

# CHINESE LITERATURE

*Monthly*



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## *Great Man of a Glorious Era*

YEN CHANG-LIN

### In His Mind a Million Bold Warriors

Published below is a reminiscence by Yen Chang-lin recording the fighting life of Chairman Mao Tse-tung in the northern Shensi campaign during the period of the Third Revolutionary Civil War. The historical situation depicted in the reminiscence is as follows: After the victory of the War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression in 1945 the Kuomintang, disregarding the people's eager desire for peace, started a civil war with the support of the U.S. imperialists, vainly attempting to destroy the liberated areas one by one with an overwhelming superior military force so as to realize its crazy dream of enforcing its reactionary rule over the whole country. Soon after it began the civil war, the Kuomintang in the spring of 1947 concentrated over two hundred and thirty thousand men to launch an offensive against Yen-an where the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party was. At that time the Northwest People's Liberation Army in the Shensi-Kansu-Ningsia Border Region had only a little more than twenty thousand men. But under Chairman Mao Tse-tung's brilliant command, the enemy not only failed to achieve its purpose of destroying the leading organizations of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party and the Northwest People's Liberation Army or of driving them to the east of the Yellow River, but on the contrary was dealt many heavy blows by the Northwest People's Liberation Army. Finally when it had lost a large part of its main force the enemy had to flee in great

confusion while our Northwest People's Liberation Army victoriously switched to a counter-offensive.

Starting in March 1947 when our forces withdrew from Yen-an, until we switched to the offensive on the northwest battlefield, Chairman Mao Tse-tung remained all the time in the Shensi-Kansu-Ningsia Border Region. This fact greatly encouraged and strengthened the fighting will and confidence in victory of the people and armies of the Shensi-Kansu-Ningsia Border Region and of all the liberated areas of the country.

The author Yen Chang-lin during the period 1946-1951 was leader of Chairman Mao's guards. In this reminiscence, the author gives a genuine, intimate and moving description of the Chairman's firm unshakable confidence in victory when leading the people of the whole country to win thorough liberation, his determined tireless spirit in work, his frugality and simplicity in daily life and his most lofty and great thinking and spiritual outlook.

This reminiscence will be concluded in the next issue.

More than a month had passed since the organizations of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party had left Yen-an. During this period, changing our direction suddenly and frequently, we had led the enemy a dizzy chase. Every place we came to, we stayed only a few days, then moved on. The plan of the Hu Tsung-nan\* brigand army to "demolish" the nerve centre of our Party was foiled time after time, and defeat pressed closer to Bandit Hu step by step!

### Sharing Thick and Thin

In April, the organizations of the Central Committee moved to Wangchiawan in Chingpien County. Nestling halfway up the side of a mountain, this little village had less than a score of

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\* Hu Tsung-nan was in 1947 the commander-in-chief of the Kuomintang's "Northwest Headquarters for the Suppression of Bandits" and director of the Northwest Pacification Administration.



families. Chairman Mao Tse-tung, Vice-Chairman Chou En-lai, and Comrades Jen Pi-shih and Lu Ting-yi, were all living in two and a half cave rooms which the poor peasant Old Man Wang had loaned to them. Dark and dilapidated, the place was full of pickled vegetable vats. You could smell the sour odour even standing out in the courtyard. Chairman Mao stayed in the innermost room. After we put in a rickety willow-wood table, there was no space left for any other furniture. Vice-Chairman Chou and Comrade Lu Ting-yi slept on an earthen *kang* bed near the door and shared a little *kang* table. But the table was much too small for both of them to work on at the same time, so Vice-Chairman Chou found a tree stump section which he cushioned with his padded jacket and sat on that, resting his elbows on the earthen stove as he read and signed memoranda and documents. To the right was a so-called half room, which was occupied entirely by an earthen *kang* bed. When you stepped inside, you couldn't straighten up. Comrade Pi-shih worked and



slept in there. Old Man Wang, our host, felt very apologetic. He told his family to lend us another cave, and asked our guards to help move out his belongings. On hearing of this, Comrade Chiang Ching (then political assistant in the command headquarters office) said to me:

“Don’t move them! He’s got a big family — young and old, women and kids. How are you going to squeeze them all into one cave?”

“It’s too crowded in this place,” I said. “Even a company headquarters usually gets more space than this!”

“But conditions are hard at the moment,” she replied. “We’re a large organization. Moving into a little village like this, we’ve already caused the local people enough trouble. The Chairman has instructed us that when we run into difficulties we should think of ways to solve them. He isn’t going to like it if we put too much stress on his comfort. Besides, we have to think what impression this might make on the people.” \*

The two and a half rooms were connected, and you used one entrance. In spite of the fact that our leaders lived in such cramped quarters, except when there was a meeting going on, you never heard a sound. The Chairman always went in and out softly, careful not to disturb the others. Late at night, tired from too much work, he might occasionally go out for a stroll. If another leader happened to be resting at the time, Chairman Mao wouldn’t even turn on his flashlight. It was the same with the others. Vice-Chairman Chou, who got up early in the morning, would go outside when he wanted to cough. Comrades Pi-shih and Ting-yi, who used to get up early too, would take their breakfast in the shed where the guards were billeted, rather than let the clink of crockery disturb other people’s rest. This spirit of mutual care and consideration among our leaders made a deep unforgettable impression upon us. At

all times they thought of others first. They never thought of their own personal convenience.

At mealtimes, the leaders were even more considerate, each insisting on eating only the coarsest grain. The Chairman firmly demanded gruel made of flour and elm leaves. Each time Vice-Chairman Chou picked up an elm-leaf muffin, he would say with a chuckle: “Delicious!” Planning and thinking for the people of the whole nation day and night under such difficult conditions, our leaders were always calm, confident and unruffled; their spirit of revolutionary optimism constantly inspired and educated us, and taught us the great meaning of life!

### The People Are Our Wall of Bronze

For ten years or more, the people of northern Shensi Province had been living a peaceful settled life. Not having known the alarms of war themselves, at first they took things rather casually. Whenever our march came to a new place, Chairman Mao would call the village cadres to a meeting. Sometimes he would also summon the secretary of the district Communist Party committee to check what preparations were being made for battle, and would mobilize the people to conceal any implements or crops that could be used by the enemy. He also gave the guards squad a task. No matter where we stopped, the first thing we had to do after removing the saddle-bags from the horses was to go out and do propaganda among the people, get to know the conditions of their production and livelihood, as well as the size of the population and the number of families, how much land was cultivated and what taxes were paid — and report it all back. Because Chairman Mao kept after us, this had already become a customary part of our work.

There had been a drought that year, with no saturating rain since the beginning of spring. All the young men in the village had gone off to the front with their pack animals. Only women and children were left. The sowing season would soon be over, but the only thing they could do was look at their ploughs and worry. Seeing this situation, the Central Committee organizations immediately called an emergency meeting. Chairman Mao mobilized every man in our organization to go out in the fields and lend a hand with the sowing and hitch our horses to the ploughs. He also told us to assign some people to go into the mountains with the country folk and help them cut brushwood, which they needed for boiling water and for cooking.

It was then that we received more good news from the front. Our field army had wiped out an enemy brigade at Yangmaho and captured an enemy vice-brigadier. This victory encouraged us greatly. Everyone threw himself into his work more vigorously than ever.

When Chairman Mao wasn't working, he often went out and travelled around. He had been used to taking walks in Yenan, but now his habits were a bit different. Sometimes he climbed mountains, sometimes he walked the stone road, sometimes he rode horseback. Each time he went out, he would cover a score of *li*. All this was to accustom himself to our marches. As there was much work to do in the fields, Chairman Mao never let more than two of us accompany him. We were only seventy or so *li* from Wayaopao, and enemy spies were often active in the neighbourhood. We always worried whenever Chairman Mao wandered a bit far. So usually we sent a few men on ahead secretly. One day Chairman Mao happened to see them, and he asked: "Are those your men on that hill up there?"

I was taken aback. But I couldn't lie. After a long pause I could only say: "I was afraid —"

"Afraid of what?" Chairman Mao interrupted. Then he continued: "The enemy won't come this way at present. Their

armed forces can't come, and it's not easy for their plain clothesmen to come either. We have the people on our side! Everyone's so busy in the fields now, you ought to send a few more men to help with production. Why must they all go with me?" Seeing that we didn't answer, the Chairman said pleasantly: "You must have faith in the people. Although the enemy may not have 'counter-revolutionary' written on his forehead, the country folk can spot a bad man immediately. We don't have to make a move. These neighbours will nab him! You men should do more mass work!"

At this point Chairman Mao gave me a meaningful glance and asked: "Have you heard of our organizations' 'Six Manys?'"

I said: "The country folk say we have many men carrying pistols, many who ride horseback, many rolls of telephone wire, many women (radio operators), many flashlights and many pack animals."

Chairman Mao smiled. "Those are the characteristics of this detachment of ours! You can see what good analytical powers the country folk have. I'm afraid our own comrades may not be aware of these characteristics yet! But we must tell the people to observe secrecy. If the enemy gets hold of this kind of information, we won't be able to stay here long!"

The Chairman taught us time and again to believe in the people, to rely on the people. As long as we really did this, the people would stand with us for ever, be our wall of bronze. They would never leave us even if faced with a mountain of knives or a sea of flames! These words remained firmly in our minds, and we made them a standard for our behaviour. That's because they were absolutely right. Not once did they fail to come true.

At the time, in a village near where our Fourth Detachment was quartered was a primary school teacher who was a member of the Kuomintang. Although ordinarily he said nothing but "progressive" things, his thinking was actually quite reactionary.

The country folk are very sharp, and they had been keeping an eye on him for some time. Afraid that since we were a big organization our presence might easily be detected, they imposed a news blockade of their own accord and didn't let him learn a thing. Later, after we had left Wangchiawan, sure enough he went over to the enemy. They grilled him: Where has Chairman Mao gone? He was tongue-tied. He hadn't the faintest idea. The enemy hung him up and beat him. Then they tied him with a rope and took him to Yen-an.

Now, after Chairman Mao's reminder, we immediately changed our methods. We sent several more comrades out to plant the fields and to cut brushwood in the mountains. This helped the local folks with production and enabled us to do our guard duty at the same time. It was killing two birds with one stone. After that, whenever one of our comrades in the guards' squad would return from the mountains with a bundle of firewood on his back and walk with the Chairman back to the village, Chairman Mao would ask him with a smile: "Doing sentry duty again?" Everyone would laugh.

### **Making Hu Tsung-nan Listen to Orders**

But those days didn't continue for long. After the battle of Yangmaho, the main forces of the enemy concentrated in the Wayaopao area. They burned every neighbouring village to the ground. Not a single house was left standing whole. The doors and window frames of every cave dwelling were also burned. The enemy made frequent forays in all directions, hoping to find our main force in order to fight a decisive battle.

To puncture the enemy's arrogance, our leaders worked more intensively than ever. Day and night they held meetings to analyse

and discuss the situation. We guessed that another big campaign was probably being planned. At times like this, the leaders rarely came out of the cave. Only the secretaries ran in and out with radio messages. Once in a great while, Chairman Mao came out, but then it was only to pace back and forth alone, deep in thought. He seemed to be pondering some important problem.

One afternoon, just as Chairman Mao and Vice-Chairman Chou were emerging from the cave, the confidential secretary rushed up with a radiogram which he handed to Vice-Chairman Chou. After reading it, Vice-Chairman Chou immediately gave it to Chairman Mao. The Chairman took it and read it. Then he said: "Lure the enemy away, then it will be all right." So saying he promptly went back into the cave and continued with the meeting.

For several days after that we seldom saw our leaders rest. Sometimes the lamps in the caves burned right up until dawn. All these signs proved that the Chairman was arranging a battle again, preparing to move the enemy about. We'd soon be hearing of a big victory!

But the news from the front wasn't so good. The enemy had already occupied Suiteh and it looked as if they'd reach the Yellow River bank in another couple of days. Up until then we hadn't had any word of our army's movements. What was the real situation? Past experience told us that the enemy always took our orders, that they never could act outside the Chairman's accurate plans and shrewd calculations. But how, after all, was our army going to hit them this time? We waited anxiously.

On May second, the Chairman again held a meeting in his cave that lasted all night. It wasn't until nearly daybreak that our leaders — still wearing their clothes — went to bed. Suddenly the thundering of artillery sounded to the southeast of where we were living. We hastily got up. The Chairman came out of his cave with that patched and repatched grey padded jacket of his

draped over his shoulders. "Is that artillery fire?" he asked the sentry, Yueh Cheng-pang.

"Yes, it's artillery! They've been firing for quite a while now," the sentry replied.

The Chairman didn't say anything else. But as he returned to his cave, there was an animated expression on his face.

In a little while, everyone in the compound had risen. The Chairman and the Vice-Chairman didn't bother to rest, but again went back to working busily. A secretary with a radiogram in his hand flew into the Chairman's cave. We heard Vice-Chairman Chou say: "Good! Now that we've taken the commanding height, we've got the situation under control!" We were infected by the leaders' pleased cheerful laughter, which immediately followed. Everyone tried to guess where we had struck.

For two days and two nights the artillery boomed. People couldn't repress their excitement. Whenever we had a free moment, we hurried to the top of the caves and looked. But we couldn't see a thing. We all had one belief: Once we started a battle, victory was ninety percent assured. Sure enough, not long after, news of victory came from the front. Our army had retaken Panlung, completely wiped out the over seven thousand enemy defenders, and captured the enemy brigadier Li Kun-kang. We had also knocked down an enemy plane with rifle fire. Panlung was the enemy's strategic supply depot. Munitions, materials, uniforms and white wheat flour were piled mountain high. As a quarter-master general, Hu Tsung-nan wasn't bad at all. He delivered to us everything we needed. This gave our army more abundant strength to beat the enemy.

All clouds of doubt were dispelled. What had happened was that while the enemy was seeking our main army for a showdown battle, the Chairman had ordered our field army to use one brigade to lure nine of the enemy brigades from the Panlung-Wayaopao line to Suitch. Then our main force was ordered to

circle around and attack the enemy's rear. If the enemy had tried to return from Suitch, it would have taken them six or seven days at least. By then it would have been too late. This big victory made us better understand Chairman Mao's brilliant military thinking; it won every battle. After Hu Tsung-nan attacked Yen-an, on all battlefields of the northwest we had only a little more than twenty-two thousand field army troops, while the enemy had more than two hundred thousand men. For the small to defeat the large it was necessary to destroy the enemy troop effectives and continually strengthen our own forces in the course of the fighting. With his thorough grasp of the enemy's ways, Chairman Mao not only commanded our troops, but he also directed the actions of the enemy. Thus, for two months, the enemy could only move according to our plan. I couldn't help recalling: Once, before Hu Tsung-nan barged into Yen-an, the Chairman decided to concentrate a superior force in the Chinghuapien sector northeast of Yen-an and destroy an invading enemy detachment. Sure enough, everything worked out as the Chairman had anticipated. Five or six enemy brigades of over fifty thousand men, all fully equipped, charged towards Ansai. They saw only our Eighth Brigade openly withdrawing in Ansai's direction. They never dreamed that our main force would strike them a fatal blow in the Chinghuapien sector! The great victory at Yangmaho we won in the same way. Because our army correctly put Chairman Mao's concept of military strategy into effect, it was able to be mobile and flexible, be quick and powerful, fight consecutive battles without shirking dangers or difficulties, spot and make use of the enemy's weak points, and hit hard mortal blows, not letting a single enemy escape the net. As a result, in two months the whole aspect of the northwest battlefield changed completely.

On May fourteenth, a mass victory meeting of ten thousand people was held at Chenwutung to celebrate our army's victorious

retaking of Panlung and the turn in the northwest military situation. Vice-Chairman Chou, representing the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party and Chairman Mao, congratulated the heroic commanders and fighters of the Northwest Field Army. And he announced at the meeting: The Central Committee and Chairman Mao are still in northern Shensi!

"Chairman Mao is still in northern Shensi!" What enormous encouragement this news brought. Cheering and jumping for joy, the people threw their caps into the air.

With Chairman Mao personally in command of us, all-out victory is sure to come quickly!

After Vice-Chairman Chou returned, several leaders sat in the courtyard and talked about the impressive meeting at Chenwutung. Their laughter filled the little yard. Finally, Vice-Chairman Chou said: "Chairman, our brigadiers are concerned about you. They say you don't have enough armed men around you. Every one of them asks permission to come and guard your safety!"

Chairman Mao laughed. Rising to his feet he said: "I'm certainly not going to divert any of their strength! Let them concentrate it to use against the enemy. We're quite safe here!"

The other leaders all smiled and nodded.

### Chairman Mao Is Still in Northern Shensi

The weather gradually turned sultry. Chairman Mao, in a cave where the air barely circulated, perspired as he worked. We felt very remiss. Outside the door, we built an arbour of branches so that Chairman Mao could enjoy the cool shade. Sometimes he ate his meals there. Every day at dusk, the Chairman would bring out a small stool and sit a while beneath the arbour;

he would either study a foreign language, or correct the writing in the guards' diaries. Ever since we had left Yen-an, even though life was unsettled and he was very busy, Chairman Mao had persisted in teaching himself a foreign language; he never dropped it. What's more, he frequently reminded us to study whenever we had a spare moment. If we couldn't study systematically, we could read some novels. And so, when we set out we made a plan for each of us to read five novels on the march and keep a diary. Whenever the Chairman had time he always looked over our diaries or asked about our studies. In this informal manner, he gave us very helpful supervision.

It was a scorching afternoon. Chairman Mao and Vice-Chairman Chou both went to the little arbour to enjoy the cool shade. Comrade Lu Ting-yi turned on a battery radio which was resting on an overturned vat. The Hsinhua broadcasting station happened to be reporting and commenting on the news of our big victory at Panlung and the mass victory celebration in Chenwutung. The girl announcer spoke with much emotion. When she told of how Chiang Kai-shek broke his word and started the civil war,\* she criticized him severely with great indignation, in stirring tones. When she told of the joyous victory celebration at Chenwutung, the unrestrained enthusiasm in her voice was inspiring to hear. Chairman Mao stood up and walked a few steps, then halted by the doorway and listened attentively. Comrade Lu

\* In 1945 the War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression which had continued for eight years ended victoriously. In order to do all it could to win peace and also to expose, in the course of winning peace, the true face of U.S. imperialism and Chiang Kai-shek so as to unite and educate the broad masses of people, the Chinese Communist Party sent Chairman Mao Tse-tung and others to Chungking to negotiate peace with the Kuomintang and Chiang Kai-shek. On October 10 the results of the negotiation, which include many agreements on measures to ensure peace in the country, were announced. Thinking that after the agreement the Communist Party would be sure to relax its vigilance and he could obtain a big victory by seizing the opportunity to attack, Chiang Kai-shek immediately launched an attack on the liberated areas after the agreement was published.



Ting-yi turned the volume on louder and the stirring voice at once rang through the courtyard.

"That girl comrade is terrific!" Chairman Mao said approvingly. "She blasts the enemy with stern righteousness indeed! And she's very stimulating when she talks about our victory. What a clear distinction between hate and love! We ought to train more announcers like her."

As he was speaking, the host of the compound we were living in, Old Man Wang, bare-armed and smiling, came hurrying over. Though past sixty, he was of hard robust build and was a skilled farmer. What with three sons and their wives and a whole troop of kids, there were nearly a score in his family. The three sons had all gone off to help at the front. At spring ploughing time families whose men were in the army or had been killed in battle lacked labour power. The old man volunteered his service and helped them plant first. Only after that did he tend to his own land. His spirit of "looking after others before tending to self" was known and praised by all. He had been a member of the Red Guards when Liu Chih-tan was leading the revolutionary struggle of the people of northern Shensi, and he often told Chairman Mao stories of fighting under Liu Chih-tan. Chairman Mao was always the first to hail Old Man Wang whenever they met, and would pull up a stool and invite him to be seated. The old man had never seen a radio before. Hearing such impressive sounds coming out of the square box, he was absolutely amazed. He leaned forward, his hands on his knees, examining the radio from all sides. After a long silence, he asked curiously:

"What is this? Is there someone inside?"

We all roared with laughter. "Don't laugh," said Chairman Mao. "If any of you understand the principle of the thing, explain it to old uncle."

Radios were pretty rare in those days. The other guards and I had heard them a few times, but none of us could say what made them work. We looked at each other in embarrassment.

Chairman Mao brought over a small stool and invited Old Man Wang to have a seat. Then, in a casual chatty way, he began to explain what a radio was all about. He talked of the echoes in the mountain valleys, of the vibrations in the air, and finally of the various principles governing electro-magnetic waves. The more we heard, the more interested we became. It was like attending a fascinating lecture.

"*Aiya!* There's certainly a lot of deep learning involved here!" Old Man Wang said in surprise. "Today I've opened my eyes and gained some knowledge! If you folks weren't stopping here I'd never get to see such a thing! Even if I'd fallen over one on the road and brought such a gadget home, I'd probably have broken it up for firewood!"

We all burst into laughter. Chairman Mao laughed too.

"Fine," he said. "Be sure you don't make kindling of it if you happen to find one in the future."

Old Man Wang nodded vigorously. "I won't burn it, I won't burn it. I'll keep it to hear our Chairman Mao speak!" Again we wanted to laugh, but no one did. In wartime, the movements of our leaders were kept secret. The old man knew the leader who was talking to him only as "Li Teh-sheng" (the name Chairman Mao used during the time of the northern Shensi battles). He had no idea that this was our great leader, Chairman Mao!

After that, Old Man Wang always tried to get close to the Chairman. He felt this high-ranking leader was truly warm-hearted and friendly. Every day he went into Chairman Mao's cave dwelling a couple of times. If it wasn't for pickled vegetables, then it was for grain, or to shift the pickling vats — and at the same time, to say a few words to the Chairman. He knew from the broadcast that Chairman Mao hadn't left northern Shensi. Every time he met us, he would announce:

"Have you heard? Chairman Mao is still in northern Shensi! Hu Tsung-nan's bandit troops won't last long!"

It wasn't until after we left Wangchiawan that the old man finally learned that the leader who had been living in his cave dwelling was Chairman Mao. The old fellow's heart blossomed into joyous flower.

"Chairman Mao is still in northern Shensi," he would tell people. "He won't go until Hu Tsung-nan is beaten."

Later, the Kuomintang brigand troops occupied Wangchiawan, and it so happened that the cave the Chairman had lived in caught the fancy of bandit leader Liu Kan.\* There, Liu had orgies of feasting and turned the place into a shambles. One day when Old Man Wang came down from the mountains to scout out the enemy's activities, he was caught and brought back to the village. They hung him up and beat him, demanding that he tell where Chairman Mao had gone. In a voice as hard as nails, the old man snapped:

"You want to know where Chairman Mao is, do you? He's right here in northern Shensi!" Then he closed his eyes and wouldn't say another word, no matter how the enemy whipped and kicked him. Crazy with rage, the bandits chopped off two of his fingers. Old Man Wang fainted several times. But each time he revived, it was always the same retort:

"Chairman Mao is still right here in northern Shensi!"

### Marching at Night Through Wind and Rain

In the blink of an eye it was June. The corn we had planted was more than a foot high. All the country folk were busy spreading fertilizer and weeding. Tender green crops covered the mountainsides — signs of a rich harvest. Goaded by the disgrace

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\* Commander of the Kuomintang 29th Army.

of successive defeats, Hu Tsung-nan, in a fury, again sent Liu Kan, leading more than four brigades, for an assault on the Wangchiawan sector.

Command headquarters ordered us to make all necessary preparations for battle. The comrades who had been dispatched to do propaganda work among the people also came back, one after another. Knowing that our troops were getting ready to leave, the local people hastily concealed or removed everything that might be of use to the enemy. Chairman Mao, with particular concern, said that the enemy was coming from the east and that we should organize the withdrawal of the local people systematically, not let them run around blindly. He said we should tell the village cadres the direction we would be taking, so that they could lead the people the same way. Some of our men were afraid this might reveal our direction to the enemy. They suggested that the people move in a different direction. When Chairman Mao heard about this, he seriously criticized the idea. He ordered that the people must definitely be allowed to withdraw with their own army; this would diminish their losses. The people and the army had been fused into one and we should be responsible for the people to the end. Men were dispatched to call back those who had already gone off towards the east. When the people learned that our forces were moving west, they felt completely assured. Supporting the old folks and holding the babes, driving their sheep and carrying their chickens, they hurried towards the west.

All the country folk in the neighbourhood were gone before dark. We received orders to depart that night. Quickly we put our things in order, got our animals ready, and waited for the order to march.

Thunder rumbled. The western sky filled with black clouds. It was going to rain very soon. The Chairman and several of the other leaders were still at a meeting in the cave. We were extremely anxious. Although there hadn't been any saturating rain yet that summer, we hoped those dark clouds would quickly scatter. Otherwise, during the march our leaders might get soaked.

At long last Chairman Mao came out of the cave. We hastily led up his horse. The Chairman looked up at the sky, unbuttoned his jacket and said happily: "This is going to be a good rain!" He calmly sat down on a stool, not showing the least inclination to leave. Just then Comrade Wang Tung-hsing, assistant chief-of-staff of the detachment, came along.

"Chairman," he asked, "when are we setting out?"

"What's the rush?" said the Chairman. "We haven't seen the enemy yet!"

Hearing the Chairman talk like that, we became even more worried. We remembered the time we were leaving Yen-an. Guns and artillery were roaring in unison, planes were bombing, but the Chairman was as steady as Mount Tai. Today our main force was far away. We had only four companies of men, and not even a small field piece. A few hundred rifles would have to hold off four and a half enemy brigades equipped with American arms — the responsibility was too heavy. The assistant chief-of-staff understood how troubled we were, and he kept urging: "It's better to start a little early, Chairman. The road is hard to travel in the dark."

The Chairman smiled. "I've crossed the snowy mountains and I've crossed the marshy grasslands. But I've never been across the desert. Don't worry. We'll never do what the enemy expects. They want to drive us across the Yellow River, but we're going to do just the opposite — travel west. There are plenty of roads! What's so special about crossing the desert! Let's wait and have a look. There'll still be time enough to leave after Hu Tsung-nan's troops get here!"

"You go first, Chairman. I'll stay here for you and fight an engagement with the enemy to see what they're made of. Then we'll give you a report." Comrade Wang Tung-hsing was very good at sensing the Chairman's feelings. Since he wouldn't leave, the Chairman must be considering how to strike the invading enemy, both to provide better cover for the people's withdrawal and to prevent the enemy from estimating our real strength.

Chairman Mao heard Comrade Wang Tung-hsing out, and, sure enough, he smiled with pleasure. Promptly rising to his feet, he queried: "Do you dare to stay behind?"

Comrade Wang laughed. "Why not? If only the Chairman will give the order!"

"Good! How many men do you want?" the Chairman asked.

"Give me one platoon!"

"Good! We'll leave you one platoon. Be sure to fight an engagement here!"

After receiving the order, Comrade Wang speedily began making preparations.

Chairman Mao twice paced the length of the courtyard, back and forth. It seemed as if the cave dwelling he had lived in for nearly two months were receiving the Chairman's review with deep affection. Lowering his head, the Chairman pondered for a while, then he turned back to us and said:

"Sweep the cave clean and check everything in it carefully again."

The sky was darkly overcast. We lit a lantern. When the leaders were ready and mounted, scattered drops began to fall. Sure enough we were running into rain.

Just before leaving the compound, Chairman Mao stood outside the door of Old Man Wang's cave dwelling and asked: "Is our host still here?" I replied: "The village cadres have already led the people away." Only then did the Chairman get on his horse.

We went along the rear of the village then climbed through the drizzle towards the ridge of a mountain to the west. Although it was June, the weather was rather cold late at night in that fine murky drizzle. The nearer we got to the top, the stronger the wind and rain became. Our leaders wore raincoats and were mounted on horses, but their trouser legs were soaked from the knee down. Wang Chen-hai, who was leading the Chairman's mount, proceeded with great caution. He kicked every little stone in the path out of the way, for fear that the animal might stumble. Whenever he came to a slippery stretch, he chirruped

to the horse repeatedly, as if telling the old black horse: "Be careful!" On the downgrades, he would say in an undertone: "We're going down. Watch your step!" And the old black horse automatically slowed its pace. The road was so slippery that we skidded with every step, and the night was so dark you couldn't see the fingers of your hand before your face. Stumbling and colliding with each other, we travelled on. Where the animals couldn't be ridden, the Chairman dismounted and walked with us slowly up the mountain.

After crossing the ridge, the path became muddier than ever. Every time you put your foot down the mud sucked at your shoe and wouldn't let it go. The night was so black that whenever the line of march stretched out a bit too long, the ones in the rear lost contact. Those up front had to keep clapping their hands to show where they were. Below was a deep ravine into which you might easily tumble if you weren't careful. Chairman Mao strode along calmly, his cloth shoes squelching in the mud. I walked close beside him so that I might catch him if he slipped, but he proceeded quite steadily. Concentrating on moving forward, I accidentally stumbled and was about to fall when the Chairman quickly put out a big hand and pulled me upright. A feeling of warmth flooded my heart.

At daybreak we reached Hsiaoho. Enveloped in thin mist after the rain, the village looked exceptionally lovely. We were now forty *li* from Wangchiawan. Our detachment halted and rested. Some time before noon we heard heavy rifle and artillery fire to our rear. Planes began circling overhead. Scouts reported that Comrade Wang Tung-hsing had engaged the enemy! Our one platoon, on a controlling height at Yangchilaowan, was blocking the advance of three brigades. It beat back three enemy charges. In spite of the help of artillery and planes, the enemy couldn't move forward a single step. After three and a half hours, having successfully accomplished his delaying mission, Comrade Wang Tung-hsing at last voluntarily withdrew.

According to our scouts' reports, enemy outflanking units were moving in the same direction as we. At dark, we continued our

march. The sky, which had just cleared, again changed, and it started to pour. Travelling upwards along the ridge, suddenly we heard scattered rifle fire down below. At the same time we noticed in the valley to the left a long row of flames. There seemed to be no beginning or end to them. This succession of bonfires stretched on and on, turning the whole valley red with their glow. It was the enemy, and they were right below us. Comrade Pi-shih issued an order: No one was to turn on his flashlight or smoke. We travelled a bit further, then the men ahead suddenly halted and word was passed back: Rest where you are. We were sweating with anxiety, worried about our leaders' safety. The situation was so tense—how could we stop here? We sent a man to inquire. What had happened was that the peasant guiding us had lost the path. Our troops had no way of going on. All we could do was send to a nearby village for another guide. To prepare for anything that might happen, our guards detachment dispatched a platoon with three machine-guns to set up a position commanding the valley, which was down the slope to the left.

The Chairman stood in the rain. On that bare mountain there wasn't even a rock to sit down on. Guard Shih Kuo-jui removed his pack and placed it on the ground. "Sit here, Chairman!" he said. "That will make it dirty!" said the Chairman. "It doesn't matter," Shih replied quickly. "If it gets dirty, I can wash it." The Chairman said: "Thank you," and seated himself on the soaking wet pack.

It was raining harder and harder. The water streamed down our faces into our collars. We thought: Wouldn't it be fine if we could build a shelter so the Chairman could get out of the rain! Unfortunately there wasn't a tree in sight. Then the men got an idea. Several men crowded together around the Chairman. In that way the wind couldn't do much, and when we held an old greatcoat over our heads, even the rain was kept off.

The Chairman laughed. "A real wall of bronze! Neither wind nor rain can get through! But you men will be cold!"

"We're young and healthy, the cold doesn't bother us!" we replied in practically one voice. Crowding together, we really weren't very cold.

As he sat down, the Chairman automatically pulled out a cigarette. Tapping it on his hand, he held it up to his nose and sniffed it. He looked as if he wanted to have a smoke. Guard Sun Chen-kuo asked: "Would you like to smoke, Chairman? Here are some matches. They're still dry." The Chairman said: "The order is no smoking!" And he put the cigarette back in his pocket.

Battered by wind and rain, we were in a very difficult situation. At any time the enemy might charge up the mountain. The firing was sometimes heavy, sometimes light, sometimes far, sometimes near. Our hearts were in our throats. The Chairman said quietly: "This is a good rain. In another half month the wheat will be ready for harvesting!" Hearing those calm words, we at once grew steady. As long as Chairman Mao was with us, the worst situation could be changed to a good one.

After about an hour, Comrade Pi-shih came over. He reported the situation to the Chairman and said: "A guide's been found. Let's go on. We're only twenty *li* from Tientzuwan!"

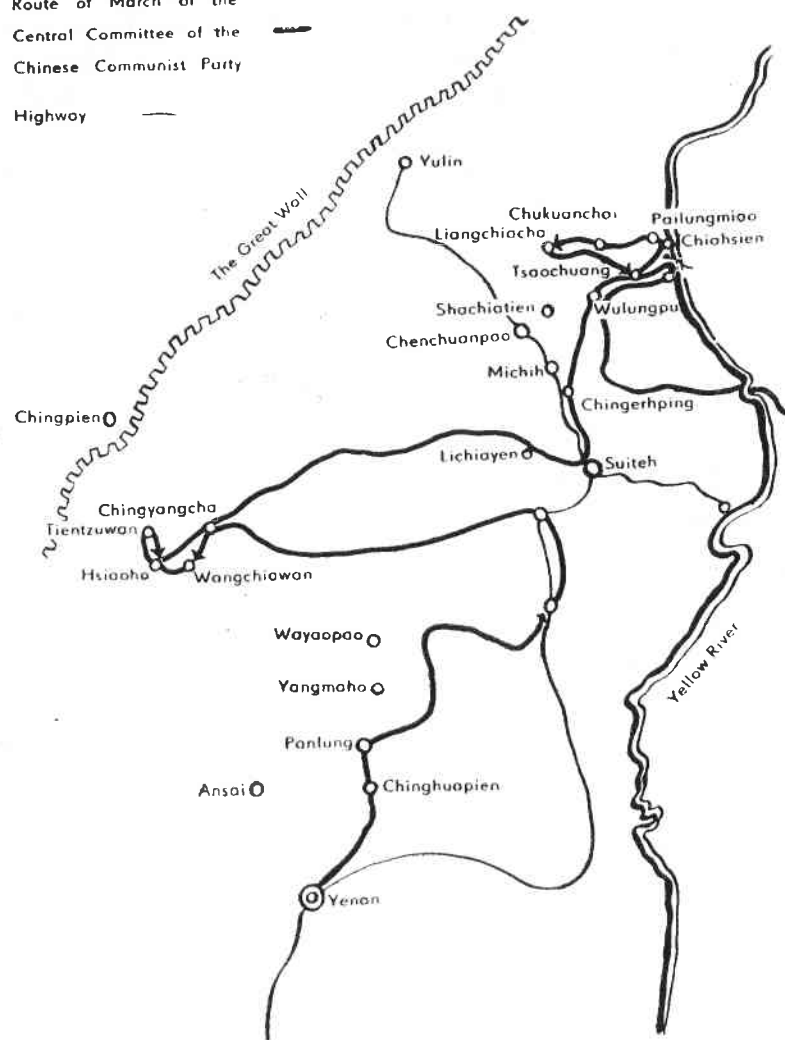
"Let's go!" said the Chairman.

The detachment resumed its march. We asked the Chairman to ride on a stretcher, but he refused. "I told you long ago I won't sit on that thing!" he said. "If you want to carry it, that's up to you! Thanks to Hu Tsung-nan's attack, I've had exercise which has made me quite strong. I really ought to thank him!" We all laughed.

The rain seemed to lessen a bit. At dawn we reached a little village about five *li* from Tientzuwan. The Chairman hadn't drunk a mouthful of hot water all during the night march. We made a temporary halt and found a narrow little cave that was pitch dark, where we prepared to dry our clothes over a fire and boil some drinking water. The comrades quickly piled up some brushwood and stripped off their upper garments to dry them by the fire. Smoke filled the whole cave, choking us and making

Route of March of the  
Central Committee of the  
Chinese Communist Party

Highway



our eyes water. We asked the Chairman to remove his shoes so that we could dry them.

"They'll only get wet again after you toast them dry," he said with a smile. "I'd better just wear them this way."

After daybreak, we crossed the ridge and entered Tientzuwan. The detachment and its pack animals got out of the rain under



the trees at the head of the village, where it waited for orders. The country folk here had all evacuated. Of the twenty-odd original households all that remained were empty cave dwellings.

Comrade Pi-shih said: "The enemy has also set out. They're only twenty or thirty *li* from us."

"Let's rest here," said the Chairman, "and make preparations for fighting on the march! Organize the security detachment well. If the enemy come, we'll leave immediately. If they move on through the valley, we'll remain here." Then he looked down the mountain and added: "The enemy is probably heading for Pao-an."

Sure enough, scouts kept coming in with reports: "The enemy is passing through the valley!" "The enemy is all gone!"

"Good," said Chairman Mao. "We'll stay here."

The pack animals were unloaded, living quarters were found, and our troops began to rest.

No sooner had we moved in than Comrade Wang Tung-hsing returned with his platoon. The Chairman came out of his cave to greet them. He shook Wang's hand and said affectionately: "Well fought! If one of our platoons can hold off the attack of three enemy brigades, it proves they're not a bit formidable! It shows we can lick Hu Tsung-nan very quickly! I've already sent radiograms to all our positions, commending you men. Such courage and military skill deserves formal citation!"

Comrade Wang Tung-hsing said: "The Chairman commands us well."

"You're an excellent fighter!" said Chairman Mao. "I am going to give you another mission. Will you dare to go?"

Comrade Wang laughed. "If only the Chairman will issue the order, I'll dare to go anywhere!"

"Good! I want you to go to Yen-an. Do you dare or not?" the Chairman asked with a smile.

"If the Chairman says go, I'll leave immediately," Comrade Wang replied, also smiling.

"Take a company and tail the enemy. Make a trip to Yen-an. Don't let the enemy get any sleep for two days and two nights!

You have two responsibilities: Go to the section around Date Orchard and find out what the enemy is doing. Where are they living? How are they treating the people? The other is to visit the people in that neighbourhood. See whether any of them have come back. You must find a way to help them with whatever difficulties they're having. Be alert and resourceful on the road. If you run into a large enemy detachment, move on. If you meet a small enemy detachment, resolutely wipe it out!"

"I certainly will firmly complete my mission!" said Comrade Wang. He started to leave.

"Not so fast," the Chairman said. "Have a meal first and then go. There's still time. Take a radio along and stay in direct contact with us!"

The mission assigned, Comrade Wang seemed to think of something. He hesitated a moment before saying: "If I take a company, won't that be too much? How will you get along here?"

With a gentle smile, the Chairman placed a hand on Comrade Wang's shoulder. "Don't worry, just go," he said firmly. "Don't bother about me. I've got my own methods." He paused, then added: "We may not be here when you come back. I can't tell you definitely where we will be. But one thing is sure — we won't leave northern Shensi!"

We won't leave northern Shensi! What power there was in that phrase. It had already become the symbol of our victory!

Having accepted his assignment, Comrade Wang Tung-hsing made all necessary preparations, selected a radio operator and left with a company of crack troops. They tailed the enemy in the direction of Yen-an.

With more than four brigades, Liu Kan, rushing about like a headless fly, never was able to locate the trail of our Central Committee organizations. Finally, he had to give up and return in dejection. Comrade Wang and his men just at that time began to nip the enemy's tail. Liu Kan was puzzled. He never expected to meet a People's Liberation Army unit here. He had no choice but to defend himself hurriedly. Abandoning arms and equipment all along the way, he and his brigades fled back to the city of Yen-an.

Not long after, we heard that Comrade Wang had penetrated to the outskirts of the city. There he gathered five or six guerrilla detachments and started a struggle against the enemy. At the same time, they helped the local peasants quickly harvest eight hundred loads of wheat. When this news reached us, Chairman Mao said approvingly:

“Excellent. Eight hundred loads of wheat harvested now are more useful than the destruction of eight hundred enemy soldiers!” Half a month later, Comrade Wang Tung-hsing, having completed his mission, returned victoriously. Everyone smiled and talked happily as we went to congratulate him.

“So you’re back,” I said. “The *Empty City Ruse\** is concluded too.”

Comrade Wang didn’t understand. “What do you mean?” he asked.

“We only had so few troops to protect the Central Committee and Chairman Mao to begin with, and you went off with a whole company,” I said. “If you hadn’t come back soon we would have had trouble finding enough men to do sentry duty, to say nothing of fighting a battle!”

Comrade Wang laughed. “What are you getting excited about! When you’re with Chairman Mao, everything’s as steady as Mount Tai! I remember a line that’s inscribed on the Yen-an city wall:

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\* This is a story of the Three Kingdoms period in China. The kingdoms of Shu and Wei were at war. Shu lost Chiehing, an important strategic point, and this endangered another military key point, Hsicheng. At that time, the crack troops of Shu were all away and Hsicheng was undefended. When Szuma Yi, acting prime-minister of Wei, learned of this, he took the opportunity to lead his men in an attack on Hsicheng. Chuko Liang (i.e. Kung-ming), prime-minister of Shu, who was in charge of Hsicheng, worked out the empty city ruse under these extremely dangerous circumstances. When Szuma Yi’s troops came to the city walls they found the gates wide open and Chuko Liang invited Szuma Yi to enter. Knowing that Chuko Liang was a careful strategist who never took risks, Szuma Yi mistook these signs to mean that an ambush was planned. He ordered his army to withdraw for forty *li*. By the time Szuma Yi found out the real situation and returned, Chuko Liang had already called back a rescue force and Hsicheng was saved. This story was later used as the theme of an opera which became known in every household in China.

‘In his mind a million bold warriors. . . .’ How well those words fit our great leader! We may not have many men, but with Chairman Mao’s thinking to guide us, we’re bound to defeat the enemy!”

### Victory Is in Sight

Beside a stream in the mountains, the village of Hsiao-ho was surrounded by groves of deep green. After spending five days in Tientzuwan, the organizations of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party returned here. The excitement of battle over, life once more peacefully settled down. While we were still on the road the Chairman told us that the enemy, having taken several beatings in succession, would not have the strength to launch any attacks for a while. He estimated that we would remain for a fairly long period in the Hsiao-ho area. He therefore urged us to make effective use of this time to find a teacher and dig into our studies. Beloved leader — our progress always concerned him. Even though he was very busy, he could still give such detailed thought to our welfare.

On the bank of the stream was a large compound that had belonged to a landlord. It contained a cave dwelling made of brick, with about a dozen rooms. Three sides of it protruded from the mountainside and it had a tile roof. The local people were accustomed to living in caves. While the poor could only scoop out a hole in the side of the mountain to live in, the rich used brick and created a new style dwelling. This one looked like a tile roofed house from the outside, but when you went in it was a cave. These places were very comfortable — warm in winter and cool in summer. Our command headquarters was set up in this compound. Vice-Chairman Chou, Comrade Pi-shih, Comrade Ting-yi and Comrade Chiao-mu, all lived here. We borrowed another three-sided cave dwelling from a family whose son was in the army for the Chairman’s office. The Chairman lived in the north end, the guards in the south. On the *kang* bed in the middle section our peasant host was raising a great many silkworms.

After the living quarters were properly arranged, the staff officers sent over the military maps. Knowing that the Chairman wanted to work, we quickly lit a lamp for him. Then we guards gathered in the courtyard and wrote in our diaries or read stories in the bright light of the moon. Comrade Pi-shih came to see the Chairman, and we hastily rose to greet him.

"You've been marching all day," Comrade Pi-shih said with a smile. "You ought to go to bed early. Reading in the moonlight — be careful or you'll have to wear glasses too!"

Comrade Pi-shih was our commander. Whenever we stopped in a place, he always inspected it thoroughly. As he approached the Chairman's cave, suddenly he halted and looked around. "What's the rustling sound?" he asked. We explained it was our host's silkworms eating mulberry leaves. Comrade Pi-shih said: "Too noisy. It will interfere with the Chairman's work. We're going to stay here for some time. Move to another house tomorrow!" At this reminder we felt we had been too careless.

At night we could hear that rustling sound like the hissing of a fine rain. Not only that, but our host came twice during the night with more mulberry leaves. Opening and shutting the door, moving things about, he made quite a racket. The following morning, we hurried to find a new house. When the Chairman learned this, he said:

"You ought to be out helping the people harvest the wheat. That's important. This place is fine. There's no need to move. He can feed his silkworms and I'll attend to my work. We shouldn't put people to trouble at any time."

Always thinking of others, helping others, never bothering people, only making things easier for them, "Be concerned before anyone else becomes concerned, enjoy yourself only after everyone else finds enjoyment"\* — that was the noble way of our great leader. Even his daily life was permeated with this spirit.

The wheat harvest was soon over. At that time, the Chairman was particularly busy. Almost every day he held meetings with

\* The words of the Sung dynasty scholar, Fan Chung-yen.

the other leaders, and analysed problems. One day the Chairman suddenly proposed taking a walk outside the village. We were very pleased to hear this because the Chairman had exercised very seldom since coming to the village of Hsiao-ho. We accompanied him up the rear mountain. He noticed that Wu Ying-ling, one of the guards, was limping.

"Is your foot any better?" he asked.

Wu hadn't been careful and sprained his ankle on the march. It still hadn't healed. Since the Chairman questioned him, Wu replied: "The doctor says the bone's been hurt. It can't improve very quickly!"

The Chairman thought a moment, then asked: "Is the girl you're engaged to still waiting for you at home?"

Wu's face turned red, and he stammered: "Yes, she's still at home, waiting."

I remembered that once when the Chairman had gone out for a stroll in Yen-an, he had asked about our families, and Wu had told him that he had a girl who had been waiting to marry him for eight or nine years. At the time the Chairman had commended the women of our liberated area for not only being able to fight and work, but for understanding revolutionary principles and having the emotions of revolutionaries. That had been a year before. I was surprised that the Chairman should remember so clearly after all that time. The Chairman saw that Wu Ying-ling was embarrassed and he said:

"Excellent. You can take this opportunity to go home for a visit! If neither side has any objections, you two can go to the government office and register your marriage!"

Wu became very upset. "Chairman," he said, "this is no time to be getting married. I can't leave you! Wait till we've beaten Hu Tsung-nan, then we'll see!"

Chairman Mao smiled. "That's a very good way of thinking. But your foot's not well. It would be very inconvenient in battle. It's better for you to take this opportunity and go home for a look. You'll cure your injury and settle your marriage problem at the same time. While home you can do some work among the

masses. It won't be long before we defeat Hu Tsung-nan. You're a Hopei Province man. We'll be going down to Hopei too."

All of us were thrilled. If Chairman Mao intended to cross the Yellow River that meant the military situation throughout the country was going to change completely. The day of Chiang Kai-shek's total defeat was not far off. Chairman Mao also instructed Wu, saying:

"After you cross, you can keep in touch with the organization\* of Comrade Shao-chi and Commander-in-Chief Chu. Whatever time we cross the river, they'll know it."

Wu Ying-ling didn't know what to say. He was so moved, hot tears filled his eyes. The Chairman urged him to return to his quarters and rest. Then he gave me special instructions:

"After we get back, ask Chief-of-Staff Yeh to write a letter of introduction, requesting the local government to look after him while he's at home recuperating." I promised to do so. Having made his orders clear, the Chairman then asked: "How are you men coming on with your studies?"

"We're having a hard time finding a teacher!" I replied.

"Let those who know, teach," said the Chairman. "Teach yourselves and learn from each other. You also can listen to the radio broadcasts, ask your leaders to make reports, discuss current affairs. As long as you're serious about studying, there are plenty of methods!"

While talking, we reached the top of the mountain. Off in the distance we could see a vast darkly verdant area of deep moun-

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\* After the People's Liberation Army withdrew from Yen-an on March 19, 1947, most members of the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, that is to say, Comrades Mao Tse-tung, Chou En-lai and Jen Pi-shih remained in the Shensi-Kansu-Ningsia Border Region, while a working committee of the Central Committee was set up which included Comrades Liu Shao-chi and Chu Teh, members of the Secretariat, and a number of Central Committee members, with Comrade Liu Shao-chi at the head. The Working Committee entered the Shansi-Chahar-Hopei Liberated Area by way of the Shansi-Suiyuan Liberated Area and arrived at Sipaipo Village, Pingshan County, Hopei Province, to carry out the tasks entrusted to it by the Central Committee. It wound up its duties on May 1948, when Comrade Mao Tse-tung and the Central Committee came to Sipaipo Village. Here the organization referred to is the Working Committee.

tains and quiet valleys, of green peaks piercing the clouds. It was a scene of magnificence and beauty. On the summit were several rock piles and a few crumbling stone caves. The whole place was overgrown with weeds. The Chairman pointed at the nearest rock pile and asked:

"Do you know what that is?"

We guards stared at it for a long time, but none of us could tell. The Chairman circled around it, then pointing as he spoke, explained:

"There was frequent warfare here in ancient times. These are vestiges of battle. The rock piles were forts. And those were the foundations of buildings. This place was the manor of a feudal landlord."

Our interest was greatly aroused, and we all asked many questions. The Chairman patiently answered them one by one. It was like attending a most vivid history class. We learned many things. When you travelled with the Chairman, any place was a classroom - and what a wonderful persuasive teacher our leader was!

On the way back, the Chairman proposed going to see Old Hou, the stableman. Old Hou had been with the Chairman ever since the Long March. He was faithful and hard-working, and the Chairman was very fond of him. When we walked into the compound, Old Hou hastily knocked the ashes out of his pipe against the sole of his shoe and ran up to shake the Chairman's hand.

"How's your health, Old Hou?" the Chairman asked him.

His face wreathed in smiles, Old Hou said: "Chairman, you haven't come out for a walk in days, and you don't ride your horse. I've been dying to see you!"

"Well, here I am!" the Chairman said with a laugh.

Smiling, Old Hou quickly led out the old black horse. When the animal saw the Chairman it began to prance, expecting him to mount.

The compound owner's young daughter, Lan-lan, a lively cute youngster not more than fourteen or fifteen, had none of the shy-

ness of little girls in the mountain regions. The spotless white homespun tunic she wore heightened the freshness of her appearance. As soon as she heard our voices, she rushed out to greet Comrade Chiang Ching. In her hand was a newly made pair of big cloth shoes.

Comrade Chiang Ching dropped in here often. Noticing that Lan-lan was bright and had nimble hands, she had asked her to make her some clothes. The clothes fit well, so she asked her to make a pair of cloth shoes for the Chairman.

Now the shoes were ready, and Lan-lan said to the Chairman, laughing: "I'm not very good at this. Please try them on and see if they fit." By then, her mother had also come over.

Smiling, the Chairman said: "Thank you. With these shoes, fighting and walking will both be easier."

Comrade Chiang Ching was delighted. She invited mother and daughter to come and call at the Chairman's cave dwelling. They both agreed. Lan-lan's little brother and sister also came along. Neither of the kids were the least bit shy. They ran up to the Chairman and each took one of his hands, looking at him and laughing innocently.

"Come and play with me!" the Chairman said fondly. And we all went down the mountain together. When we entered the compound, the Chairman invited his guests to be seated and asked with concern about their livelihood.

"We get along very well at home. We never have any hardship," replied Lan-lan. "Only when Hu Tsung-nan comes and we run away to the gorges and don't dare go home — we often go hungry then!"

Without waiting for the Chairman to speak, Lan-lan's mother quickly put in: "You silly child, all you know is the little hardship we had lately. You don't know what the older generation went through in the days before the Red Army was formed! Now, Bastard Hu has come to these parts, and we're suffering a bit. But as soon as we get back home we still have food and drink. When did we ever have that in the past?"

"Mama is right," the Chairman said. "In times of war there's bound to be some hardship. Things will be better after we beat Hu Tsung-nan."

"That's what we all think!" said Lan-lan's mother. "But how long will it be before the enemy's driven away?"

"Soon!" said the Chairman. "A year, at most!"

"That's really soon!" said Lan-lan's mother. "We could hold out eight or ten years if need be, to say nothing of one. We country folk have got the will. As long as Chairman Mao is still in northern Shensi, we're not scared of Bastard Hu!"

Throughout the whole period of the war of liberation in northern Shensi, wherever we went we always heard the same thing: "Our Chairman Mao is still in northern Shensi! We're not afraid of anything!" These words had become a tower of strength for all the people. People used these words to encourage each other while looking forward to victory and the future. Though there may be difficulties big as the sky, we'll conquer them all! Old Man Wang felt that way, and so did Lan-lan and her mother! When people spoke these phrases, they seemed to see their own leader amid barren mountains, or in a dilapidated dark windowless cave, thinking and planning for the future of the whole nation.

And today the Chairman's words were particularly inspiring. We would defeat the enemy in at most a year. That meant the victory which had been brewing was just about ready.

The next day the Chairman told us to get his things in order. He wanted to move to the place where Vice-Chairman Chou was staying. The Central Committee was going to hold an important conference and this place was too small. It couldn't accommodate many people.

According to instructions, we moved to the big compound on the bank of the stream. We heard that a goodly number were going to attend. Because the caves were too small, we hurriedly set up an arbour in the courtyard and carried out some wooden tables and chairs. Crude and simple, this place had to serve as the meeting hall.

General Ho Lung was the first to arrive. He was then Joint Defence Commander-in-Chief of Shensi, Kansu, Ningsia, Shansi



and Suiyuan. We saw a lot of him in Yen-an, and often heard people tell how he had joined the revolution with a cleaver. He was frank and straightforward by nature and loved to talk and laugh; he always would chat with the rank-and-file soldiers whenever they met. For this reason he was known affectionately among the commanders and men as "Good Old Marshal Ho." After Hu's bandit army launched its attack on northern Shensi, General Ho not only took part in the military planning for the area, he also commanded the local troops in active assaults on the enemy, and organized the manpower and resources of the rear into massive support for the fighting field army.

The Chairman came out of his cave dwelling to greet him, and warmly shook his hand. General Ho looked the Chairman over from head to toe. "Chairman!" he exclaimed. "You're thinner than you were in Yen-an!"

Chairman Mao laughed. "I feel fitter than I did in Yen-an. Marching is a good thing. It toughens the body. Now, without riding a horse, I can cover ten or twenty *li* and not feel tired."

General Chen Keng arrived next. He was my old commander. We knew him even better. A warm person with a cheerful direct way of speaking, he was a bold and firm commander in battle. His recent sweeping campaign across southern Shansi powerfully complemented the northern Shensi warfare.

When General Chen Keng saw Chairman Mao, the first thing he said was: "You've been through a lot of hardships and dangers, Chairman! You don't have enough guards and their arms are poor. We were really worried about you. The brigadiers all requested to come across the river and protect you!"

The Chairman shook hands with him and replied cordially: "This time I've asked you to come across the Yellow River but not to protect me!" Then the Chairman smiled: "Your forces are fighting very well in southern Shansi, you're hitting the enemy fatal blows. The good arms should be left to you. There's no need to worry about me here."

Northwest military and administrative leaders had all arrived one after another. The courtyard was soon very lively, with

seventeen or eighteen leaders laughing and talking together in high spirits. Commander-in-Chief Ho examined the arbour we had built of branches and leaves. In a moved voice he cried: "Chairman! Although my headquarters has electric light and sofas, some comrades still say it's not good enough. But here you are working under an arbour. When I go back, I'm going to tell them a thing or two!"

Vice-Chairman Chou had instructed our administrative personnel to do everything possible to make living conditions a bit easier for the leaders. Since there was no place to buy vegetables locally, the Suiteh prefectural Party committee sent us a few loads on pack donkeys every few days. But the weather was hot and the trip long. By the time the vegetables arrived, many were already wilted. There was no help for it. All we could do was go out and dig up wild vegetables. This particular kind was one the Chairman had discovered during a walk in Wangchiawan. It happened to grow here too. Everyone thought it was very tasty when it was served at the table. General Chen Keng liked it better with each mouthful. He couldn't stop praising it. "This is delicious," he said. "Is there any more?"

Everyone laughed. Vice-Chairman Chou said: "We've got plenty. We can dig some out whenever we want." And he told the cook Old Chou to heat up another platter.

During the conference, the Chairman spoke almost every day, at large meetings and small, as well as holding separate talks with the leaders of the various localities. He was extremely busy from morning till night. We knew from experience that the Chairman's work became tensest before the start of every big action. At this conference, which seemed to be one analysing how to co-ordinate the fighting on several battlefields, the work was especially heavy.

The conference lasted seven or eight days. Many questions were discussed. The atmosphere was very enthusiastic. When the talk turned to the northern Shensi battlefield, it was decided that our army should attack Yulin, lure the enemy up north, drag them around until they were exhausted, then find the right opportunity to wipe out their effectives. With regard to the Chen-Hsieh Army\*

\* The field army led by Chen Keng and Hsieh Fu-chih.

crossing the river, it was decided that they should drive into western Honan and threaten Sian, in support of the southern push of the Liu-Teng Army.\* From the way the discussion went, it was safe to say that victory was already in sight. A new situation with a huge counter-offensive was about to begin!

### Our March Is Our Classroom

The organizations of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party remained in the village of Hsiaoho for over forty days. The prelude to the new battle had commenced! In the beginning of August the main force of the Northwest Field Army drove straight up to Yulin. Hu's bandit army, panicky, hastily switched its forces from the southern front to the northern front, to relieve the besieged city. From the Chihtan-Ansai sector, following east along the Great Wall, came the enemy's Thirty-sixth Division, headed by Chung Sung.\*\* The combined seven brigades of Liu Kan and Tung Chao\*\*\* hurried north along the Hsienyang-Yulin highway. Bandit chief Chiang Kai-shek flew to Yen-an to supervise personally. All the enemy positions were thrown into confusion.

The village of Hsiaoho was in the path of the spearhead of the enemy's attack. According to our scouts' reports, the enemy's "swift brigade" was rushing with full force towards the village. The Central Committee organizations decided to move. On the evening of the thirty-first of July the Chairman told us to check and return the implements we had borrowed from the local people, and pay the original price of anything we had broken. We also were to call on every family and say goodbye. Soon after, Comrade Jen Pi-shih summoned all cadres of platoon leader rank and above to a mobilization meeting. He said we had a difficult

\* The field army led by Liu Po-cheng and Teng Hsiao-ping.

\*\* Commander of the Kuomintang 36th Division.

\*\*\* Commander of the Kuomintang's 1st Army.

march ahead of us. The enemy planned to blockade Suiteh and Michih, and surround us west of the Wuting River. In order to smash their plot we had to get to Suiteh first and find a chance to wipe them out. It was therefore necessary for everyone to display a tough and stubborn fighting spirit. After the meeting, Comrade Pi-shih inspected the defence positions of the guards detachment. Obviously, the situation was pretty tense.

Chairman Mao and the other leaders all rose early on the morning of August first. Knowing that we were leaving, the local people came in groups of four or five to see us off. The courtyard was quickly jammed full. Lan-lan, the young girl who had made the shoes for the Chairman, pushed her way up to him through the crowd and said: "I want to go with you!" then burst into tears.

"Lan-lan," the Chairman said with a smile, "you haven't left your mama yet and you're already crying. If you go with us and cry, your mama won't be around to comfort you!" His jesting made Lan-lan laugh. The Chairman waved his hand in greeting to the local people. "Old neighbours," he called, "we've lived here more than forty days. We've given you a lot of trouble!"

"You comrades helped us till the land," said the local people. "It's you who've had the trouble!"

The people swarmed around, shaking hands and holding on to our clothes, and could not stop saying how sorry they were to see us go. There were so many people and so many voices, it was hard to hear clearly what was being said. Vice-Chairman Chou stepped up on a rock and said in a loud voice:

"Old neighbours, you also know that the enemy may come this way. When we leave, you must bury and conceal everything and get ready to move! Don't let the enemy get hold of a single grain. Starve them to death! Pin them down! The day of the total destruction of the enemy isn't far off!"

At once the local people set up an excited cheer: "Wipe out Bastard Hu!"

Our troops were already far ahead, but the people still clustered around our leaders and wouldn't let them go.

"Please go home everybody," the Chairman said. "We'll be coming back again before long!"

Crowding ahead and behind, the local people saw the leaders to the edge of the village. The Chairman kept turning to wave his hand even after he had gone a good distance.

Our troops marched along the Tali River valley towards the east. At times wide, at times narrow, the river twisted through the mountains. All along the march, we had to keep crossing back and forth. Some places had a small bridge, others only a few big stepping stones. Travelling on horseback was plainly a nuisance, so the Chairman simply dismounted and walked. He chatted and joked with us all the way. At the shallow parts of the river, he was over the stepping stones in two or three bounds. Where the water was deep, and there were no stepping stones or bridge, the Chairman waded across with us, not even bothering to remove his shoes and socks. We sang the whole length of the journey.

Northern Shensi mornings in August are clear and cool, but when the sun gets overhead it burns like fire. Your clothes run with sweat and the stones bake so hot they seem ready to smoke. Gradually, our singing stopped. All we could do was pant with the heat. No one was better than the Chairman at noticing the comrades' change of mood. Seeing that we all had fallen silent, he took his straw hat off and fanned himself with it.

"This is very hard on you comrades," he said.

That remark immediately revived everybody's spirits. "We've only gone a few paces," many voices cried together. "You

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*Chairman Mao Tse-tung* by Liu Kai-chu →

Liu Kai-chu, a well-known Chinese sculptor, was born in 1904. He started studying painting in 1920 and in 1928 went to France to study sculpture. He is now a vice-chairman of the Chinese Artists' Union and vice-director of the Central Institute of Fine Arts.

In 1952 he was one of various noted artists from all parts of the country to work on the nine massive reliefs on the People's Heroes' Monument in Tienanmen Square in Peking. These reliefs, epitomizing the revolutionary struggle of the Chinese people during the last hundred years, have been widely acclaimed. In 1958, Liu Kai-chu sculpted a bust of Chairman Mao Tse-tung. The bust reproduced here is a more recent work.



can't call this hard!" "It can't be compared with the Long March!" "What's hard about it? We march when we feel like it, and rest when we feel like it. It's the enemy who've really got it hard. We're always pulling them along by the nose!"

The Chairman laughed heartily. "Well put! The enemy has a hard fate. The inhabitants and the surroundings are strange to them, and they came from south to north, without any support from the people. We're dragging them to pieces! We may have to suffer a bit of hardship, but we're winning victory in exchange."

The Chairman was always like that. Whenever there was an opportunity, he would talk to us about the current situation, or lead us into a discussion of useful questions. From the stars above to the earth below, political economy, ideological improvement, art and literature, labour and production — no topic was excluded. As a result, so far as we were concerned the march was a classroom where we could gain a lot of new knowledge.

Chatting with the guards as he walked, Chairman Mao asked them about their families, whether they had received any letters, how the harvests had been. Usually when we were in camp the Chairman was busy with his work and couldn't possibly get close to every man. But on the march he had a good chance to understand us all. Later on, he asked us whether we understood the significance of this march. We repeated what Comrade Pi-shih had told us at the mobilization meeting. The Chairman was obviously very satisfied.

"That's right," he said. "If we fight this battle well, the entire military situation will change."

Somehow the conversation turned to a discussion of which unit fought the best. Someone commended the New Fourth Brigade. Suddenly the Chairman pointed at me and said:

"Yen Chang-lin, you're from the New Fourth Brigade. Tell us, what is it that makes the New Fourth Brigade so formidable in battle?"

It's a shame to admit it, but although I had been in the New Fourth Brigade for years I had never properly summed up and analysed the courageous and skilful battle experiences of my own

unit. I thought only of one reason. "Because the Party leads us well!" I said.

"That's the most fundamental reason!" said the Chairman. "With strong Party leadership, the fighting quality of an army is bound to be high. Our revolutionary armies all have that characteristic."

Without thinking, I blurted: "Our New Fourth Brigade is different in other ways. One is that most of our men are from Hopei!"

The Chairman shook his head. "Not all Hopei men are necessarily good fighters. In the Three Kingdoms period, weren't the famous Hopei generals Yen Liang and Wen Chou both killed by Kuan Yun-chang of Shansi?"

Everyone roared with laughter. I could feel my face getting a bit warm. For the moment, I didn't know what to say. The Chairman saw my embarrassment, and he said:

"Whether you can fight or not doesn't depend on what province you're from. The Kuomintang soldiers are the worst fighters, but as soon as we liberate them, and they have some class education and take part in speak-bitterness movements,\* and they understand why they are fighting and who they are fighting for, they immediately become good fighting soldiers."

At once a light dawned in my mind. My thinking had still had some remnants of regional prejudice!

"It doesn't matter if you say the wrong thing," the Chairman encouraged me. "Think again, carefully. If it's right, everyone will accept it. If it's wrong, we'll all analyse it, and then you'll understand."

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\* Speak bitterness meant speaking out the bitterness which the old society and the reactionaries had inflicted on the labouring people. Through the speak bitterness movement the army was able to greatly raise the political consciousness of all its officers and men and at the same time very effectively accelerate the remoulding of large numbers of captured Kuomintang soldiers into liberation army fighters. It played an important role in consolidating and extending the People's Liberation Army and its victories.

I thought a moment, then, gathering my courage, said: "The New Fourth Brigade has many veterans. Nearly all joined back in 1938."

"There's a reason that can stand!" said the Chairman.

"Nearly all our cadres are old Red Army men who were on the Long March," I went on.

"Veteran cadres are experienced in directing warfare," said the Chairman. "That's also a reason. Any more?"

"Our arms aren't bad either," I said.

The Chairman nodded. "Right. With veteran cadres, veteran fighters, a high level of class consciousness, always winning victories — arms and equipment are sure to be plentiful."

I said a few more things. Some were right, some were wrong. The Chairman patiently helped me analyse, one by one — which were the main reasons, which were secondary, which didn't count as experience at all. With the Chairman pointing these things out, I seemed to become more familiar with our own troops. All during the march I berated myself for ordinarily not using my head, not trying hard enough to learn. Not only was the Chairman constantly concerned about our political progress, but there was never a moment when he wasn't giving attention to strengthening our ability to analyse problems.

*(to be concluded)*

*Translated by Sidney Shapiro*



CHAO SHU-LI

## The Unglovable Hands

The training section of the Millstone Hill Brigade, White Cloud Hills People's Commune, had been set up when the brigade was still an advanced agricultural co-operative. Its job was to teach technique to those who were novices at farming. When the advanced co-op was formed in 1956, a lot of women and school students who had never done any field work before were convinced they should take part. Their work was far below standard, so the co-op chairman, Chen Man-hung, proposed that this training section be organized and that two highly skilled old peasants be chosen as teachers; some land that had a low output anyway, and so didn't matter much if it were badly tended, could be used as the training ground. After the management committee approved the idea, a few score *mu* of poor soil on top of Millstone Hill and a couple of small orchards in the valley on the southern side were set aside. Two teachers were selected. One was Chen Man-hung's father — Chen Ping-cheng. The other was an old orchard tender named Wang Hsin-chun. Old Chen was made section chief and Old Wang was appointed his assistant.

The members of the section kept coming and going. Usually they worked in the regular field teams. It was only when Old Chen or Old Wang were teaching some type of farming which the trainees couldn't do or couldn't do well, that they joined the section. Although most of those receiving training were newcomers to farming, there were some exceptions. The first were people who had been farming regularly but who weren't good at this

or that type of farm work. When instruction was being given in the technique they needed, they would volunteer for the section. The second were people who did a certain type of farm work poorly, not because they couldn't have done it better but because they didn't want to. If their field team talked it over and decided it was necessary, they were sent for training. During their period of learning they received only sixty percent of the daily points given for whatever work the section was doing at the time. For this kind of person the training was considered a form of mild punishment.

Section Chief Chen was seventy-six years old. Ordinarily, a person of such advanced age would have stopped doing heavy field work long ago, but this old man was exceptionally healthy. In his youth, he could do one and a half times as much as any of his mates. The average young fellow found it hard keeping up with him, even now that he was old.

In the winter of 1958 after the commune was formed and the Millstone Hill Agricultural Producers' Co-operative became one of the commune's brigades, the brigade again elected Man-hung as its leader. It established a Home of Respect for the Aged and, after a discussion, declared Old Chen qualified to retire and enter. He stayed only three days. The old man felt that the light work they did there, like shredding hemp or picking the seeds out of cotton, didn't give him enough outlet for his energy. At his own request he left the Home of Respect for the Aged and went back to his job as chief of the training section.

Old Chen was not only the most skilled farmer in Millstone Hill, he was the model worker of the entire White Cloud Hills region. No terrace wall that he built ever collapsed; in the smoke pits made by his hands the flames never went out in the middle of smoking fertilizer. As for ordinary jobs like ploughing, planting, hoeing and harvesting, there was even less chance of anyone surpassing him.

He demanded of the members of his training section not only standard work but proper form. He said that unless your form was correct you couldn't possibly do work that was up to standard. Take the second hoeing, for instance. The form he demanded was: incline the waist to a definite angle; slant the body and step sideways, being careful where you put your feet; grasp the handle

firmly with both hands, driving the hoe blade accurately with each stroke but not making it tremble. His standard was: chop down almost to the roots of the crop without turning over the topsoil; when covering roots with soil, pile it neatly in three strokes, flat and even on top, not pointed.

Whenever he began to teach anything, he always demonstrated first, letting his students watch him from the side. He lectured as he worked, often explaining the same movement over a dozen times. Only then would he let the learners try while he observed. His rules were so numerous that the pupils would forget one while remembering another. Sometimes their backs were too straight, or their steps careless, or the strokes of their hoes haphazard. Things they should have been able to do with one stroke, they would still muff even after numerous swings. Old Chen would keep up a continuous flow of instructions, reminding this one, calling out to that one, and frequently interrupting to give more demonstrations.

One fellow named Ho Ho-ho had been hoeing with a straight back all his life. Every time he brought his hoe down, the blade bounced three times. It cut weeds if it bounced into the weeds; it injured sprouts if it bounced into the sprouts. After the training section was formed, his field team decided to send him for instruction. The first day he arrived, Old Chen as usual showed him the correct stance for hoeing. But this fellow, whose nickname was "Ha Ha Ha," was pretty lazy. After hoeing a few strokes with a bent back, he straightened up again.

Old Chen was rather creative. The next day he brought an extra hoe blade from home and attached a handle to it only three feet long. He gave it to the fellow and said: "This short-handled hoe is the only thing that will cure you for good of hoeing with a straight back." And sure enough it did cure him. Because with a handle only three feet long, if you don't bend your back your blade won't even touch the ground. When the field teams heard about this, they all prepared a few short-handled hoes, reserving them specially for those who were in the habit of hoeing without bending their backs.

The pupils were worn out after a session of practising form, and Old Chen rested with them. About nine terraces down, on

the bank of a dry stream bed, Old Wang, the assistant section chief, was teaching orchard planting to another group of pupils. During their breaks, the upper and lower groups usually hailed each other, and the two old men got together for a smoke and a chat. The pupils also met to read a small newspaper, or to exchange talk and laughter.

As soon as he saw Old Wang, Old Chen always extended his hand to shake hands, and Old Wang always hastily pulled his back. Old Wang, ten years or more younger than Old Chen, was Chen's good friend. But Wang was afraid to shake hands with him, for he knew once he put his hand into Chen's vice-like grip it would be very painful.

During one of the rest periods, Chen invited Wang up for a smoke. Chen began striking sparks into his pipe with flint and steel. Wang said: "It would be easier if you lit some tinder first and took your light from that!" A middle school student, who had just joined the training section, wanting to be helpful, looked around but couldn't find anything except a couple of dry persimmon tree twigs about two inches long each.

Old Wang laughed. "You needn't bother," he said. "Grandpa Chen has tinder."

The young man looked, but he didn't see any. Old Chen also said, "I've got some." Calmly putting down his flint and steel, he scabbled around in the soil on either side of him with both hands without even looking, and picked up two large handfuls of bark and old grain roots and such. While Old Wang struck a match and lit them, Old Chen picked up two more handfuls and also added these to the little blaze. "That's not a bad trick," the student said, and he too started to grope in the soil beside him.

Old Chen cried: "Careful! You'd better not do that!" But he was a bit too slow. The student had already pricked his middle finger with something sharp, and he quickly pulled back his hand. "What kind of hands have you got, child," Old Wang scolded, "and what kind has he? His fingers are like iron rake tines. No thorn or splinter can pierce them!"

Rubbing his injured finger, the student examined Old Chen's hands. They were indeed different from other people's: square palms, fingers short and thick, none of them able to straighten out, covered with callouses front and back, the round end sections

like halves of fat cocoons topped by fingernails, and giving the over-all impression of small rakes made of branches. But there was nothing appreciative about the student's gaze. If anything, it was a trifle contemptuous, as if to say — "How can you call those things 'hands?'"

Both of the old men noted the student's manner. Old Chen said nothing. He merely smoked his pipe with a smile of quiet pride. After lighting his own pipe, Old Wang criticized the young man. "You shouldn't look lightly at those hands, young fellow!" he said. "If it weren't for those two hands, this very field our training section is planting would still be an arid waste! This whole hill once belonged to Landlord Wang. These score or more sections on the top, according to the old timers, weren't cultivated for more than thirty years. In that period, neither Chen's family nor mine had even an inch of ground of our own. Chen worked for the landlord as a hired hand, I herded the landlord's oxen. Later, Chen cleared this wasteland. I grew up and was promoted from herd boy to hired hand, learning from the chief hired hand to tend orchards on the banks of the river. All this land here was cleared, hoe stroke by hoe stroke, and built up, terrace by terrace, by Old Chen and his son Man-hung, the present leader of our production brigade. If it weren't for those two hands, wouldn't this place still be a wasteland?"

The student was a little sorry he had been scornful, but he didn't like to admit he was wrong, so he only said mockingly: "No wonder we're learning so slowly. The trouble is we don't have hands like that!"

"We're teaching you to use your hands to work like mine, not to grow hands that look like mine!" Old Chen corrected him solemnly. "If I hadn't cleared the mountain, my hands wouldn't look like this either. The older generation has already cleared the land, and one of these days we'll be having mechanization, so you young fellows won't have to develop hands like these!"

Although Old Chen hoped others wouldn't have to have hands like his, he was proud of his own rugged hands. They were not merely hard, they were also nimble. He liked to weave, and made all kinds of useful articles out of bramble. He also could make many different toys of sorghum stalks. Instead of the usual cow's horn, he used his finger after cuts had been made at one end

to slit the bramble lengthwise, but the tough skin on his finger wasn't even scratched. And when he did fine work, it was so delicate you couldn't believe it was done by his two hands. The cricket cages he built of sorghum stalks had doors and windows, and little upper and lower stories. The two-inch square lattice-work windows were of various designs, with openings so small that even a bee couldn't have crept through.

As the countryside advanced from land reform to mutual-aid teams to co-operatives to people's communes, the income of Old Chen's family steadily increased. In the winter of fifty-nine, his children and grandchildren bought him a pair of woollen gloves to protect those hands that had worked so hard and so well. "These hands have never enjoyed such good fortune before!" he said when accepting the gift.

He tried them on. They were too small in the palms, and the fingers were too long and narrow, but he managed to force them on. The palm sections stretched square, the lower halves of the fingers grew thicker, while the upper halves dangled empty.

"They'll fit better after you use them a while," said his son Man-hung.

The old man clasped them together, then extended them before him and said: "Not bad!" Then he took them off and gave them to Man-hung's wife, saying: "Put them away for me, for the time being!"

"Why don't you wear them, pa?" asked his daughter-in-law. "Don't your hands get cold out in the fields?"

"We're building a stashed in the valley. I can't carry stones wearing gloves!" He put them down and went out. But after the stashed was built, other work followed — cutting hay, cleaning sheep pens, storing turnips, threshing corn. . . . It was inconvenient to wear gloves on any of these jobs. The old man forgot he ever had a pair.

One day there was a trade fair in the village of White Cloud Hills. Man-hung's wife urged the old man to go. "You don't have to teach much technique for the jobs being done this time of the year. Take a day off and stroll around the fair." The old man agreed. He put on a new cotton padded jacket, tying it at the waist with a new sash,

"Now you can wear your gloves!" his daughter-in-law said. Taking them out, she gave them to him. He pulled them on and left.

Millstone Hill Village was small. It had no branch of the consumers' co-operative. When the old man put on his new clothes and gloves and walked down the street and his neighbours saw that he was going to the village of White Cloud Hills, many of them asked him to buy things for them. Three ounces of cooking oil for this family, two catties of salt for that. . . . It added up to more than he'd be able to carry in his two hands, so he borrowed a small basket from one of his neighbours.

Arriving in White Cloud Hills, he strolled halfway down the main street to the consumers' co-op, bought all the things people had requested him to buy, and went on. As he was passing the gate of the commune office compound, he noticed that the implements store nearby had just received a shipment of mulberry wood pitchforks. Salesmen were busily unloading them from the truck. This locality hadn't seen any new pitchforks for the past two years. Every brigade was short of them. Old Chen thought the chance too good to miss.

He hadn't brought any money, but his son Man-hung was at a meeting in the commune office — perhaps he had some. Old Chen hurried in and told him. Man-hung said: "Ha! Those things are precious! Buy some, quick!" He took fifty yuan out of his pocket and gave the money to the old man.

Old Chen rushed back to the implements store and began selecting pitchforks. He was very demanding about farm implements. He couldn't stand one that was faulty. Taking off his gloves, he shoved them inside his tunic. Then he picked out a pitchfork and pressed the three pronged head against the ground, examining to see whether the tines were even and strong, whether the head was on straight, whether the handle was bent or not.

But before he finished looking over the first fork, about a dozen more customers had arrived. Each one grabbed a pitchfork and started inspecting it. In the flash of an eye, the store was full of pitchfork buyers. Even the commune brigade leaders recessed their meeting to come out and buy pitchforks. These people didn't pick and choose. They just asked the price and bought.

Old Chen could see that the situation was getting tense. Not daring to go on selecting according to his own high standards, he hastily picked five pitchforks at random. The rest were snatched up by other customers. After paying for his purchase, he tied the pitchforks together and put them on his shoulder. Holding the basket in his other hand, he pushed his way out of the crowded implements store. Because he was carrying too many things, he gave up the idea of strolling

down the lower half of the main street, and left White Cloud Hills Village via the same lane he had come in.

Once out in the open again, he no longer felt crowded; the road was wide. He put his hand in his tunic and groped for his gloves. He found only one of them. Putting down the basket and the bundle of pitchforks, he unfastened his belt sash and searched more thoroughly, but there was no sign of the other glove. He was sure he had left it in the implements store.

"If it's lost, it's lost!" he thought. "It's never been of much use to me anyhow!" He retied his sash, shouldered his pitchforks, picked up the basket, and continued towards home. But after a few steps, he thought: "The children meant well when they bought them for me. It wouldn't be right for me to go back without even looking for that lost glove!" So he retraced his steps to the farm implements store at the trade fair in the village of White Cloud Hills. Fortunately, a salesman had found the glove and left it with the cashier. As soon as Old Chen came in, they returned it to him.

Quite some time later, Old Chen was again elected one of the model workers of the year. He was invited to the county seat



to attend a model workers' conference. Naturally, this was another occasion for him to wear his gloves. He changed into his new padded tunic, fastened it with his new sash belt, and donned his gloves once more.

Big Millstone Hill is forty *li* from the county seat, and the winter days are short. So Old Chen set out immediately after breakfast. He didn't arrive until the sun was about to set behind the hills. That day, all he had to do was check in. On reaching the county seat, he went to where he was supposed to report and registered. He was issued a convention pass, then taken to a hostel.

He hadn't been to the county for half a year, and he found it greatly changed. The streets were wider, the avenues had been smoothed. The ramshackle old hostel where he had put up previously when attending conferences had been thoroughly renovated into row after row of brick buildings with tile roofs. It was already dark when he entered the hostel compound, and lights were shining in the windows of the rear rows of buildings adjoining the central walk, which meant that the rooms were already occupied. In the first three rows of buildings, some of the windows were lit, some were dark. He went to the registration office and signed his name. Then one of the attendants led him to the second row on the west side, number five. He observed that there was a light in number six, but the rest of the rooms in that row were still dark. On the ground underfoot he could feel various hard and soft objects. He didn't know what they were.

"Watch your step, old neighbour," the attendant cautioned him. "These buildings were finished only a week ago. We haven't had time yet to clean up the courtyard. Better come this way. There's a lime pit over there. Stick close to the wall. Over that way are two big logs. . . ."

At number five, the attendant opened the door, went in first and turned on the light. Only then did he ask the old man to enter. The room was very clean. A warm fire was burning in the stove. Before the window were a table, two chairs and a stool. In the rear of the room, beside each of the side walls, were two beds. The door and windows had not been painted yet, but the walls looked newly whitewashed. The heat of the stove made them give off a faintly damp odour.

Noting the beds, Old Chen asked: "Four people to a room?"

"That's right, four."

"Are you filled up for this conference?"

"We will be when everybody gets here. Some of the more distant people haven't come yet. You have a good rest. I'll bring you some warm water for a wash."

In a few moments, the attendant returned with hot water, and Old Chen washed his face. People from the further districts kept arriving. Second row, west, soon was fully occupied. Old Chen's room-mates in number five were three young fellows. Everyone introduced himself.

The conference lasted three and a half days, during which the old man listened to reports, prepared a speech of his own, and in general was very busy like everyone else. It wasn't until after a summation by the county Communist Party committee on the morning of the fourth day that the conference could really be considered at an end.

Those who lived fairly near to the county seat left for home that afternoon. Those whose homes were further away stayed overnight. Old Chen was forty *li* from his village. Though it wasn't so far, it wasn't exactly near either. Had he been a young man, with fast walking he probably could have made it by dark. But Old Chen was getting on in years. He didn't feel like groping through the night. So he also decided to remain in the hostel until the following morning.

After lunch, those who were staying over took a walk around the town. The old man went to number five first and found his three young room-mates playing cards with a man from number four.

"Aren't you going to see the town?" he asked them.

"You go ahead, grandpa," they replied. "We'll follow in a little while."

Old Chen tied his sash, put on his gloves and left the room. Because two big logs were blocking the path, after passing number four, he always had to hug the wall of number three to get by. He thought this a nuisance.

"It would be much better if those logs were moved to one side," he said to himself. "But where should they be moved to?"

Squatting down in front of number four, he surveyed the scene. He decided the best place would be south of the lime pit. Having picked his spot, he removed his gloves and placed them on the step. Then he tried shifting one of the logs. Both ends of this log had been cut off, and the middle part that remained was knotty, short, thick and curved, with squared sides. Moving it was very difficult. With a bit of effort Old Chen managed to raise one end of the log. But after rotating it a turn along its edges, he had to drop it again to the ground. Looking for a helper, he knocked on the door of number four. But everyone had gone out. Then he returned to number five and said to the young fellows: "Comrades, give me a hand. Let's roll those two logs to a side and clear the path, what do you say?"

"Fine! I tried doing it myself yesterday, but I didn't have the strength," replied one of the young men. He put down his cards. The other three also agreed in the same breath. All rose and went into the courtyard. The old man untied his sash, laid his new padded tunic on his bed, and followed.

But when he tried to join them, one of the young fellows stopped him and said: "You just take things easy, grandpa, there are enough of us to do this job." Four young fellows were just right for the short log. There was no place for the old man to get a hand in. He had no choice but to let them roll the log without him.

He began trying to roll the second one himself. The four young men by then had rolled the first log to its destination. Seeing Old Chen working on the second, one of them hurried up to him and said: "Don't bother, grandpa. We can carry this one." Another young fellow came over and they tried lifting the log. This one was a bit longer than the first, but it was thick at one end and thin at the other. The thin end was lifted all right, but the fellow at the thick end couldn't budge it though he tugged and strained.

"It's no use," he said, giving up. The other fellow, seeing that his mate couldn't get the heavy end off the ground, was about to drop his end too, when Old Chen cried: "I'll do it!" He leaned forward and gripped the log with both hands, bent his legs like a man on horseback, then, pulling as he straightened his legs, smoothly and easily raised the log. The young fellow who hadn't

been able to lift the thick end looked at a mate and stuck up his thumb in admiration, then both of them rushed over to relieve Old Chen of his burden.

"You're certainly all right, grandpa!" they said. "But you're an old man. Better let us take over."

An attendant who came along with a pot of hot water, when he saw what they were doing, said hastily: "Thanks very much! Our hostel people will do it!"

"It doesn't amount to anything!" said the young men.

"We managed to clean up all the courtyards before the conference except in the first three rows. Once the conference started we got too busy," explained the attendant. "Tomorrow morning after all you guests leave, we'll get on with the job. It won't even take us two days!"

"Why wait until we leave?" asked Old Chen. "Our conference is over. What could be a better time for us to help you clean up this courtyard now?"

"It's not right to trouble you," said the attendant.

"No trouble at all," replied Old Chen and the young men.

Other comrades in second row, west, who hadn't gone into town, hearing this exchange, also came out of their rooms to indicate their agreement with Old Chen. The attendant rushed off to ask the manager. The others didn't wait for his return, but immediately started looking for things to use in the clean up.

Because the tidying of the first three rows hadn't been finished, there were plenty of shovels, brooms, baskets and carrying-poles lying around the courtyard of the fourth row, east, and the guests soon had them in hand. Old Chen wanted to tote a shoulder pole and basket, but the others, seeing his long grey beard, wouldn't let him no matter what he said. He had to settle for a large bamboo broom and join in sweeping the yard.

Model workers are, after all, model workers. When the remaining guests in the other rooms of the first three rows saw what the guests in second row, west, were doing, they all came out and did the same. In a little while, the attendant came back with the manager. When the manager's urging the guests not to bother proved in vain, he had no choice but to call out all the hostel's office personnel, book-keepers and attendants in a general mobilization, and the entire staff pitched in with the model workers.

While everyone shovelled up the bits of brick, broken tile, tree bark and sawdust scattered around the courtyard, Old Chen followed with his broom. Starting by the wall in the southwest corner of second row, west, he advanced facing north, swinging his big broom in steady strokes. When he had swept as far as the window of room number six, he noticed some mud and shavings on the sill. He raised the wide bamboo broom, but because the sill was too small, he couldn't get at it. Putting down the broom, he cleaned the sill with his unscratchable hands. He looked down the line of rooms towards the east and noticed that every sill was dirty. So he moved on, from six, to five, to four . . . wiping every sill clean. Then he returned to the western side of the courtyard and resumed his sweeping.

Work goes well when you have a lot of people. In little over an hour, all six courtyards were clean, the rubbish was piled on both sides of the main walk, and the usable materials were deposited in a special place for them outside the back gate, where a truck would pick them up that night. The old man surveyed the excellent results appreciatively for some time. Now that the place was tidy, he felt, walking around was much pleasanter.

The manager, the office personnel, the book-keepers and the attendants all brought water for the model workers so that they could wash their hands and faces. After everyone had washed, some went for a stroll along the streets. Old Chen once more put on his padded tunic and tied his waist sash. But when he went for his gloves, he discovered that they were gone again.

"Have any of you seen a pair of gloves?" he asked a few of the young men.

"No," replied one. "Where did you leave them?"

"On the doorstep of number four."

"I've seen one!" said another young fellow. "When we were collecting the rubbish I saw a glove all covered with mud in a bunch of shavings. I thought someone must have thrown away an old glove."

"Right! Probably I buried them under the shavings I scraped off the window sill of room number four. You didn't see them and covered them over with dirt!"

Old Chen hastened to the rubbish piles along the main walk. But the rubbish from second row, west, alone was enough to fill several score baskets. How could he possibly find them?

An attendant who saw him, asked: "What are you looking for, old grandpa?"

"I've got a pair of gloves in here somewhere!"

"Are you sure?"

"Positive!"

"I'll find them for you, then. You take a stroll around town."

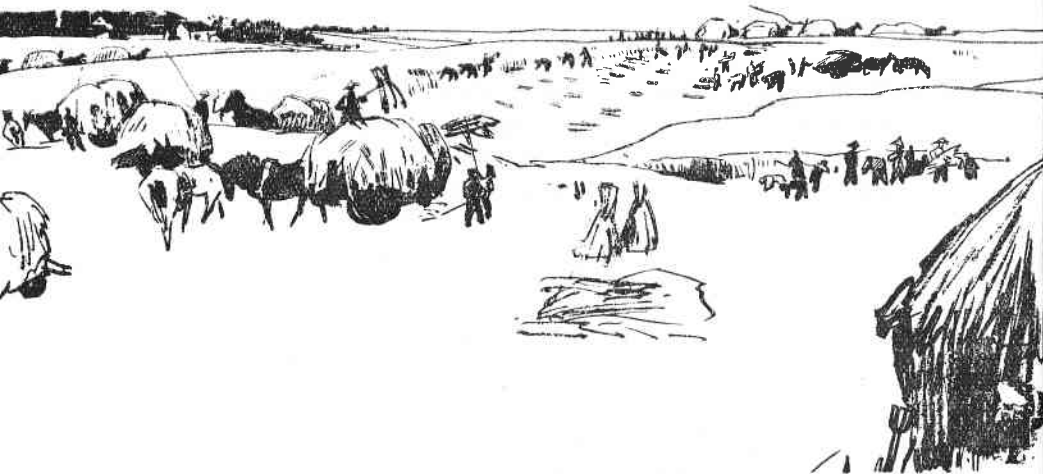
"Don't bother. Those gloves aren't of much use to me!" The old man promptly gave them up.

He took a long walk through the streets. Except for the new buildings that he hadn't seen half a year before, there wasn't much else that interested him. "I don't want to buy anything, and I've nothing to sell," he thought. "Why should I hang around these shops?" He returned to the hostel. It wasn't dark yet when he got back. The young fellows who shared his room were still out. An attendant opened the room door for him and told him the gloves had been found. Old Chen stepped in. The fire was pleasantly warm, as usual. His gloves had been washed nice and clean by an attendant. They were drying on the back of a chair near the stove.

Old Chen arrived home the following day. After he changed his clothes, he gave the gloves to Man-hung's wife.

"I'd better return these to you," he said. "These hands of mine just can't keep gloves on them!"

*Translated by Sidney Shapiro  
Illustration by Pan Chiang*



LI CHUN

## Sowing the Clouds

### 1

This spring we went to the Jade Mountain People's Commune. Walking down the road, we were caught in a scattered shower. "Spring rain is more precious than oil." Already chopstick high and growing steadily, the delicately verdant wheat drank its fill of the hazy rain. Slowly, each sprout unfolded two large green and tender leaves.

Everyone took shelter under an open thatched shed by the side of the road. Talking and laughing, the peasants discussed this good rain as they shook the drops from their umbrellas or removed their tunics to dry them in the breeze. The little shed was soon very lively and very crowded.

It was coming down hard now, and a girl dashed in from the road. She must have been about eighteen or nineteen. Tall, the wet clothes plastered to her body made her look even taller and accentuated her strong healthy lines. Purity and firmness shone in her handsome eyes. Not bothering to wring the water from her garments or scrape the mud from her feet, she merely brushed

from her forehead a few dripping locks of jet black hair. Selecting a spot beneath the edge of the roof that was just out of the rain, she stood there silently.

A couple of golden clouds appeared in the sky and the rain stopped. Everyone poured out of the shed like water from a sluice gate and hurried back to the road. Only the girl didn't move. She hesitated, stepped deeper into the shed, then shouted:

"More rain's coming, comrades!"

But by then everyone had rolled up his trouser-legs and was hastening on. Very few people heard her. Sure enough, before they had gone two hundred paces, a fury of raindrops pelted down, like beans pouring out of a sieve.

Laughing, everyone came running back to the shed and again crowded in under its thatched roof. Because they didn't take evenly spaced positions, the shed seemed more packed than before. Moving slightly to make room for others, the girl resumed her stand by the edge of the shed. Although she still said nothing, everyone had noticed her by now, and several people struck up a conversation with her.

"How did you know it was going to rain again, sis?"

"Those golden clouds we saw just now were 'shower clouds.'"

"How much longer is it going to last?" Everyone had quieted down now and was listening.

"Not very long. This is morning rain. It'll clear by the afternoon," the girl replied in an offhand manner.

"There's a lot of rain here in spring," someone said.

"No, there isn't," the girl contradicted. "Last year from the first to the twelfth of April we had no rain at all. But on the thirteenth, exactly the same date as today, we had four fingers of rain."

"What about the fourteenth?" a young man asked her deliberately.

"Clear, becoming cloudy."

"And the fifteenth?"

"Overcast, with a strong southwest wind in the afternoon."

"And the sixteenth?" The young man seemed determined to see it through to the end.

"Clear. There was no more rain till the seventh of June, when we had ten millimetres."



The girl's answers were quite effortless. Her memory was remarkable. The statistics of a year before were right on the tip of her tongue. Everyone gaped at this methodical girl, and more people began questioning her.

"Are you a meteorologist?" someone asked her.

"That's right," she replied simply. "I'm the meteorologist at the weather forecasting station of our people's commune."

"Where did you get such a good memory?" someone else queried.

The girl blushed. She couldn't think of a suitable reply.

No one asked her any more. The talk turned to this year's wheat. But everyone was thinking: "That girl is all right!"

The rain stopped. In the high-yield fields the wheat shimmered greenly translucent in the sunlight. Raindrops like mercury rolled slowly down the wheat leaves and dropped onto the soft earth. Everyone walked on. Our group shouldered our luggage and proceeded to the management committee of the people's commune. We were received by Comrade Kuan Tien-chi, secretary of the commune Party committee. A cheery man in his forties, he was extremely straightforward and enthusiastic. He spoke emphatically and was obviously honest and sincere.

"How much wheat are we planting here this year?" we asked him.

"74,263 mou." Kuan smiled. "This year we started collecting fertilizer early. Seventy percent of our fields have already had three top dressings."

His precise earnest way of talking reminded us of the girl we had met in the roadside shed. Evidently all the cadres and people around here were practical and down to earth. At the time we didn't know that the girl belonged to this particular commune. The next day, when Secretary Kuan was showing us around one of the production brigades, we ran into her outside the village.

She was at her "observatory," noting the marks in her temperature recording box. When she saw us, she smiled and asked: "Did you get caught in any more rain that day?"

"No," we said. "Are you the meteorologist of this commune?"

"Yes!" she replied with a laugh.

"This is Hsiao Shu-ying," said the secretary. "She does her work very well. She's one of the 'Red Flag Bearers' for the entire province. Everyone has a lot of confidence in her."

Our respect for the girl increased after hearing Secretary Kuan's introduction. Later, when our conference of three grades of cadres was concluded, we went to call on her in her weather station. This is what she told us.

2

"Where shall I start?" she asked.

"Start from the rain we got caught in the other day!" we said.

She laughed. "That day a comrade asked me how I got such a good memory? Concentration! Actually, my memory used to be pretty bad. My ma was always scolding me for losing things. I think everybody's memory's about the same. It all depends what you concentrate it on. In the winter of '58 our commune sent me to the provincial capital for a course in meteorology. Before I left, Secretary Kuan said to me, 'Shu-ying, work hard on this course. Our commune is in a mountain region, on the edge of the county and on the border of the province. Today our people's communes do large-scale collective production, and they must have weather stations. So make sure you come home with the goods!'

"I didn't even know what 'meteorology' meant at the time. But since the Party committee was sending me, I knew it must be necessary. We were making big leaps forward in all branches of our work, so there was no use saying the course might be too hard. I decided I'd just go and then see what I'd see. We were smelting iron out of the rocks on Jade Mountain—you could see that people were capable of big things!

"On the thirteenth of the last lunar month, my pa, carrying my luggage, walked with me through a big snowstorm, and saw me off at the bus station. I arrived in the provincial capital on New Year's Day. The course began right after the holiday. I took one look at my classmates and my heart began to flutter. They were all primary school and lower middle school graduates. The only thing I had ever graduated from was a quick literacy

course. The trouble with those courses was that you learned to read pretty well, but you wrote too slowly. Your hand just couldn't move fast enough, and the fountain pen felt like it weighed a few hundred catties.

"The first day of the meteorology class I placed my notebook neatly on the desk, took out my fountain pen and tried to take lecture notes like the others. But how could I! My characters were as big as dates. I couldn't get down more than three words out of every sentence. An icy northeast wind was blowing outside the classroom window, but my forehead was damp with sweat.

"That night as I lay on my bed I was very worried. Though we were all so busy at the commune, I was sent out to study. But at this rate what would I learn? How could I do any weather forecasting when I got back? I remembered what the Party secretary had told me, and what my pa had said, and the more I thought the worse I felt. I wondered whether to write a letter and ask the commune to send someone in my place, but our commune was far away. Just to send a letter and get a reply would take half a month. It all seemed pretty hopeless. But then, suddenly I remembered the phrase big leap forward. If we could make a big leap forward in raising crops, and a big leap forward in producing our own iron and steel, why couldn't I make a big leap forward in education? My brain seemed to clear, and I thought of a plan.

"The next day in class I didn't try to take any notes. I concentrated on listening, straining to remember every word. You needn't laugh. That was how I started training my memory.

"What I memorized during the day I wrote down in my notebook, word for word, at night. Sometimes I rewrote my notes two or three times — anyhow it was good writing practice and I had a nice bright electric lamp. Some nights the other students went to the movies, but I stayed home. Or they took a stroll through the streets, but I never went with them. In the two months I spent in the provincial capital I never even discovered where the big department store was.

"I kept on that way for a month. I managed to write everything down all right, only my eyes got a little bit red from staying up late. When the Party secretary of the training course found out what I was doing, he told the teacher to give me special help.

I was really embarrassed. The teacher had to repeat every lecture just for me. But then I thought — it's all for the cause of the Party. My job is just to plug away at my studies.

"By the third lunar month, the training course was over. I never expected it, but I came out first in my class. At our graduation assembly, the school director said: 'Take a look, everybody. A girl who is practically 'blind' in literacy had done better than fifty other students whose 'eyes' are 'wide open'! . . . My eyes grew moist. If it hadn't been for the Party, how would I have been able to get this knowledge?

"I hadn't been home for nearly three months, but I certainly thought about it. Especially about my ma and Orchid. Orchid and I are great friends. A few years ago we always wore tunics of the same flowered cloth, and plaited our braids in the same way. Though we're both grown up now, we still like to meet and chat together. I was also curious to know what changes there'd been in our people's commune these last few months.

"I arrived in the county seat on the fourth, and rushed back to the commune the first thing the following morning. The moment I crossed the big dyke, my heart expanded. In the distance I could see our commune's red flag and the tall sails of the windmill on the western flats. The peach trees we had planted the year before last were pink with blossoms; they circled the village in a rosy cloud. The wheat in the fields was plump and green. When the breeze blew it rippled like a sea. To one side of the village was a long swath of golden rape. It really was a pretty scene.

"I love to look at our country crops. They're always changing. Every time you come home from a trip they put on a different dress. Now they're green and shiny, but in another couple of weeks they'll be a beautiful golden yellow. And our pig farm had developed too. When I left, the plans for it had only just been drawn. But when I came back there was already a lot of new construction, big and bright on the southern slope.

"As I gazed around, I heard a whip snapping in the willow grove. From the sound of it I knew that my big brother was coming with his horse cart. I yelled to him and, sure enough, the voice that shouted back from the grove was my brother's.

"You don't know my big brother. He's the leader of our youth brigade. Tall, dark, we call him Bronze Hammer. He's a wonderful worker, and he's very direct. When he was small, ma used to say he was dug out of the mountains — he's so strong. But his thinking was still a little backward when I came home from the training course. After I sat down on his cart he said:

"Shu-ying, you studied up in the provincial capital for a couple of months. What did you learn?"

"I learned meteorology!" I told him. "That means predicting the weather. It's very important. It's the staff officer to the commanders of agriculture —"

"Shu-ying," he interrupted, "the way I see it, the main thing for us young people to do in this big leap forward is to put a little more muscle into physical labour!"

"Other kinds of work have to be done too!" I told him, but I couldn't convince him. We quarrelled all the way home. As we came down the dyke, I saw a line of people approaching from the village, pushing wooden-wheeled carts. When they drew closer, I recognized them — the members of the commune Party committee were going out to work in the fields. Secretary Kuan, Secretary Liu, Commune Director Chang, Section Chief Hsu. . . each trundling a cart of manure. I hastily gave my brother my luggage, jumped from the cart and ran forward. Secretary Kuan and Director Chang saw me first, and their faces lit up. While still a good distance away, Secretary Kuan shouted: "Hey! Our little sky observation scout is back!"

"Did you have any trouble with the course, Shu-ying?" Commune Director Chang asked me.

"Yes," I said, "but the leadership helped me." I had often heard that when a person comes back from a study course or a conference, he's supposed to give a report to his superiors. So I pulled out my batch of notebooks right there on the road and asked: "Shall I start my report?"

"Secretary Kuan laughed. 'Wait till we get to the fields. This minute, we're pretty busy with these carts.'

"I had to laugh too. After three months of not touching a cart, my hands were itching. I pulled one away from Director Chang and trotted with it into the fields without a stop.

"We halted beneath a willow tree and Secretary Kuan and the others listened to my report. Everyone got very excited. Secretary Kuan wrote down in his notebook some of the weather signals I had learned, like 'when the flag stirs on the pole — gentle breeze,' and 'when the telephone wires moan — fresh wind.' He asked me:

"Is it province's idea that we should set up our own weather station?"

"They said that each place should act according to its own situation. If the conditions are right, then set one up."

"We'll do it!" Secretary Kuan exclaimed after thinking a moment. "We're a mountain district here, our weather is complicated and we're on the borders of both the county and the province. Sometimes their forecasts are correct for the county or the province as a whole, but they're not necessarily right for us. We're always on the defensive in our agricultural production. We need a weather station — the sooner the better!"

"The Party committee attached such importance to meteorological work, I felt that anything I wanted to say Secretary Kuan had already said. But not all comrades agreed. Section Chief Hsu didn't altogether go along with the idea. 'It's not so easy to run a meteorological station,' he said. 'We haven't any equipment.'

"But Secretary Kuan was very firm. He said, 'We can't wait any longer. This year we've planted thousands of *mou* of wheat. All must be watered three times and fertilized five. We're gunning for an average of four hundred catties per *mou*! A lot will depend on accurate weather forecasting. We can't guarantee a bumper crop without it. We'll think of some way to get equipment. If we hold out our hand and wait for it to be given to us, we won't be able to move an inch. If we do things ourselves, we can go flying ahead. I don't see why we can't set up a weather station in a big commune like ours!"

"And so, our commune decided to establish an observatory within the next ten days. I went home and told my ma and pa, and they also supported me. My pa is very progressive! He's called Hsiao Kuan. He's in charge of our commune's storehouse. He joined the Communist Party in 1951 and was the chairman of a peasants' association. Though past sixty, he sees things very clearly. The year before last a theatrical troupe in the city put

out a call for actors, and someone suggested that I take the test. But pa wouldn't let me go. 'It's not that I'm feudal,' he said. 'I'm keeping her in the country so that she can become a tractor driver. It seems to me it won't be long before we have mechanized agriculture.' So you see how farsighted he is.

"When I told my ma that I had been learning meteorology, she didn't know what it was. My pa told her: 'It's taking over from the Old Lord of the Sky. It's controlling the heavens and controlling the earth. It's regulating the wind and the rain.'

"My ma laughed and said: 'I never thought our girl would have such a big job!'

"We set up a temperature recording box, a wind direction finder and a rain gauge on the outside platform of the Dragon King Temple. We made all the instruments in our commune. The temperature box was built of the wood of an old crate my ma gave me. We gave it a coat of white paint and it looked as good as a store-bought one. All we lacked was a picket fence, but we couldn't find enough lumber. Just as I was worrying over that problem, Secretary Kuan came along.

"'What do we need a fence for?' he asked.

"'Keep out the pigs and chickens and ducks. Also to prevent the kids from getting in and messing with the instruments.'

"'That's easy.' He trotted off to the east fields and soon came panting back with six big bundles of sorghum stalks. He dumped them on the ground and said: 'Here. I'll help you build a fence. We'll see whether it'll serve the purpose.' He rolled up his sleeves and started weaving. In only a morning's time, the fence was finished. It was neat and pretty. 'You see, Shu-ying,' Secretary Kuan said to me. 'This is fine, isn't it? That's how our commune has to do things. Live frugally even though we're prospering. Every penny, every inch of lumber we can save, adds that much strength to our country.'

"Those words of Secretary Kuan taught me a lot."

"After setting up our instruments on the temple platform, the commune wrote a big placard reading 'Sky Observatory' and hung it high above the fence gate. That got the whole village talking.

"Some said, 'It's to scan the heavens for signs, like Chuko Liang.'\*

"Others said, 'They're going to watch the Soviet sputniks!'

"When people found out that I was the meteorologist, they kept coming up to me. I had only to come out of the house and people would approach me on the street and ask:

"'Is today going to be clear or overcast?'

"'Is it going to rain tomorrow?'

"Especially the members of the youth brigade. They never had much to say to me before, but now any one of them might question me two or three times a day. Even the primary school kids, the moment we met, would all begin yelling questions.

"I was very tense those first few days. Secretary Kuan had told me I was to start formally issuing forecasts on the tenth. I hadn't made any analyses yet, so whenever anybody asked me about the weather, I couldn't answer. It got so that I didn't dare show myself on the main street. I travelled only through back lanes. Even so, it was no use. Prosperous middle peasants made sarcastic remarks. They said: 'The stage has been set, the drums and gongs are ready — why doesn't the actor come out and sing?'

"When I heard that, I decided to try a weather forecast on the quiet! Otherwise I wouldn't know what to say. Every day, according to what I observed, I forecast the weather. The first three days the weather was clear, and my predictions were right, but I didn't tell anyone. On the fourth day, the situation changed. I forecast a cold wave from the north with probable hail! But the county weather station only said showers. What am I going to do? I thought. I'm still new at this thing. Shall I tell the Party committee? I went to see Orchid. She's

\* A famous statesman and strategist in the Three Kingdoms period (A.D. 220-280) who understood meteorology and made use of the weather in battle.

the announcer in our commune loudspeaker network station. When I told her, she asked:

“‘Can you have hail in spring?’

“‘I said, ‘According to my prediction you can.’

“‘Forget it,’ she said. ‘The Party committee hasn’t asked you to start forecasting until the tenth. Besides, the county observatory hasn’t said anything about hail.’

“‘I took her advice and didn’t report to the Party Committee. But that was a boner. That night in the middle of a thunderstorm, it started to hail, and the blossoms on our apple trees were ruined, and many of the fish fry we were raising were killed in the pond.

“‘I didn’t know at first. When I got up early the next morning to check the rain gauge I saw a crowd of people around the fish pond. I went over and took a look. There was Secretary Kuan and Old Wei, who was in charge of the pond, scooping out the dead fish fry. No one was saying a word.

“‘Secretary Kuan saw me and said: ‘You see, Shu-ying, the hail last night killed a lot of little fish. We must start weather forecasting on the tenth! Our commune is doing farming, forestry, animal husbandry, side-occupations and fishery. We must know the weather for every one of these enterprises.’

“‘When Secretary Kuan said that, I could feel my face burn. I was very ashamed. I had known it was going to happen, but because I was shy and didn’t have a strong sense of responsibility I hadn’t said anything to the Party committee. If I had, mats could have been put over the pond and we wouldn’t have lost any fish fry. The more I thought, the worse I felt.

“‘Secretary Kuan,’ I said, ‘my weather forecast yesterday showed hail for last night!’

“‘What! You knew?’

“‘Yes, but I was careless. I didn’t say anything about it.’

“‘Secretary Kuan didn’t say a word. He only glared at me. He didn’t criticize me. I would have felt better if he did. After this lesson, I understood how I ought to do my job.

“‘After clearing out the dead fish fry, Secretary Kuan said to me: ‘Shu-ying, starting tomorrow our commune’s weather station will make forecasts. Each day has its own problems. You don’t have to wait until the tenth.’

“‘That’s what I’ve been thinking.’

“‘Are you having any difficulties?’

“‘No.’ My mouth said I wasn’t having any difficulties, but the Old Lord of the Sky seemed to be going out of his way to give me some. The very first day of my forecasting, I ran into a terrible mess.

“‘That day, according to all my calculations, the weather for the following day would be: ‘Clear, with moderate north wind rising about nine in the morning and becoming strong in the afternoon. Wind subsiding at night, followed by frost!’ The problem was—if we were going to have frost, protective measures would have to be taken for the crops; but suppose my forecast was wrong? I thought and thought, and finally I decided I would act on the facts as I saw them. I handed a report of my findings to the Party committee.

“‘Section Chief Hsu read it first. He looked at me and said: ‘Ha! Frost, eh? This is no small matter. Are you sure?’

“‘Yes.’ My heart was beating fast.

“‘Secretary Kuan then took a look at my report. After a long time he said decisively: ‘If frost is coming, we’ll have to prevent it! Make a note of this. Tomorrow afternoon order all-out frost prevention.’

“‘Section Chief Hsu said: ‘Ah, she’s only a girl. . . .’

“‘Since we’ve set up a meteorological station, we have to trust the meteorologist. We’ve nothing else to go on. Give the forecast to the loudspeaker network,’ said Secretary Kuan.

“‘Secretary Kuan spoke in his usual tone, but his words seemed to me to be enormously heavy. If you had dropped them they probably would have knocked a hole in the ground.

“‘I took my report and flew to the broadcasting room. Orchid looked at the forecast, then opened her mouth and stuck out her tongue in dismay. She said: ‘You know, Shu-ying, once we broadcast this thing, tens of thousands of people will be sent out to fight the frost!’

“‘I know,’ I said. ‘You just go ahead and broadcast it.’

“‘Our weather forecast office was in the next room, and as I leaned against the table I could hear Orchid’s voice through the wall. When she said: ‘And now, here is the weather forecast from the Jade Mountain People’s Commune’s own weather

station: Tomorrow morning, moderate north wind. . . .’ I felt quite elated. I thought: Our pocket in the mountains has its own meteorological station at last.

“The trouble came the next day. I got up early and hurried on my rounds. There wasn’t a bit of wind stirring. Even the leaves on the trees were motionless. Ah, I thought, what a nuisance; where’s that moderate wind? I was afraid to meet anyone who might question me, so rushed back to my station. I kept my eyes glued on the wind velocity meter. Right up until breakfast time, there wasn’t a breath of wind.

“I didn’t feel like eating, and I didn’t dare go to the dining hall anyway. It always had so many people there at meal time. They’d ask me all sorts of things. What could I say? *Ai!* When you’re scared, the wolf is sure to come! It was just my luck to meet my gabby sister-in-law. She’s in charge of our brigade’s windmill flour grinder. Standing in the dining hall compound, she stuck her neck out and shouted across to me: ‘Hey, Shu-ying, any wind today? We want to know whether to bring the grain to the mill!’

“She’s got a loud voice, and it really carries. People could hear her two blocks away. What did she care how upset I was?

“I rushed over to her and said: ‘Sister, you’re yelling loud enough to call the soul out of my body!’ I was pretty agitated. My sister-in-law said: ‘I’ve got to use the wind. The Old Lord of the Sky is our roller-pushing donkey. But that old donkey is too untractable!’ She laughed heartily.

“Just then, a prosperous middle peasant named Fan Fu-hsing walked by. His nickname is ‘The Tease.’ He loves to make sarcastic remarks. At that time he was always making cracks about the new techniques we were introducing on our farm. He came over to me and said:

“‘I hear you want to become a Chuko Liang and forecast the future. You even claim there’ll be wind today!’

“‘Yes. We’ll have a moderate wind this morning.’

“‘What!’ He pretended to look at the sky in surprise. ‘How come I can’t see it!’ Some old men standing around laughed.

“One of them said: ‘She’s only a girl. How could she know anything!’

“‘If a person knew the business of the Old Lord of the Sky,’ said another, ‘he’d be a heavenly spirit!’

“Everyone was passing remarks and there still was no breeze. My heart felt like it was being clawed by a cat. But I pretended to be very calm. ‘Man isn’t supernatural,’ I explained. ‘But man can master science, and that makes him stronger than the spirits. There will be wind today. Wait and see.’

“It certainly was a coincidence. Just as I said that, we heard the red flag suddenly start to flap on the pole outside the Party committee office. My heart seemed to melt into flower! Fan the Tease was in the middle of snorting: ‘Science! Who ever heard of —’ But before he could get the words out of his mouth, a big gust of wind blew the straw hat off his head and sent it rolling along the ground. As he raced after it, people on the street clapped their hands gleefully.

“Don’t laugh, the best is yet to come! After lunch, the wind blew harder. Suddenly the loudspeakers went on. It was the Party secretary’s voice, ordering the frost prevention measures. He said: ‘Comrades of every administrative district, production brigade, pasture field and orchard. There’s going to be a frost tonight. To guarantee this year’s bumper wheat crop, we’ve got to defeat the frost. Every brigade must immediately prepare piles of straw to burn for smokescreens. All the straw must be delivered to the fields before nine o’clock tonight. Each administrative district must appoint men to see to it that this directive is carried out.’

“The order really brought on an avalanche! In a few minutes criers were running down the streets shouting and beating gongs. People came flooding out. Carts large and small, loaded with straw, rolled towards the fields. It was like going into battle. Soon, between seventy and eighty thousand catties of straw had been delivered to the fields.

“Around midnight, when all was still, the wind died completely. The moon came out from behind the clouds and shone whitely on the countryside. Piles of straw lined the edges of the wheat fields in neat rows. From a distance, the fields looked like a large chess board.

“Secretary Kuan had to go to a county Party committee meeting that night, so Commune Director Chang was in charge of

the frost prevention. You needn't think just because she's a woman that our Director Chang isn't capable. She had been a child bride in the old society. Right after liberation she began taking part in revolutionary work and was a secretary of a district Party committee. Because she's youthful looking and I'm quite tall, and we both have longish faces, everybody says we look like sisters. She didn't sleep all that night, and neither did I. I was wearing thin clothes, but she had brought a cotton padded tunic of flowered cloth. It got very cold during the night and she said to me: 'Come on, Shu-ying, this is big enough for both of us.' We huddled together and she draped the tunic over our shoulders. We walked around the fields that way, checking up.

"We heard voices coming from behind one of the straw piles. Fan the Tease and another old man were talking. Fan was saying: 'Who knows whether there'll be any frost? But they make us come out here and don't let us get any sleep! I bet we'll have to squat in these fields until dawn!'"

"'Anyhow, you can forget about sleep for tonight!' the old man said.

"We were about to retort when someone stood up abruptly in the field and said in a muffled voice: 'What are you complaining about, Fan? Will you be responsible if the frost ruins the wheat?'"

"It was my brother, Bronze Hammer. He always says what he thinks. The Tease didn't dare utter a peep. 'Don't fall asleep,' Director Chang cautioned the watchers. 'Prop your eyelids open with twigs,' she joked. 'Tomorrow you can take a holiday!' Everyone roared with laughter.

"As it began getting on towards morning, a thin grey mist covered the sky and the weather turned biting cold. I knew that meant the frost was coming. Out here we get frost when the temperature goes down to zero. As a rule when the mercury drops to two or three degrees, that's the time to light the smudge fires and drive off the frost.

"I kept watching the thermometer and Director Chang stood beside me, waiting to order the beating of the gongs. My eyes were fixed on the column of mercury. Slowly, it fell. I don't know how long I watched. My eyes were beginning to smart.

The temperature dropped to five, four—it was about to hit three!

"'Three degrees!' I shouted.

"'Shall we beat the gongs?' Director Chang asked me tensely.

"But just then I felt a gentle south breeze, as soft as cotton, caress my face and the temperature stopped falling. At once it began to rise again. Hastily I yelled: 'No!' Because the minute the gongs sounded seventy or eighty thousand catties of straw would be lit. Director Chang came running over to look at the thermometer. 'What's happened?' she asked. 'You see,' I said, 'the temperature's rising. There probably won't be any frost.' She said: 'How dangerous! That was a close call.'

"We waited a while longer and the temperature rose still higher. I began to feel comfortably warm. I looked to the east. Ha! A flaming red sun was rising from the horizon.

"Director Chang beat out the signal ending the frost alert. The people in the fields immediately started swarming noisily back to the village as if they were hurrying to a temple fair. *Hai!* I never thought I'd make such a mess of things. Everyone was talking about it on the road home. The words that stuck in my ears were:

"'The forecast was wrong! I knew our crude weather station couldn't do the job.'

"'If ducks could catch fish, what would you need cormorants for!'"

"Some good-hearted people said: '*Ai*, she's only a slip of a girl. What did you expect?'"

"'She'd better quit making those silly forecasts. Turning the whole commune upside down!'"

"The prosperous middle peasants squawked the most. Fan the Tease deliberately twitted my brother. 'So she thinks she can take over from the Old Lord of the Sky. All she's good for is stuffing herself with muffins.'

"'Who said we were going to have frost?' someone asked. The Tease raised his voice to make sure my brother heard: '*Hsiao Kuan's girl!*'"

"My brother is very hot tempered. He glared at me furiously, as if he wanted to poke me when we got home. I was walking with Orchid. I didn't dare look at him.

"Just our luck, at the edge of the village we ran into an old man. He stopped Orchid and said: 'All because of one word from you, everyone had to freeze out in the fields all night.'

"Orchid said: 'It wasn't me.'

"'What do you mean it wasn't you? I heard you over the loudspeaker network.' Orchid had no way of explaining. Since I was right beside her, it would have been embarrassing for her to tell the true story. She left me angrily and walked on ahead.

"I've a pretty stubborn character. At the time I didn't shed a tear. All I thought was: 'If I was wrong, then I was wrong. But my conscience tells me I've done nothing to be ashamed of!'

"When I got back to our meteorological office there was a roaring inside my head like a mountain torrent. A shadow darkened the doorway and came in. It was my brother, Bronze Hammer.

"He glared at me. 'Shu-ying, of all the jobs you could do, why do you have to pick weather forecasting?'

"'The work is needed. It's the job the Party gave me!'

"'I've got a criticism!' His voice was getting louder.

"'If you've got a criticism, then state it!'

"'That's a fine weather forecast you gave!'

"'You learn from your mistakes. Nobody is born knowing how.'

"'You've still got the nerve to argue! Our whole family has lost face on account of you! People are saying you're just trying to get out of doing physical work; they're clawing our pa up the back!'

"That's the kind of fellow my brother is. He gets mad very easily and says anything that comes into his head. I was so angry my hands were trembling. There was no reasoning with him. I pushed him right out of the room and shouted:

"'Mind your own business!' And I slammed the door.

"A few minutes later, the door opened gently. I looked up. It was pa! He put two muffins and a dish of vegetables on the table and said: 'Here. You'd better eat something, sis.

You've been up all night. Have a bite to eat. I just told your brother off. I really ought to paste him a couple.'

"I seldom cry. But when I saw my pa, I don't know what made me such a sissy, but tears began rolling down my cheeks like beads from a broken necklace.

"'Don't cry,' pa said. 'You've got to stand firm when things go wrong. Green the first time, experienced the second. Persevere. You're bound to strike water if you dig deep enough; there isn't any mountain that can't be cut through. How did Chairman Mao lead the Red Army over the snow mountains and through the swampy grasslands!' To encourage me he said: 'It seems to me you're doing pretty well. When a little girl who used to herd sheep and studied only three years in spare-time literacy classes can calculate how big a wind and how much rain we're going to have, and knows what the temperature will be too—I say that's not bad at all.'

"The more pa talked, the harder I cried. 'Pa,' I pleaded, 'don't say any more. It's my fault for not doing a good job.'

"After he left, I still wasn't able to think the thing out. This job is too hard, I said to myself. It would be better if I went back to work in the fields. But then I thought—If I don't do this job, all the trouble the Party took to train me will be wasted. What's more; today the people's communes pitch into large-scale production like an army fighting a battle. They have to know the weather.

"Unable to make up my mind, I went to the Party committee office to see Director Chang. On the way home from the fields, she also had looked very angry. At the office door I heard several voices inside talking. There was Director Chang, Section Chief Hsu and Secretary Kuan. It seemed that Secretary Kuan had returned from his county Party committee meeting that morning.

"Section Chief Hsu was saying: 'There are a lot of complaints against our meteorologist for making the wrong forecast. Some people claim we'd be better off without her; there'd be less trouble!'

"Secretary Kuan became angry. He said: 'What kind of people say that! Who are they? Have you investigated? The county Party committee meeting was called specially to study techno-





logical innovations and the promotion of simple mechanization on a large scale. The committee even commended us for setting up our own weather station. Put the question before the people for discussion! It's obvious there's plenty of conservative thinking around here.'

"As a matter of fact,' said Director Chang, 'the forecast last night was correct. The temperature went down to three degrees, but it went right up again. That's why we didn't light the smudge fires.'

"It seems to me the job was done pretty well,' Secretary Kuan agreed. 'We saved tens of thousands of catties of straw! On my way back from the county I saw other communes — they all had lit their fires. Think of the straw we saved. . . .'

"I didn't dare to hear any more. In the first place, it's wrong to listen in on your leaders' discussions. In the second place my tears were flowing so fast I couldn't stop them. When I got back to our weather station I felt as if I didn't have a trouble in the world. I had only one thought:

"I'll work for the Party even if the sky falls!"

"I went right on with my job. I checked the wind direction, examined the formation of the clouds. . . . It certainly was a coincidence. The forecast showed frost again for the following day! This time I had no doubts. I would give honest reports, no matter what problems I might run into.

"In the afternoon Secretary Kuan and Director Chang came to the station. The Secretary still seemed a bit angry, and he paced the room without speaking, though he looked as if there was a lot he wanted to say. Director Chang asked me: 'Did you cry, Shu-ying?'

"I hung my head and didn't answer.

"Secretary Kuan waved his hand and said: 'You have to be able to stick things out and not be afraid of trouble. Don't pay any attention to what some backward people may say. If your report was wrong last night, you just try harder the next time! Aim for a hundred percent accuracy.'

"Secretary Kuan is very strong on principle. I knew he didn't say anything about our saving tens of thousands of catties of straw because he was afraid it would make me conceited. 'Shu-ying,' he said, 'you must continue this work. You mustn't give in.'

"I handed him my report and said: 'This is the forecast for tomorrow!' He read it, then he looked at me and nodded.

"That's the spirit!' he said. 'So there'll be frost, eh? Are you sure?'

"I'm sure.' I told him my reasons.

"We'll take steps at once.'

"This time there really was a frost. It was a 'creeping frost,' but because our commune took good precautions, tens of thousands of *mou* of wheat escaped unharmed.

4

Shu-ying had gone this far with her story when a young man carrying a whip entered. "Our carters' brigade has to go to Hsuchang to pick up some chemical fertilizer," he said to her. 'It's a five-day trip. Is it going to rain in the next five days? If it is, we'll take tarpaulins.'

Shu-ying led him outside to talk. We remained in the meteorology office. That was when we noticed a poster on the wall. It was a jingle written in big letters:

Weather station of you I approve,  
 Without your help we can't make a move.  
 Staff officer to the production command,  
 In the conquest of nature you as sentinel stand.  
 Your eyes can see a thousand *li* high,  
 Right through the clouds way into the sky.  
 You can summon the rain or call the wind into play,  
 You know whether dark or bright will be the day.

As long as we listen to your words so clever,  
We're sure of a harvest bigger than ever.

While we were reading it Shu-ying returned, and we asked her: "Who wrote that poster?"

She laughed. "My brother, Bronze Hammer! He's the fellow who just asked me whether it's going to rain. We're on very good terms now, but last year he didn't believe in any of this. Let me tell you how he came to write the jingle poster.

"After we licked the frost, the Party committee kept a close eye on our weather station. It gave us the slogan: 'With the Party secretary in command, combine local and modern methods; improve by your own efforts; strive for accuracy.' I did a lot of educational work among the people, explaining about the weather, and another girl was assigned to help me. All the production brigade leaders were ordered to learn some meteorology. Tests were given at regular intervals to all of them, including my brother.

"Combining local and modern methods was very effective. The old folks in our Home of Respect for the Aged are a mine of information. The Party committee issued formal invitations, asking them to become advisors to the meteorological station. I didn't understand why, at first. But after I had collected a lot of the old saws from them, I realized how important this method was.

"Take Grandpa Po, for instance, who lives in our Home of Respect for the Aged. This year, he's ninety-seven. I learned a couple of hundred proverbs from him alone. Like: 'When Jade Mountain wears a foggy cap, the hired hand can take a nap.' Or 'When the clouds move east, the wind's going to scrape; when the clouds move west, better wear your rain cape.' Or 'Pink clouds at morning, don't leave your door; pink clouds at dusk, go a thousand *li* or more.' Or 'Rainbow in the east, you'll soon see the sun again; rainbow in the west, we'll have some more rain.' Or 'Broom-tail clouds high up in the sky, big rain coming before three days go by.' Or 'Thunder in the morning, rain gone before the noon hour; thunder at night, a ten day shower' . . . and many more. I picked up all these important peasant sayings in our Home of Respect for the Aged.

"After we accumulated this valuable experience, our weather station changed. Under Secretary Kuan's guidance, we analysed and weeded through the local sayings, comparing them with standard scientific rules. For example, those 'broom-tail clouds' I just mentioned—in the text books they're called 'bean-sprout clouds'—if you see them when the sun is going down behind the mountains, it's sure to rain within three days.

"As a result of combining local and modern methods, our confidence soared. We became more and more accurate. Gradually we were able to predict the weather three, five, and even ten days in advance.

"When the wheat was ripe, Secretary Kuan called us in and said: 'This year the wheat has all ripened at the same time. It's a fine crop. If we're to snatch it out of the mouth of the rain dragon, the weather station will have to do a good job.' We said: 'No doubt about it. We give you our guarantee.'

"Our wheat grew beautifully last year—high as a man. Each head had four rows of grain, round and fat and big as pomegranate seeds. Our commune plants mostly 'Pima Number One' wheat. The husks of that strain are rather loose. They drop off easily—especially in a wind. During the harvest, we worked in the fields, keeping one eye cocked at the sky. At night we didn't dare sleep. If there was any wind, we were to telephone the Party committee promptly.

"The fourth day of the harvest, when the emulation among the teams and brigades was at its height, we noticed some signs of rain. There were three arrow-shaped clouds in the sky when the sun sank behind the hills. One of our local proverbs says: 'At sunset time see clouds of arrow, rain will follow on the morrow.' When we got back to the station we looked at the leech in the jar. It had floated up from the bottom and was trying to jump out of the water. Then we checked the moisture in the air and the wind velocity. Our first decision was that it would rain the following afternoon.

"At that time, the cut wheat was all heaped in the fields. Very little of it had been sent to the threshing ground. If it rained, the wheat kernels would be soaked and start to sprout. We hurried to report to the Party committee.

"The leaders of the committee thought that if they stopped the harvesting, the loss would be serious. Besides, the weather was beautiful, without a cloud in the sky. Secretary Kuan was very conscientious. He went back with us to the station and checked each instrument personally. Then he took us up the mountain slope to the pasture, to see Grandpa Chao.

"Grandpa Chao is one of our weather advisors. He's been herding sheep on the mountain slopes for more than fifty years. His experience is very rich! We found him at dusk. He was just bringing the sheep down the mountain.

"Is it going to rain tomorrow, Old Chao?" Secretary Kuan asked him. The old man looked at us, then squatted down without a word and turned over a stone. 'It's going to rain.' He pointed at the underside of the stone. 'You see. That stone is sweating' He plucked a stalk of *chieb-chieb* grass and examined it. 'The *chieb-chieb* grass is turning white. That means rain.'

"When should we expect it?" asked Secretary Kuan.

"Grandpa Chao laughed and glanced at me. 'Can't say exactly. From the way these sheep are gorging themselves on grass and don't want to go down the slope, my guess is there'll be rain tomorrow.'

"Making a note of what the old man said, Secretary Kuan became very tense. He practically flew down the slope. We couldn't keep up with him. Back at commune headquarters, he immediately called a council of war. An hour later, an order was issued over the loudspeaker network for all teams and brigades to stop reaping. They were to concentrate all their forces on moving the cut wheat out of the fields and threshing it that same night.

"When this directive reached my brother's youth brigade, they didn't like it much. They had been pushing to be the first to finish reaping, and they had only a few dozen *mou* left. If it weren't for the order to stop they could have got all their wheat cut that same night. Actually they weren't doing so well, because the grain they had reaped was piled up all over their field.

"We were helping their brigade when the order came over the loudspeaker system. Bronze Hammer rushed up to me and

yelled: 'How can it rain in weather like this, Shu-ying? There isn't a cloud in the sky. Where's the rain going to come from?'

"I ignored him. I knew he'd have to carry out the directive. Just then Secretary Kuan and Director Chang came along on a tour of inspection. When Secretary Kuan saw that my brother's brigade still hadn't moved their wheat, he said reprovingly: 'Bronze Hammer, you'd better get that wheat out of here before the rain starts.'

"It can't rain in weather like this, secretary,' my brother argued. 'There's not a sign of rain anywhere.' He was still dilly-dallying.

"Stop reaping immediately,' Secretary Kuan said shortly. 'By the time you see the rain, it'll be too late. All of you start finding ways right now to get that cut wheat home in a hurry. This is an order!'

"Bronze Hammer pulled a long face and gave me a sulky look, but I pretended not to see him. That night, as I helped the youth brigade stack and thresh the grain, he said to me: 'We can get along fine without a busybody like you!'

"I paid no attention.

"The next morning, having worked all night, I was fast asleep when he came bursting into my room. 'Get up, Shu-ying,' he shouted, 'and take a look at your rain! You've delayed the commune's reaping a whole day. That's nothing to be sneezed at!'

"It isn't time yet,' I said. 'It'll rain when the time comes.' He kept ranting and raging. My ma had to shoo him out of my room.

"After breakfast, the sky was still a beautiful clear blue. Bronze Hammer began complaining again in the courtyard, not to me directly, but deliberately loud to let me hear. 'Where's the rain?' he demanded. 'All that labour power wasted a whole day — who's going to be responsible!' That's the kind of fellow my brother is. He can't stand being idle a single minute, and he's very concerned about our commune's production. I knew there was no use talking to him when he was so worked up. He was only looking for an excuse to argue with me. I had no intention of poking that hornets' nest. Anyhow, he'd understand soon. In the meantime I just ignored him!

"Just then the telephone in the front room rang. Our front room is the office of the youth production brigade. It was commune headquarters calling. I stood listening in the doorway. It turned out that Secretary Kuan was giving Bronze Hammer a 'test'! He wanted my brother to tell him the day's weather. Bronze Hammer got all in a flap. He didn't remember many of the details. 'Ah . . . it's going to rain,' he said. 'How big a rain? . . . The wind? . . .'

"He was stamping his foot and signalling frantically with his hand for me to tell him. I said, 'Light breeze from the east, followed by moderate rain in the afternoon.' He repeated my words. Secretary Kuan told him that the whole commune was to turn out that morning for a rush job of planting sweet potatoes. This was a good chance to plant without having to water, because heaven was going to do the job for us in the afternoon!

"Bronze Hammer couldn't see that at all. 'But what if it doesn't rain?' he protested. 'The potato sprouts will shrivel up in the sun and die!'

"Secretary Kuan said we knew what we were doing. If you had a good grasp of the Old Lord of the Sky's business, you could make intelligent use of it. Our way of planting the sweet potatoes would save both labour and water.

"That morning, our commune planted six thousand *mou* of sweet potatoes. My brother also joined in the work, but he couldn't stop worrying, and he kept on grumbling. At noon, he couldn't eat his lunch. He would look up at the sky, then look over at the sweet potatoes. He was like an ant on a hot griddle. My sister-in-law, who had eaten her meal in the dining hall, came home then.

"'Our brigade hasn't given us any work for this afternoon,' she said to Bronze Hammer, 'I'm thinking of visiting my ma. The only thing is, I'm afraid it'll rain. What do you think?'

"'Rain, my eye!' said my brother. 'Don't you see that big sun in the clear sky? You're getting so you won't even eat a meal without checking the farmers' almanac first!'

"'But the weather station says it's going to rain.'

"'What do you want to listen to them for? Just go ahead.'

"My sister-in-law went into the house and changed into her new clothes and put on a pair of snowy white new cloth shoes. After she had decked herself out all sleek and shiny, she started for her mother's village, a package wrapped in red silk tucked under her arm. My brother also left with a set of buckets hanging from the ends of a carrying-pole. He was going to the pond for water to irrigate the sweet potatoes!

"He had just brought the first load to the field when an anvil-shaped cloud appeared in the sky. Some people call them 'flying horse clouds,' but because they're shaped like anvils, we've named them 'rainsmith shops.' They're the fastest and most violent rainmakers. Suddenly the wind began to moan and great pillars of rain sloshed down as if the sky were emptying.

"The buckets dancing on the ends of his shoulder pole, my brother came dashing back. He just reached the shelter of the compound gateway when my sister-in-law, soaking wet, also came running home. Her new white shoes were a muddy mess, and her brand new clothes were plastered to her body. She began punching my brother and yelling:

"'You said it wouldn't rain! You said it wouldn't rain!'

"My brother wasn't mad any more. He only fended her off and said soothingly: 'Cut it out. Our commune's six thousand *mou* of sweet potatoes are going to live! That's more important than your new shoes!'

"Ever since then, my brother's had a lot of respect for weather forecasting. He was very helpful to us during the dry spell. That was when he wrote that poster. When he brought it over, he said: 'Shu-ying, our youth production brigade presents this to the weather station as a commendation for your work.'

"'You shouldn't compliment us,' I said. 'If it weren't for the Party and the people, a couple of young girls like us couldn't accomplish anything.'

"And that's the honest truth. The Party deserves all the credit. If it weren't for the Party, how would we know about combining local and modern methods, or about following the mass-line? It's only today that we realize how important these things are. The more folks flatter us, the more modestly we rely on the leadership of the Communist Party.

"The day after Bronze Hammer put up the poster, we wrote a slogan and pasted it on the opposite wall." Shu-ying pointed to an inscription on the wall of the east side of the room. It read:

"Firmly rely on the Party's leadership and obey the Party's instructions."

5

The little meteorology office was very clean and simple. Below the slogan were two large windows which opened out, their square lattice frameworks covered with pure white paper. On the large central square of each of the windows, a peach-pink paper cut-out of attractive folk design had been pasted.

The design was quite intricate. It showed a writhing rain dragon pulling a big plough over clouds floating in the heavens. Behind the plough was a smiling girl, driving the dragon with a whip.

Looking at the paper-cut, we admired its excellence. "Wonderful," we said. "Who did it?"

Shu-ying laughed and blushed. "I cut it myself, just for fun!" And she added: "Nearly all the women around here know how to make paper-cuts for windows. The ones my ma made were so good she was able to sell them at the fair. They were famous. But they were always scenes from the old operas."

"This one is certainly a new idea," we said.

"It's not so new," she replied. "Last year one of our local people made up a rhyme with a line in it about: ' . . . leading the rain dragon along by the nose.' We've even experimented here with man-made rain. It's not so hard to do." She began telling us how they fought the drought the year before. "That was a big battle," Shu-ying said. "And it really proved the strength of the people's communes as big and socialist organizations.

"Our drought last year, according to meteorological records, was the worst in these parts in a hundred years. When our Party committee received a telegram from the provincial authorities warning that there probably would be no rain for a hundred days, Secretary Kuan and Director Chang were unable to swallow their next two meals. But the following day, the Party

committee came to a decision. All forty thousand members of the commune were summoned to a big mass rally. Secretary Kuan made a speech. He said:

"Comrades, the Old Lord of the Sky is challenging us to war. But we're not afraid. We've got the leadership of the Party and Chairman Mao, we've got our people's commune, and we've got the water conservation projects we built during the big leap forward. We'll fight the drought till heaven bends its head. We swear to win a bumper autumn harvest! . . ."

"That night, all the members of the Party committee set out for the various production brigade headquarters, their packs upon their backs. Secretary Kuan went directly to the fields. On June tenth we started our general offensive against the drought. Water windlasses, irrigation ditches, donkey engines, pumps, bucket trolleys—all went into operation. Everywhere, water was moving. The villages were empty, but the fields were crowded with people.

"Our weather station was shifted to the top of Double Mountain Dam. In addition to our forecasting we became responsible, with Orchid and a few others, for the irrigation of ten *mou* of rice paddy. The first day, Secretary Kuan called us together for a meeting. He pointed down at the new rice fields our commune had opened at the foot of the dam.

"Those eighty thousand *mou* are the very life of our commune,' he said. 'If we can lick the drought and harvest the rice, we won't have to worry about food or fodder. If the drought beats us, well, the problem will be very serious. We're far from the main traffic arteries. It won't be easy getting grain shipped in from the outside. The best thing is for our commune to pool all its forces and make sure we have a good rice harvest. It doesn't matter so much if we lose any of our other crops, but the rice is our main responsibility.'

"Then he added: 'You station people have only one duty: Forecast the weather and the moisture content of the soil accurately. You must do your job responsibly, practically, with no fuzziness about anything. We're fighting a deadly battle here.'

"Secretary Kuan didn't talk much, but whatever he said seemed to carve itself into our minds. That's the way we young country people are. A lot of oratory doesn't get much response

out of us. But if you just show us clearly and simply where our duty lies, nothing can daunt us—the tougher the situation, the harder we work. We said: ‘We guarantee to be good assistants to the Party. We’ll report the temperature and the soil moisture content twice a day. We won’t let one drop of water go to waste.’

“In the next few days we invented an ‘earth-baker’ to measure the moisture content of the soil, and a hair hygrometer to measure the moisture of the air. We made them all ourselves. At that time we had about forty million cubic metres of water in our Double Mountain and Lower Flat reservoirs. According to our calculations if we used it well we had enough to irrigate our eighty thousand *mou* of rice paddy three times, even if we didn’t get a drop of rain.

“With every member of the commune pitching in, we fought the drought for forty-seven consecutive days. Some of our wells went dry, and so did several of our streams, but the people’s spirits kept rising all the time. And when the city sent us a big pump and a generator, everyone’s confidence became stronger than ever.

“On the twenty-fifth of July our weather forecast showed that the following day would be cloudy. All our previous announcements had been clear, clear, nothing but clear! We were sick of saying it, and the people were sick of hearing it. So it was really a pleasure to be able to predict a cloudy day over the loudspeaker network. The evening of the twenty-fifth, the county meteorological station sent us an urgent forecast for the coming week. It read: ‘Attention, entire county. A heavy rain storm will break the night of the twenty-sixth.’

“When word got around that a storm was coming, everyone nearly danced for joy. But I was troubled, because the forecast of our commune station showed no rain for either the twenty-sixth or the twenty-seventh. When we sent our report to Secretary Kuan, he didn’t have it announced right away. Instead he came to our weather station with Section Chief Hsu.

“‘No rain in our forecast, eh?’ he asked us.

“‘That’s right. There’s not enough moisture in the air. Besides, there’s going to be a west wind tomorrow night. We can’t have rain here with the wind blowing from the west.’

“‘You can’t be positive,’ said Section Chief Hsu. ‘Even with a west wind, sometimes it rains. My idea is to let everyone take a rest tomorrow. It’s probably going to rain.’

“Secretary Kuan disagreed. ‘This is no small matter,’ he said. ‘If we let the people’s enthusiasm cool, it might take several days to rouse it to this pitch again.’ Turning to us, he said: ‘You continue with your calculations. Get proof from as many sources as possible. Talk things over with those advisors of yours. Check the facts carefully; be positive. I don’t want to hear you using the word “probably.”’

“The next morning, sure enough, the sky was cloudy with a heavy overcast. We had been checking the temperature and the wind direction all night. Now some of the prosperous middle peasants started raising a rumpus. ‘It’s going to rain, you can see it in the sky,’ yelled Fan the Tease. ‘We ought to rest. Watering the fields is just a waste of water and effort. The Old Lord of the Sky is going to bow his head.’

“His complaints made everybody uneasy. My brother looked up at the black clouds overhead and he also began to wonder. He came and asked me about them. I told him it wasn’t going to rain, to keep on fighting the drought. He went back to the fields and called a discussion meeting and had a hot argument with Fan the Tease. By then the sky was darker than before. Thunder kept rolling and booming. That afternoon I climbed Jade Mountain to see Grandpa Chao. He laughed and said: ‘I knew you were coming.’

“‘Grandpa Chao,’ I asked, ‘what do you think? Is it going to rain?’

“He said: ‘Of course! But probably not in these parts. It depends on what kind of wind rises. If it’s from the east, then we’ll have rain. If it’s from the west, the storm won’t be able to reach us, because Jade Mountain will block it. It’ll just veer off the mountain’s north face.’

“‘How many times have you seen a situation like this?’ I asked him.

“He smiled. ‘I’ve scores of years of experience. Whenever we have weather like this, I just herd my sheep to a sheltered spot at the foot of the cliff. All that’s coming is a dry wind.’

"Hearing him say this, I felt much surer of our forecast. I went back and carefully analysed the weather reports from three different provinces, then went through our own records. I again checked the direction and velocity of the wind and the moisture in the air, noting the changes in the cloud formations. I reviewed every bit of information we had. The conclusion still was no rain for our area, only a strong wind. By then the sky was already black, with inky clouds racing across the heavens like wild horses. It was growing very dark. The crash of thunder seemed to rise up from beneath our feet. Flash after flash of lightning split the sky.

"I made up my mind. It could thunder and lightning all it liked. I had my proofs. I wasn't afraid. I would go to the Party committee and report!

"An oil lamp had already been lit in the committee office. I nearly jumped out of my skin at the sight that met me when I entered the room. Secretary Kuan, Director Chang and Secretary Liu were all standing around not uttering a word, their foreheads beaded with sweat, as if something terrible had happened!

"Comrade Wang of the county water conservation bureau, was there too. 'According to our calculations,' he was saying, 'the storm will arrive late tonight or early tomorrow morning. The heavy rain will create mountain torrents which will endanger the entire county. For safety's sake, the water conservation bureau thinks it best that all water presently stored in the reservoirs be released first.'

"'Release the water!' The phrase struck me like a thunderbolt. How could we let the water out of our reservoirs? Then Secretary Kuan spoke. He said: 'Our water is as precious as gold. Every bowl of water will mean a bowl of grain. We've got tens of thousands of *mou* under irrigation here, and they depend entirely on the water from our two reservoirs. That water is of tremendous importance to our whole commune!'

"'I know the hard work you've all put into building those two reservoirs,' said Comrade Wang sympathetically. 'And this year you've got water in them for the first time. Of course you hate to let it go. We can understand that. But we can't risk big things for the sake of the small. This is a directive of the county government. I'm here to see that it's carried out.'

"'It doesn't matter if we release the water today,' said Section Chief Hsu confidently. 'It's going to rain tomorrow. Our reservoirs will fill up again.'

"'But according to our weather station,' said Secretary Kuan, 'the storm isn't going to reach us here.'

"Section Chief Hsu pointed at the sky outside and said: 'Anyone can see that it's going to rain in a minute!' As he was speaking, thunder pealed and lightning flashed! One of our other comrades said: 'I think we'd better obey the county's order. The responsibility's too heavy.'

"Section Chief Hsu agreed. 'These two reservoirs of ours are above the county seat. If there are mountain torrents, the dams overflowing will be the least of it. But what if the county town is flooded! I say we must carry out the directive.'

"I couldn't restrain myself any longer. I said: 'Our meteorology station just made another careful check, Section Chief Hsu. We're positive it isn't going to rain here!'

"'This storm is spread over a wide area,' said Comrade Wang. 'It's not restricted to our county alone.'

"Secretary Kuan rose to his feet. 'I'll ask the county Party committee again,' he said firmly. 'I'll explain the whole situation and ask the committee to decide.' He was reaching for the phone when a big man entered the room. We all turned to look. It was Secretary Lin of the county Party committee!

"'Why, Secretary Lin!' everyone cried happily. Secretary Kuan laughed. 'I was just about to telephone you for instructions—'

"'It's about letting the water out of your reservoirs,' Secretary Lin cut in. 'I know all about it. I've been up on your dams, looking around. The people are very hesitant. They don't want to let the water go. The situation is this—' His voice became grave. 'A big storm is going to hit every county in the province. There's no question about that. You don't want to release the water. That's all right too. The specific conditions ought to be considered in each case. But you must have proof. You can't be careless. This is no ordinary problem.'

"How clearly and to the point Secretary Lin talked! As he spoke my heart was pounding. Outside, the thunder was louder

than ever, and streaks of lightning followed one after another. Orchid, who was standing beside me, turned pale.

"Come what may, I said to myself, you've only got to remember one thing: Base your actions on the facts; dare to speak and dare to take responsibility! I had learned a bit about meteorology. The Party had trained me as a weather forecaster. If I didn't give true forecasts what was the use of the training? Besides, that water in our two reservoirs wasn't just water, it was golden shining grains of rice!

"Secretary Kuan called to me then: 'Where's Shu-ying?' I pushed forward through the group around him. 'Here I am!' I said. 'Tell Secretary Lin your station's weather forecast again!' he directed.

"My tunic was drenched with sweat, probably because I was too upset. I hadn't realized it myself, but Secretary Lin noticed it at once. '*Aiya*,' he said. 'Sit down, sit down and relax. Your tunic's all wet.' He poured me a bowl of water and said with a smile: 'Now, let's hear about it. Don't be nervous.'

"I plunged right in! I said: 'Secretary Lin, according to our calculations, there's not going to be much rain here. In the first place, there isn't enough moisture in the air. Secondly, storm clouds from the west under three thousand metres are blocked by Jade Mountain and veer off its north face. Thirdly, according to old peasant experience and our own records of six previous storms, eighty percent of the summer rains driven by northwest winds never reach this southern side of the mountain. Fourth, we're a mountainous region here, and we're on the border of three provinces. The usual forecasts don't necessarily apply here. Besides, our temperature and wind velocity instruments prove that we're not going to have any rain — only a big wind!'

"I said all this very fast, as if I had memorized it. Orchid told me later I sounded like an actress on the stage. I looked at Secretary Lin. He was listening very carefully. As I was talking, outside there was a heavy rumble of thunder and raindrops spattered against the window.

"Section Chief Hsu yelled: 'It's raining! It's raining!'

"'Don't lose your head,' Secretary Lin said quietly. 'When the thunder is big the rain is small.' Hearing these words I felt as if a weight had been lifted from my heart!

"Comrade Wang of the Water Conservation Bureau said to me: 'You claim it won't rain here. But what if it does? Are you prepared to take the responsibility?'

"'If our forecast is wrong, I'm willing to accept any punishment that's given me.'

"Secretary Lin suddenly rose to his feet. He said: 'She's already assumed full responsibility.' Then he addressed the others: 'It seems to me that this little girl has good reasons for her forecast. She's investigated, she's analysed. It's precisely this matter that's brought me here. On the way, I also investigated. I questioned a dozen old peasants. Nine of them said it wouldn't rain here. One of them said — "When the thunder god sings his song, even if it rains it's not for long." It seems to be a case of "summer rains barely wet the ox's back," as the peasants put it. Well, what are we going to do? My idea is not to release the water at the moment, but to place some strong young men on the dams to be ready for any emergency, with a good leader in command. Any objections?'

"'No objections!' The shouted response drowned out the booming thunder! 'I'll take charge on the dams tonight!' said Secretary Kuan. We all draped our tunics over our shoulders and went outside.

"The sky was pitch black by then. You couldn't even see the person ahead of you. The wind was howling madly, as if it were quarrelling with the big trees. Secretary Kuan picked forty young stalwarts from my brother's youth production brigade and posted them by the sluice gates of the dams. If there was any word of mountain torrents coming down, they were to open the gates immediately and let our water out.

"By the time everything was ready, it was well past midnight. Secretary Kuan told us to go to sleep, but when we saw that he and the other secretaries were staying up all night and the battle was so tense, how could we? I remembered there was still something I had to do — go up Jade Mountain! Up on top, if any storm clouds got by, I could give the warning.

"Wrapping my tunic tightly around me, I bent my head and pushed through the wind up the slope. Climbing Jade Mountain ordinarily wasn't hard, but the night was black as ink and the big wind seemed determined to knock me over and not let me go up.



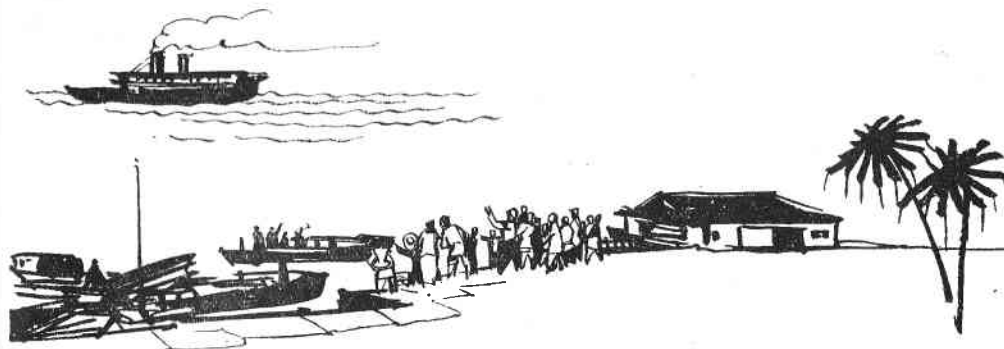
"When I reached the summit, the wind was even stronger, and thunder shook the mountain as if trying to topple it. In a flash of lightning, I could see the north side. A white sea of misty clouds, like ten thousand galloping horses, rolled east along the Tan River. Several times the wind blew the clouds in our direction, but Jade Mountain stuck out its big pot belly and shoved them back. Lightning, thunder, wind and rain whirled about the sky like a whole stage full of fighting warriors. It was so beautiful, I forgot to be scared. I picked up a lot of valuable meteorological information that night.

"Just before dawn there was a flurry of large raindrops. But they only moistened the ground, then stopped. I went back to the top of the dam. Blue sky was already showing in the north. Secretary Kuan and my brother and the others were turning the windlass to raise the sluice gate. But they weren't letting all the water out. Since we hadn't got any rain from the sky we were making our own — releasing some of the clear spring water to irrigate our commune's eighty thousand *mou* of rice, growing so lush and dense that not even a breeze could slip through.

"We didn't have a drop of rain right up until the autumn harvest. But our people's commune in a blazing rush of activity brought our crop in and threshed it just the same. We averaged five hundred and seventy catties of rice grain per *mou* for those eighty thousand *mou*. This not only gave us enough food grain for all of our commune's forty thousand members, as well as seed grain and fodder, but four big trucks were busy a whole month delivering the surplus we sold to the state. The Old Lord of the Sky had challenged our people's commune to battle but the result was:

"He lost!"

*Translated by Sidney Shapiro  
Illustrations by Shu Lan*



KO YUAN

## The Sisha Archipelago

### The Ship Sails Away

The ship sails away  
Towards the bright Dipper;  
The ship sails away  
Its gleaming lights melting into the Milky Way.

Ah, clouds and mist of the ocean,  
Move off the shipping-route, please!  
Let us see off the ship as it steams far away,  
Carrying greetings from Sisha to our motherland.

Sisha Archipelago is one of the four island groups (Sisha, Tungsha, Nansha and Chungsha) in the South China Sea. It comprises several dozen islands and atolls of which Yungshing is the largest. The archipelago is rich in resources and a favourite fishing ground of fishermen in the vicinity of Hainan Island. For many years the U.S. imperialists have attempted to deny China's sovereignty over Sisha and the other islands in the South China Sea, but each time their schemes have failed.

Carry our fertile guano deposits  
To the farms to hasten an abundant harvest;  
Sea wind, bring us the scent of crops  
Sweet and heady as good old wine.

Carry our vivid, striped virgularia  
To the friends from lands far away;  
Separated by mountains and oceans we cannot see them;  
But our hearts beat as one, we clasp their hands.

Transplant our red trees of coral  
At the entrance of the great Hall of the People;  
Like our hearts, they will bloom in all seasons,  
Never to wither or fade.

Send the rare sea-cucumber  
To Chung Nan Hai, to the leader loved by us all;  
If Chairman Mao will but taste it,  
We shall talk of it all night in our delight.

The ship sails away  
Towards the bright Dipper,  
The ship sails away,  
Its gleaming lights melting into the Milky Way.

Ah, motherland! change all the stars of the Milky Way  
Into lights on thousands and tens of thousands of ships;  
Let us bear off this crystal palace from the South Sea  
To build another great hall on Changan Boulevard.



### Sisha, Our Home

Braving a wild wind and torrential rain,  
Conquering the angry, roaring waves,  
A fishing team comes to bleak, deserted Sisha  
And pitches three-cornered tents there.

Brawny, muscular young fellows,  
Old salts with faces weathered by wind and frost,  
Back from fishing like to sit together  
To talk of their dear ones and homes.

Only the team-leader who sits beside them,  
Puffing in silence at his pipe till it sizzles,  
Says quietly, "Fishermen sail rivers and seas,  
Wherever they cast their net, there their home is."

The others let his words pass unnoticed,  
And the team-leader listens with a smile to their talk;  
One day a convoy of ships comes from the mainland,  
In the prow stands the team-leader's wife, a child in  
her arms.

So, soon after the baby is born,  
The team-leader moves his whole family to the island.  
A simple rucksack, a yellow bamboo basket,  
Packed with the songs and scent of the flowers of home.

At night, when they crowd into the team-leader's home,  
All are merry as at New Year;  
Many pairs of arms dandle the child,  
They laugh in its face and sing.

This, the first child come to Sisha,  
Is fair-skinned, plump and bonny,  
With black hair like dusky clouds,  
Eyes like two stars that have fallen into the sea.

This, the first child come to Sisha,  
Look how he laughs, like spring flowers blossoming!  
He wants to take the whole of life in his arms,  
Utterly untouched by the storms of the South Sea.

They give him golden plexaura, rosy coral;  
They pick a handful of gleaming conch shells for him;  
Among all these treasures, the new generation  
Will grow up on the islands of Sisha.

There is no more nostalgic talk of home,  
They boast to the team-leader's wife of Sisha's wealth;  
The team-leader smiles and says nothing; after a pipe  
He takes them to mend boats and nets while the moon  
is bright.

When the next convoy comes to Sisha,  
The men see their own people's faces below the white  
sails;  
They have come, the families of the fishermen,  
Come to strike roots here and flourish like the coconut  
palm.

Red brick buildings are going up now on the island,  
Cocks crow, pigs grunt, everywhere is bustle and joy;  
The children play beneath the wood-oil trees,  
The women sun bright clothes in every yard.

Under all the eaves there is singing,  
Happy villages are growing on the Sisha islands;  
Team-leader, as you stand smiling before the map,  
What new plans are you turning over in your mind?





### The Postmark

Seagulls wheel up and down before the eaves,  
At the door grows tall sweet viburnum;  
Rat-a-tat-tat!  
Who is that tapping softly under the window?

It is a young postman, the postmark stamp in his hand,  
Stamping fresh blossoms on each envelope;  
The ink smells good among the flowers,  
Catching the eye in that sweetness is the word "Sisha."

For years Sisha had no postal service,  
How could letters cross that expanse of sea and sky?  
Then from the mainland flew this friendly courier,  
Fearless of hardships, he made this his home.

Since then how many lines span sky and ocean  
To end the worries of those far away;  
Since then one by one, the unknown isles of Sisha  
Are becoming known with fresh blossoms throughout the  
world.

How much is embodied in one little postmark  
Look! beautiful seagulls, white viburnum in bloom,  
The hearts of the men of Sisha, mighty as the ocean,  
The postman's radiant youth. . . .



### Weather Sentinels

There is a group of girls at the weather station,  
Off work they go laughing and singing to the seashore;  
They like, barefooted, to chase the tide,  
Or pick shells of every colour to sew on their coats.

Whenever the boats come back from a long voyage,  
They help to unload the fish and dry the nets;  
Others have embroidered their praise on a red banner  
To hang in their place of work.

Through the veil of mist they go each day to the sea,  
Send up observation balloons to welcome the sun;  
Late at night they stand out in the wind  
To watch the moving clouds, the twinkling stars.  
When a storm blows up and sand swirls through the sky,  
Their white overalls still flutter along the beach;  
And when torrential rain lashes their cabin window,  
They calmly tap out their code messages.

No matter how unpredictable the South Sea,  
These girls can predict each storm;  
And boats ply to and fro, heeding their warnings,  
Each time with a rich haul in their hold.

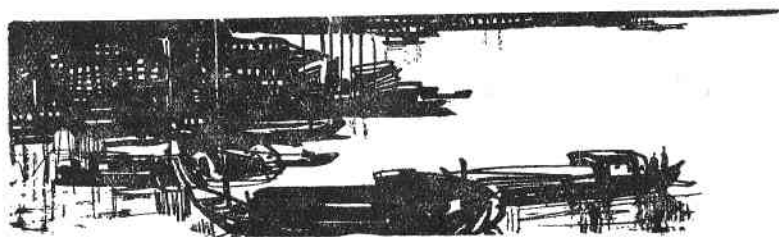
A flock of pigeons, the old chairman calls them,  
Whose gay songs fill the island;  
A flock of seagulls, the fishing team-leader calls them,  
Whose hearts take wing and fly with every boat.

Weather sentinels is the girls' name for themselves,  
They stand proud guard over Sisha for their country;  
Imprinting on their hearts the wind and clouds of the  
South Sea,  
Pin on their lapels the splendour of the South Sea.

### Mooring at Night by Yunghsing Island

When the curtain of night hangs low in the South Sea  
The sea water grows darker and darker;  
Then up floats Yunghsing Island like a golden lotus,  
Its twinkling lights stealing the glory of the stars.

Who are those figures in the lamplight  
Coming and going on the sandy beach?  
Whence comes the singing through the evening mist,  
That bewitches even the waves?



Ah, the fishing boats are back from a long voyage,  
The carrying-poles are swaying over the gangway;  
And the men loading the boats by night with guano  
Come with a long procession of creaking barrows.

The barrows tip out whole silver hills of guano,  
The carrying-poles unload heaps of golden fish and  
prawns;  
From here floats the joyful singing  
In close time with the workers' steps.

The slumbering sea birds are wakened  
And flit quietly under the lamplight;  
The cool sea breeze laden with sweetness  
Blows softly, bearing songs.

Ah, the night is late,  
But the later the night, the brighter shine the lights,  
The louder sounds the singing,  
The lovelier grows Yunghsing Island.

*Translated by Yang Hsien-yi  
and Gladys Yang  
Illustrations by Shu Lan*

## Pages from History

CHUNG HSI-TUNG

### Tearing the Mask Off the U.S. Armed Forces

On the morning of October 1, 1945 five U.S. warships suddenly appeared off the coast of Yentai. Like clouds gathering in a clear sky, their arrival changed the people's happiness on liberation to a feeling of tension.

These so-called "allied forces" had made no appearance at all in the long years of the War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression. Now that the war was won and Yentai was liberated, they had turned up. What had they come for?

According to the commander of the fleet, Rear-Admiral S, they had come to see how the Japanese surrender had been carried out and to inspect the property of U.S. citizens in Yentai. But instead of leaving at once when they discovered that the Japanese troops and their puppet army in Yentai had been wiped out or

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This is a true account of what happened in 1945 after the surrender of the Japanese invaders and the victory of the Chinese people in the War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression. At that time, the U.S. imperialists on the one hand actively helped the Kuomintang reactionary government to prepare for a counter-revolutionary civil war and on the other hand sent military planes and battleships to carry out aggression against the territory already liberated by the Chinese people's armed forces. This account of the aggression against Yentai carried out by U.S. battleships fully exposes the gangsterism of the U.S. imperialists. The author is at present a major-general in the Chinese People's Liberation Army.

driven off by the Communist Eighth Route Army more than a month ago, under the pretext of "negotiating the establishment of friendly relations" with our army and government they brazenly refused to go. And while carrying out their so-called inspection of the property of U.S. citizens, they tried repeatedly with no sense of shame to intrude into the military forbidden area in the vicinity of our eastern battery, even attempting to force their way into our barracks. They asked permission for their marines to use Kungtung Island as a place of recreation. After consulting our superiors, we granted this permission and sent people down to receive them and hold a get-together with the marines. But to our surprise after the first time they never came again. Later, we learned that they were afraid their marines might become "red" from our influence. In the wake of the U.S. fleet, a formation of the U.S. airforce and several U.S. naval planes came in turn to circle over our military forbidden area. We sent a strong protest against this to Rear-Admiral S. His answer was, "These are good-will flights to celebrate the liberation of Yentai by your army." He also said, "If you don't like it, I can guarantee that it won't happen again." In spite of this guarantee, however, U.S. planes kept up their activities in our territorial air. When we warned him firmly that we would not tolerate this and that he would have to be responsible for the consequences, he said, "We must treasure the friendship between us with particular care."

These actions of theirs gave us reason to suspect that they were up to no good. Under these circumstances, on the instructions of the Chiaotung Party committee and the Chiaotung military command a committee for united action was formed, comprising representatives of the Chinese Communist Party, the government, the armed forces and the people of Yentai, to meet any sudden emergencies that might arise. I was appointed secretary of the committee.

And sure enough, the U.S. forces lost no time in revealing their true colours. On October 4, an adjutant from the U.S. ship brought in a "despatch" asking our troops to withdraw from Yentai and to make arrangements to hand the place over to them. We promptly lodged a strong protest. The adjutant said he would convey our protest to his superior.

At dawn on October 6, a whole fleet of U.S. warships sailed into Yentai Port and cast anchor. A small launch pulled up at the dock and someone came to our foreign affairs office to invite our special representative, Comrade Yu Ku-ying, to the U.S. warship for a talk.

Comrade Yu Ku-ying came back at about nine o'clock and gave us a brief account of his trip and what he had seen of the U.S. fleet. This was the Yellow Sea Fleet of the U.S. Pacific Fleet. It carried amphibious forces. The naval commander was Vice-Admiral B, the commander of the amphibious forces Rear-Admiral R. The fleet had brought the amphibious forces to land at Yentai and wanted us to consent to a "take-over." Failing that, they wanted at least a joint garrison. Their commanders were coming to our foreign affairs office at ten to discuss the division of Yentai into zones and the time and place for their landing. This was an open act of aggression! Extremely indignant, we immediately analysed the situation so as to decide on what measures to take. After some discussion we all agreed that the U.S. armed forces in the guise of "allies" were trying to blackmail and trick us. They hoped to intimidate us with their superiority in arms so that they could take Yentai without a fight. Then, by setting up bases from Yentai to Weihaiwei and blocking the entrance to the Pohai Bay, they could cut communications by sea between Shantung and northeastern China. Their so-called joint garrison was only the first step. The next would be to bring in a large number of Kuomintang troops and secret agents and finally drive us away. Therefore to accept their request for a joint garrison was tantamount to handing Yentai over to the U.S. armed forces and the Kuomintang reactionaries.

In order to be prepared for all emergencies, we immediately got in touch with the military command asking them to alert our troops for combat. At the same time the garrison of the docks was instructed that it must be responsible for the strictest defence of our country's territory as these "visitors" were coming ashore. Only the commanders and a small number of their men should be allowed to land. The others must stay on the launch, which should remain at a distance from the dock. Those who came ashore must bring no arms. And we reserved the right to search every single person, whoever he was.

At ten o'clock they arrived at our foreign affairs office—Vice-Admiral B, Rear-Admiral R, Rear-Admiral S, several officers of the navy, army, and airforce and a number of reporters. As the political commissar of the garrison troops I received them. After introductions and the customary greetings, Vice-Admiral B was the first to speak.

"Your men have plenty of spirit."

"More so than usual today," supplemented Rear-Admiral S, cocking his head. So they had been struck, it seemed, by their serious reception at the dock.

I answered, "Our men, tried and steeled in the flames of war, take pride in the fact that they are safeguarding their country's sacred territory."

Then the struggle between the two sides started.

Arrogant Rear-Admiral R raised the first question:

"May I ask, General Chung, when and where you intend to let us land? And where are we to be stationed after we land?"

Vice-Admiral B quickly interposed.

"I think," he drawled, "both sides ought to appoint a number of staff officers to study the situation over a map and submit a plan to both parties for approval."

Listen to them! How beautifully they had everything mapped out and how casually they proposed it. As if Yentai were already theirs, and all they were waiting for was for us to arrange the "take-over." Could we give up easily the territory we had liberated through battles?

Wait—

"It is premature as yet to talk about plans for landing. Will you kindly explain, gentlemen, why you want to land on territory which the Chinese people's army has long since liberated?"

"We have come to disarm the Japanese," R hurriedly explained.

"The Japanese troops were annihilated or driven off by our army a month ago. Rear-Admiral S is well aware of this. He spoke about this fact publicly to the reporters. Surely he did not fail to tell you about it?"

"Yes, I did speak about it. I also reported it to my senior officer, Vice-Admiral B," said the embarrassed S.

But R brazenly pressed his specious claim.

"We have come to clear away the submarine mines laid by the Japanese in Yentai Port."

"We are quite capable of dealing with those ourselves," I said.

"May I ask, then, if you consent to a joint garrison?"

"I repeat once more: it is beyond comprehension that you should want to land on territory long since liberated by our army and talk about a joint garrison. For the sake of our friendship as allies I say it again: It is not desirable for you to land here. . . ."

This made Rear-Admiral R very angry. Standing up abruptly and glowering, he said harshly:

"That being the case, I demand that your forces withdraw from the city of Yentai immediately. We intend to occupy this place."

He probably thought this would cow us thoroughly. Unfortunately he was out in his calculations. For they had no understanding whatsoever of the members of the Chinese Communist Party and the fighters of the Eighth Route Army. His demand was as ridiculous as it was outrageous. Repressing our indignation with an effort, we behaved with the utmost gravity and composure. No doubt this gravity and composure surprised them, for B quickly chimed in:

"What Rear-Admiral R means is that we ask your troops to withdraw. This is a request, not a demand. . . ."

"Yes, this is a request," added S, putting on a smile. "And we are asking only your armed forces to withdraw. This does not include the municipal government of Yentai and the police force."

Probably they thought R had put things too bluntly and that this amplification of theirs would win the sympathy of our comrades in the government. This was obviously a trick. But it was too stupidly and clumsily played.

Doing my best to control my fury, I sat on the sofa and answered their challenge in an even voice.

"Whether it is a demand from Rear-Admiral R or a request from Vice-Admiral B, in essence it is the same. That is, you want us to withdraw to make room for you. There can be only one interpretation of this demand of yours — open aggression against the Chinese people. You want to occupy by force the city of Yentai already liberated by our army. Tell me: Can this be called the friendship of an ally? No, it is aggression!"

At that time the U.S. commanders were very much afraid of the word "aggression." They were afraid of having their true face exposed. They seemed to be a little embarrassed and exchanged glances. For a moment the tension was quite evident. In fact, Rear-Admiral R's face seemed to swell visibly. S shrugged, made as if to speak, then thought better of it. In the meantime R had grown even more overbearing.

"Following Admiral K's orders I have come to land at Yentai. For the sake of our friendship and to avoid any untoward incident I must request you to withdraw to the suburbs. I am a soldier. My duty is to obey orders."

The situation had become very tense. Representing the interest of the Chinese Communist Party and the Chinese people I stood up and answered solemnly and firmly, "I am a soldier too. I know quite well how to perform my duty. I have orders to garrison Yentai. I know how to defend it from acts of aggression from any enemy. In the long course of war we have learned how to deal with aggressors. I give you formal warning, Rear-Admiral R, that if you dare to invade Yentai, you must shoulder the full responsibility for all consequences."

There was no more to be said.

Rear-Admiral S was petrified. How could they extricate themselves from this awkward situation? "Shall we sit down!" he suggested hurriedly. Rear-Admiral R sat down. So did I.

"We can work the problem out gradually," said Vice-Admiral B trying to smooth things over. "I suggest that both parties ask for instructions from their higher commands before we come to any decisions."

"A good idea," agreed Rear-Admiral S promptly.

The tension relaxed. Rear-Admiral S resorting to his diplomatic wiles strained every nerve to make small talk and smooth over the tense situation. R, a moment ago so angry, now looked as if nothing had happened. He even talked to me in genial tones with every appearance of interest, turning from time to time to give his attention to the secretary sitting between me and Comrade Yu Ku-ying. They must be up to some tricks again, I told myself. When a wolf disguises itself as an old woman, we particularly must be on our guard. As I had expected, after beating about the bush, R suddenly asked, "How many men do



you intend to put on the Yentai and Weihaiwei Line?" He said this in a casual tone as if talking about the most trivial daily affairs.

"That will depend on the situation," I replied, equally casually. My answer kept him silent for a long time. As I waited for their next move, Vice-Admiral B changed the subject. "Isn't it a fine day? . . . I can see the streets of Yentai are kept very clean."

"Thank you for the compliment. Our people love peace and freedom and know how to have a good life once independence and peace are won."

The "visitors" then took their leave. But this was simply the first scene of the struggle.

With right on our side our arguments were strong, while the U.S. armed forces who were in the wrong had little to say. They lost the first round of the struggle. Since they had lost, they ought to have abandoned their attempt to land. But what invader would give up so lightly? Having knocked their head against the wall, they had suggested asking for "instructions from the higher command" to give themselves a necessary breathing-space. Their next step might be to adopt more ruthless means, they might even try a landing by force. We had to be prepared for the worst and concentrate on planning counter measures.

We studied with care the sections dealing with this subject in Chairman Mao's *On Coalition Government*, looked up the various brief directives of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party on the attitude to be adopted towards the U.S. armed forces and did our best to grasp the essence of the directives of the military command and the Party committee of the military area. Step by step we clarified our ideas. There were two lines of approach: one was for us to give way, the other was to force them to give way. If we gave way we would have to withdraw our troops from Yentai, leaving for the time being only government organizations and the police force to hold out inside the city. But they certainly would not be able to hold out for long. In the end we would lose Yentai. With Yentai gone, it would be hard to defend the ports of Weihaiwei, Fushan and Penglai. If they were lost, the situation would be serious. What would become of our sea communications with the

northeast? It was obviously the objective of the U.S. armed forces to cut this line of communication. And the sequel to that would be even more damaging for us. That was why we must not give way whatever happened.

That being the case, there was only one path to take: resolutely refuse to let the U.S. forces land at Yentai. What would be the outcome of this? One possibility was that in view of our just protest, the U.S. invaders would give up their attempt to land. Looking at the international situation as a whole, this was quite probable. It was likely that the U.S. would not dare to expose its own aggressive nature. It was probably not worth the Americans' while to give up the banners of "allies" and "friendship" just for Yentai, so our "toughness" might bring about a "weakening" on their part.

Another possibility was that disregarding all else they would try to land by force, and when they had accomplished their purpose turn round to disclaim any political responsibility. If they attempted armed aggression we would counter that aggression; our men would block their way. We would firmly stamp out the fierce flames of aggression.

After full and lengthy discussion we decided to forbid firmly any U.S. landing at Yentai.

To meet every possible eventuality, we ordered immediate reinforcements to all fortifications along the coast where the enemy might try to land and mobilized our troops for combat. It was also decided that a meeting of the people of Yentai should be held at four that afternoon and followed by a mighty anti-aggression demonstration, to further arouse the masses.

Four o'clock and the sports arena was packed with a stirred, indignant crowd. Yellow, louring clouds scudding across the sky before a north wind from the sea made the day more overcast. The people's mood, however, was stormier and more impassioned than the gathering storm.

Comrade Yu Ku-ying and I arrived at the meeting at four. As we squeezed our way through the crowd, people eyed us expectantly as if to ask, "How are your talks with the Americans going?" Both Comrade Yu Ku-ying and I spoke at the mass meeting. We told the people what had happened during our negotiations with

the Americans and expressed our determination to defend Yentai against the U.S. aggressors. Our words encouraged the forty to fifty thousand people of the city, many of whom were moved to tears. They swore to defend their territory resolutely!

An old docker squeezed his way over to me. "Political commissar!" he said with strong emotion, gripping my hand. "Don't let the Americans come whatever happens. We mustn't drive the wolf out of the front door to let the tiger in through the back. The workers have just stood up now that the Eighth Route Army is here; we mustn't let them push us down. We'll do whatever you say. I may be old, but I still can take one of them with me in a fight to the death. . . ."

He was voicing the sentiments of all the people of Yentai and giving expression to the indomitable spirit of the victorious Chinese people. In the presence of such a heroic people we felt an upsurge of strength, strength to break through all difficulties and triumph over all enemies.

As the meeting proceeded, U.S. naval reconnaissance planes flew low overhead several times. Normally, the people would have rushed for shelter but today not one person stirred from his place. They ignored the planes. Each flight only increased the hatred in our hearts and our fighting strength.

The meeting was very successful, concluding with a demonstration which set out along different routes.

"Oppose U.S. armed aggression!" "Get out, invaders!" these and other slogans, drowning the drone of the U.S. planes, swept across the city and out over the sea. . . .

Like an irrepressible tide, the demonstrators converged from different sides to the road by the beach. They shook angry fists at the U.S. fleet and shouted, "If the Yankees dare come here we'll throw them out!" The workers said a dockers' patrol was not enough: All the workers should be armed. The students too asked to be given weapons. It wasn't until it was completely dark that the government and the National Salvation Association of All Circles could persuade the demonstrators to go home.

Our armed forces did not join in the demonstration; they were busily engaged in battle preparations. Our men and their commanders, long steeled in the flames of battle better than any, knew the value of peace. Therefore when a new enemy dared

to stretch out for the fruit of victory in our hands their anger was the most easily aroused and converted into fearless militant strength.

Night came. We returned to the office. It was time to examine carefully the measures being taken to cope with the critical situation.

Staff officers arrived from headquarters, as well as army commanders and political commissars. They reported on the deployment of troops, the strengthening of fortifications and their contact with the military sub-area headquarters. Everything was well in hand.

The municipal government reported that important materials were being shipped away and non-essential personnel were alerted for withdrawal to the other side of the mountain.

The commander of the coastal defence unit phoned to report that the men's morale was high, their fighting spirit excellent. They were keeping a close watch over the U.S. ships.

The chief of the security bureau came. He had personally inspected the whole city. Good order was being maintained throughout Yentai and security measures were being effectively carried out. Nothing untoward had occurred. . . .

It was growing late. We kept urging each other, "Go and get a little sleep." Actually no one wanted to go to bed.

October the 6th had passed — it was now the 7th. The clock had just struck one when Comrade Yu Ta-shen, director of the *Yentai Daily*, charged in panting and sweating.

"Good news!" he cried.

"What good news? Hurry up and tell us!"

"Chief-of-staff Yeh Chien-ying has issued a statement forbidding the U.S. aggressive forces to land at Yentai."

"Good! The Central Committee's protested to the U.S. forces."

". . . Owing to the fact that the U.S. Marine Corps has expressed its intention of landing at Yentai and asked the 18th Group Army and the Yentai municipal government to withdraw from Yentai, Chief-of-staff Yeh Chien-ying of the 18th Group Army has written specially on the 6th to inform Colonel Y of the U.S. military mediation group that since all Japanese and puppet troops in Yentai have long since been disarmed and good order is being maintained in the city there is no necessity whatsoever for U.S. armed forces to ask to land there. Colonel Y is requested

to inform U.S. Army Headquarters that it should instruct its marine corps off the coast of Yentai not to land there. Should they attempt to land by force without first making proper arrangements with our side and by so doing cause a serious incident, the U.S. side must take full responsibility. . . . The full text reads as follows. . . ." Comrade Yu Ta-shen very quickly finished reading the full statement.

While Comrade Yu was reading, we received a wire from the Party Committee of the military area and the military command ordering us to follow the directions in Chief-of-staff Yeh Chien-ying's letter and firmly prevent a U.S. landing in Yentai.

We decided to have Chief-of-staff Yeh's statement translated into English, and a typed copy of this was enclosed with the Chinese text and sent to Vice-Admiral B, refusing to allow a landing.

On the morning of the 7th, our sentry reported that all the U.S. ships had got up steam, though so far none had stirred.

At approximately 6:30 it was reported from Yentai Hill that the U.S. flagship had signalled: "Landing at 7:15." At 7, our signalmen again reported that two boats left the U.S. flagship and were coming towards us. But the whole fleet made no move. At 7:15, the patrols on the dock reported that B and other U.S. officers were at the dock, having come to take their leave. Would we grant them permission to land? Our answer was: Yes. Take them to the foreign affairs office.

At the foreign affairs office, Vice-Admiral B told me flatteringly, "On my strong recommendation, Admiral K agreed that we need not land here. We have come specially to say goodbye. However, Rear-Admiral S and his fleet will remain here to maintain liaison."

Courtesy should always be returned. Since they had come to say goodbye, we must see them off. After they had gone, Comrade Yu Ku-ying and I boarded a launch and headed for the U.S. ships to return their call and send them off. Such a strong wind was blowing, however, that our launch could not leave the harbour. It was decided to signal them this message: ". . . Came to say goodbye but were kept back by the gale. Extremely sorry." Their reply was: "Thank you very much."

Not long after, they pulled anchor and left Yentai.

In this tense struggle victory belonged to us. But the story did not end there.

On October 16 at twilight all Rear-Admiral S's ships suddenly also sailed off. The harbour looked rather empty.

Why had they left without saying goodbye? Had something so important happened that they had no time to take their leave? No, that could hardly be. They were up to some new trick for sure, hatching some new plots.

It turned out as we expected. On the morning of October 17, gunboats and armed ships of the Kuomintang brigands sailed into the harbour, occupying Kungtung Island. There they stayed to rob passing boats. According to the report of the fishermen who had been captured by the brigands but escaped from Kungtung Island and our own army intelligence, this was a contingent under Chang Li-yeh, formerly of the puppet army under the Japanese stationed at Yentai. Today they were back again under the Kuomintang flag.

The dastardly behaviour of these brigands aroused the fury of our people who demanded that the army set out and annihilate them. Naturally we had to respond to the people's demand and defend the people's interest. We urged the pirates repeatedly to leave their wicked ways and come over to our side; when all appeals proved in vain, our forces set out at dawn on the 29th by two different routes. After a brief but fierce battle, the brigands were completely wiped out. The brigand battalion commander Chia Feng was closely pursued until he was drowned at sea.

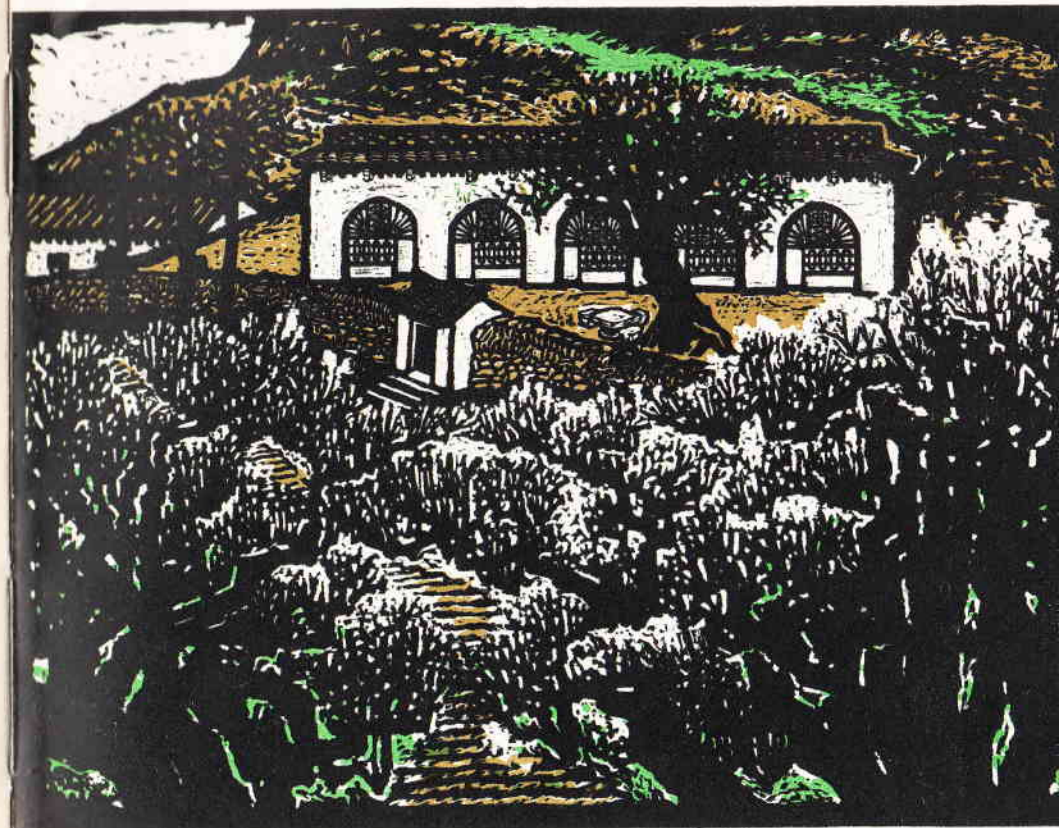
Unexpectedly, the day after the battle of Kungtung, Rear-Admiral S returned. He came ashore to call on our army and government authorities. His first words on seeing us were to congratulate us on our naval victory. He announced that the U.S. armed forces had temporarily withdrawn in order to avoid taking part in China's internal strife.

How artfully the U.S. forces and Kuomintang brigands coordinated with one another, and how childish and despicable were the lies fabricated by the U.S. officers! However, neither the direct aggression of the U.S. ships nor the harrassment by the Kuomintang brigands under U.S. direction had any success. The

struggle had enabled us to go through a new process of steeling and taught us something new. We also came to understand more clearly the tricks of the U.S. imperialists. Threats and blackmail are their first tactics. When these fail they use deceit, and when that too is unsuccessful they resort to the dirty tactics of a scoundrel — but in the end they run.

This was what happened when in 1945 U.S. naval forces invaded Yantai and were driven out by the people.

*Translated by Chin Sheng*



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*Spring in the Date Orchard* By Hsiu Chun—>

This date orchard is in Yenan, where the secretariat of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party had its office and where Chairman Mao Tse-tung lived from 1943 to 1946.

One of Hsiu Chun's works *Spring in Northern Shensi* was reproduced in *Chinese Literature* No. 8, 1960. A brief note about him appeared in the same number.

## *Classical Heritage*

WU TSU-HSIANG

### On "The Pilgrimage to the West"

1

*The Pilgrimage to the West* is a great mythical romance in the treasury of Chinese classical literature. Its distinctive artistic appeal is the result of a synthesis of remarkably magnificent fantasy and a profoundly rich realistic content.

The only other Chinese classical novels which can compare with *The Pilgrimage to the West* in their strong influence on the masses are the *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* and *Water Margin*. Though *The Pilgrimage to the West* reached its final form as a novel more than a hundred years later than the other two, these three masterpieces underwent a similar process of development. They were all to a greater or lesser extent based on historical events, which were passed down as legends for centuries among the people, becoming the oral literature of folk artists, and eventually being given their final form by outstanding writers. Works which come from the masses and have gone back to the masses, they are splendid examples in classical literature of collaboration between professional writers and folk authors.

The historical basis of *The Pilgrimage to the West* is as follows: In A.D. 628, the second year of the Chen Kuan period of the Tang dynasty, the monk Hsuan Tsang, aged twenty-seven, reached the kingdom of Magadha in India after passing through more than fifty kingdoms to the west of China and overcoming many

dangers and difficulties on the way. He studied the Buddhist canons in the monastery of Nalanda, and after seventeen years succeeded in acquiring 657 Buddhist texts to present to the Tang court. The travels and adventures of this young monk aroused tremendous admiration and interest among his contemporaries as well as later generations; and this, combined with the propaganda by Buddhists, was responsible for the gradual evolution of a popular legendary tale embodying the people's dreams and aspirations. From the time of the Tang and Sung dynasties, story-tellers adopted this as their theme, further amplifying it and introducing more supernatural elements. We still have an incomplete text of a story-teller's prompt-book printed in the Sung dynasty entitled *The Chante-Fable of the Monk Tripitaka of the Great Tang Dynasty and His Search for Buddhist Scriptures*.<sup>\*</sup> This tells of Tripitaka's pilgrimage through many strange lands, and in it appears the figure of Friar Monkey who, with his great magic powers and skill in both literature and military arts, helps the monk to overcome the perils on the way, assisted in this by the God of the Deep Sand who also possesses supernatural powers. This text of little more than ten thousand words reveals the early outline of the main story of the present *The Pilgrimage to the West*. Friar Monkey was developed in the novel into the hero Monkey Sun Wu-kung, while the God of the Deep Sand became Sandy, one of the four pilgrims who went out in search of scriptures. This prompt-book, moreover, contains several important episodes in *The Pilgrimage to the West*, as for example the story of the Valley of Fire and the Country of Amazons. The Valley of Fire episode was the early form of the adventure of the Flaming Mountain which we are publishing in this issue.

During the Yuan dynasty (1277-1367), not a few plays made use of the incidents in the story of this pilgrimage. A famous example is Wu Chang-ling's *The Pilgrimage to the West*. By now the plot and characters are much more highly developed than in the Sung dynasty *chante-fable*. In addition to Monkey and Sandy, we now have Pigsy as well as such characters as Red Boy and Princess Iron Fan. At the same time these tales were written into prose romances. Thus the *Yung Lo Encyclopaedia* compiled in 1403

<sup>\*</sup>Tripitaka (San Tsang) is Hsuan Tsang's honorary Buddhist title.

at the beginning of the Ming dynasty contains the story of Wei Cheng who in a dream killed the dragon of the River Ching, and notes that this was taken from *The Pilgrimage to the West*. This episode in more than a thousand words is fairly close to Chapter Ten of the present version of *The Pilgrimage to the West*.

However, the man who rewrote the story of the pilgrimage, making of it a truly great work of art, was Wu Cheng-en (1500-1582) of the Ming dynasty. He was the son of a small tradesman in Huaian Prefecture on the north bank of the Yangtse. His family, which had once produced scholar-officials, was poor when he was young. He was a good student, brilliant and highly gifted. He was also lively, fond of making jokes and writing satires. Although he won a certain reputation in his district, he never did well in the official examinations. He stayed for fairly long periods in Nanking, where he lived on the money he made by writing essays and contributions from friends. At the age of sixty he was appointed assistant magistrate of Changhsing County, but because he would not flatter his superiors and did not get on well with them he left the post before long and returned to his own district where he lived to be over eighty. *The Pilgrimage to the West* was the work of his last years, carried out at home after his retirement. His family origin and experience had made him discontented with the utterly corrupt politics and social life of his time. Since he suffered all his life from an oppressive situation, he could enter into the thoughts and feelings of the masses of people who were longing desperately for social change. Under the feudal tyranny, however, he could not express his innermost thoughts directly. His love for folk legends and his familiarity with these rich and colourful stories provided him with a means to vent his feelings and express his ideal, to attack the society of his time and hold it up to ridicule.

Wu Cheng-en made certain important changes in the story of the pilgrimage. First, he transformed the main theme of the story, raising to a higher level the popular account of the pilgrimage and transforming the folk story which had a strong religious flavour into a mythical novel with a clearer, richer and more profound realist social significance. In this connection we should note that the formerly admired hero Tripitaka was relegated to a secondary position, becoming relatively an object



of criticism and ridicule; while the real hero is Monkey, the rebel against authority who exterminates evil spirits, symbolizing the hero of the people's dreams. Secondly, while presenting a great variety of clear and vivid artistic images, including gods, saints and monsters, Wu Cheng-en embodied in this work the specific historical features and contents of a definite society; while in handling his scenes and episodes, he freely exposed the society of the day. His criticism and satire is so steeped in wit and humour that readers receive much food for thought and their interest is thoroughly aroused. Thirdly, he skilfully selected a number of characters and episodes from other popular folk legends and myths, adding these to the skeleton of the original story and integrating them with the central theme. His sources were Buddhist and Taoist legends as well as ordinary folk tales.

The mystic utterances interspersed throughout the novel represent the confused reactionary ideas about the so-called unity of the three religions — Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism — which were prevalent in the upper strata of the society of that period. Wu Cheng-en wrote these passages with his tongue in his cheek.

2

*The Pilgrimage to the West* has a hundred chapters. The first seven describe how Monkey is born, seeks sainthood and attains immortality, how he masters seventy-two transformations and such magic arts as riding the clouds and somersaulting through the air. To win freedom and become the master of his fate, he makes havoc in the Dragon King's Palace, in Hell and in Heaven, waging revolutionary struggles against the so-called Three Spheres which symbolize the feudal powers, and the Jade Emperor was forced to give him the title of the Paragon of Heaven. After winning a series of glorious victories he is finally defeated when in a contest with Buddha he bounds one hundred and eight thousand *li* away to the end of Heaven in one somersault, but comes back only to discover that he has gone no further than Buddha's palm. So he is made captive under the Mountain of Five Peaks, which is a transformation of Buddha's hand, and

he cannot move. The five chapters from Chapter Eight onwards describe the reason for Tripitaka's pilgrimage to the West and the preparations. The eighty-odd chapters following Chapter Thirteen make up the main bulk of the novel with the story of the eighty-one perils which the pilgrims encounter on their way to the Western Heaven. Tripitaka, passing the Mountain of Five Peaks, rescues Monkey Sun Wu-kung from beneath it and makes him his disciple to help him to exterminate evil spirits and overcome the dangers on the road. After some fights on Monkey's part a pig monster and a water monster become Tripitaka's disciples too — Pigsy and Sandy. These are the four pilgrims who go to seek for scriptures, and they also subdue a dragon which is changed into a horse for Tripitaka. On their journey they meet with dangers great and small, there are many involved interludes and the incidents are connected as far as possible so that the whole work appears very well organized. Thus this novel which purports to have the quest for Buddhist scriptures as its main theme is actually a book about vigorous fights to overcome perils and difficulties, with Monkey as its chief protagonist, while the search for the scriptures is deliberately ignored. In fact when the pilgrims reach the realm of Buddha in the Western Heaven and obtain the scriptures the novel is concluded.

Of course, this mythical story of a pilgrimage with Monkey as the chief character like all other ancient myths reflects the people's hopes and ideals in their labour and production, their desire to conquer and to master nature. This is not merely the significance of the various magic powers and feats of Monkey; all the gods and saints and many monsters and evil influences also signify the forces of nature expressed in fanciful forms. These rich and splendid symbols could not be the creation of Wu Cheng-en alone or any other single individual; they actually reflected the rich experience and heroic spirit of the masses of people of a nation with a long history in their struggle against nature. However, when approaching this mythical story as a work of art, an understanding of this aspect alone is insufficient; for these myths were mainly produced and developed in the later period of Chinese feudal society, and they hold a greater significance in that they reflect the class struggle. The history of the feudal society of China is a series of incessant peasant revolts; from the end of

the Tang dynasty down through the Sung, Yuan and Ming dynasties these revolts of the peasants against feudal rule became more frequent, grew fiercer and larger in scope. These revolutionary agrarian movements played an important part in hastening the development of feudal society so long stagnant. Yet every peasant revolt had ended in failure through different ways. The main reason for their failure, however, was their historical limitation: in other words, the broad masses of the labouring people who were oppressed and exploited could not in their struggle against feudal rule put forward a new political programme and social ideal of their own. Thus while they waged a brave revolutionary struggle, they were at the same time forced to recognize the political system and social order of feudalism. This was a contradiction that could not be solved at that time.

It goes without saying that the mythical Monkey Sun Wu-kung is a complex character, whom we must not interpret in a mechanical or over-simplified manner, searching subjectively for social and historical significance in every single trait and episode. Viewed as a whole, however, a character like this of Monkey could not be created without the social and historical background referred to above, without the heroism of countless men in the actual revolutionary movements referred to above, without the ideals and aspirations of the revolutionary masses. In the first seven chapters, Monkey is a rebel passionately seeking freedom, urgently demanding change, daring to challenge and oppose whatever authority which rules over the universe and determines fate. No matter how great the authority of the gods and saints, how exalted their position, how high their dignity, no matter what wonderful magic powers they possess, in their fight with Monkey they all stand revealed as useless cowards who panic shamefully. In these descriptions, which are a bitter satire on the gods and saints, Wu Cheng-en pays the warmest tribute to every act of defiance and revolt on the part of the rebel and to his victories. It is precisely in this attitude he takes to express his likes and dislikes that the writer gives full rein to his astonishing imaginative powers.

In one sense, Monkey resembles the revolutionary masses of that period: he carries on brave and effective struggles against the feudal rule yet he cannot break through the domination of this system. Though one somersault will carry him a hundred

and eight thousand *li* away, he cannot leave the palm of Buddha's hand or avoid being imprisoned beneath the Mountain of Five Peaks. This handling of the subject is not due solely to the fatalistic ideas of the writer himself.

But the Monkey of this story of the pilgrimage is not one to surrender tamely after defeat. He helps Tripitaka travel West to find Buddhist scriptures not because he has submitted to the powers of Heaven or is going against his own will. It would be more correct to say that he is sent to help Tripitaka search for scriptures because as a result of his brave struggles the gods and saints realize his invincible strength, recognize his resolute and noble qualities and are forced to respect him. They have to let him go forth and fight in another just cause. Monkey, for his part, helps Tripitaka of his own free will. When fighting the gods and saints before, he lacked a clear goal and purpose. His slogan when he made havoc in Heaven was simply, "This year is the Jade Emperor's turn; next year, mine." He fails because although he opposes the existing rule he can propose nothing new; but unwilling to admit defeat he persists in seeking what he considers to be the truth or the ideal. It is this deep-seated need in his heart that makes him help the monk to seek the scriptures. His energies are actually concentrated on destroying the monsters and forces of evil on the way; he is not sure himself how much genuine interest he has in finding the scriptures, and the novel does not go into any detail about this either.

Because Monkey puts his yearning for the ideal into the task of safeguarding Tripitaka in his search, he shows the greatest enthusiasm and determination, brings his courage and wisdom into full play and overcomes countless difficulties and obstacles, revealing incomparable optimism and heroism. Monkey's essential spirit while making havoc in Heaven and escorting the monk on his pilgrimage is consistent throughout.

If we examine Monkey in this story of the pilgrimage, we notice four things about his relationship with others. First, he is fighting most of the time against monsters who represent forces of evil which clash directly with his own aspirations. So his fight to exterminate them is a just one, and no matter how arduous the struggle Monkey always triumphs in the end. Secondly, in his fight against the monsters Monkey is often assisted by the



gods and saints; but it does not follow simply from this that Monkey during the pilgrimage is entirely on the side of the gods, acting as a stooge of the ruling powers of Heaven. It is very clear from many passages in the book that on the one hand Monkey still keeps at a considerable distance from them. He is restricted by the fillet clamped on his head by the magic of the gods, yet he adopts a completely independent, even insolent attitude towards them. On the other hand many of the monsters are secretly in league with the gods and saints while not a few actually come from them, as does most of their magic power. This mythical presentation in the feudal period was not without significance in that it exposed and ridiculed actual politics and reality. We know that all the local evil forces who oppressed the people directly during that period received their authority from the court; during the Ming dynasty the imperial guardsmen and eunuchs stationed in various localities were the greatest scourge of the people, while the wicked landlords and local despots all had their secret connections with the government. It is Monkey, therefore, not the gods and saints, who is against the monsters. Monkey is actively engaged in wiping out monsters, while the gods and saints remain passive until forced to help. In fact, then, Monkey's attack on monsters in a world wholly dominated by the gods is an indirect struggle against the hierarchy of heaven.

Thirdly, though Monkey considers Tripitaka as his master and strives whole-heartedly to protect the monk on his pilgrimage, there is a sharp contradiction between them. Tripitaka is a weak and soft-hearted "elder." Though he is often endangered by the monsters, who want to eat his flesh, heart and liver, he insists on treating them kindly and will not let Monkey kill them. Monkey is the very reverse. He resolutely determines to kill the monsters and exterminate all the forces of evil; thus irreconcilable conflicts flare up between master and disciple. Time and again Tripitaka drives Monkey away because he has killed some monster or evil spirit, reproaching him for indulging in evil ways and refusing to practise virtue; yet once Monkey leaves Tripitaka finds himself in trouble. This glorious portrayal of Monkey Sun Wu-kung as a resolute fighter, upholder of justice and deadly enemy of the powers of evil is a forceful criticism of the character of Tripitaka, who represents the orthodox thought of the ruling class.

Fourthly, the relationship between Monkey and his comrade-in-arms Pigsy is highly significant too. Pigsy has many of the characteristics of a property owner of the small peasantry. During the pilgrimage he constantly wavers, displaying a lack of confidence and resolution. When a woman entices him, he wants to stay with her and will not continue his journey. His is gluttonous and lazy, fond of petty gains, and these shortcomings always involve him in difficulties. In a fierce fight he holds back like a coward, letting Monkey bear the brunt; but when he sees that a monster is being defeated, in order to share the credit he runs forward brandishing his rake. However, he is simple and good-hearted. Despite his many serious faults, he consistently opposes the monsters and never gives in to the forces of evil. Of the four pilgrims, he is the one to undertake the hardest and humblest tasks, carrying the luggage, opening a way through the brambles, clearing away filth or rotten persimmons. He is not stubborn either but willing to admit his mistakes; thus he endures to the end as Monkey's comrade-in-arms, contributing an indispensable share on the pilgrimage. Pigsy makes a strong impression on readers of this novel, who find him contemptible and ridiculous yet cannot help liking him at the same time. Obviously this impression is inseparable from the writer's treatment of Pigsy, whose character is affirmed while his defects are sharply criticized.

## 3

The story of Monkey's three attempts to get the palm-leaf fan to cross the Flaming Mountain occupies three entire chapters, 59 to 61, out of the whole novel of a hundred chapters. The pilgrims are in the middle of their journey, and struggles against monsters and perils come thick and fast. This episode follows on from the earlier of their eighty-one perils and leads up to the later ones. It is an important and enthralling story, one of the chief adventures in the book, which has always compelled readers' interest. Popular with old and young alike, it has formed the theme of many operas, puppet-plays, picture books and decorative paintings.

The Ox Demon King and his wife Princess Iron Fan are unlike all the other monsters. They do not come from the gods and saints, nor are they out to injure the pilgrims (except that the Ox Demon King's son Red Boy has carried Tripitaka off several times by magic, meaning to take out his heart and eat his flesh to gain immortality, and wanting his father to join him in this.) Of all the monsters they are two of the most sympathetic. This has something to do with Monkey's relationship with the Ox Demon King; for when Monkey was king of the monkeys in the Water Curtain Cave on the Mountain of Fruit and Flowers these two were sworn brothers, as is told at the beginning of the novel. Owing to this special connection, Monkey does not treat them at first as ordinary monsters and when trying to borrow the fan he addresses them cordially as "sister-in-law" and "brother," showing great politeness for the sake of their former friendship. The Chinese people of the feudal period considered loyalty to friends as a great virtue. But this was a personal bond, a minor good; once it came into conflict with justice and major issues, friendship had to be sacrificed for the greater good. So in this episode Monkey first speaks of friendship to his former sworn brother, but when the Ox resenting his treatment of Red Boy refuses to help him out by lending him the fan Monkey gives up his personal friendship and treats the Ox as his enemy, starting a fierce battle. Thus in Monkey's relationship with the Ox Demon King, Wu Cheng-en brings out further the hero's fine character from this particular angle, which is significant. The Ox King is very aptly typified here as an ordinary feudal landlord in the actual society of feudal China. Descriptions of his relations with his wife and concubine and his fights with Monkey are full of interesting episodes and scenes in which the author keeps poking fun at the social customs of that period.

In connection with the artistic achievement of this adventure of the Flaming Mountain, to my mind there are three points which deserve attention. One is the penetrating and powerful manner in which Monkey's fearless fighting spirit and positive optimism in face of perils and obstacles are expressed through a wealth of detailed description. Another is the wisdom of Monkey's tactics against Princess Iron Fan and the Ox Demon King, for he does not merely rely on strength of arms and magic. This

is especially true of his tactics against Princess Iron Fan when he changes into a gnat, slips into her belly and so terrifies her by jumping up and down that she lends him the fan. Shrewd tactics like these are not simply interesting flights of fancy, but also full of meaning. Monkey did not adopt such ruses in his earlier fights. The third point is that Monkey had not yet attained his full stature as a hero, and he still reveals a number of weaknesses. He trusts too much in his own might and is also easily deceived by the enemy. In his first attempt to get the fan, after defeating Rakshasa by getting inside her, he takes the fan and walks off without any suspicion; but it turns out that he has been tricked into accepting a fake. In his second attempt, after using his wisdom and some hard fighting he gets the true fan but is so drunk with victory, so lacking in vigilance, that the Ox Demon King in the guise of Pigsy gets the fan back by a ruse. So Monkey is deceived again. There is a most amusing picture here of a small Monkey gloating conceitedly as he carries a huge fan which he does not know how to shrink back to its original size. This is Wu Cheng-en's kindly criticism of the shortcomings of his favourite character.

All Monkey's battles against the Ox King and his wife during his three attempt to get the palm-leaf fan are presented with great verve and gusto. Lu Hsun in his *Brief History of Chinese Fiction* commented that in this novel "the most miraculous and fantastic changes take place." And this description is no exaggeration.

WU CHENG-EN

## The Pilgrimage to the West

### CHAPTER 59

#### Tripitaka Is Stopped by the Flaming Mountain Monkey Tries to Get the Palm-Leaf Fan

Many the strains sprung from one common stock,  
Boundless the store of the sea;  
And vain are men's myriad fancies,  
For every sort and kind blend into one.  
When at last the deed is done, the task accomplished,  
Perfect and bright Truth is manifested on high.  
Then let not your thoughts wander east or west,  
But hold them well in check  
And smelt them in the furnace  
Till they glow red as the sun,  
Clear, brilliant and resplendent  
To ride the dragon at will.

Our story tells how the monk Tripitaka accepted as his disciples Monkey, Pigsy and Sandy, how having overcome doubts and curbed unruly thoughts they joined forces to journey with one accord towards the West. Time sped like an arrow, the sun and the moon flew like shuttles. Sultry summer passed once more into late, frosty autumn. Look!

Light clouds are scattered,  
The west wind blows hard;

Storks cry in distant valleys,  
The frosted forest is a tapestry;  
Chill and desolate the scene,  
Across far hills and further streams.  
Wild geese come to the northern pass,  
Swallows return to the south,  
While travellers lonely on the road lose heart  
And the monks' robes are cold.

As the monk and his three disciples travelled on, little by little the heat became intense. Tripitaka reined in his horse to say: "This is autumn now; what makes it so hot?"

Pigsy answered, "Don't you know? There is a kingdom in the west called Sicily where the sun sets. Men usually call it the 'Brink of the Sky.'\* About four or five every afternoon the king sends men up the city wall to beat drums and blow horns to drown the seething noise of the ocean. For the sun is the true Fiery Principle, and when it falls into the Western Ocean it hisses and seethes like fire plunging into water. If there were no drumming and bugling to fill their ears, the children in the city would be killed by the din. It's so sweltering here, I think we must have reached the place where the sun sets."

Monkey burst out laughing and said, "Don't talk like a fool! We're a long way from Sicily. If we keep changing our minds like our master and dawdle like this, even if we travelled from childhood till old age and had three lives, we'd never get there."

"If this isn't the place where the sun sets, brother, why should it be so confoundedly hot?" asked Pigsy.

Sandy said, "It must be freakish weather, an autumn heat-wave or something of the sort."

As they were arguing, they saw by the roadside a manor house with a red-tiled roof, red brick walls, a gate painted red and red lacquered benches — the whole building was red. Tripitaka dismounted and said, "Monkey, go and ask the people in that house the reason for this fearful heat."

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\*This legend was taken from earlier Chinese accounts based on Arabic sources. Here Sicily is confused with a legendary region in the West called by the Arabs Djabulsa or the Land of the Setting Sun.

Then Monkey laid aside his gold-hooped staff, tidied himself, assumed a scholarly air and went down the road to have a look at the gate. An old man suddenly came out, and this was what he looked like —

He wore a linen gown neither yellow nor red,  
A straw hat neither green nor black;  
He held a gnarled bamboo cane neither crooked nor straight,  
And was shod in leather boots neither new nor old.  
Copper-red his face, silver-white his beard,  
Long shaggy eyebrows covered his blue eyes  
And his teeth flashed gold when he smiled.

This old man, looking up, was taken aback to see Monkey. Gripping his cane tight, he shouted, "What monster are you? What are you doing outside my gate?"

Monkey bowed and said, "Don't be afraid, sir. I'm no monster. I've been sent by the Great Tang Emperor of the East to find Buddhist scriptures in the West. We and our master have just reached your worthy district. I've come to ask why it is so hot here and what the name of this place is."

The old man, reassured, said with a smile, "Forgive me, friar. My eyes played a trick on me and I did not see you were a monk."

"That's quite all right," said Monkey.

"Where is your master?"

"There to the south, standing in the road."

"Please ask him over."

Monkey waved cheerfully to the rest, whereupon Tripitaka approached with Pigsy and Sandy leading his white horse and carrying the baggage. They all bowed to the old man who, pleasantly surprised by Tripitaka's handsome looks and the unusual appearance of Pigsy and Sandy, invited them in to rest, telling his household to serve tea and prepare a meal.

Tripitaka, hearing this, stood up to thank him and ask, "May I inquire, sir, how it is that your honourable district has grown so hot even in autumn?"

The old man answered, "This unworthy place is called the Flaming Mountain. We have no spring or autumn here. It is hot in all four seasons."

Tripitaka asked, "On which side is this Flaming Mountain? Does it block the way westward?"

"There's no going west," said the old man. "That mountain is sixty *li* from here, right in the way you would have to go. And its flames reach out eight hundred *li* so that not a blade of grass can grow round about. A man with a head of copper and body of iron would melt if he took that road."

At this Tripitaka paled and dared ask no more.

Just then a young fellow pushing a red wheelbarrow stopped outside the gate and cried, "Cakes for sale!"

Monkey pulled out a hair and changed it into a copper with which to buy a cake. The lad took the money and with no further ado whipped the steaming clothcover from his wheelbarrow and handed a cake to Monkey. That cake was as hot as burning charcoal or red molten iron in a furnace. Just watch him shift it from one hand to another! "Phew!" he exclaimed. "It's roasting! I can't eat this!"

The lad laughed, "If you're afraid of heat, this is no place for you. That's how hot things are in these parts."

"That doesn't make sense, young fellow," retorted Monkey. "The proverb says: Without heat and cold no crops will grow. If this place is so sweltering all the time, where did you get the flour for your cakes?"

"To find that out, you must pay a respectful visit to the Iron Fan Fairy."

"Why, what has the fairy to do with it?"

"This Iron Fan Fairy has a palm-leaf fan. One swish of that fan will put out the fire; another swish will make a breeze; a third will bring rain. That's how we sow and reap in due season and get our crops. If not for that, I assure you, not a blade of grass could grow."

Then Monkey hurried inside and gave the cake to Tripitaka, saying, "Take it easy, Master. There is no need to worry yet. When you've eaten this cake I'll explain why."

Tripitaka offered the cake to his host, who said, "I haven't served you any tea or food yet: how can I accept this from you?"

Monkey laughed, "Don't bother about tea and food, sir. Just tell me where the Iron Fan Fairy lives."

"Why do you ask?"

"That pedlar just now told me that this fairy has a palm-leaf fan. One swish of that fan will put out the fire; another swish will make a breeze; a third will bring rain. That's how you sow and reap your crops. I want to borrow that fan to put out the fire so that we can go past and you can get harvests to feed yourselves."

"That may be so," replied the old man. "But since you have no offerings I doubt whether the holy one would help you."

"What offerings does she require?" asked Tripitaka.

The old man answered, "Folk here make their request every ten years with four pigs, four sheep, red silk, flowers, the choicest fruit of the season, chickens, geese and good wine. After purifying ourselves we go with humble hearts to the fairy mountain. There we prostrate ourselves and beg the fairy to come out of the cave and put out the fire."

"Where is the mountain?" asked Monkey. "What's the place called? Is it far? Wait while I go and borrow the fan."

"It lies to the southwest," said the old man. "Its name is the Mountain of Emerald Clouds and on it you'll find a fairy cave called Palm-Leaf Cavern. The journey there and back takes pilgrims from here a whole month. The distance is nearly one thousand four hundred and sixty *li*."

"That's all right," said Monkey with a smile. "I'll be back in no time."

"Wait!" cried the old man. "You must have some tea and food first and prepare some rations. You'll need a couple of people to go with you too. That's a lonely road infested with wolves and tigers and the journey takes more than one day. This is no joke!"

Monkey laughed, "No need, no need! Off I go." And with that he vanished.

The old man was amazed. "Heavens!" he exclaimed, "so he's one of these immortals that ride on clouds."

We need not describe the redoubled respect with which this family now treated Tripitaka. Let us accompany Monkey, who in no time arrived at the Mountain of Emerald Clouds and hiding his divine aura started searching for the cave. Presently he heard

the sound of felling wood and saw a woodcutter in the forest. Hastening forward Monkey heard him chant:

Faintly through clouds I glimpse the familiar woods,  
The path is lost among sheer cliffs and brambles;  
I see the morning rain on the western hills,  
On my way back the southern stream has risen.

Monkey accosted him with a bow. "Greetings, brother!"

The woodcutter put down his axe to return the bow and asked, "Where are you going, friar?"

"Can you tell me whether this is the Mountain of Emerald Clouds?" When the woodcutter said that it was, Monkey continued, "I hear there is a Palm-Leaf Cavern belonging to the Iron Fan Fairy. Where would that be?"

The woodcutter said with a smile, "There is such a cavern, but there is no Iron Fan Fairy. There is only a Princess Iron Fan, also called Rakshasa."

"Is she the one said to have a palm-leaf fan which can put out the flames of the Flaming Mountain?"

"That's right, that's right. Because the goddess has this magic fan which can help the local people by putting out the flames, they call her the Iron Fan Fairy. We here have no need of her and know her only as Rakshasa, the wife of the powerful 'Ox Demon King.'"

When Monkey heard that, he lost colour in dismay. "Up against an enemy again!" he thought. "That Red Boy we captured was said to be their son. When we met his uncle in P'erh Cave on Chiehyang Mountain, he refused us water and wanted to take revenge. Now here I am up against the mother — how am I to borrow the fan?"

Seeing Monkey deep in thought, heaving long sighs, the woodcutter said with a smile, "Friar, what can worry a holy man like you? If you take this path east, less than five or six *li* will bring you to Palm-Leaf Cavern. You don't have to worry."

"I can take you into my confidence," said Monkey. "I am the first disciple of Tripitaka, who has been sent by the Tang Emperor of the East to find Buddhist scriptures in the West. A year or so ago in Fire-Cloud Cave we had words with the princess'

son, Red Boy. Now we want to borrow her fan, I'm afraid she may refuse out of spite. That's what's worrying me."

"Just watch your step, friend," said the woodcutter. "Simply ask for the fan and say nothing about the past. I'm sure you'll get it."

"Thank you for your advice, brother," Monkey bowed. "I'm off."

Leaving the woodcutter he went straight to Palm-Leaf Cavern. The double gate was firmly closed and the scenery around was beautiful. Undoubtedly, that was a lovely spot!

Rocks formed the bones of the mountains,  
The essence of the earth.  
The mist held last night's moisture,  
Moss made a new, fresh green;  
High peaks outdid the islands of Penglai,  
The quiet and scent of flowers made a fairy world,  
Wild storks nested on tall pines  
And orioles called to each other from fading willows;  
A time-hallowed, unearthly place was this,  
The bright-plumed phoenix sang in a green plane tree,  
The grey dragon lurked in the running stream,  
Vines drooped above winding paths,  
Creepers climbed over rocky steps;  
\* On emerald cliffs monkeys hailed the rising moon,  
On tall trees birds saluted the clear blue sky;  
Bamboos on both sides cast shade cool as rain,  
Flowers on the path made a thick, patterned carpet;  
At times white clouds drifted up from distant valleys  
To wander aimlessly after the breeze.

Monkey stepped forward and called, "Brother Ox! Open the gate!"

Then the gate grated open and out came a maid with a flower basket in her hand, a hoe over her shoulder. Her dress was plain and bare of any adornment, her face radiant with piety. Monkey advanced, his palms pressed together in a salute, and said, "May I trouble you, maid, to announce me to the princess? I am a monk on my way West to find Buddhist scriptures, but I cannot cross the Flaming Mountain and have come here to ask for the loan of the palm-leaf fan."

"Tell me your monastery and your name, so that I can report to my mistress," said the maid.

"I come from the East," answered Monkey. "I am the monk Sun Wu-kung."\*

The maid turned and went in to kneel before Rakshasa. "The monk Sun Wu-kung from the East is outside the cave, madam," she said, "he wants to see you to borrow the palm-leaf fan so that he can cross the Flaming Mountain."

To Rakshasa the name Sun Wu-kung was like salt sprinkled on fire or oil added to flames. She flushed crimson, her heart swelled with anger and she swore, "That vile ape! So he's here, is he!" Calling for her armour and weapons, she put on her helmet and breast-plate, seized two swords of blue steel and sallied forth. Monkey slipped to one side to have a look at her.

A flower-patterned scarf she had  
And silk robe with cloud designs;  
The double tiger-sinews about her waist;  
Barely disclosed her embroidered skirt beneath;  
Three inches long her arched phoenix-beak slippers,  
Dragon-tassels had her gilded greaves;  
Grasping her swords she shouted in her rage,  
Fierce as a goddess from the moon.

Stepping out of the gate she cried, "Where is Sun Wu-kung?"  
Monkey stepped forward and bowed. "Here, sister-in-law! Greetings."

Rakshasa snorted with rage. "Who's your sister-in-law? Who wants your greetings?"

"The Ox Demon King of your honourable house was my sworn brother, one of seven sworn brothers," said Monkey. "Now that I learn you are his wife, lady, shouldn't I address you as my sister-in-law?"

"Vile ape! If you were our sworn brother, would you injure my child?"

"Your child?" Monkey pretended ignorance.

"Yes, my son Red Boy, the Holy Child King of Fire-Cloud Cave in the Valley of Withered Pines on the Howling Mountain.

\* Monkey's Buddhist name.

You trapped him. I was looking for you to pay you back, and now you've delivered yourself into my hands. Don't think I'm going to let you off!"

"Come, that's not reasonable, sister-in-law," protested Monkey with a smile. "You can't blame me. Your son captured my master and wanted to steam him or boil him. Luckily Kuan-yin carried Red Boy off and saved my master. Now he is with Kuan-yin as the angel Sudhana. He's become a genuine bodhisattva, deathless and pure, and will live as long as the sun and moon, as long as heaven and earth endure. You should be thanking me for preserving him instead of blaming me—that's most unfair!"

"You smooth-tongued baboon!" scolded Rakshasa. "My son may not be dead, but can he come back to me? Shall I ever see him again?"

"That's not difficult." Monkey laughed. "If you want to see your son, sister-in-law, just lend me your fan to put out the fire so that I can escort my master on his way. Then I'll go to Kuan-yin and ask her to send him to see you and return the fan. You can see then whether he's been harmed or not. If he's been hurt in the least, you'll have cause to blame me. If he looks in better condition, you ought to thank me."

"Hold your tongue, you devil! Stretch out your head and let me take a few slashes at it. If you can stand the pain, I'll lend you the fan. If not, I'll send you all the sooner to Hell."

With folded hands, Monkey went up to her, laughing. "Say no more, sister. Here's my head. You can whack at it till you're tired. You'll have to lend me the fan."

Without another word, Rakshasa swung her swords and rained down a dozen resounding blows on his head. When Monkey did not turn a hair, the princess took fright and turned to fly.

"Where are you going, sister?" he cried. "Hurry up and lend me the fan."

"I don't lend my treasure," she answered.

"If you won't lend it, see how you like a dose of Brother Sun's cudgel!"

The Monkey King seized her with one hand, with the other plucking the staff from inside his ear. He swung it once and it grew as thick as a bowl. Rakshasa pulled free and raised her

swords to resist. Then Monkey attacked with his staff. So there at the foot of the Mountain of Emerald Clouds both sundered their bonds of friendship, black hatred in their hearts. And what a fight that was!

The woman was a monster,  
Hating Monkey, eager to avenge her son;  
Though Monkey too, was angry,  
He spoke her fair when the road west was blocked,  
Asking patiently, he asked for the loan of the palm-leaf fan,  
Making no parade of his strength.  
In her folly Rakshasa attacked him,  
Yet the Monkey King remembered the ties between them.  
But how can a woman prevail against a man?  
Women, when all is said, are the weaker sex.  
Mighty his iron staff with its hoops of gold,  
And swift her gleaming swords with the blue blades;  
Each struck at the other's head and face,  
Contending hard with no respite,  
Parrying blows left and right.  
Warding off attacks before and then behind;  
They were fighting with all their might  
When the sun sank in the west;  
Then Rakshasa waved her fan—  
One swish of that fan and even the gods were afraid!

Rakshasa fought Monkey till evening fell and she knew she could not win, for his staff was heavy and he wielded it with great skill. Thereupon she took out the palm-leaf fan and waved it. At once a cold wind sprang up and Monkey, unable to stop, was blown straight out of sight. Then Rakshasa returned in triumph to her cave.

Monkey floated up and away. Though he strained left and right he was powerless to come down, like a leaf whirled off by a gale or a fallen petal swept headlong by a stream. A whole night he hurtled through the sky, not till daybreak did he alight on a mountain top, where he flung both arms round a crag. After some time, when he had recovered a little, he looked carefully about him and saw that this was the Lesser Sumeru Mountain.

"What a shrew!" He let out a long sigh. "How did she get me here? I remember coming to this place a year or so ago to

ask the Bodhisattva Ling-chi to rescue my master by overcoming the Yellow Whirlwind Monster. The Yellow Whirlwind Mountain was more than three thousand *li* to the south. Since I've come back from the west, this must be goodness knows how many tens of thousands of *li* to the southeast. Let me go down and ask the bodhisattva my best way back."

The clear note of a temple bell broke into his thoughts and he hurried down the slope straight to the monastery. The priest at the gate recognized him and went in to announce, "That furry-faced god who came the year before last to ask you to subdue the Yellow Whirlwind Monster is here again."

Ling-chi, realizing who it was, hastily rose from his seat and went out to greet Monkey. He invited him in, saluted him and said, "Congratulations! Are you back already with the sutras?"

"Not yet," said Monkey. "No, we're still a long way from that."

"If you haven't succeeded yet, what brings you back to these wild mountains of ours?"

"The other year you were kind enough to overcome the Yellow Whirlwind Monster for us. Since then we've met with many more hardships on our way. Now we've reached the Flaming Mountain and can get no further. The local people told us about an Iron Fan Fairy with a palm-leaf fan which can put out the fire, so I made a special trip to see her. She turned out to be the Ox Demon King's wife and Red Boy's mother. She blames me for making her son one of Kuan-yin's attendants and bears me a grudge because she'll never see him again. Instead of lending me the fan, she fought me. And when she found my staff too powerful for her, she waved her fan at me and sent me flying all the way here before I managed to stop. I've taken the liberty of calling at your monastery to ask my way back. How far is it from here to the Flaming Mountain?"

"That was Rakshasa or Princess Iron Fan," said Ling-chi with a laugh. "That precious palm-leaf fan of hers has divine powers for it was created by the Universe after the Primordial Chaos. Since it is the essence of the Primary Female Principle, not only can it put out fires but if waved at a man it will send him flying eighty-four thousand *li* before its wind drops. From here to the Flaming Mountain is little more than fifty thousand *li*.

You stopped because you know how to ride the clouds. Most people wouldn't have come down so soon."

"This is terrible!" exclaimed Monkey. "How is my master going to cross that region?"

"Set your mind at rest," replied the bodhisattva. "Your coming here is a sign that Tripitaka's luck is good and that you will succeed."

"How shall we succeed?"

"In the past when Buddha taught me, he gave me a wind-calming pill and a flying-dragon wand. I used the wand to overcome the Yellow Whirlwind Monster, but I haven't yet used the pill. I'll give it to you so that she won't be able to blow you away; then you can get the fan and put out the fire, and after that you will succeed."

As Monkey bowed his thanks, the bodhisattva took a silk pouch from his sleeve and tucked the wind-calming pill inside Monkey's collar, where he had it sewn firmly in place. Then he saw Monkey to the gate saying, "I shan't entertain you now. Head northwest to reach the mountain where she lives."

So Monkey left Ling-chi and somersaulted through the clouds straight back to the Mountain of Emerald Clouds, arriving there in next to no time. He banged on the gate with his iron staff and shouted, "Open up! Open up! I've come to borrow the fan."

The panic-stricken maid inside rushed to report to her mistress, "That man is back again to borrow the fan!"

Alarmed to hear this, Rakshasa thought, "That wretched ape certainly knows a trick or two! My treasure fans men eighty-four thousand *li* without stopping. How did he manage to get back so soon? This time I'll wave my fan at him two or three times, so that he can't find his way back."

She hastily got up, buckled on her armour and picked up her two swords. Reaching the gate she shouted, "So you aren't afraid of me, Monkey! You've come back to be killed."

Monkey laughed. "Don't be so mean, sister! You must lend it to me. After I've helped my master Tripitaka to cross the mountain, I'll send it back without fail. I'm a very honest gentleman, not one of those fellows who never returns what he borrows."



"You scoundrelly baboon! The idea!" swore Rakshasa, "What impudence! You haven't yet paid for taking away my son, and now you want to borrow my fan — not likely! Stand your ground and have a taste of my swords."

Monkey, no whit dismayed, parried with his staff. After six or seven clashes, Rakshasa's arms were tired while Monkey was still vigorous and invincible. Since the battle was going against her, Rakshasa took out her fan and waved it at him, but Monkey stood immovable as a rock. Putting away his staff he said with a smile, "This time things have changed. Fan as hard as you please. If I budge, I'm no true man."

She fanned again and yet again, but sure enough Monkey did not move. Then Rakshasa lost her head and putting away her magic fan turned and fled into the cave, making fast the gate behind her.

When Monkey saw that she had closed the gate, he decided to play a trick. Having taken the wind-calming pill from his collar and put it in his mouth, he transformed himself into a tiny gnat and squeezed through a crack in the gate. He heard Rakshasa call, "I'm thirsty. Hurry up and bring the tea!" Then the maid attending her brought a pot of fragrant tea and poured out a full bowl with bubbles on top. In high spirits, Monkey swooped to hide under the bubbles. Since Rakshasa was parched she drained the bowl in two gulps and Monkey found himself inside her belly, where he resumed his own form. Then he called at the top of his voice, "Sister, lend me your fan!"

Pale with fright, Rakshasa asked her maids if the gate were locked. Assured that it was, she said, "If the gate is locked, how do I hear Monkey shouting inside my room?"

The maids told her, "His voice is coming from inside you, madam."

Rakshasa demanded, "What magic are you up to, Monkey?"

"I have never worked magic in all my life," said Monkey. "This is genuine honest skill. I am enjoying myself in your honourable belly and may now say I know you inside out. I find you are hungry and thirsty, so here's a bowl of tea for you." With that he stamped so hard that Rakshasa felt an excruciating pain in her belly and fell groaning to the ground. "Don't stand on ceremony, sister!" Monkey continued. "Here's some cake

to stay your hunger." And he butted with his head till she felt an excruciating pain in her chest. She rolled on the ground, her face waxen and her lips white, screaming, "Spare me, brother! Spare me!"

At that Monkey stopped plaguing her and said, "So now you recognize your brother-in-law, eh? For the sake of Brother Ox I'll spare your life. Hurry up and give me the fan."

"I will, I will, brother! Come out and take it."

"You must show me the fan before I'll come out."

Rakshasa told a maid to fetch the palm-leaf fan and Monkey saw it from her throat. He said, "Since I'm sparing you, sister, so as not to make a hole in your belly I'll come out through your mouth. Open your mouth three times."

As she complied, Monkey flew out in the form of a gnat to alight on the palm-leaf fan. Not knowing this, Rakshasa went on opening her mouth and calling, "Come out, brother!"

Then Monkey resumed his true shape and picked up the fan. "Here I am!" he cried. "Thanks for the loan!" He strode off, while the maids hastened to open the gate and let him out.

Having turned his cloud eastwards again, in no time at all Monkey came down beside the red brick wall. Pigsy exclaimed in pleasure at the sight, "Here's Brother Monkey, master! He's back!"

Then Tripitaka, Sandy and the old man came out to welcome him and lead him inside. Monkey showed them the fan and asked, "Is this the fan, sir?"

The old man answered, "That's it."

Tripitaka said in high delight, "You have done extremely well. You must have gone to a great deal of trouble to get this treasure."

"The trouble is nothing," said Monkey, "but do you know who this Iron Fan Fairy is? None other than the wife of the Ox Demon King and the mother of Red Boy. They call her Rakshasa or Princess Iron Fan. When I went to her cave to borrow the fan, she brought up old grievances and whacked me several times with her swords. And as soon as I frightened her with my staff, with one wave of her fan she sent me flying all the way to the Lesser Sumeru Mountain. Luckily I met the Bodhisattva Ling-chi who gave me a wind-calming pill and showed me the way back to the Mountain of Emerald Clouds and Rak-

shasa. This time when she fanned me again and I didn't move, she went into her cave. So I changed into a gnat and flew in too, and when she called for a drink I hid under the bubbles in her tea and jumped around in her belly till the pain was too much for her and she begged me again and again to spare her life, promising to lend me the fan. I let her off then and took the fan, which I shall return when we've crossed the Flaming Mountain."

When Tripitaka heard this he was most thankful. They said goodbye to the old man and proceeded west for forty *li* or so till the heat became almost intolerable. Sandy swore that his feet were scorched and Pigsy complained of blistered soles, while the horse trotted faster than usual, unable to keep its hooves on the ground for long. Soon it became impossible to go further.

"You had better dismount now, master," Monkey said. "While you stop here I shall go to put out the fire. After the wind and rain, when the ground is cooler, we can cross the mountain together."

Then Monkey raised the fan, approached the flames and fanned with all his might. The flames only blazed up higher. He fanned again and the flames increased a hundredfold. He fanned a third time and they soared up ten thousand feet and started to burn him. Though he jumped back fast, the hair on his thighs was singed. He promptly ran back to Tripitaka, shouting, "Turn back, quick! Turn back! The fire is coming this way." Tripitaka climbed into his saddle and with Pigsy and Sandy they hastened east for more than twenty *li* before they halted.

Then Tripitaka asked, "What happened, Monkey?"

Monkey threw down the fan. "It's no use, it didn't work. That woman fooled me."

When Tripitaka heard this, his heart sank and he knitted his brow in dismay, unable to hold back the tears. "What shall we do?" he lamented.

Pigsy asked, "Brother, why were you in such a hurry to make us turn back?"

"The first time I fanned, the flames blazed up," said Monkey. "The second time I fanned, the fire grew even fiercer. And the third time the flames shot up ten thousand feet high. If I hadn't made off double-quick I'd have no hair left!"

Pigsy laughed. "You're always boasting that no thunderbolt or fire can harm you. How is it you're so afraid of fire today?"

"You fool, what do you know?" retorted Monkey. "I was on my guard before, so I came to no harm. But today I was so eager to put out the flames that I didn't recite any charm to ward off fire or use any magic to protect myself. That's why all the hair has been burnt off my thighs."

Sandy asked, "What shall we do now with this great blaze cutting our road to the West?"

Pigsy said, "Let's find a way where there's no fire."

Tripitaka asked, "In which direction is there none?"

"There's no fire in the east, south or north," answered Pigsy.

"Where are the Buddhist scriptures?" asked Tripitaka.

"In the west," was Pigsy's reply.

Tripitaka said, "The only way I want to go is that which leads to the scriptures."

Sandy said, "There are flames where the scriptures are, and where there are no flames there are no scriptures either. We can neither go forward nor back."

While the master and his disciples were disputing at cross purposes, someone called to them, "Don't worry, holy ones! Have something to eat before making any decision."

They turned to see an old man in a long cape, a crescent-shaped hat and hob-nailed boots, who was holding a dragon-head wand. Behind him was a demon with a nuzzle like the beak of a hawk and broad cheeks like a fish. This demon had on its head a bronze pot full of steamed bread and cakes, cooked millet and rice.

Approaching them from the west, the old man bowed and said, "I am the local god of the Flaming Mountain. I know that Saint Monkey is helping a holy monk in his pilgrimage and that you are unable to advance. I have come to offer you some food."

"Never mind the food," said Monkey. "When can the fire be put out so that my master can pass this place?"

"To put out the fire, you must borrow Rakshasa's palm-leaf fan," said the local deity.

Monkey picked up the fan from the road. "Here it is," he said. "But the fire burnt higher than ever when I fanned it."

The local god examined the fan and laughed. "This isn't it. Rakshasa fooled you."

"How can I get the genuine one?" asked Monkey.

The local deity bowed and said with a smile, "To borrow the genuine fan, you must first find the Prince of Mighty Strength."

If you want to know the reason for this, you must hear what is related in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER 60

### The Ox Demon Calls Off a Fight and Goes to a Feast Monkey Makes a Second Attempt to Get the Fan

The local god said, "The Prince of Mighty Strength is the Ox Demon King."

"Was this fire started by the Ox Demon King?" asked Monkey. "Is that why it's called the Flaming Mountain?"

"No, no," said the local deity. "I don't dare tell you unless you promise not to be angry."

"Go on," said Monkey. "Why should I be angry?"

Then the local deity said, "You were the one who started this fire, sir."

"Where was I at the time?" demanded Monkey angrily. "What nonsense is this! Am I the sort of person that starts fires?"

"I see you don't recognize me. There used to be no mountain here; but five hundred years ago when you played havoc in heaven, the god Erh Lang captured you and took you to the Taoist Patriarch, who put you in the Eight Trigram Furnace. When they opened the furnace you kicked it over and a few bricks fell down here, still flaming, and turned into the Flaming Mountain. In those days I was the priest in charge of the furnace in Tushita Palace. To punish me for not keeping better watch, the Patriarch sent me here to be the local god of the Flaming Mountain."

When Pigsy heard this he swore, "So that explains your get-up! You're a Taoist priest turned local deity."

Still somewhat sceptical, Monkey asked, "Tell me, then, why I have to find the Prince of Mighty Strength?"

The local god answered, "He is Rakshasa's husband. Some time ago he left her and went to Cloud-Reaching Cave in the Mountain of Gathering Thunder. A fox king there after living for ten thousand years had died leaving a daughter, Princess Marble Face. This girl had property worth millions but no husband; and two years ago, impressed by the power of the Ox Demon King, she invited him to be her husband and made over all her property to him. So the Ox Demon King has left Rakshasa for some time, never going back. If you find him, you can ask for the real fan. Then you can put out the fire and continue on your way with your master. You will be doing the local people a good turn by getting rid of the Flaming Mountain for ever. And I shall be forgiven and allowed to go back to Heaven to the Taoist Patriarch."

"Where is this Mountain of Gathering Thunder?" asked Monkey. "Is it far from here?"

"It is over three thousand *li* north of here."

Then Monkey told Sandy and Pigsy to take care of their master, and asked the local god to keep watch there. The next instant he had vanished in a flash. In no time he reached a mountain which towered to the sky. Descending from the clouds to alight on a peak, he looked about him. That was a magnificent mountain!

Its summit soared up to the azure sky,  
Its great roots reached down to the Nether Stream;  
The sun shone warm in front of it, the wind blew cold  
behind it;

The plants on its sunny side knew nothing of winter,  
The ice on its windy side never melted in summer;  
Mountain brooks flowed eternally into Dragon Pool,  
And hillside flowers bloomed early by Tiger Cave;  
Springs flowed from a thousand sources like flying jasper,  
Flowers bloomed all together like outspread tapestry;  
Here were twisted trees on twisted mountain ridges,  
Gnarled pines beside gnarled rocks;  
Peaks, crags, precipices, chasms,  
Sweet flowers, rare fruit, red vines, purple bamboos,

Green pines and verdant willows;  
Unchanging was the bloom in every season,  
Immortal as the dragon it endured.

After surveying this scene, Monkey plunged down from the peak to explore the mountain. He was at a loss for the way when he saw in the shade of the pines a girl swaying gracefully towards him with a sprig of fragrant orchid in her hand. He hid behind a grotesque rock to have a good look at her. What was she like, this girl?

Hers was the beauty that makes kingdoms fall,  
Lingering her lotus steps;  
Hers was the loveliness sung in days of old,  
Like a blossom that can speak, like jade but sweeter;  
Her black hair was piled up high,  
Her eyes were limpid as an autumn pool;  
Beneath her skirt tiny arched slippers peeped,  
From her sleeves fluttered tapering fingers;  
With crimson lips and sparkling teeth,  
She seemed the goddess who comes with rain and clouds;  
Smooth as the River Ching, fair as Mount Omei,  
She was lovelier than the fairest maids of Chengtu.

As the girl slowly approached the rock, Monkey bowed and said softly, "Where are you going, lady?"

At the sound of his voice the girl looked up in surprise. Frightened by Monkey's unprepossessing appearance, she faltered, "Who are you? Why should you ask?"

Monkey thought, "I had better not tell her about our search for scriptures and the magic fan, because she may be in league with the Ox Demon King. I'll pretend I'm here to see him."

Since he was silent, the girl changed her tune and asked sharply, "Who are you? How dare you accost me?"

Monkey bowed and answered with a smile, "I come from the Mountain of Emerald Clouds. Being new to your honourable district, I don't know the way. May I ask you whether this is the Mountain of Gathering Thunder?" When she replied that it was, Monkey continued, "And where is Cloud-Reaching Cave?" "Why do you ask?"

"I have come from Princess Iron Fan of Palm-Leaf Cavern on the Mountain of Emerald Clouds to fetch home the Ox Demon King."

At that the girl was very angry. Flushing up to her ears, she swore, "The stupid bitch! The Ox Demon King has lived here with me for less than two years and I have given him a great store of jewels, gold and silver, brocade and silk, supplying him every month with firewood and rice so that he can enjoy himself just as he pleases. Is she utterly without shame that she still wants him back?"

Realizing that this was Princess Marble Face, Monkey drew out his staff and swore, "Bitch yourself! You bought the Ox Demon King with your family property, buying yourself a husband, you shameless slut! How dare you call others names?"

The frightened girl lost her head and darted off, running away in terror. Monkey followed, shouting, and once past the shady pines he found the entrance to the cave. The girl ran in and slammed the gate behind her. Monkey put away his staff and stopped to look round. It was a lovely spot.

Dense woods, steep precipices,  
Were clothed with shady creepers and sweet orchids;  
Brooks splashed like tinkling jade through tall bamboos,  
The smooth rocks deftly billowed fallen petals;  
Mist shrouded distant hills, sun shone on clouds,  
Dragons and tigers roared, storks and orioles sang;  
Loveliness so secluded,  
For ever bejewelled with flowers,  
Was a match for the fairy cavern of Mount Tientai,  
Fair as the magic islands of Penglai.

Let us leave Monkey enjoying the scenery while we follow the girl. Running until she was in a lather of sweat and panting for fright, she rushed into the Ox Demon King's library where she found him quietly studying a volume on alchemy. She flounced angrily on to his lap, scratching her cheeks and wailing. With a smile the demon king said, "Don't look so cross, sweet. What is it?"

The girl stamped and scolded, "This is all your fault, you monster!"

"What have I done now?" he asked with another smile.

"Because I was left an orphan, I married you for your protection. You had a name for courage, yet I find you are nothing but a useless, hen-pecked fellow."

The Ox Demon King took her in his arms and said, "Now, my love, what have I done wrong? Just tell me and I can apologize."

"I was strolling outside in the shade just now, picking orchids, when I was suddenly accosted by a jutting-jawed hairy-faced monk. I nearly died of fright. As soon as I'd recovered enough to ask who he was, he told me Princess Iron Fan had sent him to fetch the Ox Demon King back. When I had something to say to that, he swore at me and chased me with a stick. If I hadn't run fast, the fellow would have killed me! You're the cause of all this trouble! You'll be the death of me!"

Not till the Ox King made a formal apology and used many endearing terms and blandishments did his concubine stop sulking. Then he assured her emphatically, "My sweet, I have no secrets from you. Palm-Leaf Cavern is a quiet, out-of-the-way spot and my wife who has studied the Truth since she was young is now a regular saint. In fact my household is so strict and correct that we don't even keep a page boy. How could she send this man with the jutting jaw? Take my word for it, he's a monster from elsewhere who has come here in her name to see me. Let me go and have a look at him."

Then the Ox Demon King strode out of the library to put on his armour in the hall. Taking up an iron staff he went out of the gate. "Who is making a disturbance out there?" he shouted.

Monkey observed that the Ox had changed a great deal in the last five centuries.

His iron helmet gleamed like polished silver,  
His golden armour was covered with embroidered velvet;  
He was shod in pointed, white-soled deer-skin boots,  
And his belt of twisted silk had a lion-head buckle.  
His eyes were mirror-bright,  
Red rainbows his eyebrows,  
A scarlet bowl his mouth,  
Rows of copper plates his teeth;  
When he roared, the mountain deities took fright;

When he stirred, the foul fiends trembled;  
Known through all the Four Seas as the World Destroyer,  
Styled the Demon King of the West for his mighty strength.

Monkey straightened his clothes to advance and make a deep bow, "Do you remember me, brother?" he inquired.

Returning his bow, the Ox Demon King said, "Aren't you Monkey Sun Wu-kung the Paragon of Heaven?"

"That's right. I haven't paid my respects to you for a long time. I found out your whereabouts just now from a woman. I must congratulate you—you're looking very well."

"Hold that smooth tongue of yours!" swore the Ox Demon King. "I heard that after playing havoc in Heaven you were captured and imprisoned by Buddha under the Mountain of Five Peaks. Not long ago you were released from your punishment to escort Tripitaka on a pilgrimage to the West to find Buddhist scriptures. Why did you harm my son Red Boy at Fire-Cloud Cave in the Valley of Withered Pines on the Howling Mountain? I was just wondering how to pay you back, and here you come looking for me!"

Monkey bowed and said, "Don't blame me for what wasn't my fault, brother. Your son captured my master, meaning to eat him, and there was nothing I could do. Luckily Kuan-yin rescued Tripitaka and prevailed on your son to mend his ways, so that now he is the angel Sudhana with a higher status than yours, enjoying perfect bliss, complete freedom and eternal youth. What's wrong with that? In what way am I to blame?"

"You with your glib tongue!" swore the Ox Demon King. "You may deny injuring my son, but why did you bully my dear concubine and chase her all the way home?"

Monkey laughed. "When I couldn't find you, brother, I asked a woman the way. I had no idea she was your second wife. Since she answered me rudely, I may have spoken sharply and frightened her. I hope you'll overlook it."

"In that case, for old times' sake I'll let you off."

"I am overwhelmed by your generosity," said Monkey. "But I have another favour to ask. I really must beg your help."

"Wretched Monkey, don't you know when you're well off?" swore the Ox. "Don't pester me but go while the going's good. How dare you ask my help?"

"I'll tell you the truth," said Monkey. "I'm escorting Tripitaka on his pilgrimage West, and our way has been blocked by the Flaming Mountain. I learned from the local people of your respected wife Rakshasa's palm-leaf fan. When I went to your place yesterday to borrow it, she wouldn't lend it to me. So I've come to beg your help. I hope in the great goodness of your heart you will come with me to your wife and at all costs lend me that fan to put out the flames. I shall return it to you as soon as I've escorted my master across the mountain."

At this the Ox Demon King flew into a passion. Grinding his teeth, he swore, "What insolence! So you want the fan, do you! No doubt you've already insulted my wife and, when she refused you, you came to find me. You chased my concubine too! The proverb says: Don't insult a friend's wife or bully his concubine. You've done both, you impudent ape! Come here and let me have a whack at you!"

"If you want to fight, brother, I'm not afraid," said Monkey. "But I'm in earnest about borrowing your magic fan. Won't you please lend it to me?"

"If you can win three rounds against me, I'll tell my wife to lend it. If not, I'll kill you to avenge myself."

"Right you are, brother," said Monkey. "I have been so remiss, not calling on you all this time, that I don't know how you fight now compared with the old days. Let's have a try."

Without a word the Ox Demon King raised his iron mace and smashed it down. Monkey parried with his gold-hooped staff. It was a grand fight that followed.

A gold-hooped staff, an iron mace —  
In rage they break off their friendship  
One says, "You wretched ape, you ruined my son!"  
The other, "Don't be angry; your son is an angel."  
One shouts, "How dare you come to seek me out?"  
The other says, "I came to ask a favour."  
One wants the fan to safeguard Tripitaka,  
The other is too niggardly to lend it.  
They bandy words, forgetting their old friendship,

Enraged to be so ill-used.

The Ox King's mace is like a darting dragon,  
Monkey's staff would put demons to flight;  
First they battle at the foot of the mountain,  
Then soar into the clouds  
To display their might in mid-air,  
Revealing their skill in a bright aura of light;  
Their weapons clash before the gate of Heaven,  
But neither combatant can worst the other.

They battled more than a hundred times, yet neither could defeat the other. At the height of the fray, a voice called from the mountain peak, "Lord Ox, the prince, my master, sends you his greetings. He hopes you will come early to the feast."

The Ox King warded off Monkey's staff with his mace. "Stop a minute, Monkey!" he cried. "Wait till I come back from a feast with a friend." With that he descended from the clouds and went to his cave to tell Princess Marble Face, "My love, that fellow with the jutting jaw is Monkey Sun Wu-kung. I've given him such a drubbing with my mace that he'll hardly dare come back. So don't you worry. I'm off now to drink with a friend." Then he unbuckled his armour, put on a black velvet coat and went out to mount his Golden-Eyed Wave-Cleaving Steed. Having ordered his followers to guard the cave, he rode off north-west through the clouds.

Monkey watching from a high peak wondered, "Who is this friend of the Ox and where is the feast? Suppose I follow him?" He shook himself and changed into a breeze to go after the Ox. In no time they reached a mountain where the Ox King vanished. Resuming his own form, Monkey alighted on the mountain after him. He found a deep, clear pool and beside it a stone tablet on which was inscribed in massive characters: The Pool of Emerald Waves, Craggy Mountain. Monkey thought, "The old ox must have dived into this pool. No doubt the monster here is a water-serpent, dragon, fish, turtle, tortoise or alligator. I'll pop in too and have a look." He made a magic pass, recited a spell and shook himself, changing into a crab about thirty-six pounds in weight. He jumped with a splash into the pool and sank straight to the bottom. There he was confronted by a finely carved arch, under which was tethered the Ox King's Golden-Eyed Steed.

The other side of the arch was completely dry. Monkey crawled inside and looked carefully around. He heard music from one direction, and this is what he saw:

A vermilion palace like those upon the earth,  
With pearly arches, golden tiles, jade lintels  
Tortoise-shell screens and coral-studded balustrades;  
An auspicious aura glowed round the lotus throne,  
Lighting up heaven above and earth below.  
This was no palace of the sky or ocean,  
But a place lovelier than the fairy isles;  
In that high hall the hosts and guests were feasting,  
Officials great and small wearing crowns and pearls;  
Fairies were summoned to bring ivory dishes,  
Immortal maidens tuned their instruments,  
Whales sang and huge crabs danced,  
Turtles played pipes, an alligator sounded drums,  
The pearl at the dragon's neck shed light on the feast,  
Strange hieroglyphics graced the kingfisher screen,  
Lobster-antennae curtains hung in the halls,  
All manner of instruments made heavenly music,  
Resounding strains lingered among the clouds,  
The green-headed perch strummed the cithern,  
The red-eyed mussel fluted,  
The mandarin fish presented venison,  
The dragon's daughter wore a gold phoenix tiara;  
They fed on rare, celestial fare  
And drank the heady, heavenly elixir.

The Ox King was in the seat of honour with three or four serpent monsters beside him and in front an old dragon accompanied by his sons, grandsons, wife and daughter, all of them drinking very merrily. Monkey was going straight up to them when the old dragon saw him and ordered: "Catch that lawless crab!" The dragon sons and grandsons rushed forward and seized Monkey.

Then in human speech Monkey begged, "Spare me! Spare me!"

The old dragon demanded, "Where are you from, crab? How dare you break into our hall and scuttle about so wildly before our honoured guest? If you want to live, out with the truth!"

Then Monkey spun them a tale and it was this:

I have lived all my life in the lake,  
With my cave beside the cliff,  
After long years I have attained my wish,  
My title is Sidewise Scuttling Knight in Armour.  
Grawling through grass and mud  
I have never learned manners;  
Now, ignorant of etiquette, I have trespassed —  
I crave Your Lordship's pardon.

When the other monsters at the feast heard this, they bowed to the old dragon and said, "This is the crab knight's first visit to our palace, and he does not know how to behave. We hope Your Lordship will pardon him."

The old dragon having agreed, the monsters ordered, "Let this fellow go. Next time he will be beaten. He may wait outside."

Monkey assented and fled straight out to the arch, where he reflected: "The Ox King is fond of drinking: it will be a long time before the feast breaks up. Even then, he won't lend me the fan. I had better steal his Golden-Eyed Steed and pass myself off as him to deceive that woman Rakshasa. In that way I can get the fan and see my master over the mountain."

So Monkey took his own form, untethered the Golden-Eyed Steed, leapt into the saddle and rode out through the water. Once out of the pool, he changed himself into the semblance of the Ox King, and urging his mount through the clouds in no time reached Palm-Leaf Cavern on the Mountain of Emerald Clouds.

"Open the gate!" he called.

The two maids inside opened the gate and seeing it was the Ox King went in to announce: "Our master is here, madam."

Rakshasa hastily arranged her cloudy tresses and hurried out on lotus feet to welcome him. Monkey, having alighted and tied up the Golden-Eyed Steed, went boldly ahead with the deception; and Rakshasa unable to detect the imposture led him in by the hand, bidding her maids prepare seats and serve tea. The whole household was on its best behaviour now that the master was back.

After the customary greetings had been exchanged the sham Ox King said, "We have not seen each other for a long time, madam."

"I hope all has gone well with you," responded Rakshasa, adding, "you are so fond of your new wife that you have deserted me. What brings you back today?"

Monkey laughed, "Desert you? How could I? But after Princess Marble Face took me into her family we have been busy with household affairs and many friends have called, delaying my return for a long time. We have acquired a new property, though." Then he continued, "Recently I heard that Monkey Sun Wu-kung who is escorting Tripitaka has come to the Flaming Mountain. I am afraid he may try to borrow the fan. I hate that fellow for the injury he did our son, which we have not yet avenged. So if he comes, send word to me. I shall catch him and cut him into ten thousand pieces to work off our anger."

To this Rakshasa replied with tears, "Great king, it is said that a man without a wife has no one to look after his property, while a woman without a husband has no one to protect her. I nearly lost my life at the hands of that ape."

Monkey, pretending to be outraged, swore, "When did the scoundrel leave?"

"He hasn't gone yet. Yesterday he came to borrow the fan, and in the hate I bear him for injuring our son I buckled on my armour, seized my swords and went out to teach the wretch a lesson. He let me strike him and kept addressing me as his sister-in-law and referring to you as his sworn brother."

"Yes, five hundred years ago we were sworn brothers. There were seven of us."

"I swore at him and I struck him," Rakshasa continued. "But the wretch neither argued nor fought back. Then I fanned him away with my fan. But he managed somehow to find a wind-calming method, for this morning he was back shouting at the gate. And this time when I waved the fan he didn't move, and when I swung my swords at him he fought back. Finding his staff too heavy for me, I ran inside and closed the gate; but he contrived to get into my belly and nearly killed me. I had to call him Brother and give him the fan."

At that Monkey beat his breast in mock regret. "What a pity, what a pity! You shouldn't have done that. How could you give him our treasure? That's really too bad."

Rakshasa laughed. "Don't be angry, my lord. The fan I gave him was a fake. I had to trick him to get him out of the way."

"Where is the real fan?" asked Monkey.

"Don't worry. It's safe with me."

Rakshasa told her maids to bring wine to celebrate the Ox King's return. Then she offered a cup to him, saying, "You have a new wife now, my lord, but I hope you won't forget your old one. Try some of our home-made wine."

Monkey had to accept the cup, but with a smile he offered it to her, saying, "You must drink first, madam. I have been away a long time managing my new property and I am grateful to you for supervising the household. Let me express my gratitude."

Rakshasa drained the cup, refilled it and handed it to him remarking, "There is an old saying that a wife is her husband's helpmate. You are my prop and support — what thanks do you owe me?"

This little ceremony over, they sat down to drink. But Monkey, not liking to break his fast, simply ate a little fruit as he chatted with her. Several cups of wine made Rakshasa merry and rather amorous. She cuddled up to Monkey, holding his hand and murmuring softly to him, rubbing his shoulder and whispering endearments as she held the cup first to his mouth and then to hers and fed him fruit from her own lips. Monkey, pretending a fondness he did not feel, chatted, laughed and returned her caresses.

Wine makes for poetry and sweeps grief away,  
A cure for every ill;  
A stickler for etiquette will relax after drinking,  
A woman will lose her restraint and laugh out loud;  
Red as the peach she blushes,  
Pliant as the willow she sways;  
Her tongue is loosened, she begins to flirt;  
Sometimes she smooths her hair with slender fingers,  
Sometimes she shakes a sleeve, arches a foot;  
She bends her powdered neck, sways from the waist;  
Though not a word is said of love's delight,  
Her breast is half revealed, her gown undone,  
And tipsily swaying,  
She darts forth amorous looks from languishing eyes.



When Monkey saw that she was thoroughly tipsy, he asked, "Where did you put the real fan? You must be careful, Monkey is a wily creature. Don't let him steal it by a trick."

With a smile Rakshasa took the fan from her mouth. It was no larger than an apricot leaf. She handed it to him, saying, "Here it is!"

Monkey took it rather sceptically. "How can such a small fan put out a fire?" he wondered. "This may be another fake."

When Rakshasa saw him brooding over the fan, she nestled closer and laid her cheek against his. "Put away the treasure and let us drink, darling," she said. "What's on your mind?"

Monkey seized this opportunity to ask, "How can such a tiny thing put out flames that have spread over eight hundred *li*?"

Too drunk to be suspicious, Rakshasa reproached him, "My lord, we have been parted for two years, and no doubt all the pleasure you've had day and night with Princess Marble Face has so bewitched you that you've forgotten your treasure. Surely you know that if you put your left thumb on the seventh red thread of the handle and call out: He-hi-ho-she-shi-shu-hu! the fan will grow twelve feet long. This fan has such marvellous powers that it can put out even eighty thousand *li* of flames."

Monkey promptly memorized the incantation and put the fan in his mouth. Then he rubbed his face, resumed his own form and cried fiercely, "Look, Rakshasa! Am I your husband? Aren't you ashamed of the way you've been flirting with me?"

When she saw that it was Monkey, Rakshasa knocked over the table in her panic and fell to the ground, quite overcome with shame. "Oh, this will be the death of me!" she wailed.

Not caring what became of her, Monkey shook her off and strode out of Palm-Leaf Cavern. Thus, unmoved by female beauty, returning exultant, he leapt on to a cloud and soared to the summit of the mountain where he took the fan from his mouth and did as he had been told. Laying his left thumb on the seventh red thread of the handle he chanted: He-hi-ho-she-shi-shu-hu!. Sure enough, the fan at once became twelve feet long. He held it up and examined it carefully. This was certainly different from the bogus fan: it emitted a sacred aura, and its thirty-six red threads merged into the handle like veins. Since Monkey had asked only how to make the fan larger, not

how to make it smaller, he had to carry it bulky as it was on his shoulder as he returned by the path he had come.

Meanwhile the Ox Demon King after feasting with the other monsters at the bottom of the Pool of Emerald Waves went out to find his Golden-Eyed Steed had disappeared. The old dragon called the monsters together and asked, "Who has taken away Lord Ox's Golden-Eyed Steed?"

The monsters kneeling replied, "None of us would dare do such a thing. We were all at the feast presenting wine and dishes or singing and making music together. Not one of us came here."

"Our own people would not dare do this," said the old dragon. "But did no stranger come here?"

The young dragons answered, "The only stranger was that crab monster who came as we were starting the feast."

When the Ox King heard this, the truth dawned on him. "No further investigation is needed," he said. "Earlier on when you sent to invite me, I was with Monkey Sun Wu-kung. He is escorting the monk Tripitaka to look for Buddhist scriptures but they have been stopped by the Flaming Mountain. When I refused to lend him my palm-leaf fan we came to blows, but neither side worsted the other. I left him to come to your feast. Monkey is always up to some mischief or other. He must have transformed himself into a crab to come here for news and stolen my steed to go back to my wife and try to get the fan by a trick."

The monsters hearing this were greatly perturbed. "Is that Monkey who played such havoc in heaven?" they asked.

"That's the one," said the Ox King. "If any trouble crops up on your way to the Western Heaven, try to steer clear of him."

"What shall we do about your steed?" asked the old dragon.

The Ox King laughed. "Don't worry. You'd better go back. I'll catch him up."

Cleaving the waters he left the bottom of the pool and rode on a murky cloud straight to Palm-Leaf Cavern on the Mountain of Emerald Clouds, where Rakshasa could be heard stamping, beating her breast and shrieking. The Ox King pushed open the gate and found his Golden-Eyed Steed tethered in the yard. He called out, "Madam, where is Monkey?"

At sight of him the maids fell to their knees. "The master is here!" they cried.

Rakshasa seized him and butted him with her head. "Plague take you!" she scolded. "How could you be such a fool as to let Monkey steal your Golden-Eyed Steed and take your form to trick me?"

Through clenched teeth the Ox King asked, "Where has the wretch gone?"

Beating her breast, Rakshasa cried, "That villainous ape tricked me out of the fan and went off in his true form. I am bursting with anger!"

"Take good care of yourself and don't worry. I shall catch him up and get the fan from him. Then I'll flay him alive, grind his bones to powder and take out his heart and liver to avenge you!" He shouted to the maids, "Bring me my weapons!"

"They aren't here, sir," they said.

"In that case, bring me the princess' weapons."

So the maids brought him Rakshasa's swords. The Ox King stripped off the black velvet coat he had worn to the feast and fastened his inner jacket tightly about him. Then, brandishing both swords, he left Palm-Leaf Cavern and ran towards the Flaming Mountain.

The fond wife took Monkey for her heartless husband,  
The fierce demon king goes forth to seek his foe.

If you want to know what the upshot was, you must listen to what is related in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER 61

### **Pigsy Helps to Defeat the Demon King Monkey Makes a Third Attempt to Get the Fan**

Soon the Ox Demon King came in sight of Monkey walking happily along with the fan over one shoulder. Taken aback, the demon king said to himself, "So the ape has even learned how to use the fan! If I demand it outright, he's sure to refuse. And if he fans me with it, I'll be blown eighteen thousand *li*

away, which would no doubt suit him very well. I've heard that Tripitaka is waiting for him on the road with his two other disciples, Pigsy and Sandy, whom I met when they were monsters. I had better take the form of Pigsy to deceive him in his turn. Monkey is so pleased with himself now that he won't be on his guard."

Now the Ox King could also assume seventy-two different forms and had mastered the same arts of warfare as Monkey except that he was clumsier, less agile and dexterous. Having put away his swords and chanted a spell, he shook himself and changed into the semblance of Pigsy. He made straight for Monkey, calling out, "Here I am, brother!"

Monkey was in the highest spirits. As the proverb says, a cat who has won a fight exults like a tiger. He was too full of his achievements to examine the approaching figure carefully, but seeing what seemed to be Pigsy he called out, "Where are you off to, brother?"

The demon king spun him this yarn, "You've been away so long that our master was afraid the Ox King had proved too much for you and you were finding it hard to get his magic fan. He told me to look for you."

Monkey laughed. "Don't you worry. I've got it."

"How did you get it?"

"That old ox and I battled about a hundred rounds, but neither could beat the other. Then he left me to go to the bottom of the Pool of Emerald Waves in Craggy Mountain to feast with a bunch of serpent and dragon monsters. I trailed him there, having changed into a crab, and stole his Golden-Eyed Steed. Then in the form of an ox I went back to Palm-Leaf Cavern to fool that woman Rakshasa, and after we'd played at husband and wife for a while I managed to get the fan from her by a trick."

The Ox King said, "We're grateful for all the trouble you've taken. You must be tired out. Let me carry the fan."

The idea that this Pigsy was a fraud had not even crossed Monkey's mind. So he handed over the fan.

The Ox King knew how to put away the fan. As soon as it was in his hands he chanted an incantation to make it shrink back to the size of an apricot leaf, while at the same time he resumed his own form. "Vile ape!" he swore. "Do you know me?"

At this sight, Monkey reproached himself bitterly. With an oath he stamped his foot and shouted, "Hah! The archer who's been shooting wild-geese all his life has had his eye pecked today by a gosling!" In his rage he swung his iron staff hard against the Ox King's head. The Ox waved his fan. But Monkey when changing himself into a gnat to slip into Rakshasa's belly, had put the wind-calming pill in his mouth and it had slipped into his stomach. So now his whole body was strong, his whole frame was firm, and hard as the Ox King fanned he could not be moved. The demon king was disconcerted. Thrusting the fan into his mouth he raised his swords and fought back. The two of them battled desperately in mid-air.

Sun Wu-kung, the Paragon of Heaven,  
And the Ox Demon King, the World Destroyer,  
All for the sake of the palm-leaf fan  
Made trial of their strength in battle.  
For once willy Monkey slipped up  
And was outwitted by the bold Ox King.  
Now one attacks ruthlessly with his gold-hooped staff,  
The other wields his blue blades skilfully;  
Monkey in his might emits a coloured halo,  
The Ox King in his rage sheds a bright light;  
They fight bravely, fired with hatred,  
Gnashing their teeth in fury.  
Dust rises till the earth and sky grow dark;  
A sand-storm swirls till ghosts and deities hide.  
One shouts, "How dare you trick me!"  
The other: "How dare you lay hands on my wife!"  
They bandy high words in their passion,  
"For deceiving my wife," says the Ox King,  
"You shall suffer punishment at the hands of the law."  
The clever Monkey and the fierce Ox King  
Will brook no argument but fight to the end;  
Hard they thrust with staff and swords —  
Whoever slackens for an instant will go to Hell.

Let us leave them locked in battle and return to Tripitaka waiting at the roadside. The sweltering heat of the flames combined with his anxiety and thirst made him ask the local god,

"Can you tell me, respected deity, how powerful this Ox Demon King is?"

"Very powerful indeed, with a great store of magic," replied the local deity. "Monkey will find a worthy opponent in him."

Tripitaka said, "Monkey is a swift traveller, who can usually cover two thousand *li* in no time. I can't think why he has been gone a whole day, unless he is fighting with the Ox King." He called to Sandy and Pigsy, "Which of you, Wu-neng and Wu-ching, will go to meet Monkey? If you find him fighting some enemy, you can help him to get the fan to put an end to this heat. Then we can cross the mountain and go on our way."

"It's getting late," said Pigsy. "I'd gladly go and meet him, but I don't know the way to the Mountain of Gathering Thunder."

"I know the way," said the local deity. "If Lord Sandy will keep the master company, I'll go with you."

Tripitaka welcomed this suggestion. "That is extremely kind of you," he said. "When our task is done we shall show our gratitude."

Then Pigsy bestirred himself, tightened the belt over his black silk coat, took up the rake which served him as weapon and rode eastwards on the clouds with the local god. As they journeyed they heard loud battle cries and felt a wild gust of wind. Pigsy stopped the clouds and saw Monkey embroiled with the Ox King.

The local deity cried, "Go ahead, Lord Pigsy!"

Then Pigsy clutching his rake bellowed, "Here I am, brother!"

"You fool!" swore Monkey, "You've spoilt the whole show."

"The master told me to come and find you," said Pigsy. "Because I didn't know the way we spent some time discussing what to do, till the local god offered to bring me here. I may be late, but how have I spoilt the show?"

"I'm not blaming you for being late," said Monkey. "This confounded ox has no sense of what is right. I got the fan from Rakshasa, but he took your form and said he had come to meet me. I was feeling so pleased that I passed the fan to him. Then he showed his true form and we started fighting here. That's why I said you spoilt the show."

At this, Pigsy was very angry. Brandishing his rake, he swore at the Ox King, "Plague on you, you bloated ox! How dare

you pass yourself off as me to deceive my brother and spoil our relationship?" He started striking out wildly.

Now the Ox King was too tired after fighting all day with Monkey to resist Pigsy's fierce onslaught with his rake. He turned to flee. But the local god of the Flaming Mountain led a ghostly army to block his way and said, "Prince of Mighty Strength, we entreat you to stop fighting! The monk Tripitaka is on his way to find scriptures in the West and all the deities are on his side. His quest has been announced to Heaven, Earth and the Nether Regions and won universal support. Give us your fan now quickly to put out the flames so that he can cross the mountain safely. Otherwise Heaven will visit its wrath upon you."

"Do be reasonable, local deity!" said the Ox King. "That scurvy ape has kidnapped my son, bullied my concubine and deceived my wife. To get even with him for all these wicked deeds I am itching to swallow him up and turn him into dung for the dogs to eat. I am certainly not going to lend him my treasure."

While they were parleying, Pigsy came up and swore, "You pain in the chest! Hand over that fan at once if you want your life spared!" The Ox King had to swing round and fight Pigsy again with his swords. Then Monkey came with his staff to Pigsy's aid. It was a tremendous contest!

The pig spirit, the ox monster  
And the immortal monkey who went up to Heaven —  
The Truth must be steeled in battle,  
With the Earth Element and Primal Cause;  
The rake's nine teeth are sharp,  
The double blades are pliant,  
The iron staff is a formidable weapon,  
And the Earth God lends a hand.  
The three elements contend together in turn,  
Each exerting its magic power;  
Gold comes when the Ox is made to till the earth,  
Wood is at rest when the Pig returns to the furnace,  
When the mind is absent, Truth is not to be found;  
To keep the spirit within, Monkey must be harnessed.  
Wild is the clamour, painful is the quest,  
As three weapons clash together;  
The rake and swords are used with an ill purpose,

The gold-hooped staff is raised with good intent;  
They fight until the stars and moon hide their light  
And a chill mist darkens the sky!

The Ox King battled bravely and stubbornly, fighting each step of the way. A whole night they contended, neither side giving ground, till it was dawn again. They were now just in front of Cloud-Reaching Cave on the Mountain of Gathering Thunder, and the deafening din made by these three combatants, the local deity and his ghostly troops roused Princess Marble Face, who asked her maids to find out the cause of this disturbance. The small monster at the gate reported, "Our master is fighting that man with the jutting jaw who came yesterday, a long-snouted, big-eared monk and the local god of the Flaming Mountain."

When Princess Marble Face heard this, she ordered her garrison officers great and small to go to her husband's aid with lances and swords. A hundred or so were mobilized in all, and they trooped forth eagerly, brandishing spears and staffs as they called to the Ox King, "Great prince, we have been sent by our mistress to aid you!"

"Splendid!" exulted the Ox King.

When these monsters charged with their weapons, Pigsy taken unawares could not withstand them and fled in defeat trailing his rake after him. With one somersault Monkey leapt out of the fray, while the ghostly troops scattered too. So the Ox King was the victor. He went back to the cave with his monsters and made fast the gate behind him.

"That's a brave rogue!" said Monkey. "He fought me from yesterday afternoon till tonight, and I couldn't beat him. Then luckily the two of you came to help me. But though we fought one whole night and half a day, he showed no sign of exhaustion. Those small monsters of his seemed a pretty tough lot too. Now he has closed his gate and won't come out. What shall we do?"

Pigsy said, "Brother, you left our master at about ten o'clock yesterday morning, but you didn't start fighting till the afternoon. Where were you in between?"

"After leaving you I came straight to this mountain," said Monkey, "I met a young woman and when I spoke to her I

found she was his favourite concubine Princess Marble Face. I frightened her with my iron staff so that she ran into the cave to fetch the Ox King. He shouted and argued with me for a while, after which we came to blows. A couple of hours later he was invited to a feast and I followed him to the bottom of the Pool of Emerald Waves in Craggy Mountain, where I changed myself into a crab to overhear their talk. Then I stole his Golden-Eyed Steed and went back to Palm-Leaf Cavern in the Mountain of Emerald Clouds in the semblance of the Ox King. I tricked Rakshasa out of the fan and when I went out and tried her magic I made the fan grow big but couldn't make it small again. As I was walking away with it on my shoulder, he came along in your shape and got the fan back by a trick. That took quite a few hours."

Piggy replied, "As men say, 'When a boatload of beancurd capsizes into the sea, brine returns to brine.' If we can't get the fan, how can we help our master to cross this mountain? Let's turn back and try some other way."

"Don't be upset or lose heart," urged the local god. "It's no good talking about turning back; even going by a devious path shows a lack of virtue. The ancients said, 'Never take a by-path.' How can you think of turning back? Your master is sitting on the right road waiting eagerly for you to succeed."

"Quite right," agreed Monkey firmly. "Don't talk like a fool, Piggy! The local god is right. We must persevere."

We must fight it out, showing our skill;  
Watch me use my transformations!  
Coming West I have found no rival,  
The Ox is simply one form taken by the mind,  
And now we are meeting together;  
But first we must contend for the magic fan,  
With coolness put out the flames  
And break through the void to reach Buddha.  
When the deed is done we shall go to paradise  
And feast in bliss the immortals.

When Piggy heard this, he took heart and said eagerly:

Quite right! Let us go, let us go,  
Whether the Ox wills it or no!

The Wood Element becomes a Pig,  
The Ox returns to the Earth;  
The Metal Element is Monkey;  
When one fight there will be peace.  
The palm-leaf fan signifies Water,  
When the flames are out all will be done;  
Day and night we must press on without rest,  
When success is won we shall go to the feast.

So the two went forward with the local god at the head of his ghostly troops. With their rake and iron staff, crash! they smashed the front gate of the Cloud-Reaching Cave. The officers guarding the gate shook with fear and dashed inside to report, "Great prince, Monkey and his men have broken our gate!"

The Ox King was in the middle of describing the fight to Princess Marble Face and cursing Monkey. This news threw him into a passion. Hastily donning his armour he seized his iron mace and rushed out, swearing, "Vile ape! Who do you think you are? How dare you make this disturbance at my gate and break it in?"

Piggy stepped forward and swore, "Stinking old hide! Who are you to call other people names? Stand your ground and look out for my rake!"

"Filth-guzzling swine!" swore the Ox King. "You're beneath my notice. But send that baboon here at once!"

"Old bag of hay!" cried Monkey. "Yesterday I counted you as my sworn brother, but today we are enemies. Take a blow from my staff!"

The Ox King put up a fearless resistance and this time the battle raged even more fiercely. The three mighty ones grappled together. What a fight!

The rake and iron staff with miraculous might  
Led the ghostly troops to fight;  
The Ox revealed a fierceness, strength and power  
Matched nowhere under heaven.  
The rake and staff dealt strong blows,  
The iron mace worked wonders of bravery,  
Ding-dong! the weapons clashed,  
Thrusting, parrying, yet neither side giving way  
As they contended for supremacy.

Earth was their reinforcement,  
 Wood and Earth were tempered together.  
 Those two demanded, "Lend us that palm-leaf fan!"  
 This one retorted, "You deceived my wife,  
 Pursued my concubine, injured my son  
 And have made fresh trouble at my gate!"  
 Monkey cried, "Beware of my staff — it will flay you alive!"  
 And Pigsy, "Mind my rake — it will riddle your carcass!"  
 But the Ox Demon was no whit afraid  
 And swung his iron mace to resist.  
 Blow followed blow like clouds and rain  
 Scattering mist and wind.  
 With hatred in their hearts they fought,  
 Determined to destroy the enemy,  
 Resisting and parrying, they did not weaken.  
 The two brothers attacked in concert;  
 The Ox King withstood single-handed with his mace;  
 Three or four hours they fought,  
 Till at last the demon king gave ground.

The three battled recklessly for about a hundred rounds. Pigsy's stubborn temper was roused and with Monkey to back him he lashed out wildly with his rake. The Ox King could not withstand such an attack and turned to flee to his cave, but the local god and his ghostly troops barred the way.

"Halt, Prince of Mighty Strength!" they cried. "We are here."

When the Ox saw that he could not slip inside and that Pigsy and Monkey would soon be upon him, he tore off his armour in haste, threw down his mace and with a shake changed himself into a swan to fly up into the sky.

Monkey laughed. "See Pigsy, the old Ox has fled!"

That fool Pigsy did not know what had happened and neither did the local god and his troops. They were staring this way and that up and down the mountain when Monkey pointed a finger, "Isn't that him flying up there?"

Pigsy answered, "That's a swan."

"That's what the old Ox has changed into," explained Monkey.

"In that case, what shall we do?" asked the local god.

"Fight your way into the cavern, both of you. Wipe out all the monsters there and destroy his lair to cut off his retreat. I'm going to pit my transformations against his."

Pigsy and the local deity agreed and started storming the cavern.

Then Monkey put away his gold-hooped staff, recited a spell and with one shake of his body transformed himself into a hawk. He shot into the clouds, then swooped down on the swan, seizing its neck and pecking at its eyes. The Ox King, well aware that this was Monkey, hastily flapped his wings and became an eagle, wheeling back to attack the hawk. Monkey changed into a black vulture to chase the eagle, upon which the Ox King changed into a white stork and with a shrill cry flew south. Monkey halted, shook his plumage and turned into a crimson phoenix crying aloud. At sight of the king of birds whom all feathered creatures must obey, the stork swept down the cliff and became a musk-deer lazily nibbling grass at the foot of the hill. But Monkey also folded his wings and changed into a ravening tiger which with tail outstretched rushed to catch the deer to devour it. The Ox King in panic changed into a spotted leopard and rounded on the tiger, but in face of this onslaught Monkey shook his head and became a gold-eyed lion with a roar like thunder and a head strong as iron, which flung itself against the leopard. The Ox King hastily changed into a bear and rushed to grapple with the lion. Then Monkey rolled on the ground and became an elephant with a trunk like a serpent and tusks like bamboo shoots, which curled its trunk to seize the bear. At that, with a laugh, the Ox King showed his true form. He was a huge white bull whose head towered high as a hill, whose eyes darted light, whose two horns were like iron pagodas and whose teeth seemed a row of sharp swords. He measured more than ten thousand feet from head to tail and about eight thousand feet in height. "Damn you!" he bellowed at Monkey. "What can you do now?"

Monkey decided to show his real form too. Taking out his gold-hooped staff and straightening his back, he shouted, "Grow!" At once he became ten thousand feet tall with a head like Mount Tai, eyes like the sun and moon, mouth like a pool of blood and teeth like gates. Raising his iron staff high, he lunged at the Ox King's head. The Ox sprang forward to gore him. The shock of battle shook the mountains and made earth and heaven quake. As the following verses will testify:

Evil grows ten thousand feet when Truth grows one foot high,  
The Monkey of the mind is hard put to it to subdue him;  
To extinguish the blazing fire of the Flaming Mountain,  
The coolness of the magic fan is needed.  
Firmly the Yellow Dame supports the Dark Patriarch;  
With care the Wood Mother wipes out the monsters;  
The Five Elements in accord, Truth is achieved;  
Free from evil, the mind purified, the Western Heaven is  
attained.

The two of them made great trial of their magic powers as they contended in mid-air, till all the passing spirits and deities, the Six Cyclic Gods and Eighteen Guardian Angels came to hem in the Ox King. Nothing daunted, he thrust east and west with his straight, gleaming iron horns, then lashed south and north with his erect spiky tail. Monkey fought him face to face while the other deities gave aid from the side. The Ox King in desperation rolled on the ground and resumed his previous form to escape back to Palm-Leaf Cavern. Thereupon Monkey also changed back to his normal size and gave chase with the other deities. When the Ox King dashed into the cave and closed the door, refusing to come out, they besieged the whole of the Mountain of Emerald Clouds. As they were about to storm the cavern gate, Pigsy and the local god came up noisily with the ghostly troops. Monkey asked them, "What happened at Cloud-Reaching Cave?"

Pigsy said laughing, "I killed the mistress of that old ox with my rake, and when I stripped off her clothes I found she was a white-faced wild cat, while her monsters were donkeys, mules, calves, bulls, jackals, foxes, stags, goats, tigers, deer and the like. I killed the lot of them. I also burned all the living quarters in the cavern. The local god told me he has another home here. That's why we've come."

"Well done, brother! Congratulations." applauded Monkey. "I competed at transformations with that old ox for nothing, for I couldn't beat him. Then he changed back into an enormous white bull and I grew until I filled heaven and earth. I was fighting him when the gods came down and surrounded him. Then he resumed his usual form and went into the cave."

Pigsy asked, "Is that Palm-Leaf Cavern?"  
"That's right, where Rakshasa lives."  
"Then why not smash our way in and kill them to get the fan?" demanded Pigsy with an oath. "Why let them sit there having a pleasant chat?"

At that, foolish Pigsy showed his might and smashed at the gate with his rake. Crash! Part of the rocky cliff and the gate caved in.

The maid inside hastily informed the Ox King, "Master, someone outside is smashing our front gate!"

The Ox King, who had reached shelter panting, was just telling Rakshasa of his fight with Monkey over the fan. This news threw him into a frenzy. He spat out the fan and handed it to his wife, who, holding it, pleaded with tears in her eyes, "Great king, why don't you give this fan to Monkey so that he calls off his forces?"

The Ox King replied, "Though this is a small thing, madam, I bear him a deep grudge. Just wait here while I fight it out with him."

Once more the Ox King buckled on his armour, chose two swords and sallied forth. He found Pigsy bashing in the gate with his rake. Without a word, the Ox King raised his swords and fell on Pigsy, who warded him off with his rake and fell back a few steps. As he left the gate, Monkey came up with his staff. Then the Ox King rode on the wind away from his cavern and battled with Monkey over the Mountain of Emerald Clouds. Soon he was surrounded by all the gods and the ghostly troops of the local deity too. That was another fine fight!

Clouds hide the world, mist veils the universe;  
Cold blasts of wind swirl sand and dust;  
His towering rage is like the angry waves,  
Once more he whets his swords and puts on armour;  
His hatred, ocean deep, grows fiercer yet!  
To gain his end, Monkey ignores old friendship,  
To win the fan, Pigsy too shows his might;  
The gods and angel hosts pursue the Ox,  
Whose two hands have no rest  
As he wards off attacks from left and right.  
Even the passing birds cannot fly above them,  
The fish cease swimming and sink deeper down;

Spirits lament, the earth and sky grow dark,  
Dragons and tigers take fright, the sun is dimmed.

The Ox King battled desperately for more than fifty rounds. Then, unable to resist further, he fled north. There he was stopped by the Vajra Puo-fa of Mimo Cliff on Mount Wutai, who shouted, "You can't pass this way, Ox Monster! Buddha has given me orders to spread nets in heaven and on earth to capture you."

At that moment up came Monkey, Pigsy and the other deities. The Ox King hastily turned and fled south. There he was stopped by Vajra Shen-chih of Chingliang Cavern in Mount Omei, who shouted, "I am waiting to capture you by order of Buddha!"

Dismayed, his limbs faltering, the Ox King sped east. There he was stopped by Vajra Ta-li of Moerh Cliff in Mount Sumeru, who shouted, "Where do you think you are going, old Ox? I have orders from Buddha to capture you."

The Ox King recoiled in fear and fled west. There he was stopped by Vajra Yung-chu of Chinhsia Ridge on Mount Kunlun, who shouted, "Where are you going? I have been instructed by the Buddha of the Temple of the Great Thunder Voice in the Western Heaven to halt you here. I won't let you slip through my fingers!"

The Ox King, trembling with fear, regretted his folly too late. He was surrounded by Buddha's troops and heavenly angels who had spread a great net from which there was no escape. As he was in this desperate plight, Monkey came up with his men and the Ox King rode upwards on a cloud.

This time his way was barred by the Heavenly Prince Li and his son Nocha at the head of yaksas and giants who shouted, "Stop! We have orders from the Jade Emperor to subjugate you."

In desperation the Ox Monster shook himself and changed once more into a huge white bull to gore the prince with his iron horns, while the prince swung his sword at him. By this time Monkey had caught up again.

Nocha called out, "Excuse us for not bowing to you, since we have armour on. Yesterday my father and I saw Buddha and reported to the Jade Emperor that the monk Tripitaka had been stopped by the Flaming Mountain and Monkey Sun Wu-kung could not overcome the Ox Monster. The emperor ordered my father to bring angels to help you."

"The fellow knows quite a bit of magic!" said Monkey. "Now he's changed into such a hulking brute, what shall we do?"

"Don't worry." Nocha laughed. "Watch me capture him."

With a cry Nocha changed himself into a god with three heads and six arms, and leaping on the enemy's back he swept his sword and cut off the bull's head. But then as he put down his sword to greet Monkey, from the neck of the bull sprouted another head, its mouth belching black smoke, its eyes throwing off golden sparks. Nocha hacked again, but as fast as one head fell another grew in its place. A dozen blows he struck and a dozen heads sprouted one after another. Then Nocha brought out his flaming wheel and hung it on the bull's horns, making the magic fire blaze so fiercely that the Ox was burned and tossed his head and tail, bellowing with pain. This time he could not change his shape again, however, for he was caught under the prince's magic mirror.

"Spare me!" he pleaded. "I surrender to Buddha."

"If you want to be spared," said Nocha, "give us that fan without any more delay."

"My wife has it," said the Ox.

Hearing this, Nocha uncoiled his rope for binding monsters and astride the Ox's back seized its muzzle, put the rope through and so drove it along. Meanwhile Monkey assembled the four Vajra Kings, the Six Cyclic Gods, the Guardian Angels, the Heavenly Prince and the Giants, as well as Pigsy, the local deity and his ghostly troops. Thronging around the white bull, they went back to Palm-Leaf Cavern.

The Ox Monster called, "Wife, bring out the fan to save me!"

At this Rakshasa quickly divested herself of her jewels and coloured garments, and dressed in a white robe with hair knotted like a nun she came out carrying the twelve-foot fan. At the sight of all the angels, the Heavenly Prince and his son Nocha, she dropped to her knees and kowtowed, crying, "Spare us, Buddha! We'll give this fan to Brother Sun to accomplish his mission."

Monkey came forward at that and took the fan. Then, riding on bright clouds, they all headed eastwards.

Let us now return to Tripitaka and Sandy who, standing and sitting by turns, had been waiting for Monkey all this time and were very worried because he did not come back. Suddenly they saw the sky fill with auspicious clouds which covered the ground



with light, while deities of every description came floating towards them. "Sandy," cried Tripitaka in dismay. "What divine army is that coming this way?"

Sandy recognizing the host said, "Master, there are the four great Vajra Kings, the Guardian Angels, the Six Cyclic Gods and other deities. The one leading the ox is Prince Nocha, the one holding the mirror is the Heavenly Prince his father. Brother Monkey is carrying the palm-leaf fan, followed by Brother Pigsy and the local deity with other guardian angels."

When Tripitaka heard this, he put on his monk's cap and cape and went forward with Sandy to welcome the angels, to whom he offer these thanks, "I have no virtue or ability and am deeply indebted to you for taking such trouble to come here."

The four Vajra Kings replied, "Congratulations, holy monk! Your task is nearly accomplished. We have been sent by Buddha to assist you. You must persevere in your efforts and not slacken in your search for Truth."

Tripitaka kowtowed as he received these instructions.

Then Monkey took the fan and approached the mountain. He fanned with all his might and the fire on the Flaming Mountain went out, leaving it dark without a single spark. He fanned a second time and a cool breeze sprang up. He fanned a third time and the sky became overcast while a light rain started to fall. As the following verse will testify:

Eight hundred *li* the Flaming Mountain stretches;  
The whole world knows of that great conflagration;  
Fire makes it hard to achieve the philosopher's stone,  
The Truth is darkened in that smoke and flame;  
The borrowed palm-leaf fan brings rain and dew,  
And help is brought by hosts of heavenly angels.  
The rampant Ox returns to Buddha's yoke;  
Fire and water merge and all things are at peace.

So now, freed from heat and worry, Tripitaka could set his mind at rest. They thanked the Vajra Kings who returned each to his sacred mountain. The Six Cyclic Gods soared to guard the sky, the other deities scattered, and the Heavenly Prince and his son led the Ox back to Buddha. Only the local deity was left waiting there with Rakshasa.

Monkey asked, "Well, Rakshasa, why aren't you gone? What are you standing here for?"

On bended knees Rakshasa pleaded, "Be merciful I beg you, and return me the fan!"

"Ungrateful bitch!" swore Pigsy. "Isn't it enough that we spared your life? How can you ask for the fan? If we take it across the mountain, we can sell it to buy some cakes. After all the trouble you've caused us, why should we give it back to you? It's raining, you'd better go."

Rakshasa kowtowed and said, "You promised before that after the fire was out you would give it back. I am sincerely sorry for all that has happened and our foolhardiness which made you mobilize such a host. I have already attained human form but not reached sainthood yet. After seeing the revelation of the True Form, I shall never dare to act wilfully again. If you will give me the fan, I promise to make a fresh start and go to cultivate virtue and study the Truth."

The local deity interposed, "Lord Monkey, since this woman knows quite well how to put out the fire, why not get rid of it once and for all before returning her the fan? Then I can live here in peace and you will be doing a good turn to the local people, who may offer sacrifice to me. That would be a kind deed."

Monkey said, "I heard from the local people that after the fire is put out by fanning they can get in a year's harvest, but then the fire starts again. How can we put it out for good and all?"

"If you want to put out the flames for good," said Rakshasa, "just fan forty-nine times in succession. Then the fire will never start again."

Hearing this, Monkey took the fan and fanned with all his might forty-nine times, till there came a great downpour of rain on the mountain. That fan was certainly a wonderful thing, for rain fell only where there had been flames; elsewhere the sky was blue. Since they were standing in a place without flames, they avoided a drenching. After spending the night there, they saddled the horse the next morning, made ready their luggage and returned the fan to Rakshasa.

Monkey told her, "I'm giving you back the fan so as not to be accused of breaking my word. But don't start any trouble now

that you have it. I'm letting you off lightly because you've already attained human form."

Rakshasa took the fan and recited an incantation, whereupon it became as small as an apricot leaf and she put it in her mouth. Then she thanked them and went off quietly to cultivate Truth. Later she attained sainthood too and her name is kept in Buddhist canons.

When Rakshasa and the local deity had thanked them for their kindness and seen them off, Monkey, Pigsy and Sandy escorted their master on his way, cool and refreshed in body, with a spring in their step.

Warring Elements unite to form the Truth,  
Water and Fire at peace, the Great Deed is accomplished.

If you want to know how many years it was before they returned to the East, listen to what is told in the next chapter.

*Translated by Yang Hsien-yi  
and Gladys Yang*

*Spring Is Always with Us* By Chen Tzu-fen→

Born in Changlo County, Fukien Province in 1898, Chen Tzu-fen is vice-chairman of the Fukien branch of the Union of Chinese Artists. He has devoted nearly fifty years of his life to traditional Chinese painting, inheriting and developing the traditional art of our motherland and created many outstanding paintings. He specializes in figure painting, landscapes and paintings of flowers and birds.

One of his representative works, *Still Life*, was exhibited in the Art Exhibition of Socialist Countries held in 1958 in Moscow.



## *Commemoration*

MAO TUN

### The Fiftieth Anniversary of the Death of Leo Tolstoy

Fifty years ago Leo Nikolaevich Tolstoy departed from this world at the age of eighty-two. This great author raised so many grave problems in his writings and attained such heights of artistic power that his books have come to occupy a most important position in the classical literature of the world, marking "a step forward in the artistic development of the whole of mankind." (Lenin: *L. N. Tolstoy*.)

In nearly sixty years of writing, Tolstoy produced a great deal of works profound in content and beautiful in form, a precious literary legacy for mankind. He absorbed much that was useful from the critical realist school founded by Pushkin and developed by Gogol. At the same time he learned from foreign literature, from the achievements of such great masters as Stendhal and Dickens. On the other hand Tolstoy's writings in turn have exercised a powerful influence on the development of the Soviet Russian literature and that of other nationalities of the Soviet Union. Tolstoy also made a very great contribution to world literature, particularly to the development of the novel as a form of

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The year 1960 marked the fiftieth anniversary of the death of Leo Tolstoy and Chinese cultural circles held large commemoration meetings. This article was written specially to commemorate him.

literature. Tolstoy is a superb craftsman who reflects reality from many sides with tremendous breadth. In his epic works, mighty, turbulent pictures of the patriotic war of the Russian people and scenes of common daily life, a host of images of characters, their relationship and conflicts, their appearance and penetrating descriptions of their inner-world are interwoven to form a comprehensive and vivid picture of the life of that period. In his novels and short stories dealing with the social life of that day, Tolstoy has also summed up extremely complex social phenomena with astonishing artistic power, exposing the inner relations of various complex phenomena and raising many important social problems. The vast range of Tolstoy's writings, their complex plots, delicate psychological analysis and his distinctive, pitiless method of tearing off all masks—these greatly increased the possibility of works of art to reflect reality, enriching and further developing the realist method of artistic creation. Writers of every country in the world would like to learn Tolstoy's artistic skill.

The revolutionary literary workers of our country have always paid great attention to Tolstoy, fully appreciating the ideological significance and artistic value of his writings. Lu Hsun pointed out emphatically that one of Tolstoy's distinguishing features was writing "for the present." Chu Chiu-pai affirmed that Tolstoy had "shed great splendour on the history of the literature of mankind." In my own case, when I started writing stories, I owed much to the foreign works of fiction which I had read, and of Russian writers my favourites were Tolstoy and Chekhov.

After the establishment of the Chinese People's Republic, unprecedentedly favourable conditions came into being for the introduction of foreign literature to China. The translations of many of Tolstoy's works have been improved, and some have been retranslated. An initial step has been made in the study of Tolstoy based on the Marxist-Leninist principle of critically inheriting the literary heritage. Our people value the legacy of Tolstoy's works.

The age in which Tolstoy lived was one of swift social changes and fierce class struggles. The defeat of tsarist Russia in the Crimean War of 1853-1856 intensified the crisis of the serf economy. At the beginning of the sixties, an upsurge of peasant uprisings forced the tsarist government to declare the abolishment of the serf

system. The rapid development of the capitalist economy bankrupted the countryside, and this combined with the influence of the remnant forces of serfdom brought ruin to millions of peasants. All this could not but produce very great effect on a realist who was a keen observer and had inherited the progressive tradition of Russian literature in close link with the liberation movements of the people. Naturally this had to find expression in his works.

With superb artistic power Tolstoy in his writings exposes and attacks the Russian landed nobility. His exposure is closely linked with the broad canvas he paints of the life of that class. Tolstoy's works vividly reveal the political and economic system of the landed nobility, their daily life, spiritual outlook, and other aspects like the family, marriage and love. Tolstoy depicts the landed nobility with "the most sober realism," a pitiless "tearing down of all and sundry masks." (Lenin: *Leo Tolstoy as the Mirror of the Russian Revolution.*) He exposes the crimes of the landed gentry and the social system of the class. Tolstoy fiercely attacked the rotten parasitic life of the landed nobility, their low morality, the poverty of their spiritual life. In *War and Peace* he exposed the corruption and utter selfishness of the tsarist court and some of the upper nobility and their apathy regarding the country's fate.

Tolstoy in the process of his writing never ceased to enlarge upon and deepen his exposure and condemnation of the landed nobility. In *Anna Karenina*, he depicted a few cliques in the upper aristocratic society and their representative figures. Through these representatives of aristocratic society, Tolstoy made a profound exposure of the common characteristic of the higher nobility: their life was parasitic, corrupt and empty.

In *Resurrection*, Tolstoy's exposure has changed into bitter sarcasm and a fierce attack on the landed gentry: The pitiless tearing down of all and sundry masks, characteristic of Tolstoy, is most forcefully shown in this book. By contrasting the poverty of the masses with the luxurious life of the landed nobility, Tolstoy not only laid bare the crimes of a parasitical existence and the hypocritical face of the exploiting class, but made a strong attack on the state, the law courts, prisons and police of the exploiting class as well as the official church which protected the interests of the exploiters. He pitilessly exposed the interests of the exploiters. He pitilessly exposed the utter corruption, selfishness and savage cruelty towards

the people of the hierarchy of tsarist officials, fiercely condemning the injustice of the system of land ownership of the landlord class, and advocating the abolition of the private ownership of land. Tolstoy did not realize, however, that to abolish the land ownership of the landlord class, its political power — the autocratic system of tsarist Russia — must first be overthrown. He dreamed that this aim could be accomplished through “moral self-perfection” on the part of the representatives of the landlord class and by awakening them to a realization of their guilt.

The period from the abolition of the serf system to before the revolution in 1905 was an age of the rapid development of capitalism in Russia. Capitalism destroyed the basis of life of the old patriarchal system and the power of money increased enormously. Human relationships were reduced to a bare cash nexus. All the old moral concepts were tottering. All this aroused in Tolstoy an extreme hatred and fear of capitalism. In his works, on the one hand, he depicts the development of capitalism in Russia, on the other he makes fierce attacks on it. He kept cursing the power of money, exposing the hypocrisy of bourgeois morality and bourgeois law.

Tolstoy showed deep sympathy and concern for the conditions of the labouring people of different countries and the people of the colonies under the system of world capitalism directing sharp attacks against the system of world capitalism. In his early story *Lucerne*, his essay *The Definition of Progress and Education* written in the sixties, and especially in many of his political articles written after the eighties like *The Contemporary Slave System*, he made a penetrating exposure of the hypocritical slogan much vaunted by the bourgeoisie “Liberty, democracy and equality.” He pointed out that in a capitalist society, so-called “liberty, democracy and equality” were only privileges reserved for millionaires. Tolstoy’s description of the capitalist system as the “contemporary slave system” is very apt.

Towards the latter part of Tolstoy’s life of creative activity, world capitalism had developed into imperialism. In many of the political articles and letters written during this period he indignantly condemned the wars of plunder carried on by the imperialists. His fierce attack on the U.S.-Spanish war in 1898 which was started by the U.S. imperialists to seize colonies

was a clear example of his opposition to the imperialist wars of plunder and his sympathy for the enslaved people of the colonies.

In a society ruled by the landlords and the bourgeoisie, the problem of the fate of millions of peasants never ceased to preoccupy Tolstoy. One of the important aspects of all his work as a whole is his depiction of the life, thought and feelings of the peasants and his search for a way to improve their living conditions. In his early work *A Landlord’s Morning* he had already shown the sad lot of the peasants under serfdom. The abolition of serfdom in 1861, instead of improving their condition, made the peasants more dependent on the landlords, while the rapid development of capitalism hastened the bankruptcy of the peasantry. Thus Tolstoy in his writings raised this problem more and more sharply. In *Resurrection*, through the chief character of the novel, Nekhlyudov, he reflected the poverty-stricken life of the Russian peasants and the misery of the ruined countryside after the abolition of serfdom.

Tolstoy has not only painted a vivid picture of the sad lot of the broad masses of Russian peasants in a society dominated by the landlords and bourgeoisie, but has given us many portraits of peasants; and by means of these he reveals profoundly the changes in the thoughts and feelings of the Russian peasantry during the preparatory period of the bourgeois revolution. In many works Tolstoy described the strong demand of the peasants for land. In *Anna Karenina* he graphically conveys the enthusiasm and initiative shown by peasants tilling their own soil, and their resistance when working for the landlord. The growing hatred and hostility for the reactionary ruling class is a clear characteristic shared by many of the peasants drawn by Tolstoy.

In the scenes of the people’s life depicted by Tolstoy, he did not merely present the sad lot of the people. In works like *Tales of Sevastopol* and *War and Peace* he also showed the fine moral qualities of the labouring people and the great role of the masses in history. In these works, Tolstoy found true patriotism and fearless heroism not in most of the so-called cultured aristocratic officers but in the commonest of soldiers. In *War and Peace* he recorded a glorious page of history when the Russian people rose to defend their motherland. In this epic, while describing events of great consequence to the fate of Russia like the Battle of Boro-

dino and the people's guerrilla war, he showed that the masses of people were the true defenders of Russia; it was they who saved Russia, not the upper aristocratic society and the tsar.

For more than half a century, Tolstoy indefatigably exposed and criticized the reactionary Russian society under the landlords and bourgeoisie which enslaved the broad masses of labouring people. His cries of protest called forth a great response from progressives throughout the world. His exposure was powerful because with his outstanding artistic genius he expressed the hatred for the landlords and bourgeoisie of the millions of Russian peasants under the patriarchal system who were faced with bankruptcy and their daily growing revolutionary passion. His strong condemnation of the system of land ownership of the landlord-bourgeois class reflected precisely the peasants' longing for land, while his criticism of capitalism reflected the protest against capitalism of the peasants faced with the threat of bankruptcy.

However, Tolstoy's criticism of the landlord-bourgeois class started from the viewpoint of the Russian peasant under the patriarchal system. He could not make a historical and concrete analysis of the social cause of those criminal iniquities he flayed or find out the correct way to eliminate them. He considered all the complex social problems and problems of the class struggle as originating from a never-changing, abstract moral problem. To his mind, all criminal iniquities arose because men violated God's law of universal love and acquiesced in the fact that some men could use force against others for their own interest. Hence Tolstoy believed that the only way to rid men of these sins was to make "all men always admit that they are sinful before God." (*Resurrection.*) These ideas found expression in Tolstoy's works as fanatical religious propaganda — "moral self-perfection," "do not resist evil with force" and so-called "quietism." Tolstoy's moral preachings whether in his day or now are reactionary.

Tolstoy's strong protest and ruthless exposure of the reactionary ruling class was in sharp contradiction with his preaching of "non-resistance to evil." But we should not regard this contradiction as fortuitous or altogether his own. Just as the strength found in Tolstoy's world outlook and artistic creation reflected the strength of most Russian peasants under the patriarchal system in the preparatory period of the bourgeois revolution, his weakness

was also the weakness of most Russian peasants under the patriarchal system, and their lack of political consciousness. Of course, we must not ignore either, the influence on Tolstoy's world outlook and artistic creation of his family origin in the landed nobility.

Although there are very great defects in the ideas expressed in Tolstoy's works, these cannot hide his splendour. His writings still afford much food for thought, move readers strongly and possess radiant immortality. As Lenin said, the heritage Tolstoy left us "contains something which has not retreated into the past, which belongs to the future. This heritage is accepted and is being worked on by the Russian proletariat." (Lenin: *L. N. Tolstoy.*) This remark applies equally to all progressive people of the world who are critically inheriting this heritage.

## Chronicle

### Chinese Cultural and Art Circles Celebrate the 43rd Anniversary of the October Revolution

During the festival when the Chinese people were heartily celebrating the 43rd anniversary of the great October Socialist Revolution, the Ministry of Culture, the Commission for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries and the Sino-Soviet Friendship Association held an "October Revolution Film Week" in thirteen cities in China and showed ten Soviet feature films including *Stories of Lenin*, *The Ulyanov Family*, *The Man with the Gun*, *Warrant-Officer Panin* and others.

The opening ceremony of the film week was solemnly held in Peking on October 6. Chen Yi, Vice-Premier of the State Council, was present at the ceremony. Shen Yen-ping, Minister of Culture and vice-president of the Sino-Soviet Friendship Association and S. V. Chervonenko, Soviet ambassador to China, spoke at the opening ceremony. After the ceremony *On the Wild Banks of the Irtysh*, a Soviet feature film was shown.

To celebrate the anniversary of the October Revolution, drama, music and dance organizations in Peking, Shanghai and other cities gave concerts and soirées. The Shanghai People's Art Theatre staged for the occasion *The Heroic Song of Praise*, the third play about Lenin by the well-known contemporary Soviet playwright N. F. Pogodin.

The October issue of *Shijie Wenxue* (World Literature), a monthly published in Peking, featured a translation of *Dried Black Bread*, which is a set of reminiscences of the revolution by the Soviet woman writer Y. Drabkina.

The Soviet Artists' Troupe visited China on the eve of the festival, bringing with them the deep friendship of the Soviet people. Their rich and varied programmes and their excellent performances won the praises of the Chinese audience and added much lustre to the festival.

Chu Teh, Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, and others saw the performance.

### Sino-Korean Friendship Cultural Activities

October 1960 marked the tenth anniversary of the Chinese People's Volunteers going to war to resist U.S. aggression and aid Korea. The Ministry of Culture of the Chinese People's Republic and the China-Korea Friendship Association jointly sponsored in various large cities a "film week to commemorate the tenth anniversary of the Chinese People's Volunteers going to war to resist U.S. aggression and aid Korea."

The films shown included the Korean feature films *Comrades-in-Arms*, *Scouts* and *How Can We Live Apart*, as well as the Chinese documentary *Testimony of History* and feature films *On the 38th Parallel*, *Friendship* and *Sangkumryung*. These films vividly reflect the great victory of the Chinese and Korean peoples and armed forces in defeating the U.S. imperialist aggressors, as well as the unbreakable militant friendship sealed in blood of the Chinese and Korean peoples.

During this period, the Korean People's Army Ensemble held performances in Peking, China's capital, to mark its friendly visit to China. The items presented had a profound political content and strong national style. The choruses showed the ardent love of the Korean army and people for their motherland and their hatred for the U.S. imperialist aggressors, as well as the fraternal friendship between the armies and peoples of China and Korea. Artists in the chorus successfully integrated the traditional Western methods of singing with their own national traditional method of singing. The clear timbre and fine technique of their instrumental music, and the fresh, creative handling of their national traditions by the national instrumental musicians made a profound and unforgettable impression upon the Chinese audiences.

The performance was attended by Chairman Mao Tse-tung and other leaders of the Chinese Communist Party and the state, including Liu Shao-chi, Chou En-lai and Teng Hsiao-ping.

## Commemorating the People's Musicians Nieh Erh and Hsien Hsing-hai

On October 29, 1960, to commemorate the twenty-fifth anniversary of the death of Nieh Erh, great singer of the Chinese people, pioneer and founder of proletarian music in China, and the fifteenth anniversary of the death of his comrade-in-arms Hsien Hsing-hai, literary and art circles in Peking held a commemoration meeting followed by a concert.

Premier Chou En-lai attended this commemoration meeting. Also present were the well-known writer Kuo Mo-jo, as well as the playwright Tien Han and the poet Chang Kuang-nien who were the close comrades-in-arms of Nieh Erh and Hsien Hsing-hai during their lifetime.

The meeting was presided over by Hsia Yen, Vice-Minister of the Ministry of Culture. In his address he pointed out that Nieh Erh and Hsien Hsing-hai under the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party used the art of music as their weapon to wage a resolute fight against the Kuomintang reactionaries within the country and the Japanese imperialist aggressors; they drew inspiration from the revolutionary struggle of the masses and composed many immortal works which educated and united the people and have never ceased to stir men's hearts, opening a wide path and laying a firm foundation for proletarian revolutionary music in our country. Hsia Yen affirmed that the path taken by Nieh Erh and Hsien Hsing-hai is the path for Chinese intellectuals to ceaselessly remould themselves to become proletarian fighters under the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party and in the masses' revolutionary struggles. The revolutionary, militant spirit and the mass and national character reflected in the works of Nieh Erh and Hsien Hsing-hai are the most precious tradition of our country's revolutionary music.

Next Lu Chi, chairman of the Chinese Musicians' Union, delivered a report entitled "Great Revolutionary Fighter, Vanguard of the Revolutionary Music of the Proletariat." This report summarized the historical background of the creative work of the two people's musicians Nieh Erh and Hsien Hsing-hai, introduced their path of development as musicians, analysed the special features of their works and pointed out the great contribution to the Chinese people's revolutionary cause and to national liberation made by Nieh Erh and

Hsien Hsing-hai with their work in revolutionary music and revolutionary activities.

After the report, professional song and dance groups, orchestras and dramatic companies gave a joint performance of Nieh Erh's *Storm on the Yangtse*, the first opera in China to praise the resolute struggle against imperialism waged by dock workers under the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party. This opera describes how the Shanghai dock workers and the workers toiling away to repair roads, drive piles and break rocks, defied the persecution of the imperialists and their stooges and united to fight bravely, throwing into the Yangtse the ammunition used by the Japanese imperialists to massacre the Chinese people. Other items performed were the song-and-dance *Production Chorus*, the music of which was composed by Hsien Hsing-hai, and such popular songs as *Trail Blazers*; *The March of National Salvation*; *On the Taibang Mountain*; *Roar, Yellow River* and *The March of the Volunteers*. When it came to this last — Nieh Erh's *The March of the Volunteers*, which was made the national anthem of the Chinese People's Republic after the liberation — Premier Chou En-lai and the whole audience stood up and joined in the singing. The entire theatre reverberated to the powerful strains of this revolutionary song, and the enthusiasm of the entire audience reached a high pitch.

Nieh Erh and Hsien Hsing-hai were also commemorated in Shanghai and other cities.

## Poetry Contest in a People's Commune

At the mid-autumn Moon Festival in 1960, to celebrate the bumper harvest, a poetry contest was held in Huayuan People's Commune, Huailai County, a district noted for poetry in Hopei. Poets like Tien Chien, Yuan Shui-po and Tsou Ti-fan, as well as the musician Lo Chung-yung and others, went specially from Peking to take part in this contest.

The poetry contest was held in a field by a running brook at the end of the village. Before it began, a cheerful crowd had already gathered there. After the chairman of the commune Keng Ming-chun had recited the prologue, secretaries of the municipal and county



Party committees and other leading comrades came forward to take part in the competition, after which more than fifty commune members and poets ascended the platform to recite their poems. These contestants are members of production brigades, workers, primary school teachers and canteen, hospital and emporium personnel of the commune. Most of them were labour heroes or model workers. They sang of the three red banners — the general line for building socialism, the big leap forward and the people's commune. They sang of their beautiful home and their joy in a good harvest, using their poems to express their determination and to challenge others. The recitations were of various kinds, solo as well as collective. Sometimes a whole family formed one unit, husband and wife capped each other's verses, or five girls competed as one group. Among those who took part were old commune members of seventy and children of six from the nursery.

More than eighty poems were recited, all with the heroic spirit of the builders of communism, a strong flavour of life and the rich imagination and simple, vivid language characteristic of folk poetry.

One commune member, Hsu Chung-ching, recited a poem called *Each Reservoir Is Like a Stretch of Oil*:

The Great Wall stretches unbroken for countless li,  
Each reservoir is like a stretch of oil;  
Terraced fields are built on the high hills,  
And fruit thicker than stars covers the slope.

Another commune member, Li Chien, made a song *Every Word Comes from the Heart*:

On the commune walls are poems and paintings,  
We can handle both hoes and pens;  
We write of the three red banners,  
We paint construction riding on winged steeds;  
We record our great gratitude to Chairman Mao,  
Every word comes from the heart!

Tien Chien, Yuan Shui-po and Tsou Ti-fan all presented poems to the meeting with congratulations on the splendid harvest. Lo Chung-yung and several other musicians composed music on the spot for poems by several peasant poets and sang these to the gathering.

The painters covered the walls with beautiful and vivid posters specially painted for the poetry contest. This encouragement intensified the enthusiasm and elation of the commune members.

Back in 1958, during the big leap forward, Huayuan People's Commune launched a tremendous movement to write folk songs. The whole village, men and women, old and young, took up pens. The celebrated poet Kuo Mo-jo came here to write poems, paying tribute to Huayuan People's Commune as the District of Poetry. After that this district won a name throughout the country as the district of poetry and painting. There was an increase both in quality and quantity in the poems recited at this contest, showing that the folk song movement here is developing by leaps and bounds.

### Second Exhibition of Workers' Spare-time Art

In October 1960, the Second Workers' Spare-time Fine Art Exhibition was held in Peking. There were more than six hundred exhibits, including posters, New-Year pictures, paintings in the traditional style, woodcuts, oil paintings, cartoons, scissor-cuts, water colours, sketches, pencil drawings and designs. The theme of most of these exhibits, and the best of them, was praise for the three red banners — the general line for building socialism, the big leap forward and the people's commune. There were many good works, too, dealing with the life of workers.

The poster *My Youth Is for Agriculture* gave concrete and powerful expression to our people's heroic determination to support and aid agriculture by "stirring mighty hearts to produce steel at top speed and ensuring a harvest of countless tons of grain." The New-Year picture *The Front Line* and the traditional-style painting *Fighting for Steel* as well as others show the fervour and magnificent spirit of the big leap forward in industry. *Sisters-in-Law Go In for Innovations, A Modern Chuko Liang* and others show the mighty movement for technical innovations and technical revolution which is unfolding and deepening on our industrial front. The woodcut *On the Construction Site* presents the exciting bustle and activity on a work site. *Training*, with a bold composition and rich, bright colouring, shows

a scene from the life of Shanghai workers as they take part in a bicycle race one morning in the People's Square.

The strong appeal and originality of these exhibits are due to the fact that the artists worked under the direct leadership of their Party committees, on the basis of their own experience of life and in close conjunction with political requirements. Thus the themes are clear and strongly focused. And since these worker-artists are able to convey vividly the thoughts and feelings of the people around them with whom they are familiar, the images they create are rich, varied and typical. Many visitors to the exhibition commented: These works come from the heart.

The First Workers' Spare-time Fine Art Exhibition was held in 1955. The last five years have seen a further improvement in workers' fine art. This exhibition shows how the Chinese workers led by the Chinese Communist Party have not only used their skilful hands to achieve the big leap forward in industrial production but have at the same time become a powerful fighting force in the big leap forward in culture. In addition to enjoying fine art, they are producing some of the newest and most beautiful works themselves.

### Exhibition of Cuban Graphic Art

After the establishment of diplomatic relations between Cuba and China, an Exhibition of Cuban Graphic Art was held in our capital in November 1960. With great interest, Peking audiences enjoyed the works of Cuban artists.

Cuban graphic art has a long history and has attained a very high level. Altogether 118 woodcuts, etchings and linocuts of twenty-three artists both old and new from a Cuban province were displayed. The exhibits in a variety of styles, reflected the varied life of the Cuban people. The woodcuts and linocuts of the well-known artists A. Armenteros and J. Rigol show good artistic technique, skilful use of the graver and fine handling of black and white. *The Agitator* by A. Armenteros portrays Fidel Castro, leader of the Cuban people. Since after the victory of the Cuban revolution, the Cuban peasants, under Castro's leadership, carried out the agrarian reform, the artist has inscribed in bold lettering on the woodcut *La Tierra*

*Es Vida*. This woodcut was widely acclaimed by visitors to the exhibition. J. Rigol's *The Head*, and the *Profile* of a Negro by A. Posse also attracted much attention.

A number of the exhibits reflect the tragic life of the Cuban people under the tyrannical rule of Batista before the Cuban revolution. These help us to understand the past of the Cuban people who have stood up. There were also several exhibits showing the Cuban people's opposition to imperialist war and ardent love of lasting world peace. As they express a wish shared in common by the peoples of the world, they won the hearts of all who saw them.

The holding of the Cuban graphic art exhibition in Peking is merely a beginning in the cultural interflow between our country and Cuba. Everyone eagerly hopes to see in the future more exhibitions of works reflecting the new life of the heroic Cuban people who have stood up, the Cuban people's struggle and their new spiritual outlook. This will enable us to exchange experience with them, learn from each other and promote friendship.

### Han Dynasty Iron-smelting Site Discovered

A Han dynasty iron-smelting site dating from the second or third century B. C. has been discovered near Tiehshengkou Village in Kunghsien County, Honan. Beneath the stratum of tilled soil was a layer of earth containing relics of the iron culture. Most of the earth on ground where smelting was done was baked red, pounded solid or paved with tamped ore and slag. The site consists of two parts, east and west. The west side is the iron-smelting site with remains of seventeen iron-smelting pits. The fairly well preserved ones are of four types: rectangular furnace, ore-sintering furnace, reverberatory furnace and small puddling furnace. Near by in a pit for storing iron are piled a number of broken bricks and large quantities of wrought iron. The east side was used for smelting and forging iron tools. Here are furnaces, a number of iron implements and a large rectangular pit for slag.

This find affords additional proof of the infinite wisdom and rich creative power of the Chinese labouring people, who already in the

Western Han dynasty some two thousand years ago had mastered fairly effective and complex iron-smelting techniques. The objects discovered also confirm that in the Han dynasty coal, charcoal and firewood were used in iron smelting; while the iron implements unearthed show the general productive level of that society.



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