

CHINESE LITERATURE

1979 6



CONTENTS

Selection of Ai Qing's Poems	3
On Poetry — <i>Ai Qing</i>	38
Return from Silence — <i>Robert C. Friend</i>	42

STORIES

My Sacred Duty — <i>Wang Yaping</i>	52
Duan Yang — <i>Jia Pingao</i>	79
Zhou Enlai on Questions Related to Art and Literature	83
Memories of Premier Zhou at the 1961 Film Conference — <i>Huang Zongying</i>	96

NOTES ON LITERATURE AND ART

My Mother and Her Paintings — <i>Liao Chengzhi</i>	102
The Short Stories of 1978 — <i>Du He</i>	113
The Beijing Opera "Autumn River" — <i>Liu Naichong</i>	118

CHRONICLE	122
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PLATES

Paintings by He Xiangning	
Lion (1914)	16-17
Pine, Chrysanthemums, Bamboos and Birds (1931)	72-73
Waterfall (1938)	88-89
Green Plum Blossom (1943)	104-105
Landscape (1956)	112-113

Front Cover: Mountain Flowers — *Pan Tianshou*

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Ai Qing

Dayanhe — My Nurse

Dayanhe, my nurse,
Took the name of the village where she was born;
Dayanhe, my nurse,
Had been a child-bride.

I am the son of a landlord,
But I am also the son of Dayanhe,
Brought up on her milk.
By nursing me Dayanhe fed her family.
I was raised on the milk of your breast,
O Dayanhe, my nurse.

Dayanhe, the snow falls today and I think of you;
Your grass-covered grave under the snow,
The withered weeds on the eaves of your cottage now locked,
Your tiny ten-foot garden that was mortgaged,
The stone bench green with moss before your gate.
O Dayanhe, the snow falls today and I think of you.

In your arms you pressed me to your heart and with your
great heavy hands caressed me.
After you lighted the fire in the stove,
After brushing the ashes from your apron,
After tasting the rice to make sure it was cooked,
After putting the bowl of black soya on the black table,
After mending the clothes of your sons torn by mountain
thorns,
After bandaging your youngest son's hand cut by a chopping
knife,
After crushing the lice on the shirts of your children,
After collecting the day's first egg . . .
You took me in your arms, pressed me to your heart and
caressed me with your great heavy hands.

I was the son of a landlord,
And I drank your milk to the last drop,
When I was taken back home by my parents,
Ah, why did you cry, Dayanhe?
I became a new guest in my parents' home!
I touched the carved red lacquer furniture,
The gilt designs on my parents' bed,
I gazed at the words "Family Happiness" above the doorway,
which I could not read,
I touched my new clothes of silk and mother-of-pearl buttons,
I looked at my unknown little sister in my mother's arms,
I sat on a painted stool on a bed warmed by a brazier,
I ate fine white rice three times ground,
But I felt ill at ease —
I was a new guest in my parents' home,

To make a living, Dayanhe,
After her milk had run dry,
Began toiling with those arms that had carried me;
With a smile she washed our clothes,
With a smile she rinsed vegetables in the icy water of the
village pool,
With a smile she sliced turnips crisp with cold,
With a smile she mixed fermented grain for the pigs,
With a smile she fanned the fire under the pot of boiling meat,
With a smile she carried the winnowing basket to the square
to sun the beans and wheat.
To make a living, Dayanhe,
After her milk had run dry,
Began toiling with those arms that had carried me.

Dayanhe loved this foster-baby she gave her milk to,
During the New Year Festival she cut candied rice for him,
Often she would slip quietly into her village house
So that he would come running to her and call her "mama".
Above the stove she would paste the gaudy painting he made.
How Dayanhe would praise her foster-child to her neighbours!
Once she had a dream which she could tell no one:
In the dream she went to celebrate her child's wedding,
She sat in a brightly-lit hall adorned with coloured silk,
And the beautiful young bride tenderly called her "mother-
in-law"
How dearly she loved this child she gave her milk to!

Dayanhe died before she awoke from that dream.
At the hour of her death her child was not by her side;
When she died, the husband who had beaten her shed tears.

Together her five sons wept bitterly;
When she was dying, she whispered her foster-child's name;
Dayanhe was dead;
At the hour of her death her child was not by her side.

Dayanhe departed with tears in her eyes.
With the weight of more than forty years of humiliation in
the world of men,
With the countless sorrows of a slave.
With a four-dollar coffin and some bundles of rice straw,
With only a few feet of earth in which to lay her corpse,
With a handful of the ashes of burnt paper money,
Dayanhe departed with tears in her eyes.

But there were things that Dayanhe could not know:
Her drunkard husband died,
Her eldest son became a bandit,
Her second son died in the flames of war,
The third, the fourth and the fifth
Lived on, cursed by the masters and landlords.
And I — I write curses on this world of injustice.
When I returned to my village after long wandering
In mountains, over fields,
I met my brothers, and we were closer
To each other than in those former years.
And this was what you, Dayanhe, now calmly sleeping,
Do not know.

Dayanhe, today the child of your breast is in prison.
He is writing a poem dedicated to you,

To that purple shade beneath the yellow soil,
To the outstretched arms that carried me,
To the lips that kissed me,
To your face dark and tender,
To your breast that nourished me,
To your sons, my brothers,
To all foster-mothers and their sons on earth,
Those who are like my Dayanhe,
To Dayanhe who loved me as her own sons.

Dayanhe,
I am your son,
Your breast fed me.
I venerate you,
I love you.

On a snowy morning, January 14, 1933

The Sun

From the graves of the ancient past,
From the ages of darkness,
From this death stream of humanity,
Awakening mountains from their slumber,
Like a wheel of fire over the sand dunes
The sun rolls on towards me. . . .

With invincible rays
It gives breath to life,
Making the branches of trees dance towards it,
Making the rivers rush forward with song.

When it comes I can hear
The sleeping insects turning underground,
The people talking loudly in the squares,
The cities beckoning it from the distance
With electricity and steel.

Then my breast
Is torn open by the hands of fire,
My rotten soul
Gets discarded by the river,
And I gain faith once more
In the resurgence of humanity.

Spring, 1937

He Has Risen

He has risen —
From dozens of years of humiliation,
By the deep pit dug for him by the enemy.

His brow dripping with blood,
His chest also running with blood,
But he is laughing —
He has never laughed like this before.

He is laughing,
His eyes looking forward, gleaming,
As if searching
For the enemy that felled him to the ground.

He has risen.
When he stands,
He will be fiercer than all beasts,
And wiser than all men.

He must be like this,
For he must snatch back his own life
From the death of the enemy.

October 12, 1937, Hangzhou

Snow Falls on the Chinese Land

Snow falls on the Chinese land:
Cold blockades China. . . .

Like an old woman with many grievances, the wind
Closely follows behind,
Stretches out her claws,
Tugs at clothes of passing people,
Her words as old as the earth,
Complaining, never ceasing. . . .
From the woods,
Driving their carts,
Come the peasants of China,
Wearing their fur caps,
Braving the snow —
Where do they want to go?

I tell you, I too
Am a descendant of peasants.
From your carved face

So deeply etched with pain,
I can understand,
Understand so profoundly,
The hard years
Of people living on the plains.
No, I am not happier than you.
Lying in the river of time,
Often the waves of woe
Have entirely submerged me.
In wandering and in prison cells
I spent my very precious youth,
My life
Like yours
Has been seared.

Snow falls on the Chinese land:
Cold blockades China. . . .

Along the river in a snowy night
A small oil lamp drifts slowly
In a decrepit boat with a black cover.
Who sits there,
Facing the lamp and hanging her head?

O you
Dishevelled and dirty-faced young woman,
Is it that your warm house,
A warm and happy nest,
Has been burnt out by the invader?
Is it that on a night like this
You lost your husband's protection

And in terror of death were tortured
And humiliated by the enemy's bayonets?

On such a cold night as this
Numerous old mothers
Crouch in homes not theirs,
Like strangers
Not knowing
Where tomorrow's wheels will take them. . . .
The roads of China
Are so rugged
And muddy.

Snow falls on the Chinese land:
Cold blockades China. . . .

Throughout the snowy plains in the long night
Arc lands bitten by the beacons of war.
Countless toilers on the land
Have lost the cattle they fed,
Have lost their fertile fields
And are crowded together
In the dirty lanes of despair.
Facing the dark sky,
The hungry land holds out shivering hands
Begging for succour.

The pain and agony of China
Are as wide and long as this snowy night,

Snow falls on the Chinese land:
Cold blockades China. . .

O China,
On this lampless night,
Can my weak lines
Give you a little warmth?

At night, December 28, 1937

The Woman Mending Clothes

The woman mending clothes sits by the roadside.
When people pass by
Dust rises up,
Dust coats her kerchief,
Dust greys her clothes.
Her baby begins crying,
The child's tears are dried by the sun;
She does not notice it.
Silently she thinks of her home,
Its shelter destroyed by gunfire.
Silently she mends clothes for people,
And lets her child's eyes,
Those poor reddened eyes,
Stare at the empty basket.

The woman mending clothes sits by the roadside.
The road stretches away endlessly.
She mends socks for some passer-by,
And the passer-by goes on.

At a station on the Beiping-Hankou Railway, February 1938

I Love This Land

If I were,
I would sing with my hoarse voice
Of this land buffeted by storms,
Of this river turbulent with our grief,
Of these angry winds ceaselessly blowing,
And of the dawn, infinitely gentle over the woods. . . .
— Then I would die
And even my feathers would rot in the soil.

Why are my eyes always brimming with tears?
Because I love this land so deeply. . . .

November 17, 1938

Lion (traditional Chinese painting) by *He Xiangning*



Hitler

Napoleon's mighty plan
Of a hundred years ago
Has become an illusive dream.
The old world has been shattered —
New men, the proletariat, uninvited
Have stepped on to the stage of history.

After a century of lavish feasts,
The bourgeoisie has come to days
From which the glamour has faded.
In order to clear up the mess left by the feast
They have placed Hitler there
To play a comic role.

To the character of a lunatic
Add unbridled ambition
And irrational arrogance:
Lo, is created a terrible boldness!

In his own eyes he was a hero,
A poor copy, indeed, of Bonaparte,

The arsonist who fired the Reichstag,
The bloodhound of the German revolution,
The manipulator of the Munich puppets,
The one who gambles on conspiracy and deceit.

Hostile to man's intellectual work,
Hostile to peace among the peoples,
Hostile to humanity's noble ideals,
Hostile to the laws of history,
He wants to turn everything upside-down,
Replacing culture and art
With guns and bombers,
Replacing justice and law
With torture and whips.
Strangling the revolution, suppressing the workers,
Exiling the intellectuals, imprisoning good men,
He has turned the whole of Germany
Into one great concentration camp.

The people have lost their milk and bread,
Lost their freedom and happiness.
He uses whipping with leather thongs
To repay their ceaseless toil.
In the lands he dominates
There are sighs and cries everywhere,
The air reeks with the smell of blood,
Whole regions are dark with bloodstains,
And unburied corpses lie strewn everywhere.

An assassin, the worst criminal,
He considers his evil his virtue,

And openly opposes all good things.
In our age his very name
Now means "cruelty" and "terror".
Creating misery for all men,
He calls in the Four Horsemen
Who, galloping like the whirlwind behind him,
Bring War, Plague, Hunger and Death.

He uses racism as his pretence
To fan the flames of war,
But even the Germans
He tramples under his boots.
Holding *Mein Kampf* in one hand
And a pistol in the other,
He shrieks about conquering the world.

Countries destroyed,
Peoples enslaved,
Half the world plunged in darkness,
While he, glaring like a moron,
Gapes and laughs over the abyss.

Drunk with his dreams of conquest,
He is now starting his last adventure,
Sending great marching hordes
To invade the land of peace and freedom.
The resistance of a working people's army
Has stunned him;
The roar of our guns
Is punishing him for his betrayal.

Attack him! Deal him a mortal blow!
Smash up his foolish dreams,
Tear to shreds his deceit.
It is now time to bury him —
He has dug his own grave.

Let all the enslaved peoples
In the conquered lands arise!
Whether Poles or Danes,
French or Dutch, Belgians or Greeks,
Let them all unite firmly.
With the gallant Red Army
Let us together form an iron chain
To fight and defend mankind,
Its freedom, peace and happiness!
It is time to exterminate this bandit!

July 2, 1941

The Announcement of the Dawn

For my sake,
Poet, arise.

And please tell them
That what they wait for is coming.

Tell them I have come, treading the dew,
Guided by the light of the last star.

I come out of the east,
From the sea of billowing waves.

I shall bring light to the world,
Carry warmth to mankind.

Poet, through the lips of a good man,
Please bring them the message.

Tell those whose eyes smart with longing,
Those distant cities and villages steeped in sorrow.

Let them welcome me,
The harbinger of day, messenger of light.

Open every window to welcome me,
Open all the gates to welcome me.

Please blow every whistle in welcome,
Sound every trumpet in welcome.

Let street-cleaners sweep the streets clean,
Let trucks come to remove the garbage,

Let the workers walk on the streets with big strides,
Let the trams pass the squares in splendid procession.

Let the villages wake up in the damp mist,
And open their gates to welcome me,

Let village women release their chicks from the coops,
Let the peasants bring out their cattle from the sheds.

Poet, announce to them through your passionate lips,
That I am coming from beyond the woods and mountains.

Let them sweep clean their threshing floors
And those always-dirty courtyards,

Let them open those windows pasted with coloured papers,
Let them open those doors pasted with spring couplets.

Please wake up those industrious women,
And those snoring men,

Let young lovers get up too,
And young girls fond of sleeping.

Wake up those mothers who are tired,
And the babies sleeping beside them.

Please wake up every one,
Even the invalid and the pregnant,

Even the infirm with age,
Those groaning in their beds,

Even those wounded in the just war,
And refugees from homes burnt by the enemy,

Please awaken all the miserable people,
I shall give them all comfort.

Please awaken all those who love life.
Workers, engineers and artists.

Let singers come singing to welcome me
With voices savouring of the grass and dew,

Let dancers come dancing to welcome me
Clad in the white mist of the morning.

Let all those who are healthy and beautiful awake,
Tell them that I am coming to knock on their windows.

You, poet, who are loyal to time,
Please bring to mankind the news of comfort.

Let all people prepare to welcome me,
I shall come when the cock crows for the last time.

Let them look at the horizon with reverent eyes,
I shall give all those awaiting me the kindest light.

Poet, as night is nearly over, please tell them
That what they have been waiting for is coming.

1942

Fossil

With such agility in your movements,
Such buoyancy in your strength,
You leaped in the foam
And swam in the sea.

Unfortunately a volcano's eruption
Or perhaps an earthquake
Cost you your freedom
And buried you in the silt.

After millions of years
Members of a geological team
Found you in a layer of rock
And you still look alive.

But you are now silent,
Without even sight.
Your scales and fins are whole
But you cannot move.

So absolutely motionless,
You have no reaction to the world.
You cannot see the water or the sky,
You cannot hear the sound of the waves.

Gazing at this fossil,
Even a fool can learn a lot:
Without movement
There is no life.

To live is to struggle
And advance in the struggle;
Even if death is inevitable.
We should use our energy to the fullest.

1978

The Umbrella

In the morning I ask the umbrella,
"Do you prefer being baked in the sun
Or being drenched by the rain?"

The umbrella smiles. It says,
"This is not what I worry about."

I persist in my question:
"Then what are you worrying about?"

The umbrella says,
"What worries me is this:
In the rain I mustn't let people's clothes get wet;
In the sun I must serve as a cloud overhead."

1978

The Mirror

Though just a plain surface,
Yet it seems unfathomable.

It loves truth deeply,
Never hiding defects.

It is honest with those who seek it,
Anyone can discover himself in it,

Whether one is flushed with wine
Or wears hair white as snow.

Some like it
Because they are good-looking.

Some avoid it
Because it is too frank.

There are even some
Who hate it and wish to smash it.

1978

In Praise of Light (abridged)

Each man in his life,
Whether clever or slow-witted,
Whether lucky or unlucky,
When he leaves his mother's womb
Follows the light with his eyes.

A world without light
Would be like man without eyes,
A ship without a compass,
A gun without the sights;
Then how know the snake by the roadside
Or the trap that has been laid ahead?

If there were no light in the world,
There would be no spring with its willow catkins,
No summer with its blossoming flowers,
No autumn with its golden fruits,
No winter with its flying snows.

If there were no light in the world,
We could not see the turbulent rivers,
The vast forests, raging seas, snow mountains,
If we could see nothing of these,
What interest would we have in the world?

2

It is only because there is light
That our world with all its myriad things
Becomes colourful and magnificent
And our society appears so splendid.

The light gives us wisdom,
The light gives us imagination,
The light gives us enthusiasm,
With which we can create immortal images.

How awe-inspiring such works of architecture,
Revealing more splendour within!
How moving those poems,
Bringing tears to people's eyes!

Those wonderful sculptors
Giving warmth to the cold marble!
Those brilliant painters
Depicting alluring eyes that speak to you!

Dances with feet lighter than the wind,
Songs with voices clearer than the pearl,

Fiery enthusiasm, loyalty hard as crystal —
All art becomes lifeless without the light.

How beautiful the camp fires on the plain,
How beautiful the lighthouse near the harbour,
How beautiful the stars of a summer night,
How beautiful the fireworks in a celebration! —
But all these beautiful things depend on the light.

3

What a wonderful thing light is!
It is weightless but bright as gold,
Can be seen but cannot be grasped,
Goes everywhere in the world but has no form;
Wise and modest, it abides always with beauty.

It is created through clashes and friction,
Born in the process of burning and extinguishing;
It comes from fire, comes from electricity,
Comes from the eternally burning sun.

Ah sun, the greatest source of our light!
From high space billions of miles away
It sends warmth to where we live,
So that all things grow in this world.
All creatures worship it
Because it is the light that never fades.

It is something unfathomable,
It is not solid, not liquid, not gas,

Comes and goes without trace, is illimitable.
Makes no noise, settles anywhere,
Is powerful without showing its strength,
It is silent dignity.

It is a great being,
Rich and benevolent,
Broad-minded and frank,
Gives without expecting reward;
Selfless, it shines in every direction.

4

But there are creatures that fear the light,
Creatures that nurse hatred of the light,
Because the rays of the light
Hurt their selfish eyes.

All the tyrants in history,
All the evil ministers of past dynasties,
All the avaricious and corrupt people,
Have tried to imprison the light
Because light awakens the people
And exposes them as thieves of others' wealth.

All those who oppress others
Want the people to remain impotent,
Never daring to utter a sound,
So that they can rule as gods.

All those who exploit others
Want the people to remain ignorant,
So ignorant that they cannot count,
Cannot even work out one plus one.

Persons like this only want slaves,
They want tools that can speak,
They want only tamed animals.
They are afraid of men with ideas.

So they want to extinguish the fire,
And in the boundless darkness
Of their castles built of stone
Try to keep their despotic reigns for ever.

Sitting on the throne of authority,
Medals in one hand, whips in the other,
Money on one side, chains on the other,
They make contemptible political bargains,
Holding devils' dances
And feasting on human flesh and blood.

The history of men has seen so many generations
Immersed in the depths of woe,
In darkness as solid as granite.
Yet there have been many brave men
Who have used their heads
To knock down the iron gates of hell.

Glory to those who have dared to revolt!
Glory to those who have kept to the struggle!

In the storm, the thunder cracks louder than ever,
In the dark, lightning flashes brighter than ever,
From the long, dark night
The fiery sun emerges.

.....

7

Each of us possesses one life,
A speck of cosmic dust in the nebulae of the universe,
But each speck possesses its own strength,
Together all these specks produce the light;
Each one is independent,
Yet also shines on the others;
In the light it revolves ceaselessly
Together with the earth in the universe.

We burn as we revolve,
Our life is the burning process.
We in our own years
Should be like fireworks at a festival
Shooting up to the sky with a cry of joy,
Then exploding with a dazzling light.

Even if we are a small candle,
We should burn to the last bit;
Even if we are a match,
We should flare at the crucial moment;
Even if our bones have rotted after we die,
We should burn on as the will-o'-the-wisp.

8

Even if our life is as brief as the dew,
Even if we are a grain of sand on the Ganges,
We can bring out light greater than our own body;
As an insignificant person,
A speck of dust among astronomical numbers,
I have sung with my hoarse voice
Of freedom in days when we had no freedom,
Of liberation when we were an oppressed nation,

In this vast world
I have sung for those who were humiliated,
For those who were oppressed;
I have sung of resistance, of revolution,
In the dark night placing my hope in the dawn,
I am just a spark in this conflagration
In the joy of victory singing of the sun.

While the flames of my life are not yet extinguished
I have joined the contingents of fire and light,
Amalgamating the "one" with the "infinite",
Fighting for the truth.
Advancing together with those marching in struggle,
I shall always sing of the light.
The light belongs to the people,
All wealth belongs to the people,
The future belongs to the people.

Advancing together with the light,
Winning victory together with the light;

Victory belongs to the people.
When we are with the people, we are invincible.

9

Our forbears are glorious,
They have blazed the path for us,
Leaving deep footprints along the road
With bloodstains in them.
Now we are beginning a new Long March,
Not just a distance of eight thousand miles,
Not just crossing the mountains of the southwest
Or climbing snow-capped peaks in the northwest,
Not forcing our way across the Golden Sand and the Dadu;
We are forcing a path through more dangerous obstacles,
In our advance will be worse storms, more glaciers. . . .

But the light is beckoning us onward,
Urging us, exhorting us, encouraging us.
The light has brought us to the dawn of a new age,
Now our people are advancing bravely on all fronts.

Let faith and courage go with us,
We are armed with the finest ideal,
And, together with the most advanced class,
Our hearts are burning with hope,
The path before us is strewn with sunshine.

Let each day of our days
Revolve fast like the fastest wheels,

Let our lives give the fullest of our potential,
Let us be like the force liberated from the nucleus,
Spreading the wings of light to the farthest,
Soaring high into infinite space.

Let us soar high with the greatest speed,
Let us soar high with indomitable spirit,
Let us advance from today into tomorrow,
Let us consider each day a new starting point.

Perhaps some day a time will come
When we, this ancient nation,
This most courageous class of men,
Will accept light's invitation
To knock at gates now firmly closed,
To visit all our neighbours.

Let us start from the earth —
And soar towards the sun.

August to December, 1978

Ai Qing

On Poetry

The poet must speak the truth.

You hear people say, "So-and-so's poems are much liked because they voice the words in people's hearts." I don't think they've got the whole point. I would say, "So-and-so's poems are liked because he speaks the truth straight from his heart."

Everybody loves to hear the truth and a poet can only touch people's hearts with words that are sincere. He must also stand with the people, sharing their loves and hates, their joys and sorrows. Only when the poet's wisdom and courage come from the people will he win the people's trust.

The people do not like falsehood. No matter how well you camouflage it, no matter how high-sounding it appears, it will not touch the people's hearts. In his own heart, everyone has a scale on which he weighs your words.

There are people who brag about their "political acumen". They always praise those who are in power and throw stones at those who have fallen.

Such people write "poetry" with one eye on the barometer.

But we live in such a rapidly changing world that such "poets" have to run their legs off, hopping from one extreme to another

like a speculator rushing around the market. Though they have the cunning of a philistine, they just can't help sometimes placing their stakes on the wrong bet.

Political acumen is of course necessary, the sharper the better, but it must be in accord with the will of the people. If one is motivated by selfish, egoistic considerations, he cannot gain genuine political acumen.

This means the poet's acumen must be the same as the people's and he must also have the political staunchness of the people.

A "tumbler" who rocks this way and that, always righting himself at every instance, is only a toy, never an example for human behaviour.

Nobody can be excited at all and everything. Even a cicada knows when to get excited.

There are people who think you don't need "inspiration" to write poetry. They probably belong to the school that advocates "test-tube" babies, but they are certainly not poets.

People who think that anything they don't understand or can't explain does not exist or is unscientific can only live in small shells like the snail.

The objective world is constantly changing. It sometimes rains, sometimes the winds blow. People too are moved, now by joy, now by sorrow.

"Inspiration", if we must call it that, is nothing more than a new stirring over something on the part of the poet, or a sudden passion, a flash or spark lighting up the heart for only an instant. "Inspiration", so-called, is the happiest possible encounter of the poet's own world with outside reality. It should be a poet's best friend. Why exile inspiration to the desert of subjectivism?

There is no contradiction without difference.

To be excited about everything means not to be excited about anything.

A poet must be true to his feelings. Feelings are his reaction to the objective world.

Not every poem is about the poet himself but every poem is written by him, and that means it comes from his heart.

To pretend excitement when there is no stirring means you must learn to lie. Writing about something which does not touch your own heart, you will never touch other people's hearts.

Of course, telling the truth may mean trouble, or even bring on danger, but if you want to write poetry, you shouldn't do it at the expense of your own conscience by telling lies.

You don't write poetry by playing on words, yet you have to know how to use words in writing poetry. Even in speaking there is a difference between those who know how to beguile and those who do not.

Reflection and imagination come from thinking and are no more than the compounding of life's experiences. In the course of composition, comparisons are born whose purpose is to verify experience with experience.

.....

Artistic thinking is to capture elusive, fleeting ideas so that their images appear in vivid colours before the reader like indelible print on paper.

Artistic thinking aims at transforming the abstract into something concrete and approachable.

Artistic thinking enables solid, heavy things to take on wings; and in the reverse case, it enables the fluid and volatile to take shape.

Artistic thinking may bring together people thousands of miles apart, while on the other hand, it may make those standing close together part company.

Artistic thinking is a method complementing the abstract with the concrete.

Artistic thinking is poesy. It is also a basic method in writing.

Even in theoretical articles, that is, articles written along logical lines, artistic expressions of thought are often employed.

.....

Poems have eternal charm due to their artistic expression of thought.

To express an idea, a poet often gropes around for images. Take, for instance, my poem, *Pearls*:

Deep in the emerald sea,
Absorbing the essence of the sun,
You are a piece of the rainbow,
Bright like the sunrise cloud.

Imbuing the shape of blossoms,
Adoring the essence of crystal,
Ideas warmed in my cockles
Form drops of bright pearls.

Ideas are abstract, but once placed in the form of "drops of bright pearls" they become brilliant objects real to the grasp.

.....

December 1978

Robert C. Friend

Return from Silence

—a comment on Ai Qing, contemporary poet

In Wuhan in the winter of 1937 a young poet with a fierce love of his motherland turned an angry eye on the horizon of snow that smothered China — a land being ravaged by the Japanese invaders, frozen by the cowardly lack of resistance of the Guomindang.

“Cold blockades China,” he wrote. “The wind, like an old woman with many grievances, closely follows behind, stretches out her claws, tugs at clothes of passing people, her words as old as the earth, complaining, never ceasing. . . .” (*Snow Falls on the Chinese Land*)

Twenty years later, in a campaign against “Rightists” (1957-58) in the new People’s Republic, Ai Qing was labelled a Rightist. Poems such as *Snow Falls on the Chinese Land*, some critics said, were gloomy and pessimistic. They deliberately distorted the meaning of these verses, ignoring those with which the poet had closed his poem — lines that belied their charge:

Snow falls on the Chinese land:
Cold blockades China.



The Poet Ai Qing

O China,
On this lampless night
Can my weak lines
Give you a little warmth?

Ai Qing and his poems disappeared from public life after these attacks. The silence surrounding him lasted so long that foreign admirers began to believe him dead. In a sense, a new snow was falling on China. Forces trying to undermine the young society were slowly stifling democracy, working their way into high positions and creating the havoc with which they thought they could seize power from the masses of the people whom Ai Qing had always served. In varying degrees but ever increasing tempo, the turmoil was to last until 1976 when much of this rot was excised with the arrest of the “gang of four”. In late 1978 the charges previously made against Ai Qing were declared false and he was officially exonerated.

Of these two long decades of silence Ai Qing says only, “Following the spring of 1958, I went to work on a state farm in Heilongjiang Province for a year and a half and then in the winter

of 1959 to a state farm in Xinjiang, where I lived for sixteen years." During this period, though publication was denied to him, he continued to write poems. In the northeast he wrote two long poems on the transformation of the wasteland (unfortunately these have been lost). In Xinjiang he finished a novel, *The Desert in Retreat*.

Ai Qing, throughout his long life, has asked only one thing of his poems: that they "give a little warmth", a stiffening of will and courage, to the victims of injustice, the disinherited of China — and the world — and, as the revolution of the disinherited began to bring a brighter society into existence, that they help the people build their new and better world. Pessimism, crippling spectre that it is, has not been a factor in his life. Even in *The Trumpeter* (1939), when his hero, no more than a boy, falls in the smoke and flame of battle, he writes:

No one saw him fall
Down to the earth he loved above all things,
His hand still grasping the trumpet.
.
Listen!
The trumpet is still singing!

And in 1978, forty years later, as New China once more concentrates intensively on the problems of modernization, it is certain that Ai Qing, as he writes his poem *Red Flag*, remembers the blood of the little trumpeter who helped bring victory:

Red is fire,
Red is blood,
Red is the *shandandan* flower,
Red is the azalea,
Red is the pomegranate blossom,
Red is the rising sun;
Red is the most beautiful
flag flying in the wind!

Born Jiang Haicheng in 1910, Ai Qing came from a landlord's family in Jinhua County, Zhejiang Province. Because a fortune teller had declared that it was his Fate to harm his parents, he was sent away to be brought up by a poor peasant woman. This poor woman did not even have a name, so people called her by the

name of her village, Dayanhe. When he was five years old he was brought back home. As a further guarantee against the interference of Fate, he was not allowed to call his parents "father" and "mother" but had to call them "uncle" and "aunt". For the rest of his life he was to detest fortune telling and all other feudal superstitions. In this home, he remarked later, "I grew up in a milieu of indifference and disdain."

In the preface to his new *Selected Poems* which will soon be off the press (People's Literature Publishing House, Beijing, 1979), Ai Qing says of these formative and vital years only, "My childhood and the relations between me and my family were portrayed in my poems *Dayanhe — My Nurse* and *My Father*, the first written in 1933, the second in 1941. Yet in these works his memories of both are so vividly expressed — the one glowing with love, the other sadly scornful of a man who passed his life "the most tranquilly in an epoch the most troubled" — that we must assume their importance in the myriad decisions the poet took that made him the Ai Qing the world knows today. "Dayanhe," he says to his foster-mother, "I am the son of a landlord . . ." and in the same breath finishes the line with "and I drank your milk to the last drop".

Surely part of his decision to leave his home of "indifference and disdain" and join the red-bannered forces then raising the storm that would finally liberate "cold China", was the love of the poor and dispossessed which he had absorbed from the breast and care of this peasant woman.

"My father," Ai Qing wrote in his poem of the same title, "thrashed his children to train them and became the tyrant of the family." Whatever else this training did for Ai Qing, it was a school for rebellion. His father thought that "book knowledge" gained in regular school was only useful "first, to ornament the facade, second, to safeguard the family patrimony". Worse still to a youth in a time of fervent national patriotism:

My father, unmoved before the "revolution",
Waited, indifferent, for "progress".
He knew that this was "the wave"
But strove to avoid the torrent,
Keeping his distance and watching it. . . .

He was a most ordinary man,
 Poltroon enough to "stick calmly to his duties".
 The "middle way", conservative, greedy, complaisant,
 He went through life the most tranquilly
 In an epoch the most troubled,
 As did innumerable landlords of China.
 He considered his tiny lost village
 As his immutable kingdom.
 He had received from his ancestors a patrimony
 That he would pass on to his descendants,
 Neither larger nor smaller.
 That was his entire life —
 And it is for this that I pitied him.

It was in primary school during the May 4th Movement in 1919 that he first heard of such ideas as "democracy" and "science". In middle school he read some works by Lu Xun and wrote an essay entitled *Each Age Should Have Its Own Literature*. It was in his home district that he first heard of the idea of class struggle reading a mimeographed copy of *Introduction to Historical Materialism*.

In 1928 he entered the National West Lake School of Art in Hangzhou, where the artist Lin Fengmian was then principal. Lin recognized his talent but told him, "You won't learn anything here. You'd better go abroad."

One evening in 1929, now no longer able to hold his son in this "decrepit village", Ai Qing's father dug up a thousand Mexican silver dollars from under a plank in the floor and, "with trembling hands and a sombre mien" said, "Return in a few years. Don't let any pleasure make you forget to come back."

Thus he left to study in France. Here he read widely, supporting himself by working in a small factory making Chinese lacquer ware. He became familiar with the poems of Rimbaud, Yesenin, Blok and Mayakovsky and especially those of the Belgian poet, Verhaeren. "I fell in love with poetry," he says.

In January 1932 Ai Qing returned to Shanghai where he promptly joined the Left-wing Artists' Association and organized a group of painters. In July of the same year he was thrown into prison for being opposed to Jiang Jieshi (Chiang Kai-shek). Like Nazim Hikmet and others, his three years in prison were productive years. Here he wrote *Dayanbe — My Nurse* and a number of

other poems, for the first time using the pen name Ai Qing. The poems were published as a collection in 1936 and mark Ai Qing's turn from art to literature. He also translated some poems of Verhaeren which were later published as *The Prairie and the City*. His time behind bars carried him closer to the poor and the oppressed.

His release in October 1935 began what one writer has called "a wandering, fighting life", a poet-soldier sharing the life of millions of Chinese patriots in those years. When the war against Japan broke out in 1937 he left Shanghai, went to Wuhan first, then went back to the north, to Shanxi and Shaanxi, then went south again, spent some time in Guilin as editor of *The South*, a supplement of the *Guangxi Daily*, taught in a teacher-training school in Hunan and went to Chongqing in 1940. Finally in 1941, with the help of Zhou Enlai, he arrived in Yanan. "It was in Yanan," he wrote later, "that for the first time I saw the light break." That same year he was elected a member of the Shaanxi-Gansu-Ningxia Border Area Congress. He attended the Yanan Forum on Literature and Art in 1942, was selected as a model cultural worker in 1944 and taught in the Yanan Lu Xun Academy of Art and Literature in 1945. From 1946-49 he was vice-president of the North China Associate College of Literature and Art. In early 1949 he entered Beijing with the People's Liberation Army. He took part in the Congress of Literary and Art Workers. At Liberation he was given the task of taking over the Central Art Academy and at the same time became the vice-editor of *People's Literature*.

In 1950 Ai Qing met Pablo Neruda and Nazim Hikmet when they came to China to present the Peace Prize to Soong Ching-ling (Mme. Sun Yat-sen). "The Party Central Committee asked me to take care of them," he said recently. "We got along very well." Hikmet had just been released from twelve years in a Turkish prison for having sung the songs of the oppressed too loudly — freed by the pressure of a worldwide campaign in which Ai Qing had taken part. The three poets had a common bond — they had voiced the hopes of the millions. For this, tyrants had feared these eagle singers yet had not been able to choke off their

songs with steel bars. Neruda was in China again in 1958, this time with the Brazilian writer Amado, and Ai Qing again hosted them. Neruda was with the Chinese poet when he received official notice of his conviction as a Rightist. The Chilean poet did not have a chance to say goodbye and, in the long years of silence that followed, continued to ask the Chinese for news of this "very kind, honest, broad-minded man".

It is singular that the works of the great poets of this age of the common man's struggle for liberation — men such as Neruda, Hikmet — share common characteristics. First, because their poems speak from the innermost hearts of both the oppressed and those who have already won their freedom, their words wing across continents and the barriers of different tongues with few difficulties in translation. The images and metaphors used are nearly universal and thus warm and encourage people everywhere. Second, the great poets are never sententious and pretentious, their lines do not ring false as do cracked bells. The grandeur of their poems comes from their simple, uncomplicated honesty. Third, perhaps one can claim that no great poet can be found among the pessimists, the dispensers of gloom and futility. The lodestars of the world of poetry are men who, from the very hearthsides of the people themselves, speak the truth fearlessly, clearly drawing the line between the people and their enemies, and constantly sounding the bugle for advance. Fourth, great poets are men of conviction, men who have analysed the pros and cons of the human condition and understood at least some of the laws of struggle and the resulting progress. Theirs may be the chaotic, nervous world of the clawing, killer-wolves, or it may be the more rational, calm world of the new socialist society, but whatever their milieu their songs call for the march toward better horizons. Great poets are quiet men, men of humour, living life to its fullest, sure of their faith in the people.

These characteristics are easily seen in the life and poems of Ai Qing. Across the obstacles of language, for example, Nazim Hikmet's lines come to us out of Turkish, Ai Qing's out of Chinese. In 1937, with common images, both spoke of the people facing the fascist enemy. Hikmet, of the citizens of Madrid against Franco's

troops; Ai Qing, of the peasants of China "bitten by the beacons of war" lighted by oriental allies of the Spanish fascists. Writes Hikmet:

In the snow of the night
 You stand before the gates of Madrid . . .
 This evening perhaps you are cold
 and your feet wet;
 And while I think of you
 Perhaps in this very instant a
 bullet pierces you,
 And thus there is neither snow nor wind,
 neither day nor night. . . .

(Snow in the Night, 1937)

And Ai Qing:

On such a cold night as this
 Numerous old mothers
 Crouch in homes not theirs,
 Like strangers
 Not knowing
 Where tomorrow's wheels will take them,
 The roads of China
 Are so rugged
 And muddy.

(Snow Falls on the Chinese Land, 1937)

Both of these poems find instant response to images and mood — not just for the pictures of snow and cold but for the suffering people who, though ten thousand miles apart, are being attacked by the same dark forces of fascism.

Ai Qing's straightforward, uncomplicated honesty marks all his poems. It is, for example, present gently but insistently in *The Mirror* (1978), which he thinks is one of his best: "It loves truth deeply, /never hiding defects./ It is honest with those who seek it. /... Some avoid it/ because it is too frank. /There are even some/ who hate it and wish to smash it."

It is one of the strengths of great poets that they herald new worlds — that they sing more of sunlight than of night, of struggle than of apathy, of trail-blazing than of old paths. It is also a universal characteristic of all revolutionaries and of the ordinary men

and women of the world whom they serve. Even though, in a recent delightful poem, Ai Qing speaks of an ancient fossil — a fish buried millions of years ago — one is compelled to look into the future by the poet's irresistible confidence. "Gazing at this fossil," he says, "even a fool can learn a lot: /Without movement there is no life./ To live is to struggle /and march forward in the struggle./ Even if death is inevitable,/ we should use our energy to the fullest." Asked recently if he had found this poem fun to write, the poet's eyes crinkled with humour. "Yes," he said, then added slyly, "too many people these days have turned into fossils" (*Fossil*, 1978).

Because revolutionary poets constantly seek truth in the inter-relationships of things, they as constantly maintain very close ties with the people from whom they come, clearly distinguishing their enemies. "Poets must speak the truth for the people," Ai Qing said in a poets' conference in Beijing recently. And he added, "Together with the people poets should ponder over, inquire into and answer the sharp questions of our times."

"A world without light," he says (*In Praise of Light*, 1978), "would be like man without eyes," unable to see either friend or foe. But over the many centuries, the light has constantly guided men forward so that they have opened their eyes to the millions of enemy tricks and deceptions, have learned that unity holds contradictions, that progress often entails reversals, that movement encounters resistance, and that revolution risks betrayal.

Then to the great masses of the people, Ai Qing gives a distillation of these truths:

Our life is a burning process.
We in our own years
Should be like fireworks at a festival
Shooting up into the sky with a cry of joy,
Then exploding with a dazzling light.

Even if we are a small candle,
We should burn to the last bit;
Even if we are a match,
We should flare at the crucial moment;
Even if our bones have rotted after we die,
We should burn on as the will-o'-the-wisp

It is an interesting fact that the poet Ai Qing is also an artist. He liked to draw when he was a child. Though his time at the National West Lake School of Art was short, he continued these studies in Paris. Today his modest home in Beijing contains many paintings of the great masters, particularly carefully-chosen works by Qi Baishi (Chi Pai-shih), his friend Lin Fengmian and others. The close relationship between painting and poetry has long been a cherished tradition in Chinese art and literature. Su Dongpo (1037-1101), for example, said of the Tang poet, painter, calligrapher and musician Wang Wei (Mojie, 699-759): "To look at the verses of Mojie is to see his paintings; to look at his paintings is to see his verses." One might say also of Ai Qing, though he no longer paints: To read his poems is to see a painting. The poet, as a matter of fact, is a master painter with words, and this is seen best in such poems as *Snow Falls on the Chinese Land*, *The Trumpeter* and *In Praise of Light* where his images, sharply outlined with a fine economy of words, seem to move with a life one can almost touch. Ai Qing has chosen the pen, but one feels that his choice might have been just as rewarding had it been the brush.

Ai Qing, like his brothers of this and past centuries who have voiced the hopes and demands of the people, speaks with the purity of sunlight of clean sharp air, of mountains, vistas, roads ahead, far horizons and, yes, of struggle and battle — always with a voice like a shining trumpet calling men and women to live with fullness, courage, passion and love, always for the common goal of a bright new world.

Wang Yaping

My Sacred Duty

It was August 1975, when a policeman, Wang Gongbo, a fifty-nine-year-old Communist Party member who had joined the revolution in the autumn of 1938, was recalled from the Provincial "May 7th" Cadre School, where he had been working in the countryside.

Hands in pockets, Wang Gongbo paced to and fro in the corridor of the Provincial Public Security Bureau. Each door, each corner was both familiar and strange to him. The building had once been a Guomindang army headquarters, while he had been an underground Party member. After Liberation, he had toiled day and night there for years serving the people. For eight years, however, he had been absent from his work. Many people were unknown to him.

He entered the office of the bureau's chief, Zheng, who was about his age, tall and strong. Without any preliminaries, they got down to business.

Zheng informed him that in the past two months there had been momentous changes throughout the whole country, since his return from cadre school. Chairman Mao and Premier Zhou had given

instructions that those who had been wrongly persecuted should be rehabilitated. It was Wang's job to investigate their cases.

Wang remembered the night he lay on some rice stalks under a pumpkin trellis gazing at the starry sky, when he and Zheng had talked till midnight. When they had discussed the memorial speech made by Premier Zhou for the late vice-premier He Long, who had been hounded to death, tears coursed down Zheng's cheeks. Wang heaved a deep sigh, looking forward to the day when he could return to his old job and spend his last years doing more work for the Party.

Suddenly the telephone rang. The call was from Xu Runcheng, vice-chairman of the Provincial Revolutionary Committee, asking if Wang had reported for work and wanting to speak to him. After inquiring after his health, Xu said meaningfully: "Now that you're back, you'd better start adapting yourself to the new situation. Class relationships have changed, you understand. Don't let us down."

As Zheng said goodbye to Wang at the entrance, he gripped his hand and asked in concern: "Will you go now and see your family first?"

Smiling, Wang left and walked along the tree-lined pavement.

2

Rain pelted down on that late autumn night. Although it was the early hours of the morning, Wang was still puzzling over a case. The criminal file was dated October 1967, with a photograph of a man, whose intellectual square face with its bushy eyebrows and stubbled chin had an enterprising and determined, if not rather stubborn, look. It made a favourable impression on Wang. Suddenly a chill gust of wind made him cough, aggravating his heart condition. Only then did he remember that he had forgotten to take his medicine for several days.

The faded handwriting appeared before his eyes again. A thug and rapist, Bai Shun, aged thirty-two. A graduate of Haerbin Industrial University and a technician in Institute No. 305.

He frowned dubiously.



A sixteen-year-old girl, Yang Qiong, had accused Bai Shun of attempting to rape her. Her parents and about a dozen colleagues had testified against him. The criminal law section of the Public Security Department had sentenced Bai Shun, a month after his arrest, to fifteen years' imprisonment and he had been sent to the countryside to be remoulded through physical labour.

Wang shook his head: "Attempted rape?" Was it merely for this such a sentence had been passed on him? That was an abuse of the law!

The record bore no signature of Bai Shun, finger-prints, nor anything official except a crimson stamp. The lack of an official signature caused Wang to consider this case further. The rain poured down outside, while in his mind he saw Bai Shun's young face. He paced the floor, hands in his pockets, unaware that the dawn sun was already shining through his windows.

That Sunday, Wang cycled along the road on the outskirts of the town, heading for the farm penitentiary about a dozen miles away.

The farm was surrounded by rivers and lovely hilly countryside. The crops seemed to dance in the breeze.

The security guard on duty, a man aged about thirty, looked smart with his tanned complexion and neat moustache. Before Wang had greeted him, he exclaimed: "Ah, it's Professor Wang!" Wang immediately recognized Chen Qingshui, a graduate of the police college before the Cultural Revolution, where Wang had been an adviser on legal studies. Chen had been one of his favourite students, a mere youth then with down on his lip. Chen was surely married now and perhaps a father. And so it was. Chen was a team leader in the penitentiary and his wife, Lu Ping, also worked in the security bureau. They had a child of five.

Wang explained the reason for his visit. It so happened that Bai Shun was in Chen's team.

"Bai acts dumb, never says a word, though he works very hard. In summer he usually tends the pumpkin patch and he does it well. Now he's working in the fields, attending to the autumn crops."

What a coincidence, Wang thought, on learning that Bai Shun was doing the same work he had done at cadre school. He was silent for a moment before he asked: "Since he's such a good worker, why hasn't his sentence been commuted?"

"I recommended it twice to my leader and a former guard did the same, but we never got an answer. Other offenders behaved worse, but their sentences were commuted and they were freed. Some were even promoted after they went back to their old jobs. Bai Shun, however, has suffered even more than before. Now he is very weak. Draining a flooded field in the rain, he caught a chill, and I came back from a bureau meeting to find him very ill. I was told that the deputy head of the bureau, Pei, and a doctor came to see him and gave him an injection and some medicine. Later his condition worsened, so, unable to find our doctor, I secretly sent for another from the town who came and helped him.

He said Bai Shun had been prescribed the wrong medicine. All this started me thinking. Since then I've assigned him to the pumpkin patch so that I can give him some measure of protection."

Wang was satisfied at his former student's vigilance and sense of duty.

"In my opinion, the leaders will obstruct his being released even when he's served his sentence." After a sigh, Chen continued: "Why do you want to see him?"

"Because the case is unjust. Besides, he pleaded not guilty. I want to know the truth."

Chen could barely conceal his joy. Yet he felt he must caution Wang: "He hates to discuss it with anyone, even me. Now you. . . ."

"Let me try," Wang insisted.

Bai Shun was not in his thatched hut. On the mattress was nothing save his crumpled bed-roll, beside which was a perpetual calendar made by Bai Shun. Picking it up, Wang looked at it, deep in thought. Chen noticed this and said: "Bai Shun often gazes at it too, probably counting the days till he'll be released." Suddenly he gave the mattress a slap and then stood erect, bumping his head by mistake on the low roof, shaking the shed.

Rubbing his head with his hand, Chen smiled and remarked: "I'd quite forgotten that eight years ago today he came here. That was the same day his son was born. Since that time, he has carved a star on the big maple tree each year today. Then he stares into the distance."

"Where are his family now?" asked Wang, but Chen only shook his head and so Wang suggested they should go and see Bai Shun.

At the entrance to the farm was the maple tree, its branches



spread wide, some of its leaves patched with red. Beside it stood a man, so deep in thought that he did not notice their approach.

Wang scrutinized Bai Shun for a while. He was of medium height with a frail build. Though only forty, his hair was already turning grey. Wang's heart was touched. He nodded to Chen, who called out: "Bai Shun! Someone wants to talk to you."

Roused from his reverie, Bai Shun turned to glare at Wang. His cold, dull, unhappy expression shocked Wang. Was this really Bai Shun? What a difference between the man and the handsome face in the photograph! It was as if ten or twenty years of suffering had marked him. His face was covered with scars. In his reddened eyes shone an expression of hatred.

"Officer Wang is from the Provincial Public Security Bureau," Chen introduced him.

Biting his lip, Bai nodded. Wang noticed that when Bai Shun was excited, he seemed as if his eyes would burst out of their sockets. That was understandable. Walking over to the maple tree, Wang saw the stars carved on the trunk. On the last one was a fresh drop of resin. He had evidently just finished carving it. Wang looked at the tree and asked: "How long have your eyes been like that?"

"Eight years," Bai Shun replied.

"How did it happen?"

"Hatred."

"Hatred?" Wang queried. Turning round he saw Bai Shun's face had paled and his muscles twitched. Then sighing deeply with a hand over his eyes, Bai Shun lurched away.

"Halt! Don't go out of bounds!" shouted Chen.

Bai Shun stood transfixed on the weed-covered ground. He made an effort to restrain himself and then slowly walked away in the direction of his shed, following Wang.

At sunset, Wang made his way home, pushing his bike, accompanied by Chen. "Was he beaten?" Wang broke the silence.

"Savagely! He almost died. But for his wife's letter, I doubt he could have held on till now." Then he explained: "I was on duty when he was arrested. He was dragged along, beaten, kicked and thrown into a corner of the room. By then he was unconscious. Pei, a deputy section leader, interviewed the plaintiff. She only wept. It was her parents who told the whole story you read on the record. Some of their visitors were witnesses. The trial was simple. After gathering the evidence against Bai Shun, Pei sentenced him immediately to fifteen years' hard labour. I was staggered and wondered why. Pei reprimanded me and said I didn't know the new situation. He added that Xu, the new vice-chairman of the Provincial Revolutionary Committee, had inspected our work and given us a directive from a Party Central Committee member* saying that the old Public Security Bureau, the procura-

* Referring to Jiang Qing.

tor's office and the court had all been in the hands of the bourgeoisie. They must be destroyed. Bai Shun was a typical case, a stinking bourgeois intellectual, fed on revisionism. Moreover, because Bai pleaded not guilty, this was proof that the old judicial system connived with the criminals. Therefore it was significant that he had been given such a harsh sentence. However, I was very confused by what he said. . . ."

Talking about the past Chen grew agitated. He had come to understand what really made people suffer and be unhappy. Wang sighed. "I'll never forget when the sentence was pronounced," Chen continued. "Bai Shun couldn't believe his ears and argued heatedly. Old Pei cursed him, trying to force him to sign the judgement. He refused and swore at Pei. Pei was so enraged he hit him with some handcuffs. That's how he got the scars on his nose. He fainted with the pain."

Wang drew in his breath and sighed again. Then Chen went on: "On his arrival here, he had a high fever, but refused any medicine, food or water. He only wanted to die quickly." At this Chen frowned. "Later Lu Ping sent me a letter from his wife, Lin Fang. After I had read it to him, he wept, but gradually changed and felt much better. That's how he's managed to survive up till now, saying nothing."

"Do you remember what was in the letter?" Wang asked.

"It was written in blood. His wife believed in his innocence and said she would love him for ever. She wrote that as comrades-in-arms, they had a shared faith in the Communist Party led by Chairman Mao, and that one day the wicked people would be punished and injustices righted."

Wang nodded. Gazing at the distant horizon, he remarked: "How beautiful the dusk is!"

Chen knew that Wang was leaving. Feeling sad, he inquired: "And how are you?"

"Well, not as good as before," Wang fondly patted him on the shoulder and added humorously, "but there's life in the old dog yet!"

Smiling, they shook hands and parted.

The early winter evening felt bitterly cold. In his padded uniform, Wang walked along the street covered in slush, hands in pockets, thinking.

In the past month there had been some serious indications that Deputy Head Pei was beginning to pick on Wang and throw his weight about. Wang, however, remained defiant, so the two men were at loggerheads. Wang was convinced that Bai Shun's case was not an ordinary criminal one and that there was more to it. Wang was an experienced policeman and knew that the case was a delicate one, complicated and dangerous. This only roused his fighting spirit. The value of his life he felt was in triumphing over such difficulties. First he had to find Lin Fang and talk to her.

After inquiring, he finally traced Lin Fang's address. The condition of her room was worse than he had anticipated, dilapidated and with a low roof from which the melting snow dripped. Inside a light shone through the curtained window. Under the eaves was a brand-new bicycle, which could not have belonged to her or else she would have taken it into the house at night.

About to knock at the door, Wang drew back his hand, hearing a boy weeping and a man's voice, low but clear.

"... Bai Xue is top of his grade and the teachers show his examination papers to the other students, urging them to work like him. I criticized some naughty boys. Then later they ganged up with a hooligan and began to tease Bai Xue. They made remarks about his father and insulted him. Bai Xue couldn't take that so he answered back. Then they beat him up and threw his satchel into the river."

A woman began to cry.

"If Ai Hua, the teacher, hadn't come along, who knows what would have happened? That's life today!"

Wang went away from the door, as if to blot out the weeping. By chance he came to a stationer's which was about to close, only a few customers remaining to be served. Glancing at the shelves, he noticed some satchels. He bought a satchel, pencil-case, some pencils and notebooks. Putting everything into the satchel, he slung

it over his shoulder and made his way back to Lin Fang's home.

He knocked and the door opened. A woman appeared.

"What do you want?"

"I'd like to talk to Lin Fang, please," Wang replied.

"I'm Lin Fang. Please come in."

The room was in a mess. Wang saw a tall, handsome young man, who must have been the one talking before. Close beside him was an eight-year-old boy in neatly patched clothes. He was just like his father when he was a boy. Wang was happy that Bai Xue had a kind mother and a friendly, caring teacher.

He had seen Lin Fang's photograph in the file and her youthful appearance made a strong impression on him. Although her face was now haggard with weeping, there was still a sparkling defiance in her eyes against her miserable plight. Over the years her eyesight had become poor.

The young teacher and the boy watched him expectantly. Wang looked down at his own uniform reflectively and felt a pang.

"What do you want to talk to me about?" Lin Fang asked curtly.

"About Bai Shun's case," Wang answered bluntly.

She was taken aback.

Then Wang emptied out the contents of the satchel on to the table. There was a silence as the boy and teacher watched him.

Wang went over to the boy, patting his head and holding out his hand to the teacher. "I heard what you said. Thank you for helping to bring up this boy."

"I'm Wu Zhengguang," he said modestly. "Thank you for all your kindness on behalf of Bai Xue."

Gripping Wu's hand, Wang said: "I'm Wang Gongbo, from the Provincial Public Security Bureau." Then he turned to Lin Fang. "Bai Shun never signed the sentence. There must be a reason, I think, why you haven't got divorced, but love him even more. Can you tell me what that is?"

Hands trembling, Lin Fang could barely control herself.

Wu's eyes moistened as he interjected: "It's plain that there's been an injustice, but how can she complain any more? Every

complaint has its repercussions. She's been moved from her home four times."

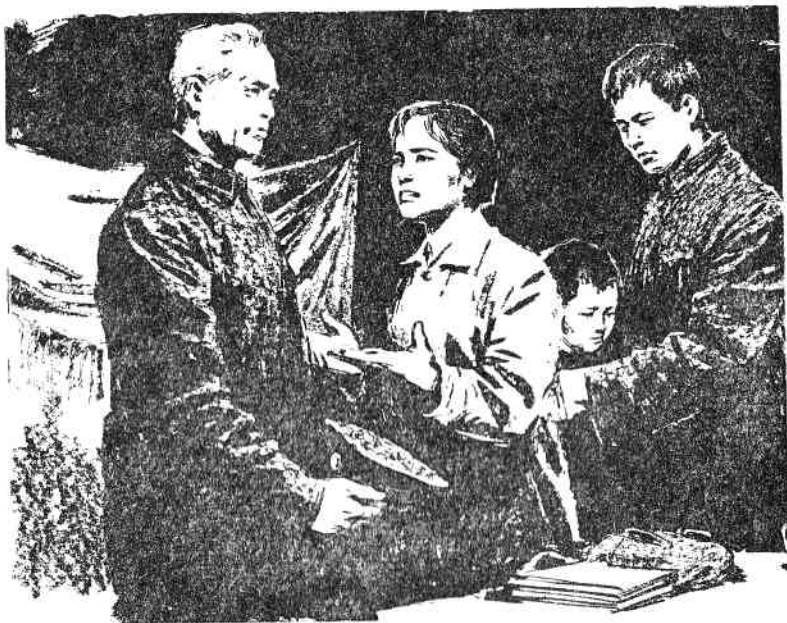
"Yes, I know all about it," Wang nodded. Catching sight of the scar on the boy's forehead, he felt very sad. "Don't worry. Believe in the Party and its policies. As long as Bai Shun is innocent, his case will be righted some day. I hope you'll help me."

Looking up, Lin Fang said firmly: "Chairman Mao is still alive and the Party's policy is clear. Nothing can make me despair. I have faith that one day my husband will be rehabilitated."

"That was why you wrote that letter to him in your blood. I believe that he's been able to keep going because of your unshakable faith."

Lin Fang nodded. Into her mind streamed all the events of the past eight years. She sadly poured out her story to the kind old policeman.

In September 1967, an old cadre on the Provincial Revolutionary Committee, Lu Qing, became a thorn in the flesh to the trouble-



makers in the province. He had taken part in the Long March and since being transferred to the province from his army unit in the early sixties had helped to transform the poor province into a rich one. Because of his ability, he was very popular with the people. Thus for those who wished to make use of the Cultural Revolution for their own ends, he was an obstacle. They looked for ways to get rid of him.

At that time, Lin Fang, who was about thirty, was pregnant and resting at home awaiting her confinement.

Bai Shun had come home depressed and told Lin Fang about a struggle that had taken place outside the revolutionary committee offices. A man had been speaking to the crowds about the so-called crimes of Lu Qing. Those who followed Chairman Mao's policies argued against him. Through a loudspeaker attached to their car, they argued that Lu Qing was anything but a capitalist-roader. At this point some people arrived carrying a body. A woman following sobbed that her husband, a secretary in Lu Qing's office, had been poisoned to death while on duty the previous night. She had been told by some men that they had seen Lu Qing give him a packet of cakes. When analysed these were found to contain arsenic. This revelation shocked all those gathered there. Those who supported Lu Qing were dumbfounded. Their opposers seized this chance to snatch away their car with the loudspeaker. They asked the victim's family and the witnesses to get into the car and announce Lu Qing's crimes over the loudspeaker. Then Lu Qing was jostled on to a truck and paraded through the streets.

Many people were angered about the injustice done to Lu Qing, but they dared not speak out. Some, taken in by the frame-up, in disappointment thought he had cheated them. Others rejoiced at the anarchy. As the truck passed Bai Shun caught Lu Qing's sad glance which seared his heart. His head whirled as he thought how Lu Qing had helped him when he had got into difficulties with his scientific research. To him, Lu Qing was a respectable, sociable comrade and a model Party cadre. Now he was being brutally treated. All this upset him deeply.

As he told Lin Fang this, Bai Shun stroked her shoulder and said: "If we can't manage, how will our unborn child fare?"

Lin Fang said nothing but only snuggled closer to her husband. It was about midnight when they heard a rap at the door of the apartment which they shared with another family. Before they could go out to open it, in came their drunken neighbour and a friend whose voice seemed familiar to Bai Shun. He greeted the neighbour's wife who was in the corridor: "I want to tell you . . . my aunt . . . your husband's . . . damn crafty. . . . His game . . . got Lu . . . dumbfounded. He swallowed bitter pills, but can't say anything. . . ." He stopped. "Ssh! Beware of eavesdroppers!" warned the neighbour. They went into their room. All was quiet again.

In these rooms next to Bai Shun lived Yang Darong, who worked in the provincial committee office. Although they were not close friends, the daughter, Yang Qiong, often asked Lin Fang for help with her homework. When the Cultural Revolution had begun in 1966, Yang Darong had become a rebel leader, often returning home late at night and arrogantly swaggering about. That night Yang Darong had returned home so late and the drunken words of his companion were suspicious. What had happened? Was the Lu he had mentioned Lu Qing? Despite his wife's warnings, Bai Shun tiptoed gingerly towards the door.

Lin Fang, her heart in her mouth, held her breath. All of a sudden, she heard a clang. Bai Shun had bumped against a pail. The noise nearly made her cry out. Bai Shun switched on the light in the lavatory, yawned and shut the door.

Returning to his own room, he was trembling with rage. He told his wife that Yang and his thugs were talking about the day's happenings. It was Yang who had poisoned Lu Qing's secretary. The men who bore false witness and claimed that Lu Qing gave his secretary poisoned cakes were his thugs. They were still plotting to get at the other old cadres in the Provincial Revolutionary Committee who opposed them.

Lin Fang was stunned. Bai Shun decided to inform the Provincial Security Bureau of their crimes.

"I'm afraid of nothing except for our unborn child. . . ." she said filled with anxiety.

"It's for the sake of millions of children that I must speak out

against these thugs. . . . Better our child isn't born under the rule of such fascists."

"Those brutes think they can get away with everything and frame fine old cadres like Lu Qing. Our child. . . ." Tears came to her eyes.

Embracing her, Bai Shun wished he could give her some of his strength. They gazed silently through the window at the dark sky. His enthusiasm dispelled her fears and maternal feelings and duty overwhelmed her.

Late that night Bai Shun wrote a letter. The couple stood at dawn at their window looking at the morning sunlight in the distance. At this moment they knew the satisfaction of a husband and wife in harmony, concerned for their children and fighting for the revolution.

The third day after Bai Shun's letter had been sent, Lin Fang was busy making baby clothes. Bai Shun came home with some red buttons for the baby garments. As he was taking them out of his pocket, Yang Qiong's mother shouted from the kitchen: "Quick, your porridge is boiling over, Old Bai!" Bai Shun hurried into the kitchen the two families shared.

After a moment, the woman shrieked again: "You hoodlum. . . ." followed by sounds of her daughter weeping.

A crowd of neighbours rushed out. There were curses, blows and Bai's shouts heard. Lin Fang was dazed. Dashing out she heard Yang Qiong crying out: "No, no. . . . Don't!" At this she was dragged away by her father into their room, and the door shut with a bang. Some burly men were beating up Bai Shun with sticks and tongs. Lin Fang ran forward but was held back by Yang Qiong's mother, who then savagely beat her crying out: "We're neighbours. Who thought he would rape my daughter? Beat him to death! Beat him to death!"

Bai Shun was pulled on to the staircase and dragged through the crowds lining it. His head banged against the sides, his blood was everywhere. Lin Fang fainted.

She had never seen her husband since that day. Eight years had passed. When Bai Xue was born, she was very ill. Fortunately they were cared for by kind neighbours and she had recovered. It

was then her eyesight had begun to fail. During the years she was forced to move home. . . .

Lin Fang shook her head sadly. "We've been living like this for a long time now. He was sentenced to fifteen years. Fifteen years! We'll wait for him. I know he's innocent. That's why I wrote him that letter in my blood."

Wiping away his tears, Wu said angrily: "Those bastards are as rotten as they can be."

Wang's veins bulged in his forehead as he stood up and said: "Here we have the dictatorship of the proletariat. One day those fascists will be crushed."

It was late when Wang walked along the icy road with Wu, pushing his bicycle. They were more relaxed, Wu talking about himself and his girl.

She was a language teacher in his school. She was pretty, and, more important, she had a heart of gold. Her father was a high-ranking official in the provincial committee. She never boasted about her father however, and Wu, who was a sensitive young man, never pressed her about this. Their love had begun through their common concern for their pupils, especially her deep attachment to little Bai Xue. She would not go with Wu to Bai Xue's home, however. Whenever Wu talked about the hardships Bai Xue and his mother had to endure, she would get upset and agitated and tell him to be quiet.

Although he loved her very much, Wu felt she had some mental block about this subject.

As they parted, Wang wished Wu and his girl every happiness. At that moment, a man in a short overcoat, the collar upturned, approached and whispered: "Old Wang. . . ."

Wang recognized Chen. Only when Wu had gone did Chen dare to continue: "There's an order from Zheng for you to go back to cadre school immediately. The work of reviewing cases has been suspended for the time being."

Wang was fully aware of the gravity of the situation, or else Zheng would have acted in a different way. Gazing up at the pitch-black sky, he felt the chill in the air.

5

Before Wang returned to cadre school, Zheng and Vice-chairman Xu of the Provincial Revolutionary Committee wanted to talk to him. Stooping slightly, hands in his pockets, Wang entered the Provincial Public Security Bureau. There in Zheng's office, they were waiting for him. Zheng grasped Wang's hand and looked at him for a moment.

After a few pleasantries with Xu, Wang noticed the jubilation in his bloodshot eyes.

Xu was in a hurry to leave and so he said to Wang: "Frankly, long ago I opposed the so-called rectification* carried out in July, August and September. I could do nothing at the time but wait and see. Many of you were too naive politically, thinking it should be carried through to the end. . . . Nevertheless you've worked very hard in the last few months, and your spirit was exemplary. Still you ought to reflect why you were so willing to wear yourself out. I suggest you examine yourself and your motives." Then he added smiling: "In cadre school your awareness will help the others, I'm sure."

As he took his leave, Xu insisted that Wang take his car to the army hospital and have a check-up. Portfolio in hand, he left for the provincial committee offices.

Zheng and Wang sat opposite each other saying nothing. Sadly Zheng lowered his head.

"Comrade. . . ." Wang patted his old friend's knee.

Zheng looked at him and scolded: "Why didn't you let me know about your heart? I hope Xu hasn't upset you. You will go to the hospital or perhaps Beijing for an examination, won't you?"

Wang took his hand and answered: "Premier Zhou's really ill. Yet he never thinks about himself. Hospital or school, what's the difference? Don't worry, Zheng. I can take care of myself."

Zheng paced up and down. He knew Wang's stubbornness and was unable to persuade him.

* In 1975 when Deng Xiaoping, presiding over the State Council, pointed to the interference in and sabotage of Party work by Lin Biao and the "gang of four", the call to rectify this was made then.

Standing in the cold wind, they lingered, hardly able to part.
"I know your situation," Wang said, "but you mustn't give up."
"So long as there are mountains and rivers, we'll meet again one day," Zheng declared firmly.

6

Severe winter. A month had elapsed since Wang's return to the cadre school. The false charge against Bai Shun remained, and this disturbed Wang's sleep. He felt he hadn't fulfilled his duty. With this and the heavy work during the day, his health deteriorated.

It was extremely cold. Wang had just finished feeding the pigs, when a savage gust of wind made him cough. The pain in his heart made him dizzy. Bending down, he leaned against the wall. His wife, Li, hurried over and gave him some pills then helped him to their room, where she sat him down by the stove. Controlling her feelings, she tried to persuade him: "Zheng told you to go and see a doctor. I think you should too."

After his pain had eased a little, Wang wiped away the perspiration on his brow and said with a bitter smile: "No need for you to nag too. Do you think medicine can cure me?"

Helplessly she shook her head. "You know Zheng is concerned for your health. What's more, you've been given sick leave here." Then she added: "Perhaps you could use it to find out the truth about Bai Shun's case."

"Really?" His eyes brightened as he understood her meaning. "Yes, you're right. Please help me pack."

Suddenly they heard the sound of funeral music carried by the wind. Worried and apprehensive they slowly got up and went to the door. Outside, people gathered in the open. Some even forgot to put down the loads they were carrying on their shoulders; others were unaware of the cigarette ends burning their fingers.

Our esteemed and beloved Premier Zhou, whom the people loved dearly, had died.

Old Wang, who never shed tears, sobbed bitterly.

The funeral music reverberating in his ears, the wind ruffling his

grey hair, he trudged along the road. His wife followed carrying a small bundle in her hand. Stopping abruptly and taking it from her he said: "I'm going now..."

Looking at his thin grief-stricken face, his wife clasped his hands. Suddenly she pressed her cheek against them and wept, all sorts of feelings welling up inside her.

Wang smoothed her ruffled hair and patted her trembling shoulder. Then having gazed down at her with deep affection for a while, he turned round and strode away.

7

Wang returned to the provincial city again, and Zheng came to see him. They had an intimate talk, in which Zheng told him Chairman Mao's health was poor. Silent for some time, their feelings were beyond expression.

"From the recent programmes on the radio, I guess they* must have speeded up their... attacks," Wang said after a while. "We must hurry up and make the best use of our time. I don't think I can spare the time to see a doctor now..."

Zheng nodded in agreement, showing his complete trust in and his deep understanding of his old friend.

Wang seldom went to the security bureau office and hardly ever to the hospital. Instead he asked Chen to help trace Yang Qiong. She had changed her name to Ai Hua and was a teacher in a suburban primary school.

Wang knew that his meeting with her was of vital importance and that there wasn't much time left. He hurried to the school despite the bitter weather and his poor health.

Ai Hua had only two classes that day. After she had dismissed the last one, her head ached and she felt weak. The previous night she hadn't slept a wink because Wu had told her of his love for her. She loved him but was confused and upset. As a girl with a dual identity, she felt she had no right to love. As she had matured, she had learnt some of life's difficulties. She hated her

* Here referring to the "gang of four".

parents and family who had humiliated her and made her guilt-ridden.

In the staff-room, she found an old policeman, who greeted her with outstretched hand: "I'm Wang Gongbo. I'd like to have a talk with you."

Feeling uneasy, her heart pounded wildly. When they were seated, she lowered her head in embarrassment. She felt as if the old man's eyes were piercing right through her.

To relax the tension, Wang began softly: "Isn't your real name Yang Qiong? I've heard you're very fond of Bai Xue."

Blushing slightly, she answered hesitantly: "I... Yes. What can I do for you?"

"Do you remember the case of Bai Shun eight years ago? We're reviewing it again. Can you help me with some of the details?"

The girl asked hastily, her lips trembling: "What can I tell you?" Her voice was so low even she could scarcely hear it. It was a disgrace she could never wipe out. Whenever she wanted to cry out that Bai Shun was innocent, she seemed to hear her father's threats and her mother tearfully imploring her. After Bai Shun had been framed, her parents had kept her in the house for several days, lecturing her by turns.

Her father had told her that revolution requires sacrifices and that it was necessary for Bai Shun to be put away. If not, then the rebels like Xu in the Provincial Revolutionary Committee and Pei in the security bureau and others would be overthrown. Then they and not Bai Shun would be brought before the law.

Weeping bitterly her mother had pleaded that she was their only child, their daughter. "It's for your own good. If anything should happen to your father... Anyway Bai Shun's indecent behaviour has got around..."

"But Uncle Bai didn't do anything," she replied in tears.

Her father glared at her and scolded: "Whom do you choose: Bai Shun or your father? If I become a counter-revolutionary, you'll suffer all your life."

"You're a girl, yet you don't know what's good for you." Her mother blustered: "No use crying over spilt milk, you know."

Only sixteen, Yang Qiong could not understand all that they

said. She mostly felt ashamed and terrified. In court she could not say a word, and so her parents spoke on her behalf. Not long after, her father was promoted to be the deputy head of a department in the Provincial Revolutionary Committee.

Eight years had passed. In order to ease her mental pain, she left home and avoided meeting her family. Changing her name, she began to work in a primary school on the outskirts of the city to atone for her guilt. By an unfortunate coincidence, Bai Shun's son happened to be a pupil. His pure innocent eyes caused her great anguish. She lavished all her affection on the child, whose sufferings she had brought about.

In time she had hoped to forget her past, but Wang Gongbo had appeared and opened the old wound. She was in a dilemma. If she spoke the truth and righted the injustice, then what about her family? And Wu, could he forgive her? Thinking these questions over in her mind, she felt so agitated that she rose abruptly. Although it was winter, beads of perspiration appeared on her forehead. Afraid to meet Wang's eyes, and biting her lip, she shook her head distractedly.

Patiently Wang waited, his eyes never for a moment leaving her pale face. He was racking his brains how to appeal to her sense of justice. "Comrade Ai Hua, you should be courageous and overcome your fears," he said at long last. "An innocent man has been wronged, framed! Not only your father, but also bigger criminals have probably been involved. Only by finding them can justice be done. Don't you think that this is the duty of every young person educated by Mao Zedong Thought?"

Ai Hua felt dizzy at these words. She asked herself if she was worthy.

Silence. Then all of a sudden the door swung open and in came a young man. The instant their eyes met, the two men simultaneously cried out in astonished delight.

"Wang!"

"Wu!"

"What brought you here?"

"Bai Shun's case. I'm here to make investigations..."

"Can Ai Hua be of any help?"

"Yes," the old man answered after a pause. "She's just given me some important information. Perhaps I shall find Yang Qiong soon."

Wu was pleased and began to introduce Ai Hua affectionately, "Old Wang, she's the girl I told you about. . . ."

Then he turned and reproved Ai Hua: "So it seems you know something about it. Why didn't you tell me before?"

"She just remembered now," Wang came to her rescue with a smile.

Deeply moved by Wang's thoughtfulness, Ai Hua felt indebted to him and tears filled her eyes. She knew that if Wang revealed her identity, Wu would be shocked and might not be able to take it. She felt guilty that her ignorance and weakness had brought tragedy to Bai Shun's family. She had been conscience-stricken ever since. But Wu was innocent and had nothing to do with it. Why should he be involved? She covered her face with her hands to restrain her sobs.

Wu was moved by her weeping and told Wang: "She's very sensitive. She always cries when the sufferings of Bai Shun's family are mentioned."

Looking at the young couple, Wang understood their differences. He also knew that as an older man he should help them. He decided on the next step. "Come on! We'll go and see Bai Xue."

Wu nodded approvingly. When Ai Hua had first seen Bai Xue at school, she had longed to visit his family right away and help them, but she had lacked the courage. Now she went in spite of herself.

8

Lin Fang welcomed them warmly. When she heard Wang's voice, she became sad. She didn't want this kind old man to be involved in Bai Shun's case again.

Knowing perfectly well what was in her mind, Wang asked: "Where's your boy?"

"Gone to learn about production in a factory."

"Old Wang's here on sick leave," explained Wu, "and he wants



Vertical text inscriptions in Chinese characters, likely a calligraphic inscription or a poem, located in the upper right section of the painting.

to take this opportunity to trace Yang Qiong.”

With a dull look in her eyes, Lin Fang stared blankly at Wang for a while and then said: “I’m very grateful to you for your kindness.”

Wang sighed with a touch of regret.

Lin Fang shook her head and continued: “I’ve often thought about her. Only Yang Qiong knows the truth. But . . . even if we found her, she wouldn’t tell it. Her father would be guilty and her reputation and future would be ruined. She must be about twenty-four now and perhaps she has a husband and family. Would she ruin herself and them? Impossible!”

Wang stared at the girl who sat silently by the door, not daring to look at Lin Fang. Her eyes were moist with tears.

“I have faith in the younger generation raised in the new China,” said Wu. “If she is an honest person, I’m sure she’ll act correctly in the end.”

Gazing at Wu, in astonishment, Ai Hua broke out in a cold sweat. “If he knows the truth about me, he’ll be disgusted.” Heart-broken she said to herself: “What shall I do? How can I face the world?”

Everyone except Wu noticed her whisper.

Lin Fang turning round asked: “Who’s that?”

“Ai Hua, Bai Xue’s teacher,” answered Wu. “She loves Bai Xue very much.”

Lin Fang rubbed her eyes, but couldn’t clearly make out the girl’s face. Taking Ai Hua’s hand tightly in hers, she said gratefully: “So you’re Teacher Ai! My son always mentions you. He says you used to mend his clothes. Thank you so much. You are all wonderful people. Just now your voice reminded me of Yang Qiong’s. Hers was soft like yours. She’s not to blame for her despicable parents and what they forced her to do, soiling her good name.”

Trembling, Ai Hua walked over to the window and tried to control herself.

Wang sighed and added: “People like Yang Darong have no principles. They’ll even sacrifice their own flesh and blood. They are the real criminals in our society. Only by exposing them mer-



cilessly can we right the wrongs. Only then can we free their victims like Yang Qiong. It's for this purpose that I came here. . . ." He stopped, coughing badly. Having pain in his heart he leaned against the wall doubled up. Startled, the two young people rushed over to help him and give him his pills.

Lin Fang's heart sank when she realized the old man was seriously ill.

Wu began to wipe the sweat from Wang's forehead. Wang said calmly: "Nothing serious, just the usual old trouble. Those people would like to see me dead, but I'll keep going. I've some work to do, it's my sacred duty, and, believe me, I'm not so easy to get rid of!"

Lin Fang wept, unable to speak.

Ai Hua gazed with respect at the weather-beaten face of the old revolutionary, who had known life's sufferings. An idea that

had been in her mind for some time suddenly became as clear as day. She knew at that moment what it meant to be an ordinary but great person. In front of this fine man she decided to pour out what had been locked in her heart for eight years.

Just then there was a pounding at the door and in rushed Chen dressed in plain clothes.

Wang in astonishment cried out his name.

Chen grasped his hands and said quickly, "Wang! Lu Ping sent me here to tell you that they are out to get you. Xu says you are breaking the law and that your investigations have an ulterior counter-revolutionary motive. He's ordered Pei to arrest you at once. They're searching for you everywhere. Zheng is attending a meeting of the Provincial Revolutionary Committee. You must go to him right away. The sooner the better. Lu Ping has phoned him."

Wang took off his cap, stroking his badge with emotion. Lin Fang knelt to grasp his legs weeping bitterly, but Wang helped her to her feet and said calmly: "I'm always prepared for the worst. These thugs will stop at nothing. . . ."

"Those bastards!" Wu swore angrily.

Ai Hua unable to control herself any longer at the window burst out crying. Wu and Chen also started to weep silently.

Suddenly Ai Hua felt a warm hand on her shoulder and raising her head found Wang looking at her in expectation. What feelings his eyes conveyed! Opening her mouth she revealed her identity, shocking everyone except Wang. "I'm Yang Qiong."

The room was quiet except for her speaking.

Wang knew that he was not dealing with a simple frame-up. His actions would affect the political situation in the country. He wanted to take the girl to meet Zheng as soon as possible and in great secrecy.

But it was no secret. Xu had been informed of his whereabouts as soon as he had left the cadre school, and had ordered Pei and Yang Darong to take care of Yang Qiong. But when Yang Darong reached the school, he found that his daughter had left. Flustered, he guessed she must have gone to Bai Xue's home. Rushing there he arrived just in time to eavesdrop on her con-

fession. He was paralysed with fright. Reporting this to Xu over the phone, he felt like a convict. At the other end Xu was so scared he nearly dropped the receiver. But Xu was a tough character. Pounding the desk with his fist, he hissed: "We'll now play our trump card!"

A jeep was dispatched at once to carry out the secret orders of Xu and Pei. It sped along the route Wang had to take.

Old Zheng had realized that Wang was in danger when he received Lu Ping's call. Rushing out of the conference room, he sent a capable assistant to go quickly to meet Wang.

As an old security man, Wang was used to being vigilant at all times. He led Ai Hua and Chen along the road under cover of night. When they approached a crossroad not far from the city, Wang told them: "The enemy must have been alerted. They'll do everything they can to stop us."

Chen nodded anxiously.

Ai Hua said firmly: "I know that, Uncle Wang."

Approaching a jeep parked by the roadside, they saw Zheng's assistant emerge from it. He walked up to them and told them to get in. Just at that moment, another jeep sped towards them, headlights dazzling. It raced towards the girl who was a little in front of the men.

Wang instinctively saw it was going to kill their only witness. Running forward he pushed the frightened girl aside. The jeep flashed past, knocking the old man a dozen metres away, and disappearing in the darkness.

The two young men cried out in alarm, rushing over to him, choking with sobs. The girl fainted.

In the moonlight Wang's grey hairs were red with blood.

9

In the quiet emergency room, the doctors and nurses worked hard to save Wang's life.

A leading comrade of the hospital accompanied Xu to the ward. Looking from the pale face to the blood transfusion apparatus, Xu asked about Wang's condition. On learning that Wang had been

in a coma all the time and was not expected to live, he heaved a sigh of relief and said: "You must save his life! The plan must be discussed carefully."

The door opened slowly. Raising his head, Xu was startled to see Zheng's awesome expression. Guiltily he began: "Old Zheng, you've come. . . ." The two youngsters, Chen and Ai Hua, stood at Zheng's side staring at him, their hatred unconcealed. All were silent as the tension in the room mounted.

Wang lay still, his eyes closed. He seemed at peace, neither pain nor happiness on his calm face. He had accomplished his sacred duty. . . .

10

It was 1976. The maple tree stood like a huge torch ablaze in the golden autumn.

Bai Shun was standing under it carving the tenth star on its trunk. Finishing it, he pressed his cheek against it, and hope filled his numb heart. He pictured a child's face, his nine-year-old son's, whom he had never seen.

"Daddy!" He heard a boy's clear voice. "We've come to fetch you home!" He raised his head quickly wondering if he was dreaming.

He saw some people approaching in the dawn light and stood there gazing at them stupidly. . . . Chen? His wife? And . . . his son? The other two he didn't recognize.

When they reached him, Chen took his hand and said in excitement: "The 'gang of four' have been smashed. The injustice done to you has been righted."

Bai Shun stood there gazing at them in bewilderment, hardly able to believe his ears. Calling his name, Lin Fang threw herself into his arms. His wife's tears awakened his heart and he knew the truth, tears filling his eyes too.

"Uncle Bai!" a girl called him. Her voice seemed oddly familiar. Raising his head, he looked at her in silence. Lin Fang went over to the girl and taking her hand said: "Yang Qiong came with us to bring you home. She . . . she's a fine girl."

The young man beside her introduced himself: "I'm Wu Zhengguang. Yang Qiong is my fiancée. We all came together to tell you the good news."

The dawn clouds tinged the autumn fields with red. Surrounded by his family, Bai Shun said goodbye to Chen and then left. Yang Qiong and Wu walked beside each other, behind the family. Bai Xue kept turning round to wave goodbye to Chen.

Chen's heart thrilled at the knowledge that the majesty of the law had been restored.

Illustrated by Chen Yuxian

Jia Pingao

Duan Yang

Duan Yang was twelve years old. I met her in Shanglo Village, Shaanxi Province in 1976 while the "gang of four" were still in power.

At that time I was being criticized for having put all my energies into education, and so I was sent away from my middle school in the county town where I worked to do hard physical labour at the village forge. As all my books were confiscated, I had nothing to read. Books had caused me a lot of trouble. I was glad to be rid of them. Later my family also moved to the village, and one day among my belongings I found an old copy of Hans Anderson's *Fairy Tales*.

Idling away the hours, I decided to tear up the book and make paper planes for my five-year-old son. After all, he was innocent. Why should he suffer because of me? His happy laughter chased away the gloom. Within minutes a crowd of children had gathered to see the paper planes, to whom I gave one each. They were delighted and ran laughing and shouting into the street.

After a while, my son returned carrying a cardboard plane. When I asked him where he had got it, he said Duan Yang had swapped it with him. Who was Duan Yang? He pointed to the entrance of the lane where a girl stood with a bundle of cardboard

planes in her hand, exchanging them for paper ones with the other children. She took each of the planes I had made and carefully smoothed out the paper, putting it in her bag.

I was wondering what she was up to, when she came running over and asked: "You made the paper planes, didn't you?"

"Do you want to know how to make them?" I began but stopped when I noticed that hers were more skilfully made than mine.

"Please, could you swop all the paper in that book for my planes," she said blinking her bright eyes.

So she wanted the book! To make paper planes? I felt uneasy. I'd always clung on to my books before, and that one I'd torn up in a fit of pique. But I'd never expected that others would ruin my book like this. It was like rubbing salt in an old wound! I asked her unhappily: "It costs one yuan. Can you afford it?"

She lowered her eyes and pursed her lips. After wringing her hands, she turned and went away. Before long she returned and said she would give me one yuan, but no more pages were to be torn out. Though she seemed serious enough, I didn't pay much attention to her words.

The next day, at the crossroads, I saw some women buying flowers and putting them in their hair. This jolted my memory. It was almost the time for the Dragon Boat Festival, when in this village it was the custom for women to wear gardenias in their hair. When I approached I was surprised to find that the flower-seller was Duan Yang. She was carrying a basket of gardenias which she was selling very cheaply at a cent for each.

"Does she sell flowers?" I asked a man near me. He said that as both her parents had been labelled as "capitalist-roaders" and imprisoned by the "gang of four's" followers, only she and her grandmother were left at home and life was hard for her. I felt so sorry for her that I decided to go over and talk to her, but before I could open my mouth to speak, she had taken a gardenia from her basket and, smelling its fragrance, she walked across the road leaving behind her its delicate scent.

That evening I saw her again in the distance squatting on the steps of a store. She was taking coins out of her pocket and count-

ing them. She smiled happily. I guessed she must be going to buy some sweets or an ice lolly.

Three days passed and as I hadn't seen her, I almost forgot her. I worked long hours in the forge, throwing out the slag, pumping the bellows or working behind the counter selling knives, spades and axes. One evening, after the street lights had been turned on, I was tidying the counter and was about to shut the door when I saw someone leaning against it. Without bothering to raise my head I said: "We've closed. Please come back tomorrow."

But the person didn't move. Then I heard a girl's clear voice: "I've brought my one yuan."

Looking up I saw Duan Yang. An empty basket was over her arm, and she held in her hands a great pile of one-cent coins. I was staggered. All that money from selling flowers! The money clinked on to the counter as she picked up the torn book of fairy tales I had chucked into a corner. She turned to leave but I caught hold of her. "There are exactly one hundred cents," she said. "Not a cent less."

"You really want to buy it? Why?"

"To read it."



To read it! I thought to myself, so she wants books to read and she finds this one interesting. . . . "But don't you study at school?" I asked.

"Yes, but not this kind of book. In fact our school doesn't have any books at all."

"But I'm destroying books like this, so why should you want to read it?"

She didn't reply but only stared at me and asked: "People say you were a teacher. Is that true?"

I nodded.

"If your pupils are rowdy hooligans, do you like it?"

"I . . ."

"If they're illiterate, do you like it?"

"I . . ."

In her eyes I saw my reflection. I seemed to see again the broken window-panes at school and the shattered street-lamps. I remembered reading a letter from a boy to his sick uncle. There were only one hundred and eighty characters in the letter but more than one hundred were written wrongly.

"Why did you tear up that book?" Duan Yang asked me again.

I couldn't explain. I started to sweat. Why had I destroyed such a good book? My circumstances wouldn't be changed by that. Rejecting learning wouldn't make me feel any better. When I raised my head I found she had moved over to a street-light. With her basket still on her arm, she was squatting down with the loose pages and checking their numbers with the pages in the book. In the light, the gardenia shone in her hair like a white butterfly. . . .

I walked over to her. I wanted to tell her that although I was forced to work in the forge, I would find time to write some stories for children. And if I failed to do that, at least I'd make copies of the book of fairy tales for her and all the other children. . . .

Illustrated by Zhou Sicong

Zhou Enlai on Questions Related to Art and Literature

There is now a bad tendency, that is, the lack of a democratic style of work. We have asked people to emancipate their thinking, break away from fetishes and superstitions and dare to think, speak and act. However, many people do not dare to. Of course, they still think, but they do not dare to speak or act. So two "dares" are missing. Minor errors in thought, speech or action are unavoidable and do not matter as long as free criticism is allowed. If only one person were allowed to speak and all others forbidden, wouldn't that be "rule by one lone voice"? How did "rule by one lone voice" come about? It has something to do with the leadership. So we must create a democratic atmosphere. I, for one, want to state that my words today can be thought over, discussed, criticized, negated or affirmed. No one in the world speaks correctly one hundred percent of the time. When people are mistaken they speak incorrectly, but even when they are correct they may say something inappropriate, or exaggerate. This calls for criticism. I advise our writer comrades not to think you can pro-

These are excerpts from speeches by Premier Zhou Enlai at a forum on literary and art work and a meeting on scenario writing in June 1961 which were published in the *People's Daily*, *Wenyibao* (Literary Gazette) and other literary journals in February this year.

duce good writing overnight. Great politicians and writers pay serious attention to polishing and revising their own writings. As Chairman Mao often says, the works of Marx and Lenin which we read have all been carefully polished and revised. Chairman Mao himself when he writes anything revises it several times. Therefore, we must create an atmosphere in which everyone will feel free to discuss and comment on the views we have aired.

In order to create a democratic atmosphere and change the style of work in art and literature, we must first of all change the cadres' style of work. To achieve that we must first change the leading cadres' style of work, starting with the few of us. We are often in contact with friends in art and literature circles; but if people are not allowed to query or debate the views we put forward what is the point of having discussions? Our words have not been officially approved by the Party. And even if they had been studied and approved by the Party, criticism should still be allowed. Even resolutions passed by the Central Working Meeting can be discussed and revised, much more so my personal views. Everyone is putting forward questions which come within the framework of socialism in order to improve our art and literature and implement the policy on art and literature. Each has his own views. Why can't we discuss them? If your views differ from what I say today, please write giving me your comments. That will help me to make a better speech next time.

A man is not a stone and he has to think. We should let people voice their thoughts and turn them into action. In recent years, there has been another way of doing things. Whenever anybody said anything, if it didn't fit a certain pattern it was sniped at, labelled and attacked. People were forced to speak and act in accordance with set patterns. Once these subjective patterns became fixed, they could be used to find fault in a one-sided, subjective, metaphysical way and the charge "right deviation" was made on a subjective basis without investigation. *Daji and Her Father* was labelled as "sentimental". Once this label was attached, people were bound to oppose the writer's petty-bourgeois sentimentality. I know *Daji and Her Father* both as a short story and as a film. It is a good piece of work. But it has limitations. In

the story, when the old man of Han nationality finds his daughter and gets her back, critics call this "bourgeois humanism". When I saw the film it almost made me cry, but not quite. Why? Because of the device used by the director to restrain your emotion. For an example, when the girl is about to leave her old Yi foster-father, we feel moved to tears but can't shed them, because in the film she turns away and covers her face with her hands so as not to let the audience see her cry. The ideological restrictions are so strong that although so moved we are not allowed to cry — this is not proletarian feeling! The critics say, "It is bourgeois humanism for father and daughter to weep when they meet again after a long separation." So the film director dared not let them cry. It is no good to stick that label of "humanism" on everything. As a matter of fact, the question about "the theory of human nature" was solved twenty years ago. In his *Talks at the Yanan Forum on Literature and Art*, Chairman Mao said that there was no human nature in the abstract and that in class society there was only human nature of a class character. But now certain people have imposed restrictions which are applied quite indiscriminately.

First to snipe at people, then pin ideological and political labels on them and then attack them organizationally, all on the basis of subjective restrictions and erroneous definitions — this does not conform to Marxism-Leninism. And no matter what one has said, it is linked with one's personal history and family origin. We believe that motive and effect are unified. We cannot infer from the motive without looking at the effect. It is all right to look into people's backgrounds, family origin and social relations, but it is important to look at an individual's present behaviour. We judge a person mainly according to his present behaviour.

Marxism has its designs, and great ones too. We are not opposed to all designs in general. We want to transform and proletarianize society and transform nature. The proletarian world outlook is the most scientific. Only we can transform society, the whole world and unfold the future. What we have are great designs. It is wrong to reduce these great designs into small metaphysical and subjective ones. If those who are labelled Rightists are real Rightists, they should be so labelled, but we cannot tag anyone a Rightist at ran-

dom. The present problem is one of unjustified labelling, where a person's occasional errors in speaking or thinking, or even ideas and statements that are permissible, are termed poisonous and evil. This is not right. We must be even more careful in using the big stick. Even if someone is wrong, so long as he is willing to mend his ways we must allow him to do so. If he is unable to mend his ways at once, we should wait and should not expel him from the Party off-hand; this is not a prudent course of action.

1. Material and Intellectual Production

Certain laws governing material production also hold good for intellectual production. When pressed too far mental production will suffer, perhaps even more than material production. Quotas and pressures of time are problems for mental workers. Take the writing of poetry as an example. Among our leading comrades, Chen Yi likes to write poems. He composes them very quickly and is a prolific, highly talented writer. Chairman Mao differs from him in that he writes only after much deliberation. Though he writes less, he writes with magnificent vitality and achieves highly concentrated poetry. We should not demand one poem a day from Chairman Mao, nor should we interfere with Comrade Chen Yi and ask him to write less. Mental work cannot be uniform. However, when we add up the intellectual production of the whole country our socialist culture is rich and colourful. Problems concerning this aspect must be explained explicitly. Too high quotas and too strict demands sometimes hamper the production of mental products.

In the literary and art field there is also the problem of readjustment, consolidating, filling out and raising standards. Too much has been done in the past which does not accord with the spirit of consolidating and raising standards. In my view, work must be done in accordance with specific situations. Some operas and opera troupes are loved by the masses, who like to keep them. Some are demanded by the leadership. Those opera troupes which our people love to keep as mobile ones and are willing to support can tour among production teams, and therefore can be maintained. This

kind of opera troupe meets the demands of the masses and serves their interests. There are other opera troupes which were set up by the various ministries of the Central Government or at the insistence of the leading organizations of districts and counties. They serve only a few people. So they must be interfered with and not allowed to be maintained. We cannot have too many people cutting themselves off from material production to do intellectual production. As for the amateur cultural troupes run by the masses themselves, which do not hamper production and work, they should be allowed to exist. Our popularization of culture relies mainly on such spare-time activities.

2. Class Struggle and the United Front

There are political and ideological class struggles and there are others which arise from the ingrained customs of the old society. Politically, anyone hostile to socialism who attempts to restore capitalism must be resolutely opposed.

Ideological struggle is a long-term task. Writers and artists must pay special attention to ideological problems and styles of work. Eliminating old ideas and styles of work will take a long time. We come from the old society and were educated in old schools. Even the young people today are influenced by remnants of the old ideology of their families and society. So, old ways of thinking and old styles of work still exist to varying extents. Their complete elimination will become possible only after an entirely new foundation has been laid. The remoulding of a person's world outlook takes time and cannot be done in hurry. This is even more the case with people working on natural sciences. For instance, I have met a doctor whose technique is first-rate, who serves socialism yet believes in God. But this doesn't prevent him from serving the socialist society. Some elders in our families also believe in religion, but still remain citizens of socialist China. This situation is permissible and cannot be changed by force. It isn't easy to thoroughly change such people. And how about ourselves? Are we so clear about dialectical materialism? Don't we have any of the old ways of thinking? That would be hard to claim. We need constantly to

remould our thinking. Ideological remoulding is a long-term task. How can a new society, born out of the old, be remoulded all at once?

Habits of the feudal and bourgeois classes come from the old society. People have been accustomed to them from childhood and never think of them as wrong. Therefore, it is necessary to draw a distinction between political problems, ideological problems and force of habit. We should not struggle against everything without ascertaining the nature of a problem. In short, we should make a concrete analysis of class struggle and not confound vigilance against counter-revolution with the ideological remoulding of the people.

On the one hand we must carry out class struggle; on the other we must consolidate the united front. The Communist Party and democratic parties and people form a united front. This was true during the period of the democratic revolution and is true during the period of socialist revolution and construction. The united front should be widening and deepening, not narrowing and weakening. There should be no doubt about this. In order to develop our economy and culture better, we must politically heighten our vigilance against class enemies at home and abroad and, at the same time, we must expand and strengthen internal unity.

3. "Whom to Serve"

"Whom to serve" is a political criterion. The question of whom to serve exists for any art form. Chairman Mao pointed out that art and literature must serve the workers, peasants and soldiers. That is our political criterion. To serve the workers, peasants and soldiers, serve the labouring people and serve the masses under the dictatorship of the proletariat — this is only the political criterion for art and literature. The political criterion is not everything; there must also be artistic criteria and the question of how to serve. The service performed by art and literature is done by means of many varied artistic forms, and no restrictions can be imposed on these. Art and literature serve politics through images, for only through images can ideas be expressed. Without images, art and



何家濠作于京江

literature would cease to exist. Then how can one speak of them serving politics? Slogans are not art. To make art and literature better serve the people, we must have it tested through practice and by the masses. We need to see whether the images you have created will stand up and whether they are appreciated by the people. It is not the approval of the leadership that counts. At present, however, there are more decisions made by the leadership than by the masses. Whether a work of art is good or bad must be decided by the people and not by the leadership. Of course, we must speak out if a work errs politically or is anti-socialist. We cannot allow it to spread unchecked. But works of this kind are very few after all. I have read some material on Sichuan. A vice-minister of culture went there and said that the Sichuan opera was backward. This offended the people of Sichuan. One comrade responded: "Whether the form is backward or not must be determined by the 70 million people of Sichuan." I think that this comrade was courageous. That was a good rejoinder. The people like it, but you don't. Who are you after all? Art must be approved by the people. So long as the people like it, it has its value and should be allowed to exist provided it is not anti-Party or anti-socialist. The leadership has no right to proscribe it. Artists must face the people and not just face the leadership. Does this mean opposition to the leadership? No. Leading comrades have the right to offer their views on political questions and they must put politics in command. This means chiefly determining whether something is a fragrant flower or a poisonous weed, whether it is anti-Party or anti-socialist. These are the aspects to which political acumen should be applied.

All you comrades present are leaders. I express the hope that you will interfere less. Of course, I do not mean that you should be irresponsible; in the first place, you should assume responsibility, but secondly, you should interfere less. By responsibility, I mainly mean political responsibility. We should not let poisonous weeds and revisionism run riot. However, we must make clear distinctions. We should not describe everything as revisionist.

Someone asked me: "Is the educational role of art compatible with its recreational role?" Dialectically speaking, yes. The

masses who go to see plays or films want to be entertained and to relax and you can educate them through the typified images presented. Education is conducted through entertainment. Of course, there should be a variety of subjects. We can't have battles all the time. Comrade Zhu De said that he had fought battles all his life and wanted to see some films which were not about battles. If you provide the audience with war films every day, they will not enjoy them. On the other hand, if there was not a single war film and young people were to lose their militancy, that would not be good either. There should in general be a balance between contemporary and historical themes for films. As to subject matter, the writers should be allowed a free choice. In ancient times there was no socialism but there were traditions among the Chinese people. The people created many ideal characters. There were also quite a number of myths suitable for writing about. We should have a ratio, and this ratio should vary for different areas and different art forms. Some opera forms are suitable for lyrical themes and can only present war themes occasionally. For instance, all the performers in Shaoxing Opera are women and when they present *A Dream of Red Mansions* the performance will have an appeal. But it is difficult for this opera form to present operas featuring acrobatic fighting. We should take account of local conditions and different periods. In arranging programmes, we must take audience requirements into consideration. In the cinema, for example, we should make different arrangements for the rural areas and factories and provide them with films particularly suited to them. But on the whole we must give them something to enrich their lives. On the one hand, we should praise the glory of labour; on the other hand, we need things that are lyrical and entertaining. We should tell young people about the hardships of making revolution and show that it was not easy to achieve socialism. More plays and operas on the trials and hardships of revolutionary struggles should be performed so that people will not forget the past suffering. The Ministry of Culture should make greater efforts to bring about a general balance as far as subject matter is concerned, but it should not do so by compulsion or commandism and should not interfere

too much with subject matter. I heard from some comrades in Shanghai that several writers not familiar with Party committee leadership were importuned to write about it. One writer was told daily about the importance of showing the Party committee in command; nevertheless he failed to write anything on this subject. It would have been better to ask him to write about something else which would bring his strong points into play.

When an audience attends theatrical performances or film shows, each member of the audience takes from them what he needs. For example, I like to read prose and short stories but have no time to read novels. Sometimes I like to see plays, operas or films not demanding any mental effort, simply for relaxation. Are we influenced by what we see? Yes, we are.

To do cultural work we have to study the economic base. The upsurge of cultural construction should come after that of economic construction. The development of cultural undertakings should not be unrestricted. If there were too many cultural undertakings and they were to exceed the level of economic development, the economic base and production would be affected. They were supposed to serve production but the result would be just the opposite: production would serve culture. Culture for the sake of culture would eventually destroy culture.

4. The Laws of Development for Art and Literature

Like industrial and agricultural production, art and literature have their own objective laws of development. Of course, art and literature are products of the intellect and therefore more complex and more difficult to master. As Comrade Zhou Yang has said, the characteristics of art and literature are the reflection of life through the means of images. Chairman Mao has said, life as reflected in works of literature and art can and ought to be on a higher plane, more intense, more concentrated, more typical, nearer the ideal, and therefore more universal than actual everyday life. Revolutionary literature and art should create a variety of

characters out of real life and help the masses to propel history forward, so as to reach the goal of serving politics. I think that at present the following questions have to be solved:

(1) The question of quantity and quality. Over the past few years many works of art and literature have been produced but they are not of good quality. We have a great number of writers and artists but their standard is not high either. The same theatrical item is imitated and performed everywhere, and the performances only cover a small range of subjects. The same subject is dealt with in various places so that many works differ only slightly from each other. The same language is used to eulogize the same matter, so that the quality of each work is low. Although the present output of art and literature falls far short of the needs of popularization, the most important thing at present is not to increase the quantity but to raise the quality. Improving the quality involves careful work and you cannot demand that it be accomplished overnight. Not everybody is capable of creating a successful work and neither can such works be produced every day. It is impossible for "everybody to write poems and everybody to paint" or for "a Guo Moro to come forward in every county". Such slogans are incorrect. Art and literature should dialectically combine ideological content and artistic quality. The creation of good art requires more adequate preparation. *Socialism is Good* is a good song but the words are too simple. Now the song *The Water in the Hongbu Lake Surges Wave upon Wave* is more popular and welcomed by the masses. The reason is that it has a revolutionary content and is lyrical and of high quality. This is the masses' opinion and the selection made by them. Now writers should be allowed more time to write, they cannot be pressed too hard. Drama troupes mustn't give too many performances, so that the actors and actresses may have enough time to rest.

(2) The question of raw materials and refining. Only after refining can scenes of actual life become works of art. A writer can produce his works only after he has mastered enough raw materials and refined them. Now we should place more stress on refining and, therefore, should allow the writers and artists more time.

(3) The question of ideology and professional skill. Ideology is very important and serves as the guideline. It is necessary to strengthen ideological study. You are "engineers of the soul" and your ideological level should be higher than that of others. If we do not raise our ideological level, we cannot produce good work. But apart from raising our ideological level, we must have a good command of professional skills. Otherwise, how can we express ideological content? If we only know about politics and do not have a good command of professional skills, what we write will be nothing but slogans and cannot appeal to the people. To have a good command of professional skills, we cannot do without basic training. An artist must have experience and talent and must be well-cultured. Failing this, one can be neither artist nor critic. It is necessary to accumulate experience and skills, to have constant practice and to be tested by the masses in practice. But at present people do not dare to talk about experience, talent and skill. When somebody talks about skill, it is regarded as bourgeois ideology. Obviously this is wrong.

Now the accusation of taking "the white and expert road" is prevalent. We have not made such accusations.

What is "white"? When a person dedicates himself to serving socialism on socialist soil, even though he does not study politics to any great extent, we cannot assess him as "white". Only those who oppose socialism can be judged "white". Take a surgeon for example, he is skilled at surgery and has cured many patients but he is not politically active and, therefore, is regarded as "taking the white and expert road". Isn't this absurd? Take another example. A person dedicates himself to serving socialism. Though he does not know much about politics, he has devised a missile in two years and contributed much to the state. Another person talks about politics every day but he failed to devise a missile in five years. Whom will you choose? I choose the first. We can only ask the second to be a political teacher; he cannot work in the missile institution because instead of making missiles he would only "make mischief" there.

(4) The question of criticism and discussion. Criticism of works of art and literature by others must be allowed. There

should be freedom to publish works and to criticize them; likewise, there should be freedom for both criticism and discussion. Neither the critic nor the artist should monopolize the literary world. We encourage criticism and also encourage the contention of a hundred schools of thought and free discussion. Provided the debate is carried out within the framework of socialism, you may assess something as good and I may assess it as bad, but both views should be allowed. If criticism without discussion is what is allowed, then people will say it is easier to be critics.

5. Legacy and Creation

Chairman Mao said that we should lay more stress on the present than on the past. We believe that each generation surpasses the previous one. In the course of historical development, the contemporary always surpasses the ancient. However, there were always good things in ancient times worth inheriting. That is why Chairman Mao urges us to take over the fine things in our cultural legacy and absorb critically whatever is beneficial, "discarding the bad while absorbing the good", so that our culture will develop and be enriched by each generation and attain a new high in the future communist society.

Regarding the relationship between Chinese and foreign things, we should always lay our main stress on the Chinese because we are Chinese. But we must not reject foreign things and close our doors. That would be idolizing the ancients. We should assimilate good foreign things, too, and integrate them with our national culture. Our nation has always had the ability to absorb what is outstanding in the culture of other nations. We have absorbed things from the cultures of India, Korea, Vietnam, Mongolia and Japan as well as of western Europe. But we must emphasize our own traditions, first of all thoroughly understand our national heritage and then absorb foreign things, gradually integrating them with our own. This should be a chemical combination and not just a physical mixing, simply attaching foreign things to Chinese.

Whether we learn from ancient things or from foreign things,

we do it for today's creation, and integrate them with our own works. Art and literature must have a creative spirit of their own.

6. Leadership

In the past three years, we have had great achievements. These achievements by far outweigh any shortcomings and errors. How can we correct the shortcomings and errors? The heart of the matter is leadership, education and going among the masses. Briefly, investigation and study are needed. Chairman Mao's working method is to conduct investigation and to study. First, the leadership must be self-critical and shoulder more responsibility, as problems are always connected with people in the upper ranks. I hope you will do this on your return. Then art and literature workers will have ease of mind and the drive to make our socialist art and literature flourish.

Self-criticism alone will not suffice and there remains the need to go among the masses. Only when you go down among the masses can you find whether your opinions are correct or not. It is good for us to put questions of all kinds before the masses. In this way we can have their help. Investigation and study must be conducted in a down-to-earth way and not carelessly. Others' achievements should be confirmed and appropriate assessment be made of problems. The situations in various areas and departments are different. In some places, the leadership is entirely wrong, in some places a few of the leaders are wrong and in some other places the leadership is entirely correct. We must make the assessments accordingly in a down-to-earth way.

We must create an atmosphere in which everyone dares to speak. Even if some views are not in agreement with the thinking of others, people should speak their minds as long as their words are beneficial to socialism. Say all you know and say it without reserve; blame not the speaker but be warned by his words; and correct mistakes if you have committed them and guard against them if you have not. In this way our cadres can be educated, a healthy atmosphere can prevail, socialist art and literature will develop better and will have plenty of scope.

Huang Zongying

Memories of Premier Zhou at the 1961 Film Conference

For many years I have worked both as an actress and script writer in the film industry. In 1959, I devoted all my time to writing film scripts for the Shanghai Film Studio. Later in June 1961, there was to be a conference on feature films in Beijing. Because of ill-health I asked for leave, but Comrade Yuan Wenshu, Party secretary of the Film Workers' Association, insisted I attend. Although I didn't feel well, I travelled to Beijing.

On the evening of 16th June, after all the other delegates had gone to see some films, I flopped down on the bed exhausted, not bothering to change my clothes. Suddenly in rushed Zhao Dan, my husband, shouting: "Zongying, get up! Hurry! The premier's coming to see you and all of us!"

Huang Zongying, born in Beijing in 1925, started to work as a stage and film actress in Shanghai in the early 1940's. She acted in such films as *Crows and Sparrows* and *The Family*. From the late 1950's until now, she has worked as a professional writer, writing both scripts and reportage. Today she lives in Shanghai with her husband, Zhao Dan, one of China's most distinguished film actors.



Premier Zhou Enlai with film workers

Just as I sprang up from the bed Premier Zhou entered laughing. I quickly went over to shake hands and greet him. He looked me up and down, taking in the ordinary clothes and home-made cloth shoes that I was wearing, and then asked: "So you don't dare to wear bright clothes?" Then he added: "Ideological remoulding doesn't mean you have to change your clothing." He also said the same to Zhao Dan, who dressed sloppily.

Zhao Dan rushed out to look for some other comrades. That evening two feature films were being shown. After the first my husband had returned to see how I was and in the foyer of the hotel had chanced to meet Premier Zhou, who was about to leave

after a briefing with some foreign visitors. The premier knew about our conference and so asked who else was around. After Zhao Dan had told him, he took the lift up to our room.

Soon Chen Huangmei, a vice-minister of culture and head of the Film Bureau, Ding Yi, Party secretary of the Shanghai Tianma Film Studio, Chen Liting, head of the studio and a director, Shen Fu, head of the Shanghai Haiyan Film Studio and a director, and others arrived. In great excitement, the hotel attendants brought up tea, flasks and fans. "Can you bring us some cold drinks?" the premier asked them kindly. "I'll pay for them." They gladly brought us orangeade, walnuts and apricot kernels.

We were in an ordinary room. The premier and Comrade Shen Fu sat on the sofa, Ding Yi on a chair and the rest of us on the beds. After searching for the others, Zhao Dan came back and sat down on the end of the bed, facing the premier. Panting, he wiped the perspiration from his face. Premier Zhou kindly handed him his bottle of orangeade.

"You're looking thinner," the premier said to me, shaking his head. "What's the matter? Ask the doctor to give you a thorough examination."

"Oh, it's nothing serious, premier," I told him. "Perhaps I've been worrying too much about my work."

"Five Party secretaries are in charge of Zongying's writing group, and they've chased away all her inspiration," teased Chen Huangmei.

"What do you mean?" asked Premier Zhou concerned. "Tell me all about it."

So then I told Premier Zhou everything. There were too many censors checking film scripts. Leaders at the various levels differed in their opinions about a film. Sometimes we wasted a lot of time writing and re-writing several versions of a script. We cited some examples. The premier listened carefully, his head raised as he leant against the sofa. We could see that he wanted us to discuss the problem right there and then in front of him.

"Premier," I said to him, "at the conference we've dealt with the question of the laws of art in our discussion groups. But I still have a question and I don't know if I can ask it or not."

"Of course you can," he said.

"Premier, when scientists make rockets and missiles, those who are not scientists, whether leaders or ordinary people, have no right to comment on their work. But with films it is different. Everyone feels he has the right to give his opinion, while we artists have little say. I think we have too many leading censors, or as we say, 'mothers-in-law'. How and in what ways should the Party committees at the various levels supervise film scripts and creative work? We feel this question must be studied and discussed." Then I told the story about my five Party secretaries.

Some time before, I'd been given the job of writing the scenario for a film, *A Good Manager*, an important one assigned by the Shanghai Municipality. In the script a commune Party secretary had to be portrayed, but in my life I'd known very few Party secretaries. Our writing group consisted of three members. The first Party secretary of the Shanghai Municipality was responsible for it, but the first Party secretaries of the Shanghai Film Bureau, the Shanghai Film Studio and the commune also had a hand in it. Meanwhile the deputy Party secretary of the studio worked with our group.

After we had collected some material, we tried writing, while the deputy Party secretary was with us day and night. We three writers often talked at random and thought hard racking our brains until we finally came up with some ideas. Then the deputy Party secretary asked us: "What relationship do your ideas have with the main theme of the film? How do they show the ideological theme?" His questions embarrassed us and killed our inspiration. How can a writer be so all-inclusive? One evening he felt ill and went to bed early. We worked all through the night without interruption and were able at last to complete the plot for the film. When I said that, Premier Zhou burst out laughing. Then I added: "Because we lacked experience, it was impossible for us to produce a good script even though there were five Party secretaries supervising us."

As we talked and laughed, we discussed the question of how to strengthen the leading role of the Party and still obey the laws of art. We told the premier about the lively discussion at the con-

ference about a short story and film called *Daji and Her Father*. Many had felt the film was not as moving as the story. This wasn't the fault of the director. The author had helped with the screen adaptation, and had changed or cut the most moving parts fearing there was some "humanism" about them. So at the conference we had had a heated discussion about "humanism". Each of us had been given a copy of the story so that we could compare it with the film. When I mentioned this, Premier Zhou held out his hand and asked Chen Huangmei: "May I have a copy too?" Immediately my husband gave him his.

The next day, the premier continued to make investigations among the delegates and had some special talks with some leading Party and administrative comrades. Whenever there were contradictions, the premier would gather as many opinions as possible from all angles. That was his style of work. Along with many comrades, Premier Zhou saw the film *Daji and Her Father* that evening.

On 1st July, the premier met all the delegates. Zhao Dan insisted that Premier Zhou tell us his opinion of *Daji and Her Father*. Which was better, the story or the film? "Premier," Zhao Dan said, "you think the film is better than the story, but I can't agree." Premier Zhou replied: "The film has a stronger sense of the times we live in and the scenery gives more scope..." Zhao Dan insisted: "That's because a film, a multiple art form, is necessarily richer than a book." So the two of them spoke their minds freely, neither willing to concede to the other. Finally Zhao Dan had nothing more to say and so he ended: "I'll stick to what I said. I still think the story is better than the film." The premier stopped and beamed at him, saying in a ringing voice: "Of course you can stick to your opinion. And I'll stick to mine! What you, Zhao Dan, say belongs to one school; what I, Zhou Enlai, say belongs to another!" He burst out laughing, then so did Zhao Dan, till we all joined in.

During the Cultural Revolution, Lin Biao and the "gang of four" labelled that 1961 meeting on script-writing as a counter-revolutionary one to mobilize "monsters and demons". They said our talk with Premier Zhou that evening had been a vicious attack

on the Party, socialism and Mao Zedong Thought. Comrades Chen Huangmei and Yuan Wenshu were accused of being the ring-leaders. All those present that evening were persecuted. Their sufferings are generally known and so I won't write about them now. As for me, I was forced to live as a "counter-revolutionary" for some years.



Liao Chengzhi

My Mother and Her Paintings

He Xiangning (1878-1972), former president of the Union of Chinese Artists, veteran revolutionary and noted Chinese painter, was the wife of Liao Zhongkai (1877-1925), a leader of the Left wing of the Guomindang (Kuomintang).

The author of this article is vice-chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress and director of the Overseas Chinese Affairs Commission.

— The Editors

An exhibition of paintings by the veteran revolutionary He Xiangning will open in the National Art Gallery in February, and the comrades in charge have asked me to write about it. I wondered for a long time what to write. Some friends suggested reminiscences, and I myself have been wanting to jot down what I saw and heard during my boyhood. Trivial as these notes may be, they can serve as topics for chat over a cup of tea or a few glasses of wine. Besides, I believe that not many people are left who know about these matters, so the sooner they are written down



He Xiangning painting in her studio (1958)

the better. As I happen to have been hospitalized for a minor ailment — nothing that could prove fatal — I shall take this chance to write about my mother's paintings and her life. This will discharge my present duty and make a start for the memoirs I hope to write later. Whether the result will be readable or not will depend on luck.

To be honest, I am a complete ignoramus on the subject of painting. Unlike some comrades who can, at first sight, distinguish between the genuine and fake Badashanren works left on the market, I cannot even distinguish between Li Laolian and Zheng Banciao. For a lout like me to talk about my mother's paintings is

the height of presumption. But never mind. I shall just pour out my recollections for the criticism of true connoisseurs.

As is generally known, my mother was born in a typical large feudal family in Hongkong and she never expected to take up painting. There is quite a story about how she got married to my father, who had lost his parents in Honolulu when he was seventeen. It had much to do with his father's last instructions. Because overseas Chinese in the United States were discriminated against, my paternal grandfather told his son on his death-bed that, according to the customs of our Hakka forbears, he must take a wife with unbound feet, especially as women with bound feet were looked down upon in foreign countries. After my father had escorted my grandfather's coffin back to the motherland for burial, he set out to look for a partner as instructed. But where was he to find one? There were very few women without bound feet at that time.

There is no story without coincidences. From childhood my mother had often overheard relatives or visitors talking about the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom in the 19th century. They said the peasant insurgents opposed binding women's feet, and she made up her mind at all costs never to bind her own. Her parents were furious and tried every means to have her feet bound, but she cut the binding cloth with her scissors at night. The next day her feet were bound again, and again the cloth was snipped into flying butterflies that same night. After several dozen rounds of such bold struggles my grandparents finally gave in and let her do as she pleased. The explanation is simple: my mother had three brothers and eight sisters, being the ninth child in the family, so somehow or other they let her slip through the net. My mother told me that after she was exempted from this cruel custom, with her feet unbound she raced around happily, climbing trees and bounding up hills.

As chance would have it, her father heard that there was a young man openly proclaiming that he wanted to find a wife with unbound feet. Wasn't this a godsend? So without undergoing tedious formalities the two young people were married. They had no



time to enjoy the freedom of choice, but this saved a good deal of trouble.

After marriage, they hit it off very well. There is much that could be written about that too, but I can pass over it for the time being.

Since they could no longer stay in the feudal family and it was then all the rage to study abroad so as to make our country rich and strong, they took advantage of the prevailing trend and went to Japan to study. My mother defrayed all expenses for the two of them from her dowry. When they reached Tokyo she enrolled in a women's college at Meguro. However, within less than a year she was pregnant and had to give up her studies. After my sister Mengxing was born, my mother took her to my grandfather's home in Hongkong, then returned to Japan.

Then sponsored by Li Zhongshi she joined the Tongmeng Hui (the Chinese Revolutionary League) led by Dr. Sun Yat-sen, the aim of which was to overthrow the feudal rule of the Qing Dynasty. That was how she met Dr. Sun. Later she recommended my father and Hu Hanmin for membership. After joining the League she stayed in the office, kept watch for Sun Yat-sen, did the cooking and also worked as a liaison officer and filing clerk. She started to learn painting at an art school for women at Ueno in Tokyo in order to draw and embroider army flags, insignia and designs for the armed uprising organized by Sun Yat-sen. My father also encouraged her in this. And so, to her own surprise, she took up painting.

Since she produced many paintings in her life, why are only some eighty odd displayed in the exhibition? There are many reasons. As an underground worker her life was fraught with danger, and often she had to abandon everything to take flight — this happened more times than I can remember. She lost many paintings in this way and very few were left in her keeping or with relatives and friends.

The style of her painting underwent the following changes:

In the first period, as she was studying in Japan her early works inevitably showed a distinctly Japanese style. She studied under Tanaka Raishou, an outstanding painter of the Meiji period, and

learned from him to cover a wide range of subjects, although she never mastered figure painting. Her early works show the influence of his style. This period lasted until around 1920, the eve of the outbreak of China's great revolution against imperialism and feudalism. With bright colours and vivid images these Japanese-style paintings reflect her joy in the revolutionary life she shared with my father and her sanguine disposition, despite the dangers to which they were exposed.

Prominent among her works of this period are lions, tigers, deer, monkeys, landscapes and flower paintings. She so loved chrysanthemums that, apart from painting them, she used to make clusters of them out of silk pasted on thick paper.

One of her best works of this period was *Lions Gazing West* which my father and Mr. Zhu Zhixin* appreciated very much. But it was lost when Chen Jiongming shelled Guanyin Hill where Dr. Sun lived, and is nowhere to be found now.

Another small scroll *A Roaring Tiger*, which was given to Mr. Huang Xing, was recovered by chance after Liberation. Very pleased, my mother had it included in *The Peoples' Republic of China*, a large album published in commemoration of the tenth anniversary of Liberation, and in the *Collection of Poems and Paintings by He Xiangning* published in 1963. In the early 60's I met some of Huang Xing's descendants in Shanghai and returned the scroll to its rightful owners. For all I know it is still in their possession.

After her return to China, my mother stayed in Shanghai for more than a year before going to Guangzhou. During these months when Sun Yat-sen inaugurated the magazine *Reconstruct*, my parents were very active. First they had to make contact with the envoy sent to Shanghai by Lenin. In my parents' house in Minhou Lane, Changping Road (which still stands there) a Russian language training class was held. Mr. Li Zhangda once stayed

* Mr. Zhu Zhixin was the first to translate works on socialism and publicize socialist thinking in the early period of the Tongmeng Hui. A man of few words, he once said, "Why brag about sacrifice if you are unwilling to sacrifice yourself?" He himself died for the cause, killed by Guangxi warlords. He considered himself a man with the "dual personality of Marx and Nietzsche".

and took lessons there before he went to study in the Soviet Union. My father wrote for *Reconstruct* and at the same time worked as an English teacher. He also went from time to time to Zhangzhou in Fujian Province to help prepare to fight back to Guangdong. I remember my mother was too busy to paint much then; however, two of the tigers and one of the paintings of flowers in the 1963 collection probably belong to this period. Unfortunately the originals have disappeared.

My mother went to Guangzhou before Chen Jiongming turned renegade. Influenced by the Lingnan School* there her style underwent another change. Now ignoring her paints, palette and the silk stretched taut on frames, she concentrated on painting with ink and colour washes on paper. My father would make comments by her side, picking fault with this or that. They often bickered until finally my mother threw away her brush and fumed, "If you know so much, why not paint it yourself?" Only after he had apologized profusely would she resentfully pick up her brush again. Fellow painters who dropped in occasionally were their friends Gao Jianfu and Gao Qifeng, while Yao Lirou was a frequent visitor. What others there were I cannot remember now. My father was so keen on giving her paintings away that none of this period were kept, more's the pity!

That good time did not last long. When Chen Jiongming bombarded Guanyin Hill in June 1922, my father was arrested and imprisoned at Shilong. My sister and I were immediately sent to Hongkong, only my mother remaining behind in danger. In order to rescue my father she went to see Dr. Sun Yat-sen on board the warship *Yongfeng*, then hurried from place to place in wind and rain although she had bad dysentery at the time. How could she be in the mood to paint? Not a single painting appeared. As Lu Xun said, in tense struggles when blood is shed people cannot attend to literature and so it is difficult to have any writings.

After my father's release, he accepted a new assignment to go to Japan as the representative of Sun Yat-sen to negotiate with

* One of the schools of modern Chinese painting which stresses painting from nature with bright colours. The composition and brushwork conform to no conventional pattern.

Lenin's envoy for co-operation between the Communist Party and the Guomindang. My mother naturally accompanied him. They travelled under the pretext of taking their sick daughter, who was actually in good health, to recuperate at a hot spring, and inspecting the raw silk industry in Japan. This was for fear that the Japanese government would otherwise refuse them admittance.

My father's plan succeeded, and he started talks with the Soviet representative at Atami. Since I had been sent to study in the middle school attached to Lingnan University, I cannot say whether my mother did any painting at this time. Probably none at all or very little. Before long, her father died and she had to leave Japan for Hongkong.

In 1923, when the negotiations were nearly completed, Sun Yat-sen led his troops back to Guangzhou. He promptly made arrangements for the First National Congress of the Guomindang and defined his Three Great Policies: alliance with Russia, co-operation with the Communist Party and assistance to the peasants and workers. In 1925, Dr. Sun was seriously ill. My mother followed him to Beijing. I remember that after my father was assassinated by the Guomindang Rightists on August 20, 1925, she sighed, "I only succeeded in prolonging his life for three years." During those three years she did very few paintings, devoting all her time to working for the co-operation between the two parties, the establishment of the Huangpu (Whampao) Military Academy and the Guangzhou-Hongkong strike. When in 1926 the Northern Expeditionary Army set off on its northern march, she went with the West Route Army. How could she be in the mood to paint at such a time?

When she could sit down by her painting desk again, the sky was already mantled with dark clouds. She witnessed the massacre of workers, peasants and Communists, whose mutilated corpses strewed the ground while their devilish butchers donned official robes and congratulated each other on their promotion. They were none other than the old "good friends" and "sworn brothers of the Tongmeng Hui". And those swine whose subordinates murdered my father were now all in Nanjing, calling each other brothers. My mother was well aware that it was hope-

less to expect the Guomindang with these hangers-on to resurrect the Three Great Policies. What was to be done? She could find no way out herself. So she resumed her work as a painter to vent her grief and indignation.

She concentrated on her work, painting plum blossoms, pine trees, chrysanthemums and occasionally tigers and lions. Most of all she painted plum blossom which sheds fragrance in the bitter cold of winter, as well as the evergreen, enduring pine. When fighting broke out among warlords, she decided to leave her motherland and go to Europe. But that was no easy matter; she would need money. So to raise her travelling expenses she held exhibitions of calligraphy and paintings and sold her works in Shanghai, Hongkong, the Philippines and then Malaya and Singapore. Patriotic overseas Chinese respected her and so, having raised enough money to cover three years' expenses, she went to Paris. There she worked energetically. The six hanging scrolls (pine trees, chrysanthemums, bamboos and sparrows) displayed at this exhibition were created in Paris. A Frenchman offered her a high price for them but she was unwilling to let them go, especially as she treasured Mr. Liu Yazi's inscription on them. I still have some of the works she did during those years.

After two or three years, in 1931 the Japanese occupied China's three northeastern provinces and in 1932 attacked Shanghai. My mother immediately returned and plunged into the resistance against Japanese aggression and the national salvation movement.

The Nanjing Guomindang government threw cold water on the heroic defenders of Shanghai, so that the resistance there came to a premature end. Then the "He-Umezu Agreement" was signed. After the fall of the northeast, north China was threatened. But Jiang Jieshi (Chiang Kai-shek) was busy fighting the Communists in the name of "internal pacification before resistance to foreign invasion". The country was in danger of annexation and the people of ruin. Meanwhile my mother contracted a serious heart disease. But when she got better, together with some old friends who adhered to the Three Great Policies and refused to serve the Nanjing government, she organized a society called "Friends in the Winter". She did a great many paintings in this period, quite

a few of which I still have. She and her associates painted pines and bamboos, as well as plum blossom and narcissus which blossom in winter and exude a fragrance in snow. There was a story about this period referred to in the 1963 album. Mr. Liu Yazhi inscribed a poem on a painting created jointly by my mother and a friend. It read:

For whom is she mending this land ravaged by war?
Under her talented hand mist and clouds appear.
Forsaking ambition, her mind at ease,
With her cane she often seeks out other recluses.

This showed clearly that she had broken with the Nanjing government. Yu Youren heard this from someone, and turned up uninvited a few days later. He wrote a poem also:

She could aid the green mountains,
Not by drawing them;
Will she not cease living as a recluse
That her fame may spread through the land?

This was obviously aimed at reconciling her with the Nanjing government; so later we ignored him.

Nearly all the poems and paintings of that period had this spirit. My mother's pine trees and plum blossoms became more vigorous and powerful. When Jiang Jieshi had my father's coffin removed from Guangzhou to Nanjing, he meant to scoff at Hu Hanmin. At the ceremony to remove the coffin, my mother lashed out at both sides, so that Wang Jingwei slunk away, not daring to meet this "old friend's" eye. When the Chinese Communist Party and Chairman Mao issued the "August 1 Appeal", calling for a halt to the civil war and united resistance to Japanese aggression, my mother was among the first to support it and persuaded many others to sign a petition requesting the Nanjing government to clarify its stand. This kept her so busy that her painting slowed down. The Xian Incident in 1936 forced Jiang Jieshi to resist the Japanese invaders, and in 1937 the War of Resistance Against Japan broke out. Being old, my mother moved back to Hongkong where she had more time to paint. Actually her main task was to help Soong Ching Ling, Madame Sun Yat-sen, to organize the China Defence League

and collect donations for the Eighth Route Army and the New Fourth Army led by the Communist Party.

In Hongkong my mother got in touch with many overseas Chinese. From 1938 to 1941 she publicized the war of resistance among them, saying that the best way for them to join the resistance was to aid the Eighth Route Army. In return for their donations she gave them paintings. What the total number was I have forgotten. The themes continued to be pine trees, plum blossom, chrysanthemums and occasionally landscapes.

When Hongkong fell into enemy hands she moved from northern Guangdong to western Guangxi, leading a wandering life for four years during which she did little painting. Her luggage was simple as she had lost her painting brushes and colours and therefore had to paint with whatever brush and paper she could find. A representative work of that period is a green plum blossom, strong as steel, which seems to be exuding fragrance.

Throughout the whole of the War of Liberation (1946-1949) she stayed at her old home in Hongkong and once again had the opportunity to purchase brushes and mix colours for painting. She was confident that the Guomindang government in Nanjing would certainly be defeated and the Communist Party in Yanan would triumph. The style of her painting changed again. Her themes were plum blossoms, pine trees, chrysanthemums and landscapes still but they expressed sanguine exuberance instead of her former grief and indignation. Although she was over seventy, her plum blossom boughs had a vigour which few young artists could equal. After the Liberation of the whole mainland she went on painting in this style until she was over ninety.

She died on September 1, 1972 at the age of 96. But she continued to paint until 94.

Some of her later works such as landscapes are rather "stiff", but her plum branches still strong as iron reflect her life-long defiance of the enemy and her love for her comrades.

Letting my fancy wander I have written nearly 5,000 words, far more than I intended. However, I felt I had to write something to introduce my mother's life and her paintings.

But I hope readers will not shake their heads and sigh after reading these rambling reminiscences. . . .
Alas, here I must stop.

Beijing Hospital, January 25, 1979

Landscape (traditional Chinese painting)
by *He Xiangning*



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Du He

The Short Stories of 1978

The year 1978 witnessed a fine crop of short stories. Perhaps we should say this really began with *The Class Teacher** by Liu Xinwu, published in November 1977, for its appearance was a landmark in China's story-writing. Before this, story-writing was just beginning to recover after its brutal suppression by the "gang of four". *The Class Teacher* marked a breakthrough, after which many other new writings came out and won popular acclaim, bringing new life to the literary scene and raising the level of writing as a whole.

The distinguishing feature of the short stories of 1978 is their exposure of the tyranny imposed by the "gang of four" and the consequences of this tyranny — the mental trauma of many people, distorted human relations and spiritual anguish. The stories draw attention to such cases and appeal for healing measures. The young author Liu Xinwu makes a point of this. Following his first story, five more came out, including *A Place for Love*,* which although not up to his first in content or artistic technique retain, in general, its main characteristics. He portrays a variety of characters: young people bent on getting a partner for life but who do not

* See *Chinese Literature* No. 1, 1979.

know the meaning of love, others who are cynical about everything, yet others who faithfully follow all directives from above and are so "ultra-left" that they seem inhuman. Without exception they reveal the damage inflicted on their minds by the "gang of four". By describing these distorted personalities, the author probes the depth of social life and men's inner world during the disturbing decade of the late sixties and early seventies. This is why his stories have the ability to move people. Starting from life but going deep into its varied phenomena, characters and problems, Liu Xinwu emphasizes the delineation of the inner self.

Reflection on the problems of life during this decade is not confined to Liu Xinwu alone but is a feature of our times, a trait common during periods of great revolutionary changes. The "gang of four" rode roughshod over China for more than a decade, and brought calamity on our whole nation. Before their downfall every thinking Chinese was pondering over China's future and, when the gang finally collapsed, it was felt that this chapter of history must never be repeated and that a lesson must be drawn both from the positive and the negative side. It was along these lines that the short stories of 1978 were written criticizing the "gang of four".

Writers' purpose in depicting the soul-searing experiences of those days is not to plunge readers again in the gloom of that period but to help us to understand what we lived through yet did not comprehend at the time. To enable us to go forward at critical moments of history, we need to reevaluate many things. For instance, the puritanism and "Leftist" thinking of a girl like Xie Huimin in *The Class Teacher* were for a long time regarded as good and correct, but now it is necessary to look at them more critically. As during the period of enlightenment everything had to be judged in the court of reason where it had to justify its existence, so today, practice is the criterion to judge what is right and what is wrong.

This new reevaluation of life is the reason why the short stories of 1978 won the approval of so many readers. Last year there was an animated debate over *The Wound* and some other stories. This debate marked a new step in China's story-writing, helping our writers to liberate their minds. Some were able to stand up boldly, casting aside old concepts and restrictions to march forward. Others

lagged behind and opinions clashed; hence the debate — a debate between progress and conservatism.

An important achievement of the 1978 stories is that they are based on life and by their example have settled a number of theoretical questions which had been confused, such as the question of realism, writing about true situations, and tragic endings.

A fairly large proportion of stories deal with cases where people were wrongly imprisoned or accused by the "gang of four". *My Sacred Duty* is one of these. Its hero Wang Gongbo works under virtually intolerable pressure to investigate the false charges against Bai Shun. Indefatigable and genuinely selfless, he finally loses his life in a car accident engineered by Xu Runcheng and Pei Fanian. His death is inevitable and his tragedy is the logical extension of that of Bai Shun; for had anyone other than Wang tried equally hard to clear Bai Shun, under the circumstances then prevailing he would have met with the same fate. Such problems could not be solved single-handed by individuals, no matter how high their moral calibre, because it was a question of the system of jurisdiction. Without proper legal safeguards and with power concentrated in the hands of such criminals as the "gang of four", who were subject to no supervision, inevitably false charges were brought against people all over China, and men of integrity who tried to right such wrongs were ruined themselves. The death of Wang Gongbo leads us to this conclusion.

Apart from those falsely charged and unjustly imprisoned, their relatives and friends were implicated. During the time of the "gang of four" the number of those incriminated in this way was unprecedented in Chinese history. Stories like *The Wound* portray this type of tragedy and show how a false charge can affect not only the accused himself but his family and their loves and lives. Thousands of families were broken up and their happiness destroyed. It is natural that such wrongs should find reflection in stories like *The Wound*, which can be said to crystallize the tears and blood of countless families. They depict the sufferings of our people during that abnormal period of our history and show an important facet of our social life which was dark and stifling; but it is a true portrayal. The fact that many stories of 1978 took false

charges, unjust imprisonment and tragedies as their theme was in itself an achievement signifying that writers were starting to tackle subjects hitherto "out of bounds". This was a forward and not a backward step. We hail this victory of revolutionary realism. Even if some of these works leave us with a sense of oppression, this is much better than bogus bravado or sham optimism because it helps to wake us up to the facts.

New types of people do not drop down from heaven overnight but are thrown up by the great tides of historical change. Tempered in the struggle against the "gang of four" and undergoing almost unbearable sufferings and hardships, some young people achieved maturity. In her story *Melody in Dreams* Zong Pu depicts such a character. Nineteen-year-old Liang Xia grew up in the ten years when Lin Biao and the "gang of four" were trampling over our land, and her girlhood was full of troubles and setbacks. In her student years, the best time for absorbing knowledge, her parents are labelled capitalist-roaders and constantly struggled against. They are kept in isolation and starting from the age of nine she has to take food to them in prison. She herself is also derided for being the daughter of capitalist-roaders. When her father dies under these brutal conditions, she and her mother go to live in the countryside. Soon her mother dies too, leaving her to seek refuge with an aunt who is a political opportunist, who eventually drives her out. These ordeals, coming at a time when a girl is filled with ideals and aspirations, turn Liang Xia into a cynic, a complex, contradictory character. Extremely clever and quick to learn, she is very musical. But when another aunt who is teaching her the cello asks her why she is learning music, her answer is, "To make a living, of course." She appears very selfish, giving careful thought to her every step, yet at times she is warm-hearted and active in helping others. She learns to treat life with a mocking smile, burying the deep hate in her heart under a cool worldly aloofness. Her wit and sarcasm are reminiscent of He Wei in the play *When All Sounds Are Hushed*,* but she is less defeatist. She simply masks her youthful ardour with a cold caustic manner. She is pure

* See *Chinese Literature* No. 4, 1979.

metal steeled in a furnace and hammered into shape by the hard knocks of life, so that when in 1976 the great tempest of the April 5th movement came, she was swept into the tide and together with many other young people became one of the real heroes and heroines of the time.

The heroes of that movement, as a number of writings have portrayed, were mostly young people who were vanguards in the decisive battle against the "gang of four". It seems only natural that they should be pace-setters and shock troops in our modernization of our country. At important points of history new characters have always appeared in the battle against the old and the moribund. Destruction of the old is closely linked to the setting up of the new and this is the main content of revolutionary changes. It is the main theme too of last year's new short stories, which depicted a number of heroic characters fighting the old to establish something new.

Another feature of last year's stories is the appearance of proletarian intellectuals who are devoting all their skill to developing our science and culture. The technician Wu Guoliang in *My Marriage** is such a type. For many years, the "gang of four" trampled on intellectuals. Now their appearance as heroes in our short stories represents yet another breakthrough.

Old authors are exploring new fields and a contingent of hopeful but very young new writers has appeared. There is much to be expected from them.

* See *Chinese Literature* No. 5, 1979.

Liu Naichong

The Beijing Opera "Autumn River"

Quite commonly in China, performances are given of selected dramatic episodes from different traditional operas.

Autumn River is one act from *A Tale of a Jade Hairpin*, a traditional Sichuan opera about the romance between a nun Chen Miaochang and a scholar Pan Bizheng in the Song Dynasty (960-1279). Their parents have betrothed them before their birth and a jade hairpin is given to the girl's family as a betrothal gift. But war breaks out, the Chen family is scattered, and their homeless young daughter enters a convent and becomes a nun. Pan Bizheng goes to the capital to sit for the imperial examination but, falling ill, he fails to take it and on his way home visits his aunt, the abbess of the convent. The young couple fall in love at first sight and secretly get engaged. His aunt discovers this and separates them on the grounds that a nun is not allowed to have a love affair. She forces Pan to leave to sit for the next examination in the capital. Grief-stricken to know that her lover is leaving, Miaochang is extremely anxious to see him off. She slips out of the convent to run after him. Coming to a river she meets an eighty-year-old boatman who sympathizes with her plight but, seeing how desperate she looks, teases her by refusing to ferry her across. Finally, however, the old man lets her get on board and helps her to catch up with Pan.

Thus the lovers meet again on the boat and exchange gifts as a pledge to be true to each other before they part in tears. The opera ends with Pan's success in the examination and the marriage between the lovers. *Autumn River* shows Miaochang pursuing her lover on the river. The special features of this performance have made it widely acclaimed for three hundred years.

Most traditional Chinese operas have no scenery and only the simplest stage properties. The characters' feelings and thoughts, as well as the setting, changes in weather and so forth are expressed through singing and acting. *Autumn River* is an outstanding example of this.

The curtain rises on an empty stage. As the music starts Miaochang enters in a hurry. She is wearing a nun's headdress and patchwork habit and carrying a "Buddhist duster". As she hurries on her way she reproaches the abbess for separating her from Pan. Her gait shows that the winding way is rugged. Her sudden halt





in the centre of the stage indicates that she has reached a river. She paces to and fro gazing into the distance, while music suggestive of flowing water and the boatman's chanting backstage conjure up a riverside scene. At Miaochang's call, a white-bearded old man punts a boat in. He has on a straw hat, a cloth tunic and straw sandals. Rowing with an oar and taking short, quick steps, he looks as if really on a boat.

The nun tells him why she is in such a hurry and offers him a good price for ferrying her. The boatman asks for a higher price and in desperation she agrees to it, only to find that this is all a joke. She complains that he has wasted her time and urges him to be quick. When the boat is close to the bank he throws a rope ashore and jumps off to fasten the boat to a post. Then he fixes a plank as a gangway, but Miaochang dares not cross it and the old man has to help her with his pole. When she is finally aboard he prepares to set off; however, the boat won't budge. The old man jumps into the water to push. Still it refuses to move. Frantic, he turns round and discovers that he has forgotten to untie the rope. He blames Miaochang for flustering him. The rope is untied but

the boat is really grounded. With a shove of his foot he pushes it off and at last they get under way.

The small boat quickly puts out into midstream, the old man at the prow, the girl at the stern, both rocking up and down as if on a boat. The boatman punts hard and the boat cuts forward swiftly. The girl waves her "Buddist duster" to show that there is a wind. When Pan comes in sight, she is overjoyed and the old man punts even harder. In this atmosphere of elation the act ends.

The skilful acting conjures up the setting and vividly presents Miaochang's anxiety and the boatman's humour. A veteran performer of *Autumn River* says that one cannot act it well without some knowledge of rivers, boats and wind; for the actor and actress must be able to convey the motion of the boat and the wind on the river as well as the heroine's feeling. They should have a certain training in acrobatics too. For instance, when the boatman meets the nun he looks at her with his body inclined sideways, one leg bent and the other lifted while holding the pole in one hand and tweaking his beard with the other. Miaochang is a beautiful figure in her colourful habit as, holding up the "Buddist duster", she stands erect or sways gracefully; and for this a good training of the waist and legs is needed.

Chinese Poets Meet

More than a hundred poets from various parts of China met in Beijing recently to discuss their work. They agreed that more poems should be written to reflect our people's feelings and their heroic efforts to modernize the country.

The poet Ai Qing, reappearing after a silence of more than twenty years, said: "Together with the people, poets must think about our present problems, analyse them and find answers for them." Other speakers maintained that the power of poetry lies in its truthfulness. Poets must speak the truth for the people. He Jingzhi, writer of the opera *The White-haired Girl*, said that a poet must not hesitate to express his political ideas and his outlook on life; he must "be responsible to the people and uphold the truth".

All agreed that poetry can only flourish in a democratic climate. Guided by the principle of "letting a hundred flowers blossom and a hundred schools of thought contend", poets must be encouraged to write on a large variety of themes. Poetic forms should be varied and poets should compete with each other. The so-called poems full of empty slogans produced under the rule of the "gang of four" were disgusting. Now the time has come to restore the fine tradition of realism of our revolutionary literature and art.

The forum discussed the development of Chinese poetry and held that many excellent poets have made important contributions to China's new poetry since it began to appear sixty years ago in

the May 4th Movement of 1919. Since the publication of the *Talks at the Yanan Forum on Literature and Art* in 1942 new poetry has made great headway. In 1976, the poems written in memory of Premier Zhou and to attack the "gang of four" in Tian An Men Square were another breakthrough. It was agreed that in future new poetry should assimilate the merits of our classical poetry and folk-songs and learn from foreign poetry too.

Zhou Yang on Literature and Art

Zhou Yang, vice-president of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences and vice-chairman of the All-China Federation of Literary and Art Circles, recently urged China's writers and artists to give true pictures of socialist life. He held that our literature and art should help the people to observe and understand reality and to look forward to the future from the angle of historical development. In this new period of socialism it should describe the endeavours and feelings of the Chinese people in their great struggle to modernize the country and portray the heroes among the broad masses. Modernization, he said, would involve a great revolution in ideology, as well as in science and technology. Writers and artists should learn as fast as possible how to reflect the new life and new problems.

Zhou Yang's speech, delivered at a forum in Guangzhou at the end of 1978, deals with six topics — the tasks of literature and art in the new period of socialism, the question of praise and exposure, socialist literature and art and its allies, form and style in art, free academic discussion and the question of leadership. The *People's Daily* has carried the full text of this speech.

Beijing Opera Theatre of Beijing Celebrates Its Founding

The Beijing Opera Theatre of Beijing, set up not long ago, comprises more than seven hundred noted actors, libretto-writers,

directors and musicians. The repertoire shown in its opening performances included the well-known classical opera *The White Snake*, other traditional items adapted from such classics as *Outlaws of the Marshes*, *Pilgrimage to the West*, *The Three Kingdoms*, *The Western Chamber* and the newly-produced opera with a historical theme *Hai Rui Dismissed from Office*.

“Satire and Humour” Published

Satire and Humour, a quarto cartoon supplement to *People's Daily*, is now published once a month.

The supplement consists mainly of cartoons dealing with the situation at home and abroad. In addition there are short essays, sketches, satirical poems, cross-talk, fables, political jokes and general information on cartoons.





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