Hao Chung's cottage just behind the back



yard of the mill. Hao unlocked the gate and led them in. Because his second daughter had just had a baby and his wife had gone to help with her lying-in, there was nobody at home. The place was in darkness. Hao went in and turned on the lights. At first their search revealed nothing. Then Chao discovered a bulging sack stamped in red with the words "Brigade Vermicelli Mill".

Mao-ching, Ho and Chao, being prepared for this, showed no surprise while Yu and Fifth Uncle dissembled their elation. Only Hao Chung was visibly astounded. He dashed over, untied the sack and thrust his hand in. Sure enough, it was the beans! Bursting with rage he cursed the man who had hidden the loot here to incriminate him. Then turning to Mao-ching he blurted out:

"Mao-ching, you all know I'm not that sort. You must help me clear myself!"

In the circumstances Mao-ching could only say, "Don't get excited. You know whether you committed a theft or not. We should all trust the Party. We'll never wrong anyone who's innocent, and neither will we let any scoundrel escape."

Reassured by these words Hao glared at Yu and Fifth Uncle, then declared firmly, "Yes, I know. I'm not worried. I'll just wait and see who the real culprit is." He stood there calmly puffing away at his pipe.

Yu had sensed a hidden meaning in Mao-ching's words. Seeing that the latter was still looking around and fearful of what he might find, he hastily said, "Now we've found the stolen goods, let's go back and discuss our next step."

Mao-ching did not answer but went on looking around while working out a plan of action.

"Look!" cried Chao. "Somebody's knocked over an oil bottle here; there are oil stains all over the place."

Fifth Uncle's face fell. Yu noticed this, and suspecting that his uncle had left traces he hurried over to look.

The bottle had been found in a dark corner. As Mao-ching flashed his torch on the spot, Hao Chung told them that the bottle of oil had stood on the west window-ledge. Since the ground was not too hard, when the bottle fell it did not break, only spilling oil on the

window-ledge and the ground. The fact that the oil had not yet seeped into the earth indicated that this had happened not long ago. Around the bottle were some oily footprints. Unfortunately, these were none too clear.

"Too bad!" exclaimed Yu, venting his relief. "We've spoilt these footprints by trampling round searching. Otherwise they might have given us a clue."

"Don't worry, we'll catch the thief all right," replied Mao-ching confidently, his eyes on Fifth Uncle's feet — shod in tattered cotton-padded shoes. He assigned one militiaman to stand guard here and told the others to go back to the mill.

By now a crowd had gathered around the mill. On the return of Mao-ching and the rest, they pressed forward asking for news. Yu was inwardly gloating:

"This morning you and Hao Chung tried to catch us out. Now it's *your* turn to be questioned. Let's see now how you talk your way out of this."

He was waiting to watch the fun when to his surprise Mao-ching said:

"Tell them the result of our search, Old Yu."

This seemed too good a chance to miss for inciting the villagers and confusing the issue. Yu made no demur but strode up the steps and launched into a detailed description of the search.

Chao was puzzled by this invitation to Yu to speak. He looked round but Mao-ching had gone. So he drew aside Ho who was talking to Hao Chung, and asked:

"Where has Mao-ching gone? Why didn't he explain the situation himself instead of letting Yu give his version?"

Old Ho smiled.

"If you didn't invite him, he'd still insist on speaking. What's there to be afraid of? Besides, this gives Mao-ching a chance to nip off and attend to other business." Then he explained what Mao-ching and he had just decided on.

On leaving Hao Chung's cottage, Mao-ching had tugged at Ho's sleeve to detain him. Once the rest had gone on, Mao-ching asked:

"Notice the cotton-padded shoes Fifth Uncle's wearing?"

"Yes, I did. I was thinking of mentioning it to you. That may be the clue we need. When he dumped the stolen sack there, most likely he knocked down the bottle and spilt oil all over his shoes. Having no spare shoes he had to change into padded ones."

"Exactly what I think."

Then Mao-ching suggested that they should shake off Yu and get a militiaman to watch Fifth Uncle, while he took two other militiamen to Fifth Uncle's place to look for oil-stained shoes. If they found them, that would be evidence that Fifth Uncle was the thief. Then they would disclose Yu's illegal sale of the rubber tyres and attempt to get Wang Hua to bribe Mao-ching. The fight would be as good as won.

After Ho had explained this to Chao, the two of them walked back and saw that Yu had given the crowd his version of the whole business, along with various dark hints. He was now concluding unctuously:

"As the proverb says: To catch a thief you must find the stolen goods. Since the sack was found in Hao's place, the inference is obvious. However, to be doubly sure, we're not drawing conclusions just yet. We hope you'll give your comments and views. It's the duty of anyone who knows anything more to come out with it and not try to cover up for him."

The villagers were amazed to hear that the stolen sack had been found in Hao Chung's cottage. Ignoring Yu's concluding remarks they all started discussing the matter. Some swore that Hao Chung would never do such a thing, others that the whole business smelt fishy. The majority remained highly sceptical, but a few started clamouring indignantly. Pleased by the commotion, Yu cast round for some means to incite the crowd further. But just then Mao-ching strode swiftly through the throng and called sharply to Fifth Uncle:

"Get up on the steps, you!"

Fifth Uncle had been secretly exulting. This new development disconcerted him. Like an automaton, he stiffly climbed the steps.

"What have you got on your feet?" Mao-ching demanded.

"Shoes. . . ."

"What sort of shoes?"

"P — padded shoes," stuttered Fifth Uncle, now thoroughly shaken.

The villagers were puzzled by the sight of Fifth Uncle shivering in his thick padded shoes. They all watched intently. The whole courtyard fell silent. When Yu saw this, he turned pale.

"What time of year is this?" Mao-ching asked the crowd with a smile. "Why should anyone wear thick padded shoes in this warm weather?"

A roar of laughter went up.

"My feet ache. . . . It's rheumatism. . . . I have to keep warm."

Fifth Uncle winced as if he were in pain.

Mao-ching turned to the militiaman behind him.

"All right, see if you can cure him."

The man stepped forward and threw something down in front of Fifth Uncle.

"Have a good look!" he roared. "What are these? There's nothing wrong with your feet — it's your heart that's black and rotten. That's the root of your trouble."

Fifth Uncle let out a cry. His knees buckled under him and he slumped to the ground, trembling convulsively. The villagers saw by his feet a pair of shoes stained with oil. They asked what this meant. Mao-ching pointed at Fifth Uncle.

"That's what I want *him* to tell us."

But Fifth Uncle stubbornly refused to speak.

"In this case, I'll tell the story for him," said Mao-ching.

He explained how the bottle of oil had been spilt in Hao's cottage, and how they had found this stained pair of Fifth Uncle's shoes hidden in the mill's woodpile.

The furious villagers rounded on Fifth Uncle, demanding why he had plotted to make Hao Chung out a thief, spoiling his good name.

Yu was frantic. He tried to appear not to be involved. But as the crowd put pressure on Fifth Uncle to come clean, Yu feared the latter would disclose their whole plot. He cleared his throat, took a grip on himself, and turned gravely to Mao-ching.

"The discovery of these shoes further complicates the situation," he said. "Just as finding that sack in Hao Chung's place didn't prove conclusively that he was the culprit, these shoes may not be sufficient proof of guilt either. Fifth Uncle may be trying to put the blame on Hao Chung. On the other hand it's also possible that someone has faked false evidence, taking advantage of the fact that he'd changed into padded shoes. I suggest we call a stop to this questioning. A forced confession may not be the truth. Suppose we cadres report it to the security authorities and let them deal with it? What do you all think?"

Mao-ching caught the sinister implications in this. Apart from trying to exonerate Fifth Uncle, Yu was hinting that they meant to force him to confess. He answered loudly enough for all to hear:

"On the basis of facts the masses have put certain questions to your uncle. Fair enough. How can you talk about a forced confession? Following up the clue of the spilt oil, the militiamen and I searched for and found this pair of stained shoes. Call that taking advantage and faking evidence?"

Yu tried to laugh this off.

"You've got me wrong, Mao-ching," he countered. "Of course I wasn't suggesting that you were faking evidence. I only meant that if we make a decision now on the basis of this single piece of evidence, we may accuse someone unjustly. Better investigate further and get more proof. Analyse the problem more thoroughly."

"Quite right!" In view of Yu's obstinacy Mao-ching spoke sternly. "Our Party believes in the mass line, in investigating the facts." He added sarcastically, "So you think we lack sufficient evidence? Don't worry. We'll soon satisfy you." He turned to the crowd and called:

"Come here, Wang Hua!"

Wang Hua, who had followed Mao-ching to the mill, had made up his mind to challenge Yu face to face. However, he had recoiled from the sight of the fellow as if from a poisonous snake. He had not known previously of Yu's scheme to incriminate Hao — that made everything much clearer.

"What a vicious brute he is!" he told himself. "Getting Fifth Uncle to smear a good man like Hao. Thank goodness, Mao-ching



saved me. If I'd gone on taking orders from Yu, I should certainly have come to a bad end!"

So now, bracing himself, he strode forward. Taking out the letter he had written from his pocket, he waved it in front of Yu's nose.

"Look! What's this?"



Yu gave a start. He knew this was the end. However, in a last-ditch stand he blustered:

"This is your handwriting. How do I know what you've been up to?"

"Come off it! Of course you know. I warn you not to tell any more lies," Mao-ching thundered. Then he turned to Wang Hua. "Go on, tell them all about it."

Plucking up courage, Wang Hua mounted the steps. He waved the letter in his hand and spoke with emotion.

"This is no ordinary letter of introduction. It's proof of Yu's illegal sale of rubber tyres." He fished a bank-book from his pocket then. "Here's the bait this devil used to try to drag me to Hell." Next, he produced a wad of bank-notes. "And this is the sugar-coated bullet which the enemy without guns wanted to use on Comrade Mao-ching."

Calming down a little then, he disclosed the whole story. And at once a struggle meeting started in the courtyard, a struggle to defeat the frenzied assault of the bourgeoisie and to safeguard socialism.

9

It was a sunny morning some six weeks later. Liu Chi was driving a cart with rubber tyres down the slope from the brigade office. The cart was loaded with sacks. Liu's white horse tossed its mane and

whinnied, the red tassels on its head gleaming in the sun, the bell under its neck tinkling in time with the thudding of its hoofs. As they bowled past the fish-pond skirted with green willows, the ducks resting in the shade on the bank started quacking in alarm. Rejoicing in the fine sight of the prosperous countryside around, Liu Chi told himself:

"When the wheat crops didn't come up to much, we blamed it on sidelines. But after we caught the trouble-makers, we realized it was due to enemy sabotage. As Mao-ching says: Provided our direction is correct and we give our main attention to agriculture, there's nothing wrong with developing sidelines too."

He turned to look at the dozen-odd other waggoners who were going with him to deliver grain to the state. They were still resting under the big locust tree, apparently not ready to set out yet. So he halted his cart and waited by the roadside.

"Delivering grain to the state, Uncle Liu?"

Liu Chi was driving a gadfly away from his horse when he heard this voice. He looked up and saw Mao-ching's wife. A cloth bag in one hand, a heavy bundle of books in the other, she was coming towards him beaming. As he offered to carry her things he asked with concern:

"Is your arm better? Why carry such heavy loads?"

"My arm's fine, thanks," said Shu-ying.

"Why didn't you rest longer in hospital? Why be in such a hurry to come back?"

"I must do my bit for the brigade. But how about Yu and his uncle? Is their business settled?"

Liu Chi laughed.

"You're certainly keen on class struggle," he said, "asking that before even getting home. Yes, the case is settled."

"What's the verdict?"

"Besides embezzling public funds, Yu was found to be a rich peasant. A special committee from the commune made thorough investigations and it was found that his family should actually be classified as rich peasants. In the early days of Liberation, he pretended to be progressive and managed to worm his way into the Party.

He's now been expelled from the Party. On the basis of a report submitted by the special committee and the findings of the security bureau, it was decided by the county people's court that he be reclassified as a rich peasant, and branded as a profiteer and embezzler of public funds. He's doing a spell of manual labour under surveillance, and has had to give up all his ill-gotten gains."

"How about Fifth Uncle?"

"Well, you knew before you left what he'd done. The verdict was: He must pay back the money he embezzled and reform himself through labour; but he won't be labelled a profiteer if he behaves himself in future."

Shu-ying asked next about Wang Hua.

"Because he made a clean breast of everything that evening and showed great progress after Mao-ching and others helped him, he was let off. But he's resigned from his job as brigade accountant. Now he is doing very well both in political study and in farm work."

Before Shu-ying could ask for other village news, the carts were ready to start, so they said goodbye. Liu Chi's parting question was:

"What are those books you've brought with you?"

"Copies of the works of Chairman Mao. Mao-ching told me to get them for you in Peking."

Liu Chi asked her to keep one set for him, then pointing at a distant red flag said:

"You'll find Mao-ching over there, working in the fields with the others."

Shu-ying gazed towards the distance. The newly ploughed fields were astir with a great contingent of commune members and draft animals. Moved by the stirring sight she forgot her fatigue and, picking up her bundles, ran down the highway. Behind her, whips cracked. The convoy of carts sped past her, racing towards the sun, towards the fluttering red flag.

*Illustrated by Chen Yu-hsien*

## Tempered Steel

One clear spring evening in 1967 a full moon was shining brightly. The office of Yu Family Village Production Brigade was packed with people cutting out characters, making paper flowers, writing slogans, or rehearsing items to the accompaniment of gongs and drums. Others came and went in twos and threes cheerfully discussing the big event fixed for the next afternoon: The brigade was going to set up its own revolutionary committee!

Then, the news spread: "Mao-ching has disappeared." Mao-ching was the newly nominated chairman of the revolutionary committee.

A little later, word came: "Skinny Liang has disappeared too."

Their disappearance was taken lightly at first. But as the news spread people everywhere in the village began to talk about it.

Old Ho Lao-chuan a member of the Party committee, vice brigade leader Chao Ta-hu and militia company leader Sun Kang went to Mao-ching's home and then to Liang Hsiang's to inquire. They were told that both men had gone to the county town. Ta-hu and Sun Kang took a few militiamen and headed immediately for town,

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About this story see the Editors' Note on p. 3.

asking everyone they met on the way, "Have you seen Mao-ching? Or Liang Hsiang?" But apparently no one had seen either of them.

In the county, the supply and marketing department's waggoner said he had seen Mao-ching cycling at top speed in the direction of Apricot Hill as if he had urgent business. Not far behind, a tall skinny fellow with a long narrow head seemed to be chasing after him. He had seen this man before but couldn't place him. Ta-hu and Sun Kang made straight for the county defence department.

Ten minutes later an army truck drove out from the defence department. In it were Ta-hu, Sun Kang and several armed PLA soldiers. Leaving the town, the truck sped along the highway to Apricot Hill.

What could have happened?

### 1

The previous autumn, when the millet and sorghum were ripening, a long line of matting stands was put up in front of the brigade office. Soon these stands were covered with layers of big-character posters. At noontime and in the evenings, the villagers came to read and discuss the posters. Some came with notebooks in their hands or water-buckets on a pole, others with a pipe between their lips or holding rice bowls. Old people came leaning on sticks. Women took their babies along, while the Red Guards all carried copies of *Quotations From Chairman Mao Tsetung*.

Everyone was busy then, especially Chao Ta-hu, Old Ho and young Sun Kang. Yet the busiest of all was Liu Mao-ching, the Party secretary. He was busy passing on and explaining the Sixteen Points,\* preparing for the autumn harvest and wheat sowing, and urging the villagers to write big-character posters criticizing him and the Party branch. He was elated when so many posters were pasted up. But none of these criticized him. Some people were pleased by this,

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\*A decision of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party concerning the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. Adopted on August 8, 1966, it stated: "The main target of the present movement is those within the Party who are in authority and are taking the capitalist road."



but not Mao-ching. He pressed old poor peasants and Red Guards to take the lead in "setting fire to" or "bombarding" him.

"What is there to 'bombard'?" some people asked.

"Plenty," said Mao-ching gravely. "Being in a leading position for more than ten years, I must have made plenty of mistakes. We all of us have shortcomings. Why don't you help me to get rid of them now?"

He made the production teams hold special meetings to collect criticisms of him. At each of these meetings he took careful notes, and asked the speakers to write out their opinions in the form of big-character posters.

"Isn't it enough that you've heard them?" someone said.

"No. Write them out for everyone to see. I'll correct my mistakes quicker with public supervision."

So the posters criticizing Mao-ching increased in number. And he went about his business more keenly than ever. Two weeks later, he himself put up a poster bombarding the county deputy secretary, Lu Chai. This shook the county Party committee.

Mao-ching, while studying the Sixteen Points, had started wondering about Lu Chai. After Liberation, Lu Chai had been vice-director of the county agricultural bureau for half a year before being transferred to the city. He had returned to the county the previous winter as deputy secretary of the Party committee. Lu had also spent quite a time in Yu Family Village, having been there for several months during land reform when he arbitrarily classified Yu Pen-tang, who was actually a rich peasant, as a middle peasant. He had then sponsored Yu for Party membership and nominated him deputy village head. Coming back to Yu Family Village in 1960, Lu had introduced Liu Shao-chi's method of "basing output quotas on the household." By then Yu Pen-tang had given up his former post, but Lu made him his right-hand man by appointing him brigade leader. Mao-ching was helping to build a reservoir at that time. Ta-hu and Old Ho had hurried to the worksite that same night to talk things over with him. They returned to the village to take the lead in opposing the new household output quotas. Granny Sun who lived at the west end of the village argued vehemently

with Lu and threatened to report him to the Central Committee of the Party. So Lu had to beat a retreat. In 1961, after Yu was exposed and replaced, Mao-ching wrote to the city committee and reported what he knew about Lu. He received no answer. Lu was even assigned the post of deputy secretary of the county Party committee. All this had puzzled Mao-ching. But after studying the Sixteen Points the reason dawned on him — all this was due to the capitalist road taken by some of those in authority. Lu surely was a capitalist roader!

Mao-ching took action immediately. Busy as he was, he made time to consult the old poor peasants and organize investigation meetings. It then became clear that Lu had not classified Yu Pen-tang as a middle peasant simply because he had deviated from Party policy. No. Yu had trapped him by using his sister as a bait. This was disclosed by an old man who lived on his own and, being both timid and taciturn, went by the nickname Old Tongue-tied. During the land reform Lu had moved in to live with this old man on the pretext of getting him to speak out. In fact, his real purpose was to scare Old Tongue-tied into keeping his mouth shut about Lu's affair with Yu's sister, which he had discovered. Later when Yu Pen-tang was exposed as a rich peasant, Old Tongue-tied wanted to speak up but the thought of Lu Chai made him close up again.

Mao-ching invited Tongue-tied to all the four meetings, but although touched by this, the old man said not a word.

"Close as a clam, he is!" said the villagers.

Then for three nights Mao-ching talked to him. In the end, the old man opened up and poured out the secret he had kept bottled up for seventeen years.

After this Mao-ching went many times to the county to read the big-character posters there and talk with Secretary Wang of the county Party committee and various others. There were people who opposed Lu. But adept in the use of revolutionary terms, Lu had fooled many people into supporting him. In the village, his fury mounting, Mao-ching talked things over with Old Ho, Ta-hu and Sun Kang and began writing a poster to expose Lu.

It was the busy autumn harvesting season, time to reap the millet and prepare for wheat sowing. Mao-ching worked in the fields all day and did his writing under the lamp at night. Writing did not come easy to him, as he had never gone to school. It was a lengthy and laborious process. A worn-out cabinet served as his desk. On it were the *Selected Works of Mao Tsetung*, a dictionary, a notebook and several sheets of paper. He studied the books, looked up new words, leafed through his notebook and wrote until cock-crow. Dawn found him still writing.

"Aren't you going to bed yet?" asked his wife.

"No," he answered. "I'm fighting a battle."

He went on writing for three successive nights. On the third morning, when Shu-ying got up at dawn to get breakfast, he put down his pen and stood up in high spirits.

"Another three days and nights," his wife commented. "This is the third time so far."

"You have a good memory." He laughed.

"How could I forget? The first time was to fight the Japanese imperialists. The second to build a reservoir dam."

"And this time, to fight a capitalist roader," said Mao-ching. "Each time was for the revolution."

"Why don't you have some sleep?"

Mao-ching stretched out his arms. "No. I'm full of pep. I don't want to sleep."

"Then go and work in the fields," someone chipped in outside.

It was Ta-hu, who now came in with Sun Kang and Old Ho.

Sun Kang picked up Mao-ching's manuscript and offered to make a clean copy.

"I'll give you an assignment," Ta-hu said to Mao-ching.

"What is it?"

"Have a good sleep!"

"And stay away from the fields," added Old Ho.

"Right." Mao-ching grinned.

After their departure, Mao-ching lay down fully dressed on the *kang* for a nap. He didn't wake up until the afternoon. Sitting up abruptly he complained to his wife:

"Why didn't you wake me?"

"I did try, but I couldn't."

Mao-ching laughed.

When the lamp was lit that night people thronged to his home: Old Ho, Ta-hu, Sun Kang, some youngsters, old poor peasants, Hao Chung from the mill, Liu Chi the waggoner and Grandpa Li from the old people's home. Old Tongue-tied came too. All applauded when he asked to have his name put on the poster.

Granny Sun was the last to arrive. With her failing eyesight she seldom ventured out after dark, but Mao-ching had gone to fetch her. As she stepped into the courtyard they heard her saying:

"It's just what I wanted, Mao-ching. If you hadn't come for me, I'd have groped my way here if I had to crawl!" Then she came in and sat cross-legged on the *kang*.

Silence fell as soon as Mao-ching took up the poster.

When he finished reading it, voices rang out again.

"You've really gone for him!"

"This will finish Lu off, just see!"

"It won't be that simple," said Mao-ching. "We know from the Sixteen Points that there will be repeated reversals in this struggle. The capitalist roaders will resort to intrigues and stab people in the back in order to discredit the revolutionaries. Lu Chai has a lot of tricks up his sleeve. He's still in power and won't take defeat lying down. We must be prepared for that."

The room quieted down again as they all thought this over.

"Mao-ching must look out," warned Old Ho. "He's sticking his neck out."

"I'm not afraid," Mao-ching said. "He who is not afraid of death by a thousand cuts dares to unhorse the emperor! We Communists, poor and lower-middle peasants must dare to follow Chairman Mao and make revolution."

His determination warmed the hearts of all.

Mao-ching was the first to grasp the brush and sign his name on the poster.

All the others clustered around. They all signed their names.

Then they considered when to put up the poster.

"Let's strike while the iron is hot," Mao-ching suggested. "Put it up right away. Tomorrow morning we'll sow the wheat." As they all approved he went on, "Go and get your bikes, Ta-hu, Sun Kang and you young fellows. We'll meet at the entrance of the village. You old folk must go home and sleep."

Just outside the village, Sun Kang whispered to Mao-ching, "I went into the courtyard after you read the poster and saw someone there."

"Who?"

"Skinny Liang."

"Liang Hsiang who married Yu Pen-tang's sister?"

"Yes. I asked him what he was doing. He just gave an evasive answer."

"He's involved with Lu Chai and Yu Pen-tang. We must be on our guard."

When everybody had arrived, Mao-ching gave the signal to leave. The young men jumped on to their bikes and sped like arrows, the northeast wind behind them and a starry sky above, to the county town. Taking up the rear, Mao-ching as he pedalled wondered: What sort of fellow is this brother-in-law of Yu Pen-tang's?

## 2

Liang Hsiang was not a native of Yu Family Village but had come to settle here on Lu Chai's recommendation during the land reform. When Mao-ching came home from the army, Old Ho told him that Liang Hsiang had arrived towards the end of the land reform movement, and that Lu Chai had settled the matter by consulting only Yu Pen-tang, then deputy village head.

According to Yu Pen-tang, Liang Hsiang came from East Gully in the Western Hills more than 200 *li* away, and Lu Chai had put up in his home while fighting as a guerrilla. Liang Hsiang's father, who had supported the Eighth Route Army, was killed when their village fell into enemy hands and Liang Hsiang was conscripted, but he managed to run away and went into hiding. Learning later that Lu Chai was a cadre in the county, he had turned to him for help. That was how he came to Yu Family Village. Mao-ching also gathered

from Yu that Lu Chai had arranged the match between Yu's sister and Liang Hsiang. When Mao-ching was in charge of security work in his brigade, he wrote a letter to East Gully to verify this, and the information they supplied was more or less the same. That reassured him.

In the village Liang Hsiang was neither active nor backward. He just went along with the others, not making himself conspicuous in any way. He never quarrelled with his neighbours and, if they needed money, lent them small sums. Some people regarded him as a simple, honest fellow; others, as someone anxious to keep out of trouble; yet others, as a dark horse. During the time of the bourgeois Rightists' attack on the Party,\* Liang had made several trips to the city. But after the Rightists were counter-attacked he never ventured out again. In 1960, when Lu Chai came to Yu Family Village to "fix output quotas based on the household", he was one of his active followers. But as soon as Lu Chai left he relapsed into silence. Once his brother-in-law Yu Pen-tang with whom he had been on good terms was reclassified as a rich peasant, Liang was seldom seen to cross his threshold.

At the beginning of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution in the summer of 1966, Liang did nothing to attract attention. But once Mao-ching started making inquiries about Lu Chai, he pricked up his ears. Had he any ties with Lu Chai, or was he concerned just because they were old friends? But why should he eavesdrop on the sly? Mao-ching's suspicions grew.

A few days later, someone in the county told Mao-ching that Liang had gone to look up Lu the night the poster was put up. A few days later, a villager told him that Liang was gathering around him a dozen or so people, among them well-to-do middle peasant Yu Pen-hsing and rich peasant Yu Pen-tang. Mao-ching and Old Ho decided:

"We'll keep strict tabs on Yu, but give Liang plenty of rope till we've sized him up."

\*In April 1957, the bourgeois Rightists made use of the Party's rectification campaign to attack the Party. In June the same year, the broad revolutionary masses launched a counter-attack under Party leadership.

The autumn of 1966 was a time of tense struggle. Then wheat was sown and the autumn harvest stored. The villagers plunged straight into their work for the winter: they levelled land, built embankments and sank wells. Suddenly Liang Hsiang and his gang started clamouring.

One morning, Mao-ching was directing the sinking of a well west of the village when someone hurried over saying:

"Go back quickly to the village, Mao-ching. There are posters up demanding your overthrow."

Presently another man panted over.

"Skinny's got that gang of his to rebel — they accuse Mao-ching of ten big crimes!"

"What crimes? Tell us quick," urged the others, crowding round.

"He's a bogus Party member."

"A capitalist roader!"

"He persecuted Yu Pen-tang."

"He brought false charges against Lu Chai."

The villagers were furious. Sun Kang and Ta-hu threw down their tools meaning to return to the village. Other young men followed suit.

But Mao-ching, who had never stopped working, restrained them.

"What's the hurry?" he asked. "Let's get on with the job. We can read their posters at noon."

Ta-hu and the others took up their tools again, cursing Liang Hsiang, Lu Chai and Yu Pen-tang.

"That old rascal Yu Pen-hsing is their cat's-paw," swore one.

"We'll have it out with them when we get back!"

Mao-ching was provoked too by what he had just heard. He felt sure that Lu Chai was the man behind the scenes who was pulling the strings, making Liang Hsiang and his lot dance to his tune. Liang's group included bad characters like Yu Pen-tang. Liang himself was a suspicious character too. But the others who had been taken in by them should be protected. He must rally them together so as to lead them on to the right track. Pressure must not be used on these people.

Ta-hu blew the whistle for the noon break. The impatient youngsters downed tools and prepared to leave. But Mao-ching called them back.

"I've a problem. Let's all put our heads together to solve it."

"Go ahead. Don't hold us up too long," said Sun Kang.

"Who put up the posters in the village?"

"Skinny and his lot."

"All on their own?"

"No, with Lu Chai's backing," said Old Ho.

"Right. He's behind this. And here's another question. What is Yu Pen-hsing?"

"A well-to-do middle peasant."

"That means he's one of the masses, whom we should unite with."

"But he doesn't unite with you," Sun Kang pointed out.

"He wants to overthrow you," Ta-hu added.

"You mean we can't unite with him and the dozen or so villagers who are following Liang Hsiang's lead? Do we unite with 95 per cent of the people or only 70 to 80 per cent?"

Ta-hu and Sun Kang were silent.

After a little pause, Mao-ching went on, "In this revolution we're making, we must bear in mind the Central Committee's Sixteen Points and Chairman Mao's instructions to unite with the majority and strike at a small handful. We must hold a steady course and hit hard at the capitalist roaders. Lu Chai's on a reactionary line, trying to crush us. So we'll go on exposing him. Blast him, denounce him and fight back against him!"

"Yes, we must concentrate our fire on Lu Chai," agreed Old Ho.

"I know what our Party secretary means," Sun Kang said jokingly. "To open fire on *him* is fine, and anyone who does that deserves an award."

Everyone burst out laughing. Mao-ching grinned too.

### 3

The well west of the village sank deeper and deeper. The terraced fields on the northern slope rose higher and higher. Meanwhile

Lu Chai was having a difficult time in town, Liang Hsiang was rampaging more wildly in the village, and Yu Pen-tang was taking a tougher stand. After studying, observing, analysing and fighting together, Mao-ching, Old Ho, Ta-hu and Sun Kang saw the situation more clearly. And, their vision broadened, they worked with increasing drive.

In a flash, the Spring Festival of 1967 arrived.

Good news kept flying into Yu Family Village, brought by the radio, press and word of mouth. The Shanghai working class had seized power from the handful of capitalist roaders. The Party Central Committee had sent a telegram of congratulations. And our great leader Chairman Mao made a high appraisal of this fine takeover. Mao-ching, elated by the news, took every word of Chairman Mao's instructions to heart. He, Ta-hu and several youngsters lost no time in cycling to the county town and posting up three slogans on the wall of the county committee compound.

Proletarian revolutionaries, unite!

Dismiss Lu Chai from office!

Strip Lu Chai of his power!

Revolutionaries in the county applauded them, telling Mao-ching that a committee was being organized to seize power. They had been meaning to send for him as they would be taking action very soon. Mao-ching promptly pledged them his whole-hearted support.

Secretary Wang of the county committee took Mao-ching to his office to find out how things were in Yu Family Village.

"That complex struggle of yours is linked with the one in the county," he told Mao-ching. "You must keep a careful watch on Yu Pen-tang."

"That's just what I thought. Yu Pen-tang is the weak point, the gap, in Lu Chai's defence, so they're trying desperately to close up that gap. By egging Yu on to deny that he's a rich peasant, Liang Hsiang is trying to protect Lu Chai."

Secretary Wang nodded agreement. "We must understand fully Chairman Mao's instructions on seizing power. **This is a great revolution, a revolution in which one class overthrows another.**"

Lu Chai represents his class. And he'll rally all its forces if his position is threatened. Now that Lu Chai is cornered, you may feel the repercussions in your village. You must be well prepared."

"Relying on the Party and the masses, I can weather any storm," Mao-ching declared.

Grasping his hand, Secretary Wang saw him out. Mao-ching, clearer in his ideas now, returned to the village with redoubled confidence.

On the eve of the lunar New Year, the village concert group put on a show and, to the accompaniment of drums and gongs, the children let off fireworks. The Pleiads had glided to the west when Mao-ching returned to the village. He went as was his custom to have a look at the cattle sheds and talked with some of the stockmen. It was midnight by the time he reached home.

His son was shouting inside, "Aren't you going, Yu Pen-tang? I'll call the militiamen if you don't clear out."

Mao-ching was astonished. What was Yu Pen-tang doing here?

Then his wife spoke, "You've rooted yourself here, eh? Are you trying to make trouble?"

Mao-ching was alerted. He said to himself, "He's up to some trick. I must be tough."

Then he heard Yu's sly voice, "How dare I make any trouble? I've come to wish the Party secretary a happy New Year."

Mao-ching lifted the door-curtain and went in.

"As the old saying goes: Take care when the weasel pays a New Year call to the chicken." Mao-ching's voice was icy cold.

With a start, Yu looked up and was transfixed by Mao-ching's piercing eyes. He lowered his head and moved sheepishly from the *kang* to a bench.

Planting himself on the *kang* to roll a cigarette, Mao-ching demanded, "Tell me what brought you here. And make it short, mind you."

Feeling utterly deflated, Yu cursed himself for a fool. Then, clearing his throat he decided to brazen things out.

"Business brought me here," he drawled. "I've come to talk over my class status." Receiving no answer, he went on, "The villagers don't see eye to eye on my status. Some say I'm a mid-

dle peasant, others that I'm a rich peasant. In fact, I'm something between the two, a marginal case. It all depends how you interpret it. No one can object if I'm classed as a middle peasant. It's only right to stick to the lower status." He lit a cigarette and waited.

Mao-ching, his eyes averted and still smoking, waited for him to continue.

Not receiving a rebuff, Yu went on more arrogantly. "Let bygones be bygones. I bear you no grudge. You work for the Party and the public and I think Liang Hsiang's gone too far, trying to oust you. Confucius said, 'To exceed is as bad as not to reach.' I'll talk to them so that you'll be on good terms again, able to pull together."

Looking at Yu now, Mao-ching replied, "All you said boils down to this: You're trading with me. If I change your class status, you won't try to oust me. Right?"

Yu opened his mouth, but said nothing.

"What a fine scheme! You'll be a middle peasant and I a Party secretary while Lu stays in his post in the county. We'll just laugh off our differences and follow the bourgeois line with one heart and one mind."

"No. No. We'll practise socialism."

"That's not socialism!"

Unable to refute this, Yu demanded, "Well, do you agree or not?"

Mao-ching stood up abruptly and stepped towards Yu. "You've come to the wrong person and the wrong door," he said gravely. "Liu Mao-ching is no profiteer to peddle his goods where they'll fetch the highest price. I'm no Lu Chai either to rise to your bait. I'm a true Communist, a secretary of a Communist Party branch. As long as I live I shall struggle against you, Lu Chai and your class until your class is entirely eliminated. We have no faith in Confucius. We'll never be 'on good terms' with you, never 'pull together'. What we *will* do is this — put you under the dictatorship of the proletariat!"

Yu went pale and flushed up by turns. "You're framing me!" he yelled. "You must restore my sister's good name."

"We're doing just that." Mao-ching snorted scornfully. "We're restoring the true features of every one of you."

Yu rolled his eyes as new tactics occurred to him. "Let me tell you something," he said smugly. "Tongue-tied has been lying. He admits it himself."

"Don't be a fool," Mao-ching scoffed. "You scared him into silence in the past. But the Cultural Revolution has made him see you as you really are. Now, nine oxen or ten horses couldn't drag him to your side."

Mao-ching sat down again and rolled another cigarette, waiting for Yu to continue. He knew that the fellow still had more tricks to play. Having gone so far, he would not stop half-way.

Sure enough, Yu resumed his seat. Frowning and blinking, he drawled again, "I advise you, Liu Mao-ching, to face the facts."

"Better take your own advice!"

"Power is being seized now in many units in the city."

"Seizing power from the capitalist roaders is fine."

"The road doesn't matter. Where there's power, it can be seized. Know what some higher-ups say? Those in authority taking the socialist road must have a bashing too."

"You must be dreaming. You'll never wrest power from the proletariat. Anyone who tries that will be smashed to pulp."

Mao-ching had neither risen to Yu's bait, nor knuckled under to threats. Yu's beady eyes flashed with rage.

"Don't talk rubbish, Liu!" he bellowed. "I warn you, if you don't change my class status, this'll be a bad New Year for you!"

Mao-ching laughed disdainfully. "I've been waiting for this scene. Listen to me, Yu Pen-tang! I've had good New Years ever since Liberation and this is the best of the lot — thanks to your visit."

Hsiao-tung, Mao-ching's youngest son, ran in at this moment.

"Daddy, where's my lantern?" he cried. "Grandpa Li said you'd bought me a big lantern."

"That's right. I'd almost forgotten." Mao-ching threw a glance at Yu, then said to his son, "Yes, I asked Grandpa Li to buy a lantern in town two days ago."

He pulled out from his pocket a flat red object, and unfolded this to make a big melon-shaped lantern.

Hsiao-tung jumped to reach for it.

Holding up the lantern, his father said, "Wait while I fix it." He bent a sorghum stalk to make a handle and put in a tiny candle. Then he struck a match and the room glowed with a red light. Hsiao-tung took the lantern happily and ran out.

Yu looked on with clenched teeth, then put on another act. Toppling with a thud from his chair, he knocked his forehead on the edge of the *kang*. A bump formed immediately. Clasping this, he sprawled on the *kang*, howling.

Hsiao-tung, taken by surprise, stood wide-eyed at the door.

Mao-ching calmly told him, "Go and ask Brother Sun Kang to come with a few militiamen." As Hsiao-tung hopped off with his lantern, Mao-ching praised him, "You're a good little messenger."

The next second Hsiao-tung cried from the courtyard, "Brother Sun Kang is here."

And in they both charged, followed by some militiamen. Yu tried to control his panic, but his heart was pounding.

"Stand up," Sun Kang ordered.

Yu sat up woodenly, breaking off his wailing. In face of the angry young men, he had nothing to say.

Hsiao-tung back in the courtyard called again, "Here's Grandpa Tongue-tied."

Like a pirate stranded on a desert island who shouts and waves to a passing boat before finding out its business, Yu Pen-tang perked up and rounded on Mao-ching.

"See! Tongue-tied has come to find you. The three of us can cross-check now and clear this business up."

"Don't rejoice too soon," said Mao-ching.

Tongue-tied shuffled in, in his hands two greasy boxes of cakes wrapped in red paper. He held these up for all to see.

"Look, Mao-ching and Sun Kang," he said indignantly. "Yu Pen-tang's sister brought me these. She made a scene when I refused to accept them. When I asked why she'd brought them, she

said I knew the reason. She wanted me to go back on my story to you, saying that I'd got it wrong, being old and forgetful. As if I'd do such a thing! Why should I keep her secret for her, I ask you? She needn't think she can bribe me."

This disclosure, like a ladle of icy water, quite took Yu's breath away, chilling him from the crown of his head right down to the soles of his feet. It warmed Mao-ching's heart, however, like a burning brazier.

"Hear that?" Mao-ching asked. "Here's the testimony you wanted."

"Now come clean!" roared Sun Kang. "Why are you trying to make trouble over your class status?"

Only then did Tongue-tied see Yu. He darted towards him with the two boxes of cakes.

Yu was now hopping mad. "Old dolt, telling lies left and right, smearing good people! I'll...I'll bring a charge against you." Blustering, he stalked to the door. But Sun Kang barred the way.

Tongue-tied trembled with fury. Pointing at Yu's back he cursed, "Stinking, black-hearted rich peasant! Trying to scare me again, eh? I'm not afraid! Go and lay a charge anywhere you like. I'll fight this out with you. Here!" With all his might he flung a box of cakes at him.

Yu turned just in time to get all the cakes in his face. As he scrambled at the icing with his hands, another box landed on his head. Bits of cake got under his collar. All the rest burst out laughing. Fumbling at his collar, Yu rushed out. When Sun Kang started giving chase, Mao-ching stopped him, sending a militiaman to see where Yu went.

The militiaman returned to report, "He'd just got to the street when Liang Hsiang and his lot intercepted him."

"Wind is the herald of rain. You must watch out for Liang Hsiang's next move," cautioned Sun Kang.

"Lu Chai and his gang are putting up a last-ditch struggle, but it won't get them anywhere," said Mao-ching. "We've just given Liang Hsiang a rope to hang himself."

The lunar New Year was a holiday for the commune members. But Party members, cadres and some of the well-sinking team went to lower a wooden base down the well. At sunrise, they set off with a red banner and marched, singing, to the site. They were soon joined by the Youth Leaguers and militiamen, followed by brigade members and students. Very pleased, Mao-ching asked Old Ho to take the old people and young folk to build terraced fields while he, Ta-hu, Sun Kang and the able-bodied men stayed there to sink the well.

The well was shaped like a trumpet, with a flared opening, narrowing down below. Ta-hu jumped in to stand on the rim of the lower part, but it gave way under his weight and with a cry he fell to the bottom.

"Ta-hu, Ta-hu!" shouted the rest, crowding round the opening. Mao-ching shinned down a rope suspended into the well. Ta-hu, uninjured, gave him a broad grin. But the well bottom was now choked with a few feet of debris. As the earth was thawing out in the warmer weather, they decided to install the base at once before another cave-in. They must fight against time.

Basketfuls of earth were hoisted up and emptied on to the ground. The young men took off their padded jackets, then their pull-overs. Sweat streamed down their faces. Mao-ching and Ta-hu worked on at the bottom. Time and again others offered to take their places. They refused, saying it would waste time getting up and down. Mao-ching, the oldest among them, an enemy bullet still embedded in his shoulder, worked as vigorously as any of the young men. And inspired by his example, their spades fairly flew.

When the debris was cleared, they prepared to lower the wooden base into the well.

"Granny Sun's coming," shouted someone. "Running too!"

Granny Sun hailed them from a distance, "Liang Hsiang's making trouble at Mao-ching's place! Skinny's making trouble!"

The news, like a thunderbolt, fired the young men with fury. They dropped the base and ran to cluster around Granny Sun. Sun

Kang passed on the news to the men in the well and some of these called to him to hoist them up. Ta-hu calmed down as Mao-ching made no move.

Mao-ching yelled to Sun Kang, "Stop. No one is to leave..." All fell silent.

Thinking that Mao-ching had not heard what had happened, Granny Sun called down to him, "Mao-ching! Skinny is making trouble at your place."

Mao-ching's reply was, "Sun Kang! Go ahead and lower the base."

Granny Sun stood beside the well, her heart in a tumult, as countless memories crowded to her mind:

Mao-ching, she thought, when you came home from the army, you spent all your demobilization money on our mutual-aid team. When you worked on the reservoir site, you didn't take time off to come home for months, not even when your son was kicked by a mule and had to stay in hospital. Your father-in-law sends you timber from the mountains every year, but you give it all to villagers who want to build new houses while you still live in that old shack of yours. Every New Year's Eve you go the rounds of the village to see that our folk are all right. When a dog stole the pork of the family of a revolutionary martyr, you made your son take them your own meat all ready for cooking. And on New Year's Day, you took the Youth League members, militiamen and even your little Hsiao-tung fifty *li* there and back to cut wood for all the soldiers' families. You send first-rate fertilizer to the brigade and make the accountant register it as second-rate. You choose the weakest piglet to raise each year, saying that your wife knows how to look after weaklings. Ah, Mao-ching, you're really a fine cadre trained by Chairman Mao!

Tears of emotion streamed down the old woman's face.

Now voices were heard approaching. Granny Sun wiped her tears and looked around but could not see who it was. She listened carefully, then told the men, "Here they come. It's Liang Hsiang and his lot."

This time, everyone kept calm. Even young Sun Kang did not stir. They worked on, ready for any eventuality.





Liang Hsiang and a dozen men trooped noisily to the well. Granny Sun confronted them.

"Why have you come to make trouble here?"

Pulling a stern face, Liang growled, "Are you backing up a counter-revolutionary?"

"Who are you calling counter-revolutionary?" Granny Sun retorted.

"Liu Mao-ching!" Liang craned his long neck.

Granny Sun went pale with fury. Pointing at Liang's nose, she swore, "Liar! May your lies rot your dirty mouth."

"Ha, you can't save him this time, however hard you try." Waving a little notebook over his head, he ranted, "Liu Mao-ching has written a reactionary slogan in his notebook. He's a counter-revolutionary caught red-handed. We're going to make him step down right away and struggle against him."

Everyone was flabbergasted. Then, indignantly, the men laid down their tools. Those down in the well clambered up while those on the ground surrounded Liang Hsiang, demanding to look at the notebook. But he put it in his pocket.

"You can't see it. Tell Liu Mao-ching to come up." He added provocatively, "Perhaps you don't dare."

Before he could finish, Mao-ching stood in front of him. Sweat dripped from his face onto his muddy clothes but, eyes blazing, he thrust out his hand.

"Give me that notebook."

Liang backed away. "You want to destroy the evidence of your crime?"

Solemnly, Mao-ching said, "That would be the act of a counter-revolutionary. And that's what *you* are, if you daren't show it to me and to everybody."

Liang Hsiang fished out the notebook. Ta-hu snatched it away and gave it to Mao-ching who leafed through it. On the margin of one page where a year ago he had written notes on his study of Chairman Mao's *Carry the Revolution Through to the End*, someone had scrawled two reactionary slogans viciously attacking our Party and the Cultural Revolution. Raging with indignation, he held up the notebook.

"Comrades and villagers," he announced. "The enemy has started an offensive. Only landlords, rich peasants, reactionaries, bad elements or Rightists could write such reactionary slogans. We must open our eyes to the truth and unite to fight against the enemy. Catch the fox by the tail and beat him hard, until we get hold of the scoundrel who did this foul thing!"

"Don't put on an act, Liu Mao-ching. It's *your* notebook and *you're* the counter-revolutionary. Don't try to confuse the issue."

Ignoring him, Mao-ching addressed the others, "The enemy may be cunning but they're stupid too, thinking they can clear themselves by writing in someone else's notebook. But the saying goes: Real is real and sham is sham. A flying crow always casts a shadow. From the colour of these two lines it's obvious that the ink has only just dried."

Liang Hsiang's followers began to whisper among themselves. Some craned their necks to get a better look at the notebook while others started arguing with Liang. Yu Pen-hsing stood silently at one side, hanging his head.

"Liu Mao-ching is making unfounded counter-charges," howled Liang Hsiang. "Drag him out." He flung out one arm.

Sharp-eyed Sun Kang stepped forward and caught Liang by the wrist.

Ta-hu bellowed, "You want to fight, eh? You're too scrawny."

Liang Hsiang screeched to his men, "Come on! At them!"

His group hesitated. Some of them backed away. The few who did move forward dared not lift a finger against the twenty or so strapping young men with Mao-ching.

Mao-ching made Sun Kang release his hold on Liang. Standing on a boulder he warned, "Don't fall into their trap, comrades. Someone wants to start a fight."

"It's clear who that is," Ta-hu added. "Liang Hsiang started this."

"I'm nabbing a counter-revolutionary."

"A counter-revolutionary? He's one of your lot, isn't he?" said Sun Kang.

Another slanging match started. But very soon Mao-ching put a stop to it.

"Come on, to the county security bureau," he shouted. "Ask them to investigate. Each side can send two men, to go together."

Mao-ching handed the notebook to Ta-hu who was to go with Sun Kang, while Liang Hsiang chose two men. The four set off at once to the county. As Liang started back to the village he noticed that several of his followers were working with Mao-ching. No matter how he called, they ignored him. Cursing, Liang Hsiang went away with those who had stuck to him.

Yu Pen-hsing, one of those who had stayed, took off his fur jacket to go down to work in the well.

"We have enough men down there. You stay here," Mao-ching told him.

Yu Pen-hsing blurted out, "I'll work hard from now on, Party secretary, and be a good peasant."

"Just working hard won't make you a good peasant." Mao-ching laughed. "You have to fight against bad characters."

"I know nothing. Nothing at all," Yu said hastily.

Mao-ching smiled and clambered down the well.

At sunset when the wooden base was laid, Ta-hu and Sun Kang returned to tell Mao-ching joyfully, "The power-seizing committee is holding a meeting tonight. They want you to be there by seven o'clock."

## 5

Two days later, Mao-ching came back from the county town. Though his eyes were red from lack of sleep he was full of good news and looked happy.

"The revolutionary rebels have succeeded in seizing power. Lu Chai has been removed from office," he announced.

Now that Lu Chai was no longer in the saddle, Liang Hsiang promptly backed down. He could make trouble no more. Soon after this the county security bureau twice sent men down to investigate the matter of the counter-revolutionary slogans. Though the case was still open, it seemed obvious that Liang was the culprit.

As the young wheat turned green, the northern hills were tinted emerald. One by one, peach and apricot trees burst into bloom. Soon now, Yu Family Village was going to set up its new revolutionary committee. And who was to be the chairman? Liu Mao-ching.

The day before this great event Mao-ching got word that a new batch of posters had appeared in the county town: Lu Chai was a renegade! When Mao-ching returned from his morning's work in the fields, he bolted his lunch and headed straight for town on his bike. The moment he entered the county Party committee compound, his eyes took in the characters written in bold black ink: "Down with the renegade Chi Hsiao-yun (Lu Chai)!" — the title of a big-character poster.

Mao-ching was taken aback. The name Chi Hsiao-yun struck a chord in his mind, though for the moment he could not place it exactly. He pushed his way into the crowd round the poster. A closer glance made him gasp.

"So it's him!" he exclaimed.

Mao-ching recalled the time, during the War of Resistance Against Japan, when he was a young messenger in the district detachment. Kao Peng, his commander, sent him off with a letter for Chou Ling, Party secretary of the guerrilla unit at Apricot Hill. Mao-ching found the village deserted. Someone told him that there had been fighting that morning and the guerrillas had moved north. Mao-ching went to several villages before he found the guerrilla unit and its leader. Secretary Chou was nowhere to be seen. The guerrilla leader asked him to take a letter back.

On reading the letter, Kao Peng blanched and bowed his head in silence. Then, banging the table with one fist, he spat out the name: "Chi Hsiao-yun!"

"Who's Chi Hsiao-yun!" asked Mao-ching.

"A renegade! He was deputy leader of the Apricot Hill guerrillas."

"Where's Secretary Chou?"

"Dead." Kao Peng was grief-stricken. Later he told young Mao-ching that this coward Chi Hsiao-yun had revealed the guer-



rillas' whereabouts to save his own skin when the Peace Preservation Corps of south Apricot Hill captured him. In collusion with puppet forces under the Japanese, the corps surprised and surrounded the guerrillas. Chou Ling led a detachment in a stubborn fight to break through the encirclement. She gave her life to save the guerrilla unit from annihilation.

Now the big-character poster revealed that Lu Chai was the alias of Chi Hsiao-yun, describing in detail how he had sold out to the enemy. A man called Lai Wang, nicknamed Long-legged Lai who later became a Kuomintang secret agent, was then head of the Peace Preservation Corps in south Apricot Hill and it was he who interrogated Chi the traitor. Just before Liberation, Long-legged Lai disappeared. Some thought he had died, others that he had escaped to Taiwan. Attached to the poster was a small faded snapshot with the caption: Picture, found in Lai Wang's house, of Lai Wang and the renegade Chi Hsiao-yun.

People were peering at this snap to see if the renegade was really the Lu Chai they knew; but nobody paid much attention to Lai Wang. Mao-ching, however, fixed his eyes on Lai, carefully scrutinizing his every feature. The longer he looked the closer seemed the resemblance. Though the picture was small and blurred and the men in it twenty years younger, in Mao-ching's eyes, slick smarmy Lai Wang was the image of Skinny Liang — as he must have looked in his younger days.

Mao-ching itched to take immediate action to find out the connection between the two men. After some thought he made up his mind to go to south Apricot Hill Village, bring back someone who knew Lai Wang and let him have a look at Skinny. That would be the fastest, simplest and surest way to identify the Kuomintang agent without arousing his suspicion beforehand. South Apricot Hill lay about 120 *li* from town with a dozen hills in between. A round trip meant a lot of exhausting pedalling and not getting back until late, but Mao-ching thought nothing of it. He took his bike to the repair shop, pumped up the tyres and tightened the screws. With a quick glance at the afternoon sun he then mounted and made straight for the road to Apricot Hill.

Since it never crossed his mind that he might be trailed, he did not discover that another machine ridden by Skinny Liang was following fast behind him.

6

Liang Hsiang had also left the village at noon, just a few minutes before Mao-ching. The last few days had been difficult ones for Skinny. Lu Chai had been removed from office yet he could do nothing about it. The situation was getting out of hand, but again he could do nothing. Besides, he was scared stiff by the security bureau's investigation of the case of the counter-revolutionary slogans. While working in the fields that morning, he had heard the news — Lu Chai had been exposed as a renegade! At this bolt from the blue, his head swam and he nearly toppled over in a faint. When the villagers went home for lunch, he did not stop to eat but made straight for the county town on his bicycle.

It was a beautiful April day but Liang Hsiang had no eyes for spring sunshine. As he pedalled frantically, he reviewed the most crucial encounters he had had with Lu Chai.

The first had been in his own office in south Apricot Hill. He had just picked up a red-hot iron to threaten the captured Communist when the man caved in. He was overjoyed. "I thought he was a real Red but he turned out to be a dud."

The second time was in the small west room of Tongue-tied's house. When he confronted Lu Chai there, the man stared at him agog, speechless with dismay.

"Don't you know me? I'm Lai..."

"What're you doing here?"

"Surrendering myself to Your Honour, Director Lu!"

"Clear out! Quick!"

"I wouldn't be here if I didn't mean to stay."

"I could have you arrested this minute."

"I'm willing to share a cell with you."

There was a pause. Lu weakened visibly.

"What exactly do you want?"

"To be a good citizen under Your Honour's protection."

Lu paced the room, his eyes on the floor. In a low voice he said, "You are Liang Hsiang, a peasant from East Gully in the Western Hills. You're the son of the old man in whose house I once lived during the war years." He then pulled a mimeographed news bulletin from his file and pointing to an article said, "You'll find your role described here."

Lai took the bulletin and read the article, written by Lu Chai. It was entitled *Memories of My Old Host*.

Feeling easier in his mind now, Lu Chai went on, "The real Liang Hsiang was press-ganged into the Kuomintang army and dragged off. You can assume his name. Just say you escaped on the way and came back. This'll be first-rate camouflage."

"Where shall I live?"

"Right here in Yu Family Village. You can depend on the deputy village head Yu Pen-tang." After a while Lu said, "To kill a man, a knife must thrust deep. To save a man's life, one must help him in every way. I've even got a wife for you."

"This is no time to joke."

"Yu Pen-tang has a sister."

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The previous year, late one autumn night, Liang Hsiang had had his third encounter with Lu Chai. He had gone straight to Lu's office after eavesdropping on Mao-ching outside his house.

Slumping down on a chair, Liang blurted out: "Liu Mao-ching's going to put up a poster against you."

Lu was stunned. "Him again! What's he writing?"

"About everything you did in Yu Family Village. Tongue-tied has spilled the beans."

Lu flushed. "You can't believe that blethering old idiot," he blustered.

"Don't get me wrong," said Liang. "I haven't come to vent my jealousy over your old flame, but to warn you — you're in big trouble."

Lu took a grip of himself. "Damn Liu Mao-ching! He's gone too far this time. Writing letters to accuse me behind my back

didn't topple me; so now, riding the whirlwind, he's inciting others to rebel as well. Seems he's set on dragging me down."

"No matter what, you must hurry and stop that gap. Otherwise, once a breach is made, you'll be done for."

Lu thought for a long time, then sighed, "You'll have to speak out then."

"Who? Me?"

"Who else but you? As a leading cadre, according to the Sixteen Points, I'm in no position to say anything. You're an ordinary commune member, you can rebel against him."

"Rebel against Liu Mao-ching?"

"Why not? Afraid?"

"The villagers are all for him."

"Never mind. Once you stick a few dirty labels on him, they'll turn against him."

Outside the compound now they heard the sound of voices and footsteps approaching, as well as bicycle bells.

Liang listened. A little flustered, he said, "Here they come! Yes, it's them all right."

Lu lifted a corner of the curtain to peek out. "Listen, Lai, you've got to make up your mind. Once you pull down that man, you and Pen-tang'll be able to stand up straight again."

"I know that. But let me tell you, Liu Mao-ching is no ordinary person, he's a real fierce tiger. If for some reason we fail to pull him down, he'll spring. . . ."

"You can't sit back and wait for the tiger to eat you, can you?"

"Then you think. . . ."

"You'll have to burn your bridges."

After this they had met a few more times, but Liang felt too panicky to think about them now. He knew he was bound irrevocably to Lu.

He got off his bike at the entrance to the county Party committee compound. Looking furtively to make sure no one he knew was around, he slipped in to read the poster. One glance and his heart nearly popped out of his mouth. That incriminating snapshot in particular made him so frantic he wanted to snatch it off and swal-

low it whole. But people reading the posters were milling around. What could he do in broad daylight? After a while, since nobody seemed to be paying him any attention, he began to speculate: The picture was so small and faded, perhaps none would notice the man standing by Lu Chai. As long as Lu himself didn't confess and name him, he might still pull through. His heart stopped pounding so wildly. He took courage.

He was just about to leave when Mao-ching arrived. Liang's heart sank. Slipping behind someone's back he kept his eyes on Mao-ching, who stood rooted before the picture, staring intently at the figures.

"He must have spotted me," thought Liang Hsiang in despair.

When Mao-ching left, he trailed him. Instead of going back to the village, Mao-ching headed for Apricot Hill. Liang was now desperate. Hatred for this Party secretary, accumulated over seventeen years, drove other considerations from his mind. He touched the dagger in his belt, muttering savagely, "It's him or me now. . . ." With his long legs he pedalled frantically after Mao-ching.

## 7

The spring afternoon was very warm. Mao-ching unbuttoned his padded jacket, racing along like the wind. When he met someone he knew, he shouted a hurried greeting as he flew past. The old waggoner of the county supply and marketing department called to him from his cart, to ask where he was going.

"Apricot Hill," Mao-ching shouted back, already some distance away. He was filled with only one desire: to get to south Apricot Hill as fast as possible.

Behind him Skinny Liang pedalled with all his might. He too had only one desire: to cut Mao-ching's throat. But the sky remained a limpid blue, the sun bright gold. Both highroad and mountain path ran through open country. He dared not follow too near Mao-ching, but tailed him about two *li* behind. Swallowing his impatience, he waited eagerly for dusk.

Village after village was left behind. The road climbed up and down several mountain ridges. Mao-ching pushed vigorously forward. The green willows and pink peaches flanking the familiar mountain road brought nostalgic memories of his younger days, of his revolutionary comrades and their fighting life together in these same mountains. It was on an April spring day just like this that he had run down that tortuous mountain track to deliver an urgent message. On another April day just like this he had crouched behind a big rock with Commander Kao as they opened fire on Japanese invaders coming up the opposite slope. As the road skirted a deep gully he remembered the fine battle they'd fought there to annihilate a whole unit of invaders. And under that old peach-tree by the foot-hill he had once paused for breath, on his back a wounded comrade-in-arms whose blood dripped redder than the April spring flowers. In Mao-ching's eyes, even the pebbles on the path were dear, for before he had been entrusted with a gun these had been his only weapon. Once he had battered the enemy with nothing more than pocketfuls of stones, throwing them with the deadly accuracy acquired in his five years as a poor shepherd boy. The enemy had run away bleeding and frightened.

Skinny Liang was by now hot and perspiring. He waited eagerly for the sun to set but it seemed to be plodding slower than an ox. If only Mao-ching would slow down a little! But Mao-ching went fast as the wind. Liang gritted his teeth and pedalled furiously.

Finally the sun set behind the hills. The moon came up. Mao-ching crossed the long valley leading to the western pass of Apricot Hill. Under the misty moonlight, an apricot orchard stretched up the hillside, its pink blossoms filling the air with fragrance. The scene made him think of the guerrillas of Apricot Hill. Mao-ching remembered the steadfast look in Party Secretary Chou Ling's eyes, and Commander Kao Peng who used to send him here with messages. Last winter an old comrade-in-arms had told him that Kao was now commissar of a division which had recently been transferred to one of the suburbs near here. How glad he would be to know that the renegade Chi Hsiao-yun had been exposed. These

reflections made Mao-ching forget hunger and fatigue. Not stopping to rest, he pedalled up the path to the hills.

Just then, the moon disappeared behind a cloud. The hillside turned black. As his bicycle rounded the hilltop and started downhill, the road was lost in darkness. Mao-ching slowed down, keeping both hands on the brakes. Half-way down he heard a clatter behind him. Looking over his shoulder, he was startled to see a cyclist hurtling towards him. Too late to avoid a collision now. Mao-ching braked to a sudden stop. Crash! The other bicycle rammed into him, throwing him into the ditch. In the instant before the crash, Mao-ching recognized the face of Skinny Liang. Burning hate and the longing for vengeance flared up in his heart. As soon as he hit the ground, he groped for and gripped a big stone. He was ready for battle.

The moon reappeared from the clouds. Mao-ching and his adversary could see each other clearly now. Liang, who had fallen in the centre of the road, scrambled hastily to his feet. He pulled out a dagger and charged. When the young Communist tried to get to his feet an agonizing pain shot through his left leg. He rolled over on his side. Gloatingly, Liang Hsiang raced towards him, his dagger raised.

Just as Liang was about to step into the ditch, Mao-ching heaved himself into a sitting position. Abruptly, he let fly the stone in his hand. Liang saw it coming but it was too late to dodge. It struck him full on the temple. Down he flopped, his dagger clattering to the ground. Mao-ching knew he was knocked out. Gritting his teeth and dizzy from the pain in his leg, he crawled towards the agent and touched his wrist. The man was out cold. Quickly, he undid Liang's belt and leg bindings and with them tied his hands and feet.

As the night deepened, the moon shone out again over the serene fields and hills. An hour went by without anyone appearing. Liang opened his eyes. Straining to loosen his bonds, he tried to free himself. Mao-ching gave him a look of utter contempt.

"This is the end for you."



Liang ground his teeth, then sighed. He stopped straining.

Suddenly the sound of a motor came from the other side of the ridge. A truck appeared at the top of the road, its headlights dazzling the eye. Mao-ching excitedly waved his cap to attract attention. The truck stopped. A dozen or so men jumped down. They came running towards him crying, "Mao-ching!"

It was Ta-hu and Sun Kang with some PLA comrades. Mao-ching exclaimed in joyful surprise.

Liang Hsiang, his dagger and the bicycles were put in the back of the truck. Mao-ching was helped into the cab. Ta-hu wanted to take him straight to the county hospital, but Mao-ching signed to the driver to go on.

"Straight on to south Apricot Hill Village."

## 8

The next day at noon good tidings flashed through the street and lanes of Yu Family Village.

"Mao-ching's back."

"Liang Hsiang's behind bars."

"The revolutionary committee's going to be set up right away."

Then cymbals and gongs crashed, slogans were posted up. Men and women, young and old, left their homes to converge in the square where the meeting was to be held. Some went first to see Mao-ching.

Old Ho, Hao Chung, Liu Chi, Tongue-tied, Grandad Li and Granny Sun went into Mao-ching's house. The first thing Granny asked about was Mao-ching's leg. Beaming, he assured her it was a simple dislocation. He had had it seen to at the hospital and now felt quite all right again. As Granny Sun didn't believe this, he took a few steps and stamped his left foot to convince her. The old woman, wiping her eyes on the hem of her tunic, exclaimed, "I'm so glad about that!" Touched by her concern Mao-ching felt his own eyes moistening.

While they were talking, Yu Pen-hsing strode in shouting, "Party secretary, I have something to expose."

When Mao-ching asked him what it was, he said, "I want to expose Skinny. It was he who wrote those counter-revolutionary slogans in your notebook. I happened to go in while he was writing."

"Why didn't you say so earlier?" demanded Granny angrily.

Yu Pen-hsing had no answer to that.

"Better late than never," said Mao-ching. He told Yu, "We're going to have Lu and Liang brought here to be struggled against."



You can speak up against him at the meeting, expose and debunk him at the same time."

Yu Pen-hsing agreed to do that and left. The others set out also for the meeting, Mao-ching and Old Ho bringing up the rear. A jeep stopped near by. As soon as its door opened, Mao-ching and Old Ho went up to greet the Party secretary of the county. As Secretary Wang shook hands with them he pointed to the man emerging from the jeep behind him.

"Look, who's here!"

A PLA commander in his fifties, broad and thick-set, beamed at them, stretching a hand out to Mao-ching. Mao-ching stared in disbelief, then ran up to grip his hand, too excited to say anything but "Commander!"

Recognizing him too, Old Ho cried, "Old Kao!" The commander strode up to shake his hand.

Mao-ching took Kao Peng and Secretary Wang to his house.

"Commissar Kao has been with us for a fortnight," said Wang. "He kept talking of coming down to see you, but we were held up by Lu Chai's case."

"Never suspected that Lu Chai was Chi Hsiao-yun, did you?" asked Kao Peng.

"No, I didn't."

"Neither did I. But as soon as I saw him, he looked so like that renegade in every way that I was sure. Investigations proved my suspicions well-founded."

"He changed his name after he turned traitor and wormed his way again into the Party underground in town. He even spent half a year in the Western Hills."

"That Liang Hsiang pretended to have come from East Gully in the Western Hills. He must have taken somebody else's name."

"Never connected Liang Hsiang with Lu Chai, did you?" Kao Peng asked again.

"No. Liang Hsiang appeared just a simple, honest peasant. I never imagined he'd been the head of a Peace Preservation Corps and a Kuomintang agent at that. Imagine, he and Long-legged Lai who interrogated Chi Hsiao-yun are one and the same person!"

"I think that's a profound lesson to be remembered. We never suspected such things could happen, but Chairman Mao and the Party Central Committee knew it was possible. That's why the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution was launched to consolidate the proletarian dictatorship, uncover these renegades, Kuomintang agents and diehard capitalist roaders, and seize back the power they'd usurped. Also to temper us in struggle so that we'll learn to weather still fiercer storms."

"In these past months, Mao-ching has led us in battle and been well tempered," said Old Ho.

"It takes plenty of tempering to produce fine steel!" was Kao Peng's approving comment.

*Illustrated by Chen Yu-hsien*

## NEW CHILDREN'S SONGS

*Cheng Chun-ping*

### Every Wall Is a Battlefield

Red brick walls,  
And grey brick wall,  
A field of battle each and all.

We Little Red Soldiers fight,  
With vim and punch and pep,  
Writing posters is a free-for-all.

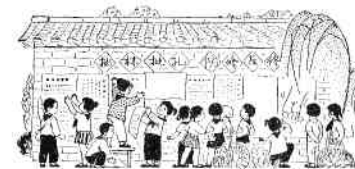
Political cartoons we love to draw,  
And little stories we write as well,  
Both are our guns and ammunition.

---

These songs were written by Little Red Soldiers of the Hsissupe Primary School in Peking. For further information see the article on p. 104.

We know Lin Piao was rotten,  
Confucius and Mencius we debunk,  
Our revolutionary fires burn bright.

Red brick walls,  
And grey ones too,  
Every wall is a battlefield.



*Chang Hsiao-hua*

## Our Battle Songs Soar to the Rosy Clouds

We blow our bugles, beat our drums,  
As we Little Red Soldiers march;  
Rank on rank in a mighty stream,  
To join in a criticism meeting.  
We Little Red Soldiers are new fighters,  
Against the ideas of Lin Piao, Confucius,  
And all who would turn back the clock.  
Whatever bars our way ahead  
We'll destroy and leave in ashes;  
We Little Red Soldiers are marching forward,  
Following the red flag held on high,  
Our battle songs soar to the rosy clouds.

*Liu Shu-mei*

## Smash "The Mandate from Heaven"

Lin Piao was a very bad egg,  
Like Confucius and Mencius he peddled poison.  
He wanted to restore capitalism and seize power,  
So he spread nonsense like "the Mandate from Heaven".\*  
Pointing to his own head, he used to say,  
"This head of mine is very special!"  
He called himself a "heavenly horse,"\*\* "solitary and free",

---

\*"The Mandate from Heaven" is one of the idealist theories advocated by Confucius. "Life and death are pre-ordained; wealth and honour come from heaven." All exploiting classes in the past used this theory to suppress and fool the labouring people and exact obedience from them.

\*\*According to an old Chinese classic "the heavenly horse" possessed miraculous powers. "The heavenly horse flies through the skies, solitary and free." The same classic states, "He is a unique being who can come and go in the universe and roam the country, solitary and free. This being is the noblest of men." Lin Piao wrote an inscription in which he likened himself to "the heavenly horse", "the noblest of men" and "a unique being". His aim was to usurp power, reverse the revolution and establish himself as a despotic ruler.

While he schemed to turn back the tide of history.  
We are Chairman Mao's Little Red Soldiers,  
No one on earth is going to fool us,  
We rely on practice and revolution,  
Not on any "Mandate from Heaven".  
We'll throw this nonsense in the garbage can,  
Where it will remain for all time.



---

**Herding Horses for the Motherland**  
(oil painting)      *by Kuang Ting-po*



## We Study for the Revolution

There was once a bad book pupils had to study,  
Called *Poems for Gifted Children*\*  
Full of sayings of Confucius and Mencius to be memorized  
Such as, "In the court all are officials,  
Only well-read scholars are there."  
For long hours indoors students studied to become officials.  
The aim of the book was to oppress the working people.  
We Little Red Soldiers are a new generation,

---

\**Poems for Gifted Children*, a reactionary textbook, was written in the Sung Dynasty (A.D. 960-1127). It was used by all ruling classes in the past to teach the ideas of Confucius and Mencius to young children. The main theme in this book is the worship of Confucius. It emphasizes the study of the Confucian classics and instills the idea of "going to school in order to become officials". The lines, "In the court all are officials, only well-read scholars are there," are taken from this book.

Who study to join the revolution. With our brooms  
We'll sweep away all old dust and rubbish;  
Criticism of Confucius and Mencius we'll write ourselves,  
We'll study Marxism-Leninism, and other subjects too,  
For we're going to be workers, peasants and soldiers when we  
grow up.



*Chang Yi-pin*

## Learning to Farm

Little bees are buzzing all over the countryside,  
When we go to the outskirts to learn how to farm.  
Our arms loaded with cauliflowers we run in a file,  
While our commune uncles look on with a smile.

Little bees are buzzing all over the countryside,  
When we go to the outskirts to learn how to farm.  
We Little Red Soldiers work in the leek field,  
In high spirits our hoes we wield.

Little bees are buzzing all over the countryside,  
When we go to the outskirts to learn how to farm.  
Teachers and pupils do farm work together,  
Along this broad road we'll march on for ever.

## Open-Door Schools Are Fine

Going to help in factories,  
Working together with street committees,  
Open-door schools are fine.

The old workers teach us,  
Show us the socialist road;  
Angrily we criticize Lin Piao and Confucius.

Helping the street committee  
We investigate social questions,  
Keeping in mind the basic line.

We go out to workers, they come in to us,  
Understanding of both pupils and teachers rises,  
Running open-door schools is fine.

---

This poem and *A Visit to My Sister* are the collective work of a children's creative group.

## A Visit to My Sister

Wearing my small straw hat to shade me  
From the red sun as I walk,  
Skirting the lush green fields I go,  
To visit my sister in the countryside.

The sorghum stalks are sturdy and tall,  
The corn cobs big and fat.  
Hard work brings bumper harvests,  
My sister is a hard worker.

Grasping my sister's hand in mine,  
I look her over from head to heels;  
She's strong and husky, her cheeks are rosy,  
Now I can see how much she's changed.

The Party secretary said to me,  
"Your sister is really a go-getter.  
She leads the study of Marxism-Leninism;  
In farming methods she's a pathfinder.

"Firmly she follows the revolutionary road,  
Lin Piao's poison didn't affect her.  
She's taken root in our mountain village,  
And been chosen the women's team leader."

Hearing these remarks, my sister answered modestly,  
While pointing to the fields around us,  
“It’s the sunshine, rain and dew  
That nourishes the crops and makes them grow.

“It’s Chairman Mao who points out the way to me,  
Poor and lower-middle peasants teach me too,  
I’ve not made enough progress yet,  
But all I’ve done I owe to the Party.”

Now back home again I realize,  
My sister is a fine example,  
So I write these lines, fully determined  
That when I’ve grown bigger I’ll go to the countryside too.



## WRITINGS BY LEGALISTS

The movement to repudiate Lin Piao and Confucius is unfolding in depth in China. One of its main features is the study now being made of the struggle between the Confucian and the Legalist lines in history, the publication of newly annotated works by past Legalists, and the use of Marxist methods to critically sum-up the historical experience of class struggles to serve present-day needs.

The Confucians and the Legalists emerged as two opposed schools of thought during the Spring-and-Autumn Period and the Warring States Period (770-221 B.C.) when China was changing from slave society to feudal society. The Confucians opposed reforms and believed in a return to past traditions, advocating “rule by rites”. The Legalists stood for progress and reform, and advocated “rule by law”. The Confucians represented the interests of the moribund slave-owning class of that time, the Legalists those of the newly emerging feudal landlord class. The founder of Confucianism was Confucius (551-479 B.C.). One of the chief early Legalists was Shang Yang (?-338 B.C.).

During the Western Han Dynasty (206 B.C.-A.D. 8) feudal society was consolidated, and thereafter the struggle between the two different schools was carried on within the landlord class. The Legalists were the progressive wing of that class.

Representative Legalists of different periods in Chinese history have left many writings expressing their political views.

*Chinese Literature* has this year begun publishing writings by Legalists. Our third number introduced some poems by Tsao Tsao (A.D. 155-220) and an article on his writings. In this number we are publishing six poems by another well-known Legalist, Liu Yu-hsi of the Tang Dynasty, with an introductory article.

— The Editors



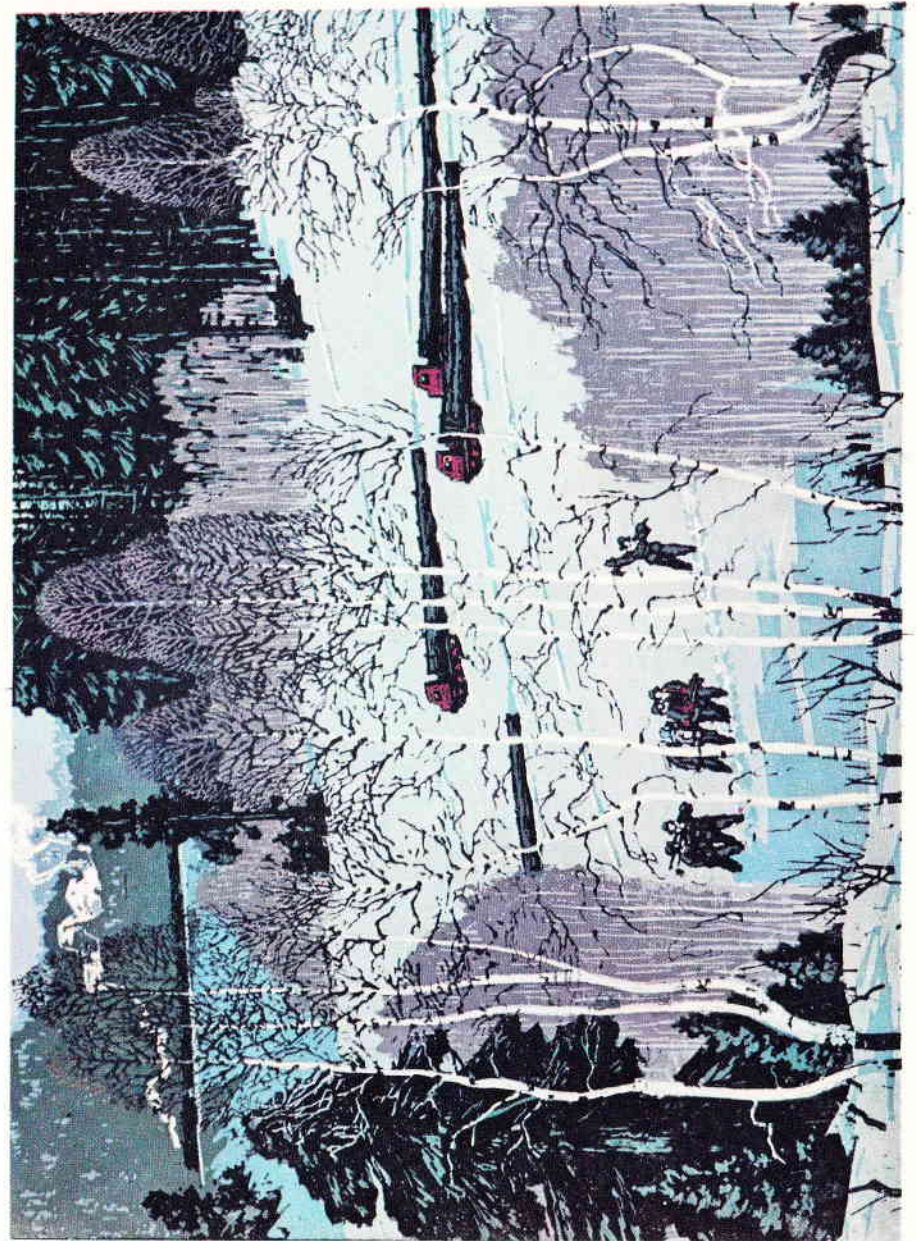
Liu Yu-hsi

## Mosquitoes

On sultry summer evenings when Orchid Hall stands open  
At dusk mosquitoes raise a furious droning,  
Their din first heard as fearful  
As thunder rumbling from the southern mountains;  
Clamouring, whirling, revelling in darkness,  
The swarm obscures men's eyes, deceives their ears.  
When flowers drip dew, the moon rides high,  
How viciously they bite, driving sleep away;  
A six-foot man am I, mere midges you,  
But a horde against one you can wound me.  
Natural seasons brook no control,  
I will hang a net over my bed to keep you out;  
When with the dawn of autumn the air clears  
You paltry pests will feed pheasants.

---

Song of the Forest (woodcut)  
by Tu Hung-nien



## Recalling the Past at Mount Hsisai

Wang Chun's galleons sailed down from Yichow\*,  
Chinling's\*\* kingly grandeur faded sadly away:  
Chain-barricades sank fathoms deep in the Yangtse,  
Flags of surrender overspread the cliff.  
Time and again men may lament the past;  
The mountain remains unchanged, couched above cold river.  
Now all within the Four Seas are one family,  
By old ramparts autumn wind sighs through the reeds.

---

\*Wang Chun (206-285) led the troops of Tsin down the Yangtse River from Szechuan to conquer the Kingdom of Wu in 279.

\*\*Chinling, present-day Nanking in Kiangsu Province, was the capital of the Kingdom of Wu (222-280) during the Three Kingdoms Period.

## A Reply to Po Chu-yi's Poem at Our First Meeting at a Feast in Yangchow

Cold and lonely the mountains of Pa, the rivers of Chu,\*  
Twenty-three years an exile,  
Missing old friends, in vain I sang  
The song of him who heard fluting,\*\*  
And home again am like the woodcutter\*\*\*  
Who found his axe-handle rotted.  
By the sunken barge a thousand sails go past,  
Before the withered tree all is green in spring;  
Hearing your song today, sir,  
I drink a cup of wine and take fresh heart.

---

Po Chu-yi (772-846), a famous Tang poet, was a close friend of Liu Yu-hsi towards the end of his life.

\*The mountains of Pa and the rivers of Chu referred to far-off regions in southwest China.

\*\*The singer who heard fluting was Hsiang Hsiu of the third century, who was reminded by flute music of his dead friends and wrote a poem about them. Here Liu Yu-hsi was thinking of Wang Shu-wen and others of his associates who had died.

\*\*\*The woodcutter was Wang Chih. According to a Tsin Dynasty story, he went into the mountains to cut wood and stayed for a while with some immortals, returning home later only to find that his axe-handle had rotted away and none of his neighbours was left.

## Poem

In the eleventh year of Yuan-ho (816), on my recall to the capital from Langchow, I wrote this poem for the amusement of the gentlemen who went out to enjoy the blossom.

Red dust sweeps men's faces on the royal highway,  
None but declares he is back from seeing the blossom.  
In Hsuantu Temple are a thousand peach-trees  
All planted since Master Liu left the capital.

## Revisiting Hsuantu Temple

When I served as secretary in the Department of State Farms in the twenty-first year of Chen-yuan (805), this temple had no blossoming trees. That same year I was appointed prefect of Lienchow, then demoted to be vice-prefect of Langchow. Ten years later, when recalled to the capital, I heard it said on all sides that a Taoist priest had planted fairy peaches in this temple, making it seem enveloped in rosy clouds. I wrote the preceding poem to commemorate this before being sent to the provinces again.

Now, fourteen years later, having been summoned back to head the Protocol Department, I have revisited Hsuantu Temple. Not a single peach-tree remains, only mallows and buckwheat wave in the spring breeze. I have therefore written the following twenty-eight-character poem while waiting to pay the temple further visits.

— In the third month of the second year of Ta-ho (828)

Half the hundred-*mu* court is overgrown with moss;  
Vanished the peach-blossom, nothing blooms here but rape;  
Gone, none knows where, the Taoist who planted the peaches,  
But today Master Liu is back again.

## A Willow Ballad

North of the Pass, Chiang flutes played *Plum-Blossom*;  
South of the Huai, Hsiao Shan sang *Fragrant Cassia*\*\*  
Play no more tunes, sir, of bygone dynasties  
But hear the new *Willow Ballads*.

---

\*The Chiangs were a nomadic people in China's northwest. *Plum-Blossom* was a local folk melody.

\*\*Hsiao Shan, a protégé of the Prince of Huainan (179-122 B.C.), wrote a poem in the traditional local style about fragrant cassia.

## Liu Yu-hsi's Political Poems

The struggle between the Confucian line and the Legalist line continued throughout the two thousand odd years of China's long feudal history, and some noted Legalists were outstanding men of letters. Liu Yu-hsi (A.D. 772-842), a fine mid-Tang poet, was a statesman of the Legalist line and a thinker with certain materialist ideas.

Liu Yu-hsi lived just after the rebellion of An Lu-shan and Shih Ssu-ming which had plunged the empire into eight years of war, seriously impairing the central feudal authority and unity of the country. The power of the central government had fallen into the hands of eunuch factions; in the provinces, local garrison commanders had raised independent armies; and the conservative bureaucrats at court, concerned only to safeguard their selfish interests, did the bidding of powerful eunuchs and provincial warlords. Representing the interests of old landlord families, these high officials adopted a retrogressive Confucian line which hampered progress and encouraged separatism. With such men at the helm of the government, great landowners annexed more and more land from the peas-

ants, taxation grew increasingly exorbitant, countless peasants having lost their land were reduced to beggary, and agriculture declined. The smaller landowners, too, were victims of political oppression and economic exploitation, and this made them also wish for political and economic reforms. The struggle between the Confucian and Legalist lines in the middle Tang period centred upon these issues: whether to introduce reforms and go forward or to cling to past tradition and retrogress; whether to uphold the unity of the empire or to allow local warlords autonomy.

Liu Yu-hsi came from a family of minor landlord officials. Because his class also suffered political oppression, he felt strongly about the abuses of his time. At thirty-two he obtained an official post in the capital, Changan, and became a close associate of Wang Shu-wen (753-806), a trusted adviser of the crown prince. Wang and he together planned a programme of political reform. And when the crown prince ascended the throne in 805 as Emperor Shun-tsung, he relied on Wang Shu-wen and other officials with Legalist ideas to start a reform movement aimed at wresting power from the eunuchs and suppressing the unruly provincial commanders. They also introduced measures opposed to the conservative class of big landowners. Liu Yu-hsi and Liu Tsung-yuan (773-819), another famous man of letters, were prominent in this movement for political reform. Unfortunately, because they lacked mass backing, in less than half a year the movement was crushed by the conservatives and the emperor was forced to abdicate. All the chief reformers were either killed or demoted and banished from court, Liu Yu-hsi being posted to be a district official serving in remote provinces for most of the rest of his life.

After the failure of the reform movement, Liu Yu-hsi used his writings as a weapon to continue the fight against the conservative forces and produced many militant essays and poems. His most celebrated philosophical essay is his dissertation *On Heaven*, which puts forward the materialist view that "Heaven (i. e. natural forces) and Man can defeat each other", for "it is by the use of laws that Man can conquer Heaven", and "Man relies on laws and institutions to rule, by deciding what is right and what is wrong". But if laws

and institutions are destroyed, social rights and wrongs become confused and men lose the prerequisites for subduing nature. Liu Yu-hsi also expressed the view that all things in the universe have definite forms and quantities, and that it is possible to discover them.

About eight hundred of Liu Yu-hsi's poems are still extant today. Among them are topical poems which reflect the progressive ideas and political stand of members of the lower landlord class. These poems with their militant spirit are products of the fierce struggle between the Confucian and the Legalist lines, and were used as weapons by the more enlightened small landowners in their fight against the diehards of the big landlord class. The content of these poems is healthy, and some of them have artistic value too. Like other progressive works by men with Legalist views in Chinese history, these poems by Liu Yu-hsi are gems in China's literary heritage.

Chairman Mao has told us: **"In the world today all culture, all literature and art belong to definite classes and are geared to definite political lines."** This applies to all literature and art past and present. So Liu Yu-hsi's topical poems reflect the aspirations of the progressives in the lower-middle landlord class of his time and served their Legalist political line.

In the fierce struggle for political reform, Liu Yu-hsi displayed great fortitude and tenacity. After the reform movement failed, when he was vilified by reactionaries, he still maintained that "as time goes on, rights and wrongs will be seen clearly". He was convinced that history would show that his line was correct. In an autobiographical sketch written just before his death he declared, "People may taunt and insult me, but there is no blemish in my mind." This persistence in progressive ideals and refusal to bow to the forces of reaction comes out clearly in Liu Yu-hsi's poems. In one he wrote:

The ways of the world are waves crashing swiftly down,  
But my heart remains as firm as a towering rock.

Thus even when conditions were hard and he suffered serious reverses, he would go against the tide and keep up the fight. During

his banishment to outlying regions, he remained concerned with the political struggle and his poems reflected important issues of the day. *The Conquest of Tsaichow* and *Going West of the City* eulogize the suppression of the rebel generals of Huaihsi in 817, while *The Recapture of the Land of Chi* celebrates the recovery in 819 of twelve eastern prefectures which had defied the central authority for more than fifty years. These poems show Liu Yu-hsi's ardent desire to see the empire re-united and his opposition to separatist tendencies.

In his political poems, Liu directed his attack mainly against conservative forces of the big landlord class represented by the eunuchs and local commanders. In certain allegories he described them as insects or birds. The poem *Mosquitoes* published in this issue was aimed at the clique of eunuchs in power. It penetratingly depicts their treacherous nature and foretells their inevitable doom. Such pests fear light and love darkness; at dusk they swarm forth to attack people viciously. Progressives attacked suddenly by them in the dark, being one against many, may be unable to ward them off so that these blood-suckers may be rampant for a while. Their days are numbered, however; for once the autumn wind blows and the sun rises, all pests of this kind will perish. This poem, in the original, consists of three rhymed quatrains and a final rhymed couplet, ending on a militant note.

Another poem *The Kite* depicts rapacious officials as kites preying on the carcasses of rats. *The Blackbird* ridicules sycophants for ever changing their tune. *The Hawk* is a satire on lackeys in the pay of powerful eunuchs. These vivid allegoric exposures of vicious yet cowardly types of reactionaries have a deep political significance.

Liu Yu-hsi's two short poems on his two visits to Hsuantu Temple are well known. They show the fearlessness with which he fought against the conservative forces. Hsuantu Temple in the capital was a place where men of letters went to enjoy the scenery and write poems. While Liu Yu-hsi was active in the reform movement, there were no peach-trees in the temple grounds; but ten years later, after his recall from the provinces, so many trees had been planted here that in springtime when they bloomed the place seemed veiled in rosy clouds and many people went there to enjoy the blossom. It was

rumoured that these peaches had been planted by a priest with miraculous powers. Liu Yu-hsi used this theme to write the first poem, a political allegory.

The first two lines conjure up the pageantry and bustle on the royal highway as crowds return from visiting the temple; in the next two the atmosphere changes abruptly, indicating that the poet cared nothing for this empty show. This poem circulated quickly in the capital, to the annoyance of the authorities, who had been informed by some of Liu's detractors that this was a veiled attack on the government. So within a few days he was dismissed again from the capital to be a district official. However, this did not make him abandon the fight. Fourteen years later, recalled again to Changan, he raised the same issue once more in a poem on his revisit to Hsuantu Temple.

The first two lines of the second poem describe how all the peach-trees have disappeared and the place is desolate, implying that this change is no accident. In the last two lines he wonders where the priest with miraculous powers who planted these peaches has gone, and expresses a challenge to those in power; for the poet who despised the earlier splendour and bustle has now returned, while the temple grounds have run to waste.

This second poem once more infuriated the diehards and as a result he was soon banished again to yet another minor provincial post. When we consider the background of these two poems and Liu's own experience, their political meaning is clear: the peach-blossom stood for the new bureaucrats of the conservative party who, at the height of their power, might appear very splendid; but in the poet's eyes, this splendour would soon fade and vanish like smoke. By showing his contempt for these powerful people, Liu revealed his firm conviction and militant spirit.

Political struggles strengthened his will to fight. In the narrative poem *The Sounds of Autumn* he compares his feelings to those of a spirited charger growing old in the stable and an eagle with its wings pinioned. Though the charger cannot gallop freely and the eagle cannot soar to the sky, they retain all their ambition and fighting spirit. *Hearing the Autumn Wind* employs similar images:

The horse shakes its shaggy mane, thinking of the grass of  
the frontier;

The eagle opens weary eyes, longing for the sky.

Now the world is at peace, it is time to take a look round,  
And so, though ill, for you I climb the high terrace.

Growing old and infirm, he still longed to fight for reforms.

Chinese literature provides many examples of poems with themes from history, most of which have a clear political message. Poets who followed the Confucian line used historical themes to advocate a return to the past and glorify ancient "sages", opposing change and progress and vilifying the reforms of earlier Legalists. Conversely, poets who followed the Legalist line used historical themes to preach reform, oppose retrogression and denounce the evils of conservatism; and these poems served their current political struggles.

As Liu Yu-hsi was so strongly aware of the political crisis and economic decline of the Tang empire, all his poems on historical subjects drew lessons from the past which had a bearing on the current situation. In 826, when passing through Chinling, present-day Nanking, he wrote the poem *Chinling* recalling its earlier history. This city had been the capital of six kingdoms from the third to the sixth century; but although it commanded a strategic position with excellent natural defences, this could not prevent the fall of these kingdoms in turn. So he wrote:

Rise and fall are brought about by men;

Mountains and rivers guard a state in vain.

He pointed out this profound historical lesson to warn the government that if those in power simply clung to past traditions and made no serious reforms, then even Changan with its fine natural defences might fall one day like the old city of Chinling, and the mighty Tang empire could perish like the Six Dynasties.

Having in mind the dangers of the separatist tendencies of local army commanders, in some of his poems on the past Liu Yu-hsi pointed out that the wish of the people and the natural historical tendency were for unity, and separatist trends must in the end fail.

This idea is vividly expressed in *Recalling the Past at Mount Hsisai*.

Mount Hsisai, near present-day Tayeh County in Hupeh, commands a strategic position. In the Three Kingdoms Period, it was an important fortress on the river guarding the western frontier of the Kingdom of Wu. The first half of this poem unfolds a historical panorama. In the year 279, Wang Chun, a commander of the Western Tsin Dynasty, advanced from Yichow (present-day Chengtu) along the Yangtse to conquer the Wu capital Chinling. Though Wu had strong river defences, the trend towards unity proved irresistible, the fortifications were breached, and the last king of Wu was forced to surrender. The second half of the poem turns from the Battle of Chinling to this mountain fortress. Since ancient times the natural surroundings of Hsisai had undergone no change, yet the six kingdoms which had their capitals at Chinling had fallen one after the other while the empire remained disunited. Now the Tang Dynasty had re-united the country but, just as the wind still sighed through the reeds, the old fortress still remained. Linking this with the attempts of local army commanders to split up the country, Liu clearly wanted to warn men of the perils of disunity as seen from the past.

Some of Liu's poems express his personal feelings at specific times instead of dealing with a political struggle or drawing lessons from history; yet in these too he shows a positive spirit, an optimistic faith in the future, and a materialist viewpoint. This sprang from his long experience of political struggle. A well-known example is the poem he wrote on first meeting the poet Po Chu-yi at a feast in Yangchow. At that time Liu was already fifty-four. For more than twenty years, since the failure of the reform movement, he had been transferred from post to post in the far-off southwest while many of his former colleagues who shared his ideals had died. This poem first relates his own experience, his frustration in exile, and his longing for his old friends. Then follow two famous lines contrasting the sunken barge with the thousand sails going past, and the withered tree with all the green of spring. Here the poet uses these images to suggest the inevitable progress of human society.

All that is old and moribund must be ousted by what is new — this is the law of nature. Instead of grieving because he is growing old, he warmly praises the new things coming into being. And finally, having expressed his gratitude to his new friend Po Chu-yi, he determines to "take fresh heart". This optimistic note is very different from the conclusion of so many old poems lamenting an earlier age.

Liu Yu-hsi believed that men must rely on laws and institutions. Vicissitudes in human life are not caused by heaven but by contradictions between rising forces and declining ones; hence change is inevitable and new things must replace the old. Such rudimentary materialist views regarding historical evolution are often found in his poems, and this it is that gives them their buoyancy and forcefulness. He wrote:

In the flowering wood new leaves supplant the old,  
In the flowing stream waves in front cede to waves behind.

He sees the world as in a constant process of development. Elsewhere he writes:

Men of old lamented the melancholy of autumn,  
But I maintain that autumn surpasses spring.

Whereas many earlier poets had written with nostalgia of autumn, he found it inspiring and invigorating. He also believed that people were steeled through struggle.

Bamboo steeped in frost gives a clearer tone,  
Plane-wood tempered by fire has a tragic note.

To his mind, wood must be tempered by frost and fire before it could be made into musical instruments with a stirring timbre. Here, again, he reveals the intrepidity of a progressive statesman who dared to struggle against the powers of darkness.

The main spirit animating Liu Yu-hsi's political life as well as his writings is opposition to retrogression and the desire for progress. His long banishment from court provided him with opportunities for closer contact with the labouring people, enabling him to pro-



duce a number of poems depicting peasant life. Inspired by local folk-songs and dances, he also wrote songs and ballads in folk metres such as the *Willow Ballads*. In one of these published in this issue he stated explicitly:

Play no more tunes, sir, of bygone dynasties  
But hear the new *Willow Ballads*.

To him, traditional songs might at some time have been "new tunes" which had a positive significance, but these already belonged to bygone ages, and songs containing fresh ideas were required to suit contemporary needs. Indeed, he wrote his political poems to help supply this need.

Liu Yu-hsi's ballads and songs in folk metres used simple language and vivid images to express progressive Legalist ideas from the materialist viewpoint, and to reflect various aspects of contemporary society. In them he voiced his belief in the need for reform and his criticism of conservative forces. Thus in another of his *Willow Ballads* he used the willow as a symbol for his political ideals.

Gone in a flash the peach and plum blossom,  
But the willow lives on and on.

It is recorded that the common people of that time liked to sing Liu Yu-hsi's songs; and this shows that the progressive ideas in them were supported by the people.

Chairman Mao has pointed out: **"It is always so in the world, the new displacing the old, the old being superseded by the new, the old being eliminated to make way for the new, and the new emerging out of the old."** The best of Liu Yu-hsi's topical poems show that the Legalists played a positive role in the development of Chinese literature because of their progressive outlook.

However, since Liu Yu-hsi belonged to the landlord class, even his best poems cannot but reveal the limitations of his class and his age. After the middle of the Tang Dynasty class contradictions became more acute and a great storm of peasant rebellion started gathering. But though the progressives in the landlord class wanted political reform, they could see neither the power of the peasant

masses nor a lasting political solution. So their poetry embodied certain negative or erroneous ideas. Even those of Liu Yu-hsi's poems which express his political stand and fighting spirit lack trenchancy, resorting to no more than gentle sarcasm and mild complaints. Certain of his poems on historical themes also sound a pessimistic note, lamenting that all human life is vanity. Some of his later poems, written when he was no longer in the thick of political struggles, also reveal a laissez-faire attitude. All these are blemishes in his poetry.

*Hsin Ping*

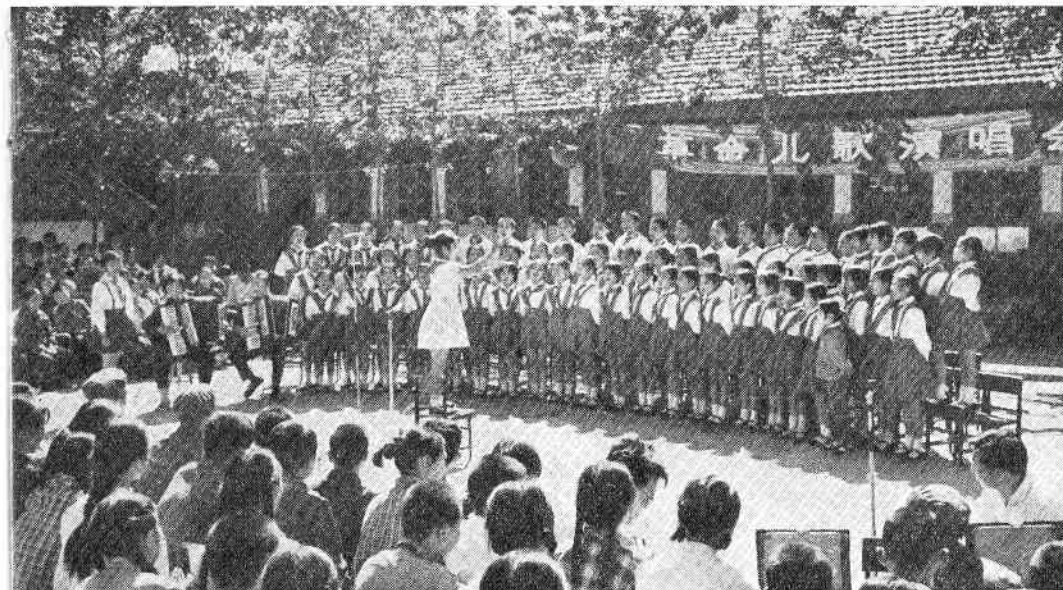
### New Children's Songs from a Peking Primary School

In the spring of 1974 a nationwide movement to repudiate Lin Piao and Confucius started in China. It is the continuation, in greater depth, of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution in China. This new mass movement has spurred the development of the revolution in literature and art, following the example set by the revolutionary model theatrical works, and people of all ages and professions have taken to writing songs. Two typical examples are the peasant poems of Hsiao-chin-chuang in Paoti County near Tientsin which we introduced in our April issue and the new verses made by Little Red Soldiers of Hsissupeï Primary School in Peking.

As soon as you set foot in the courtyard of Hsissupeï Primary School, you see posted up everywhere verses repudiating Lin Piao and Confucius. As one of the Little Red Soldiers here has written:

Red brick walls, and grey brick wall,  
A field of battle each and all.

Since last year the children of this primary school, numbering little more than six hundred, have written more than ten thousand



Singing revolutionary songs

revolutionary rhymes. Some of these they have also set to music and sing or perform in different ways. They have so far held more than twenty such performances, fully showing their militant spirit.

We're writing verses by the thousand now,  
A weapon, each, to fire against Lin Piao!

The youngsters of this school only started writing verses during the mass movement to repudiate Lin Piao and Confucius. When the movement began, staff and students first criticized the reactionary line of Lin Piao who preached the Confucian maxim: Exercise self-restraint and return to the rites. At that time class enemies in our society were trying to corrupt our children with jingles slandering the movement to encourage school-leavers to go to the countryside; so the school's Party branch got the teachers and pupils to study Chairman Mao's instructions on this question, organized visits to the countryside to see how educated young people had settled down



Reciting a new poem

there, and invited some of them to come and give talks to the school. In this way they made an effective criticism of such Confucian concepts as “one who studies hard can become an official” propagated by reactionary verses. A fifth-former Wang Lin learned a profound lesson from these activities. She thought: since the class enemy is trying to poison our minds with vicious rhymes, we should produce revolutionary rhymes to counter-attack. So she wrote a poem with the title *Go to the Countryside to Work for the Revolution*:

My elder sister's setting out today,  
 A big red flower at her breast;  
 She's off to the countryside to make revolution,  
 So quick she is to obey Chairman Mao's behest.  
 Before she leaves she tells me earnestly:  
 “Grow up fast and, whatever you do,  
 Put paid to Lin Piao and Confucius  
 So that you can come to the country later too.”  
 When I hear this I answer her quickly:  
 “In big ideals we Little Red Soldiers take pride;  
 We'll see later who makes the biggest contribution  
 In building up our socialist countryside!”

This was how, in the course of struggle, the first revolutionary verse was written in this school. It sparked off a general movement to write rhymes on current events.

To enable the children to grasp certain basic principles of Marxism to use as their weapons in repudiating Lin Piao and Confucius and to heighten the ideological level and militancy of their poems, the school authorities helped them set up study groups for the study of Marxism, Leninism and Mao Tsetung Thought, and other groups in which to practise writing. After study the children's political consciousness was raised.

When Wen Hung, grand-daughter of a revolutionary martyr, studied Chairman Mao's instructions and linked them with her own experience, she recalled the class struggle she had seen for herself when visiting a commune in the suburbs where a class enemy had plotted sabotage. She also recalled how her grandfather had been murdered by the Kuomintang reactionaries while trying to protect his comrades. These recollections filled her heart with hatred for the enemy, inducing her to make a forceful criticism of the Confucian doctrine that human nature is good. She wrote:

“By nature man is good” — what bunk!  
 Little Red Soldiers don't believe that lie.  
 The landlords preached benevolence  
 But plunged the peasants in dire misery;



Reciting one of her new poems

The KMT, who claimed "man's nature's good",  
 Shed streams of blood yet didn't bat an eye. . . .  
 Little Red Soldiers can't be fooled, for we  
 See clearly and we have the resolution  
 To liquidate Lin Piao and old Confucius  
 And grow up to persist in revolution.

The movement to criticize Lin Piao and Confucius and the writing of topical verses have given fresh impetus to the educational reform in this school. By taking part in social investigations and learning from factory workers, peasants and soldiers, the children have become more politically minded and this is reflected in the richer content of their new rhymes. They now write in praise of the proletarian revolution in the educational system, and new socialist

phenomena such as the mass exodus of school-leavers from the cities to work in the countryside. Thus Yen Li-hua writes:

The situation in our school is grand,  
 Reform in education's reached high tide:  
 Students and staff unite in criticism,  
 Comrades-in-arms, we're fighting side by side.

Chang Yi-pin, a schoolgirl who went for a spell to a commune in the suburbs to learn farming, has become very adept in farm work. On the basis of her own experience she wrote the poem *Learning to Farm* published in this issue. Written with deep feeling, it gives us a graphic picture of real life, expressing our school-children's love of the people's commune, their love of the collective and their love of labour.

The writing of verses in this school has also enriched the children's spare-time activities. A fourth-former Chin Min and his elder sisters Chin Wen and Chin Chun, all of whom study in this school, have been making up new verses together after school ever since this movement started. They not only write themselves, but encourage other youngsters to join in. During the summer holidays last year, they got other children living in the same compound to draw pictures and compose poems with them, besides writing criticisms; so their holidays were spent very profitably.

The appearance of so many new rhymes in this school has aroused great interest among the worker-peasant-soldier masses and among literary and art workers. Some of the new rhymes such as *Go to the Countryside to Work for the Revolution*, *Lin Piao and Confucius Are a Bad Lot*, *Little Red Soldiers Take Part in Criticism Meetings* and *Learning to Farm* have been set to music by professional musicians.

The writing of new children's verses in Hsissupe Primary School has also given fresh impetus to writing of this kind throughout the country, initiating a new trend in our primary schools.

## New Piano Music

Recently concert-goers in Peking have given a warm welcome to two new compositions for the piano, *Battling the Typhoon* and *Welcome in Spring to Change the World of Men*.

*Battling the Typhoon* was adapted from the *cheng* music of the same name by Liu Shih-kun and other pianists. The music expresses the heroism of our dockers who struggle against typhoons to protect state property for our socialist motherland.

In the autumn of 1973, the southern part of Hainan Island was devastated by the biggest typhoon in its history. Soon after this disaster, Liu Shih-kun and others went to that area. Instead of the scene of desolation they had expected, they found the islanders working with tremendous enthusiasm and saw with their own eyes rows of solid handsome houses being built on the ruins little more than twenty days after the typhoon. They also heard themselves from the local people what a world of difference separated the old society and the new. Before Liberation, a typhoon meant that the poor lost both their homes and their lives. Now, immediately after

a serious disaster, the Party Central Committee and Chairman Mao sent medical teams and relief supplies, so that not a single person died of hunger and not a single casualty succumbed to his wounds owing to delay in getting medical treatment. Gratitude to the Party and Chairman Mao had given the islanders infinite strength, and many were the stories of people sacrificing themselves to help others overcome difficulties and carry on production. Liu and the other musicians realized that no difficulty however great could crush the people armed with Mao Tsetung Thought. In our socialist New China it could only spur them on to work still harder for the revolution.

Deeply moved by this experience, Liu Shih-kun and his colleagues poured all their feeling into the adaptation. Their piano composition pays high tribute to the hard work of the dockers, using a chromatic scale to depict the swift onslaught of the typhoon bringing torrential rain. The forceful and powerful theme is presented with variations and steadily grows in strength, showing how these heroes by their dogged struggle gradually get the better of the typhoon. Then the deluge ends, the sky clears; bright sunshine scatters the dark clouds and lights up the men's joyful faces. From their hearts they praise the Party and Chairman Mao, and go all out to repair the damage done. The music ends on a note of jubilation.

The composers of this adaptation tried to retain the special features of *cheng* music with its traditional style while exploiting to the full the distinctive excellency of the piano. For instance, the *cheng* scale is pentatonic, hence the harmonies of this piano piece are basically in the pentatonic scale; and naturally the original score calls for special *cheng* techniques. Acting on the principle that old things should be made to serve present needs and foreign things adapted to serve Chinese needs, they introduced certain innovations to bring out the theme more vividly and profoundly. In the passage describing the fight against the typhoon, they adopt the method of sweeping the chords used in playing the *pipa* or Chinese guitar, thereby enhancing the fighting atmosphere. And the fierce onslaught of the typhoon is presented by means of a chromatic scale in place of the old pentatonic. In this way, the potentialities of the piano are fully utilized and the tension is greatly heightened. However, the fierceness of

the typhoon is only a foil to the heroic characters whose image is kept in the forefront. The passage presenting the calm after the storm makes full use of the pure timbre of piano music to suggest the bright clear sky, sunshine and white clouds, and this again serves to bring out the joy of the workers after their victory and their deep love for the Party and Chairman Mao. The deeply lyrical quality of this passage lends an added poignancy to the whole composition.

*Welcome in Spring to Change the World of Men* was adapted by Liu Shih-kun and others from an aria sung by Yang Tzu-jung, scout leader of the People's Liberation Army in the revolutionary modern Peking opera *Taking Tiger Mountain by Strategy*. This work expresses the hero's feelings as he sets out alone on horseback to beard the enemy in his den. From the start the music carries the audience into a world of raging wind and snow where a horse is galloping through the storm-tossed forest. The steady thud of the horse's hoofs and the howling of the wind supply the background to set off the hero's daring. Faced with such a dangerous and complex mission, he has no thought of his own safety, only wishing he could melt the whirling snow and welcome in spring to change the world of men. He is afire with the revolutionary ideal to smash the old world and liberate all mankind. And here the composers resort to revolutionary romanticism by using a cadenza suggesting a gurgling fountain, as if the hero can see the ice and snow melting away and flowers blooming in spring. In this way they present Yang Tzu-jung's lofty aspirations and round out his image, making it more vivid.

This new piano composition is an adaptation from the original Peking opera aria, but not a simple transposition. In the past, some piano works used complex harmonies and tonal colour to show off the composer's skill and the performer's technique, with the result that the main theme was blurred. In order to create glorious images of proletarian heroes in music, we must try by all means to give prominence to the chief melody which manifests the hero's character, making harmony and timbre serve this aim. In this adaptation, original tone-colour produces the forceful effect of galloping hoofs, and chromatic modulations enhance the main melody, so that the central theme comes out very clearly. To concentrate the musical

images and emphasize the climax, certain intermediate passages to accompany dancing or lengthy solos on the stage have been cut. And the expressive tonal range of piano music is fully utilized to build up atmosphere.

In the past the piano served largely to adorn the mansions and salons of the rich. Now the revolution in piano music by the proletariat, exemplified by the piano music *The Red Lantern* with Peking opera singing and the piano concerto *The Yellow River*, has liberated this instrument created by the labouring people and returned it to them, to serve the needs of the people. These two new compositions with their strong Chinese characteristics are widely acclaimed not only because they are easy to understand but, even more, because they reflect the lives of the masses and were composed for the masses, who draw inspiration and strength from the glorious heroic images of the proletariat created here.

## CHRONICLE

### Model Peking Opera Groups in Peking Tour the Country

Recently the groups responsible for the revolutionary model Peking operas *The Red Lantern*, *Shachiapang* and *Red Detachment of Women* went on a performing tour of various places in China arranged by the Ministry of Culture, similar to that they made in 1972.

Ten years have passed since the revolution in Peking opera in which model works like *The Red Lantern* and *Shachiapang* were born. Since then much more progress has been made. In the last two years new revolutionary modern Peking operas such as *Fighting on the Plain*, *Azalea Mountain* and the modern revolutionary dance dramas *Ode to Yimeng Mountain* and *Sons and Daughters of the Grassland* were created and performed. During the present tour, the workers, peasants and soldiers will be able to enjoy these new items as well.

Such wide-ranging tours are of great significance. They will further the popularization of the model Peking operas, satisfy the demands of the people and help the opera artists themselves to learn from their audiences of workers, peasants and soldiers.

### Another Festival of New Stage Productions

Sponsored by the Ministry of Culture, another festival of new stage productions from different provinces and autonomous regions has been going on in Peking, following the first which ended in March

this year. From their home provinces of Kwangtung, Hupeh, Honan, Yunnan, Kirin and Kansu, the troupes brought adaptations of revolutionary Peking operas, or separate scenes from them, in a number of local opera styles — *yuehchu*, *hanchu*, *yuchu*, *pingchu*, *taichu*, *tienchu* and *chaochu*. Local ballads supplement the programmes.

In addition, this festival features new works created in the past few years with themes taken from the Cultural Revolution and socialist revolution and construction, operas based on revolutionary history, and instrumental music and dances.

### Women Spare-Time Artists of Hupeh Province

A contingent of women is active in the graphic arts in the Yunghsin Brigade of the Hsuehchi Commune in Kuanghua County, Hupeh Province. In the last two years they have created more than 1,000 works in their spare time. Of these, about 100 have been exhibited in various counties, prefectures and the provincial capital.

In the movement to criticize Lin Piao and Confucius, the women artists have fought actively with pen and brush. Basing themselves on the family history of an old poor peasant who lived in a brigade known as "Farm-hand Village" before Liberation, they created a picture series entitled *Don't Forget the Farm-hands' Bitterness and De-bunk Confucius' "Self-restraint and Return to the Rites"*. It is a strong repudiation of the vicious plot of that reverer of Confucius, Lin Piao, to restore capitalism. They also painted *Determined to Settle in the Countryside* and other pictures, integrating today's realities in the countryside with the needs of our time.

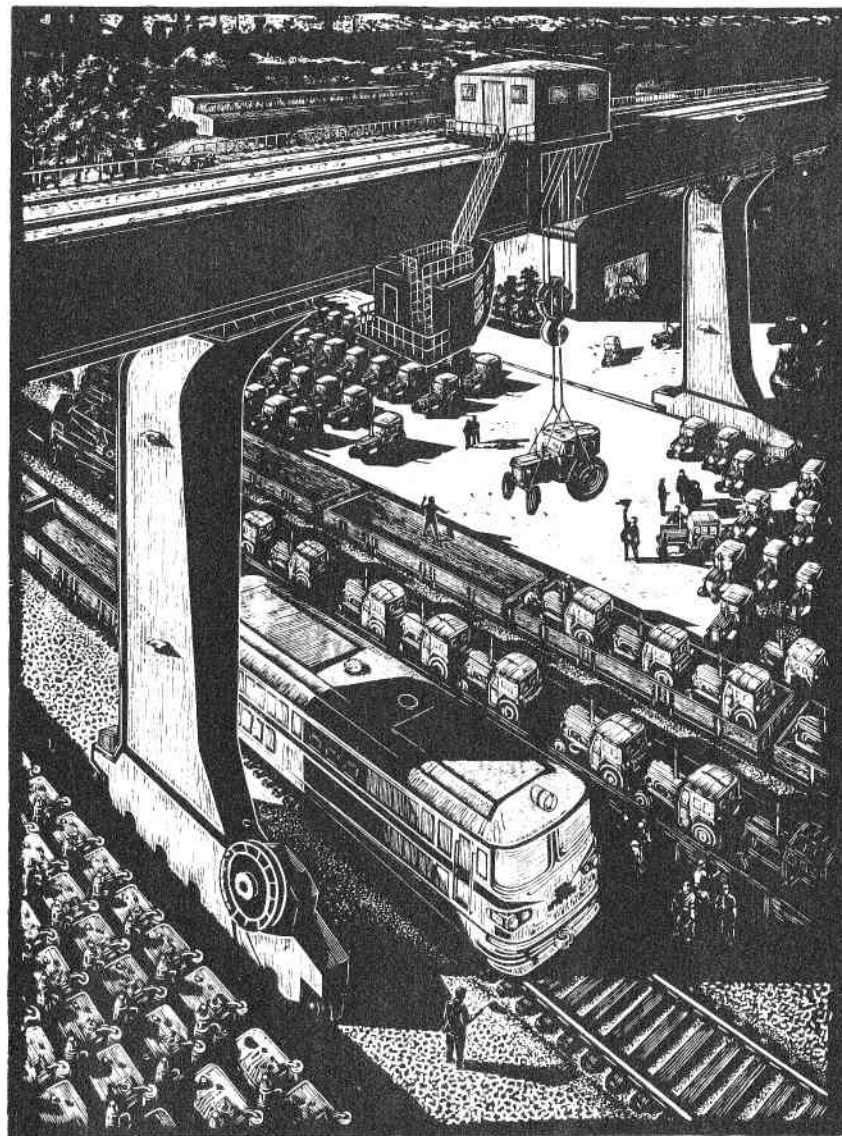
### Ancient Sea-Going Vessel Excavated in Chuanchow, Fukien

Not long ago a wooden sea-going vessel of the Sung Dynasty (960-1279) and the valuable relics it contains were excavated in Chuanchow Bay by archaeological workers of Fukien Province.

The 200-ton vessel lay under more than two metres of silt. It remains fairly complete, except for its deck. The remains of the hull measure 24.2 metres in length and 9.15 metres in width. In its

13 cabins abundant relics of the time, including quantities of spices and medicine, were found. Judging from initial analysis, lake-wood, sandalwood and aloes-wood were identified. Also found there were 524 copper and iron coins, mostly of the Sung Dynasty, as well as pottery and porcelain wares.

From its shape, structure and contents, archaeologists believe this was an ocean-going cargo ship built in Fukien in the Sung Dynasty. Its discovery provides valuable material for the study of the history of maritime traffic based on the old port of Chuanchow, the history of Chinese ship-building and geographical changes in Chuanchow Bay.







# 中国文学

英文月刊1975年第6期

本刊代号2—916