CHINESE LITERATURE

Monthly

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Front Cover: Peonies
Woodcut by Liu Hsien

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EDITORIAL

The first number of *Chinese Literature* in 1958 devoted one section to "Writings of the Last Generation" — works which appeared between 1910 and 1930 by authors most of whom began to write during the formative period of the new literature movement in China. Many of these veterans are still playing an active part today in building up our socialist culture. Our present literature has grown out of the new literature which came into being during the May the Fourth Movement. We can call the May the Fourth Movement the dividing line between China's old and modern literature, though even before that time there was some sign that the new literature was putting forth buds.

The May the Fourth Movement was a patriotic movement unprecedented in Chinese history, which started in Peking on May 4, 1919, and spread thence throughout the country. Those were the days when the imperialist powers who had defeated the German militarists were making new plans in Versailles for a re-division of colonies. China as a member of the allied nations was, technically speaking, one of the victors. Yet those who drafted the peace treaty in Versailles refused to return to China the rights and Chinese territory which the German imperialists had wrested from her by force, including the Shantung Peninsula. Instead, they decided to give these to another imperialist power, Japan. When this became known in China, tremendous indignation was aroused. The progressive intellectuals and patriotic students then in Peking held a large-scale demonstration to protest against the

imperialist powers who thought they could ignore the existence of the Chinese people and dismember China at will, as well as to oppose the feeble and corrupt government which represented the interests of the feudal landlords and bureaucrats. This developed into a political movement against feudalism and imperialism on a nation-wide scale. It marked the beginning of the new-democratic revolution in China.

In the field of culture, this movement inaugurated the new cultural movement and the rise and growth of a new literature. A mortal blow was dealt at the old literature which supported feudalism and at the classical language understood by only a few; works of literature close to the life and speech of the common people, which had been tabooed by the feudal aristocrats, were declared the new orthodoxy. The new writers, whose point of departure was a complete denial of the feudal system, observed and described the life and destiny of the common people, especially the peasants, through the eyes of revolutionary democrats and humanists, and championed the use of the vernacular language which those with any education could understand. On the basis of the vernacular, many new literary forms developed: the new free verse based on the vernacular, plays consisting of dialogue without verse unlike the traditional Chinese drama, modern novels and short stories. Thus both in form and content, the new literature born of the May the Fourth Movement can truly be called a great revolution in the history of Chinese literature.

Here lies the significance of the new literature: Not only did it write another splendid chapter in China's centuries-old history of literature, but it played a positive role by reaching a greater number of people than ever before. This year is the fortieth anniversary of the May the Fourth new cultural movement, the starting point of this new literature. A considerable part of this number is therefore devoted to it, to enable our readers to understand the nature of this movement and the thoughts and ideas of some of the pioneers of the new literature. This should provide a better perspective in which to view the development of modern Chinese literature up to the present day.

An appraisal of this new cultural movement has been taken from the works of Mao Tse-tung, who himself participated in it. The views of the great leader who has led the Chinese people to accomplish the new-democratic revolution and advance towards socialism are the best summary of the nature and significance of this movement. We are also presenting here a few of Lu Hsun's trenchant essays, the new literary form in which he excelled, as well as a poem by Kuo Mo-jo, an essay by Li Ta-chao and a critical study by Chu Chiu-pai. These men in different ways opened up new paths for the new literature which had Lu Hsun as its chief founder. "Notes on Literature and Art" contains articles by Mao Tun and Cheng Po-chi about two of the most important literary groups in the May the Fourth Movement. Mao Tun was the chief editor of the magazine *Story Monthly* which published new works at that time, while Cheng Po-chi was a contributor to another influential magazine, *Creation*. There is also a short article on Lu Hsun by Hsu Kuang-ping, his wife and most loyal assistant and comrade-in-arms.

The works of other important writers of the May the Fourth period will be published in future numbers of our magazine.

MAO TSE-TUNG

The May the Fourth New Cultural Movement

On China's cultural or ideological front, the period preceding the May the Fourth Movement and the period following it form two distinct historical periods.

Before the May the Fourth Movement, the struggle on China's cultural front was a struggle between the new culture of the bourgeoisie and the old culture of the feudal class. This was the character of the struggles that took place then between the modern educational and the imperial competitive examination system, between new learning and old learning, and between Western learning and Chinese learning. The studies in the modern school or new learning or Western learning of that time consisted mainly—we say mainly because they still retained some poisonous traces of Chinese feudalism—in the natural sciences and the bourgeois social and political theories, all of which are needed by the representatives of the bourgeoisie. At that time the ideology of the new learning played a revolutionary role in fighting the Chinese feudal ideology, and served the bourgeois-democratic revolution of the old period. However, because of the flabbiness of the bourgeoisie in China and the advent of the era of imperialism in the world, this bourgeois

ideology was easily defeated by the reactionary alliance of the slavish ideology of foreign imperialism and the Chinese feudal ideology of going back to the ancients; as soon as this alliance started a small counter-offensive, the new learning folded its banners, muffled its drums and beat a retreat, saving its carcass and losing its soul. The old bourgeois-democratic culture was bound to be defeated because it had become enervated and decayed in the era of imperialism.

But since the May the Fourth Movement things have gone differently. Since then the fresh force of a brand new culture has appeared in China, namely, the communist cultural ideology guided by the Chinese Communists, the communist world outlook and theory of social revolution. The May the Fourth Movement took place in 1919, and in 1921 the Chinese Communist Party was founded and China's labour movement actually began; all this happened after the First World War and the October Revolution in Russia, at a time when the national problem and colonial revolutionary movements in the world took on new features; here the connection between the Chinese revolution and the world revolution is quite obvious. As the new political force, the Chinese proletariat and the Chinese Communist Party, enters the Chinese political arena, the new cultural force too, in new uniform and with new weapons, mustering all possible allies and deploying itself in battle array, launches heroic attacks on imperialist culture and feudal culture. This new force has made great strides in the domain of the social sciences and of arts and letters, both in philosophy, economics, political science, military science, history and in art and literature, including drama, film, music, sculpture and painting. During the last twenty years, wherever this new cultural force directed its attack, a great revolution has taken place in content and form, for instance, in the style of the written language. Its influence is so great and its power so tremendous that it is practically invincible wherever it goes. Its scope and the numbers rallied to its cause are unprecedented in Chinese history. Lu Hsun was the greatest figure and the most courageous standard-bearer of this new

cultural force. The supreme commander in China's cultural revolution, he was both a great man of letters and a great thinker and a great revolutionary. He was a man of unyielding integrity, free from any trace of obsequiousness or servility; such strength of character is the greatest treasure among the colonial and semi-colonial peoples. Lu Hsun, representing the great majority of the people, was a figure unique in Chinese history, a national hero on the cultural front, the most correct, the bravest, the firmest, the most loyal and the most zealous hero who stormed and broke up the enemy's front. Lu Hsun's line is the line of the new culture of the Chinese nation.

Before the May the Fourth Movement, the new culture of China was a culture of old democracy and a part of the capitalist cultural revolution of the world bourgeoisie. Since the May the Fourth Movement, it has become a culture of new democracy and a part of the socialist cultural revolution of the world proletariat.

Before the May the Fourth Movement, China's new cultural movement, her cultural revolution, was led by the bourgeoisie, which was still playing a leading role. After the May the Fourth Movement the ideology of bourgeois culture which lagged even behind bourgeois politics could no longer play the leading role, and during the revolution became merely a member of an alliance in which the ideology of proletarian culture took the lead. This is a hard fact which no one can deny.

The new-democratic culture is the anti-imperialist and anti-feudal culture of the people; today it is the culture of the united front against Japanese aggression. This culture can only be led by the proletarian cultural ideology, by the ideology of communism, and not by the cultural ideology of any other class. New-democratic culture is, in a word, the anti-imperialist, anti-feudal culture of the mass of the people under the leadership of the proletariat.

*

The May the Fourth Movement was an anti-imperialist as well as an anti-feudal movement. Its outstanding historical

significance is a feature which was absent in the Revolution of 1911, namely, a thorough and uncompromising opposition to imperialism and to feudalism. The May the Fourth Movement had this feature because capitalist economy in China had developed further and because new hopes for the liberation of the Chinese nation had arisen as China's revolutionary intelligentsia saw that the three big imperialist powers, Russia, Germany and Austria-Hungary, had collapsed, and two others, Britain and France, had been weakened, while the Russian proletariat had established a socialist state, and the German, Austrian (Hungarian) and Italian proletariat had risen in revolution. The May the Fourth Movement was called into being by the world revolution, by the Russian Revolution and by Lenin. It was part of the world proletarian revolution of that time. Although there was then no Chinese Communist Party, there were large numbers of intellectuals who approved of the Russian Revolution and had some rudimentary understanding of communist ideology. The May the Fourth Movement was in the beginning a revolutionary movement of the united front of three sections of people — the Communist, the revolutionary petty-bourgeois and the bourgeois intelligentsia, the last forming the right-wing of the movement at that time. Its weakness was that it was confined to the intellectuals and did not secure the participation of the workers and peasants. But as soon as it developed into the June the Third Movement, not only the intelligentsia but also the broad sections of the proletariat, the petty bourgeoisie and the bourgeoisie took part, and it became a nation-wide revolutionary movement.

The cultural revolution ushered in by the May the Fourth Movement was uncompromisingly opposed to feudal culture; there had never been such a great and thoroughgoing cultural revolution since the dawn of Chinese history. Raising aloft its banner inscribed with the two slogans of opposition to the old ethics and promotion of the new and opposition to the old literature and promotion of the new, the movement achieved much. However, it was not yet possible to extend it widely among the masses of the workers and peas-

ants. It put forward the slogan of "Literature for the common people," which referred only to the intelligentsia of the urban bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie. Both in men and in ideas the May the Fourth Movement prepared the way for the founding of the Chinese Communist Party in 1921, and for the May the Thirtieth Movement and the Northern Expedition. The bourgeois intelligentsia then constituted the right-wing of the May the Fourth Movement; in the second period, the greater part of it compromised with the enemy and turned reactionary.

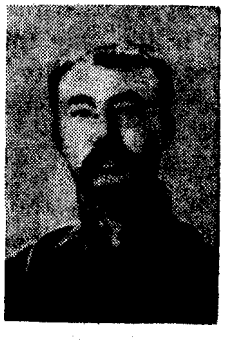
(The above two selections are both taken from *On New Democracy* written in January 1940)

We must take over all the fine artistic and literary legacy and critically assimilate from it what is useful to us and learn from its example when we try to work over the artistic and literary raw material found in the life of the people in our own times and in our own country.

Mao Tse-tung

LI TA-CHAO

Spring



Li Ta-chao (1888-1927) was one of the founders of the Chinese Communist Party and a leader of the May the Fourth Movement. In 1927 he was arrested by the warlord Chang Tso-lin and murdered.

Sunlight is shedding warmth, the east wind is melting the ice. Looking back towards my native land from these islands,* I know that gloom and stormy weather have given place to the fresh, bright spring. In that land but yesterday bound by snow and frost, the sap is rising and flowers

This article was published in *New Youth* in 1916. *New Youth* was a very influential magazine first appearing in 1915. It advocated new culture and literature, science and democracy and was against imperialism and feudalism. In 1923 it became a quarterly and the organ of the Chinese Communist Party.

* The author was then in Japan.

are blossoming. This change of season stirs men's imagination. When I walk upstairs and look far out across the countryside, I see thousands of willows turning green and broad meadows taking on colour. The virgin spring brings men infinite hope and animation; it reveals its tenderness and beauty to those of us who are students, our future still unknown, silently acquiescing in our enjoyment. Enchanting spring is touched by the industry and talents of the young, and the thought of our gifts and heavy responsibilities in the future makes it greet us each year with inexpressible kindness to comfort our hearts in our march forward. Though we may be toiling day and night to achieve our high ideals, our sacred mission, our great task, our heavy responsibility, we should make time to smile at spring, to thank it for its tenderness and beauty, to appreciate its sweetness and to bask in its warmth. This is the way to keep spring in our hearts, to keep ourselves, our family, country and nation young. For then we shall not be wasting this lovely spring in the infinity of time and space.

A human being in this vast universe is as infinitesimal as a grain of sand in the ocean. If we want to enjoy the happiness of spring for ever, we must first ask whether the spring in nature is eternal or ephemeral. If the universe is finite, then even if we live as long as the universe we cannot enjoy spring for ever. But if the universe is infinite, then we can gallantly rival the infinite universe so that we may have an eternal spring to enjoy. Whether the universe is finite or not depends on whether it has a beginning and an end. Had the universe a beginning? It began in nothingness. Will the universe have an end? It will end in nothingness. In other words, there is no beginning and no end; hence it is infinite in space, eternal in time. This is the absolute aspect of the universe.

If we consider the relative aspect, however, there is evolution too; since there is progress there is also retrogression, and hence arise the myriad different phenomena. Since there are different forms expressing these phenomena, the individual body, however great, must be finite; and life, however long, must have an end. Thus we have life

and death, prosperity and decline, youth and old age. The ancient philosopher Chuang Tzu pointed out that a fungus does not see the waxing and waning of the moon, the cicada does not know the spring and autumn. There are lesser and greater knowledge, lesser and greater ages. We may say that the months and spring and autumn exist, but though this is known to those creatures which live through the months and seasons, it is unknown to the fungus and the cicada; so in this sense we may say that the months, spring and autumn do not exist; but though the fungus and cicada do not know them, those creatures which live through them know them; in this sense we cannot say they do not exist. Since our knowledge is lesser than that of the universe and our age lesser also, if we try to fathom the universe in time or space we shall be like the fungus or the cicada.

All the cycles of life and death, of prosperity and decline, of youth and old age are in fact but the progress of spring. And this infinite, eternal whole without beginning or end is the infinite spring. We who are young and hot-blooded, standing in this great, whirling current should have fortitude and independent will to stand firm, resisting the current's force, remaining consistent in a changing world. Then we can identify ourselves with the universe, our springtime with the springtime of the universe. Since the universe is eternal, spring is also eternal and so are we ourselves. This is the spirit that restores youth and life, the spirit that moves mountains. Only those who love the spring can see eternal spring in the universe; and only when this spirit is theirs can they enjoy it for ever.

A nation or state has a life of its own. There are young nations and old ones, young states and old ones. Is China young or old? If our nation has grown old, we who are young should try to bring spring back to the national life, striving with hope and conviction to achieve this. But this can only be done consciously. Other nations often speak of China as an ancient country and the Chinese nation as moribund. Since the dawn of history countless nations have risen and fallen. If we look at world history, we see

that when Rome and Babylon were strong their stupendous achievements impressed the entire world, but in a flash their fame and glory turned to dust. Such prominent nations of Europe as Italy, France, Spain, Portugal, Holland, Belgium, Denmark, Sweden, Norway and England have all had a long history, a long life. They had their vigorous youth when their distinctive genius was brought into full play; but now their day has gone, their fame and glory have declined into mere empty shells. Thus these nations are past travellers in the caravan of human civilization.

It is clear from history that when a rising nation meets one in decline, the nation in decline will be defeated. When vigorous young life meets moribund life, the moribund life will be defeated. When a young people meets an old, the old people will be defeated. This is an inevitable law of nature. For more than 4,800 years, since the time of the legendary Huang Ti (Yellow Emperor), China has stood a mighty nation in East Asia. Its long, rich history is unique. We can consider the Chou dynasty as the time of China's youth when its culture was already splendid; after that, decline set in, but by such gradual degrees that some of the splendour has remained to this day. This is a glorious national tradition.

A man's life seldom exceeds a hundred years; thus when a nation lasts for five thousand years it has a creditable record. At present, however, all we can see is corpses, while the whole of our splendour is gone. How can a nation in such a condition survive? When our young people hear talk like this, they change colour and glare angrily, taking umbrage. There is no call, though, for anger. China has had a long history and burdens accumulated down the ages have fettered our national life, bringing about its decline. This fact we cannot deny. Our young people should pledge themselves to show the world not whether old China is going to live or die but that we are busily paving the way for the resurgence of a young China.

Whether or not we can stand up in the world depends not on the survival of old China but on its resurrection as

young China; for life is a cycle of birth and death and our problem is not one of national survival but of being born again and recovering the springtime of our nation. Gazing across the distant Himalayas, we can see the beacons of the Indian revolutionaries who are trying to revive the youth of their nation too. Since our 1911 Revolution and the 1913 Campaign against Yuan Shih-kai, our people have had no rest but have struggled on in the wind and dust, a whole nation in tumult. This was also for the rebirth of our nation. When such nations begin to smash their age-old fetters, to clean up the filth of centuries, to rebuild their life and to bring back the nation's springtime, it is on youth that they must rely.

When our republic was established, we gave it the name *Chung-hua*. *Chung* means "middle" or "central." However, we should not merely regard China as the centre of the world, but take the word as applying to time also. In world history with all its changes, past and present, the modern age may be considered as a point in the middle. Before this, we had the creation and evolution of the solar system, the earth, plant, animal and human life, and the rise and development of nations. That is ancient history, unlike that which will follow this middle period, the history of the rebirth and resurgence of nations. Past history is finished, burned out, buried; modern history is a clean sheet, new, waiting to be written on. Past history is old and dead; modern history is young and alive. Let us who are young stand firm as a rock in mid-stream and, taking today as the middle point; let us consign all old histories to the flames, develop our national virtues, and write a glorious opening page in modern history. Let us not hesitate or delay to undertake this task.

The other word *hua* means a flowering of culture. Flowers are followed by fruit, blossoming by withering: old China is the fruit from which young China is born; young China is the flower by means of which old China has a new birth. Old China is a fading flower, young China a flower in bloom. Fading precedes fresh flowering: this was so in the past and will be so in the future. Fading

and flowering must succeed each other. But there are an infinite number of springs on this earth, flowers that never fade, and our task as the young men of young China is to nurture and enjoy these. Instead of merely longing for spring and the flowers to remain for ever fresh, our constant care should be to bring the spring back to China. Even when spring is absent and no flowers bloom, we should do our utmost to resuscitate China, to make what is faded blossom again, to prevent withering, so that spring and flowers are eternally here.

I have heard chemists say that, however fertile a soil, if forced to grow crops incessantly it will be exhausted and become barren. If we want to improve it, to make it fertile again, we must grow certain plants which can absorb nitrogen from the air and so make the soil more porous. How is it that in this country, known in ancient times as the Celestial Empire, today we hear only the moaning of the autumn wind and the rustle of falling leaves? How has the old prosperity turned to such desolation? It is because no such plants have benefited the soil. A society's younger generation is like such a crop in the fields: if planted far and wide to strike deep roots, within a few years it will produce luxuriant growth for a young China firmly rooted in the world. Once more our land will be fertile and produce abundant harvests. We may describe our sturdy youth as the new China about to blossom again.

On this earth we live actually in one perpetual spring, for we are a part of the everlasting spring which is an eternal process. If some young people cannot enjoy the spring, it is because they are burdened by the cares and drudgery of life or hanker after wealth and power. The proverb says: "A hundred pieces of gold can buy a good horse, a thousand pieces can buy a beautiful woman, ten thousand pieces can even buy noble rank; but youth cannot be bought with money." No money will buy youth and spring. Indeed, great wealth makes it impossible for men to reach the road to spring.

A young man's aim should be to advance from the present. Our life is an eternity within Time, an eternity

expressed in the present moment, not in the past or the future. A man who grasps the present grasps eternity. Emerson has said that one who loves eternity should make the best use of the present; yesterday is beyond recall and tomorrow is uncertain, the sole thing really within our grasp is today; the present day is as good as two tomorrows. His words are well worth pondering, for the present is the springtime of our youth; with this eternal spring we are capable of everything and should have no worries or fears.

Fear cannot save men in peril. If some calamity is due tomorrow, no fear however great can diminish it, while the more exhausted we become today the worse prepared we shall be to combat the danger. If difficulties loom ahead, we can count only on the present and we shall look in vain for help to the past or the future. We should simply advance boldly with heads held high, relying on our own strength, not on help from others. Even less profitable is it to reflect with tears on the transience of human life.

The burden of material life and the accumulated onus of the past have the same power to hamper the present self. Seekers after profit and position are like ants grubbing for grease or moths fluttering round a flame: they devote most of their lives to the search for these things. Straining forward under the incubus of wealth and power, they are bound to stagger and fall. The greater their wealth and power, the less able they are to retain their youth. As the Bible says: "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." This shows that the two are irreconcilable. When the young have seen the light they should break the meshes of past history, destroy the prison of old ideas, and suffer no corpses to restrict their activity. Let the present kill the past, let today give place to tomorrow. Let the young free themselves also from mercenary hypocrisy to stand independent in an ever-changing universe, unfettered, retaining their innate beauty and nobility.

The present self should not only keep its youth and kill what is old today, but also what will be old tomorrow. This should be the sole wish, the sole duty of the young. One who can accomplish this will be truly free and beyond the reach of harm. He will be like the ideal character in *Chuang Tzu* who could neither be drowned in the flood nor burned in the blazing sun, while even his secondary qualities will make him the equal of the sages of old. The spring of a man like this cannot fade though the world outside him is changing, and the lifeless ashes of history cannot choke his intelligence. When our young people take this as their model, use their brains and struggle forward towards the light without looking back, leaving the darkness behind, to contribute to world civilization and the happiness of mankind, they will create youthful families, youthful countries, youthful nations, a youthful humanity, a youthful earth and youthful universe. They will enjoy eternal life and travel far over the waves, braving the wind. Why should it worry them if spring is transient?

Translated by Yang Hsien-yi and Gladys Yang

Essays by Lu Hsun

The Collapse of Leifeng Pagoda

I hear Leifeng Pagoda by the West Lake in Hangchow has collapsed. This is hearsay only, not something I have seen for myself. I did see the pagoda before it collapsed, though. A tottering structure standing out between the lake and the hills, with the setting sun gilding its surroundings, this was "Leifeng Pagoda at Sunset," one of the ten sights of the West Lake. Having seen "Leifeng Pagoda at Sunset" for myself, I cannot say I was much impressed.

But of all the vaunted beauty spots of the West Lake, the first I heard of was Leifeng Pagoda. My grandmother often told me that Lady White Snake was a prisoner underneath it. A man named Hsu Hsien rescued two snakes, one white and one green. Later the white snake changed into a woman to repay Hsu's kindness, and married him, while the green snake changed into her maid and accompanied her. Then a Buddhist monk by the name of Fa Hai, a most religious man, saw from Hsu's face that he had been bewitched by an evil spirit—apparently all men who marry monsters have a ghostly look on their faces, but only those with unusual gifts can detect it—so he hid Hsu behind the shrine in Chinshan Monastery, and when Lady White Snake came to look for her husband the whole place was flooded. This was a much better story the way my grandmother told it. She probably based it on a ballad called *The Faithful Serpent;* but since I have never read that, I don't know whether I have written the names Hsu Hsien and Fa Hai correctly or not. Anyway, Fa Hai trapped Lady White Snake in the end, and put her in a small alms-bowl. He

buried this bowl in the ground, and built a pagoda over it to prevent her getting out—that was Leifeng Pagoda. This was not the end by any means: for instance, her son who came first in the court examination sacrificed at the pagoda, but I have forgotten all that happened.

My one wish at that time was for Leifeng Pagoda to collapse. When later, grown-up, I went to Hangchow and saw this tottering pagoda, I felt uncomfortable. And although later I read somewhere that the people of Hangchow also called it Paoshu Pagoda* because it was actually built by Prince Chien Liao's son, so obviously there could be no Lady White Snake under it, I still felt uncomfortable and hoped it would collapse.

Now that it has collapsed at last, of course everyone in the country should be happy.

This is easy to prove. If you go to the hills and coast of Kiangsu and Chekiang to discover what people are thinking, you will find all the peasants, their silkworm-breeding womenfolk, old gaffers, and village loafers—all but a few who are slightly wrong in the head—sympathize with Lady White Snake and blame Fa Hai for being too meddlesome.

A monk should stick to chanting his sutras. If the white snake chose to bewitch Hsu Hsien, and Hsu chose to marry a monster, what business was that of anybody else? Yet he had to set down his sutra and stir up trouble. I expect he was jealous—in fact, I am sure of it.

I heard that later the Heavenly Emperor felt Fa Hai had gone too far, tormenting poor mortals like that, and decided to arrest him. Then the monk fled hither and thither, and finally took refuge in a crab's shell, from which he has not dared emerge to the present day. I have objections to a great deal of the Heavenly Emperor's handiwork, but I am more than satisfied with this, because the fact is it was Fa Hai who was responsible for flooding Chinshan Mountain, and the emperor was quite right to take the action he did.

* In an appendix Lu Hsun stated that this was a mistake. Paoshu Pagoda was a different pagoda at the West Lake.

I am only sorry I did not find out at the time where this report came from: it may not have been from *The Faithful Serpent* but from some popular legend.

In mid-autumn when the rice is ready to harvest, the Yangtse Valley abounds with crabs. If you boil them till they turn crimson, take one at random and remove its shell, you will find the yellow and the fat inside. If it is a female, it will have seeds as red as a pomegranate. After eating these, you come to a filmy cone which you must carefully sever from its base with a pocket knife, extract and turn upside-down to show its inside. If it has not been broken, it will look like an *arhat* sitting there, complete with head and body. The children in our parts call this "the crab monk," and this is Fa Hai who took refuge there.

Formerly Lady White Snake was imprisoned under the pagoda, and Fa Hai hid himself in the crab's shell. Now only the old monk is left sitting there, unable to come out until the day when crabs are no more. Can it be that when he built the pagoda it never occurred to him that it was bound to collapse some day?

Serves him right.

October 28, 1924

Three Summer Pests

Summer is coming. We shall have three pests: fleas, mosquitoes and flies.

If someone were to ask which of the three I prefer, and I must name one of them instead of handing in a blank

sheet as in the case of "Required Reading for the Young,"* then my answer would be: fleas.

Though fleas are unpleasant when they suck your blood, the way they bite you without a word is very straightforward and frank. Mosquitoes are different. Of course, their method of piercing the skin may be considered fairly thoroughgoing; but before biting they insist on making a long harangue, which is irritating. If they are carrying on about the reasons which make it right for them to feed on human blood, that is even more irritating. I am glad I do not know their language.

When a sparrow or deer falls into men's hands, it always tries to escape. Actually, in the hills and woods there are eagles and hawks, as well as tigers and wolves; so small creatures are not necessarily safer there than in human hands. Why is it, then, that they do not escape to us, but want to escape to the eagles, hawks, tigers and wolves? It may be because the latter treat them just as the fleas treat us. When they are hungry, they bite without trying to justify themselves or indulging in any tricks. And those eaten do not have to admit first that they deserve to be eaten, that they are happy to be eaten, and that in this faith they will live and die. Since mankind is much addicted to this sort of thing, small creatures choose the lesser evil and run away from men as fast as they can, thus showing their great wisdom.

When flies finally alight after much preliminary buzzing and fuss, all they do is to lick off a little sweat or grease; if they find sores or boils, of course they may do better; and on anything good, beautiful and clean it is their rule to leave some filth. However, since they simply lick a little grease or sweat, or add a little filth, thick-skinned people who feel no sharp pain let them go. The Chinese do not

* In January 1925, the *Peking News* supplement asked Lu Hsun to recommend ten books which all students should read. Instead of doing so, Lu Hsun wrote an essay attacking intellectuals like Hu Shih, who spread reactionary doctrines on the pretext of urging young people to study the classics.

realize yet that flies can spread germs; hence the movement to wipe them out will probably not do too well; they will live to a ripe old age, and multiply even more.

But apparently after leaving filth on things that are good, beautiful and clean, they do not gloat over what they have done and turn to laugh at the filth of what they have defiled. At least they have that much decency.

Gentlemen past and present have abused men by calling them beasts, yet actually even insects are in many respects worthy models for human beings.

April 4, 1925

The Wise Man, the Fool and the Slave

A slave did nothing but look for people to whom to pour out his woes. This was all he would and all he could do. One day he met a wise man.

"Sir!" he cried sadly, tears pouring down his cheeks. "You know, I lead a dog's life. I may not have a single meal all day, and if I do it is only husks of *kaoliang* which not even a pig would eat. Not to say there is only one small bowl of it. . . ."

"That's really too bad," the wise man commiserated.

"Isn't it?" His spirits rose. "Then I work all day and all night. At dawn I carry water, at dusk I cook the dinner; in the morning I run errands, in the evening I grind wheat; when it's fine I wash the clothes, when it's wet I hold the umbrella; in winter I mind the furnace, in summer I wave the fan. At midnight I boil mushrooms, and wait on our master at his gambling parties; but never a tip do I get, only sometimes the strap. . . ."

"Dear me. . . ." The wise man sighed, and the rims of his eyes looked a little red as if he were going to shed tears.

"I can't go on like this, sir. I must find some way out. But what can I do?"

"I am sure things will improve. . . ."

"Do you think so? I certainly hope so. But now that I've told you my troubles and you've been so sympathetic and encouraging, I already feel much better. It shows there is still some justice in the world."

A few days later, though, he was in the dumps again and found someone else to whom to pour out his woes.

"Sir!" he exclaimed, shedding tears. "You know, where I live is even worse than a pigsty. My master doesn't treat me like a human being; he treats his dog ten thousand times better. . . ."

"Confound him!" The other swore so loudly that he startled the slave. This other man was a fool.

"All I have to live in, sir, is a tumble-down, one-roomed hut, damp, cold and swarming with bedbugs. They bite me like anything when I lie down to sleep. The place is stinking and hasn't a single window. . . ."

"Can't you ask your master to have a window made?"

"How can I do that?"

"Well, show me what it's like."

The fool followed the slave to his hut, and began to pound the mud wall.

"What are you doing, sir?" The slave was horrified.

"I am opening a window for you."

"This won't do! The master will curse me."

"Let him!" The fool continued to pound away.

Lu Hsun Sculpture by Chia Sheng →

The artist, born in 1927, is a well-known young sculptor now working at the Architectural Sculpture Works in Peking.

"Help! A bandit is breaking down the house! Come quickly or he will knock down the wall! . . ." Shouting and sobbing, the slave rolled frantically on the ground. A whole troop of slaves came out and drove away the fool. Roused by the outcry, the last one to come slowly out was the master.

"A bandit tried to break down our house. I gave the alarm, and together we drove him away!" The slave spoke respectfully and triumphantly.

"Good for you!" The master praised him.

Many callers came that day to express concern, among them the wise man.

"Sir, because I made myself useful, the master praised me. When you said the other day that things would improve, you were really showing foresight." He spoke very hopefully and happily.

"That's right . . ." replied the wise man, and seemed happy for his sake.

December 26, 1925

On Deferring Fair Play

I. BROACHING THE SUBJECT

In Number 57 of *The Tattler* Mr. Lin Yu-tang refers to fair play, and remarks that since this spirit is extremely rare in China we should do our best to encourage it. He adds that "don't beat a dog in the water" supplements the meaning of fair play. Not knowing English, I do not understand the full connotation of this term; but if "don't beat a dog in the water" represents the true spirit of fair play,

then I must beg to differ. In order not to offend the eye — not to "add false antlers to my head,"* I mean — I did not state this explicitly in my title. What I mean, anyway, is this: a dog in the water may — or rather should — be beaten.

II. ON THREE KINDS OF DOG IN THE WATER WHICH SHOULD BE BEATEN

Modern critics often compare "beating a dead tiger" with "beating a dog in the water," considering both as somewhat cowardly. I find those who pose as brave by beating dead tigers rather amusing. They may be cowards, but in an engaging way. Beating a dog in the water is not such a simple issue, however. You must first see what sort of dog it is and how it fell in. There are three chief reasons for a dog's falling into the water:

1. It may fall in by mistake.
2. It may be pushed in by someone.
3. It may be pushed in by you.

In the first two cases, of course, it is pointless if not cowardly to join in beating the dog. But if you are in a fight with a dog and have pushed it into the water yourself, even to go on belabouring it with a bamboo pole is not too much, for this is different from the two other cases.

They say that a brave prize-fighter never hits his opponent when he is down, and that this sets a fine example for us all. But I agree to this only on condition that the opponent is a brave pugilist too; for then once he is beaten he will be ashamed to come back, or will come back openly to take his revenge, either of which is all right. But this does not apply to dogs, who cannot be considered in the same class; for however wildly they may bark, they really have no sense of "propriety." Besides, a dog can swim, and

* Chen Yuan, a reactionary professor and a leading contributor to the *Modern Review*, accused Lu Hsun of doing this in order to pose as a fighter.

will certainly swim ashore. If you are not careful, it will shake itself, spattering water all over you, then run away with its tail between its legs. But next time it will do exactly the same. Simple souls may think that falling into the water is a kind of baptism, after which a dog will surely repent of its sins and never bite men again. They could hardly be more mistaken.

So I think all dogs that bite men should be beaten, whether they are on the land or in the water.

III. PUGS, IN PARTICULAR, MUST BE PUSHED INTO THE WATER AND SOUNDLY BEATEN

Pugs or pekes are called Western dogs in south China, but I understand this is a special Chinese breed. At international dog shows they often win gold medals, and a number of the photographs of dogs in the *Encyclopedia Britannica* are pictures of our Chinese pugs. This is also a national honour. Now dogs and cats are mortal enemies, but this pug, although a dog, looks very much like a cat, so moderate, affable and self-possessed, its smug air seeming to say: "Everyone else goes to extremes, but *I* practise the Doctrine of the Mean." That is why it is such a favourite with influential persons, eunuchs, and the wives and daughters of rich men, and its line remains unbroken. It is kept by toffs because it looks so cute, with a tiny chain attached to its neck, and its function is to patter after Chinese or foreign ladies when they go shopping.

These dogs should be pushed into the water, then soundly beaten. If they fall into the water themselves, there is no harm in beating them either. Of course, if you are overscrupulous, you need not beat them; but neither need you feel sorry for them. If you can forgive these dogs, there is no call for you to beat any other dogs; for though the others also fawn on the rich and bully the poor, they at least look something like wolves and are rather wild — not such fence-sitters as these pugs.

But this is just a digression, which may not have much bearing on the main subject.

IV. ON THE HARM DONE TO POSTERITY BY NOT BEATING DOGS IN THE WATER

So whether or not a dog in the water should be beaten depends first of all on its attitude after it crawls ashore.

It is hard for a dog to change its nature. Ten thousand years from now it may be somewhat different, but I am talking about today. If we think it looks pathetic in the water, so do many other pests. And though cholera germs breed so fast, they look very tame; yet doctors show them no mercy.

Present-day officials and Chinese or foreign-style gentlemen call everything that does not suit them "Red" or "Bolshevik." Before 1912 it was slightly different: first they referred to Kang Yu-wei's partisans as undesirables, then revolutionaries, and even informed against them. They were trying, for one thing, to keep their high position, but they may also have wanted "to stain their cap button red with human blood."* But at last the revolution came, and those gentlemen with their high and mighty airs suddenly panicked like homeless curs, and wound up their little queues on their heads. And the revolutionaries were very up-to-date, very "civilized" in a way these gentlemen detested. They said: "The revolution is for all. We will not beat a dog in the water: let it crawl ashore." This was just what the others did. They lay low till the second half of 1913 and the time of the second revolution, then suddenly came forward to help Yuan Shih-kai kill many revolutionaries, so that things became daily worse in China again. Thus now, besides the old die-hards, there are many young ones. This is thanks to those martyrs who

* In the Ching dynasty, mandarins of the first rank had a coral bead on their caps. Some officials killed revolutionaries in order to gain promotion.

were too kind to these snakes in the grass and allowed them to multiply. The young people who understand this will have to strive much harder and sacrifice many more lives to oppose the forces of darkness.

Chiu Chin* died at the hands of these informers. Just after the revolution she was called a heroine, but this title is rarely heard now. When the revolution started, a general came to her district — what we would call a "warlord" today — and he was her comrade. His name was Wang Chin-fa. He arrested the man responsible for her death and collected evidence to avenge her. But in the end he let the informer go, because — so they say — the Republic had been founded, and bygones should be bygones. When the second revolution was defeated, however, Wang was shot by Yuan Shih-kai's stooge; and the man who brought about Chiu Chin's death and whom Wang had set free had a great deal to do with this.

Since then this informer has died peacefully in bed. But because there are still many of his sort lording it in that district, Chiu Chin's native place has remained unchanged from year to year, and made no progress at all. From this point of view, Miss Yang Yin-yu and Professor Chen Yuan are really supremely fortunate to come from China's "model district."**

V. THOSE WHO HAVE FALLEN FROM POWER ARE NOT THE SAME AS DOGS IN THE WATER

Passive resistance is merciful. "An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth" is just. In China, however, most things are topsy-turvy: instead of beating dogs in the water, we let ourselves be bitten by them. This is no more, though, than simple souls deserve.

* 1875-1907. A woman revolutionary, educated in Japan, who was one of the leaders of the movement against the Ching government. In 1907 she was arrested and killed in Shaohsing.

** Wusih, described as "a model district" by Chen Yuan.

"Kindness is another name for folly," says the proverb. This may be going too far. Yet if you think carefully, this is not intended to lead men astray, but is the conclusion reached after many bitter experiences. There may be two reasons for the reluctance to hit a man when he is down: it is either because we are not strong enough, or because we have made a false analogy. We need not go into the first possibility. As regards the second, we can find two serious flaws. First, we make the mistake of considering dogs in the water as the same as men who have come down in the world. Secondly, we make the mistake of considering all those who have fallen from power as alike, without drawing a distinction between the good and the bad. The result is that evil-doers go unpunished. At present, for instance, since the political situation is unstable, men rise and fall all the time. Relying on some short-lived authority, a bad man may commit any crime he pleases, until one day he falls and has to beg for mercy. Then simple souls who have known him or suffered at his hands consider him a dog in the water, and instead of beating him feel sorry for him. They imagine justice has already been done and they may as well be chivalrous, unaware that the dog is not really in the water, but has long since prepared its hide-out and laid in food in the foreign concessions. Sometimes it may look hurt, but this is put on: it pretends to limp to enlist sympathy, so that it can go into hiding comfortably. It will come out later and make a fresh start by biting simple souls, then go on to commit all manner of crimes. And the reason for this is partly that those simple souls would not beat a dog in the water. So, strictly speaking, they are digging their own graves, and they have no right to blame fate or other people.

VI. WE CANNOT YET AFFORD TO BE TOO FAIR

Humanitarians may ask: In that case, don't we want fair play at all? I can answer this at once: Of course we do, but not yet. This is using their own argument. Though

humanitarians may not be willing to use it, I can make out a case for it. Do not Chinese and foreign-style gentlemen often say that China's special features make foreign ideas of liberty and equality unsuitable for us? I take this to include fair play. Otherwise, if a man is unfair to you but you are fair to him, you will suffer for it in the end: not only will you fail to get fair treatment, but it will be too late to be unfair yourself. So before being fair, you have to know your opponent. If he does not deserve fair treatment, you had better not be polite. Only when he is fair can you talk to him of fair play.

This sounds rather like a proposal for a dual morality, but I cannot help it; for without this China will never have a better future. The dual morality here takes many forms: different standards for masters and for slaves, for men and for women. It would be quite unrealistic and premature to treat dogs in the water and men in the water as the same. This is the argument of those gentlemen who say that while freedom and equality are good, in China it is still too early for them. So if anyone wants indiscriminate fair play, I suggest we wait till those dogs in the water are more human. Of course, this does not mean that fair play cannot be practised at all at present; the important thing, as I have just said, is first to know your opponent. And a certain discrimination is required. In other words, your fairness must depend on who your opponent is. Never mind how he has fallen into the water, if he is a man we should help him; if a dog, we should ignore him; if a bad dog, we should beat him. In brief, we should befriend our own kind and attack our enemies.

We need not trouble ourselves just now with the aphorisms of those gentlemen who have justice on their lips but self-interest in their hearts. Even the justice so loudly demanded by honest folk cannot help good people in China today, but may actually protect the bad instead. For when bad men are in power and ill-treat the good, however loudly someone calls for justice, they will certainly not listen to him. His cry is simply a cry, and the good continue to suffer. But if the good happen for once to

come out on top while the bad fall into the water, those honest upholders of justice shout: "Don't take vengeance! . . . Be magnanimous! . . . Don't oppose evil with evil!" And this time their outcry takes effect, instead of going unheeded; for the good agree with them, and the bad are spared. After being spared, though, they simply congratulate themselves on their luck instead of repenting. Besides, they have prepared hide-outs in advance, and are good at worming their way into favour; so in no time they become as powerful and as vicious as before. When this happens, the upholders of justice may raise another outcry, but this time it will not be heard.

Nevertheless it is true that when reformers are overzealous, like the scholars at the end of the Han dynasty or those of the Ming dynasty, they defeat their own ends. Indeed, this is the criticism usually levelled against them. But though the other side detest good folk, nobody reproaches them for it. If there is no fight to the finish between darkness and light, and simple souls go on making the mistake of confusing forgiveness with giving free rein to evil, and continue pardoning wicked men, then the present state of chaos will last for ever.

VII. ON DEALING WITH THEM AS THEY DEAL WITH OTHERS

Some Chinese believe in traditional Chinese medicine, others in Western medicine, and both types of doctors can now be found in our larger towns, so that patients may take their choice. I thoroughly approve of this. If this were applied more generally, I am sure there would be fewer complaints, and perhaps we could even secure peace and prosperity. For instance, the usual form of greeting now is to bow; but if anyone disapproves of this, he can kowtow instead. The new penal code has no punishment by bastinado; but if anyone approves of corporal punishment, when he breaks the law he can have his bottom specially spanked. Bowls, chopsticks and cooked food are

the custom today; but if anyone hankers after ancient times, he can eat raw meat. We can also build several thousand thatched huts, and move all those fine gentlemen who so admire the age of Yao and Shun* out of their big houses to live there; while those who oppose material civilization should certainly not be compelled to travel in cars. When this is done, there will be no more complaints, for everyone will be satisfied, and we shall enjoy peace and quiet.

But the pity is that nobody will do this. Instead, they judge others by themselves, and hence there is all this trouble in the world. Fair play is particularly liable to cause trouble, and may even be made use of by the forces of evil. For example, when Liu Pai-chao** beat up and carried off students of the Women's Normal College, there was not so much as a squeak from *Modern Review*. But when the buildings were recovered, and Professor Chen Yuan encouraged the students of the Women's University to stay on in the dormitories, the journal said: "Suppose they don't want to go? Surely you aren't going to carry off their things by force?" If they remained silent the first time, when Liu Pai-chao beat up students and carried things away, how was it that this time they felt it would not do? It was because they felt there was fair play in the Women's Normal College. But this fair play had become a bad thing, since it was utilized to protect the followers of Chang Shih-chao.

VIII. CONCLUSION

I may be accused of stirring up trouble by this argument between the old and the new or some other schools of thought, and of aggravating their enmity and sharpening

* Two legendary Chinese rulers of the earliest times, described in old books as living in thatched huts.

** In 1925, the minister of education, Chang Shih-chao, disbanded the Women's Normal College, and set up a new women's college in the same premises under Liu Pai-chao. Liu sent thugs to take over.

the conflict between them. But I can state with certainty that those who oppose reform have never relaxed their efforts to injure reformers, and have always done their worst. It is only the reformers who are asleep, and always suffer for it. That is why China has never had reforms. From now on we should modify our attitude and our tactics.

December 29, 1925

In Memory of Miss Liu Ho-chen

I

On March the twenty-fifth in the fifteenth year of the Republic, the National Peking Women's Normal College held a memorial service for two girls, Liu Ho-chen and Yang Teh-chun, who were killed on the eighteenth in front of Tuan Chi-jui's Government House. I was pacing alone outside the hall, when Miss Cheng came up to me.

"Have you written anything, sir, for Liu Ho-chen?" she asked.

I answered, "No."

"I think you should, sir," she urged. "Liu Ho-chen always liked to read your essays."

I was aware of this. All the magazines I edit have a very poor circulation, quite likely because they often cease publication suddenly. Yet in spite of financial difficulties, she was one of those who took the risk of ordering *Thorny Plain* for a whole year. And I have felt for some days that I should write something, for though this has no effect on the dead, it seems to be all the living can do. Of course, if I could believe that "the spirit lives on after death," that

would give me greater comfort — but, as it is, this seems to be all I can do.

I really have nothing to say, though. I just feel that we are not living in the world of men. In a welter of more than forty young people's blood, I can barely see, hear or breathe, so what can I say? We can make no long lament till after our pain is dulled. And the insidious talk of some so-called scholars since this incident has added to my sense of desolation. I am beyond indignation. I shall sup deeply of the dark desolation which is not of the world of men, and present my deepest grief to this world which is not of men, letting it delight in my pain. This shall be the poor offering of one still living before the shrine of the dead.

II

True fighters dare face the sorrows of humanity, and look unflinchingly at bloodshed. What sorrow and joy is theirs! But the Creator's common device for ordinary people is to let the passage of time wash away old traces, leaving only pale-red bloodstains and a vague pain; and he lets men live on ignobly amid these, to keep this inhuman world going. When will such a world come to an end?

We are still living in such a world, and some time ago I felt I must write something. A fortnight has passed since March the eighteenth, and soon the forgotten Saviour will be descending. I must write something now.

III

Miss Liu Ho-chen, one of the more than forty young people killed, was my pupil. So I used to call her, and so I thought of her. But now I hesitate to call her my pupil, for now I should present to her my sorrow and my respect. She is no pupil now of one dragging on an ignoble existence like myself. She is a Chinese girl who has died for China.

I first saw her name early last summer, when Miss Yang Yin-yu as president of the Women's Normal College dis-

missed six members of the students' union. She was one of the six, but I did not know her. Only later — it may have been after Liu Pai-chao led his men and women lieutenants to drag the students out of the college — did someone point out one of the students to me and tell me that was Liu Ho-chen. When I knew who she was, I secretly marvelled. I had always imagined that any student who could stand up to the authorities and oppose a powerful president and her accomplices must be rather bold and domineering; but she nearly always had a smile on her face, and her manner was very gentle. After we found temporary lodgings at Tsungmao Hutung and started classes again, she began attending my lectures, and so I saw more of her. She still always had a smile on her face, and her manner was very gentle. When the college was recovered, and the former members of the staff who felt they had now done their duty prepared to resign, I first noticed her in tears through concern for the college's future. After that, I believe, I never saw her again. At least, as far as I remember, that was our last meeting.

IV

On the morning of the eighteenth I knew there was a mass demonstration before Government House; and that afternoon I heard the fearful news that the guards had actually opened fire, that there had been several hundred casualties, and that Liu Ho-chen was one of the dead. I was rather sceptical, though, about these reports. I am always ready to think the worst of my fellow-countrymen, but I could neither conceive nor believe that we could stoop to such despicable barbarism. Besides, how could smiling, gentle Liu Ho-chen have been slaughtered for no reason in front of Government House?

Yet on that same day it proved to be true — the evidence was her body. There was another body, Yang Teh-chun's. Moreover these made clear that this was not only murder but brutal murder, for their bodies bore the marks of clubs also.

The Tuan government, however, issued a decree declaring them "rioters."

But this was followed by a rumour that they were the tools of other people.

I could not bear to look at this cruel sight. Even more, I could not bear to hear these rumours. What else is there I can say? I understand why a dying race remains silent. Silence, silence! Unless we burst out, we shall perish in this silence!

V

But I have more to say.

I did not see this, but I hear that she — Liu Ho-chen — went forward gaily. Of course, it was only a petition, and no one with any conscience could imagine such a trap. But then she was shot before Government House, shot from behind, and the bullet pierced her lung and heart. A mortal wound, but she did not die immediately. When Miss Chang Ching-shu who was with her tried to lift her up, she was pierced by four shots, one from a pistol, and fell. And when Miss Yang Teh-chun who was with them tried to lift her up, she was shot too: the bullet entered her left shoulder and came out to the right of her heart, and she also fell. She was able to sit up, but a soldier clubbed her savagely over her head and her breast, and so she died.

So gentle Liu Ho-chen who was always smiling has really died. It is true: her body is the evidence. Yang Teh-chun, a brave and true friend, has also died; her body is the evidence. Only Chang Ching-shu, just as brave and true a friend, is still groaning in hospital. How magnificent of these three girls to fall so calmly, pierced by the bullets invented by civilized men! The valour shown by Chinese soldiers in butchering women and children and the martial prowess of the Allied troops in teaching students a lesson have unfortunately been eclipsed by these few streaks of blood.

But Chinese and foreign murderers are still holding their heads high, unaware of the bloodstains on their faces. , . .

VI

Time flows eternally on: the streets are peaceful again, for a few lives count for nothing in China. At most, they give good-natured idlers something to talk about, or provide malicious idlers with material for "rumours." As for any deeper significance, I think there is very little; for this was only an unarmed demonstration. The history of mankind's battle forward through bloodshed is like the formation of coal, where a great deal of wood is needed to produce a small amount of coal. But demonstrations do not serve any purpose, especially unarmed ones.

Since blood was shed, however, the affair will naturally make itself more felt. At least it will permeate the hearts of the kinsmen, teachers, friends and lovers of the dead. And even if with the flight of time the bloodstains fade, the image of a gentle girl who was always smiling will live on for ever amid the vague sorrow. The poet Tao Chien wrote:

> *My kinsmen may still be grieving,*
> *While others have started singing.*
> *I am dead and gone — what more is there to say?*
> *My body is buried in the mountains.*

And this is quite enough.

VII

As I have said before, I am always willing to think the worst of my fellow-countrymen. Still, quite a few things have surprised me this time. One is that the authorities could act so barbarously, another that the rumour-mongers could sink so low, yet another that Chinese girls could face death so bravely.

Only last year did I begin to notice how Chinese women manage public affairs. Though they are few, I have often been impressed by their ability, determination and indomitable spirit. The attempt of these girls to rescue each other amid a hail of bullets, regardless of their own safety, is a clearer indication of the courage of Chinese women which has persisted through the thousands of years of conspiracies against them and suppression. If we are looking for the significance of this casualty for the future, it probably lies here.

Those who drag on an ignoble existence will catch a vague glimpse of hope amid the pale bloodstains, while true fighters will advance with greater resolution.

Alas, I can say no more. But I have written this in memory of Miss Liu Ho-chen.

April 1, 1926

Translated by Yang Hsien-yi
and Gladys Yang

Genius is not some freak of nature which grows of itself in deep forests or wildernesses, but is something brought forth and nurtured by a certain type of public. Without such a public, there will be no genius.

Lu Hsun

CHU CHIU-PAI

Writing for a Great Cause

Preface to the Selected Essays of Lu Hsun

> "Burdened as a man may be with the weight of tradition, he can yet prop open the gate of darkness with his shoulder to let the children through to the bright, wide-open spaces. . . ."
>
> Lu Hsun: "What Is Required of Us as Fathers Today"

Gentlemen in their ivory towers will always hold aloof and sneer: "What sort of artists are you politicians? Your art is tendentious." To this a revolutionary writer can give one answer only: "Of what do you accuse me? Of the fact that the great flames of my fervour to transform the world are burning in my art too?" (Lunacharsky: "Preface to the Selected Works of Gorky")

Revolutionary writers invariably show quite openly their close ties with the social struggle, not only expressing certain ideas in their works but often stepping forward to speak as citizens, to fight for their ideals and to expose the hypocrisy of the literati who pose as so detached. In addition to novels and plays, Gorky has written many open letters and publicist articles, particularly during the last few years of fierce social and political struggles. Some sneer that he is no longer an artist, for "all he can write are these publicist articles." But everyone knows what manner of creatures Gorky's detractors are.

Since Lu Hsun in the last fifteen years has written many articles and essays, especially the latter, he has been dubbed "the expert in miscellaneous essays," a clearly derogatory title. Yet the mere fact that "mosquitoes" and "flies" cannot abide his essays proves the militancy of this type of writing. Lu Hsun's essays are actually publicist articles, polemical *feuilletons*. Anyone bearing in mind the situation during the last two decades can understand the reason for the rise of such writing. Tempestuous social struggles make it impossible for a writer to mould his thoughts and feelings at leisure, or to express them in concrete images and types in his work. Moreover, savage despotism and oppression make it impossible for him to express his views in the usual forms. So Lu Hsun's native wit helped him to find an artistic form to express his political stand, his penetrating observations on society and his warm sympathy for the people's struggle. Not only so, the emergence of this form mirrors the history of the battle of ideas in China since the May the Fourth Movement. Because of Lu Hsun, the miscellaneous essay will become a literary genre. It will not, of course, take the place of other forms; but what distinguishes it is the directness and speed with which it reflects daily happenings in society.

We have made this selection of Lu Hsun's essays, not merely because they represent a valuable achievement in the history of the battle of ideas in China, but because they can help us in our present fight. For despite great differences in the situation, we must remember that swarms of blood-sucking "flies" and "mosquitoes" are still among us today.

Chu Chiu-pai (1899-1935) was an outstanding literary critic and revolutionary statesman. He was secretary of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party in 1927. A pioneer in the May the Fourth Movement, he later worked with Lu Hsun in the cultural movement in Shanghai. He was killed by the Kuomintang reactionaries.

Who is Lu Hsun? Let me first recount a legend.

According to ancient mythology, Princess Rhea Silvia of Alba Longa was raped by Mars, the god of war, and gave birth to twin sons: Romulus and Remus. She at once abandoned them on a desolate mountain, where they would have starved had not a she-wolf suckled them. Later Romulus founded the city of Rome and flew up in a storm to heaven to become the god of battle, having killed his brother Remus for daring to mock the mighty city of Rome and crossing its ridiculous wall in one stride. So Remus had a much sadder fate than Lu Hsun. Perhaps because in that age hypocrisy reigned. Today Romulus, suckled by a wolf, would hardly build such a ludicrously pretentious city as Rome, let alone fly to heaven to be worshipped on the high throne of the gods, completely forgetting that his foster-mother was a beast. Though a modern Romulus may be guilty of certain follies, he will finally bow to the spirit of the age and return with Remus to the wolf. And Remus will never forget the one that suckled him, no matter how long he has been fighting alone, searching for a way home. He hates the dark world of the gods and the princess, and cannot but despise the false, self-deceiving paper city of Rome. But returning to the wilderness which is his home, he discovers the savagery of the common man, the iron broom to sweep away servile submission. He finds a genuinely splendid building, no ridiculous, paltry wall but a great, brand new world.

Yes, Lu Hsun is Remus, suckled by a wild beast, the rebellious son of feudal society, the traitor to the class of gentlemen, yet a true friend to certain romantic revolutionaries! He has left his own path to return to the kindly wolf.

Herzen tells us that among the nobles and landowners of Russia "there developed the men of December 14, a phalanx of heroes reared, like Romulus and Remus, on the milk of a wild beast. . . . They were titans, hammered out of pure steel from head to foot, warrior martyrs who knowingly went to certain death in order to awaken the

younger generation to a new life and to purify the children born in an environment of tyranny and servility."

How many brave fighters from before the 1911 Revolution* have survived? Coming to more recent times, how many are left of those fighters in the May the Fourth Movement — a revolution of ideas? "Some of its members rose to high positions, some went into retirement, some moved forward. Once more I saw what a transformation could take place in my old comrades of the same battle front." (Lu Hsun: "Preface to My Selected Works")

Lu Hsun spoke of seeing "once more." Today he neither dares nor wishes to speak of the 1911 Revolution. Not only have those men of "pure steel" turned into scrap, but . . . it is clear that true gold alone can stand the test of fire, and only today can we see who were genuine steel. The young men of upper-class families before the 1911 Revolution included reformists, revolutionary heroes and idealists who wanted the nation to become rich and strong. Among them were some whose objective role it was to lead mass revolutionary struggles for popular rights, and who seem to have achieved splendid results. Lu Hsun, who comes from the upper class too, was also in his early years a revolutionary who struggled for popular rights. The others, however, were rather ashamed to admit their relationship to the princess who was raped. No one can deny that the rape of the princess of oriental civilization by the war god of imperialism was a momentous event in world history which resulted in the rapid collapse of the old Chinese society. Then there emerged the mercantile capitalism of Chinese emigrants overseas, the would-be national industrialists, the philistine gentry and the modern petty-bourgeois intellectuals. Despite the difference between reformism and revolution, from the time of the reformist

* The revolution which overthrew the autocratic rule of the Ching dynasty and inaugurated a republic in China.

movement* for a constitutional monarchy to the revolutionary nationalist movement against the Manchu ruling class, the influence of the literati remained strong. The sole difference between the modern bourgeoisie and the old reformists lies in the fact that the latter longed for a resurgence of the Manchu empire, counting on Kang Yu-wei and Liang Chi-chao to carry forward the work of Tseng Kuo-fan, Tso Tsung-tang and Li Hung-chang;** while the representatives of bourgeois thought — another set of literati — conceived of a different way out: they would make themselves Chuko Liang*** invested with the sole authority, while the four hundred million Ah-tous would be master only in name. Concealed in this basic trend of most intellectuals were the seeds of reaction and a return to the past, the desire for a revival of "indigenous culture." Only the newly emerging intellectuals of the modern petty bourgeoisie were in a position to oppose such retrogression and reaction with their firm belief in science and modern civilization. Lu Hsun and other early revolutionaries of that period were equally burdened with the traditions of the old literati and feudal society. But Lu Hsun was not only one of the first to study natural science and the most advanced scientific developments of his time, he also had relatively firm ties with the peasants. The ruin of his scholar-official family meant that as a child he was able to mix with rustic lads and breathe the same air as the common people. This makes him as savage as if he had been suckled by a wolf. He can truly break the fetters of the past, loathing the palaces of gods and nobles, and never assuming superior airs like Chuko Liang. Coming from an

* This movement was started in 1898 by a group of comparatively enlightened people such as Kang Yu-wei (1853-1927) and Liang Chi-chao (1873-1928) in the government and was severely suppressed by reactionary elements who were in power.

** Well-known reactionary statesmen between the time of the Opium War and the end of the Ching dynasty.

*** Famous statesman of the third century A.D., who had the real authority in the kingdom of Shu while his young king, Ah-tou, ruled in name alone.

upper-class family, he is fully aware of all the meanness, ugliness and hypocrisy of the literati. He is not ashamed of being a bastard, but denounces his own past and is doing his best to clean up the Augean stables.

One of the greatest revolutionary statesmen of modern times has once said that the existence of a man-eating economy, the existence of exploitation, will always produce ideals opposing this system. It is so among the exploited masses themselves, also among certain representatives of the so-called intellectual class. These ideals are very dear to Marxists. Before the 1911 Revolution, say in 1907, what ideals could the Chinese have save the longing to make the nation rich and strong and the wish for a constitution and democracy? Only a great genius with acute sensibility and a truly world-wide vision could overleap the barriers of time. Even to tolerate and accept foreign ideas calls for a certain capacity. As Lu Hsun said in 1907: "Some fellows of limited intelligence hold forth on military matters . . . claiming that the first need of a nation is to have an army and military strength, using modern clichés to support their argument. . . . Though their faces are hidden by helmets and their appearance is thoroughly dignified, their greed is all too apparent. Others talk about manufactures and commerce, constitutions and parliament. The first two of these are so highly regarded by the young in China that even if nobody advocated them they would not lack followers. For then if the nation survives, they can be known as revolutionaries who strove to make the country rich and strong. If, unfortunately, the nation is overthrown, they will still have enough money to live in comfort. . . . We need not discuss the two latter. . . . So the state authority and policy-making fall into the hands of those who are working for personal aggrandizement, rich fools or merchants eager for monopoly. . . . Alas, in ancient times the state was ruled by a single monarch; but today thousands of the worst rogues are ruling instead, so that the people's sufferings are greater than ever. How can they save the country?" ("On Trends in Culture")

How like a prophecy that reads today! The Chinese bourgeoisie was revolutionary for a short period, but today the young men of 1907, the young men who so enthusiastically advocated and engaged in "manufactures and commerce" are posing as "patriots" even while they prepare for the enslavement of the nation and, what is more, take active and skilful measures to sell it to the enemy. As for the completely worthless and imaginary popular rights, these are used to whitewash the new constitution. Of course, Lu Hsun's philosophical base at that time was Nietzsche's theory of "the superiority of the individual mind over matter." In Europe this doctrine already reflected the reactionary character of the bourgeoisie, who tried in the name of some superman, in the name of "enlightened" heroes and sages, to prevent the popular and collective advance and reforms of the newly emerging class. They declared that the masses had always been conservative, that the mob obstructed progress. Lu Hsun's Nietzschean tendencies reflected quite different social relations, however. It is true that individualism of this sort is an illusion common to most bourgeois intellectuals. But in China then the urban proletariat had not yet grown into a mighty, politically-conscious force, while the mass of peasantry in the villages was simply resisting its oppressors in a spontaneous way without political consciousness. The servile attitude adopted towards the ruling class by most small townsfolk and conservatively-minded people was indeed an obstacle to reform and progress. In the quest for truth, in the attempt to conquer the blind forces of nature and the old society, these calls for the development of the individual, for freedom of thought and the breaking of conventions did, objectively speaking, have a certain revolutionary significance at that time. In Lu Hsun's essay "On the Demoniac Poets," written during this period, we see that he "chose to include all those poets who rebelled against society and sought to take action, and those whom society condemned." Lu Hsun's purpose in describing Byron and other kindred poets was to issue a call for revolt, to topple down all the fetishes

of "oriental culture." He was the first really to introduce the literary ideas of Europe to China.

At the time — that was 1907 — there was virtually no response to his appeals, which were drowned in the superficial hue and cry against the Ching government. If these historical documents had not been preserved in *The Grave*, they might have been lost, like so many other revolutionary records in China. The importance of these essays is that they gave the answer to a question mooted by contemporary thinkers: "What can be done when the people are so backward?" The stock answer of progressives in those days was: "Since the people are backward by nature, don't ask them to revolt. We'll organize a revolutionary army and make a revolution for them. And after the revolution succeeds, we must not give the people freedom until we have trained them properly for several years." Lu Hsun's answer was different, for he said that it was because the people were backward that emancipation of the individual was needed, and even more so freedom of thought and "conscious utterance," so that "each cry might strike home to men's hearts clearly and lucidly, not like the ordinary clamour." Though this stand was not quite correct, it differed considerably from the "revolutionaries'" policy to keep the people ignorant and so fool them. The problem was that in China then: "Men would like to quote splendid examples of the good old days, but since they cannot brook a comparison, they simply remark on the enslavement of one neighbouring state, the destruction of another, to show that we are better off than these poor people." When there was such self-deception, reminiscent of Ah Q,* and men lost themselves in complacent dreams, the victory naturally went to "revolutionary" theories of the Chuko Liang type, while appeals for an advance in science and art were lost.

Those were times when Lu Hsun could not but feel intensely isolated and lonely. He asked: "In China today where are the fighters in the realm of the spirit?" He said

* The famous character in Lu Hsun's short story "The True Story of Ah Q."

that the Russian writer, Korolenko, in *The Last Glimmer of Light,* described an old school-teacher in Siberia. The lesson-book which he was teaching referred to an oriole singing enchantingly amid cherry blossom, but since it was too cold for orioles there, his pupil could only put his head on one side and try to imagine the song. Such fancies are intensely moving. "And all we can do is to think hard." ("On the Demoniac Poets")

In fact, though, Lu Hsun was not isolated. The angry roar of the 1911 Revolution was due not to all the newly rich who emerged, but to "the peasants' lack of understanding." They had imagined that "they would be free after the revolution." (*Complete Works of Dr. Sun Yat-sen*: "A Speech Delivered at a Meeting of Welcome at Hangchow") The agitation of these poor, confused peasants was, of course, free grist to the mill of the newly rich, and at times found expression merely in the Ah Q sort of dreams of white coats of armour; yet the peasants were the real backbone of this noble struggle. The only true way forward for fighters in the realm of the spirit was to go along with them.

After the 1911 Revolution, a "great split" in the Chinese world of letters was inevitable. This reflected the changes in popular feeling and class relations. Chinese intellectuals of the literati type quite clearly formed two camps: the traditionalists and the Westernized school. This happened on the eve of the May the Fourth Movement, in the early days of the new literary movement led by *New Youth.* The alliance then between Democracy and Science carried the revolutionary struggle forward. It was a sign of the deepening of the bourgeois revolution for popular rights, and the result of the growth and development of the modern intellectuals. It was during this time that Lu Hsun began to take part in the "revolution of ideas." We say this because hitherto there had been nothing for him to take part in: all he could do was "think hard" in isolation. But after *New Youth* launched its "campaign for a new culture," all the anti-traditionalists joined the ranks.

After 1911, everyone realized that the revolution had failed. But not everyone could tell who would take over

the leadership. Lu Hsun called the new rulers "murderers of the present." "By murdering 'the present,' they have murdered 'the future' too — the future belonging to our sons and grandsons." Of course these murderers were corpses themselves. Those were the days when corpses ruled the country.

These corpses, the feudal warlords and bureaucrat-compradores, naturally did their utmost to preserve every ancient tradition: old feudal morality, loyalty, filial piety, chastity and integrity, as well as the corrupt, mouldering ancient culture. "There are rich men, too, with whole bevies of wives, daughters, concubines and maids, who cannot look after them all during times of trouble. Confronted by rebels or government troops, they are absolutely helpless. All they can do is to save their own skin and urge their women to seek a glorious death, for then they will be of no interest to the rebels. Then when order is restored, these rich men can saunter back to utter a few encomiums over the dead." ("My Views on Chastity") Men like these are bound to advocate chastity and praise chaste women. And in order to maintain their rule, they are even more bound to advocate loyalty and filial piety; because living men always want to move forward, the young always want to be active, and the world is at peace only when the dead hold back the living and the old control the young.

"I suppose it is the tyranny of despots that makes men cynical, while the tyranny of fools makes them more dead than alive. We are all perishing slowly, yet we think ourselves effective defenders of the truth. . . . If there are still men in the world who really want to live on, they must first dare to speak, laugh, cry, rage at, revile, fight and defeat this accursed age in this accursed place!" ("Sudden Notions 5")

Undoubtedly this is the prevalent mood at the dawn of a new cultural movement, but already Lu Hsun had his own distinctive stand. The leaders of a new cultural movement invariably want to be the new guides of the young. Lu Hsun alone sincerely desired to be "a foot soldier scouting before the main forces of the revolution." These words

are true of him: "Burdened as a man may be with the weight of tradition, he can yet prop open the gate of darkness with his shoulder to let the children through to the bright, wide-open spaces. . . ." He built no ivory tower for himself, where he could remain aloof; but he dug a grave in which to bury all his past, in the hope that the accursed age — that age of transition — might also pass more quickly. His selfless desire to serve the future and the people runs through each period of his life to the present, and this is true of every issue. Let one example suffice. Quite early in the movement for writing in the vernacular, Chien Hsuan-tung* and others tried to turn the clock back, claiming that the mixture of classical and colloquial expressions used in the *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*** was a "feasible" model, for one should not aim too high. At the same time others were arguing that the merit of any writing depended not on whether it was written in literary language or that of everyday speech but entirely on the writer's talent. Others said that to write well in the vernacular you must understand the classics. Each new writer must rely on his "genius" to create a new model of vernacular writing. Lu Hsun said: "This really makes me shudder. . . . It is my sad lot to be burdened with all the old ghosts, and unable to rid myself of them." However, "many young writers select elegant but incomprehensible terms from ancient literature to use as a conjuror's handkerchief to embellish their work." ("Postscript to *The Grave*") "Since the rise of the new literature there has been writing like mine, in which many classical phrases are used from habit, and writing like that of the Creation Society,*** aimed deliberately at creating something novel which nobody is used to. All such tendencies are likely to separate literatrue from the people." (*Three Leisures*) Lu Hsun

* A noted scholar and professor of philology.

** Well-known Ming dynasty novel written in the vernacular of the time.

*** See Cheng Po-chi's article *The Creation Society* on p. 156 of this issue.

considered himself simply as "a stone or plank in a bridge, not as any goal or model for the future," and predicted that his writing "should be lost as time goes by." ("Postscript to *The Grave*") But precisely for this reason, the bridge he built reached to the other bank and his work has become the first milestone in China's new literature. Precisely because of this, he has truly become "the leader of young rebels."

No one can deny the leading role of *New Youth* in the period preceding and during the May the Fourth Movement. It opposed feudal conventions and a return to the past, advocating the emancipation of women and of the young as well as writing in the vernacular. A high tide of "ideals" inspired men, and young revolutionary intellectuals started looking for a new path, a new future. But we should all remember that this happened not long after the reaction immediately following the 1911 Revolution — the main problem confronting serious thinkers was that ideals alone were useless, for the turbulence and confusion of the revolution had been owing to its visionary character. The reactionaries of that time did indeed raise their voices to mutter incoherently: "A dog has doggish ways, the devil has devilish ways. China is different from all other countries, so China has Chinese ways. Ideals, indeed! How detestable!" ("Random Thoughts 39") In fact, the attempts to answer this question began the split inside the new cultural movement. As everyone knows, the old revolutionaries who had tried to bring some law and order to the country had things made difficult for them by the reactionaries and hastily repented, saying that they had been destructive merely and must now study how to build. As for those revolutionaries who had been too idealistic, since the people in general ignored their ideals and they had never expected the common man to understand them, they said: "The masses are always ignorant. Let them do as they are told while we create ideals for them." So the old revolutionaries surrendered. But what of the new? Not long after the

May the Fourth Movement, Hu Shih's* clique in *New Youth* surrendered too: when the reactionaries declared ideals useless, Hu Shih immediately shouted: "Less study of principles, more study of problems!" This philistine American type of pragmatism aimed at preventing the noble ideals of the new class from gaining ground in the realm of ideas. And Lu Hsun's attitude to this question of the dividing line between revolution and reformism was a revolutionary one. He tore the masks off those who opposed ideals and laid stress on experience, pointing out that their "experience" was that of emperors and slaves!

Before the May the Fourth Movement, the main trends in Lu Hsun's philosophy were the theories of evolution and emancipation of the individual. He had high hopes of youth, boldly attacked the moribund rule of feudal society and demanded emancipation of the individual. But by degrees he came to understand the class system of feudalism and the multifold oppression of Chinese society. A searing attack on class rule can be found in "Idle Thoughts at the End of Spring," "Some Notions Jotted Down by Lamplight" and "Stray Thoughts," as well as in part of *Bad Luck* written between 1924 and 1925; and even more so in *More Bad Luck* written in 1926. Of course, the arguments used were not Marxist ones, but simply based on his own experience of life. But his holy rage and the sharp point of his satire were directed against the warlord bureaucrats and their lap-dogs. For approximately the period between the May the Fourth Movement and the May the Thirtieth Incident,** thinking circles in China were gradually preparing for the second "great split." This was no longer a rupture between retrogression and the new culture, but a split within the ranks of the new culture. On one side was the camp of workers, peasants and the common people, on the

* Hu Shih was an exponent of the right-wing section in the May the Fourth Movement.

** Anti-imperialist movement in protest against the massacre of Chinese workers by the British police in Shanghai on May 30, 1925.

other the bourgeoisie hand in glove with the remnants of feudalism. These new reactionaries posed as having Westernized ideas or as belonging to the May the Fourth Movement. This split, although not completed till the end of 1927, was under way between 1925 and 1926. The secret is revealed if we look at the *Modern Review* published by flunkeys of Tuan Chi-jui* and Chang Shih-chao,** and their fortunes after 1927. *The Tattler*, edited by Lu Hsun at that time, and the literary theories and criticism of the revolutionary petty bourgeoisie were directed against these future "scholar officials."

A number of readers today look upon the essays in *Bad Luck* and *More Bad Luck* as mere attacks upon certain individuals. The younger generation may not be much interested in these essays because they do not know the history of men like Chen Yuan. The fact is that the names of Chen Yuan, Chang Shih-chao and others in Lu Hsun's essays can be taken as standing for certain social types. There is no need to know all about their lives. The important thing is that China today is still crawling with such vermin: "fawning cats," "dogs more snobbish than their masters," "mosquitoes which insist on making a long harangue before biting," "flies which after much preliminary buzzing and fuss lick off a little sweat and leave some of filth. . . ." They are still alive — and very much so — today. It is imperative in the struggle to tear off the masks of these low, shameless dastards, these hypocritical butchers and slaves.

True, the ancient champions of virtue had gradually declined until into their corpses had to be injected some classical lore from Europe and some of the academic airs of Oxford, Cambridge and Columbia University. When to this

* A northern warlord, at one time president of the Provisional Government in Peking in the early twenties.

** Minister of education in Tuan Chi-jui's government.

were added certain tricks of Shanghai gangsters, the corpses managed to come back to life for a time, or at least to drag out a few more years of "life in death." When these "Westernized" scholars and compradore philistines later entered into a new alliance with the "revolutionary military," the rule of corpses turned into the rule of clowns. And nothing can be more fearful than corpses clowning.

". . . But this merchant capital of the type of primitive accumulation is peculiarly *combined* in the Chinese countryside with the domination of the feudal lord, of the landlord. . . . Militarism and the entire flint-hearted and rapacious bureaucracy, military and non-military, constitute a superstructure on this peculiar feature in China. Imperialism supports and strengthens the whole of this feudal-bureaucratic machine. The fact that some of the militarists . . . owned factories and other industrial enterprises . . . did not prevent them from being representatives of feudal survivals." (Stalin) This is what makes them Westernized and retrogressive. This is the reason for the Westernization of the Chinese corpse. Yuan Shih-kai and the northern warlords after him tried to stabilize this new rule, but they could only utilize "senior statesmen" of the type of the "six gentlemen."* "The warlords after him were even more stupid. . . . They were condemned for tyranny, and for despising scholarship and disrupting education into the bargain." ("A Few Parables") The thing is that to rule slaves special rules for slaves are needed. (See "Some Notions Jotted Down by Lamplight") And new "goats" are needed to help draw up these rules. These goats have "a small bell on their neck — the badge of the intellectual. . . . They can lead the masses steadily and quietly on till they reach their destination. . . . That is to say: If you must die, die like sheep; so that peace may be preserved and both sides saved trouble." ("A Few Parables") From the time of Tuan

* When Yuan Shih-kai wanted to make himself emperor of China shortly after the establishment of the Republic, he persuaded these "six gentlemen" to write a memorandum begging him to revive the monarchy.

Chi-jui and Chang Shih-chao to the May the Thirtieth Incident, men like Chen Yuan aspired to becoming such "goats." Though their hopes were deferred for several years, they finally succeeded. A new dynasty has its new "advisers," and they have already given birth to innumerable offspring of every sort and description. In those days — 1925 and 1926 — they did not labour in vain to harry "academic bandits" or enlist the help of the Western philosopher Schopenhauer to attack "chits of girls" in the Women's Normal College.

Although in those days Lu Hsun's struggle against these Westernized gentlemen appeared as an attack on individuals or personal matters, its basic significance is now becoming more and more apparent. Rulers cannot rely entirely upon artillery and machine-guns, they must have "spokesmen." There was no end to the hypocrisy and artful tricks of these spokesmen. A long, protracted struggle was needed to expose these "play-acting nihilists." (See "A Slap-dash Diary Continued")

At the time of the May the Thirtieth Incident they described the anti-imperialist slogans as "signs of disunity and jealousy." (Hsu Chih-mo)* They scoffed at the type of Chinese who "fights on and on and is all for declaring war," (Chen Yuan) implying that China should put up with beatings in silence. Immediately after the March the Eighteenth Incident** they declared that "in front of Government House is dangerous ground . . . the popular leaders are morally responsible." These "lies written in ink can never disguise facts written in blood." But this time Lu Hsun made a mistake. "I am always ready to think the worst of my fellow-countrymen, but I could neither conceive nor believe that we could stoop to such despicable barbarism." ("In Memory of Miss Liu Ho-chen") He said at the time that this was the "darkest day since the Republic." He did not

* A bourgeois poet, friend of Professor Chen Yuan.

** Massacre of patriotic students and unarmed citizens by the warlord government in 1925. See Lu Hsun's essay "In Memory of Miss Liu Ho-chen" on p. 34 of this issue.

foresee that a year or two later the darkness would be hundreds of times worse. If Lu Hsun was mistaken, we must agree with his self-criticism: "I am not suspicious enough." It is true that the vileness of the society of landlords, bureaucrats and the bourgeoisie far surpasses writers' most searing "descriptions of their crimes." Yet the men of letters who were "goats" tried to gloss over this vileness.

So at the time of the May the Thirtieth Incident, the slogan "Unite against the foreign foe!" made most men, including some revolutionaries, more or less overlook the fact that the class struggle was developing simultaneously at home, an even more serious problem in the new stage. Lu Hsun, however, pointed out: "But men have very seldom protested when the class with guns in China pillages or massacres the common people." ("Sudden Notions 11") The answer to this problem was the tremendous upsurge of popular revolution after the May the Thirtieth Incident. The revolution entered a new phase. "The best thing the dead have done for those surviving them is to have torn off the human masks from those creatures' faces and exposed their hearts, more vicious than anyone could have dreamed. So they have taught those who are battling on to use new tactics in fighting." ("Empty Talk") Evidently, to overthrow imperialism and the warlords, one must overthrow these vicious creatures. It ceased to be merely a question of petitions, "peaceful propaganda" and legal methods.

"Blood debts must be repaid in kind. The longer the delay, the greater the interest!" ("More Roses Without Blooms")

> After this, more and more "blood debts" piled up.
> Tears have been wiped, blood has dried;
> The butchers are living in peace;
> Some used steel blades, some soft blades,
> But all I have are my essays.
> ("Dedication to *And That's That*")

After the rule of corpses gave way to the rule of clowns, those corpses who could not clown lost power, while those

who could became more rampant than ever. The struggle between the *quick* and the dead, the death throes of the class on the road to extinction, and the popular resistance led by the rising class underwent a tempestuous change and reached a new stage. Lu Hsun said: "I left Canton in 1927, aghast at the bloodshed there, and my stammered comments — I dared not speak outright — appear in *And That's That.*" Even *Three Leisures,* written in 1928 and 1929, and *Two Hearts,* written in 1930 and 1931, were in the same vein. But it was during this period, when Lu Hsun's ideas reflected the confusion and indignation of the oppressed, insulted and deceived, that he finally advanced from the theory of evolution to that of class struggle, from individualism seeking emancipation to the militant collectivism determined to transform the world. If before this Lu Hsun had been conscious of the contradiction between the aristocracy of the civil service examinations and the peasants under the feudal landlords, now in addition to seeing the contradictions between the feudal classes more clearly, he saw those developing between capital and labour. He had "always believed in evolution, and was sure that the future would be better than the past, that the young would be better than the old." But "I saw young people divided into two great camps — some of them acting as informers, or helping the authorities to make arrests!" His "earlier way of thinking went by the board." ("Preface to *Three Leisures*") Yes, the earlier struggle between the old and the young had merely been a cloak for the class struggle of the previous period. Now, when the rule of the remnants of feudalism had adopted certain tricks of capitalist gangsters, not only was the class struggle between labour and capital much more evident, but the fight against feudal remnants could no longer take the form of a simple struggle between "fathers and sons." At the same time, the leaders of the newly emerging class had provided a new perspective for overthrowing imperialism and the corpses, for overthrowing capitalist gangsters and the landlord-bureaucrats. At last the poor, the petty bourgeoisie and the revolutionary intellectuals were able to see clearly their hitherto hazy dream of opposing ex-

ploitation. It is only by advancing with the new, socialist, advanced class that a man can realize this dream and in the great collective struggle really emancipate himself as an individual.

So that period of the revolution was reflected in the realm of ideas by the final division in the ranks of the May the Fourth intellectuals. Some so-called Westernized youths exposed themselves completely as "homeless" or "not so homeless" "running dogs of the capitalists" by trying to embellish the new reaction with some modernized oriental classical lore or some classical lore from the occident. Other young intellectuals came over more firmly and clearly to the side of the labouring people, rallying round the camp of revolution. The finest, the most honest, those unwilling to betray their own ideals, persisted throughout in taking the true revolutionary road.

The earliest literary movement which was genuinely revolutionary — that following the split among the May the Fourth writers — could not but begin by opposing the modernized traditionalists, the new "banquets of human flesh" and the orchestra playing at these banquets. The gangster-clowns who trampled on "the flesh and spirit of revolutionary fighters . . . to enjoy this blossom and taste the fruit," supported the corpses who had practically lost "the life of the dead" and "stabilized" their new rule. This orchestra was admixed with Italy's D'Annunzio, German's Hauptmann (this was hardly fair!), Spain's Ibanez and China's Wu Chih-huei,* and insisted that this was revolutionary literature. They were simply "imbeciles cursing their enemies under the protection of the sword." ("Revolutionary Literature") These men took over the role played by Chen Yuan under Tuan Chi-jui's government. It is said that because Tuan Chi-jui and Chang Hsueh-liang** surrendered to the revolution Chen Yuan and others changed their attitude; but as far as social significance is concerned, it is very hard to say who surrendered and whose attitude

* Reactionary publicist, a senior statesman of the Kuomintang.
**Son and successor of the warlord Chang Tso-lin.

changed. The new line today is simply: "Of course we still want a revolution, but nothing too radical. All that is left is a one-plank bridge called 'revolutionary literature.' This means that many periodicals from outside fail to get passed and fall plop, plop! into the water." ("Thoughts on the Suppression of *The Tattler*")

The "one-plank bridge" has remained unchanged, but those who used to fall into the water have learned to swim. This period saw a deeper development of genuine revolutionary literary theory. Now, owing to struggles within the ranks of the progressives, the revolutionary literary theory gradually formed a new camp. This inevitable clash posed new questions which no longer concerned fathers and sons, nor the exposure of the butchers behind the swords. A debate ensued on the tactics of the revolutionaries.

The literary theory of the proletariat often begins to take shape after writers of the revolutionary petty bourgeoisie have become awakened; then by degrees it mobilizes new forces among the labourers and workers. It must rally new recruits, overcome the weight of tradition, and enlarge the number of sympathizers.

When the revolutionary forces advance, however, "a few men may drop out, run away, grow decadent, or turn renegade. But so long as they do not obstruct the advance too seriously, as time goes by the revolutionary force will grow less mixed and better trained." ("Unrevolutionary Eagerness for Revolution") No Great Wall separates the proletariat from the petty bourgeoisie. Especially as the petty bourgeoisie consists of many strata and groups.

Some petty-bourgeois intellectuals have ties with the countryside, with the peasants who have been so deceived, ground down, fettered and kept in ignorance. Thousands of years of bitter experience have taught these peasants to hate officials and landowners; but they have not and could not have learned how to solve their problem or make an end of their sufferings. "When the old society is on the verge of collapse you will often find writing which seems rather revolutionary, but is not actually true revolutionary

literature. For example, a man may hate the old society, but all he has is hate — no vision of the future. He may clamour for social reforms, but if you ask what sort of society he wants, it is some unrealizable Utopia." ("Some Thoughts on Our New Literature") But in a broader sense, of course, this literature is revolutionary literature too, because at least it reflects one true aspect of society and shows where reforms are needed. At the same time, these early revolutionary writers who reflect the downfall of feudal society cannot always free themselves at once from individualism — the tendency to doubt the masses. They see the selfishness, blindness, superstition, self-deception and even servile submissiveness of the peasants who are small property owners; but they often fail to see the "revolutionary potentialities" of the masses, the revolutionary significance behind their clumsy, conservative slogans. This fault occurs frequently in Lu Hsun's essays, and was responsible for his temporary disillusionment and despair when the revolution suffered a setback.

On the other hand, between the May the Fourth Movement and the May the Thirtieth Incident a variety of Bohemians congregated rapidly in China's cities — young petty-bourgeois intellectuals. These intellectuals, like the "rebels" among the earlier literati, were the product of the collapse of Chinese feudalism, the victims of imperialism and the warlord bureaucrats, the orphans "squeezed off the road" by the development of the abnormal form of capitalism in China. They were more citified and more modern; their connection with the villages was more tenuous. They lacked the "sober realism" of the enlightened period of their predecessors, what one might call the down-to-earth spirit of the peasants. Instead they had been infected with the *fin de siècle* spirit of Europe. These "hot-headed" intellectuals often began by being caught up in the angry tide of revolution; but they could be the first to "drop out," "grow decadent" or "turn renegade" if they did not resolutely overcome their romanticism. "These types are most likely to sneer with stopped up noses: 'I am not one of those who sings the praises of organic work, pragmatism

or gradualism.' The social origin of these types is the petty bourgeoisie, they are horrified by war, and sudden ruin, unprecedented famine or destruction drive them distracted. They dash wildly about looking for a way out and salvation. On the one hand they trust and sympathize with the proletariat, on the other they leap about madly in despair, and they waver between the two sides." (Lenin) Naturally in the world of art such men are "geniuses." Naturally they are unwilling to be "the soil to nurture a genius." Instead, "they lose no time in penning a most superior verdict: 'Why, this is simply childish. What China needs is a genius!' " ("Waiting for a Genius") During the high tide of revolution, they are sure to be revolutionary; when the revolution suffers a temporary setback, some of them are sure to grow passive, turn renegade or leap about like men possessed. Then it is a case of: " 'I'll give you a taste of the terrors of the revolution' for the personal satisfaction of the teller. This also showed the bad influence of the scholar-cum-hooligan school." ("A Glance at Shanghai Literature") So they want to be sole representatives of proletarian literature and art.

Three Leisures and Lu Hsun's other essays criticizing the Creation Society reflect the clash between two different attitudes and trends in Chinese literary circles after 1927. Naturally, the special feature of Lu Hsun's short essays of this period is that he uses questions concerning particular individuals to shed light on social ideas and social phenomena. But most writers of the Creation Society and other cliques — I am speaking only of those with genuine revolutionary leanings since it is not worth discussing opportunists like Yeh Ling-feng* — devoted all their attention to questions of personal behaviour, age, temperament and even drinking capacity. Here, at any rate, they revealed the cliquishness of the literati.

The fact that this debate and conflict have developed into a study of principles and theory and the introduction of real revolutionary theories of literature and art marks a

* A decadent writer.

genuinely new chapter in revolutionary proletarian literature. Yet some people accused Lu Hsun of "surrendering." In retrospect, this petty-bourgeois vanity and self-conceit at the expense of others is ridiculously childish.

This problem is done with now, as indeed it should be.

Now Lu Hsun says: "One debt of gratitude I must pay to the Creation Society: they forced me to read some scientific literary criticism, which cleared up many questions which had remained unsolved in my mind in spite of all earlier literary critics had said . . . to correct the one-sided belief in evolution which I — and others because of me — had held." ("Preface to *Three Leisures*") "My way of talking constantly of myself, of how I keep 'knocking my head against a wall' and of what a snail I am, as if all the miseries in the world were concentrated in my person and I was a scapegoat for everyone else, is a bad failing of middle-class intellectuals." ("Preface to *Two Hearts*")

Lu Hsun advanced from the theory of evolution to that of class struggle, from being a rebellious son of the upper class to being a true friend of the labouring masses and a fighter. He fought for a quarter of a century, from before the 1911 Revolution, and thanks to his bitter experience and penetrating observation he has brought his precious revolutionary tradition to the new camp. He has finally proclaimed: "While I started by simply hating my own class which I knew so well, and felt no regret over its destruction, later on the facts taught me that the future belongs solely to the rising proletariat." ("Preface to *Two Hearts*") Regarding the most recent period, the essays following the September the Eighteenth Incident,* there is not much we need say. Lu Hsun stands in the front line of the battle, at his own post. Even prior to this, he pointed out

* On the night of September 18, 1931, the Japanese forces launched a surprise attack on the Chinese army stationed in Shenyang in northeast China. Owing to the non-resistance policy of Chiang Kai-shek, the Japanese aggressive forces subsequently occupied China's northeastern provinces.

An Unfinished Painting (Lu Hsun and Chu Chiu-pai) by Hsu Pei-hung

earnestly: "Since the dawn of civilization countless feasts — large and small — of human flesh have been spread, and those at these feasts eat others and are eaten themselves; but the anguished cries of the weak, to say nothing of the women and children, are drowned in the senseless clamour of the murderers. Feasts of human flesh are still being spread even now, and many people want them to continue. To sweep away these man-eaters, overturn these feasts and destroy this kitchen is the task of the young folk today!" ("Some Notions Jotted Down by Lamplight") Today the expression "young folk" has a new connotation and should even, perhaps, be changed completely — now that Japanese imperialism is carving up China, the Anglo-American League of Nations is exercising joint control, and China's ruling class of gentry and merchants is resorting to all manner of tricks to sell China in pieces or wholesale. Today he cannot refrain from pointing at the "nationalist writers"* and saying: "They (both old and young) are simply playing the part of mourners, with wails for their master always on their lips. Not till . . . the angry storm of class revolution washes clean our land can we shake off this moribund, disgraceful fate." ("The Task and Destiny of Nationalist Literature")

But the value of Lu Hsun's essays is more than this. As he himself says: "Because I come from the old camp and see the situation relatively clearly, by turning my spear to strike back I can deal a more mortal blow." ("Postscript to *The Grave*") Since the end of the Ching dynasty he has had personal experience of the literati, the reformists, Chen Yuan and all the others right up to the compradore-gangster type of literary youths in recent times. The vileness of butchers and corpses, the vulgarity, self-deceit, selfishness and folly of the petty bourgeoisie, the pseudo-nihilism of Bohemians and hooligans, the tricks of shameless, hypocritical clowns — none of these could escape his

* So-called because this group of "writers" supported Chiang Kai-shek's reactionary regime against the progressive writers who advocated resistance to Japanese invasion.

keen eye. Years of battle and startling changes have given him the wealth of experience and emotions which appear, refined and assimilated, in his writing. These revolutionary traditions are extremely valuable for us, especially viewed in the light of collectivism.

First, his most sober realism. "Because we Chinese have never dared to look life in the face, we have to resort to concealment and deceit; hence we have produced a literature of concealment and deceit; and with this literature we have sunk more deeply than ever into the quagmire of concealment and deceit, to such an extent that we do not know it ourselves." ("On Looking Facts in the Face") These views actually reflect the system of oppression and exploitation of China's darkest days, the economic and political relations of that time. The feudal civil service examination system gave every peasant boy the illusion that he could become a high official at any moment. The feudal land system gave every tiller of the soil the illusion that he could win "economic independence" and "climb to the top of the ladder." For centuries this smoke-screen has been "unprecedented." On the other hand, in times of extreme oppression and hopelessness, all the disunited people robbed of a chance of gaining knowledge and culture can hope for is to find some artful ways to deceive the emperor and officials, even the gods and ghosts. They make shift to live by deceiving others and themselves. Such a cultural heritage of the ruling class is a heavy incubus on the revolutionary ranks, who cannot shake it off quickly enough. "The praise of blood and iron has taken the place of the songs to flowers and the moon which one used to hear everywhere. But if there is deceit in our hearts and upon our lips, to speak of A and B is as false as when we spoke of Y and Z." ("On Looking Facts in the Face") Lu Hsun does his best to expose evil. His sarcasm and humour reveal a most passionate and serious attitude towards life. Those who sneer at his coldness are simply buzzing flies. Those who find his sarcasm undignified have also failed to understand him. At the same time, those critics do not realize that their empty talk and boasts are not real

fighting. However, Lu Hsun's realism is not the vaunted transcendental and objective approach of the Third Category.* Discriminating readers can feel the white-hot passion with which he is consuming this mean, rotten world.

"The world is changing from day to day; it is high time for our writers to take off their masks, look frankly, keenly and boldly at life, and write about real flesh and blood. It is high time for a brand new arena for literature, high time for some bold fighters." ("On Looking Facts in the Face")

Secondly, his perseverance in the fight. "We must battle doggedly and continuously against the old order and old forces, and make the best use of our strength. . . . While we urgently need to create a host of new writers, those of us now on the literary front must also be 'resilient.'" ("Thoughts on the League of Left-Wing Writers") "When a wild bull becomes an ox, a wild boar a pig or a wolf a dog, they lose their savage nature. But the only ones to benefit by this are their masters. This is of no advantage to the animals themselves. . . . To my mind, it would be better to retain their savage nature. This would be superior to conforming to the following formula: Man plus the nature of a tame beast=X." ("On the Faces of the Chinese") A beast is wild because it bites and will not let go. This desperate, grim persistence is the only true perseverance in the fight. Swine-herds do not worry if a pig suddenly runs wild but presently grows docile again. Fierceness and perseverance in the fight cannot be achieved by hysteria. No purpose is served by now leaping in despair, now losing heart, flying into a passion at one moment but beating your breast in repentance the next. Fighting must be done properly. We must not resemble a child losing his temper, but must keep both feet on the ground, take cover in the trenches and fight seriously, advancing step by step. Lu Hsun called these tactics of his "trench warfare." This is not fighting according to the rules. If

*A group of reactionary writers in Shanghai who considered themselves neither proletarian nor bourgeois but of a super-class — Third Category.

the enemy challenges you to come out, and you do in fact leave your trench, you will fare like Hsu Chu,* who went to fight without armour and deserved to be pierced by an arrow. Men foolish enough to fall into such traps will never be willing or able to persevere in the fight.

Thirdly, his opposition to liberalism. Lu Hsun's famous argument for "beating a dog in the water" ("On Deferring Fair Play") was actually a declaration of war against liberalism and compromise. The old forces with their hypocritical advocacy of the Doctrine of the Mean talk a lot of pseudo-scientific nonsense to effect a compromise or confuse the issue. This is nothing but a trick. Actually in this world of struggle, there are certain basic contradictions on which no compromise can ever be reached. Compromise is simply the enemy's delaying tactics. A dog may look a pitiful sight in the water, but crawling ashore it is still a dog and will bite you if it can. That is why "these dogs should be pushed into the water and soundly beaten." This should be our attitude to all the forces of evil. But those moribund philistines, who actually do not appear so moribund to those below them, show a superficial sympathy towards those who are down. In fact, consciously or unconsciously, they are preserving the system of exploitation. Philistines are narrow and shallow. Their brains, if they may be said to have brains, have been so fettered by the conventions and dogmas of past centuries that they work like automatons. The influence of the family and schools, both past and present, Chinese and Western "humanist" literature, the so-called "legal spirit" and the Doctrine of the Mean, all help to turn the minds of philistines into simple machines. Confronted with anything "novel" or "radical," they start screeching like gramophones. "The pug, although a dog, looks very much like a cat, so modest, affable and self-possessed, its smugness seeming to say: 'Everyone else goes to extremes, but *I* practise the Doctrine of the Mean.'" Lu Hsun's sharp exposure of philistines truly shows his opposition to compromise and liberalism.

* A warrior in the *Romance of the Three Kingdoms.*

Fourthly, his hatred of hypocrisy. This is Lu Hsun's main characteristic both as a writer and thinker. His realism, his persistence in the fight and his opposition to compromise are all based on this truthfulness and hatred for hypocrisy. This noble hatred is directed against the hypocritical society of the bourgeoisie and landlords, the hypocritical world of imperialism. We can call all his essays declarations of war against hypocrisy. For instance, in the collection *More Bad Luck* to which little attention is generally paid, there are many trenchant and penetrating essays attacking hypocrisy. This is true of many longer essays in *The Grave* which have not been reprinted for some time. But the Chinese ruling class excels in hypocrisy. Consciously or unconsciously, it is out to deceive the masses. It has broken the world record for hypocrisy. "Let us look at some men in China, those at least of the upper class. Do they believe in and obey god, religion or the authority of tradition, or do they simply fear these and try to use them? See how good they are at changing sides and at taking no definite stand, and you will realize that they really believe in nothing, but want to pose as believers. So if you want to look for nihilists, there are quite a few in China." These men do not believe in anything. They "think one way but speak another way, act one way offstage but another way on the stage." They are "play-acting nihilists." ("A Slap-dash Diary Continued") Hypocrisy carried to this extreme is actually the most genuine. The bourgeois nationalists, democrats, reformists or so-called socialists of the West, at least in the first period of enlightenment, although they did not understand themselves, had a true belief in some theory, religion or morality. Such unconscious hypocrisy is comparatively better. But in China men know that all this is false, yet they still talk and act in such a way as to deceive others. Some even boast about this, and use it as a pretext for killing others. Of course, since the Westerners have invented fascism, they have begun to follow China too. Alas, "progressive" China!

Naturally, the whole significance of Lu Hsun's essays cannot be conveyed in this simple analysis. But in view

of our new tasks on the literary front I want to point out the value of these essays and Lu Hsun's important position in the history of the battle of ideas. We should learn from him and advance together with him.

Peking
April 8, 1933

In actual fact, both writers and critics must consciously or unconsciously reflect the life of a certain class and by so doing assist the struggle of that class.

Whether writing or not, they are the representatives of a specific class ideology.

Chu Chiu-pai

KUO MO-JO

O Earth, My Mother

O earth, my mother,
the sky is already pale with dawn;
you rouse the child in your bosom,
now I am crawling on your back.

O earth, my mother,
you sustain me as I roam through the paradisical
garden,
and within the ocean
you give forth music that soothes my spirit.

Kuo Mo-jo was the most important poet of the May the Fourth period and a prolific writer. He is at present president of the Chinese Academy of Sciences.

O earth, my mother,
through past, present, future
you are food, apparel, shelter for me;
how can I repay the benefits you have bestowed
upon me?

O earth, my mother,
henceforth I shall seclude myself less indoors;
in the midst of this opening up of waste lands
I would fulfil my filial duty to you.

O earth, my mother,
I am envious of your dutiful sons, the peasants
in the fields;
they are the nurse of mankind,
you have always cared for them.

O earth, my mother,
I am envious of your darlings, workers in coal-
pits;
they are the Prometheus of mankind,
you have always cared for them.

O earth, my mother,
I am envious of every blade or twig, my brothers,
your progeny:
freely, independently, contentedly, vigorously
they enjoy the life bestowed on them.

O earth, my mother,
I envy every living creature, the earthworm
most of all;
only I do not envy the birds flying in the air,
they have left you to go their way in the air.

O earth, my mother,
I do not wish to fly in the air,
nor ride in carts, on horseback, wear socks or
put on shoes,
I only wish to go barefoot, ever closer to you.

O earth, my mother,
you are witness to the reality of my existence;
I do not believe you are the mere shape of a
bubble conjured forth in a dream,
I do not believe I am merely an imbecile
creature acting without reason.

O earth, my mother,
we are all I-yin, born out of Kungsang;*
I do not believe that in the shadowy heaven
above,
a certain Father exists.

O earth, my mother,
I think everything in this world are incarnations
of your body:
thunder is the breath of your might,
snow and rain the upsurge of your blood.

O earth, my mother,
I think that the lofty bowl of the sky is the
mirror in which you adorn yourself,
and that the sun by day and the moon by night
are but your reflections in the mirror.

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* I-yin: a wise minister of the ancient Shang dynasty, a farmer of Hsinyeh, who was invited thrice to enter the service of the emperor Tang and did so finally. He led a punitive expedition against the tyrant Chieh and later ruled the whole empire. The accounts are of course at least partly legendary.

O earth, my mother,
I think all the stars in the sky
are but the eyes of us your creatures reflected
in the mirror.
I can only think you are the witness to the
reality of existence.

O earth, my mother,
my former self was just an ignorant child,
I only enjoyed your affection,
I did not understand, I did not know how to
repay your affection.

O earth, my mother,
henceforth I shall realize how loving you are;
if I drink a glass of water, even if it is from
Heaven-sent dew,
I shall know it is your milk, my life-sustaining
drink.

O earth, my mother,
whenever I hear a voice speak or laugh
I know it is your song,
expressly provided to comfort my spirit.

O earth, my mother,
before my eyes everything is in restless motion;
I know this is your dance
with which you wish to comfort my soul.

O earth, my mother,
I savour every fragrance, every colour;
I know they are playthings you have given me
expressly to comfort my spirit.

O earth, my mother,
my spirit is your spirit;
I shall make my spirit strong
to repay your affection.

O earth, my mother,
henceforth I shall repay your affection;
I know that you love me and wish to encourage
me to work
I shall learn from you to work, never to stop.

December 1919

Translated by John Lester and A. C. Barnes

The mental activities of a man living in the world, provided he is not alone like Robinson Crusoe on a desert island, must be influenced by society.

Kuo Mo-jo

HAI MO

My Guide

All I know is that he was called Old Horse. I wonder where he is today.

Twenty years ago, we were students of the Yuying Middle School. The day before we set out for the liberated areas, an underground comrade of the Party called the four of us to the passage behind a building in our school. On the campus our school-mates were playing games, but our hearts had already flown to the grand cause of revolution.

We started early the next morning, according to plan. We got on a bus at Chienmen and headed straight for Hsiaotang Mountain.

Of the few passengers on the bus only we four were dressed as students. We had made full preparation for the trip. If asked, we were to say that we were pilgrims to the temple on Miaofeng Mountain. We each carried a small handbag and some canned food, sausage and bread. In order to store up calories for the trip, I had eaten twenty-seven eggs since the previous afternoon. I belched all the time we were on the bus.

It was the first time we had ever gone to Hsiaotang Mountain, although it was a well-known scenic spot. Japanese imperialist soldiers stationed there, questioned us. Luckily Comrade Kuo had brought a camera with him.

When the soldiers discovered we could take their photos, seven or eight of them immediately posed in front of the gate of the school where they were billeted. They straightened their backs, bulged their eyes and sat with their hands on their knees. Comrade Kuo was very generous, taking one photograph after another, for he actually had no film in his camera.

Then we presented them with several cans of food. They accepted. Plainly, they were not above making a small profit. And so we gained freedom of travel.

Later, when we were stopped by a policeman, we told him, "The Japanese have given us permission."

He was smart. "All right, I'll let you go, though I know it's like pelting a dog with meat dumplings — we'll never get you back, either. Give my greetings to the Communist Eighth Route Army," he said.

From the hot springs, we entered Hsiaotang Mountain. We were to turn left at the second mountain pass where a guide was to be waiting for us. We were all very unfamiliar with mountains and had only the vaguest idea about mountain passes. Every gap looked to us like a mountain pass. Naturally we took the wrong path.

There was no sign of the person who was supposed to meet us. Suddenly we heard a roar which kept coming closer and getting more deafening. Then two loud explosions burst very near us. We ran for all we were worth to a house some distance away. It belonged to a family who raised bees. They told us the Japanese were holding artillery-practice.

Apparently our costume and luggage looked pretty queer, for we were immediately surrounded by many people. Curious and vigilant, they showered us with questions. Our answer was always the same: We were pilgrims on our way to the Miaofeng Mountain temple and had lost our way. At the same time, we asked them for a guide.

"All right. Come with me. I am going to my brother," said a young man.

We hesitated. Who was he? Could we trust him? Some of us were afraid and thought of turning back, some insisted

on going forward. We talked it over and decided to go with him on condition that he would not take us through any villages.

Of course this was very childish. Even more childish was that I picked up a sharp stone on the road to use as a weapon in case anything happened. It only added to the weight of my luggage.

We had not gone far when the young man began to turn and smile at us every few steps. Our hearts pounded fiercely.

"Don't worry," he said. "My brother is also on that side."

"What side?" we asked.

"What other side is there?" he said.

We were worried all the way. After a few twists and turns he led us towards a village. My heart instantly beat even faster. I thrust my hand into my pocket and touched the stone.

"No, we are not going into the village." The others also objected.

"Don't worry," said the young man mildly. "How can you keep on walking if you don't drink some water? You have to eat something too."

True, it was midday. I had eaten nothing but five eggs that morning. Besides, where else could we go now? Could he be the one who was supposed to meet us? But why didn't he say the password?

Meeting a crisis, one somehow always finds the courage to see it through. We followed him into the village. He took us to a shack in a vegetable garden. After telling us to take a nap on the wooden bed, he went to boil hot water for us. None of us dared to sleep, but neither did anyone voice his suspicions. I stared hard at the door. We heard the ring of metal. My heart thumped fast. Unconsciously I gripped Comrade Kuo's hand, which was also trembling. A shadow holding a gun appeared on the paper window-pane. We jumped down as one man. The door was pushed open and the young man stepped in.

"Why aren't you asleep?" he laughed. "I've borrowed a gun in case we meet wolves. We may have to travel at night."

Our hesitation must have been obvious. He drew near us and asked, "Do you know Old Horse?"

What a surprising question!

"You people are always escorted by Old Horse." The young man went out again and brought in a pot of hot water. "Drink some. I saw Old Horse heading for Hsiaotang Mountain this morning. Ever heard of him? Everyone knows him around here, even the policemen. He always goes around with a pistol. When he's searched, he just pats his pistol and says, 'Yes, I have one.' I'm sure he must have gone for you. How is it you haven't met him?"

Who was this Old Horse? How we longed for him to appear. But here we were with this stranger. At last we took the risk of going with him up the Miaofeng Mountain.

Ordinarily, there were streams of pilgrims on Miaofeng Mountain at this time of year. As a child I often saw pilgrims with yellow turbans on the streets of Peking who were said to be going to this mountain. But today there wasn't a single worshipper.

Walking on and on, our things gradually shifted from our shoulders to those of the young man. When he first offered us help we refused in order to preserve our self-respect, but gradually fatigue got the better of us. When a man can no longer take care of himself, he makes no effort to hide anything — even his selfishness.

Gradually the sky became dark. By then we had eaten all of our canned food, dropped odds and ends, and were left with only a bundle of clothes each. When the red sun had sunk entirely behind the mountain we observed a temple at the very peak.

"You see that temple? The Eighth Route Army often stops there," said the young man encouragingly.

This was quite effective. The name Eighth Route Army was mysterious and legendary to us. Before we started, I

had read some pamphlets secretly published in Shanghai. One contained a photo of students of the Lu Hsun Institute of Literature and Art in Yenan listening to a lecture. Men and women all were dressed in soldier's uniform. Some sat back to back. . . .

The young man's remark gave us strength. Chasing the twilight clouds, we mounted the peak.

"Where is the Eighth Route Army?" we asked naively.

"I said that they came here sometimes," the young man laughed. He pointed to a little village on the other side of the mountain. "See that village, there? We are going to stay there tonight."

Though it looked near, we didn't reach the little village until midnight. Dead tired, we immediately fell asleep on a brick platform *kang*. No one worried any more about where we were or whether the young man was reliable.

When we woke up, the room was jammed with people. Who were they? When had they come?

"Wake up, quick." The young man was shaking us.

I could not believe my eyes. An oil lamp had been lit. The newcomers were dressed in plain clothes. Some wore hats, some had cloths draped on their heads. Each carried a grey cloth bag, which I later learned contained bullets. The men lay at our feet, leaned against our *kang* or sat on the ground. It was like some queer dream. The four of us sat up. The men at the door made way for a man in long gown who came in. He signalled with his hand to the men on the ground. Several went out.

"Who is leader among you?" he asked us.

Before we could answer the young man introduced him to us. "This is the chief of staff of the guerrilla detachment, Comrade Chang Ching-hua. Aren't you looking for the Eighth Route Army? Well, here it is."

Comrade Kuo jumped to the ground and produced two cigarettes. Chang Ching-hua took out a box of matches and struck a light. He said to us, "You must have had a hard trip, comrades. Haven't you met Old Horse?"

Dogs barked at this moment. The men sat up. A few ran out, guns in hand. Chang Ching-hua listened a moment,

then told us to sit down. "Don't worry. We have supporters everywhere," said he, pointing at the young man who had brought us. "We have contacts in all the villages around here. We'd know beforehand if the enemy were coming."

After a while we heard somebody outside the window say, "Is that you, Old Horse?"

"Why is he so late?"

A small, wiry man entered. He looked like a bit of a rascal. He wore a small round skull-cap and a black lined coat which reached down to his knees. He saluted Chang Ching-hua and, in one motion, as his hand swept down from his cap, snatched the chief of staff's cigarette from his mouth. Old Horse took a quick drag on the cigarette and looked at our odd attire.

"So you are the four aristocrats," he said rudely. "You kept me waiting until dark. I'd be there still if the old policeman hadn't told me. . . ."

I was startled. Was he a god? How could he cover the distance it had taken us a whole day and half a night to travel in only four hours?

Chang Ching-hua looked at him appreciatively. "I suppose you went drinking somewhere?"

Old Horse did not answer but breathed out hard. Chang Ching-hua pushed his head away and placed an affectionate hand on his shoulder. "This is Old Horse," he said.

"Old Horse is me. I am Old Horse. This horse specializes in carrying people."

This self-introduction made us laugh. Then Chang Ching-hua said to him, "These four people will be under your care. You will be responsible from now on, until you deliver them to General Hsiao at the Pingsi Headquarters."

"Right!"

Only this "right" was said quite seriously, and Old Horse was standing in attention. Turning to us, he slapped his pate. "I pledge this head for the safety of you four. Don't worry about a thing."

"You'll have to start tomorrow," added Chang Ching-hua seriously. "The enemy will probably try a 'mop-up' so we can't send anybody to cover you."

All this seemed to happen in a very brief period. Soon we were left alone again. Old Horse disappeared. Chang Ching-hua and his men had gone on. And the young man who brought us, went back.

Lying on the *kang* I gazed at the paper window. I saw for the first time how a paper window-pane turns from

black to grey, and grey to yellow, and gradually from yellow to white. For the first time in my life I realized the existence of time. Outside the window, chickens flapped their wings and a cock crowed hoarsely. The crowing was so full of life, I grew very excited, just as I did later on when I heard the bugle call of the Eighth Route Army for the first time.

I was startled when I felt a cold hand on my head. "Get up, comrades," said Old Horse softly.

We put on our clothes. Old Horse had everything ready. He had also found a peasant to carry our things for us.

As soon as we left the village we began climbing. It was chilly in the morning, but when we reached the mountain top I was sweating.

"Look," said Old Horse, pointing. "The morning star. We'll have to rise with it every day from now on."

"We won't walk long today," he explained. "But we couldn't remain in that village. We've heard that the enemy is coming."

It was also the first time we had ever seen a sunrise in the mountains. The sun is stingy when it first gives its light to the world, showing only its colourful gown. But when its whole face appears above the horizon it glows generously and all the darkness retreats without any delay.

When the sun rose Old Horse began to sing. Later I discovered that sunrise always made his throat itch. His singing was shrill and grating on the ear. Although I didn't care much for the Hopei opera arias he sang, I felt that his singing was full of strength, like himself.

"Fair maiden . . ." he invariably started with these two words.

After he had sung a few lines, he suddenly turned to us. "You don't like my singing, do you? I'm almost sure of that," he answered for us. "Last time, when I escorted a few girls, they said that I squeaked like a monkey. I've never seen a monkey. Do they really sound like me?"

We all laughed.

"The Eighth Route Army can't do without entertainment. It takes our minds off our troubles. Right, Comrade Intel-

lectuals? Ha, ha. . . ." He was the first to laugh at his own joke. "You may not think much of my voice, but when I sing, girls and women all gather round and refuse to leave. You could never attract them like that! If you don't believe me, just try your foreign style voices on them. . . ." He gave an exaggerated imitation of Western style singing. "Ah . . . oh. . . ." He laughed again. "The people don't like it. They say it sounds like the braying of mules. . . ."

Fortunately none of us was a music lover. So not only weren't we offended, we were drawn even closer to him.

We met more people as we went along. I was surprised that nearly every one greeted Old Horse and exchanged banter with him.

At breakfast time we reached a tiny hamlet. It consisted of just two thatched sheds half way up a mountain. When we drew near a dog came tearing out fiercely. But when it recognized Old Horse, it leaped all over him for joy and rolled on the ground in front of him. Then a little boy of seven or eight years old ran out and hung on Old Horse's arm.

Old Horse slapped his small bottom. "Go and keep watch on the mountain, little imp."

The noise of our arrival caused a young wife to emerge, a broom in her hand. Although dressed in tatters she was quite beautiful. "Oh, it's you, Old Horse. Haven't you died yet?" she said.

"Why don't you say something nice to me, sister-in-law? Are you dizzy from thinking too much of your husband?"

The young wife blushed crimson. She hit Old Horse on the head with the broom. "Take care that he doesn't rip your nasty tongue out when he comes home."

"When is he coming back?" Old Horse was instantly serious.

"Any assignment?" she asked.

"Here you are," he pointed at us.

They were teasing each other again as we walked into the house. The young wife made the fire and put rice into the pot. She put the lid on and said to Old Horse, "You watch the fire while I find him for you."

After she had gone Old Horse made us lie down. "You must take this chance to rest. We're starting out at midnight again. There's an enemy military base at the foot of the hill. We have to go through it tonight."

We got up four hours earlier than the morning star and started at midnight. This time we had a new companion, the husband of the young wife. He was the leader of the local militia.

I scrutinized him in the moonlight. He wore a sheepskin coat that was practically in shreds. He was tall. A gun swung at his shoulder.

That night Old Horse cracked no jokes. The militia leader walked up front. Old Horse covered the rear. That night I discovered another one of his characteristics. He was silent when the situation was tense.

There was an eerie silence. The only sound was our shoes crunching on the sand and stones.

The moon was bright and dim at turns. On the mountain top a child stood guard. It was the little boy Old Horse had sent to keep watch the day before. Bright lights at the foot of the mountain could be seen clearly. I know this was a crucial point.

"Two trucks went by a little while ago," reported the child.

"Where to?" asked Old Horse.

"To the base."

"Quick!" Old Horse took the lead this time and the militia leader brought up the rear.

"Stay close to me!" Old Horse said to us.

He walked so fast we had to run to keep up. Such speed ordinarily would have exhausted me. But I had no thought of tiredness then, following steadily with bated breath.

In half an hour we covered the five *li* down the mountain. Old Horse took us straight into a village near the base. Then he let the militia leader go first, and he covered the rear.

I had thought passing an enemy base would be a heroic event. But we slipped by just like that. Not far beyond the village was another mountain. As we climbed I heard

Old Horse again singing softly of the "fair maiden." I had grown to like the tune very much. It seemed to signify that peace and happiness were at hand.

"Those trucks came at exactly the right time," said Old Horse when we were taking a rest. "They're probably bringing reinforcements to attack our Eighth Route Army guerrillas. If they'd come a little later we'd have run into them on the road. A little sooner and they would have come out of the base and started searching while we were still in the village."

"Old Horse is boasting again," said the militia leader.

"Listen. What did I tell you? They're arresting people in the village."

Through the soughing of the wind, I seemed to hear women crying.

"Let's go, fellows," called Old Horse. We rose and continued up the mountain. Dawn was breaking.

Old Horse finally remembered to introduce the militia leader to us. "Comrades, this is the well-known 'Flyer on the Grass.' " Old Horse pulled at his torn flapping garment. "This enables him to fly."

"Get away from me." The militia leader poked him with the butt of his gun. "You're insane to go with him," he said to us. "An old horse is good for nothing but to be slaughtered."

"I'm an old horse, but you're a tattered old dragon."

They made fun of each other.

"Ha, leader," suddenly Old Horse whispered earnestly. "Don't start thinking of your wife at a time like this."

The leader swung a kick at Old Horse's backside, but his foot hit the guide's pistol instead. He sat down on the ground abruptly, holding his injured toes.

"I have a guard posted there. Don't be rude to me." Old Horse pulled him up. Laughing, he said to us, "We two are too crude. Please give us some high class entertainment, you high class people."

It was bright daylight now. Old Horse walked to a little river. "Let's rest a while and wash our faces. Then

we will ask the Western style students to give us a performance."

Of course we had nothing to perform. After we had freshened up a bit, Old Horse told us about the militia leader.

"He detests water, although he was a dragon king in his former life.* His family lived fairly well at one time, but a flood swept everything away. When the landowner pressed hard for rent, he ran to the mountains. The saying, 'Labour creates the world' is certainly true in his case. The land we saw on the mountain was all opened up by him. Don't let his ragged clothes fool you. He won't spend a penny on clothing; he feeds his grain to the people we lead through here. They eat it all up — particularly you foreign style students who have bigger stomachs than anybody although you're cultured people."

This brief introduction increased my respect for the militia leader. But he was embarrassed. He dug into Old Horse's ribs and ran away. Old Horse chased after him. Following the sound of their laughter, we marched on. Finally, the militia leader left us and went back. Old Horse once more guided us along small paths.

It was a fortnight since we had started our journey. I woke up one night to find Old Horse roasting rice for us. He had been preparing the things we needed for the next day's travel and keeping guard while we slept. I wondered how such a small person could have so much energy!

"You should sleep a little, Old Horse," I said.

"It's all right. I want you boys to have enough sleep. We've got a long walk and you need strength."

"I am strong, Old Horse. You'd better rest a while. If you get sick, who can take us through?"

"I'm thin but I'm tough," said Old Horse raising his head. His eyes were blood-shot.

I pleaded with him. "You can't go on like this. Let me work one night."

* In Chinese mythology, the Dragon Spirit is the ruler of the waters.

Old Horse looked serious. He said with feeling, "Young man, you're precious to the Party. No revolution can do without culture. I've been to the revolutionary base. Our university there is staffed with world-famous people. All the books and all the trained people come from there. When the country is united you are the ones who are going to put up the factories and produce the machines. I'm just right for my present job. When the revolution is won I'll visit you. Study hard, comrade. Remember me and I'll be satisfied."

He handed me a notebook and a pen.

"Write your names in my book. Be careful, this pen leaks. Some day I'll see your names in the newspaper. If you contribute something to our country I'll know I haven't lived in vain. If you live to see victory that means I too will have made a contribution to the revolution."

I wrote our names in his notebook as he had asked. I was so moved by what he said that tears trickled down my face. He laughed.

"You've still a bit of the petty bourgeoisie in you!" He wiped my tears for me and patted my shoulders. "You can't be so soft in a revolution. You'll have to change your personality completely!"

I said nothing. I could feel a strength in him which was as fierce as fire and as hard as a diamond.

When he had put the roasted rice into a bag he told me to waken the others: "We'll have to start earlier today. There's a dangerous path which even I am afraid of crossing in the daytime. It's not so bad at night because you can't see what's below."

Soon we were on our way. It was really a trying trip. A wooden board bridged a bottomless abyss between two mountain precipices. After crossing the board, you had to cling to tufts of grass and crawl along the face of the mountain. Going down there was a grass ladder with dozens of rungs.

Since I was warned beforehand, it turned out to be especially frightening. I dropped my drinking cup while crawling across the board. I listened, but I never heard

it hit bottom. People usually realize a danger only after it's over. No timid person would dare to make such a dangerous crossing a second time. But Old Horse took the risk repeatedly. I certainly admired his courage. He must have crossed that abyss dozens of times. But he never lost his cheerfulness and confidence.

Because of our fear we took two hours longer than we had planned. Day was beginning to break when we started down the slope.

Old Horse had become extremely silent. He took us into a forest half way down the mountain. A peasant came to tell him that there were enemy soldiers on the road behind us. Old Horse had planned to stay in the forest and go on at night.

"You stay here while I investigate," Old Horse said. "Wait for me in this cave and come out when I clap three times."

The cave was damp. And we were tense. We could see nothing of our surroundings. For a whole hour, we waited.

Then Old Horse came back, very pale. He looked thinner than ever. "Let's go," said he in a queer low voice. We followed him silently.

"Comrades, this is the most crucial moment," Old Horse said as we neared a village. "If we can climb that mountain on the other side of the village, we'll be safe. There may be enemy in the village, but we must go on, for there are enemy behind us too. If we should meet them, just throw down your things and run. I'll stop them. When you reach the mountain, look for a Brother Wu. Everybody knows him. He'll take you on."

Old Horse paused. He sounded depressed, and his voice was hoarse. "I won't be able to get away if we meet the enemy," he said heavy-heartedly. "If you're also captured, just say that you were fooled into coming by me. I'll back up your story. They'll probably let you go. It's better to stay alive. If you're determined to join the revolution, you can come back this way. Only I won't have the luck to be your guide again."

He shook his head and said decidedly, "Let's go."

We followed him. Our hearts were agitated and heavy. I didn't know whether Old Horse was right. . . .

When we were two hundred metres from the village, Old Horse told us to wait in the fields. He went on alone to scout.

He thrust his hand into his pocket. I know that he must have unlocked the safety on his pistol.

He was gone for quite some time. We were worried because the enemy was so near. Twenty minutes later Old Horse emerged from the village and beckoned to us. We walked quickly towards him. He signalled for us to run. My body seemed to belong to someone else. When we drew near he turned and silently walked straight into the village. All the doors were tightly closed. Numerous stones littered the street, which was a former river bed. We could not avoid making noise, and this increased our aggravation.

At a cross-road I saw a big pool of blood. When we reached the other side of the village we heard horses galloping not far away. As soon as we left the village, Old Horse took us through the wheat fields to a river. Regardlessly of the depth we walked straight in. Water came up to our chests at the deepest place. Then we climbed another mountain. As we turned we saw the dust of the enemy cavalry advancing along the same road we had taken into the village. Not far down the road on which we emerged from the village, was another enemy band. We had slipped between two groups of them.

When we were up the mountain Old Horse recovered his clear laughter.

"Fair maiden . . ." he sang.

Soon we arrived at the headquarters of Comrade Hsiao Ke in the Pingsi base. We waited outside while Old Horse went in to report.

A group of children were drawn to us by our funny combination of long gowns and Western style coats. Taking us for captured traitors, they began throwing stones at us.

Soon Old Horse came out. "Don't. Stop that," he called. "They're intellectuals, they're assets to the revolution."

Then he laughed mischievously to us and said in a low voice, "The commander is waiting for you. I'm leaving you now."

Gentle and full of feeling, he shook our hands, his eyes reddening. "I have to leave. New duties are waiting for me. Another comrade will guide you. There will be no danger from now on. You might go to study in the rear. The people I brought before have all gone to study in the University. Please study well. A great deal of work is waiting for you. I'm old and useless. I can't concentrate and I can't remember. I'm only good for this job."

He swung his bag on his shoulder, knocked the mud off his shoes, and started off, nimble as ever. After a few steps, he turned.

"Comrades, criticize my shortcomings so that I can improve." I saw his eyes, red from too little sleep, become bright and lustrous again.

Almost twenty years have elapsed, but Old Horse lives on in our hearts. He probably wouldn't have believed it. He did so much, yet he always thought he did too little.

Comrade Old Horse . . . I wonder what's become of him.

Translated by Yu Fan-chin
Illustrations by Lu Chih-hsiang

HSIAO PING

The Story of Yuku Mountain

Many of my childhood memories are associated with the days I spent at my grandmother's. Grandmother lived in a quiet little village by the Blue River at the foot of the beautiful pine-covered Yuku Mountain. In spring, pink peach blossoms and snow-white pear blossoms coloured the hillside, and glistening green wheat fields rippled on the banks of the Blue River. Overhead, skylarks sang as joyfully as my little cousin, Hsiao-feng. Hsiao-feng was the daughter of my third uncle who watched the orchard.

I liked going to my uncle's orchard to play with Hsiao-feng. Together we used to welcome the spring: we watched the young grass peep out of the earth and examined the tender buds on their branches as they opened their petals. On summer evenings we sat outside the cottage where Hsiao-feng lived. Third uncle sometimes lit a fire for us and the light blue smoke mingled with the moonlight to shroud the orchard in silver mist. A little brook gurgled past one end of the orchard. We often heard the eerie screeching of night birds in the distance. When I wanted to know why one bird cried so in the night, my uncle said that it had lost its mother and was sad.

Grandmother had told me that third uncle's wife died long ago, but she refused to tell me how. I learned about

it only when I was older. It happened shortly after Hsiao-feng's birth. One day when third uncle was not home, the wicked owner of the orchard came to the cottage and tried to seduce Hsiao-feng's mother. Third uncle returned in time to chase him off. But uncle scolded his wife severely, and that night, unbearably ashamed, she hung herself from one of the trees.

I remember third uncle always looked very sad. He said little and hardly ever smiled. During the day he worked in the orchard, digging and pruning; in the evenings he sat silently by his door puffing at his pipe and staring fixedly before him. Sometimes he darned Hsiao-feng's socks in the light of a pine torch.

He was an extremely good father. Grandmother often said, "Even if her mother had lived, Hsiao-feng could hardly have been better cared for." While he himself ate turnips and wild herbs cooked with coarse grain, he saw to it that Hsiao-feng had corn muffins. In contrast to Hsiao-feng's new printed blue cotton frock, my uncle's blue jacket was heavy with patches. I remember when grandmother made that frock for Hsiao-feng, I persuaded her to let me send it over. That day, third uncle tried the frock on his daughter himself. He gazed long and fondly at his daughter as he tugged at a hem and straightened a sleeve. I think it was the first time I ever saw him smile.

Hsiao-feng was also very pleased with her new frock. I still remember how hand in hand we ran and ran till we reached the summit of Yuku Mountain. We climbed up the big Filial Pine to gaze at the wide expansive sea at one end of Blue River and the sunset clouds changing into a thousand different shapes. Finally, twilight fell; smoke began to rise from the houses in the village and we hastily came down the tree to return to our orchard. The autumn breeze felt cool against our cheeks and insects droned among the fruit trees. Hsiao-feng made me squat under a tree to listen to the chirping insects. She whispered to me their different names.

A greenish flicker of light drifted down from the upper reaches of the Blue River. We got frightened and made for

Hsiao-feng's cottage. A light gleamed through the window. Third uncle must be patching Hsiao-feng's shoes again, I thought. Pushing open the door, we stopped short when we saw four or five strangers in the room. Third uncle was on the brick-bed *kang* talking to them. They all stopped when we entered. One man with a black beard turned round to stare at us.

"Hsiao-feng, go out and play with your Cousin Liang," said third uncle coming off the *kang*. "Go and listen for the ripe pears dropping to the ground."

"No," I said, "there's a phantom spark outside; we're scared."

My uncle hesitated a moment. "All right, I'll take you two over to your grandmother's." He turned and told the others, "Go on. I'll just take the children over." He took us by the hand and left the room.

Without a moon, the night was very dark. The wind moaned through the trees. We left the orchard to follow a little path leading to the village. Although third uncle said not a word, I couldn't help asking, "Who are those sitting on the *kang*?" He told me not to ask questions.

When we reached grandmother's, third uncle said to her that some pear buyers had come and would stay the night in his cottage. He requested that she let Hsiao-feng stay with us for the night.

After he left, Hsiao-feng and I sat close to grandmother and begged for a story. Grandmother began the tale of Yuku Mountain.

Long, long ago a father and daughter lived here. The father was a fisherman and his daughter Yuku cooked his meals and kept house for him. Every day, at about the time of her father's return, she went up the mountain to watch for his boat. One year turned into another until one day a storm started while her father was out at sea. It was a terrific hurricane: the roofs were ripped off the houses, millstones were blown into the air and huge trees torn up by the roots. The very sea was split asunder. Wind and rain raged for three days and three nights. All this time Yuku was atop the mountain watching for her father's

return. On the fourth day, the wind died and the sea calmed down but still there was no sign of her father. Yuku did not go home to eat or sleep but stood under a big pine tree on the mountain waiting for her father.

Thus she waited until winter turned into spring and the swallows returned. They brought her the sad tidings of her father's death at sea. Yuku began to weep. She wept and wept until nine times nine days elapsed and a fairy in heaven was touched by her filial grief. Using her wand, the fairy made a river channel leading to the sea, which Yuku's tears quickly filled. A river formed, and on it Yuku's father's body floated back from the sea. Yuku buried her father and became a fairy herself. Local people commemorated her by naming the mountain after her and calling the pine tree on the hilltop, Filial Pine. The river made by her tears is our Blue River. . . .

Both Hsiao-feng and I were very fond of this story. Though we'd heard it countless times, every time grandmother finished Hsiao-feng would be quiet for a long time, her eyes filled with tears.

Hsiao-feng and I often went up Yuku Mountain to climb the Filial Pine but we never saw anything unusual. When the peach trees were in bloom we followed the stream to the Blue River to gaze at the clear water flowing towards the sea. "Look," said Hsiao-feng, pointing at the river. "Yuku has been crying over her father again; the water has risen."

Hsiao-feng was pretty, intelligent and soft-spoken. My grandmother was very fond of her. One autumn, my mother brought me to stay at grandmother's because there was a fair in the village. Third uncle came to see my mother and stayed for supper. Of course Hsiao-feng came too. At supper that night, I happened to pass a date muffin to Hsiao-feng.

"Look," said grandmother. "How well Liang and Hsiao-feng get along. Soon we'll be able to arrange a match between them." Though Hsiao-feng's father merely smiled, I was overjoyed. But days passed and no one mentioned the matter again.

Soon after, my father took me to the northeast and apprenticed me to a store. How I longed to be back at the orchard with Hsiao-feng. Whether riding on a cart towards the wharf, or boarding a ship, or shedding tears after my master had beaten me cruelly, I thought always of my sweet companion Hsiao-feng. I looked back longingly on our happy care-free days at grandmother's. I remembered the Yuku Mountain, the Blue River and the orchard where Hsiao-feng lived. Sometimes I dreamed that I was back again and there was Hsiao-feng weeping under the Filial Pine. She'd tell me her father was drowned at sea and I would begin to cry with her. My own tears usually woke me up.

I spent four years amidst tears and curses, living in a dark hole of a room. Then my master's shop closed down. I returned home.

At home everything seemed different: the streets were narrower, the doors smaller, the date tree in the yard taller and my little sister bigger. My mother stroked the scars on my head and asked how I got them. She wept when I

told her how my master had beaten me and related the story of each scar. I shed no tears. I was anxious to know whether third uncle was still working in the orchard and how Hsiao-feng was.

Yes, Hsiao-feng's father still tended the orchard but, like me, Hsiao-feng had grown bigger. I was so eager to see her that I could hardly sleep that night. Getting up at the crack of dawn, I picked up a little bundle and started out for grandmother's.

It was spring again. The waters of Blue River still flowed calm and clear and the wheat shoots on its banks were as green and glistening as ever. Skylarks soared in the blue sky matching the song in my heart as I hurried along the river bank. Soon I saw the orchard at the foot of the hill. Turning off the road, I took a small path towards the orchard.

The orchard reminded me of my childhood. I remembered the pear tree where Hsiao-feng and I had caught a cicada and the peach tree under which we squatted to listen for a Spinning Maid cricket. . . . Suddenly a girl of about sixteen appeared from behind a tree. I recognized her at once.

"Hsiao-feng," I called.

Stunned for a moment, she stared at me, then flushed pink. "It's you! You've come home again!"

I told her why and when I had come home. I meant to tell her how much I missed her all these years and how I could hardly wait to see her, but now I hesitated. Her face was still pink and she darted shy glances at me. When our eyes met, she looked away, her hands pulling a leaf into little pieces. I gazed at her quietly. She seemed even prettier than before, her face was fair and rosy, her hair jet black. I thought her eyes looked brighter than the water of Blue River.

Just then we heard footsteps approaching from the north and she whispered, "You go on home. I'll meet you over at grand-aunt's place."

Meekly I went on to grandmother's. Very glad to see me, she pulled me to her and looked me over from head to toe.

While grandmother was busy scrubbing the pot and lighting the fire to cook me a meal, Hsiao-feng came in.

"Who's come, grand-aunt?" she asked, pretending not to know that I was there. "I see you've started cooking early."

"Oh, it's you, Hsiao-feng," said grandmother. "Your Cousin Liang is back. Can you imagine! Go in and talk to him; weren't you childhood friends?"

Though grandmother urged her to come into the parlour and sit down, Hsiao-feng stayed by the door. Then she began to help grandmother with the fire. Though she chatted freely with grandmother, she said nothing to me. When grandmother brought the food to the table and asked her to join us, she ran off.

I asked grandmother about third uncle at dinner. Grandmother edged close and whispered in my ear, "He's changed the past few years. At night strange people come to his house. Your other uncle who lives at the east end of the village ran into some of them." I was startled. After a pause, I asked about Hsiao-feng.

"She's a good child," said grandmother. "She comes often to see me and when field work's busy she pitches in to help. She asks about you every time she's here. But they tell me she's in with her father too."

My heart felt heavy. "Who are the strange people who come to their house at night?" I asked.

Grandmother sighed. "Who knows. According to your other uncle, they're bad men and your third uncle is a gangster in whose house they meet. But I don't think so. He is still as poor as ever. He has always been an honest, upright man. What a pity if he should go bad at his age. He's already turned forty."

"Didn't Hsiao-feng ever tell you anything?" I asked.

"She's too clever. She wouldn't be the one to chatter. It's a pity she was born in that family. If she had been born into another. . . ."

Grandmother stopped. I didn't pursue the question either. After dinner, I slipped off the *kang* and said casually, " I think I'll drop in on third uncle."

Hsiao-feng and her father were eating when I got there. "Feng told me you were here," said he. "Come up on the *kang*. You move over, Feng, and let Cousin Liang sit down."

I joined them. Third uncle seemed quite different after four years. He seemed much younger and his face no longer looked so sad. He was more talkative too; he kept asking me about the situation in the northeast. Was there enough to eat? How was life as an apprentice? Were there many Japanese and did they treat the Chinese well? When I told him that the Japanese bullied the Chinese, he said, "Unless the Chinese rise up and fight, we will soon become Japanese slaves here too."

I stole glances at Hsiao-feng out of the corner of my eye. She ate quietly without joining in our conversation, but I caught her looking at me now and then. Whenever I met her gaze she looked away shyly. It made me feel embarrassed too. In my heart I was hoping that her father would leave the room after the meal, but I was disappointed.

As soon as they finished, third uncle told Hsiao-feng, "Go and have a look . . . just say there's company at home." Hsiao-feng shot me a glance before she went out. Now that she was gone, I had no desire to remain. For courtesy's sake, I stayed another minute or two, then said good-bye. Uncle did not try to keep me.

At the southern end of the orchard, I saw Hsiao-feng under a pear tree. "Why are you leaving so soon?" she asked.

"Nobody's interested in me, why should I stay?"

"Who says so?" She sounded a bit agitated.

I didn't reply but simply looked at her. Reddening, she turned her face away, pulled a spray of pear blossoms to her and plucked at the petals.

From the riverside, a man with a pair of baskets on a pole came towards us. "You run along," said Hsiao-feng at sight of the stranger. "I'll come over to see you in the evening."

I was reluctant to go but I could hardly insist on staying. "Be sure to come then," I urged. She smiled and nodded.

Back at grandmother's I could neither sit nor stand still. Something seemed to be lacking. The day was endless. I

strolled round in the yard, then stood outside the gate. The minutes dragged. Grandmother talked of this and that, but I was in no mood for conversation. Though grandmother wanted me to visit my various uncles and cousins, I refused. Hsiao-feng might come in while I was gone.

After a long, long wait, the sun finally sank in the west. I finished supper in a few mouthfuls and put away the supper things as soon as grandmother laid down her chopsticks. Then I swept the *kang* and lit the lamp.

"Why light the lamp so early? Oil's expensive." Grandmother was surprised.

"Might as well. Visitors may come."

"Who'd come at this hour? It's late." Grandmother didn't say any more.

My heart throbbed with excitement as I strained my ears for footsteps outside our door. Several times footsteps did come, but they always went off again. I heard people returning from the mountains, children pattering home on weary feet, workers fetching buckets of water back from the river and the cattle being driven back to their sheds. The hubbub of the twilight hour gradually died away. Finally, I could hear neighbours closing their doors for the night.

Frantic as an ant on a hot griddle, I paced in and out of the room. Grandmother said something to me once or twice but I had no idea what she was talking about. Perhaps Hsiao-feng's father returned late; perhaps they were still having supper. . . . I tried to comfort myself. Surely something must have come up to detain her. She promised to come, surely she wouldn't break her word. But the minutes ticked on, and still she did not appear. I could wait no longer. I told grandmother I was going out.

"Where are you going at this hour?" grandmother asked in surprise.

"I have a headache. I want a breath of fresh air," I lied.

"All right, but don't stay out long," said grandmother. "The times are not peaceful."

I ran towards the orchard. Maybe I'd meet Hsiao-feng on the way. The night was dark. Several times I mistook a tree or a ditch for a shadow and stopped to call, "Is that

you, Hsiao-feng?" My only answer was the rustling of leaves. In the orchard I somehow lost my way. I didn't see the lights of the cottage until I had been groping for some time. As I dashed towards it, I wondered what reason to give to Hsiao-feng's father for coming so late. I could say I was leaving the next day and had come to say good-bye.

Suddenly a voice called out, "Who's there?"

It was Hsiao-feng.

"Me," I cried, glad to find her at last.

"Sorry," she said. I saw she was standing by a pear tree. "I couldn't come. Something. . . ."

"I knew you must have been held up. Come on, let's go."

"Go where?" she asked, startled.

"To my grandmother's."

"No, it's too late. I won't come tonight. I'll come tomorrow." She seemed a little flustered.

Suspicion crept into my head. "What are you doing, standing here?"

"Nothing much," she stammered. "I . . . I'm watching over the orchard."

"What is there to watch for at this hour?" More suspicious now, I spoke angrily. "Who'd come in the middle of the night? You've only blossoms, not fruit, anyway!"

From not far away came the sound of someone clapping hands. The sound was repeated once. Hsiao-feng looked more flurried. "Go, quickly," she urged in a whisper, pushing me. "Run along. I'll come over early tomorrow to see you."

My heart was in utter confusion. Pained and puzzled, I left the orchard half in a daze. On the way back, I was sure that Hsiao-feng was involved in some underhand dealings. I felt so bad that I wanted to cry.

I went to bed without a word. Grandmother thought I was ill and fussed over me. I paid no attention to her and sank into an uneasy sleep.

The next morning I told grandmother I was going home. She wanted me to stay a few days more but I couldn't remain another hour.

The day was fine, the pear blossoms were as beautiful and the Blue River as clear as the day before, but I felt wretched. Close to tears, I dragged myself despondently down the river bank.

"Cousin Liang," a voice came from behind me.

It was Hsiao-feng. Slowing my steps, I paused to frown at her. She was panting from running. As she brushed her damp forehead with the back of one hand, she asked, "Why are you leaving already?"

I remained silent, hardening my heart and focusing my eyes on the river.

"Why don't you speak to me?" She sounded close to tears. I looked at her and found there were really tears in her eyes. My heart softened.

"What fun is it for me here now?" I remarked sadly.

She stared long at me before saying, "You don't understand anything. . . ."

"Of course," I retorted. "I'm so stupid, what could I understand?"

Her lips quivered as her hands tugged nervously at the hem of her jacket. I thought I'd had the last word since she said nothing, and I resumed my journey. She called after me, but I didn't reply. A few minutes later she began to sob. Tears coursed down my cheeks too but my feet walked on. I didn't even turn my head to look back.

At home, my heart felt empty and limp. I was ill for some time. When I recovered I decided to shut her out of my mind, but I had little success.

That year I helped father in the fields and lived at home.

At autumn harvest time there was talk in the village about a band of men, operating in our vicinity against the landlords who had oppressed and exploited them. The few landlords in our village were frightened; they hurriedly moved their valuables into town for safe-keeping. One despotic landlord, known as the Stutterer, lived across the street from us. I noticed that his doors were closed every evening before nightfall and barred with double iron bars.

I still remember clearly the incident that occurred on a wet autumn night. I was awakened by shouting voices,

rushing feet and the pounding of doors. I dressed hastily and went to my parents' room. Father, frightened stiff, sat motionless in his quilt.

"Just look at you," mother scolded. "Scared out of your wits. What injustice have you done to the poor people that they would want to harm you? You are poor yourself."

I wanted to know what had happened.

"Strangers have entered the village," mother told me.

People were still banging on the Stutterer's door. After a while the door was broken down; we heard people rushing in. After a while someone walked into our yard and knocked on our window. Father paled but mother asked boldly, "Who is it?"

"Don't be afraid," a man's voice said gently. "We are Communists come to distribute the tyrant's property to the poor. Don't be alarmed."

His footsteps went away. Mother wanted father to go out for a look but he did not dare. Mother went herself.

"Do you know," whispered mother, returning after a few minutes, "Third uncle's among them."

Father was puzzled. "Who's third uncle?"

"Liang's uncle who watches the orchard. I saw him coming out of Stutterer's house."

Father became more frightened. He made me bar the door and blow out the light. We sat quietly on the *kang*.

My heart thudded heavily. Outside, the noise and hubbub continued. Running feet rushed past our house now and again. The rain beat louder amidst low rumbling thunder. Voices shouted and then mumbled outside our walls. As I listened with bated breath, my mind felt confused and strangely empty. I couldn't think properly at all. The words, "We are Communists . . ." still rang in my ears. The villagers talked much about the Communist Party in recent years. I had heard that they shared out the land equally among all the peasants. . . . But they had said that the Communist Party was somewhere far to the west. How did third uncle become a Communist? Could Hsiao-feng also be one?

For some reason I felt sure Hsiao-feng was outside somewhere and that man with the black beard I had seen in her house was there too. Visions of my encounters in the orchard flashed back . . . I remembered the strangers I had seen at the cottage, the man walking towards the orchard from the river and what grandmother told me. . . . I began to understand a little. My first impulse was to dash out to find Hsiao-feng and her father, but I made no move. I don't know whether it was out of fear or what. The rain continued to pour, the thunder rumbled.

Towards dawn the rain slackened, the shouting and running gradually ceased too. But our family sat on in silence, straining our ears for noises on the street. At daybreak, I went out. The streets were deserted.

Two days later, a contingent of men marched in from the west. We all gathered on a slope at one end of the village to watch them. They had guns. Some said they were Communist troops, but as soon as they entered the village we saw they were Kuomintang soldiers come to "scour" the countryside.

In the ensuing days, the "scouring" went on. The landlords joined in with them to search the hills. A number of peasants were brought back from the hills and sent to the Kuomintang troops stationed in a village ten *li* away. The captured peasants were not even questioned, but simply shot. After a couple of days I heard people say someone from my grandmother's village had been captured and executed. My heart missed a beat.

I could restrain myself no longer. Even though my father had forbidden me to run about, I slipped out to my grandmother's. No sooner had I entered the door than grandmother, looking frightened and alarmed, told me that third uncle had been arrested and killed. Hsiao-feng had disappeared. Grandmother described how the troops surrounded the cottage in the orchard, fired at it for a long time and then dashed in to search. They even dug up the earth round the cottage, but they didn't find anything. My poor uncle's body was claimed by a distant relative; he died in the same patched jacket he had worn for years.

Grandmother began to weep. "Poor thing, I was wrong about him. We thought he was going to the bad and was in with a gang of murderers and robbers. All they did was attack the rich and help the poor." Grandmother wiped her eyes. "They say Hsiao-feng was in the same party, and had helped by delivering messages and standing guard for them. The officials are after her now, they say. Someone saw an old man come to their cottage the day before troops came to burn down the house. He took Hsiao-feng away. No one knows where."

I could think of nothing to say. I understood more about the orchard now. I ran out of the room. Though grandmother called after me, I ran until I reached the orchard.

A few charred broken walls were all that remained of the cottage. Several pear trees nearby had been scorched by the fire. I walked among the ashes. In one corner I noticed a little iron box that Hsiao-feng used to keep her odds and ends in. Opening it, I found that it was still full of scraps of fabric and tangled bits of thread. Underneath these were little mementoes of her childhood, many of which were my presents to her. I fingered the bright marble which I had given her on Yuku Mountain, the postcard I gave her while we sat playing on the *kang*, the small penknife we used for cutting the pear twigs in spring. . . . Tears streamed down my face. With the box in my hands, I walked slowly home. Where was Hsiao-feng? Was she still alive or was she in another world with her father?

A few years later the War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression began. Not long after, a detachment of the Communist Eighth Route Army came to our village. Grown up by then, I joined in the work. It was only then I realized that the incident which I remembered so well was a peasant uprising led by the Communist Party. Hsiao-feng and her father were underground Communists.

In the winter of 1942 the Japanese invaders began a cruel mopping-up campaign in eastern Shantung, where we lived. Together with the other peasants, we ran here and there for two nights and days trying to escape the

enemy's drag-net. At dawn on the third morning we got away, but in the confusion I was separated from my comrades. All by myself, I ran on through a gorge. The sun came out, making a dazzling glow on the snow. A northwesterly wind roared through the pine groves all around me. Suddenly I heard the sound of hooves behind me. When I looked back, I was relieved to find not an enemy soldier but one of our own fighters on horseback. In that fleeting instant as the horse raced past, I saw that the rider was a woman. She looked extremely familiar, the very image of Hsiao-feng. I wanted to call her name but the horse and rider were already a distance away. I stood woodenly, watching as the roan horse galloped down the hill against the wind and finally disappeared in the distant woods.

Translated by Tang Sheng
Illustration by Lin Wan-tsui

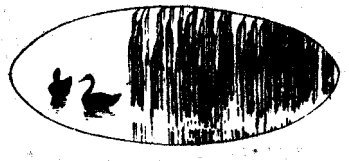
Tibetan Lyrics

Close Though We Are

To seek to know her heart,
Close though we are,
Is tracing with one finger on the ground
To calculate the distance of a star.

Even the Swan with Golden Plumes

Even the swan with golden plumes,
Bright monarch of the sky,
Bewitched by the enchanting sea
Is plunging down to die.



The Moon Reflected in a Lake

The moon reflected in a lake,
She floats on emerald waves;
I cannot clasp her in my hands.
But gaze upon her face.

Would She Might Shrink and Grow So Small

I cannot take my love with me,
But leave the lass behind? Ah, no!
Would she might shrink and grow so small
That in my pocket she could go!

Beautiful Lily of Bula

Beautiful lily of Bula,
On silver summits, in clear mountain air,
Though buffeted by wind and snow,
Still you are bright and fair.

Lovely young maid in the valley,
Why blooms the lily radiant white above?
Alike the lily and your heart
Await spring's call to love.

Translated by Yang Hsien-yi and Gladys Yang
Illustrations by Huang Chung-chun

HOU CHIN-CHING

Orchard Commune

Orchard Commune lies north of the inner section of the Great Wall, on an ancient battlefield where frontier garrisons once resisted incursions from nomadic tribes. This region has old historical associations. Near by, so the local people say, is a place known as Black Whirlwind Valley, no doubt the stronghold of some peasant revolt in days long gone by. Here is the far-famed Sangkan River too, with the sites of a dozen ancient garrisons along its banks, still known as First Fort, Second Fort and so on. Only Eighth Fort has been washed away by the river.

In this beautiful and fertile tract of land, Orchard Commune, backed by the Southern Hills, overlooks the Sangkan River. About ten miles in length from east to west and three or four miles across, it runs like a corridor beside the river. Paddy grows on its marshes, and long stretches of soft green flax carpet its banks. We saw winter wheat sown in autumn, as well as maize, sorghum and millet.

In this part of the country they eat fried bread made from millet, a satisfying delicacy always served at celebrations or to guests. The members of this commune describe

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their orchards scattered over the valleys and hillsides as "more precious than gold," for excellent fruit grows here in great abundance. The local water-melons are justly famous. These melons are not large, but they can be opened when ripe with a single slap. Their seeds are small, their rind thin, and eaten during the midday siesta under a tree they are intoxicatingly sweet. The Dragon grapes of these parts are notable too, with such a high sugar content that one grape can be sliced into a dozen pieces without losing a single drop of juice. Last year this commune had the best crop of fruit within living memory. At the time I left, the apples had been picked and the ripening yellow pears were turning white, weighing the branches down so heavily that they had to be propped up. The scent of the orchards carried for miles around; and though the early autumn days were warm, this fragrance from the fruit was cool and fresh.

With the Sangkan River so near, the commune has no lack of water. A large canal at the foot of the Southern Hills leads the river water to irrigate all the land. The peasants do not rely entirely on this, however, but have also dug wells, tapping underground springs for use in time of serious drought when the river may run dry. With the canals and these springs they are doubly safe. You can see rows of wells near some of the villages where the water spurts out of the ground with such force that if you

throw in a stone weighing two or three pounds, the water hurls it straight back. Sixth Fort has harnessed three of these springs to provide electric power. As you approach from a distance, the spurting water sways like rolls of white silk. As you draw nearer, its icy drops splash your cheeks. In summer weary passers-by refresh themselves here.

In spring when the thaw sets in, there is a danger that the eddying ice in the river may damage the dykes. To control the Sangkan River, a large reservoir will have to be constructed upstream in addition to the Kuanting Reservoir already in use further down. The young people of Orchard Commune, however, are not to be deterred by water. When the fruit is picked, the young men frequently wade with two loaded baskets through a current up to their armpits. The Sangkan River is a source of endless interest. In spring, when the ice starts melting, wild-geese come over. At night they alight on the floating ice to catch fish, and the bitter wind often freezes their feet to the ice, so that early risers who walk along the bank can be sure of bagging a few frozen birds. In summer there is good fishing here for all varieties of fish, including the red-tailed carp. In early summer the carp spawn upstream; but after a heavy rain when the river is muddy some try to escape into canals and ditches, with the result that a sudden fall in the river leaves them marooned in the shallows. I have seen a boy of ten straddle a large carp, knocking it out with his fist and carrying it home over his shoulder. I have also

seen shoals of fish in the shallow water, their backs visible above the surface, so that you could catch a number with your bare hands. To entertain visitors, the local functionaries often take them fishing at midday, and within half an hour they invariably catch over a dozen pounds of fish. All the villages by the river have their fish ponds. In sunny weather, the surface is thick with fish, some of the bigger carp tipping the scales at six or seven pounds.

There is no shortage of minerals in this part of the country. Tiger Head Mountain near by produces coal and in other hills there is iron. When the whole people of China began to smelt steel, these slumbering hills were awakened by the army of village lads and lasses who charged their heights with pickaxes. As one peasant poet wrote: "The mountains are sweating under our blows."

A land so beautiful and rich, teeming with flowers and fruit, with fish and paddy, should have its share of artists and poets too. Very little poetry was written here in the past; but now the streets of all the villages in Orchard Commune displays poems and paintings. If you ask who the

poets and artists are, the housewives will laugh — for they themselves are the authors. They use this medium to pass on good advice, or to express their own feelings, reactions and resolves. Poetry wells up in them spontaneously, and most often they write poems on the spur of the moment.

I have written these lines since leaving Orchard Commune. Though my stay there was a short one, I shall always remember this commune as a veritable land of flowers and fruit, fish and paddy, artists and poets.

Illustrations by Hsia Tung-kuang

Collecting Fertilizer by Chien Sung-yen→

Chien Sung-yen, born in 1898, is one of the master landscape painters at the Kiangsu Studio of Traditional Painting. He comes from Wusih, Kiangsu Province.

Keep the Red Flag Flying *(cont'd)*

THE STORY SO FAR

At the beginning of the twentieth century, Soching Village in Hopei is controlled by FENG LAN-CHIH, landlord, usurer and village head. Two peasants, CHU KUNG and YEN HSIANG, are worsted when they oppose him. Chu dies of rage, and his son CHU CHUNG runs away.

Twenty-five years later, when warlords are fighting for north China, Chu Chung returns to Soching with two boys, TA-KUEI and ERH-KUEI. By this time Yen Hsiang's son, YEN CHIH-HO, has two sons of his own, YUN-TAO and CHIANG-TAO. Furious at Chu's return, Feng has Ta-kuei conscripted into a warlord's army.

Yun-tao meets CHIA, a Communist, and joins the Party. He falls in love with CHUN-LAN, a neighbour's daughter; and when he leaves to join the revolutionary army Chun-lan promises to wait for him. His brother Chiang-tao joins the Communist Youth League and goes to study in Paoting where he meets YEN PING, the daughter of a distant relative.

In 1927, Chiang Kai-shek betrays the revolution and attacks the Communist Party. Yun-tao is arrested and imprisoned. Yen sells his best fields to enable Chiang-tao and Chu Chung to visit Yun-tao. They find him sentenced to life imprisonment.

Despite the White Terror, the revolutionaries work on. Chiang-tao goes back to Soching to fight a tax on the pigs the villagers kill for the New Year festival. He is helped by Chu Chung and Ta-kuei, who has deserted from the army. Soon the neighbouring villages are solidly behind them. Ta-kuei kills the peasants' pigs for them free of charge, to the fury of Feng Lan-chih who has contracted for this tax. Meanwhile a match is proposed between Ta-kuei and Chun-lan, because Yun-tao may never be released; but when Chun-lan knows this she tries to take her own life. Ta-kuei, however, wins her gratitude by helping her family.

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Ta-kuei started home down the lane, but by the time he reached the top the dark figure had disappeared. It was late, and the wind was howling through the willow copse. As he reached his own gate, a man came out — Chu Hsing.

"What are you doing here so late?" asked Ta-kuei.

"I couldn't sleep," said Chu Hsing. "I was wondering what action they'll take after this rumpus we've made. We don't want a charge lodged against us suddenly. I came to talk it over with your father."

"Don't worry. They've nothing against us."

"Ha, they're sharp! They'll be able to think up something."

"So you think old Feng can do anything he likes?"

Chu Hsing's teeth flashed. "It's as well to be prepared."

"All right. Go back and sleep now. It's late."

As Chu Hsing walked to his own wicket gate, he had the impression that there was someone behind him. He pushed open the gate and went in, then turned back to lock it, positive now that he was being followed. He peered to left and to right but could see no one. Standing at the door to his room, he threw back his head reflectively. For years he had the uneasy sense that someone was dogging his steps, and therefore he did not think too much of it. But as he turned to go in, he saw there was indeed someone close beside him.

Chu Hsing whirled round and grabbed at the man, but missed him. With clenched fists and glaring eyes, he strode fiercely

towards him. The intruder retreated step by step till his head hit the wall of the privy with a thud. Then Chu Hsing leaped over and collared him. The other gave a husky laugh. It was Li Teh-tsai.

Chu Hsing's heart was still thudding. "What do you think you're doing?" he demanded.

"I've been looking for you everywhere," said Li. "When I couldn't find you, I guessed you'd be with Chu Chung, so I waited for you at his gate." Bending forward, he kept wheezing asthmatically. An attack of rheumatic fever in his childhood had left him with a bent back, and every winter he was short of breath.

"What do you want with me in the middle of the night?" asked Chu Hsing.

"What a question! You've eaten another man's grain and spent another man's money. It's all on record. You may have forgotten, but not he."

Chu Hsing sensed trouble in the offing. "It's cold out here," he said. "Let's talk inside."

They went into the room where his wife and children were sleeping. Chu Hsing lit his pipe. "When did I eat another man's grain or spend another man's money? Are you here to dun me?"

"Of course I am. You've forgotten, but not he."

Chu Hsing, looking up, cudgelled his brains for a while, but could remember nothing of the kind. He shook his head. "I've forgotten."

Li Teh-tsai gave an ugly laugh and took a step towards him. With his pipe he pointed at Ching and Chiao-ku. "What are these?" he asked.

"My children!"

"Where did they come from?"

"Their mother bore them!"

Li pointed at Chu Hsing's wife, still fast asleep. "Where did she come from?"

"I paid money and married her."

Li's grating laugh sounded again. "Exactly! Where did you get the money to marry?"

That jogged Chu Hsing's memory. Over a dozen years ago, at the time of his marriage he had borrowed a sack of wheat and five dollars from Feng Lan-chih.

"So that's it! All these years I've done odd jobs for him without asking for a cent. When I married, I had a sack of wheat and five dollars from Mr. Feng. He said: 'You're short, take it. It's nothing. You don't have to return this.'"

"Heaven above!" Li grinned derisively. "Since when has he been so generous?"

That sounded only too true.

"Well, what's to be done?" asked Chu. "That's what I thought. Otherwise, I'd have returned him his five dollars and sack of wheat long ago."

"Pay up!" said Li. "He wants it right away. He sent me out in the middle of the night to find you."

"I haven't got it now."

"What will you do, then?"

"How do I know what to do?" Chu muttered sullenly.

"That's no way to talk! You're told to pay up and you ask me what to do!" Li grumbled: "I'm out of luck to be dragged into this. So much the worse for me! If you can't pay him back, come and tell the old man yourself. Otherwise the middleman will be blamed."

"All right," said Chu Hsing. "But I haven't got it to pay. We haven't enough to eat, let alone to repay a debt."

"Shall we go?"

"Come on!"

They were on the point of leaving when Mrs. Chu thrust her tousled head out of the quilt. "Where are you going?" she asked.

"To see Feng Lan-chih."

"Don't go! You don't owe him anything. That's all ancient history. He's digging up old accounts. If he wants a life, he can have it; but we've no money to give him!"

Li bent down and grinned. "You dare say that, my good woman?"

She put on her padded jacket and sat up.

"Never mind!" said her husband. "Why should you get up in the middle of the night?"

"Wait a bit," she cried. "Old Feng has a dungeon with instruments of torture in it. He may rack you or beat you."

"Don't you believe it," said Li. "That's for people from other villages. Why should he be so harsh to his own neighbours? I'll answer for your husband's safety."

"Let me tell you this, you poor fish," said Mrs. Chu. "If you touch one hair of his head, your children will suffer for it!"

"Rubbish!" Li guffawed. "He can settle the whole thing in a talk with Mr. Feng."

The two men went out. The north wind was bitterly cold, the streets were dark, and they walked as fast as they could to West Soching. When they reached the gate of the Feng mansion, they found the old porch dark and forbidding. Li called out, and they were admitted. When Chu Hsing entered that huge, sinister compound, his hair nearly stood on end. There was not a glimmer of light in the three courtyards, except in Feng Lan-chih's room.

They went up to the window and Chu Hsing called: "Is Uncle Lan-chih in?"

Feng coughed and asked: "Who's there? Oh, so it's you. . . ."

"I've brought Chu Hsing," said Li Teh-tsai.

"Bring him in," ordered Feng.

Li and Chu mounted the high steps and went into the gloomy room. Since Feng did not offer them seats, they had to stand.

Feng, in spectacles, was going through his accounts. After a long study of one ledger, he asked: "Chu Hsing, have you brought the money?"

Chu regretted having owned up to this loan. "No," he said. "I don't remember owing you any money."

"I don't care whether you remember or not. It's down in my account book."

"Yes, it's down there in black and white," confirmed Li. "There's nothing more to be said."

"If it's that sack of wheat and those five dollars, that happened over a dozen years ago. . . ."

Feng waved his hand. "Maybe. But even if it happened twenty years ago, sesame and husks may rot away — not this score!"

Chu felt desperate. "You made it quite clear at the time that you didn't expect them back. That's why I haven't worried about it all this time. Besides, all these years I've done odd jobs for you without asking for any payment."

"What payment?" asked Feng. "Have you kept an account?"

"No, I haven't."

Li walked over and slapped his thigh. "There you are! If you've no account, what's the use of talking rubbish?"

"Yes," said Feng. "All these years I never meant to ask for it back. But now that you've had a change of heart, I want my money back."

When Chu Hsing heard this, he flushed crimson to the roots of his hair. He stammered: "Wh-what ch-change of heart have I had?"

"You joined Chu Ming and Wu Pa against me in that lawsuit. This year you've opposed my pig tax. Why should I give you one dollar or one grain of wheat, let alone five dollars and a sack of wheat?"

Chu Hsing was left speechless. He was thinking: "I slipped up there. He owes me money but I kept no account. I owe him money and he has an account. What am I to do?" He said: "The money you make us poor devils pay you for the military levy comes to much more than five dollars or a sack of wheat."

Feng pounded the table. "Don't talk to me like that! Pay what you owe me!"

"All my family have been honest men," said Chu. "Work out how much it is, and I shall pay you."

Feng took up his abacus. "I won't be too strict," he said. "I'll let you off lightly." He calculated: "Five dollars. In three years the interest equals the capital. Without reckoning compound interest, in a dozen years it comes to a hundred dollars. As for the sack of wheat, how much should that be?"

Chu Hsing stammered frantically: "You, you c-can't r-reckon like that!"

Feng slapped his pen on the table and glared at him. "Like what? You've taken my money — is that the end of it?"

The stove in the room made it hot and stuffy in there. Chu Hsing was sweating hard. Great beads of perspiration coursed down his face. When he thought how impossible it was for him to raise this sum, he started trembling violently. "Let me have a little time and I'll pay," he said. "If you want it on the spot, I haven't got it."

"You've got to have it!" bellowed Feng.

"A murderer must pay with his life, a debtor must pay his debt!" cried Li. "This is written in the classics. Why don't you pay?"

Chu's lips quivered as he answered: "If you took all I possess, it wouldn't be enough."

Li frowned at him sternly. "You've got to have enough!"

"Are you still against the pig tax?" demanded Feng.

"That's quite a different matter," protested Chu. "Cotton and thread are bought in different shops."

"That's what you say," retorted Feng. "But I say it's the same. Wu Pa has still an old, unsettled account with me too."

Producing a ring of keys, he opened a large cupboard and from it took several ledgers. Each was six inches thick, covered in coarse blue cloth and marked with a red chop. He leafed through a few of these books. "The year that the Huto River burst its banks and changed its course, their house which had been south of the river was flooded. These two years he borrowed two measures of buckwheat seeds from me. Then his land came out on the dyke, and he said he must build a house and had nothing to eat. He borrowed fifteen strings of cash from me. Each year I asked for it, but he couldn't pay. Yet he had the nerve to go to law with me, and now he's resisting my pig tax."

Chu Hsing pursed his thick lips and mumbled: "If he wants to resist, he will!"

Li glared at him again and growled: "It's all on account of you trouble-makers! If people buy the right to the tax, what business is that of yours? Be off now! It's late, we'll talk about this tomorrow."

"Go home to your *kang* and consult your conscience," said Feng.

Li and Chu withdrew from the dark, overheated room. It was bitterly cold outside. Chu felt frozen to the marrow of his bones.

At the gatehouse, Li said: "Go on. I have other business." He went back to Feng's room where the landlord was still sitting.

"I came across a strange thing," said Li.

"What was that?" asked Feng.

"Ta-kuei has been seeing Chun-lan."

Feng Lan-chih looked up and thought for some time. "That's a stubborn bitch," he said slowly. "A hundred *mou* of land and a cart, yet she wouldn't agree."

"Be patient," urged Li. "We'll wear her down in time."

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On the *kang,* Feng Lan-chih twisted and turned but could not sleep. He was plagued by the thought of Chu Chung, Chu Ming and the other peasants who were contesting the pig tax.

By the beginning of the twelfth month, talk of opposing the pig tax was going round the woods and fields, and soon it reached Feng Lan-chih. At first he did not believe his ears. Not once in his life, in this remote corner of the world, had he found any force strong enough to stop him from collecting what taxes he pleased.

The next morning, Feng lit the lamp in his dark room and sat by the stove to keep warm. He called towards the window: "Kuei-tang! Kuei-tang!"

Presently Feng Kuei-tang entered, a book in his hand, from his room in the west wing.

He smiled. "What is it, father?"

Feng Lan-chih meant to sound him out about this pig tax, but approached the subject indirectly.

"How much manure has been carted to the fields beyond the river?" he asked.

Taken aback, his son looked up and rolled his eyes before answering: "I... I can't say for certain. It was Third Brother who went out with the carters."

He ran to find Feng Huan-tang. In the second courtyard he met the head carter, Feng Ta-yu. "How much manure did you cart to the fields beyond the river?" he asked.

Feng Ta-yu did not know either. "It was the under-groom who went," he said.

Feng Ta-yu found the under-groom, who told him they had taken eighty-two cart-loads. He reported this to Feng Kuei-tang, who returned to the inner courtyard where his father was waiting quietly at the gate.

When he saw his son, the landlord's old face grew stern. "Don't underestimate farming. It isn't easy," he said. "What are you going to plant in those fields next year?" While speaking he was walking back to his room.

Kuei-tang followed him in, stammering: "I ... we can decide that in the spring."

Feng Lan-chih shook his head. "That won't do. You should have made up your mind this autumn where to plant your *kaoliang,* millet and cotton.... Then you would have known

which field to manure first. As soon as spring comes you'll want to plough, and you must roll and harrow in the right order. Bah!..." He shook his head again several times. He might as well be talking to a wooden post: all he said went in at one ear and out of the other. "It's no good," he thought. "Kuei-tang will never make a farmer. I shall have to give Huan-tang more responsibility."

After several pipes, the old man continued: "Bah! As I see it, we'd better give up business and stick to farming. When you insisted on my going in for business, we bought that shop and started a cotton mill. We make a pretty profit, I admit, but that money isn't to be depended on. It's like willow down, blown away on a breath of wind." He regretted having handed over his keys to his son.

Kuei-tang was quite unconvinced. "What do you mean?" he asked sullenly. "How can money be blown away so easily?"

"On your advice, I contracted for the payment of the pig tax. I've reckoned that this year our rents, with the monthly and yearly interest, will bring us in 2,200 dollars. We drew out another 1,800 from the capital of the shop and cotton mill, making 4,000 altogether. If we can't get this money back, that will be too bad. Those glittering silver dollars will have flown off like willow down."

"Why don't you work it out?" protested Kuei-tang. "If you collect just sixty per cent — or even a half will do — you will make eight to ten thousand. You can sit at home while the money comes rolling in."

Ever since the eighth of the twelfth month, the opponents of the pig tax had gone from this village to that, from one mud cottage to another. In their ragged gowns and tattered padded jackets, these men raised the matting over each door and went from one family to the next, explaining how the pig tax should be fought. Yet apparently Kuei-tang had still no inkling of the matter. His father shook his head once more.

"To you everything seems so easy!"

"Have you seen this for yourself?" Kuei-tang wrinkled his nose. "Or did someone whisper it into your ear?"

"This is more reliable than my own eyes. I know quite well what must have happened. Don't forget that we're dealing with Chu Chung, Chu Ming, Yen Chih-ho and the rest of them. Yen Yun-tao is in gaol, but there's his brother Chiang-tao. They've started some sort of red Peasants' Association, and mean to go

to the county government with a petition asking for the repeal of the pig tax."

Bored by such talk, Kuei-tang muttered sulkily: "All this is beyond me. You'd better get Third Brother to take charge."

"There's no call to lose your temper," retorted his father. "You're all right as a student or a lawyer, but that doesn't make you a good head of a household. Because you lie reading in your room all day, you knew nothing about this opposition to the pig tax."

"I can't take a pack of peasants seriously."

Feng Lan-chih's moustache bristled with rage. "What's that you say? Ha! A new-born calf is not afraid of a tiger."

"Don't let them frighten you, father! They're not tigers. Which of them can you call a tiger?"

"Which of them is a tiger? Chu Chung, Chu Ming, Yen Chih-ho and Chu Ta-kuei are worse than tigers to my mind! But you won't see it. They charged me in three different courts of law, and now they're fighting our pig tax."

"Ignorant yokels — they can't do anything!" Kuei-tang turned on his heel and marched out. The talk between father and son was broken off.

Feng Lan-chih was as frantic as an ant on a hot pan. His bilious eyes bulged. His forbears had amassed so much wealth, built up so much power, in order that their descendants might live well. In the past no one had dared stand in his way when he went from the village to the town, from his *kang* to the *yamen.* His heart was set on money, land, a life of luxury and wealth for his sons and his sons' sons. In his view, these were there for the taking provided you made your calculations carefully. But this year, without any warning strange talk had started, and the peasants were trying to thwart him. He realized that he must be on his guard.

A few days earlier, upon first hearing of this resistance to the pig tax, he had sent his assistants to the county government and the various district police stations with New Year gifts and requests for help. In his estimation, the peasants might shout and create a disturbance but could do nothing more. His men returned, however, to report: "There are trouble-makers in every district saying: Down with the pig tax and down with Feng Lan-chih!" That thoroughly alarmed the old landlord. Not trusting Kuei-tang to handle this business properly, he went by

carriage to different villages day after day, advising his associates what to do if they wanted to collect this tax.

A few days later, the opponents of the tax in Greater and Lesser Liu Villages and in Greater and Lesser Yen Villages went into action. Hoping to forestall them, Feng gave orders for cauldrons to be set up at once and the tax collected. The next thing he knew, the peasants had fixed up their cauldrons first and were refusing to pay.

In Soching, the cauldron for slaughtering pigs was set up at Ta-kuei's gate. This was a thorn in Feng's side. Small as it was, it shook the foundations of his house. Only once before in the last hundred years had such a thing happened to the Feng family — that was when Chu Ming took him to court. According to Li Teh-tsai, the men fighting the tax were like a ball of fire. And in the high winter wind the flames were spreading far and wide.

After talking to his son, Feng Lan-chih put on a coarse woollen overcoat. His sallow face was heavily lined, his long grey beard was bedraggled. With his big pipe in his hand he walked to Chun Yuan Shop and sat down in the counting-house. With his feet on the table, his yellow eyes fixed on the ceiling, he smoked pipe after pipe.

Liu Erh-mao burst in like a whirlwind. "This is the end!" he bawled. "Is there no law in this country?"

Feng stared at him and stood up. "What's the matter? Have no pigs been brought to you yet?"

"All the pigs have been taken to Chu Ta-kuei. The Chus are shouting: 'We don't want the bristle or hair, we don't want the tail or guts! We don't want one dollar seventy cents either!...'"

Feng broke in, rapping his pipe sharply on the table.

"That's against the law!" His loud bellow made all the brass vessels in the room reverberate.

Liu Erh-mao sank heavily into a chair and sighed. "I'm going to be out of pocket over this."

"What's that you're saying?" demanded Feng.

"I'm finished. I've lost money for certain."

Any talk of losing money cut Feng to the quick. In recent years it had become his way to permit success only, not failure. A man was allowed to make big money, but not to lose even the smallest sum. The amount Liu would lose was trifling, a mere ten dollars or so. The landlord's own loss would be

4,000 dollars. With a howl he fell forward, pounding the table with his fist.

"Go out and curse the lot of them! Curse all their kith and kin! If anyone answers back, smash the scoundrel's legs!"

But Liu was not anxious to stir up a hornets' nest. He was a peasant himself by origin, who was doing all right with his twenty *mou* of land. The year before, he had taken up the job of village bailiff. This year he had bought the rights to the Soching pig tax. But this was only a side line for him and such trouble was more than he had bargained for.

As they were talking Feng Kuei-tang came in, his small, well-greased moustache at a jaunty angle, his black eyes twinkling. He found his father nearly speechless with rage. "Don't be angry!" He clapped his hands twice. "Why swear at them? Let's not be petty but show ourselves generous, and put up with a small loss to avoid a big one. If the worst happens, we can lodge a charge against them at the *yamen*, and fight it out in the law-courts again. This is like dipping fried pork into salt and pepper: we shall clean them up long before our pork is finished." There was a confident smile on his plump, shining face.

"That will come later," said Feng. "If I can't work off my feelings today, I shan't be able to eat!" He insisted that Liu should go out and swear at the peasants. "We can't let Chu Chung and Chu Ming get away with this!"

With old Feng to back him up, Liu decided to brazen it out. Picking up his cleaver and stepping out of the door, he stamped up and down the street, swearing.

"Who's trying to put upon Liu Erh-mao? Who dares refuse to pay my pig tax? Let anybody with any guts step forward!"

He strode up and down at the cross-roads, letting loose a flood of foul language, till a crowd had gathered to listen. Feng, standing in the doorway of the shop, slapped his leg and shouted: "Go to East Soching!"

Liu furtively put down his cleaver and, his face crimson and puffed with rage, set off, storming, to East Soching. "So you want to revolt, you bastards! I'll go to the *yamen* and sue the lot of you!" Ranting and fuming, he stamped across the marsh and climbed the bank to Ta-kuei's door. From his mouth poured spittle and curses.

Ta-kuei stared at him in fury. The next moment he pulled off his jacket and stripped to the waist. Banging his chopper

on the table, he waved one hand and shouted a challenge to Liu: "Come on! Take this knife and strike here!" He pointed to his heart.

Liu saw that Ta-kuei meant to call his bluff. Not daring to strike him with the chopper, he stood there irresolutely.

"If you won't," shouted Ta-kuei, "then bare your chest. I'll carve you up!"

As he banged the chopper on the table and started towards Liu, the onlookers turned pale. Chun-lan's heart was pounding. Chiang-tao stepped forward to drag Ta-kuei away.

"Leave me alone!" cried Ta-kuei. "Let me carve up that dog first!" With a jerk of his head he charged.

Chiang-tao rushed to catch hold of him. When he had made Ta-kuei go into the house, he said quietly: "Slanderers have blood on their lips; meat-eaters have greasy mouths. We won't take him on single-handed. We'll arouse the masses." By dint of much persuasion, he calmed Ta-kuei. Ta-kuei had roughed it as a boy during his travels with his father, and a few years in the army had made him tougher than ever. He had a strong will of his own, but his temper was a little uncertain. He flared up at the slightest provocation.

Chu Ming bellowed with laughter to see the rage Ta-kuei was in. "Good lad!" he cried. "Killing pigs has made you see red. But don't use that chopper on men!"

This only added fuel to the fire. Ta-kuei smote his chest and declared: "I don't care if it's Feng Lan-chih himself, let alone Liu Erh-mao — I'll knock the dog's teeth out!"

"It's not worth it!" Wu Pa chuckled. "You'd better knock out someone else's teeth. Old Feng will be losing his teeth soon anyway."

"All right," said Ta-kuei. "I'll spare him then. But if Feng Kuei-tang turns up, I won't let the bastard off so easily!"

When Mrs. Chu heard these threats, she called with a frown: "Now then! Keep a watch on your tongue! If you stay at home and close the door, the wind may not blow it off."

That provoked Ta-kuei, who had just put on his jacket, into stripping it off once more. Chiang-tao, Chu Hsing and Wu Pa crowded round to restrain him.

By this time the road was full of people, eager to know the outcome of the resistance to the tax. Chu Chuan-fu's pig was half in the cauldron, half out of it. Half of it was black, half white. The owner was on tenterhooks for fear the hot

water should mat the hairs together and make it impossible to scrape them off. Meanwhile Liu was still standing by the cauldron, cursing.

"You're the one in the wrong, Liu Erh-mao!" growled Chu Chuan-fu. "Ta-kuei's gone in, but you're still blocking their gate and swearing."

Liu glared, showing the whites of his eyes. "I'm blocking their gate, am I? I'll knock their gate down!"

Chu Chuan-fu's moustache bristled. "You're going too far!"

Chu's mother hobbled over and scolded: "A grown man like you, how can you speak like that? Aren't you ashamed to let the children hear such talk?"

Liu stamped his foot. "I shall talk just as I please!"

At this moment Mrs. Chu came out, to find Liu Erh-mao blocking their gate and swearing at all and sundry. She cried: "Why should he bring his foul mouth to East Soching? Come on! Pull his dirty tongue out!"

Erh-kuei and Ching ran up to scratch his mouth.

Liu answered with a horrible oath.

At that, the whole street rushed at him. "The gaol-bird! Beat him!" they cried.

The crowd surged forward with an angry roar. Liu ran, and they gave chase. He fled past the marsh and up the west bank. When he turned there and saw that the others had fallen behind, he started swearing again.

Mrs. Chu cried: "After him!"

She flew west and the others followed. As it was the end of the year and most of the men were at market or busy killing pigs, this crowd consisted mainly of women and children. They chased Liu to the door of the Chun Yuan Shop. Hanging his head, he sneaked into the counting-house and hid himself there.

"Liu Erh-mao!" shrieked Mrs. Chu. "You needn't think wearing a tiger's tail will frighten us! Come on out! We'll talk to you here in the street."

Chun-lan was in a passion too. She pressed forward, shouting: "You local despots are so used to lording it over us that you even want to tax our New Year pigs! You're stealing our sweat and blood! If you spend that money, your old people will lose their teeth, your young men will lose their wits and not be able to study, your girls will all have bastards!"

Liu listened in the counting-house till he could stand it no longer. He opened the door and went out, crimson with fury.

"Mother's!" he shouted. "There's still government and law! How dare you put your head in a tiger's mouth?"

"At him!" screamed Mrs. Chu. "Beat him up!"

Chu Chuan-fu's mother cried: "At him, boys! Grab him!"

"Don't be afraid!" shouted Ching's mother. "Beat the bastard!"

They hurled themselves on him together. Chun-lan grabbed one of his ears, Ching's mother his gown, Hsiao-chun his hair, Ching an elbow, and Erh-kuei his legs. Pushing and shoving, they lifted him off the ground.

At first Liu tried to pass it off as a joke. . He braced himself and kept still. But the women and girls pinched and slapped him till his nose was bleeding. In desperation, unable to escape from their clutches, he stooped and let down his trousers.

"Well, girls?" he cried. "How do you like that? Who would like that to play with?"

Chun-lan hastily hid her eyes. All the girls and young women covered their faces and fled. In no time at all they had scattered.

Feng Kuei-tang in the counting-house heard the hubbub on the street and the foul language. Calmly, he walked out and waved his hand.

"Neighbours!" he cried with a smile. "Is this all because of that little bit of money? Is it? Well, we don't want it. We'll give it to you to have a happy New Year. What do you say to that?"

The peasants stared. "Mother's!" they exclaimed. "What does this mean?"

Ta-kuei's outburst, the crowd's fury and Feng Kuei-tang's promise not to insist on the tax made those who opposed it straighten up and hold their heads high. But they knew from bitter experience that a tussle with Feng Lan-chih was no laughing matter. Feng Kuei-tang might speak them fair, but his smile hid daggers. That evening they gathered in Chu Chung's house and talked till it was late. Their hearts beat fast as they smoked and discussed how to be prepared for all eventualities.

The conversation turned at one point to Feng Lan-chih's method of dunning his debtors. Chu Hsing told them how the landlord had threatened him.

"Pay no attention!" cried Wu Pa. "That crafty old wolf's tail turned white long ago. He's been keeping this up his sleeve, biding his time."

"He can't catch us so easily," said Chu Chung.

Chu Hsing remarked slowly: "He always says that a rabbit never eats the grass by its burrow. But when the frost comes and all other grass is gone, the rabbit comes back to it all the same!"

Chu Chung smiled. "He won't eat you. We'll see to that!"

32

It was a winter morning with fog so thick that you could not see a man five paces away. The crows on the tall poplars were silent, white icicles hung from the trees. Chiang-tao was walking along the snow-clad dyke on his way to town, to discuss with Mr. Chia how best to carry forward the movement. He had barely reached the small bridge by the ferry when a carriage rolled up at a spanking pace, and he saw that its occupant was Feng Kuei-tang. Chiang-tao turned away his face as the carriage passed, churning up the snow. After it came two men. The foremost, in an old sheepskin jacket and woollen cap, was Chia Hsiang-nung. He was followed by a youngster with a pack on his back — Chang Chia-ching — who waited on the bridge till he was across. Chiang-tao waved to them and called:

"I was on my way to see you, and here you are!"

"Ha, we had no time to come before," said Chia. "I only got back yesterday from south of the river, and I set out this morning to visit the north side. Once a movement is under way it's like the sea — waves dashing in all directions!"

Chiang-tao took them both by the hand, and together the three of them walked back along the dyke.

As they went, Chiang-tao described how the work here had progressed. Chia listened with his hands behind his back, his eyes thoughtful.

"Good! Good!" he said at length, his face creased in a smile. "You've created a set of working methods." After some words

of praise he asked: "How did you keep control of the situation?"

"Didn't you tell me that to settle a specific problem I must grasp the main contradiction?"

Chia nodded several times. "That's right. You must start from the class viewpoint. You can only get a movement going well if you've formed a group of activists among the masses. That's what you did, working with peasants, winning over one village after another. Step by step, you've fought steadily forward, extending your scope. That's excellent!" Feeling heated, he took off his cap. His head steamed though his eyebrows and beard were still frosted over.

Chiang-tao stared and laughed suddenly. "If you hadn't told me, I still wouldn't know why things worked out so well!" His hands trembled and he smiled.

Chia said: "Last autumn, when Chia-ching organized that harvest movement south of the river, he bore in mind the need for food and clothes for the winter if the peasants were not to freeze or starve to death. And the thing went with a swing. You organized your network first and then built up a movement. Both methods are useful in starting work in a new district. You organized the masses first; he plunged headlong into the fray and consolidated his organization later." He smiled and looked from Chiang-tao to Chia-ching. "These two different methods illustrate your two different characters." He chuckled until Chia-ching was quite embarrassed.

The sun appeared through the clouds, only to disappear an instant later. The fog thickened. Not a soul was in sight.

The melting snow on the trees dripped down the trunks or fell, flip-flap, like the tears of a blind horse to wet the dyke or their clothes. When they came level with Yen's house they climbed down the dyke and went in. Chiang-tao invited them into his mother's room and asked her to boil some water.

"This was entirely the work of the peasants," said Chiang-tao. "I was just their liaison man."

"I'm glad you're modest," said Chia. "Now you've a footing among the masses, I'm sure you'll become a good political worker." He took off his woollen cap again to wipe the moisture from his face.

Chiang-tao remarked: "But after all this excitement, I still don't understand the purpose of this movement."

Chia raised his eyebrows and smiled. "For the moment, it's to arouse and organize the masses. They must be organized to struggle against the chief contracting merchant and the feudal powers. In the days to come, during that movement, we can choose some of the most active of the peasants and start a Party branch here."

"And our final aim?"

Chia raised an arm and brought his fist down hard. "It's the old story!" He clapped his gleaming head and spoke earnestly. "Our final aim is revolt, the seizure of political power. Isn't that so?" He took off his old sheepskin jacket and put it on the *kang*. Underneath he was wearing a small padded jacket of homespun cloth, his trouser legs were bound round his ankles, his cloth shoes were the type that old men wear. He commented with a chuckle: "When I come down to the country, if I put on this sheepskin jacket I look like a peasant. Back in town, I wear my long gown and I'm a teacher!"

The cold north wind had brought out a rash on his dark face, and from time to time he scratched his cheek. They were discussing Party affairs when Yen Chih-ho raised the door curtain and came in.

"Mr. Chia!" he cried. "It's some years since you were here."

For reasons of secrecy, Chia broke off what he was saying. He stepped forward rubbing his hands. "Uncle! Have you kept well all these years?"

"Pretty well." Yen wiped his pipe and passed it over.

Chia accepted it and started smoking. "You've done a good job here, uncle."

"What do peasants like us know? We're ignorant men following your lead."

"What you want is to get the better of Feng Lan-chih."

"I'd do anything to get the better of Feng. I don't mind how deep in mud I have to wade. But I'm not clear how this will end."

"It will be clear to you if you back us up."

Yen had been listening outside the window, and their references to the Party brought Yun-tao to his mind. Yun-tao had started like this too: a keen reader, fond of telling stories, eager to discuss affairs of state and the policy of the Communist Party. But after Yun-tao ran away to the south and joined the revolution, he was imprisoned by the reactionaries.

With an aching heart, Yen thought: "Revolution seems a risky business. It may cost a man his head." Today Chiang-tao's feet were set on the same path. Since his return from Paoting the lad had changed. He behaved like a grown man now in every way, and was constantly speaking of the interests of the people, the life of the masses. Chiang-tao had a good head on his shoulders.

Yen was a little nettled because Chia had changed the subject when he went in. Why should they have secrets from him? Red with annoyance, he walked to East Soching to find Chu Chung, thinking: "I approve of what this Communist Party does. And I took an active part in fighting the pig tax. I was the one who got things going in Lesser Yen Village. So why. . . ."

When he reached his friend's house, he told him:

"Chia Hsiang-nung is back."

"What does he say?" asked Chu.

"How do I know?" Yen answered coldly. "They're one cosy little family. When you're out of the room, they chat and laugh and discuss things together. The moment you go in, they pull long faces and stop talking." His features worked with indignation.

Chu chuckled. "Chih-ho, you should know better than that. They have their own business. Cough before you go in. And when they want to talk, just leave them alone."

Yen tossed his head. "After all this, they still treat me as an outsider!"

"We're not inside yet, that's why! Later, when we're inside, we can sit talking and laughing with them too."

"How long will we have to wait for that, brother?"

"Until they think we're good enough."

"And how do we show we're good enough?" Yen was still sulky.

"We've got to show them that we have real guts."

The two of them were talking hard when Mrs. Chu came in. Then they held their tongues and exchanged significant glances. She wondered: "What are the old fellows up to now?"

After a heart-to-heart talk with Chu, Yen went home. His courtyard was absolutely still. He went to the door and listened, but no one was talking. When he looked through a slit in the curtain, he saw Chia Hsiang-nung washing his face and head in icy water. Yen shivered at the sight.

"No wonder!" he marvelled. "A man must train in the coldest winter and the hottest summer." He raised the curtain and went in, asking: "Aren't you cold in this weather?"

"No," said Chia. "When my brain is tired, a wash in cold water makes me feel better."

"You don't need to take medicine this way, I suppose."

"Medicine doesn't give such quick results." Having washed his face he wrung out the towel and rubbed his neck and cheeks till they were red.

"No wonder they are men of iron," thought Yen. "It's because they train like this." Presently Chiang-tao and Chia-ching came back, and seeing that they had business Yen slipped outside.

When he had left, Chia said: "The higher-ups want our organization to move from the city to the country and find a safe liaison post. Since my home is too red now, I'd like to find a hide-out in this village. A good many of our people have to travel this way. But we need two absolutely reliable men."

Chiang-tao wanted to suggest that Chia talk it over with his father, but was afraid that might not be fitting. "That's easy," he said. "Let's go and see Uncle Chung."

The three of them went out and took the path skirting the village to Chu's house. They found him in, and Chiang-tao made the introductions. Chia knew that Chu was someone out of the common, and showed great confidence in him. Chu called his wife and asked her to boil some water. He raised his head thoughtfully while Chia explained their requirements to him. Finally he said: "That's all right. We have a safe place here."

He took them to Chu Ming's house. Standing in front of the graveyard with its groves of cedars, he told them: "If our people come this way from the city, they can cross the river, walk along Thousand *Li* Dyke past the village, and reach this graveyard without meeting a soul. If they come from Kaoyang, Anhsin or Paoting, they can rest here before going on south across the river. It's as handy as can be."

Then he took them to Wu Pa's house, which faced south on the dyke. "What do you think of the lie of the land here?" he asked. "Travellers from the north can rest here before pushing on south. Those from the south can cross the river here if they're able to swim."

Chia Hsiang-nung looked south and then north. It was open country, easy to manoeuvre in. He immediately accepted, then lowered his head and looked sidewise deep in thought. He realized that old Chu had considerable experience, and he knew his background and history. He decided to move the Party organization and their liaison post here. His last words were: "This is important work. We must be careful."

Chia stayed in Soching for two days and met Wu Pa, Chu Hsing and Ta-kuei. They invited him to their homes to sit on the warm *kang,* and offered him New Year dainties while they discussed the work. He finally decided to set up a village branch here.

Chia was very satisfied with the relation between the Party and the masses in Soching. He said: "It's no easy matter to create a set of feasible working rules." He sent Chiang-tao to other nearby districts to pass on his experience in Soching. As time was short, he told him to hurry back before the twenty-fifth to head a great demonstration at the big fair held on that day.

Chia put on his old sheepskin jacket and set off for town, leaving Chang Chia-ching to organize a militia from among the most active peasants in the neighbourhood. When Chiang-tao and Chang Chia-ching had seen off their teacher, they went to find Chu Chung.

"Uncle," said Chiang-tao. "On the twenty-fifth the county committee wants me to head the demonstration. Will you guard me? Don't let kites carry off this chick!"

Chu parted his bearded lips and bellowed with laughter. "Don't you worry, my boy! I'll act as your bodyguard. You'll be safe with me."

"The county committee wants to organize a militia to keep order at the meeting. What men do you suggest? This" — he pointed to Chia-ching — "is the militia head."

"There's no lack of men," said Chu. "For eighty years we had a boxing club here."

That evening he looked up Yen Chih-ho, Wu Pa, Ta-kuei and Wu Hsun, and between them they recruited a number of honest, steady young fellows who had learned boxing from the four villages around. From a broken chest Chu produced some iron maces and javelins, as well as some spears and clubs. So they were ready to form a militia.

The next morning Chang Chia-ching and Chiang-tao went to Chu Ming's house and found the future militiamen waiting for them in the cedar grove.

"What do you think of our men?" Chu asked Chia-ching.

"Not bad." Chang nodded. "What fighting can you do?"

Wu Pa laughed heartily. "What fighting? We used to know quite a bit, but now we're rusty. When old Chu Kung was alive, we had boxing club here. After he died and Brother Chung went north, the club broke up."

"I don't know what shape I'm in now," said Chu.

He took off his thick padded jacket, under which he wore just a shirt. Tightening his belt, he stepped forward two paces. With out-thrust chest, legs together and eyes fixed straight ahead, he took up a stance. Then he slapped his feet with both hands and leaped into the air, kicking and hitting out at the same time. But he neither panted nor changed colour.

The others clapped and cheered.

"It's no good," said Chu. "I'm old."

Wu Pa guffawed. "Old but tough!"

"Tough or not, ten years or so ago I could have kept a handful of men at bay."

Wu Pa demonstrated a different kind of boxing while Ta-kuei showed what he could do with the clubs. Then in threes and fours, sword against sword, spear against spear, they started drilling under the cedars.

Chu asked Chang: "What do you think of our militia?"

"Good." Chang nodded. "We're getting somewhere."

Chu looked at Chang, a lad of not yet twenty with nothing but faint down above his lips.

"Tell me, son," he said with a chuckle. "What skill do you have in fighting that you dare be our captain?"

"Just this." Chang pulled aside his jacket to show the black barrel of his gun. He covered it up again, saying: "Within a hundred paces, if I aim at the left eye I won't hit the right. If you throw a copper into the air, I can make a hole in it. How's that?"

Wu Pa laughed. "Chia-ching! I've knocked about with you for some time, but I didn't know you were all that good. Don't boast now!"

Chu said: "Comrade Chang Fei, why not give us an exhibition?"

As he was speaking some pigeons belonging to Feng Kuei-tang flew over. The last one had a whistle attached to it. Chia-ching raised his gun, but Chiang-tao stepped forward and said: "Don't fire at random!"

Yen Chih-ho put out a hand to stop him. "That won't do! Those belong to old Feng."

Chu pulled Yen aside. "Go on, shoot! Those belong to old Feng."

Chang was neat-handed and sharp-sighted. He drew his gun and flicked his wrist. Bang! The pigeon came fluttering down.

Chu chortled with laughter. "Fine! Now I know what you can do! Where did this famous sharp-shooter spring from?" His eyebrows twitched gleefully.

Chu Ming groped his way towards them with his stick and said slowly: "Now then! There may be no houses near by, but you must be careful how you go shooting in broad daylight. This place is supposed to be secret."

"You're really too careless," said Chiang-tao. "You never stop to think of the consequences."

Without any change of expression, Chang put away his gun, laughing. "Never mind," he said. "What's there to be afraid of? If the sky falls, the earth will prop it up."

Wu Pa laughed. "You've no need to be afraid. When you've filled your belly, your whole family has eaten. If you up and leave, your whole family has moved house. But most of us have our mud cottages here. We've wives and children."

Chu Chung thumped his chest. "See! Eighty years of boxing have stood us in good stead. We can go to town now and enjoy the sights."

After seeing Chiang-tao off, Chang Chia-ching assembled his militiamen here every evening for drill. He told them how to keep order at the meeting and how to protect their leaders.

33

Late at night, on the twenty-fourth of the twelfth month, Chiang-tao returned to Soching.

The next morning, Chu Chung harnessed his ox-cart to go to the big fair in town. On the cart was a shabby chest holding the militiamen's swords, spears and other weapons, as

well as some fire-crackers. Ta-kuei, gripping a red-tasseled spear, sat on the chest. The militiamen walked in twos and threes behind.

It was a cloudless day: blue sky above and brown earth underfoot. After breakfast, Chiang-tao went to Greater Yen Village to call for Yen Ping. She slipped out with him, carrying a small bamboo basket filled with pamphlets hidden under a red cloth. They were passing the pool when Chiang-tao said:

"This won't do. You must disguise yourself."

"How shall I do that?" asked Ping.

Chiang-tao looked her over. "You'll look too conspicuous at the New Year fair in that long gown and leather shoes."

Ping picked up the skirt of her gown. Having glanced right and left, without a word she sped home. She changed into padded cotton shoes, a short blue jacket and a homespun shawl. Then she ran out again, breathless.

"There! How about that?"

"That's a little more like a village girl. Not much."

"Why not?" she insisted, gazing at him reproachfully.

"Your face is too white. Your hair is too black, too long, too glossy." He shook his head. "You don't look like a village girl."

Ping punched him in the back indignantly. "What do I look like then?"

"A young lady, a student!" He ran and she gave chase.

She caught him by one ear. "How can you tell a villager?" she demanded.

"The peasants work hard. They're honest, straightforward people. All the year round they're exposed to the wind and sun and eat nothing but husks and vegetables. That makes them dark-skinned and strong. But you?" He looked back at her perspiring face and pouting lips. She was panting from the effort of keeping up.

"I'm quite happy!"

"If you're happy, that's all right. But get a move on, comrade! Try to catch up with the forces of the revolution."

Ping sensed some double meaning here which escaped her.

The two of them, one before and one behind, walked down the highway to town. They fell in with other small groups on their way to the fair. When those who had fought the pig tax caught sight of Chiang-tao, they came over or called

out a greeting: "Are you going to the fair? Buying something for New Year?"

Chiang-tao smiled and nodded. "This year is something special. We should buy in more."

Ping, behind him, chuckled to herself and gave Chiang-tao a nudge. "Pleased with yourself, aren't you?" she whispered.

When they passed through the city gate, they found the fair ground more crowded than in most years. Butchers and vegetable vendors were crying their wares. Pedlars of New Year pictures were singing in high falsetto voices. Chiang-tao and Ping elbowed their way through the crowd, pushing this way and that, till they had squeezed through to the fire-cracker market at the foot of the south wall. Ta-kuei, standing on the cart with his red-tasseled spear, was gesticulating and shouting gruffly. Wu Pa and Erh-kuei were letting off fireworks: squibs spluttered while rockets shot up into the sky. Everywhere was smoke and noise. The crowd was growing every moment. Chiang-tao climbed on to the cart and blew a whistle. At this signal, men flocked round from the cattle market, the cotton and vegetable markets, the groceries and taverns. Ta-kuei stood beside Chiang-tao and, raising his massive fist, shouted:

"I declare the meeting to oppose the pig tax open!"

The fire-cracker vendors stopped business to stare at each other in astonishment. The streets and lanes rained green and crimson pamphlets. Ping ran with her basket from one lane to another scattering leaflets. She would toss a handful up and watch them float off on the wind or come swirling down. Some peasants reached up to catch them and read them out loudly. Others turned their ruddy faces towards the speaker. Chiang-tao shouted as loudly as he could:

"Friends! Countrymen! We slave from one end of the year to the other, yet now they want to tax our New Year pig. . . ."

He spoke for some time about taxes. "Land rent and high rates of interest are racking our nerves. Conscription and increased levies are grinding our bones. This pig tax hurts worse than being flayed. . . .

"We toil like cattle, floundering all day in the mire, in cold wind or burning sun. . . .

"To weed our fields we raise the hoe in both hands, our back bent double, sweating in the blazing sun. We labour from spring till autumn, but paying the rent leaves us with

empty pockets. When late autumn comes we have no warm, padded clothes. In the bitter winter, in snow and freezing cold, no smoke curls from our chimneys after dark. We run into debt and the interest grows like a snowball, till we flounder deeper and deeper in the swamp. . . .

"When New Year comes round, creditors elbow each other at our doors. Though we rise at dawn, there are no dumplings in our pan. . . .

"We peasants wear chains that weigh a thousand pounds. We who till the soil have such a bitter life!"

He stopped for breath. Chia Hsiang-nung in his white sheepskin jacket was sitting on the cart with his cap pulled down to his eyes to escape recognition. Chiang-tao stooped to ask him a question and he whispered something into the lad's ear. Chiang-tao straightened up.

"The warlords are constantly at each other's throats. How long will this fighting go on. . . .

"Greedy, corrupt officials don't care whether the peasants live or die so long as they can make money. They'll dig three feet under the ground to get our last cent. . . ."

Panting as he spoke, Chiang-tao noticed Ping at the foot of a wall watching him round-eyed, unblinking. He was taken aback. His eyelashes fluttered and gold sparks danced before his eyes. In a clear, ringing voice he shouted: "Poor country-folk! What must we do to change all this?"

Chu had been watching intently from the crowd. "The boy's grown up," he was thinking. "He talks good sense." Waving one arm, he cried: "We must get together and act!"

"Right!" cried Chiang-tao. "Men are like grain: if it's sown close together, no wind or rain can bring it down; but if it's straggling and sparse, one gale will make it bite the dust. We must get together. There's strength in numbers. Now we propose to fight this pig tax and get the better of Feng Lan-chih. Who is on our side?"

Ping was watching from below. Chiang-tao usually struck her as almost feminine: his movements were so soft and delicate. With his regular features, thick eyebrows and jet black eyes, he was the acme of quietness and restraint. But today he was standing up in front of thousands, and each word he spoke struck home to men's hearts like lightning. He had kindled men's thoughts and riveted their attention. When he raised his hand, ten thousand eyes followed it. Ten thousand hearers

hung on his lips. She could not understand yet what force this was.

Suddenly Ping's face burned and she started to tremble. Her heart was in a tumult of happiness. The thought of Chiang-tao flooded her cheeks with crimson. Her heart was afire, beads of sweat stood out on her temples. Carried away, she shook her fist with the rest of the crowd and shouted:

"Long live the Chinese Communist Party!"

Thousands of fists were being raised around her, thousands of flags were waving, thousands of voices were mingling in a roar like the first spring thunder.

When Yen from his place in the throng saw the respect for his son in everyone's eyes, tears flowed down his cheeks as he remembered Yun-tao. "If he were free, he'd be doing as well as Chiang-tao, probably better. It's too bad that he's shut up in prison for life." When Chiang-tao raised his hand, thousands of men raised their fists and shouted. With tears in his eyes, Yen jumped up and exclaimed:

"Good lad! That's the way!"

Chu caught his glance and his teeth flashed in a smile.

"The boy's doing all right," said Chu.

"I didn't know he had it in him," said Yen.

Ta-kuei leaped three feet into the air to land with a thud. "Down with the pig tax!" he bellowed. "Down with that cursed landlord, Feng Lan-chih!"

In the sunshine, they shouted in unison with a roar like the rushing of a mighty river: "We must settle old scores with Feng Lan-chih!... Settle scores with Feng!..."

The thunder of their shouts carried far away.

Chang Chia-ching, Chu, Yen and the others had formed a protective cordon round Chiang-tao and Chia Hsiang-nung. They were in fine fettle, spoiling for battle. Their spears glinted, their swords sparkled, as if eager to drink deep of the enemy's blood.

Acting on Chia's instructions, Chiang-tao gave directions for the demonstration. The stall-holders had stopped doing business, and thousands watched as the imposing procession marched down the main street. The peasants stepped out boldly while students lining the way sang the *Internationale*. When the first ranks reached the Tax Bureau, the last were still in the fireworks market. Chiang-tao rushed breathlessly to the front with Ping at his heels. He whistled, and the demonstra-

tors broke the doors and smashed the windows to burst into the building. Feng Lan-chih, pale with fear, fled over the wall. Feng Kuei-tang jumped over the wall too and ran as fast as he could, losing his hat and one of his shoes in his flight. Down narrow lanes and alleys he sped to the back of the county government. Since the door was closed, he scrambled over a low wall and rushed into the magistrate's office.

"What are you doing?" asked Wang, the magistrate. "How did you come to lose your shoe and hat?"

"The Communists have rioted! They've broken into the Tax Bureau!"

Wang's eyes nearly started from his head. "What's that you say?"

"The men opposing the pig tax have started a riot!"

Wang hurried to the door and shouted: "Send the police and security forces out at once!"

Meanwhile Chiang-tao had climbed on to the Tax Bureau's roof to address the demonstrators.

"Countrymen! The landlords have run, what shall we do?"

Ta-kuei glaring, shook his great fist and cried hoarsely: "We've knocked out the landlords. Let's go to the county government! Let's root out those greedy, dirty officials!"

"We haven't overthrown the landlords yet," Chiang-tao reminded him. "We shall have to hit them harder!"

Chiang-tao blew his whistle again, and the crowd surged towards the county government. Chang and his militia kept close to Chiang-tao and Chia. Today for the first time, under the leadership of the Communist Party, Ta-kuei, Erh-kuei, Ching, Wu Hsun and the other youngsters were speaking out from their hearts. Shouting, laughing, running and jumping, they were nearly off their heads with joy. This was Ping's first experience of a popular movement, she was shedding tears of excitement.

As the crowd was in high spirits, when they passed the government salt shop Chiang-tao called out: "Salt has gone up again. What shall we do?"

Chu bellowed: "Help ourselves. . . ."

Before he could finish, the people moved into action. Chia whispered something to Ta-kuei, who flung out his arms and roared:

"Down with the high price of salt!"

The crowd joined in like thunder and rushed forward. Ta-kuei leaped on to the salt counter, picked up the scales and broke them in two against a pillar. He seized a basket and cried: "Come on! Take as much as you want!"

The peasants filled handkerchiefs and jackets with salt. Then they formed their ranks again to proceed to the county government; but at the next corner they found their way cut off. Chiang-tao ran to see what had happened. Mounted police in black uniforms were coming their way, while rows of swaggering security guards in brown had blocked the road. They had flashing bayonets in their hands and were snapping the safety catches of their rifles. There they stood, like mad dogs thirsting for blood. The peasants faltered and the procession halted. With a jerk of his head, Wu Pa told Chiang-tao to climb on to his shoulders.

Chiang-tao thumped his chest and shouted: "Don't be afraid! Don't be afraid! If troops come, we'll fight back! If water comes, we'll dam it! You with rifles — aim here!" He slapped his chest. When folk saw that the police and security forces dared not fire, they regained confidence.

Still the troops did not give ground and the procession could not pass. Chiang-tao jumped down from Wu Pa's shoulders, calling: "Comrades! Follow me!" With a stern look, he led them forward. Without warning, two bayonets were levelled at his face. Chiang-tao, his hands behind his back, stared with flashing eyes at the bright bayonets and charged with no sign of fear. His courage emboldened the others.

When Chu saw Chiang-tao threatened by two gleaming bayonets, he stripped off his padded jacket. Waving his maces he rushed over, and with a single stroke beat the bayonets down. At once five or six more were aimed at him. Chu lunged forward, laying about him with his maces. Soon he was surrounded by a forest of blades, more than he alone could cope with. He shouted, like the booming of a bell: "Charge! Even if it's a hill of swords! Come on!"

Ta-kuei flung out his arms and bellowed: "Down with the thugs of those dirty officials!"

Glaring and yelling, the crowd sent up a cry that shook the heavens. Headed by Chang and Ta-kuei, the militiamen charged with their spears. Lacking specific orders, the security troops did not dare fire on the demonstrators. They were swept back by the militia into the courtyard.

"After them, comrades!" shouted Chu.

Ta-kuei, Chang and Wu Pa led the crowd forward, and with a roar they surged into the court. They filled the great hall, they filled the front and back courtyards. Some climbed on to the roof.

Chu Chung, at the head of their ranks, lifted his fist and yelled: "We want the dirty magistrate to come out! Come and see the people!"

Others took up this cry. The police and security troops made threatening gestures and refused to scatter.

"Comrades!" thundered Chu. "If they lay a finger on one of us, what shall we do?"

"Kill the lot of them!" shouted the crowd.

Chu yelled: "All right! Get your weapons ready!"

The peasants, armed with hoes, bricks and stones, took up positions for fighting.

When the magistrate saw so many petitioners had come, he dared not show his face. He had the security guards and police to protect him. After a long delay, he sent out the message: "The pig tax need not be paid for the time being."

Chiang-tao asked him to repeal the tax altogether. Wang said he had not the authority, but must consult the provincial government.

The peasants had eaten nothing since early morning and were exhausted. Chiang-tao asked Wu Pa to lift him on to a stone monument.

"Friends! Countrymen!" he cried. "See how strong we are! We've got the landlords wetting their pants with fright and the dirty officials trembling from head to foot. Next time they try to collect the pig tax, what shall we do?"

Chu leaped into the air and shouted at the top of his voice: "Kill the dogs!"

The crowd roared: "Down with Feng Lan-chih!"

Chiang-tao cocked his head like Chia Hsiang-nung, raised his right hand and cried hoarsely:

"Down with the examination of deeds!

"Down with the increased cost of salt!

"Down with high interest!"

Then he cried: "Those who want to pull down the landlords and throw out the dirty officials join our Peasants' Association!"

People shouted back: "I'm going to join!"

"Comrades!" continued Chiang-tao. "Keep together on your way home. Don't let the landlords play any dirty tricks! Don't let the police or mounted police arrest you!"

When the meeting was over, Chu harnessed the cart and they took their places. He sat on the outer shaft, cracked his whip and set off home. Chiang-tao and Ping walked together, and on the road she told him earnestly:

"I've never been so happy in my life. My heart is beating so fast!"

Chiang-tao saw her back before going home himself.

After that meeting Chiang-tao could neither eat nor sleep. He sat alone in the orchard with its bare boughs, thinking hard. One day he had slipped out to the orchard and was standing with his back to a pear tree, gazing through narrowed eyes at the sun, when Ping came up behind him and tickled his ear with a twig. Chiang-tao whirled round. Ping chuckled and he smiled in silence, rather red.

"What are you thinking about?" she asked.

"I'm wondering how the peasants are going to stand up to Feng once this movement is over."

She sat down beside him, and he stared at her with his brilliant black eyes. Suddenly he threw out his arms and drew her to him, pressing his warm lips to her white forehead. . . .

In the wintry orchard they shared their inmost thoughts. Their fancies, like colts newly freed from harness, galloped through all the length and breadth of their motherland. Together they drew a picture of the future, tearing one up to draw another. Their young, hot blood was racing through their veins. They began to have an inkling of the freedom and joy that revolution brings to the young.

34

On their way back from the meeting, the peasants could talk of nothing but the success of their fight against the pig tax. The Carter plodded slowly to Chu's house, and was invited in to sit on the *kang*.

"Brother Chung," said the Carter, "what about this match between our families?"

Chu chuckled inwardly. "It's up to you."

"What do you mean by that?"

"Our Ta-kuei says he'd sooner go up to heaven than live with his in-laws."

The Carter guffawed. "Why is he so set against it? Are we too poor for him?"

"He says he wouldn't do it even if you had all the land in the world."

This was a blow to the Carter, who scratched his head in dismay. "Oh! That means I can't share your glory. . . . I'm old and useless. . . ."

He did not know how he and his wife were to manage, old as they were, with no young man in the house, only Chun-lan. Besides, Chun-lan was pretty and well known. Many young men had designs on her. He could not help shedding tears.

Without being told, Chu knew what was worrying him.

When Mrs. Chu saw the Carter's disappointment, she came over laughing softly. "You may call me pig-headed, but it's only a few steps from your *kang* to ours. Why not let Chun-lan come here? If anything ails either of you, do you think I won't send her over first thing in the morning and last thing at night to have a look? Why, neighbours would do as much, let alone your own kin, if you had nobody at home to help. We couldn't sit idly by while you were in trouble."

The Carter stroked his hairy chin. "If you put it that way, we'd only be a burden to you."

"Kinsmen and friends!" retorted Mrs. Chu.

The Carter took hope again. He thought: "We're neighbours, living in the same lane. Chun-lan could come over in the morning and evening to see to us." He said: "Well, the child grew up by my side and I don't like to lose her."

"But think how hard it is for her," said Mrs. Chu. "She's not so young any more. You know that, don't you?"

"I know."

"All right then, don't stand in her way."

The Carter shook his head and sighed. "Ah, Heaven . . . it's hard. It's a hard life."

When Chu saw his distress, he went over and stuck up his thumb.

"Brother, don't you trust old Chu Chung?"

"I do!" The Carter threw back his head.

"If you trust me not to let you starve or freeze, give Chun-lan to Ta-kuei. If you don't trust me, forget it."

"If that's how you feel, we'll fix up the match." The Carter was pleased. "I know Ta-kuei is a good-hearted lad."

Chu and his wife burst out laughing, and even the Carter smiled into his bushy beard. He stood up with a sigh of relief and patted his wallet much more cheerfully.

"Talk and laughter are all very well," said Chu. "But Yun-tao is still in prison. If we do this, I feel we're letting him down. Besides, Chun-lan has set her heart on Yun-tao, and she may not agree. We must go slowly."

Seeing that Chu was having second thoughts, the Carter shook his head and left. He found Chun-lan and her mother sitting talking in the dark, wrapped in their quilts. The Carter sat on the edge of the *kang* with raised head.

"Now don't you take on, daughter," he said at last. "We are old and we want to fix things up for you so that we can die in peace." He explained slowly their plan for her to marry Ta-kuei. "You're my only child," he concluded. "If you're willing, nod. If not, just shake your head."

A fire seemed to sweep over Chun-lan, and she shook her head several times in the shadows. Then, uncertain whether her father had seen or not, she threw herself down on the quilt, her heart beating madly. A hot spring seemed to be flowing through her breast. Heaven, the sorrows she had known! Today she had come to the cross-roads.

That evening Chu walked through the dark to Lesser Yen Village. The frozen snow on the ground crunched under his feet. He knocked on Yen's door and went in. After some initial talk about the meeting, he said: "There's something I want to discuss with you."

"Is it about Chun-lan and Ta-kuei?" asked Yen.

"That's it. The Carter's agreed to give Chun-lan to Ta-kuei."

Yen looked at him. "Good. Good. That's very good. That'll stop this business preying on my mind. It didn't look right having an unmarried daughter-in-law running in and out all the time."

Mrs. Yen said with a smile: "It's all in the family anyway."

But though Yen and his wife agreed, they were not altogether reconciled to the idea. They did not want to give Chun-lan up. Ever since Yun-tao's imprisonment, she had been coming to help with the sewing and washing or to brew medicine if there was illness in the house. Chun-lan was like a red thread binding the old couple to Yun-tao. The sight of

her recalled their son and his affectionate heart. They could not oppose the marriage, because Chun-lan was no longer a child; but if she left them they would be losing a treasure. Chu's idea was simply to sound them out. Of course, he would be glad if Chun-lan married Ta-kuei, but even happier if she married Yun-tao. Still, that was only a dream, for who knew when Yun-tao would be released?

Chiang-tao guessed how each of the three old folk felt. "I'd certainly be pleased if Chun-lan married Ta-kuei," he said. "But will she agree?"

That silenced them all. True, if Chun-lan insisted on waiting for Yun-tao, what could they do? Nobody knew. Chiang-tao remembered hearing that prisoners were allowed visits from their wives, while sometimes they could even marry in gaol. Still, he reflected, whether this were so or not, it would be better for Chun-lan to marry Ta-kuei.

The next day after breakfast, Chiang-tao went to see Chu Chung and Chu Ming to discuss how to deal with the landlords in Soching. He did not start home till dusk, and when he reached the end of the north lane Chun-lan darted out from her door with a small red package. She stopped in front of him.

"Here, Chiang-tao!" she called. "I want to talk to you."

"I wanted a talk with you too." He went over. "Where were you going?"

"To your house. This is a pair of shoes I made you. I didn't want your mother to spoil her old eyes sewing by lamplight. She's not strong any more and shouldn't get too tired. Come in and see if they fit or not."

Chiang-tao sat on the edge of the *kang* to try them on.

"If you have any clothes to be mended or washed, just bring them to me," she said. "When you're not at home, the two old folk are lonely and I often go over to see them. When you're at home, I don't go."

Chun-lan's mother saw that Chiang-tao was tall, fair, fine-featured, a proper man. He reminded her of Yun-tao. She glanced at Chun-lan and went out.

"Are you thirsty?" Chun-lan asked. "I'll boil you some water." She picked up a brush. "Look at all the dust on your clothes! Let me brush them for you."

"I've just eaten, I'm not thirsty," Chiang-tao said. Chun-lan was pale and thin; her features had grown sharper. "Tell me,

what are you thinking of doing?..." He did not like to say more for fear of embarrassing her. She might not be willing to tell him.

Chun-lan gave a cold laugh. "You know what odd ideas the old people have!" She flushed and compressed her lips, her eyes filled with tears. When she had brushed his clothes, she wiped some stains off his jacket. "I've something to tell you." She paused. "I want to go and see Yun-tao."

Chiang-tao clamped his lips together and said nothing. If he told her it was no use, that would upset her. If he agreed, where could they find another Tresaure Trove to raise the money for the journey to Tsinan? He opened wide his black eyes. "Do you miss him?"

Chun-lan's tears were falling like rain. She licked her cheek with the tip of her tongue. Heaving a long sigh, staring out of the window, she answered: "Yes."

Chiang-tao pitied her with all his heart and only wished that she could fly to Tsinan.

He said: "If you want to go, I'll try to think of a way." If they had had another Treasure Trove, he would gladly have sold it so that Chun-lan could visit Yun-tao.

Her face stained with tears, Chun-lan said: "The night that Yun-tao left, he told me to wait for him. He said he'd come back. . . ." She started sobbing.

Chiang-tao's eyes smarted and filled with tears. "You're not so young any more, Chun-lan," he said. "I ought to tell you that Yun-tao is sentenced for life. We don't know if he'll ever come out. Our old folk don't want you to waste the best years of your life. And Ta-kuei has improved a lot since he came back from the army. You saw how well he did in this movement."

Chun-lan leaped to her feet, sobbing and crying: "No, I won't! I won't! So there! I don't care who he is, I still won't have him. Not if he's as handsome as a porcelain figure, not if his family has gold chopsticks and silver bowls, not if they use a silver loom and gold shuttle. . . ." She came out with this all in one breath, then tightened her lips and stopped crying though she was still racked with sobs.

"That's just an idea," said Chiang-tao. "The decision still rests with you."

"I've made my decision. Since we gave each other our word, even if he never comes out I mean to wait for him. I want to go to Tsinan to see him. I must go!"

"Where are we going to get all the money for the journey?"

"I can save money by spinning."

"You can spin two ounces today, three ounces tomorrow. How long will it take you to put by so much?"

"It's something I long for every day. An iron rod can be sharpened into a needle. If I try hard enough I shall succeed." After a pause she went on: "I'll go and see Uncle Chung and Uncle Chih-ho and ask them to help me. I must go, whether they agree or not. I'm set on it!" She hesitated again, then looked hard at Chiang-tao. "You've grown up too and learned the gift of the gab. You had the same plans for me as those wrong-headed old folk."

"I never . . ." protested Chiang-tao indignantly. "I was just thinking of you."

Chun-lan threw him a reproachful glance. "Well . . ." was all she said.

That evening Chun-lan went without supper again and lay down alone in the dark, but she could not sleep. She closed her eyes and rested her head on her hands. The moment she closed her eyes she could see Yun-tao. In the long winter nights she often lay like this, between sleeping and waking, dreaming the hours away. At midnight, when all was still, she heard a sudden commotion. Beyond Thousand *Li* Dyke the ice on the river was cracking. Some force seemed to be hammering at her heart. She woke up suddenly and looked out of the window. It was still completely dark. She thought: "Even if we sell the house and land, I must go to see Yun-tao!" His serene face appeared to her in the darkness and his great eyes, like two bright lamps, shone into her heart.

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On the morning of New Year's Eve, Erh-kuei stuck red couplets on the doors, pasted up New Year pictures in the house and swept the courtyard clean ready for New Year.

When the sun was sinking behind the hills, Ta-kuei called his younger brother, and taking straw under their arms and fire-crackers in their pockets they went to the graveyard to

set fire to the grass. When it was dusk, the grass flared up and the fire spread all over the graves. At night the whole plain was ablaze and fire-crackers exploded without intermission. One sudden explosion shook the clouds and echoed far away, while the flash lit up the blue sky. When stars were twinkling above, the peasants took branches of cedar back from the graveyard and lit the grass at their doors. The lanes were filled with the acrid smell of sulphur.

That evening Ta-kuei and Erh-kuei sat cross-legged on the *kang* talking to their mother as they finished preparing the dumplings for the next day.

They rose before dawn the next morning, even earlier than in other years. Ta-kuei made the two old folk sit on the *kang*, while Erh-kuei cooked the dumplings and brought in the steaming bowls with their good smell of white flour. The young men knelt down and kowtowed to their father and mother to wish them a happy New Year.

"Get up, boys!" cried Mrs. Chu, excited and happy. "There's no need for that!"

Chu's eyes shone as he looked at his two sons and their mother. But though the whole family was together again, he could not be happy remembering his hard life. Until he avenged his ancestors his heart must be heavy.

After the dumplings were eaten, Ta-kuei and Erh-kuei set out with a lantern on which their mother had pasted a paper flower to pay their New Year calls.

On New Year's Eve, Yen burned cedar logs in his fields and in the house till it was full of the aromatic fragrance. He scattered an armful of sesame stalks on the ground.

"What's that for, dad?" asked Chiang-tao.

"For people to trample on. Trampling on something old brings good luck at New Year."

Mrs. Yen lit a stick of incense and piously raised it high before lowering her head in prayer. She set sticks of incense over the door, on the grain bin, on the hearth, over the trough. Then she took up a lantern, lit a candle, burned paper money and kowtowed.

Chiang-tao heard someone open the door. He looked up and saw Ping come in. She was wearing a black velvet gown and carrying a gauze lantern.

"What fun New Year in the country is!" she cried.

Chiang-tao took her lantern and asked: "What brings you here after dark?"

"It's bright even after dark at New Year," she said.

Mrs. Yen made her sit by the burning cedar logs to warm herself, and put a small table before her.

"Ping," said Yen, "when Chiang-tao goes to your house, you give him good things to eat. But all we can offer you in our cottage is humble fare." He urged his wife: "Hurry up and boil some vegetable dumplings for Ping."

"This is a pleasant surprise," said Mrs. Yen.

On the table she set cakes made of pig's blood and pig's head, as well as sausages and dumplings stuffed with turnip leaves. Chiang-tao heated a small pot of wine for his father.

"Don't treat me as a guest," protested Ping. "I'll help myself."

Mrs. Yen, sitting by the stove to watch the fire, kept looking over her shoulder at the girl's plump face lit up by the flames. "How pretty you are!" she exclaimed.

Ping had just put a piece of cake in her small mouth. She turned with a smile. "Pretty? I'll kowtow to you, and you can be my godmother!"

"Don't make fun of me now," said Mrs. Yen, who was thinking: "I want you to be more than my goddaughter. . . ."

When Ping had finished the dumplings and Yen the wine, they sat on the *kang* looking at the New Year pictures. Chiang-tao told the story of Hsueh Ping-kuei and his roan steed. Ping listened, wide-eyed, as he described how Hsueh travelled west and was away for seventeen long years, and how finally he won through although old Minister Wang tried to destroy him.

"When the revolution succeeds, we'll get our own back too," commented Yen.

"When the revolution succeeds, Yun-tao ought to come out of prison," said Mrs. Yen. At every festival she thought of Yun-tao. At each New Year her pillow was wet with tears. How could a mother stop grieving, when a good lad like Yun-

A City in the Making →
Woodcut by Chiang Cheng-hung

Chiang Cheng-hung is a young woodcut artist. This wood-carving was done in 1958.

tao left home and did not come back for so long? This year, though, seeing Ping and Chiang-tao together had given her new hope.

At midnight fire-crackers went off in the distance: the New Year had come in.

Ping said she must leave, but Mrs. Yen urged her to wait till it was light.

"No, granny will be worrying," said the girl.

"Your uncle will see you back."

Ping picked up her lantern and walked out, saying: "There's no need!"

"That won't do! We can't have that," Mrs. Yen was upset. "Not in times like these."

But by now Ping was already out of the gate. Mrs. Yen followed to peer through the dark night. When she came back she found Chiang-tao had disappeared. She smiled at her husband.

"It's the new way," explained Yen. "Revolution has emancipated them. In big places men and women mix quite freely."

"They seem to be getting on well," said Mrs. Yen.

"H'm. We must help them along. They mustn't be like Yun-tao and Chun-lan."

By the light of the lantern, Chiang-tao picked his way through the night. Darkness surrounded the village like a wall of silence. He looked up at the stars smiling down from the sky, and the pale glimmer through the pear trees.

"There's something I want to ask you," announced Ping.

"Go on." He peered at her through the gloom.

"I don't dare say it."

"Why not?"

"I'm afraid you may not agree."

"I will if I can."

She shook herself, smiling. "A clever answer. Listen, then!"

"Go ahead."

She walked on for fifty more paces, hesitating, then blurted out: "I want to join the revolution."

"Why?"

"Because you have."

They walked on in silence for another hundred paces or so. The silence weighed on them till they could hardly breathe. In the black night, Ping's bright glance seemed to bore into Chiang-tao.

"Well?" she demanded.

"I'll recommend you to the Revolutionary Relief Society," he said.

"Is that the same as the Communist Party?"

"It's quite close. It's a red organization. You can organize people and raise money to help the revolution, and help comrades in difficulties."

When Ping heard this, her anxious heart relaxed. "Ever since that demonstration in the city, I've been in a fever. Burning hot! My heart kept leaping!" Her voice rang out joyful and clear. "Living in this world, we should do something to benefit mankind."

When they reached Greater Yen Village, the frozen snow crackled beneath their feet. Ping knocked at the door and went in, then turned back to grasp Chiang-tao's hand. He stood in the porch for a moment before walking home through the dark.

When it was light, folk came out to pay New Year calls. Ta-kuei and Erh-kuei, who met Wu Pa on the street, bowed with clasped hands and knelt to kowtow. "Happy New Year, uncle!" they called softly and jubilantly. "We won the fight against the pig tax!"

Wu Pa answered with a grin: "We won all right, boys! Next time we have such a good New Year, I'll find you each a wife!"

The brothers went into Chu Hsing's cottage, and found him sitting smoking a pipe on the *kang*.

"Uncle, we won the fight!" cried Ta-kuei. "Did you have a quiet night?"

"It was fairly quiet," said Chu Hsing. "In the middle of the night a dog started barking, but after a little it stopped." He chuckled. "It looks as if the revolution will soon succeed. You youngsters will have a happy life."

In the street, Hsiao-chun, Hsiao-tun, Chu Ching and other boys were going from house to house kowtowing. When they came to Chu Chung's house, they went in and knelt down.

"Uncle Chung, we've come to kowtow because of our victory!"

"Get up quick, boys!" cried Chu. "The ground's dirty." He pressed peanuts into their hands and brought out hot wine. "Come on, lads! Let's drink to our victory!"

Translated by Gladys Yang

Notes on Literature and Art

MAO TUN

The Literary Research Association

The Literary Research Association was founded in Peking in January 1921. A manifesto was issued by a dozen or so founders among whom I was one. I was in Shanghai at the time and the others were in Peking and funny as it may seem, although my name was among the founders I didn't know any of them with the exception of the late Cheng Chen-to with whom I had exchanged some correspondence. He informed me of the purpose of the Association and asked for my opinion.

Of the charter members, Cheng Chen-to, Wang Tung-chao and Hsu Ti-shan were college students. They were in fact the pillars of the Association. Cheng Chen-to made contact with people and worked very enthusiastically; he wrote me regularly. I was working in the Shanghai Commercial Press, in the compilation and translation department. Funny as it may seem, for the four or five years I was working there, I did nothing but "odd jobs" — editing in Chinese or translating from European literature. At that particular time, I was helping Mr. Sun Hsin-ju with the compilation of *Ssu-pu-tsung-kan* — one of the largest collection of Chinese classics. In my spare time I translated a few modern European stories for the literary supplement of the reformed *Shih Shih Hsin Pao*.

The purpose of the Literary Research Association was to oppose regarding literature as mere entertainment or as an outlet for the writer's feelings of discontent. It advocated a "litera-

ture for life's sake." But what kind of a life? Although there was no mention of it specifically in the manifesto, it is not difficult to deduce that the ultimate of what the founders had in mind was at most a bourgeois democratic revolution.

According to my knowledge, the only document ever issued by the Association as an organization which gave some idea of its programme was this manifesto at its birth. Later on, the members of the Association began a "Hundred Schools Contend" period. Some turned right and some turned left, each according to his own free will and responsible only to himself. They did not represent the organization nor was the organization responsible for them. Consequently there was no need for the Association to exercise any control over their speech or their writing.

I don't remember whether any members' meeting was ever held or whether an executive body was ever elected. Whoever was enthusiastic and willing to bear not only hard work and hard words but put in time and money as well — that man was permitted to "wield power" and do the work of the Association.

Cheng Chen-to happened to be just such a person. Some people perhaps considered Cheng the "dictator" of the Association. If so, I can assure you that he was a rather pathetic "dictator" who often got nothing but curses. Why curses? Because the manuscripts he recommended (those by the members and non-members both) were frequently rejected by the bourgeois publishers. People imagined that since he was the son-in-law of Mr. Kao Meng-tan, one of the founders of the Commercial Press, he must have had a great deal of say in the affairs of the Press. It was not so.

Thus it seems that if we say the Association was merely an empty name, without an executive body or actual organization, had no discipline and practically did not really exist, it would be no exaggeration. Oddly enough, in the two or three years following the founding of the Association, the magazine *Story Monthly*, reorganized in 1921, became widely known as the Association's own periodical, and a series of books put out by the Literary Research Association was published by the Commercial Press. Even more spectacular was the formation of several Association branches outside Peking, many of them with periodicals of their own.

The inside story was this: A few months after the Association was founded, its few members dispersed, going to this city or

that to teach or do other work. There, they made friends with other young literature lovers and recommended them as new members, thus establishing a branch of the Association. With some luck the branch might arrange to be responsible for a literary supplement appearing every week or ten days in some newspaper. This supplement was then considered the branch's periodical. After some time, forced by the necessity of having to earn a living, these people might move to other localities and the branch and its periodical would come to an end. But, perhaps, they would again meet new friends, and the whole process would begin all over again.

On the surface it looked as if the members of the Association were very active and working in a well-organized, well-planned way. Nothing could be further from the truth. All activities were spontaneous and on the spur of the moment. One might even say that each member was "fighting his own battle."

Of course, the question is fighting for what and against whom? To my mind, the Association's manifesto answers this, in a general way, particularly the latter question. The target was fairly clear.

In its earlier stages, the active members of the Association and *Story Monthly* fought against the mawkish Romance and Butterfly literary school. Progeny of feudal ideas and compradore concepts, this school had fairly wide influence among the petty bourgeoisie as well as some effect on the young intellectuals. The Commercial Press' *Story Monthly* had for some time been in the hands of this school. In the winter of 1920, the progressive members of the Press' board of directors (Mr. Kao was one of them; he was then concurrently head of the compilation and translation department) advocated a reform of the magazine. I was asked to edit it. I agreed on condition that none of the manuscripts already paid for (mainly those of the Romance and Butterfly type) would be used, and that in the future the editorial policy would be independent of the Press. Mr. Kao accepted my conditions. It was because we were able to reform the magazine completely that the new-born Association adopted it as its organ. Actually I was editing it alone while Cheng Chen-to was responsible for getting manuscripts in Peking.

The conservatives among the Press' board of directors were extremely dissatisfied with the new *Story Monthly*. A year later, the Press published another monthly, *Story World*,

devoted exclusively to the Romance and Butterfly type of literature. Thus two literary monthlies of opposite nature were produced by the same publisher. It was an interesting phenomenon since it reflected the inner contradictions in the Press. Among the directors at the time, those representing the feudal bureaucratic and compradore classes just about equalled in strength those representing the national bourgeoisie.

Thanks to the *Story Monthly* and the Literary Research Series, the Association, although lacking any semblance of genuine organization and discipline, was able to exist for some ten years. It took part in struggles and exercised some influence. As to its achievements and failures, that will have to await the judgement of literary historians. I have no intention of going into them here.

March 14, 1959

CHENG PO-CHI

The Creation Society

The Creation Society was one of the first progressive literary organizations to appear in the movement for new literature in China, and its influence was considerable. A product of the May the Fourth Movement, it was formally established in 1921 by some Chinese students in Japan who were interested in literature. During their studies in Japan, the humiliation and insults they suffered at the hands of the imperialists, Japan's

Cheng Po-chi, a well-known prose writer, was an early member of the Creation Society. He is now vice-chairman of the Sian branch of the Union of Chinese Writers.

blatant acts of aggression against China and the treachery of Chinese warlords and politicians deepened and strengthened these young people's patriotism. At the same time, following the rapid development of capitalism, Japan's working class and young intellectuals were striving to win democracy and socialism. On the basis of their patriotism, the Chinese students in Japan readily accepted the concepts of democracy and socialism they found there. This was why their opposition to imperialism and feudalism developed so quickly, when stirred sharply by the May the Fourth Movement in China. In literary theory and writing method they were directly or indirectly influenced by European literature, and to some extent by modern Japanese literature. Certain of their chief writers were most strongly influenced by the early nineteenth century romantics, notably Goethe, Schiller and Heine. The romantic mode of writing adopted by the Creation Society was well suited to express the anti-imperialist and anti-feudal passions aroused by the May the Fourth Movement and the emotional upheavals of young intellectuals at the time. This helps to account for the enthusiastic reception given to the works of these writers by young people at the time.

During the period of ferment that preceded the formal establishment of the Creation Society, its chief figure and founder, Kuo Mo-jo, had already begun to write. After the May the Fourth Movement many of his poems were published in the progressive literary supplement *Lamp of Knowledge* of the daily, *Shih Shih Hsin Pao.*

Of all the members of the Creation Society, Kuo Mo-jo made the greatest contribution to the new literary movement. He is one of the most versatile and influential poets in modern China, whose highly evocative and militant poems express deep patriotism, humanism and revolutionary fervour. Very early in his poems, he praised the October Revolution, condemned imperialism, attacked the reactionary Chinese warlords, and wrote of people's heroes in history, taking the side of the rebels of past ages. Though he writes the new free verse in the modern vernacular, through his poems run the traditional rhythms and cadences. Tempestuous and powerful yet fresh and fluent, his style is uniquely his own. His works of fiction reveal rich imagination and lyricism. His dramas are based on history yet have a topical flavour, and the hero's speeches

usually express the author's views. Kuo Mo-jo's romanticism, full of revolutionary fervour, accorded with the revolutionary movements of the time and the aspirations of the young. It was firmly rooted in contemporary Chinese life.

Another important writer in the early period of the Creation Society was Yu Ta-fu.* Though sometimes he championed "decadent" writing, his own style had much in common with certain early nineteenth century romantics. His revolt was rather a passive one, however. His tone is somewhat melancholy. Yet the Bohemian attitude which he often adopted deliberately to show his "decadence" was actually an expression of his passive revolt, his inner indignation against the old society. He has written many first-rate short stories, most of which reflect his own life. His style is fluent, easy and rich in feeling, making a considerable appeal to the young.

Another writer who held a similarly important place in the activities of the Creation Society was Cheng Fang-wu. The author of poems, plays and short stories, he was best known for his literary criticism, which exercised a strong influence in the early years of the Creation Society.

With these three men as its nucleus, the Creation Society enlisted the support of some Chinese writers in Japan and others in China to publish in Shanghai the *Creation Quarterly* (later became the *Creation Monthly*), the *Creation Weekly* and the *Creation Daily,* a newspaper supplement. The Society carried on many-sided activities in its early, flourishing period. Later, as the revolution developed, some young writers of the Society, led by Kuo Mo-jo, published in Shanghai a weekly called *The Flood*, which was strongly political. By this time Kuo Mo-jo had already drawn near the Chinese Communists and accepted Marxism-Leninism. He published many articles advocating Marxism-Leninism, rallying supporters for the revolution and uniting young progressive forces.

In its later period the main function of the Creation Society was to advocate proletarian literature and propagandize Marxism-Leninism. On the eve of the 1925-1927 Revolution, the chief members of the Society gathered in Canton, centre of the revolution at the time. Kuo Mo-jo was convinced that

*Two of his stories were published in *Chinese Literature* No. 3, 1957.

writers had their responsibility to the revolution. He therefore proposed writing "revolutionary literature." But since this was during a period of strife when Chiang Kai-shek was conspiring against the Communists and the political situation was extremely confused and tense, Kuo Mo-jo's proposals did not arouse sufficient attention.

After the failure of the revolution in 1927, the members of the Creation Society embarked on a new task. In addition to reorganizing the *Creation Monthly* and strongly advocating proletarian literature, in January 1928 they published another magazine dealing with literary criticism and literary theory, the *Critique of Culture.* In March of the same year they brought out another small magazine, *Flowing Sand.* At the same time they co-operated with the Shanghai Art College to publicize among students Marxism-Leninism and the need for proletarian art and literature. Later they set up the Shanghai Art and Dramatic Society, the first left-wing dramatic society in China.

In 1929, the Creation Society was illegally suppressed by the Kuomintang. During the ten short years of its existence, its activities, especially those — literary and political — of Kuo Mo-jo, played a positive role in the new literary movement, leaving quite a deep impression on the minds of many young people. This influence, far from dying out as a result of suppression by the reactionaries, merged with the new tide of thought led by Marxism-Leninism to form a strong current in the great cultural revolution started by the May the Fourth Movement.

HSU KUANG-PING

The Path of Lu Hsun

As a young man, Lu Hsun made up his mind to use literature as a weapon to change the ideas of the Chinese people, so long fettered and stupefied by feudalism, arousing them to struggle for revolution. But as Lu Hsun said, his passionate ideals were swallowed up in the boundless darkness and apathy of the time. He waited fervently for the coming of dawn. Then the storm broke and forty years ago, influenced by the October Revolution, China started the epoch-making May the Fourth Movement against imperialism and feudalism. This mighty tide of revolution swept all sense of loneliness from Lu Hsun's heart, and he was caught up in the tempestuous mass movement. With an irrepressible urge, he wrote many works which opened up the correct path ahead and laid the foundation of the new literature.

The works of Lu Hsun during that period give us a penetrating reflection of the attitudes of different classes of people towards the democratic revolution as well as their thoughts and feelings. It is not strange that a peasant is the chief character in many of his stories, for the central problem of the Chinese revolution was the peasant problem and Lu Hsun was specially familiar with peasants. He understood and loved them, and his long experience and acute observation convinced him that the wretched lot of the peasants must lead them towards revolution. However, owing to the cruel oppression of the ruling class and the way, particularly, in which it used the reactionary feudal culture to deceive the people and deaden their faculties, the peasants were like blades of grass under a great rock; they grew in silence, then withered, became apathetic and died, lacking the political consciousness which would enable them to struggle against their feudal masters and the imperialists.

Here we should point out that although Lu Hsun depicted the society of that time from the standpoint of a humanist and a democrat, showing his sympathy for the oppressed, he did more than merely lament the sad lot of the peasants while seeing no hope for them — he was an uncompromising fighter against feudalism, with full confidence in the future of the masses. In his first short story, *The Madman's Diary,* which served as a clarion call in the May the Fourth Movement, he sharply posed the problem of the "man-eating society," and through the madman's mouth declared solemnly: "You (the feudal ruling class) should change, change from the bottom of your hearts. You must know that in future there will be no place for man-eaters in the world. . . ." And at the end of *My Old Home* Lu Hsun said: "Hope cannot be said to exist, nor can it be said not to exist. It is just like roads across the earth. For actually the earth had no roads to begin with, but when many men pass one way, a road is made." This shows beyond doubt that by this time he had repudiated the feudal order and its foundations, though he was not yet a Marxist.

Lu Hsun's writings during the May the Fourth period include a number of stories dealing with the outlook and fate of intellectuals, and he created many intellectuals of different types. An intellectual who does not join the workers and peasants can achieve nothing — this is clear from Lu Hsun's works. Kung I-chi (the hero in the story of the same title) is a typical scholar of feudal society who, because he is isolated from the people, grown decadent and useless, is pushed off the ladder of that pitiless society. Despised and neglected, he becomes a beggar and a thief and is engulfed in the darkness. There are bourgeois intellectuals, too, who have more ideals; but though they are dissatisfied with the old society, their separation from the masses dooms all their struggles to failure, until in the end they compromise with the old order. Thus in *In the Wine Shop* Lu Hsun makes Lu Wei-fu say: "When I was young, I saw the way bees or flies stopped in one place. If they were frightened they would fly off, but after flying in a small circle they would come back to stop in the same place; and I thought this really very foolish, as well as pathetic. But I never thought that I would come back too, after flying in a small circle." Then there is Wei Lien-shu in *The Misanthrope* who because he has been repeatedly unlucky

finally stoops to doing all that he most detested and condemned, surrendering all that he had believed in and advocated. These examples show that if intellectuals cut themselves off from the people they will accomplish nothing and even ruin themselves in the end.

During this period between the May the Fourth Movement and the First Revolutionary Civil War, Lu Hsun not only laid the foundation of the new literature, establishing the excellent tradition of making literature serve the needs of politics, but to meet the requirements of the highly complex struggle he created or adopted the art forms best suited to his purpose. Thus he wrote prose poems in *Wild Grass* and reminiscences in *Dawn Blossoms Plucked at Dusk*. And though he did not write much modern verse, because so few poets were using this medium and he wished to encourage it, he wrote some poems of this kind. From 1918 onwards, when the revolutionary struggle against the old social order increased in intensity, he created a new form of short essay to attack the enemy. His opponents laughed at him, saying that he was no artist but a mere publicist; and even some well-wishers advised him to keep to the usual literary forms instead of wasting time writing those essays. But Lu Hsun answered: "There comes a time when I have to write in a certain way. And it seems to me, if there are such troublesome taboos in the palace of art, I would do better not to enter it." So in his view literature must serve the needs of politics, and the use of certain specific literary forms is determined by the content. He once said that essays like his were not to be found in such American books as *The ABC of Writing*, but a fighter should be able to use different weapons; only so could he take the initiative and deal the enemy a mortal blow. Thus Lu Hsun compared his essays to daggers, effective weapons in coming to grips with the foe.

When we say that Lu Hsun laid the foundation of the new movement in literature, we have in mind not only the fact that he led writers to the path along which literature could develop in accordance with the principles of socialist realism — serving the workers and peasants — not only the examples he gave of various literary forms and the way in which he developed these during the movement, but also his contribution to strengthening the forces of the new literature and

broadening its front by educating and encouraging a host of young writers. Even before the May the Fourth Movement Lu Hsun helped many young friends in their writing and in their struggles. After 1920, when he was teaching in Peking University and elsewhere and many students came directly under his influence, Lu Hsun would not admit that he was their teacher, calling himself a humble foot-soldier in the revolution. In fact, though, as his friend Chu Chiu-pai pointed out, he was the leader of the young people who had revolted against the old society. By word of mouth and by the pen, by lecturing in colleges and writing for newspaper supplements and magazines such as *Mass Literature, The National News Supplement, The Wilderness* and *The Tattler*, he did his utmost to arouse the young. He also edited their writings and helped them to publish their work, including translations. By such means he educated the younger generation and blazed a wide trail for the new literature.

With deepest patriotism, taking the standpoint of the labouring people, he made use of various literary and art forms to rally keen young fighters to launch a fierce attack on feudal society, to expose its iniquities, to awaken the people and arouse them to struggle, liberating their spirit. In 1926, Lu Hsun said modestly that at most he was a single stone or plank in the bridge. Across this common-looking bridge have passed countless revolutionaries, and he himself during this great transition fulfilled the first conditions for crossing from one shore to the other, from democracy to communism. "Lu Hsun's line," as Mao Tse-tung has rightly pointed out, "is the line of the new culture of the Chinese nation."

Personalities and Events

YANG YU

Dr. W. E. G. Du Bois

When the well-known American Negro scholar, Dr. Du Bois and his wife, writer Shirley Graham, arrived in Peking in February, the Chinese people were celebrating their Spring Festival. In a festival mood they welcomed the two visitors from the other side of the Pacific.

Dr. Du Bois is past ninety but time has left few marks on him. He walks with assurance and strength, there are few lines on his broad forehead and he speaks so distinctly and lucidly that one feels that the vitality of youth still throbs within him. The same can be said for gentle, warm-hearted and sensitive Shirley Graham. If not for the strands of silver at her temples, no one would believe that she is over sixty. When Dr. and Mrs. Du Bois appeared in public, people looked at them with admiration and also a little surprise. They are as young as people's China itself.

Dr. Du Bois' name is not unfamiliar to the Chinese people. It is a name linked with Abraham Lincoln, George Washington and Frederick Douglass. Eight years ago, when the U.S. government arrested the aged scholar without reason, protests rose from all over China demanding that the venerable peace partisan be released.

Last year news came of Mrs. Du Bois' participation in the All-African Peoples' Conference in Accra, Ghana on behalf of her husband. There, she and Mrs. Eslanda Robeson, wife of the famous singer Paul Robeson, pulled down the Kuomintang flag, a symbol of the U.S. ruling class' conspiracy to create "two Chinas."

A tie of friendship, deeper than ever, links Dr. and Mrs. Du Bois with the Chinese people. It was therefore with great warmth and love that the Chinese people received their long-awaited guests whose work represents the American people's traditional love for peace and democracy and who personify the will of the Negro people in their struggle for freedom and independence.

By happy coincidence, Dr. Du Bois' ninety-first birthday, February 23, 1959, fell on a day of the full moon. These days are considered "lucky" according to Chinese tradition. His Chinese hosts, who arranged a birthday party for him, were delighted by this coincidence.

Activities started early in the afternoon. Beneath ancient green glaze tiles glittering in the sunlight, more than a thousand young students of Peking University gathered to welcome their honoured guests. Peking University is one of China's oldest universities, and has a splendid tradition. It was here that Mao Tse-tung, great leader, poet and Marxist theoretician

(Left to Right) Dr. Du Bois, the playwright Tien Han, Kuo Mo-jo and Mrs. Du Bois

of the Chinese people, worked and studied. Dr. Du Bois' visit added another page in its glorious history. His speech stirred the heart of every young intellectual.

"Speak China, and tell your truth to Africa and the world. What people have been despised as you have? Who more than you have been rejected of men?" Dr. Du Bois' grave and powerful voice took his listeners back over the years. During the past century, while Dr. Du Bois struggled for the liberation of the Negro people in America and Africa, the Chinese people were marching forward on the anti-imperialist and anti-feudal path, often knocked down but always rising again. Forty years ago, in Peking University, the students first raised the banner against imperialism and feudalism, and staged a mighty demonstration against the traitorous government. That was the beacon of the May the Fourth Movement. The flames, spreading throughout the country, heralded the great new-democratic revolution. The Chinese revolution has travelled a long, difficult and tortuous road. Today, the situation has changed. As Dr. Du Bois put it, "China, after long centuries, has risen to her feet and leapt forward."

This outstanding son of the African people called to his distant mother — Africa: "Africa arise, and stand straight, speak and think! Act! Turn from the West and your slavery and humiliation for the last five hundred years and face the rising sun." The Chinese people, who themselves went through countless difficulties, understand this call and the sentiments behind it.

The Chinese like to use red for birthdays, for red signifies happiness and joy. When Dr. and Mrs. Du Bois returned to the Peking Hotel in the evening they found the hall decorated with red lanterns and candles. A gala birthday party had been prepared. Red silk canopies with traditional symbols of longevity covered the wall. A couplet written by Kuo Mo-jo, president of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, read:

> Adding glory to our coloured peoples, admirable is
> this old man who is as strong as the steel,
> Exerting efforts for world peace, as the east wind
> prevails, today, long may he live.

On the red ceremonial table stood many gifts symbolizing longevity from Dr. Du Bois' friends, though one gift, the friendship and respect of millions of Chinese people, could hardly be displayed on the table.

Kuo Mo-jo drank to the Negro leader saying, "Honoured elder, your excellent health proves that you still are young and full of vitality. Spring has come for mankind. Supported by your continued efforts, future developments will further encourage and strengthen the confidence of the peoples of the United States, Africa and the whole world in a glorious and happy tomorrow." Three old men all in their eighties wrote a birthday greeting wishing Dr. Du Bois long life. Chen Panting, eighty-four years old painter, took up his brush and painted a lotus flower and then a peach, which in China signify "eternal peace" and "long life."

All the two hundred or so guests present, including well-known scholars, scientists, writers and artists, vied to show their love and respect for the great peace fighter. Wu Yu-chang, president of the Chinese People's University, took up his pen and wrote the following poem:

> You have fought for inviolable human rights,
> For liberation and the people's happiness,
> Now over ninety but still a fighter,
> Victory will surely be yours in the end.

Famous author Lao Sheh wrote:

> Thousands of longevity peaches bring spring near,
> Bearing birthday greetings, the peace doves are here.

Indeed, Dr. and Mrs. Du Bois had come to China like a pair of peace doves from America; doves bringing the friendship of the American people and progressive intellectuals. They saw with their own eyes how the Chinese people welcome this friendship. True friendship is the best rejuvenator. Dr. Du Bois said to his hosts at the party, "I feel younger and younger with every day." Like his ancestral land, the new-born Africa, he is marching towards a new young age.

JACK CHEN

Indonesian Art in Peking

Because of Peking's happy custom of holding art exhibitions in the pavilions of its parks, a host of people who do not ordinarily go to art exhibitions find themselves enticingly near and pay them a visit. At the same time the art lover finds his quarry in the pleasantest of surroundings. Peihai Park is currently exhibiting a small exhibition of oil paintings and sketches by Indonesian artists. Comfortably filling two rooms of the central lake-side pavilion, it is arranged by the China-Indonesian Friendship Association.

Since liberation even those who had no previous knowledge of Indonesian art have been enabled to get at least a friendly acquaintance with Indonesian painting, thanks largely to the comprehensive exhibition arranged in Peking in 1954 and the examples of the work of forty Indonesian artists in the lavish two volumes of reproductions of paintings from President Sukarno's collection published with his generous co-operation by the People's Fine Arts Publishing House of Peking in 1956. The current exhibition is in the nature of a welcome little interim glimpse of work done mostly in the past few years and — something which the larger exhibition of 1954 lacked — several examples of the Indonesian artists' skill in sketching.

The ink sketches exhibited are by ten artists. *Horse-carts* by Ali and *Two Children* by Soutepo, are typical. There are some wittily caught *Women Weavers* by Lili; market scenes by Arachmad and other line sketches by Sidig, Trisno, Lubis and others. As one might expect of sketches by the artists of the modern Indonesian school of painting, these sketches show that close contact with everyday life that gives so much warmth and colour to Indonesian art as a whole.

Once he knows what he's after, in addition to the quick eye and hand, I suppose the next most important asset of the

Horse-carts by C. J. Ali

sketcher is the ability to know when to stop, when the sketch has said enough. The best of these sketches of persons and things sharply seen and felt, avoid the danger of drifting into a calligraphic shorthand which is so centred on the artist that it is indecipherable except to the artist and his coterie; and the opposite danger of being so over-burdened with fact that it is no longer a sketch but a log book of an indiscriminating eye. There is a deftness in catching the fleeting impression and a sensitivity of line in these sketches that makes the best of them little gems.

The paintings are not, of course, intended to give a review of Indonesian art. They set off the sketches in an attractive dialogue. In friendly conversation with our Indonesian friends, may I be allowed to express my very personal preferences in which I found myself to be in agreement with many others? I liked the colourful *Indonesian Ox-carts* with their bright awnings shown off dramatically on a predominantly grey canvas by Batara Lubis; the brilliant sunlit effect of the *Back of the Fair* by Sudardjo; the exotic pink *Lotus* with their pistils like flames by Sudarlisno; and the *Village in Bali* by Sudarso. There is more than wit in Arachmad's *Building a New Road* — a group of workers laying a new road and in the background

a cluster of the election symbols of the various Indonesian political parties stuck in the ground on their wooden standards.

After seeing the show, I refreshed my memory of Indonesian painting as a whole by another study of the Sukarno album of paintings. Once more I was delighted by the vitality of contemporary Indonesian painting, its originality and variety of approach, and most of all by its strong and vibrant colours. I was struck again by the deep folk quality of the water colours on linen by Sobrat, Regig, Nadera, Made, Widja and others. In treating of traditional festivals and myths and contemporary scenes of Indonesia, with the lavishness of a people that lives close to nature, they fill their spaces with forms, human, animal, vegetable and inanimate, in exotic profusion. They can load their canvases with movement, colour, striking contrasts in a never-ending decorative pattern, or with the calm vitality of tonal harmonies. They are capable of the delicacy of miniatures with echoes of the decorative art of Buddhist ritual and of monumental designs that recall the great Mexican muralist, Diego Rivera, at his best and most exuberant.

From these I turned to the many spectacular landscapes of the Indonesian islands by Basuki Abdullah, Dullah, Ngantung and others. It is in these two spheres particularly and in the scenes of the daily life of the Indonesian people, of its peasants and craftsmen, its city folk and patriots in the long drawn out struggle for unity, peace and progress, that, it seems to me, Indonesian art makes its strongest impact on contemporary life — preserving the national cultural tradition in all its richness, beauty, pageantry and deep humanity; telling the people in noble pride and militant, confidence-instilling terms of the magnificence and loveliness of their land and about themselves, their yesterday and today. That is no small contribution to a society that has but recently succeeded in shaking off a foreign yoke that lasted three hundred years, and that has been forced to wage a continued struggle to fight off its colonialist enemies and continue its advance.

Indonesian painting today represents one of the important schools of contemporary Asian art, developing its own folk tradition, absorbing with great competence the technical and artistic achievements of other parts of the world and wedding these two currents into a new amalgam of a specifically Indonesian painting.

LIAO CHING-WEN

Where Hsu Pei-hung Lived

Spring has come. The drifted snow in the courtyard has finally melted in the warm sunlight. At this time in past years, Pei-hung and I would busy ourselves in the garden, loosening the soil around the vines, pruning our fruit trees....

Our old-fashioned house built round a courtyard covers a third of an acre near the city wall in east Peking. It was here, in this home we loved for its spaciousness and quiet, that Pei-hung spent the last few years of his life.

Since his death in 1953, the government has carefully preserved his house and built an exhibition hall on its east to form the present Hsu Pei-hung Museum. Here the artist's best works are on display. This exhibition hall, opened to the public on New Year's Day 1959, is one of the newest of Peking's many museums.

The last years of Hsu Pei-hung's life were his happiest and most tranquil. Most of his life was a bitter struggle. He was the son of a poor family in a south China village, born on the eve of the collapse of the Ching dynasty when the people were heavily exploited and society was unstable. His father, a poor country painter, made a meagre living by selling calligraphy and paintings. As a boy, Pei-hung learned painting from his father and worked on the land as well. When he was thirteen their district was flooded and his father took him away to lead a vagabond life. When he was nineteen, his father died and he went alone to Shanghai to look for work to support himself while he studied. He had no settled home and often went hungry and cold. At the age of twenty-three he went to France in the hold of a cargo boat, and joined the Ecole Nationale supérieure des beaux-arts in Paris. In that gay

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Liao Ching-wen is the artist's wife and director of the Hsu Pei-hung Museum.

capital he had to paint by the dim light of a paraffin lamp in the attic of a six-storied building; and owing to privations he fell seriously ill, but he forced himself to work to forget his pain.

Thanks to his early grounding, by the end of eight years of hard study in Paris he had mastered Western technique and gained a wide knowledge. On his return to China, he hoped to put his art at the service of his country and his countrymen, but the unsettled political situation and the sufferings of the people grieved and disillusioned him. He could not settle down, uninterrupted, to work. Towards the end of his life he often regretted having passed his prime in the dark, old society. Many times he said, with infinite sadness in his voice: "Why wasn't I born ten years later, so that I could do more for New China?"

His deep love for New China and his artist's longing to depict life made him go to Shantung Province to live with the people there who were cutting through a mountain to lead flood waters to the sea. There Pei-hung drew the portraits of many labour heroes and made the preliminary sketches for a large painting in oil to reflect the tremendous enthusiasm and spirit of the Chinese builders of socialism. After coming back to Peking he was working on his new painting when he had a stroke which left him half paralysed. After two years of illness he insisted on resuming work, but finally another attack carried him off.

The museum keeps unchanged the rooms where he worked and lived. In his studio the unfinished painting *Lu Hsun and Chu Chiu-pai** is still on the easel next to his wicker chair, his brush and palette, just as he left them.

His small bedroom is simply furnished with a bed and two cupboards where hang his cotton uniforms, some of them patched and faded. On the cupboards stand the pottery figures which he collected in Shihwan in the province of Kwangtung. He took great delight in these well-proportioned, lifelike figures made by folk artists.

In the sitting-room next to his bedroom his collection of sculpture, porcelain, pottery and seals is displayed. On one wall is a photograph presented to him by the three Soviet cartoonists, the Kukryniksi, which he kept for more than twenty

*See the reproduction of this painting opposite p. 62 in this issue.

years. In 1935, when he took an exhibition of modern Chinese painting to the Soviet Union, he made friends with a number of Soviet artists, and on his return to China he introduced the work of the great nineteenth century Russian artists Repin and Surikov to the Chinese public.

On the wall of his sitting-room hangs a photograph taken of him with the great poet Tagore. In 1939, Tagore invited him to lecture in India and hold an exhibition there. Tagore himself organized a reception to welcome him. When in India he made sketches and an oil portrait of Tagore, visited many places of great beauty and saw the magnificent ancient sculptures and murals of India.

In his sitting-room also hang scrolls by Jen Po-nien and Chi Pai-shih. Pei-hung thought very highly of Jen Po-nien's work, admiring his skilful technique in painting landscapes, figures, insects, flowers and birds. He had about one hundred paintings by this nineteenth century artist, but he did not care for the so-called polished yet lifeless "intellectual" paintings of the same period.

Chi Pai-shih was a great friend of my husband, who much admired his originality and achievements as an artist. In his view, Chi Pai-shih succeeded in breaking with past conventions; his concise, lively sketches are rich in meaning and

The Artist at Work

based on a most exacting technique and meticulous skill; he learned his art through careful observation. When Pei-hung was head of the Art College of Peking University before the liberation, he called three times on Chi Pai-shih to ask him to teach in this college. Chi Pai-shih mentions this in one of his poems:

If even Chuko Liang did not decline after
being called on three times,
How can I, a useless old painter?

In another poem he wrote:

Let ten thousand mouths abuse me,
If Mr. Hsu of the south enjoys my work.

Their friendship was very close. Pei-hung owned more than a hundred paintings by Chi Pai-shih, most of them belonging to his best period — his seventies.

My husband used to paint in ink at the desk in his sitting-room. In his last years, because he was ill for so long he did little work in oil. Usually he ground the ink himself, took a sheet of paper and reflected for some minutes before starting to paint. Visitors were often amazed by the speed at which he dashed off a spirited horse; but actually much painstaking effort, thousands of sketches and a careful study of the horse's anatomy had gone into his mastery of this technique. He believed that in art, as in science, there can be no short cuts. Only those who toil ceaselessly, are willing to labour hard and dare to fight against difficulties can reach the top.

At this same desk Pei-hung used to reply to all the letters he received. He was invariably the first one up in our house. When the first glimmer of dawn peeped in at the window he would switch on the light and start work by answering the letters of the previous day. Most of these were from young workers, peasants, students or other lovers of art. However busy he was, he would always reply in person.

Many times I heard him urge his students to put in solid spade-work on their sketches. He was against those formalists who allowed students to do slipshod work on the pretext of granting each individual freedom; he was also opposed to those die-hards who did nothing but imitate old masters. His own aim was to carry forward the national tradition, retaining a

strong national flavour but absorbing Western techniques to create a new style. Had he lived longer he would have achieved even more.

The fifty-eight years of his life saw three different periods: the Ching dynasty, the reactionary regime of the Kuomintang, and the age of the liberated people. After travelling a long and tortuous road, he was fortunate enough in the end to witness the birth of New China. Today his works are widely appreciated and loved and the government has set up a museum to exhibit his works — no artist could wish for more.

When two wise men put their heads together,
they produce better ideas;
Yellow and red put together produce another
colour.

— Tibetan Proverb

Chronicle

A 13th Century Relief of Chinese Stage

Recently in a tomb excavated in Houmashih, Shansi Province, a tile relief was discovered showing an ancient stage. The date of the tomb is the second year of Ta-an in the time of the Kin (A. D. 1210). This relief is on the back wall of the burial chamber; it is about 60 centimetres wide, 80 centimetres high, and about 20 centimetres in depth. Five actors are carved performing in a drama. The central figure, in a red robe and black gauze official hat, is holding an ivory slab. On his left are two attendants wearing gowns and hats. The two figures on the right are particularly life-like. The one next to the central figure wears a red gown with high hat. His right hand holds a fan and he is leaning to one side, his legs slightly bent, as if about to dance. The one on the right is a fat old man with white beard. He has his hair tied up in a knot, and wears a yellow tunic. Bending forward a little, he had his thumb and forefinger to his lips with his cheeks bulging out as if he is whistling. This new discovery is the earliest tangible replica of ancient China's theatre.

"The Shop of the Lin Family" on the Screen

Mao Tun's famous short story *The Shop of the Lin Family,** adapted into a scenario by the playwright Hsia Yen, has been filmed in colour and will soon be shown on the screen.

Written in 1932, the story deals with the decline and fall of a little general store in a small town in the lower Yangtse Valley at a time when the Japanese invaders were attacking Shanghai, the countryside was bankrupt, and Kuomintang officials were squeezing the last penny of graft from the tottering middle-class merchants. Inevitably the shop collapses and

*This story was published in *Chinese Literature* No. 2, 1954.

the family is disrupted. But the worst sufferers are the impoverished widows and old folks whose small "investments" are wiped out in the crash. The acting and direction are good, and the colour — a new Chinese-developed process — is of high calibre.

Removing Ancient Frescoes

The Taoist temple Yunglokung in Juicheng County, Shansi Province, is famous for its murals. This temple, one of the earliest existing Taoist temples in China, was built in the middle of the 13th century. The murals are magnificent works of art, comparable to those of the ancient Tunhuang caves.

A big reservoir being constructed at Sanmen Gorge to harness the Yellow River will submerge the present site of the temple. In order to preserve the art treasures, the Ministry of Culture and the provincial people's council decided to move not only the frescoes but the entire temple to a new site.

The murals cover a total wall space of 960 square metres. The largest of them measures six square metres. Removing them is therefore a very complicated and difficult job. Experts, workers and technicians, after much painstaking effort, have evolved a process of doing this. They are now working day and night to complete the removal before June of this year.

"Decoration," a Magazine on Industrial Art

Last year a new bi-monthly on industrial art, *Decoration,* began publication. The magazine is proving very popular. Four issues have since appeared dealing with many subjects, such as needlework, indigo blue prints, women's costumes, porcelain, lacquerware, clay and wooden toys. There were also articles on the sculpture of the Memorial to Revolutionary Martyrs at Tien An Men Square, the glaze-tile walls and stone sculptures of the Imperial Palace in Peking, the wall and window decorations in the Yangtse Valley, traditional motifs such as the fish, the dragon, the phoenix, and articles on the folk art of various national minorities. Each issue is illustrated with many photos and art prints.

Soviet Baritone Gives Concerts

The performances of Soviet baritone Tiit Kuuzik in Peking received an enthusiastic welcome. He was accompanied at the piano by Tarsina Alango. They came to China in February and stayed for one month. His repertoire included songs by Schubert, Schumann, Tchaikovsky, Rimsky-Korsakof and operatic arias. The vocalist sang with deep emotion and rich national flavour which enthralled the audience from beginning to end. After Peking, Tiit Kuuzik visited Wuhan, Shanghai and Canton where he also gave performances.

Innovations in Traditional Musical Instruments

In February the Chinese Musicians' Union held an exhibition in Peking of recent innovations in traditional musical instruments, showing 143 improved musical instruments. Retaining the good quality and tone of the original instruments, the innovations increase their volume and the range, purify their sound, and simplify the tuning technique. The ancient Chinese lyre, for instance, has little volume. The improved version has a larger sound-box which solves this problem. Changes in the dulcimer which enlarge the range and simplify the tuning and changes of key are also successful. The traditional Chinese reed-organ has 13 stops and can only play in two keys. Later types had 17 and 24 stops, and could play in five or more keys, but the fingering technique had to change with each change of key. At the exhibition an improved reed-organ made by an old workman aroused great interest. The instrument has a movable base. By manipulating it one can change key without changing the fingering. Improved instruments like the lute, the three-string guitar, the cithern and the flute were also on display. Concerts were given using these improved instruments during the exhibition.

A Collection of Local Operas

Ever since the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party put forth the policy of "Let a hundred flowers blossom, weed through the old to let the new emerge," much emphasis has been given to the rediscovery, editing and adaptation of local operas as well as to the writing of new ones. This has resulted in an unprecedented development and flourishing of these operas.

To introduce outstanding examples rediscovered or adapted in the past decade, the Chinese Drama Publishing House will bring out a collection of operas based on both traditional and modern themes. These operas are first selected by the provincial cultural bureaus and then compiled by the Union of Chinese Dramatists. The complete collection will consist of about 20 volumes, each containing 300,000 to 700,000 words, including introductory notes, photos and other information. At present the Hupeh, Shansi, Chekiang, Hopei and Inner Mongolian Autonomous Region volumes are already out or are on the presses.

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