

CHINESE LITERATURE



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Preface to "Call to Arms"*

When I was young I, too, had many dreams. Most of them I later forgot, but I see nothing in this to regret. For although recalling the past may bring happiness, at times it cannot but bring loneliness, and what is the point of clinging in spirit to lonely bygone days? However, my trouble is that I cannot forget completely, and these stories stem from those things which I have been unable to forget.

For more than four years I frequented, almost daily, a pawnshop and pharmacy. I cannot remember how old I was at the time, but the pharmacy counter was exactly my height and that in the pawnshop twice my height. I used to hand clothes and trinkets up to the counter twice my height, then take the money given me with contempt to the counter my own height to buy medicine for my father, a chronic invalid. On my return home I had other things to keep me busy, for our physician was so eminent that he prescribed unusual drugs and adjuvants: aloe roots dug up in winter, sugar-cane that had been three years exposed to frost, original pairs of crickets,

**Call to Arms*, Lu Hsun's earliest collection of short stories, contains fourteen stories written between 1918 and 1922.

and ardisia that had seeded... most of which were difficult to come by. But my father's illness went from bad to worse until finally he died.

It is my belief that those who come down in the world will probably learn in the process what society is really like. My eagerness to go to N — and study in the K — Academy* seems to have shown a desire to strike out for myself, escape, and find people of a different kind. My mother had no choice but to raise eight dollars for my travelling expenses and say I might do as I pleased. That she cried was only natural, for at that time the proper thing was to study the classics and take the official examinations. Anyone who studied "foreign subjects" was a social outcast regarded as someone who could find no way out and was forced to sell his soul to foreign devils. Besides, she was sorry to part with me. But in spite of all this, I went to N — and entered K — Academy; and it was there that I learned of the existence of physics, arithmetic, geography, history, drawing and physical training. They had no physiology course, but we saw woodblock editions of such works as *A New Course on the Human Body* and *Essays on Chemistry and Hygiene*. Recalling the talk and prescriptions of physicians I had known and comparing them with what I now knew, I came to the conclusion that those physicians must be either unwitting or deliberate charlatans; and I began to feel great sympathy for the invalids and families who suffered at their hands. From translated histories I also learned that the Japanese Reformation owed its rise, to a great extent, to the introduction of Western medical science to Japan.

These inklings took me to a medical college in the Japanese countryside.** It was my fine dream that on my return to China I would cure patients like my father who had suffered from the wrong treatment, while if war broke out I would serve as an army doctor, at the same time promoting my countrymen's faith in reform.

*N — refers to Nanking, and K — to the Kiangnan Naval Academy where the author studied in 1898.

**This refers to the Sendai Medical College where Lu Hsun studied from 1904 to 1906.

I have no idea what improved methods are now used to teach microbiology, but in those days we were shown lantern slides of microbes; and if the lecture ended early, the instructor might show slides of natural scenery or news to fill up the time. Since this was during the Russo-Japanese War, there were many war slides, and I had to join in the clapping and cheering in the lecture hall along with the other students. It was a long time since I had seen any compatriots, but one day I saw a news-reel slide of a number of Chinese, one of them bound and the rest standing around him. They were all sturdy fellows but appeared completely apathetic. According to the commentary, the one with his hands bound was a spy working for the Russians who was to be beheaded by the Japanese military as a warning to others, while the Chinese beside him had come to enjoy the spectacle.

Before the term was over I had left for Tokyo, because this slide convinced me that medical science was not so important after all. The people of a weak and backward country, however strong and healthy they might be, could only serve to be made examples of or as witnesses of such futile spectacles; and it was not necessarily deplorable if many of them died of illness. The most important thing, therefore, was to change their spirit; and since at that time I felt that literature was the best means to this end, I decided to promote a literary movement. There were many Chinese students in Tokyo studying law, political science, physics and chemistry, even police work and engineering, but not one studying literature or art. However, even in this uncongenial atmosphere I was fortunate enough to find some kindred spirits. We gathered the few others we needed and after discussion our first step, of course, was to publish a magazine, the title of which denoted that this was a new birth. As we were then rather classically inclined, we called it *Vita Nova* (New Life).

When the time for publication drew near, some of our contributors dropped out and then our funds ran out, until there were only three of us left and we were penniless. Since we had started our venture at an unlucky hour, there was naturally no one to whom we could complain when we failed; but later even we three were

destined to part, and our discussions of a future dream world had to cease. So ended this abortive *Vita Nova*.

Only later did I feel the futility of it all. At that time I had not a clue. Later it seemed to me that if a man's proposals met with approval, that should encourage him to advance; if they met with opposition, that should make him fight back; but the real tragedy was for him to lift up his voice among the living and meet with no response, neither approval nor opposition, just as if he were stranded in a boundless desert completely at a loss. That was when I became conscious of loneliness.

And this sense of loneliness grew from day to day, entwining itself about my soul like some huge poisonous snake.

But in spite of my groundless sadness, I felt no indignation; for this experience had made me reflect and see that I was definitely not the type of hero who could rally multitudes at his call.

However, my loneliness had to be dispelled because it was causing me agony. So I used various means to dull my senses, to immerse myself among my fellow nationals and to turn to the past. Later I experienced or witnessed even greater loneliness and sadness which I am unwilling to recall, preferring that it should perish with my mind in the dust. Still my attempt to deaden my senses was not unsuccessful — I lost the enthusiasm and fervour of my youth.

In S — Hostel* was a three-roomed house with a courtyard in which grew a locust tree, and it was said that a woman had hanged herself there. Although the tree had grown so tall that its branches were now out of reach, the rooms remained deserted. For some years I stayed here, copying ancient inscriptions. I had few visitors, the inscriptions raised no political problems or issues, and so the days slipped quietly away, which was all that I desired. On summer nights, when mosquitoes swarmed, I would sit under the locust tree waving my fan and looking at specks of blue sky

*S — Hostel was the Shaohsing Hostel outside Hsuanwumen in Peking, where Lu Hsun stayed from May 1912 to November 1919.

through chinks in the thick foliage, while belated caterpillars would fall, icy-cold, on to my neck.

The only visitor to drop in occasionally for a talk was my old friend Chin Hsin-yi. Having put his big portfolio on the rickety table he would take off his long gown and sit down opposite me, looking as if his heart was still beating fast because he was afraid of dogs.

"What's the use of copying these?" One night, while leafing through the inscriptions I had copied, he asked me for enlightenment on this point.

"There isn't any use."

"What's the point, then, of copying them?"

"There isn't any point."

"Why don't you write something?..."

I understood. They were bringing out *New Youth*,* but since there did not seem to have been any reaction, favourable or otherwise, no doubt they felt lonely. However I said:

"Imagine an iron house having not a single window and virtually indestructible, with all its inmates sound asleep and about to die of suffocation. Dying in their sleep, they won't feel the pain of death. Now if you raise a shout to wake a few of the lighter sleepers, making these unfortunate few suffer the agony of irrevocable death, do you really think you are doing them a good turn?"

"But if a few wake up, you can't say there is no hope of destroying the iron house."

True, in spite of my own conviction, I could not blot out hope, for hope belongs to the future. I had no negative evidence able to refute his affirmation of faith. So I finally agreed to write, and the result was my first story *A Madman's Diary*** And once start-

*This magazine played an important part in the May 4th Movement of 1919 by attacking feudalism and spreading Marxist ideas. Chin Hsin-yi is an alias for Chien Hsuan-tung, one of the editors of *New Youth*.

***A Madman's Diary*, (see *Chinese Literature* No. 10, 1971) first published in *New Youth* Vol. IV, No. 5 in May 1918, was later included in *Call to Arms*. This story ruthlessly exposes the nature of Chinese feudal society which had a history of several thousand years. Lu Hsun shows that it was a "man-eating" society and that its "virtue and morality" were sheer hypocrisy.

ed I could not give up but would write some sort of short story from time to time to humour my friends, until I had written more than a dozen of them.

As far as I am concerned, I no longer feel any great urge to express myself; yet, perhaps because I have not forgotten the grief of my past loneliness, I sometimes call out to encourage those fighters who are galloping on in loneliness, so that they do not lose heart. Whether my cry is brave or sad, repellent or ridiculous, I do not care. However, since this is a call to arms I must naturally obey my general's orders. This is why I often resort to innuendoes, as when I made a wreath appear from nowhere at the son's grave in *Medicine*,* while in *Tomorrow* I did not say that Fourth Shan's Wife never dreamed of her little boy. For our chiefs in those days were against pessimism. And I, for my part, did not want to infect with the loneliness which I had found so bitter those young people who were still dreaming pleasant dreams, just as I had done when young.

It is clear, then, that my stories fall far short of being works of art; hence I must at least count myself fortunate that they are still known as stories and are even being brought out in one volume. Although such good fortune makes me uneasy, it still pleases me to think that they have readers in the world of men, for the time being at any rate.

So now that these stories of mine are being reprinted in one collection, for the reasons given above I have chosen to entitle it *Call to Arms*.

December 3, 1922
Peking

**Medicine* (see *Chinese Literature* No. 1, 1972) and *Tomorrow* are two stories in *Call to Arms*.

Preface to "Three Leisures"*

It is four years, come to think of it, since the publication of *And That's That*,** my fourth collection of miscellanea. And last spring some friends urged me to collect what I had subsequently written into one volume. In the publishing world these last few years no one can complain of any dearth of original writing, translations or long treatises on important topics; but there have been very few short reviews or outspoken comments of the sort known as "miscellanea". For the moment I cannot explain why this should be so.

My guess is, though, that the expression "miscellanea" offends high-minded writers who shun it like the plague. This can be seen from the disparaging way in which certain people always refer to me as a "miscellanist", to display their scorn as high-class men of letters. And it seems that while well-known authors may write miscellanea too under pseudonyms, because they are out to settle private scores

**Three Leisures* comprises thirty-four essays written by Lu Hsun between 1927 and 1929.

**Twenty-nine of the essays in *And That's That* were written in 1927, and one in 1926.

and afraid to spoil their reputations, or because they have some other ulterior motive the disclosure of which would tie their hands, they let such writing be lost.

Some people certainly think miscellanea my "fatal disease", and I have indeed suffered no little on this score; but I intend to go on collecting and printing these things. It was only the trouble involved in going through magazines, cutting out articles and assembling them that delayed me from starting work for more than half a year. The fighting which broke out in Shanghai on the night of January 28* grew fiercer and fiercer till I had to evacuate, leaving my books and papers under fire; for if they were burned this "baptism by fire" would wash away those opprobrious epithets "malcontent"*** and "miscellanist". Little did I guess that on my return at the end of March I should find all my papers intact. Thereupon I started rummaging through them and making a selection, like a man just recovered from a dangerous illness who is curious to peer at his wasted features in the mirror and finger his wrinkled skin.

First I sorted out what I had written in '28 and '29. This came to very little; but apart from five or six talks given in Peking and Shanghai, for which I had no notes, nothing else seems to have been lost. I remember now that these were the two years in which I did the least writing and could find no publisher. I left Kwangtung in 1927, aghast at the bloodshed there,** and my stammered comments — I dared not speak outright — appeared in *And That's That*. But once in Shanghai I was attacked from all sides by the pens of

*Referring to the attack on Shanghai by the Japanese in 1932, when Lu Hsun's house came under bombardment.

**In October 1929, the reactionary writer Liang Shih-chiu wrote an article attacking Lu Hsun in which he alleged: "There is a type of malcontent who is always dissatisfied with things as they are. . . . If things should change to suit his views, he would probably have nothing to write about." Lu Hsun refuted this slander which served the interest of the imperialists and Kuomintang reactionaries.

***Referring to the large-scale massacre of Communists and revolutionary workers, peasants and intellectuals after Chiang Kai-shek's coup d'état on April 12, 1927. Lu Hsun, then in Kwangchow, witnessed many atrocities.

literary pundits. The Creation Society,* the Sun Society** and the "respectable gentlemen" of the Crescent Moon Society*** all condemned me. Even those who belonged to no literary clique, most of whom have now risen to be authors or professors, kept penning a few quiet gibes at me to demonstrate their superiority. To begin with I was simply "leisured and moneyed",**** the "spawn of feudalism"***** or "degenerate"; but later I was labelled a "fascist" thirsting for the blood of the young. At this time I had staying in my home a Mr. Liao***** who said he had been forced to fly from Kwangtung; but finally he told me indignantly: "All my friends look down on me and are cutting me for living with someone like you."

"Someone like you" — this shows how low I had sunk. Although editing *The Tatler****** I had no actual authority; I was not just afraid to write (for details see *My Connection with "The Tatler"*). As for

*A well-known literary association set up in 1921 and banned by the reactionary Kuomintang government in February 1929.

**A literary association set up in 1927, which broke up in 1930. In 1928 and 1929, under the influence of the "Leftist" adventurist line then prevailing, the Creation Society and the Sun Society cut themselves off from the Chinese revolution, launched polemics on revolutionary literature and carried out misguided attacks on Lu Hsun. The latter, in the course of refuting them, criticized various fallacies and put forward valuable theories regarding the development of the revolutionary literature of the proletariat and kindred problems.

***The Crescent Moon Society was a cultural and political association representing the comprador bourgeoisie. Established in 1923, its chief members included Hu Shih, Hsu Chih-mo and Liang Shih-chiu. In politics, this society was anti-Communist and anti-popular; in the cultural field it attacked the revolutionary literary movement headed by Lu Hsun.

****Cheng Fang-wu of the Creation Society wrote an essay in which he alleged that Lu Hsun belonged to the "leisured classes". He said: "We know that in capitalist society today the leisured classes are the moneyed classes."

*****"Spawn of feudalism", "degenerate" and "fascist" were terms of abuse applied to Lu Hsun in *Creation Monthly*, August 1928.

*****This Mr. Liao had been Lu Hsun's student in the Sun Yat-sen University in 1927.

******The Tatler*, founded in November 1924 as a weekly on a wide range of topics, was banned by the reactionary government in 1927. It resumed publication in 1928 as a literary periodical appearing fortnightly, but suspended publication in February 1930. Lu Hsun was one of its chief contributors and supporters and, for a period, its editor.

any other writing, it always had to be “milked” out of me. And just then, because of the “encirclement campaign”, I saw no point in plunging into the fray. That is why I wrote so little.

Now I have collected in this volume all I wrote at that time: what was mistaken as well as what may still be worth reading. As for the writing of my opponents, some of it can be found in *On Lu Hsun and China's Battle on Literature*, but these are the more dignified and decorous writings which can stand the light of day — they do not represent the whole. I am thinking of collecting some other articles in the nature of “miscellanea” to make up a volume called *The Encirclement Campaign*. A comparison between that and this collection should heighten the readers' interest and help them to understand the other side, all the shifts and subterfuges of shadow-boxing. Such dodges are not likely to die out immediately. Last year's charge “All Left-wing writers are in the pay of Moscow”^{*} is just one of many old tricks. Of course, there is no need for young people who are interested in literature and art to learn these, but there is no harm either in knowing about them.

As a matter of fact, I have made a search and can find no sign in my stories or reviews that I ever thirsted for the blood of the young.^{**} Nor did I ever dream of such a thing. I believed in evolution, was sure that the future would be better than the past and the young better than the old. Indeed, such respect did I have for the young that if they stabbed me ten times with their daggers I only shot back one arrow. Later, however, I realized my mistake. It was not the materialist interpretation of history or some revolutionary writing which befuddled me; but in Kwangtung I saw young people divided into two great camps — some of them acting as informers or helping the authorities to make arrests. This exploded my old way of thinking, and I started looking sceptically at the young instead of admiring them unconditionally. I still uttered a few cries of encouragement, though, for young people fresh to the fray — not that it did much good.

^{*}A slanderous charge levelled against Lu Hsun and other revolutionary writers by the Kuomintang reactionaries and writers in their pay.

^{**}A charge made against Lu Hsun in *Creation Monthly* in August 1928.

I believe this collection comprises everything I wrote during those two years, except that I have selected only those forewords to books which seem to have some relevance today. While looking through old papers, I came across a few articles written in 1927 which were not included in *And That's That*. I fancy that I omitted “Night Jottings” because I meant to put it in another volume; and I left out some talks and letters as being too slight or irrelevant.

However, I am now putting these at the beginning of this volume as a supplement to *And That's That*. To my mind, you need only look at the writings quoted in these speeches and letters to understand what Hongkong was like at that time. I went there twice to speak. My first subject was “The Old Tune Has Been Played Out”, the notes of which I have lost. The second was “Silent China” which, sketchy and superficial as it is, I was surprised to find labelled “vicious” and banned by the press. That is what Hongkong was like. But now practically the whole of China is becoming like Hongkong.

One acknowledgement I must make to the Creation Society: They “forced” me to read some scientific literary criticism, which cleared up many questions which had remained unsolved in spite of all written by earlier literary critics. Thanks to this, too, I translated Plekhanov's *The Theory of Art*,^{*} to correct the one-sided belief in evolution which I, and others because of me, had held. But I decided to print the materials collected for *A Brief History of Chinese Fiction* as *Anecdotes on Chinese Fiction*, to save students time and trouble; and Cheng Fang-wu, in the name of the proletariat, used this as evidence that I had too much “leisure” — “leisure, leisure, and yet more leisure”. Even now this accusation rankles. I do not believe the working class would resort to such a method of condemnation, for workers are not “pettifoggers”. So having compiled this volume I am calling it *Three Leisures*, and this is aimed at Cheng Fang-wu.

Written after compiling this volume
on the night of April 24, 1932

^{*}This volume includes Lu Hsun's translations of several works on art by Plekhanov.

Preface to "Two Hearts"

This is a collection of the miscellanea I wrote in 1930 and 1931.

By 1930 periodicals were growing rare and some could not come out on time, largely because of the daily increasing repression. *The Tatler* and *Torrent** were confiscated so often by the post office and banned by so many local authorities that they simply could not carry on. The only magazine left which would publish my contributions was *Sprouts*** but after five numbers that was also banned, and so we brought out *New Territory*. Hence this volume contains less than ten short articles written that year.

I also gave a few talks in different schools, but nobody took notes and today I myself have forgotten on what subjects I spoke. All I remember is that in one university I talked on "Ivory Towers and Snail Shells". I argued that there could be no ivory-tower art in China because we lacked a suitable environment, lacked even the

*Lu Hsun was the chief editor of this monthly on art and literature first published in June 1928, but suspended in December 1929.

**A literary monthly launched in January 1930 in Shanghai. After the founding of the China League of Left-Wing Writers in March that year, *Sprouts* became an organ of the League.

site for an ivory tower; all we could expect in the near future was probably a few "snail shells". By snail shells I meant the sort of thatched hut to which Chiao Hsien, the "recluse" of the Three Kingdoms Period,* retired. It must have been rather like the hovels put up by poor folk north of the Yangtse, only smaller; and he spent all his time crouching there, seldom emerging or stirring, going without food, clothes and conversation. For in such a time of murder and looting, of internecine strife between warlords, that was the only way for a dissident to survive. But as a world of snail shells had no art, if we went on like this we could be certain that China would have no art. This speech of mine already smacked strongly of snail shells. Still, before long I was surprised to find myself criticized in the government-sponsored *Republic Daily* in Shanghai by a courageous young man who declared that he despised me utterly because I dared not talk like a Communist. For those living in our Kuomintang Party state after the "purge of the party",** to talk about communism is a great crime, and a net has been cast all over China for the capture and execution of those who do so; yet unless I do so I am despised by courageous young men loyal to our party state. All I can do is change into a real snail. This is my only chance to escape denunciation.

By this time, however, a hullabaloo was being raised by the big dailies as well as by evening papers accusing Left-wing writers of taking Russian roubles; and the critics of the Crescent Moon Society helped with might and main from the side. Some dailies even picked up the contributions sent by members of the Creation Society to the evening papers, and sneered at me for "surrendering". One newspaper started a column called "Lives of Turncoat Leaders in Literature" and began the series with me — after which, however, they seem to have discontinued it.

*A.D. 220 to 280 when China was divided into the three kingdoms of Wei, Shu and Wu.

**In 1924, Sun Yat-sen reorganized the Kuomintang so that it became a revolutionary alliance of various classes. Then certain members of the Chinese Communist Party joined the Kuomintang in their individual capacity. After Chiang Kai-shek betrayed the revolution in 1927, Communists and many Left-wing members of the Kuomintang were massacred all over China in what the reactionaries called a "purge of the party".

I am used by now to that rumour about roubles. Six or seven years ago when *The Tatler* in Peking passed a few remarks about Professor Chen Yuan* and other "respectable gentlemen", the *Ching Pao* in Shanghai printed a letter from Mr. Tang Yu-jen, the "protagonist of *Modern Critic*", in which he declared that all we wrote and did was dictated by Moscow. These are traditional tactics. At the end of the Sung Dynasty men were accused of being "in league with the Tartars", in the early Ching Dynasty of being "in league with foreigners across the seas". Many have been murdered, invariably on some such pretext. Indeed, spitting poison has become second nature among Chinese gentlemen and scholars, but it does not simply show their acumen: it demonstrates that money is the driving force in this world. As for my being a "turn-coat", there is something in this accusation. For if I do some soul-searching, I find that although I did not write about all current events, I sometimes could not avoid harbouring dissident ideas. "I deserve death for my crimes, but the emperor is sagacious."** A loyal subject must never harbour dissident ideas. Incidentally, since it was those men of letters in government pay who pinned this label on me, they must have an emperor in their world of letters.

Last year I happened to read some treatises by Franz Mehring*** to the effect that, in a decadent society, a dissident who fails in the least to conform is in for big trouble. And the men who fall on him most savagely will be members of his own class. They regard him as a detestable renegade, more detestable than a revolting slave, for a slave belongs to another class, and therefore they are determined to liquidate him. This was an eye-opener to me. So evidently this has been the way in China and foreign countries, in time past and present — how true it is that study makes for serenity! This stopped me from being such a "malcontent" and so, in a different

*A writer of the comprador bourgeoisie and one of the chief contributors to the weekly *Modern Critic*, who attacked Lu Hsun. The *Modern Critic* clique called themselves "respectable gentlemen".

**A quotation from the celebrated Tang-dynasty writer Han Yu (A.D. 768-824).

***1846-1919. German Marxist, historian and literary critic who wrote a biography of Karl Marx.

sense following the example of *Three Leisures*, I am making *Two Hearts* the title of this volume. This does not prove, however, that I am a proletarian. Members of one class often end by quarrelling among themselves, as witness the *Book of Songs*:* "Brothers fight at home". But it does not necessarily follow that they unite to "resist an attack from without". For instance, the warlords fight among themselves the whole year round, but that does not make one side proletarian. And my incessant harping on myself, of the way I keep "knocking my head against a wall" and of my snail-like conduct, as if all the miseries of the world were embodied in me, a scapegoat for mankind, is a bad failing of middle-class intellectuals. It is true, though, that while I started by simply hating my own class which I knew so well, and felt no regret over its destruction, later on the facts taught me that the future belongs solely to the rising proletariat.

After February 1931, I wrote more than during the preceding year. But as I was writing for magazines of a different type, I had to meet their requirements and wrote very few short pieces like those in *Hot Air*.** Moreover, the criticism of my work taught me a lesson. If my comments are too brief, they are easily misunderstood or deliberately distorted. Again, as I do not intend to compile any more collections of long essays like *The Grave**** or collections of translations like *Translations Under the Wall*, I have included some rather long articles in this volume and appended my translation of "The Modern Film and the Bourgeoisie". For though films have been popular in China for some time we have seldom seen such cogent articles as this, and all interested in world events really ought to read it. And then regarding the correspondence, if I print my replies only, readers may find them hard to follow; I have therefore included a few of the more important letters I received.

Written after compiling this volume
on the night of April 30, 1932

*The earliest anthology of Chinese poetry.

***Hot Air* contains the miscellanea written by Lu Hsun between 1918 and 1924.

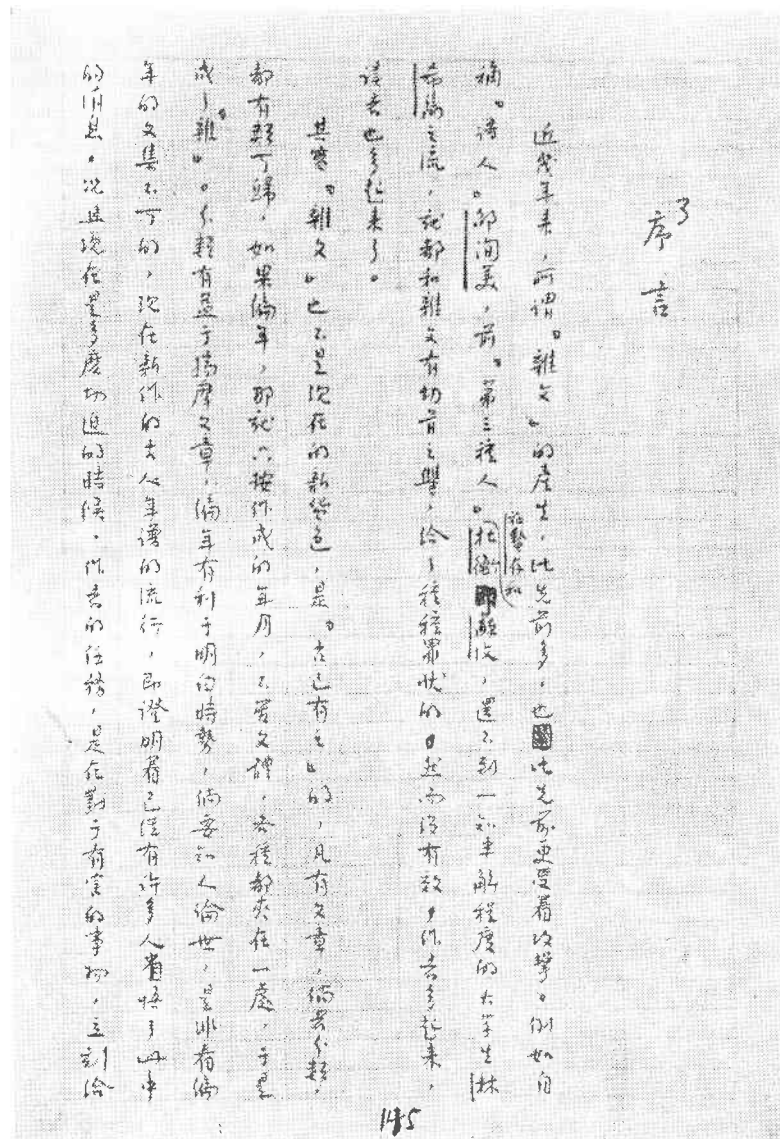
***A collection of articles written between 1907 and 1925.

Preface to “Demi-Concession Studio Essays”*

During the last few years more “miscellaneous essays” have appeared, and these have come under heavier attack than before. For example, Shao Hsun-mei** the self-styled poet, Shih Tse-tsun and Tu Heng or Su Wen who formerly belonged to the “Third Category”, Lin Hsi-chun the university student who is less than semi-literate, and other men of this kind hate such essays to the very marrow of their bones and have charged them with various crimes. All to no avail. For more and more essayists are appearing and consequently more readers.

*This volume contains twenty-six essays written in 1934, when Lu Hsun was living in North Szechuan Road in Shanghai. His house was in one of the streets built outside the International Settlement by the concession authorities, which had certain features of the concession proper. The characters *ch'ieh chieh* (且介) in the title of this volume form half of the characters *tsu chieh* (租界) meaning “concession”, and were chosen by Lu Hsun to indicate the conditions under which he was living at that time.

**Shao Hsun-mei advocated the bourgeois theory of pure art. Shih Tse-tsun and Tu Heng, who professed to belong to the “Third Category”, were reactionary bourgeois writers. Lin Hsi-chun was a student at Fuhtan University, Shanghai. All had written attacks on Lu Hsun.



Manuscript of “Preface to *Demi-Concession Studio Essays*”
in Lu Hsun’s own handwriting

Actually "miscellaneous essays" are nothing new, having existed since ancient times. All writing can be put in different categories; but if merely arranged chronologically according to the date of writing and lumped together regardless of form, this becomes a "miscellany". Classification is useful for the study of literary styles, while chronological arrangement helps us to grasp historical trends. So to understand writers and their times we must read their works in chronological order, and the popularity of newly compiled chronologies of the lives of men of old shows how many people have woken up to this. Besides, at an urgent time like this, the writer's task is to react or fight back immediately against what is harmful, to serve as sensory nerves, as limbs to resist and attack. It is of course very fine to devote oneself to producing a monumental masterpiece for the sake of the civilization of the future;* however, writers fighting for the present are embattled both for the present and the future, for if we lose the present we have no future either.

In a fight one must take sides. This is anathema to Shao, Shih, Tu, Lin and their like. Actually what they hate is the content; for the mantle of art which they wear cloaks a "preacher of death",** inimical to life.

This volume and *Fringed Literature* contain all that I wrote during last year's encirclement and annihilation campaign against "miscellanea" waged with pens and swords, overtly and covertly, mildly and roughly, by officials and civilians alike. Of course I cannot claim that this is poetry of historic significance embodying the salient features of the age, nor is it some heroes' treasure-chest which when opened up dazzles the eyes of the beholder. Like street vendors who spread their wares on the ground at night, I have nothing to show but a few nails and a few crocks; still I hope and believe that some people may find something here which is of use to them.

Written at Demi-Concession Studio, Shanghai,
December 30, 1935

*This passage is a rebuttal of Chou Yang and other revisionists who feigned concern for the "civilization of the future" as a pretext for attacking polemical writing on topical issues.

**An expression taken from *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* by the 19th-century German philosopher Nietzsche.

Half a Basket of Peanuts

— *A Shaohsing Opera*

Cast

Father	<i>a Communist, committee member of the brigade's Poor and Lower-Middle Peasants' Association</i>
Mother	<i>his wife, a poor peasant</i>
Tung-sheng	<i>their son</i>
Hsiao-hua	<i>their daughter, a Little Red Soldier</i>

The family's courtyard in a mountain village south of the Yangtse. Outside, in fields flooded with bright autumn sunshine, a fine harvest is being gathered in.

*(Chorus offstage: Sunshine and dew
Spur crops to sprout,
And studying philosophy
Makes our village blossom out;
It fires our hearts*

This translation is based on the February 1973 production. The libretto is the collective work of a group of writers and actors in Chekiang.



*And whets our faculties;
Songs of bumper harvest
Float upon the breeze.)*

*(Mother comes out of the house and gazes
into the distance.)*

Mother (sings): *Tachai's red flowers
Spread fragrance far and wide:
Our crops are doing fine!
Our rice has just
Been harvested,
Now our peanuts too
Are going to the barn.
Studying philosophy
Has freed our minds;
Our drive has doubled
And our output's soared.
Happy over our rich harvest,
My work on the threshing floor done
I am busy at home.
It's time for our afternoon snack,
but Tung-sheng and his dad aren't*

back yet from work. Ever since the Party called on us to study philosophy, revolution and production have gone with a swing. Yes, we poor and lower-middle peasants of Red Flag Brigade are really going all out to battle against heaven and earth. As my old man says, and quite right too, we must make a good study of Chairman Mao's philosophical works or our ideas will lag behind the times. *(Takes out "On Contradiction". Thoughtfully)* H'm. In our study group yesterday we discussed the universality of contradiction, and quantitative changes and qualitative changes... *(Pores over the book.)* *On Contradiction.*

(Hsiao-hua comes home in high spirits, carrying a basket half full of peanuts.)

Hsiao-hua (sings): *On my way home from school*

*I went to the fields
And gleaned half a basket
Of peanuts
To take to the granary
Of our team.
But I found the door locked —
The man in charge isn't back yet. I know what! (Sings.)
I'll go and find him after our snack.
(Reaches the gate.) Ah, mum's studying again. (Sings.)
Mum's studying hard,
Learning to read and
Learning philosophy,
Mulling over each word...
Just look at her,
Fairly beaming!
Mum. (Tiptoes over.) Mum! (Reaches her mother and calls loudly.) Mum!*

Mother: *Aiya, Hsiao-hua! What a fright you gave me. Where have you been? Wang Yu-tsai's son Treasure was looking for you...*

Hsiao-hua: *Yes, I met him.*

Mother: *He wanted you to go with him to glean peanuts.*

Hsiao-hua: Peanuts? (*Shows her the basket.*) Look!
Mother: So you've been gleaning already. (*Takes the basket.*)
What a lot you've got!
Hsiao-hua: Where's dad?
Mother: I daresay he's studying philosophy and discussing contradictions again in the fields.

(*Offstage someone calls Hsiao-hua.*)

Hsiao-hua (*calls back*): Here!

(*Voice off: "Our study group's waiting for you."*)

Hsiao-hua: Coming! Mum, our Little Red Soldiers Study Group wants me to go to a meeting. Right away.

Mother: But you haven't had anything to eat yet.

Hsiao-hua: I'll wait till I get back. (*Turns to go, then stops.*)
Take good care of my peanuts, mum.

Mother: I will.

Hsiao-hua: Mum! (*Turns back after two steps to emphasize her point.*) Mind you keep them safe, every single one.

Mother: All right. I'll keep them safe for you, every one.

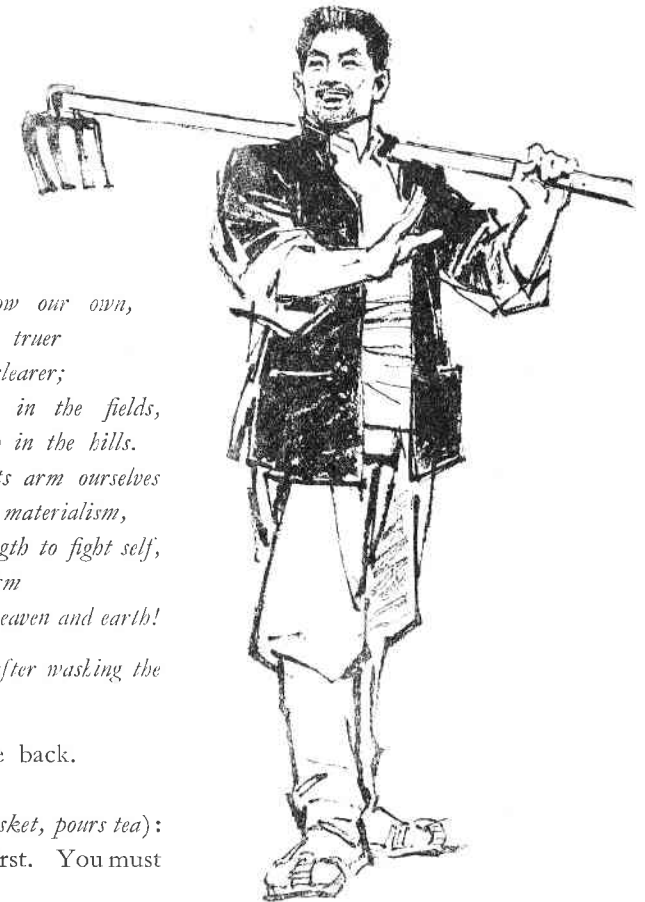
(*Voice off: "Hsiao-hua!"*)

Hsiao-hua: Coming! (*Runs out.*)

Mother (*watches her daughter leave, approvingly*): Bless the child! (*Looks at the peanuts.*) Well, I'll go and wash these right away and boil them for her. She likes peanuts boiled with salt, does my Hsiao-hua. (*Starts picking trash out of the basket and drops a peanut by mistake. She immediately picks it up.*) Yes, we mustn't lose a single one. (*Laughs and goes off.*)

(*Father, his face wreathed with smiles and a rake over his shoulder, comes back from the fields.*)

Father (*sings*): *On every side
The red sun shines;
Mountain villages bloom
With the flowers of philosophy!*



*These flowers, now our own,
Make our hearts truer
And our vision clearer;
More rice grows in the fields,
Bamboos shoot up in the hills.
When we peasants arm ourselves
With dialectical materialism,
We have the strength to fight self,
Combat revisionism
And battle with heaven and earth!*

(*Mother returns after washing the peanuts.*)

Mother: So you're back.

Father: Yes.

Mother (*puts down basket, pours tea*):
Have some tea first. You must be tired.

Father: Not I. I feel like a youngster.

Mother: So you've been competing with those youngsters again?

Father (*laughs*): You know the way it is, woman, since we took up philosophy here and studied dialectical materialism. The change in our mentality has had material results. Now that we're going all out to learn from T'achai, we're surging ahead like the Chientang River in spate — each wave higher than the last.

Mother: So you even forget to come back for your snack.

Father: Just now we got together in the fields to analyse the contradictions arising from our good harvest.

Mother: What contradictions? There are contradictions after a bad harvest, not after a good one, surely?

Father: Oh yes there are. For instance, does a bigger yield guarantee a bigger harvest? There's a contradiction here.

Mother: Well, speaking of contradictions, I have a problem. People have asked: Which comes first, the chicken or the egg?

Father (laughs): We peasants study philosophy and use it to guide us in the three great revolutionary movements of class struggle, production and scientific experiment. We're not studying so as to answer the riddle: Which comes first, the chicken or the egg.

Mother: But because we can't even answer a simple riddle, some people say: "How can clods like you study philosophy? It's like tigers trying to climb trees — ridiculous." And they say that to study philosophy you need — what do you call it? — "genius".

Father: Bah. This is all nonsense made up by cheats like Liu Shao-chi who are against us workers, peasants and soldiers learning philosophy. That's why they blether: "Peasants aren't cut out to study philosophy; all they're fit for is grubbing in the dirt." According to them, "Philosophy's made by theoreticians of genius. To grasp philosophy you have to be a genius." They're just out to fool us.

Mother (thoughtfully): Out to fool us, eh? You're right. "Which comes first, the chicken or the egg?" Why should we trouble our heads with their silly riddles? (*Turns to go into the house.*)

Father (stops her): We can't just let it go at that. (*Sings.*)

*Weeds grow among the paddy,
We must look carefully
To spot the difference.
Remember what people said
When we started co-ops:
"How can a chicken feather
Fly up to heaven?"
And in '58*

*When people's communes sprang up,
They said, "This is nothing but
A flash in the pan."*

*But we forged ahead
Sweeping stumbling-blocks aside
Till the chicken feathers
Really flew sky-high.
Our people's communes are
Going from strength to strength;
Now the Party wants us
To study philosophy;
Yet those same people sneer,
"These clods can never make it!"
They spread rumours and quibble
So as to confuse us;
There are obstacles ahead, wife,
Don't you ever forget class struggle!*

Chairman Mao teaches us: **"Liberate philosophy from the confines of the philosophers' lecture rooms and textbooks, and turn it into a sharp weapon in the hands of the masses."** To tackle revolution, production and scientific experiment, wife, we farming folk have just got to master Chairman Mao's philosophical thinking.

Mother: Yes, we must do as Chairman Mao says, and study philosophy hard. Look, I've just been studying *On Contradiction*, but I'm still not clear about "the universality of contradiction".

Father: Well, it means that there are contradictions in everything. Every day we're up to our necks in contradictions, dealing with contradictions all the time. For example, there are contradictions in our society, there are contradictions in our production brigade, there are contradictions in our family too.

Mother: Contradictions in our family? Why, we're poor peasants, we do as Chairman Mao tells us, and we're taking the socialist road. We're a happy family, all pulling together. What do you mean by saying we have contradictions? (*Picks up the basket of peanuts.*)

Father: Well, this is a problem we ought to talk over some time.

(*Sees the peanuts.*) Ah, has the team distributed peanuts?

Mother: No, these are some Hsiao-hua picked up.

Father: She picked up so many?

Mother: The more the better, surely.

Father (*to himself*): The more we glean, the less left for the collective. We must bring up the child to care for the collective.

(*To his wife*) The only way to master Chairman Mao's philosophy, woman, is to link theory with practice.

Mother: I know. We have to practise what we preach.

Father: Take gleaning peanuts, for instance...

Mother (*picks up the basket*): What about it?

Father: Gleaning a few peanuts is all right, but...

Mother: It was good of Wang Yu-tsai's son Treasure to come to fetch her. Otherwise she wouldn't have got so many.

Father: H'm. (*Thoughtfully*) The son of Wang, eh?

Father

and **Mother** (*sings*): *So many fine big peanuts
In the basket.*

Father (*takes the basket. Sings*): *The weight of this basket
Sets me wondering.*

Mother (*sings*): *Hsiao-hua works hard at school,
She's a good little helper at home —
A joy to her mother!*

Father (*sings*): *So short a time
The child had after school,
How could she fill
Half a basket?*

*Our yield is high
But we've scamped the harvesting;
There's more to this
Than meets the eye.*

(*Puts down the basket.*) When ants move their burrow, rain will follow. Right! (*Sings.*)

I must get to the bottom of this.

(*Mother brings out some cakes.*)

Father: I've some urgent business to see to, wife.

Mother: Have a snack before you go.

Father: I'll be back very soon. Take good care of these peanuts, woman, every single one of them.

Mother: I know. That's what Hsiao-hua said, every single one.

Father: Fine. (*He leaves.*)

Mother: Look at him — always in a rush! Well, just now my old man told me that to master Chairman Mao's philosophy we must link theory with practice. (*Picks up the basket. Thoughtfully*) How can I put theory into practice? (*Looks at the sky.*) Ah, it's late. I must hurry up and boil these peanuts. (*Goes into the house.*)

(*Tung-sheng hurries on.*)

Tung-sheng (*sings*): *Treasure picked a whole crate of peanuts*

And took them home

Instead of to the team;

On the road I urged him

To put the collective first,

But he told me Hsiao-hua

Had gleaned peanuts too,

And that took the wind

Out of my sails.

A Little Red Soldier

Should set a good example;

I've come home now

To have this out with her.

(*Shouts.*) Hsiao-hua! Hsiao-hua!

Mother (*comes out of the house*): Well, son. Why are you back so late?

Tung-sheng: Where's sister, mum?

Mother: She came back, then went out again.

Tung-sheng: Did she glean some peanuts today, mum?

Mother: Yes, half a basketful.

Tung-sheng: And she brought them home?

Mother: That's right.

Tung-sheng: For whom did she glean those peanuts?

Mother: For whom? (*Laughs.*) What a question! For herself, of course.

Tung-sheng: For herself? (*Stamps.*) *Ai!*

Mother: What's up?

Tung-sheng: She's a Little Red Soldier, mum. It's good to glean peanuts after school; but it wasn't right to bring them home. (*Picks up the basket.*) I'll take these to the team office. (*Starts off.*)

Mother (*stops him*): Why all this fuss? What's wrong with your sister bringing home a few peanuts to enjoy?

Tung-sheng: What? You're encouraging her to eat them?

Mother: Hsiao-hua told me to keep them safe, every single one.

Tung-sheng: Keep every single one? Not a single one must we keep! (*Turns to enter the house.*)

Mother (*stops him*): *Aiya!* Stay where you are. These are Hsiao-hua's peanuts, not yours.

Tung-sheng: You're spoiling her.

Mother: She's only a child.

Tung-sheng: A child? Dad says we should bring up children from the start to love our country and love the collective.

Mother: All right, all right; as if I didn't know that! I've already put the peanuts in the pan. I must. . . . (*Starts to leave.*)

Tung-sheng (*hastily stops her*): Mum! (*Sings.*)

Shoots must be watered by rain,

To bear flowers

Boughs must face the sun.

Hsiao-hua should be criticized

For her lack of public spirit;

It's wrong of you to spoil her

And excuse her.

Mother (*sings*): *You talk so big*

And flare up over nothing,

Making mountains out of molehills.

What does it matter —

Just a handful of peanuts?

Tung-sheng: Mum! (*Sings.*)

Making mountains out of molehills?

If selfishness goes unchecked

It's dangerous.

Little Red Soldiers should work

For the collective.

Mum, you ought to learn from the Little Red Soldiers. (*Sings.*)

You lag behind the times

And don't know what's right.

Mother: So I lag behind the times, do I? (*Sings.*)

When we started a co-op

And when we started a commune,

I backed them up to the hilt.

When have I ever

Fallen down on a job?

When have I ever

Stayed away from a meeting?

When, I ask you?

Tung-sheng: I know, I know. But don't rest on your laurels, mum. You must forge ahead. You know what dad says: We're studying Chairman Mao's works on philosophy so as to raise our thinking to a higher level.

Mother: All right, all right. So your level's high, mine's low. Bah! Is your father's level lower than yours? He saw the peanuts but he didn't say anything.

Tung-sheng: He didn't say anything?

Mother: Well, he said I was to take good care of them, every single one.

Tung-sheng: I don't believe it. (*Sings.*)

My dad's a Communist,

Nothing wrong with his thinking;

Everyone knows he's devoted

To the collective,

Not like you, just seeing

What's underneath your nose

With your left-over selfish ideas.

Mother: Selfish ideas? Me? (*Crossly*) All right, I won't argue with you. I'm going to boil those peanuts.

Tung-sheng: You mustn't, mum!

Mother: I'm going to, so there!

Tung-sheng: You mustn't.

Mother: Son....

Tung-sheng: Mum!

Father (*enters*): What's going on here?

Mother (*catches hold of him*): You've come just at the right time. We're having a contradiction over half a basket of peanuts.

Father (*laughs*): Why just now you were saying what a happy family we are, all pulling together. So we have contradictions too? This is what is meant by the universality of contradiction.

Tung-sheng: Dad, mum's being selfish.

Mother: Just listen to him. All this hullabaloo over nothing.

Tung-sheng (*takes his father's arm*): Dad, did you see those peanuts my sister brought home?

Father: Yes, I did.

Tung-sheng: Didn't you say anything?

Mother: Well?

Father (*catches on*): Oh. (*Sings.*)

When there's a lid on the pickle jar

You don't know what's inside;

Take off the lid and have a look —

That's the only way to find out.

No investigation, no right to speak.

Tung-sheng (*begins to understand*): I see....

(*Hsiao-hua comes in.*)

Hsiao-hua (*gaily*): Where are the peanuts, mum? (*Her mother says nothing.*) Brother!

Tung-sheng: You.... (*Slaps his thigh.*) *Ai!*

Hsiao-hua (*puzzled*): What's up, dad?

Mother: We're having a contradiction over half a basket of peanuts.

Father (*teasingly*): Quite a big contradiction too. All right. Since there's a contradiction, we'll hold a family meeting to thrash it out.

Tung-sheng: That's a good idea.

Mother: Very well. Let's thrash it out.

(*The family sit down together to hold a meeting.*)

Father: As Chairman Mao tells us: "The analytical method is dialectical. By analysis, we mean analysing the contradictions in things." Now let's analyse this business of half a basket of peanuts.

Mother: Yes, let's analyse it.

Tung-sheng: I'll start off. This was Hsiao-hua's doing in the first place....

Hsiao-hua (*startled*): What?

Mother: Don't get excited, child. When he's finished his analysis, I'll make mine.

Hsiao-hua (*to her brother*): What do you mean?

Tung-sheng: Why did you bring those peanuts home and ask mum to boil them for you?

Hsiao-hua: What? (*To her mother*) Have you gone and boiled them? (*Bursts into tears and picks up the empty basket.*) You must make them up! You must make them up! (*Thrusts the empty basket at her mother.*)

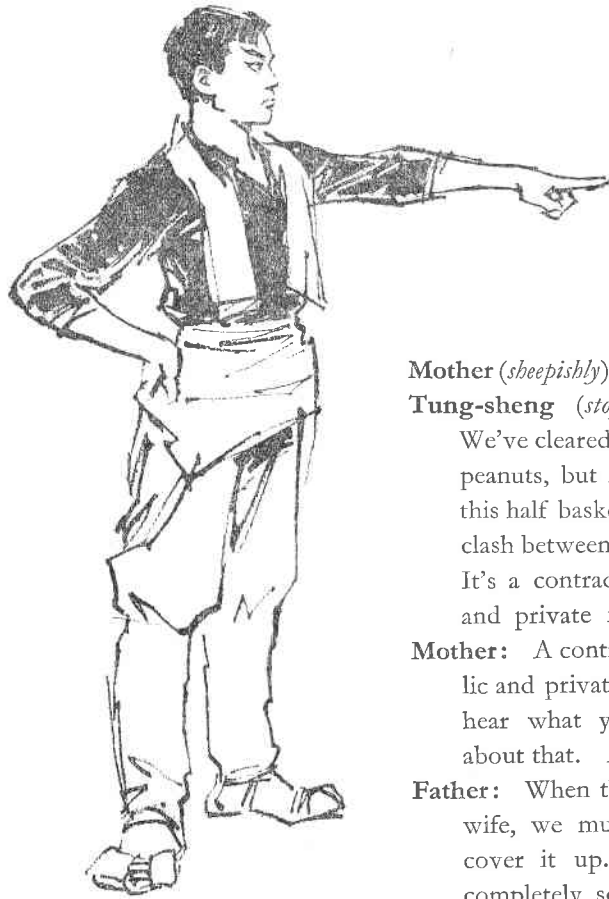
Mother (*at a loss*): Now what's wrong?

Hsiao-hua (*sobs*): I gleaned them for our team. But the man in charge of the granary wasn't there, so I told you to keep them safe for me, every single one. How could you cook them?

Mother: Well, I never!

Tung-sheng (*to himself*): Seems I misjudged her. (*To Hsiao-hua*) Don't worry, sister. The peanuts aren't cooked yet.

Hsiao-hua (*smiles through her tears*): They're not? Oh, good! Then I'll take them straight to the team. (*Picks up the empty basket and beams round.*) Well, the contradiction's solved. Let's adjourn this meeting. (*Skips into the house.*)



Mother (*sheepishly*): *Ai!* (*Turns to leave.*)

Tung-sheng (*stops her*): No, mum. We've cleared up the business of the peanuts, but not your ideas. Over this half basket of peanuts we had a clash between two kinds of thinking. It's a contradiction between public and private interest.

Mother: A contradiction between public and private interest? Well, let's hear what your father has to say about that. Am I...

Father: When there's a contradiction, wife, we mustn't gloss it over or cover it up. We must expose it completely, so as to solve it. Hsiao-hua may not have explained things clearly, but the line you took on those peanuts shows your lack of understanding.

Mother: Do you have to badger me too? Father and son, you keep harping on the same tune. One says I'm selfish, the other says I don't understand. Both gunning for me! But what's so wrong with me?

Tung-sheng: You should examine your ideas.

Mother: My ideas? What's this? A cross-examination?

Tung-sheng (*impatiently*): Mum, you....

Father: Son, we must look at questions from all sides. Gleaning peanuts in itself isn't wrong....

Mother (*cuts in*): Hear that, son?

Father: Hsiao-hua is right, wife, to hand those peanuts in to the collective. We poor and lower-middle peasants should bring up our children to care for others with no thought of self.

Tung-sheng: Right. Hear that, mum? You're tainted with individualism.

(*Mother sits down in a huff.*)

Father: Son, you throw yourself into your work like a young tiger — good! But you can't tackle ideological problems the way a tiger charges down from the hills. (*Signs to Tung-sheng to go indoors.*) And don't you get so worked up, woman! (*Pours his wife a bowl of tea and sits down beside her.*)

Mother (*takes the tea*): What do I care about a handful of peanuts? But I dote on my daughter and wanted to give her a treat — she was so pleased about picking up those few peanuts. Call that a bit selfish if you like. But individualism, no! Such a big label for such a little thing — I can't take it.

Father: You work hard in wind and rain for our brigade, wife. Your heart is with the collective.

Mother: Oh. Just now you were scolding me, now you're praising me. What's the idea?

Father: Everything has two sides. (*Pauses.*) We must try to stand higher and see further, wife. A fine drizzle can make your clothes wet. If we don't watch our step over little things, we may come a big cropper.

(*Hsiao-hua, carrying the basket of peanuts, comes out with Tung-sheng.*)

Mother: Come a big cropper?

Father: Yes. The least bit of selfishness makes it easy for people to take advantage of us.

Mother: Take advantage of us? How?

Father: Those peanuts Hsiao-hua picked up today weren't "gleanings".

All (*startled*): Not gleanings?

(Mother takes the basket from Hsiao-hua and looks at it for a minute, then puts it down.)

Father (*to his wife*): Ask the child.

Hsiao-hua (*surprised*): Ask me?

Father: Hsiao-hua. (*Sings.*)

Where did you pick up these peanuts?

Hsiao-hua (*sings*): *In the new field by the stream.*

Father (*sings*): *Was Treasure with you?*

Hsiao-hua (*sings*): *Just ahead of me.*

Father (*sings*): *And Treasure's father was reaping in front?*

Hsiao-hua (*sings*): *Just in front of Treasure.*

Father (*sings*): *Did you find many gleanings?*

Hsiao-hua (*sings*): *A whole lot, plump and round.*

Father (*sings*): *And when Treasure filled his crate?*

Hsiao-hua (*sings*): *His dad put it on his back.*

Father: Where did he take it?

Hsiao-hua: To the team, of course.

Father: No, he didn't! (*Sings.*)

When I saw those peanuts just now I had my doubts.

I went to the fields

To investigate.

First I had a good talk with Treasure;

After he saw reason he told me

What had happened.

Wang Yu-tsai left peanuts

On the ground as "gleanings",

Then took our collective's crop

For his own use.

All: Well!

Tung-sheng: So that's the way it was.

Mother: Then why did he ask Hsiao-hua to go with him?

Father: Because we're poor peasants. To pull the wool over everybody's eyes.

Mother: Oh. Wang Yu-tsai was always selfish, and he hasn't changed.

Tung-sheng: Wang Yu-tsai isn't "gleaning", he's undermining our collective economy.

Father: This tendency towards capitalism is very serious among those peasants who were well-off in the old society. (*Takes a peanut plant from his pocket.*) Look at this. I picked this up in that field by the stream. It's covered with good pods. This may seem a little thing, but it's part of our class struggle. (*Sings.*)

Peanuts dug up then

Left in the fields—

This is class struggle.

Our commune members

Farm for the revolution,

Each nut, each grain reaped

Must go to the granary;

But Wang Yu-tsai

Is out for what he can get;

We use the same hoe

But take quite different roads.

Are there no contradictions

In our family, wife?

Like it or not

We're caught up in the struggle.

We must keep this in mind

Every day,

See both sides of

Every question;

Only by holding fast

To Chairman Mao's line

Can we stand firm, see clear

And carry the revolution

Through to the end.

Mother: That's right. I see now that there's a contradiction between public and private interest in this half basket of peanuts.

Father: Yes. If all of us care only for ourselves and not for the collective, if you filch a basket today and he takes a crate tomorrow, allowing capitalist ideas to spread, our collective economy will gradually lose its socialist character.

Mother: Lose its socialist character?

Father: Yes, this is what is meant by a quantitative change turning into a qualitative change.

Mother: A quantitative change turning into a qualitative change. (*Her face lights up.*) I see it now, old man! There's contradiction in everything. In a good harvest too.

Father: Yes, wife, the only way to master Chairman Mao's philosophical ideas is by studying them in our own day-to-day struggles.

Mother: That's it. This is a fine meeting we've had today. (*Holds up "On Contradiction".*) Chairman Mao's philosophical ideas are like a golden key — they've opened my eyes. (*Sings.*)

*Once philosophy is freed
And comes to our mountain village,
It becomes a sharp weapon
For the workers and peasants;
I am going to make a good study
Of dialectical materialism,
To see the two sides of everything
And all that happens
In our family.*

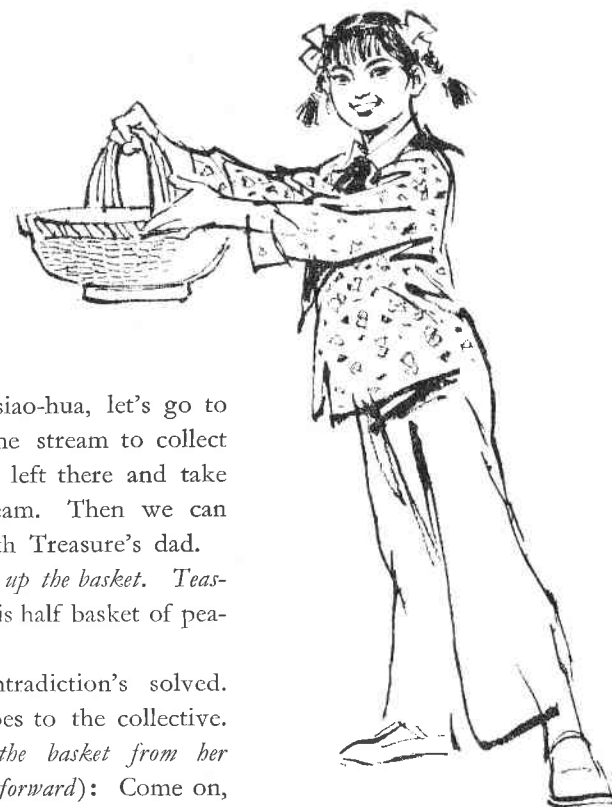
Tung-sheng

and **Hsiao-hua:** Mum!

(*Hsiao-hua jumps forward to throw her arms round her mother.*)

Mother (*beams*): Ai!

Father: Now that we've straightened out our thinking, wife, we must help Wang Yu-tsai to see where he's wrong. He may have a bad case of selfishness, but he belongs among the ranks of the people — this isn't an antagonistic contradiction — so it's up to us to win him over to take the socialist road.



Mother: Yes. Hsiao-hua, let's go to that field by the stream to collect all the peanuts left there and take them to the team. Then we can have a talk with Treasure's dad.

Tung-sheng (*picks up the basket. Teasingly*): And this half basket of peanuts?

Mother: That contradiction's solved. Of course it goes to the collective.

Hsiao-hua (*takes the basket from her brother. Skips forward*): Come on, let's go to the fields. (*A peanut falls out of the basket.*)

Mother (*hastily picks it up. Seriously*): This is collective property, we mustn't lose a single peanut.

Father: See, wife, how correct ideas change into a material force. You've taken a big leap forward. (*Laughs.*)

(*The whole family is stirred.*)

Father (*sings*): *Mao Tsetung Thought,
So glorious and brilliant,
Lights up the whole long way*

*Of our revolution,
Charting our course for us
Through wind and storm.*

Tung-sheng (*sings*): *It shows us how
To transform our land.*

Hsiao-hua (*sings*): *It shows us how
To go forward every day.*

Mother (*sings*): *It shows us how
To combat self,
Overcome revisionism
And follow the Party.*

All (*sing*): *Armed with Mao Tsetung Thought,
Holding high the red flag,
United as one
We march forward to victory.*

(Curtain)

Illustrated by Chen Yu-hsien

Chi Peng

Two Songs

A Mother's Tears of Joy

Why are folk dressed in their best?
Why have they gathered in the park?
Our young people in gay coloured capes
Are like lilies in full bloom.

Have some more barley cake,
Drink some more buttered tea,
Talk a little longer
In the accents of home,
Stay a little longer
With your father and mother.

Soon you will be saying goodbye
To the snowy mountains,

Not to come back
For a thousand days and more;
You are going to the golden city, Peking,
Far, far away,
But we shall not fret for you.

The revolutionary furnace
Of the Nationalities College
Will fire your youth
And make it shine more splendid;
The sunshine of the Party
Will spur your growth,
You will learn to brave tempests
Like the stormy petrel.

Yesterday the children of serfs,
Today you are the new masters of Tibet
Mounted on history's swift charger,
Spurring from serfdom on to socialism.

The buses come for you are sounding their horns,
Clear and insistent, bidding you be off;
Go then, children of the snowy mountains,
Flowers of the steppe,
But come back to help us build
A new Tibet.

As the buses roll across the snowy mountains
Leaving wheel tracks like long white scarfs,
Tears fill mothers' eyes —
Not tears of sadness at parting
But a mother's tears of joy!

Truck Convoy at Night

Deep blue, night falls
Over the darkling woods,
Stars wink silver in the sky,
Fresh winds ruffle the steppe,
And along the highway
Stream trucks.

Revvng of engines
Startles snowy heights;
Soughing of pines
Merges with blaring horns;
From the road that dips and climbs
Long headlight beams
Pierce the blackness
Of the night.

The trucks bring winter uniforms
And warmth
To sentries at the border,
New machines to people's communes;
Tide of our age
Rolling over the mountain highway,
They bring new life and happiness
To Tibet.

Icy torrents, swirling currents,
Perilous peaks and cliffs
We laugh to scorn;

Through boundless wastes of snow
Our swift wheels fly,
For a fire burns in the hearts
Of our brave drivers.

Down in the valley are tents
Brightly lit, and tears spring
To the eyes of our driver Nima;
For where this road now runs,
His father driving mules
In days gone by was hurtled to his death
By an avalanche.



Chairman Mao and Eighth Route Youngsters
(oil-painting) by Chin Wen-yi ▶

Hao Jan

A Young Hopeful

I was to go up into the mountains of Huaijou County some distance from Peking to write an article about the work there. Before I left Chi County, a PLA man named Ma who was posted there rang me up and asked me to meet him at the bus station, saying that he had a favour to ask me.

I arrived at the bus station at the time agreed on.

It was early spring. Warmth had returned to the earth and the willows were taking on a tinge of green. Commune members were busy digging ditches, spreading manure and harrowing their fields. Although hard at work, they kept bursting into song.

As I enjoyed the scene, I spotted Old Ma in a group of men digging a well south of the highway. I walked towards him, calling and waving.

Ma came over to meet me, explaining, "I've been here nearly an hour. The little chap watched for a while, then lent them a hand, so I joined in as well. We mustn't lag behind the youngsters, eh?"



Not caring whether I followed this or not, he laughed, then shouted "Chi-hsin!"

"Coming!" a clear voice responded. Out from the group by the well darted a slip of a boy in a red sports outfit. He seemed about twelve, with a big head on slender shoulders, a mop of jet-black hair and sparkling eyes. Wiping off the sweat on his forehead, he picked up a blue cotton-padded jacket from a mound and tucked it under his arm; then he put on a fur cap with ear-flaps and hurried towards us, smiling.

Signing to the boy to put his jacket on, Ma introduced him to me. "This is Chi-hsin, my second brother's eldest boy and a regular little live-wire. I doubt if he was born yet when you were in our village."

"You're wrong there," said I. "I remember the day he was born. We were discussing setting up a people's commune. While we were holding a meeting in your west wing, he started bawling at the top of his lungs in the east..."

This set both Ma and me laughing.

Embarrassing as this was for the boy, he neither flushed nor looked away. Straight-faced, biting his lip, he stared at us intently. This unwinking scrutiny soon sobered us. And then, his mood changing in a flash, he started, chuckling.

The boy's behaviour reminded me of his father Ma Lien-chi, a village cadre whom I admired and loved...

One year soon after Liberation someone said, "These mountains outside the Great Wall were no-man's land when we were fighting the Japs. It's a poor, barren region with no future. Why don't we move the whole village down to the plain?"

But Ma Lien-chi said stoutly, "If we do as Chairman Mao says, we can't go wrong. If we learn from the Foolish Old Man who moved mountains and work hard generation after generation, we can change these poor mountains of ours."

Now Chi-hsin seemed the very spit of his father.

Old Ma went on to tell me more about his nephew. "He's at school now, but he's a young commune member too. You know, our Bat-

ting Heaven Ridge has a name even in Peking for the fight we've put up against Old Man Heaven. Since the Big Leap Forward in '58, we've slogged away every winter and built terraced fields in thirty-two rock-strewn gullies. We've been tackling the last this year, the biggest and the hardest to cope with. One day, when this lad was working in the gully with the others, a rock hurtled down from the cliff. Trying to save someone else, he got his leg crushed."

Chi-hsin could stand this no longer. He motioned to his uncle to stop. Ma grinned. "All right, I've finished cracking you up." He turned to me and went on, "Although his leg's better now, his mother still worries. She asked me to take him to an army hospital, where a well-known surgeon examined him again and confirmed that there's nothing wrong. Now I want you to take him to Huaijou and see him to the bus which goes to our village."

I accepted this commission readily.

Then Old Ma, who had to attend a meeting, left us.

"The fields here are very big," said the boy to himself, looking in the direction of the well again.

I remarked that of course there was more land on the plain.

"That's not true." He rounded on me. "If you add all our terraced fields together, we've got just as much land. We've more trees, more herbs, and more birds up there too. I've not so much as seen a hawk here all these days."

I observed that conditions differed in different areas.

"Well, our mountains are better," he insisted. "They've no Great Wall here. No watch-towers. No tiger-dens." He chuckled, then stood on tiptoe to look into the distance.

"Why hasn't the bus come?" he asked with a frown.

I asked whether he was homesick.

He admitted frankly that he was, and gave me his reasons. "I'm a whole week behind with my lessons; the early cotton shoots we're growing in pots ought to be taken out and sunned; and the puppy my uncle promised me should be big enough now to be fetched..."

To distract him, since he was little more than a child, I opened my bag and offered him a handful of jujubes. He accepted without demur

and stuffed them all into his pocket, then took one out and popped it into his mouth.

"Good and sweet!" he exclaimed. "How small the stone is," he added. "Why, I've had these before. Yes, last winter. My dad brought home a lot from the county town when he came back from seeing an agricultural exhibition. We all liked them, but nobody knew where they grew."

I told him these jujubes were a special product of Chisu Village.

The boy pricked up his ears and his eyes lit up. "You mean that village there?" he asked, pointing to the foot of the north mountain. "My uncle told me it's called Chisu Village, but he didn't say anything about jujubes." While speaking he had eaten five big jujubes.

The bus arrived just then. Chi-hsin picked up my bedding-roll, jumped on to the bus, and put the bedding-roll down. He then alighted to help me with my two bags. I climbed on to the bus quickly to find a seat for the boy; but he hopped down again.

"That's all," I told him. "Hurry up and get on."

He stepped back, however, and said earnestly, "You go ahead, Uncle Liang. I've something to do, so I can't leave today."

With that he whirled round, dashed off across the highway and jumped over the ditch. Then clambering up a sluice-gate, he took off his fur cap and waved it as the bus started off. "Goodbye, Uncle Liang!" he called. "See you tomorrow..."

His abrupt decision put me in a dilemma. I didn't like leaving the boy behind; but the bus had already gone a considerable distance... With mingled anxiety and exasperation, I gazed at his rapidly receding figure till it had dwindled to a speck of red.

As soon as I arrived at the Huaijou guest-house I made a long-distance call to Ma. He told me that Chi-hsin had not returned to him, but assured me that the boy would not get lost. Still, I could not help worrying.

The next day the weather changed. As I waited for Ma to ring me with news of the boy, a steady rain set in. I stood under the eaves looking at the cloudy sky, not knowing what to do.

"Uncle Liang!" called a fresh young voice outside the gate. The

next instant in rushed Chi-hsin! I was so relieved that I sloshed through the mud to meet him.

He was soaked through, his black hair matted to his head, his face peaked and red with cold. Claspng his fur cap to his chest, he followed me into the guest-house.

"I looked for you in several inns," he said, smiling. "When I couldn't find you, I guessed you must be here. This guest-house is for cadres, isn't it?"

In my anxiety I had been intending to give the boy a good dressing-down once I got hold of him. But his sudden reappearance completely disarmed me. Since he was drenched, I lost no time in fetching a basin of hot water for him. Then I poured him a cup of tea.

Before washing, Chi-hsin carefully placed his cap on the side of the bed next to the wall, propping it in place with a pillow. Then he washed and had a drink. After several gulps he told me with a chuckle, "Uncle Liang, that Chisu Village of yours is really fine!"

"You went to Chisu Village?" I was dumbfounded.

He nodded with a twinkle in his eye. "They've jujube trees everywhere there, all over the hillsides, with trunks as thick as rice bowls or a man's waist. There are even some which I couldn't get my arms around."

I asked the boy why he had gone to that village. A wink was his only reply as, bending over to pick up his big fur cap, he thrust it under my nose. "Look, what's this?" I took a careful look. There, neatly tied, was a bundle of jujube cuttings.

My heart gave a leap as the truth dawned on me. "So that's what you were up to, you rascal!" I exclaimed.

"We have whole acres of hillside land," he said proudly. "Slopes, gullies, terraced fields... they're a mass of wild jujube trees. When we cut them they just grow again. Before you dig out one tree another ten grow. My dad says that if we make proper use of them, grafting them with good jujube trees, our mountains will turn into a regular gold-mine! Every part of the jujube tree is useful, you know. It makes good timber; the fruit can be used as medicine. All our villagers, old and young, are doing their best to find cuttings

from good strains to graft on the wild trees and make them bear good fruit."

"What's the use of these few cuttings if your place is so big?" I asked teasingly.

Placing his cap on his lap, he counted the cuttings with sturdy little fingers, an earnest look on his face.

"There are twenty here; that means twenty grafted jujube trees next year. If we take ten cuttings from each, we can graft another two hundred trees the year after that." He turned to me eagerly. "Think how many we can graft in three years' time! How many will we have by the time I'm my father's age? I tell you, millions!"

This high-spirited boy was a true son of his father! he had the open-heartedness typical of the mountain villagers hereabouts. The more I saw of him the better I liked him.

All this time the rain was falling steadily.

I borrowed several pictorials for Chi-hsin and made him sit on the bed, propped against the folded quilts, to warm up and read while I went through my notes.

Half an hour was as long as Chi-hsin could sit still; after that he became as restless as a monkey. First he pressed his face against the window to look out; next he skipped to the door and reached out to catch the rain. He collected handfuls of rain, then tossed it away; and when this game palled he came over to claim my attention.

"Can the bus run when it rains, uncle?"

"If the rain's not too heavy it can, because the road's covered with gravel."

"And in heavy rain?"

"The bus waits till the rain has stopped."

"What if it doesn't stop?"

"We'll just have to stay here."

"That won't do," he said anxiously.

"We're well looked after here and you can go over your lessons. What does it matter staying a few more days?"

He pulled a long face. "And what about my cuttings? Have you forgotten them?"

The serious way he said this made me laugh.

But to Chi-hsin it was no laughing matter. For a long time he refused to speak to me.

The next day he urged me three times to call up the bus station for detailed information about buses going north. Specific as was the reply — No buses today — he still did not give up hope. Putting on the cook's big straw hat and draping a turnip sack over his shoulders, he went off to the bus station himself. The reply he received was of course just what I had told him. He returned to the guest-house thoroughly crest-fallen.

There he went through the same procedure all over again: now peering through the window, now stepping to the doorway and cupping his hands to catch rain; now going to the bed to examine the cuttings in his cap.

After a while he raised his head to ask: "Do these cuttings feel the cold, uncle?"

I told him they did.

"Will they dry up if we stay here much longer?"

I told him they would.

"Would it help if I sprinkled them with water?"

This time I was at a loss for an answer.

Getting no response from me he said, "No, that wouldn't do. The water would turn to ice and they'd be frozen."

I could only sigh in sympathy.

At noon I went to the dining-hall to fetch our lunch, and Chi-hsin came with me to help carry the dishes. I took the rice back and put it on the table, and when some time had passed but he failed to show up I started back to the dining-hall to find him. I spotted him squatting under a small awning outside the kitchen with two dishes in his hands. He was so intent on watching the cook peeling turnips that I had to call him several times before he heard me and stood up to follow me back.

I watched the lad surreptitiously while we were eating. Not exactly frowning, he had a tense look on his face. With an abstracted stare he was munching his food slowly, as if he found it difficult to swallow.

Here was a new cause for worry. If this went on, the stubborn, single-minded boy might fret himself ill. I tried to comfort him by promising that if his cuttings were spoiled due to our delay, I would go back and bring twice as many to his village.

"By that time it would be too late," he said, his expression unchanged.

I assured him that I would bring cuttings earlier next year.

He shot me a glance and countered, "Why don't you skip lunch today and eat earlier tomorrow?"

With a wry smile I explained to him that we should face facts and learn to adjust ourselves to new situations.

He shook his head, then said emphatically, "What? Run away from difficulties instead of trying to find a way out? I've more guts than that."

This was a slap in the face for me, but I found it impossible to take offence.

After lunch he examined his cuttings once again. With each passing minute he seemed to grow more anxious.

When I finished clearing the table and tidying up the room he was nowhere to be seen. I guessed he had gone to amuse himself with some of the cooks or attendants; so instead of looking for him I seized the chance to ring up the county committee and ask whether they could get some truck belonging to the trade bureau or local garrison to give the boy a lift back to his village before he fretted his heart out. They promised to help.

Feeling easier in my mind, I went to the canteen to buy some sweets, then searched for Chi-hsin in the kitchen and the attendants' rest room. An attendant told me that he had seen him go out with a piece of matting over his head. Assuming that the boy had gone to the bus station again, I hurried there; but since traffic was held up, there was not a soul at the station. That made me really worried. There was no knowing what the resourceful, venturesome lad might do next.

Returning to the guest-house, I was met by an attendant with bad news. The county committee had called back to say that the road

through the mountains beyond the Great Wall was frozen and would be closed to traffic for four or five days. My heart sank. But as I opened the door of my room, a cheering sight met my eyes.

Chi-hsin, seated on the bed with both arms on the desk, was busy cutting up turnips. Having sliced the head off a large turnip, he placed it on the desk and then picked up another turnip from the floor which he sliced in the same way. Concentrating on the job in hand, he looked thoroughly relaxed.

This took a weight off my mind. But the information I had just heard disturbed me. Much as it distressed me, I had to break the bad news to the little fellow.

So intent was Chi-hsin on his work that he neither looked up nor uttered a word as I entered.

I asked if he had bought the turnips in the market.

"From the vegetable store," he replied. "Just dug out from the clamp."

I remarked that it seemed a lot for one boy to eat.

"I'm not eating them. I've another use for them."

I asked what this was.

Cocking his head he said cryptically, "Wait and see!"

Since he sounded so light-hearted, I did not like to upset him. Leaning back against my folded quilts I started reading the paper.

"Uncle Liang," called Chi-hsin presently. "See if you think this will do?"

I turned and saw that he was holding a large turnip from which he had sliced off the top, and imbedded in it were half a dozen jujube cuttings — like arrows stuck in a quiver. Nonplussed at first, I soon caught on and excitedly hugged the boy.

Pulling free he told me eagerly, "They won't dry out or get frozen this way."

His ingenuity and doggedness reminded me once more of his father. I could not but admire this little commune member.

Chi-hsin slept soundly that night.

Twice I turned on the light, but that failed to wake him. He simply flung out a short, sturdy arm, knocking over one of the turnips

with cuttings imbedded in it. Easier in my mind, I dozed off again until suddenly someone shook me.

"I'm off now, Uncle Liang."

I opened my eyes to find the light on. It was still dark outside. Chi-hsin, fully accoutred with a leather belt around his padded coat, was holding his fur cap with his precious cuttings stuck into three turnips.

I jumped up, protesting that since he had thought out this method of safeguarding the cuttings, he need not be in such a hurry. Though the rain had stopped, no buses were running north. Better wait for another day and perhaps the road would be re-opened to traffic.

"You can't fool me." He chuckled. "I heard everything the attendant told you yesterday."

Such being the case, all I could do was urge him to wait patiently for a few more days. It was only a waste of time to go to the bus station.

He shook his head decidedly. "No. I can't wait any longer, and neither can the cuttings. I'm going back on foot."

I was taken aback. In weather like this it might take him more than a day to walk such a long distance.

"When my dad was my age and worked for a landlord, he had to carry heavy loads from our village to town and back again, all in one day. Why can't I do as much for socialist construction?"

His determination kindled a fire in my heart. I hastily put on my clothes.

"You don't need to see me off. I asked the way when I bought the turnips yesterday."

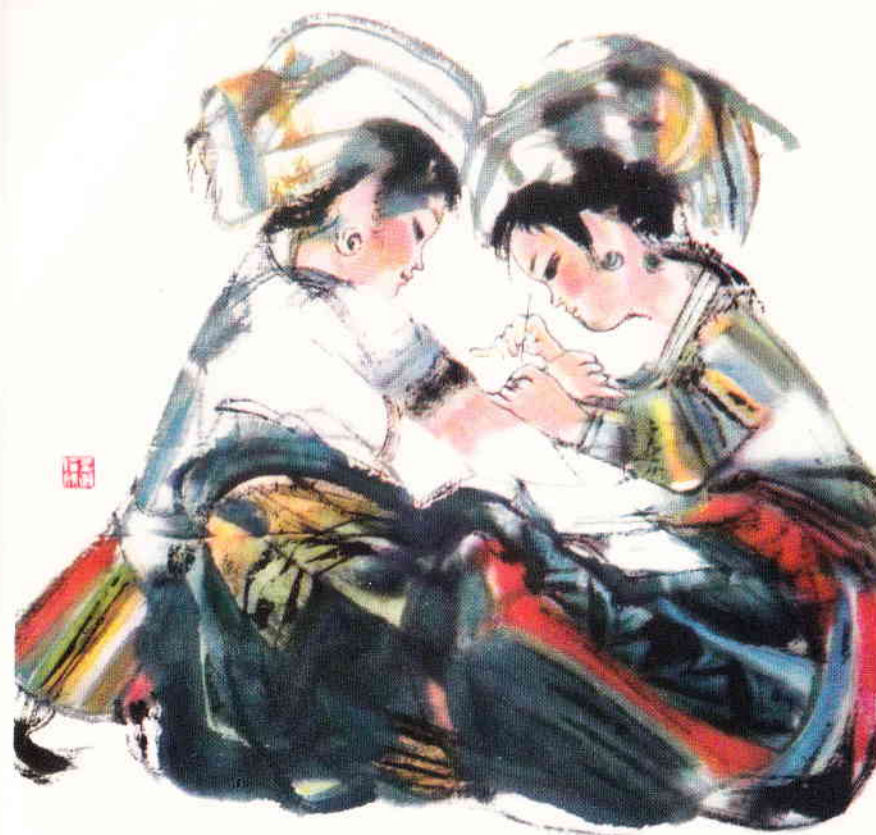
"I'm going with you up to Battling Heaven Ridge," I declared.

Dawn was beginning to break as we set off. In the distance loomed the Yenshan Mountains, with the Great Wall crowning their undulating ranges. As I raised my eyes to this imposing sight, my heart swelled with pride and joy.

Years ago Ma Lien-chi had said, "If we learn from the Foolish Old Man who moved mountains and work hard generation after generation, we can change these poor mountains of ours."

Now this young hopeful striding so swiftly beside me, who had come into the world with such lusty bawling together with the people's commune, represented a new generation. In the glorious fighting years that lie ahead, new blood will enrich and fortify our ranks from one generation to the next, ensuring our great motherland lasting prosperity and eternal youth.

Illustrated by Lu Yuan-lin



壬子九月初三
之夜程炳
擬稿于黃浦
岸



Practising Acupuncture (traditional Chinese painting) by Cheng Shih-fa ▶

Travelling Companion

In our southern mountains, when it rains in spring the weather does not clear again for days: clouds and mist enfold the valleys, blotting out terraced fields and forests alike, and there is utter silence — not a bird sings, not a human voice is heard — as if all sounds were muffled by the mist. At such times, travelling through the mountains is very hard. The rain had already kept me in the county town for several days, waiting for the weather to clear. Then I woke up one morning to hear the soft cooing of a turtle-dove. Getting up I saw that the mist was rolling away and the mountains towards the east were faintly rosy. Evidently the rain had finally come to an end and I must be on my way. I had been sent to the provincial capital for political study the previous autumn; when the course was over I took the chance to visit my old home on the Pearl River, where I stayed for some time. Thus for several months I had been away from these mountains where I had been assigned to do farm work among the local Yao people. I now heard that the spring farming was going with a swing in these parts, and this increased

my eagerness to get back to Blue Mount, the village where I was posted.

Most of the Blue Mount villagers are Yaos. They live about twenty miles from the county town. Apart from one stretch of road by the river south of the town, the rest of the journey is over rugged mountain tracks, where it is impossible to travel fast. I set off, therefore, as early as I could.

After leaving the county town, I headed south beside the gurgling stream. The mountains on both sides were doubly green and luxuriant after rain, with occasional clouds drifting over the treetops. In the terraced fields tender rice-shoots were interspersed by patches of rape in bloom, a riot of gold. Milk-vetch in flower made other fields seem a mass of crimson clouds. The spring breeze scented with the tang of newly turned earth went to my head like wine. After so long away I found the scene enchanting. As I turned into a valley and reached a grove of camellia, someone called out:

"Where are you heading, friend?"

Startled, I stopped and looked round. A man of forty or thereabouts emerged from under the trees. He was carrying a hunting rifle, had a satchel over his shoulder and a knife stuck through his red girdle. Though he was dressed like a Han, I could tell at a glance that he was a Yao. He had a square face, a large nose, gleaming eyes under thick eyebrows, and that special dignity of dwellers in the mountains. His voice was gruff, yet he spoke gently. Before I had time to ask who he was, a black hound bounded out from the bushes to sniff and circle round me suspiciously.

"Don't worry. It won't bite you," said the man. At a curt command from him, the black dog went and lay down at its master's feet.

The Yao mountain folk have a saying: A hunter's three treasures are his musket, hound and sword. This prompted me to ask: "Are you a hunter?"

He smiled. "You know our ways, but you've guessed wrong. Not everyone with a gun and a dog is a hunter. As it happens, I'm on my way back from a conference in the county town. Are we going the same way?"

When I told him my destination was Blue Mount, he laughed and exclaimed, "I thought as much."

I was pleased to have found a companion for my journey through such wild country.

As we walked on together the man asked: "Is your name Li?"

This took me by surprise. Having been in Blue Mount for two years, I knew many of the commune and brigade cadres, yet I had never set eyes on this man before. But he had got my name right.

He seemed to know what was puzzling me and said: "This is easily explained. I guessed from the notebook and two pens in your pocket that you must be one of the youngsters sent here from school. I heard some months ago that a young intellectual called Li had gone to the provincial capital to study, and was due to come back about now. So I thought you must be the same fellow."

I nodded, impressed by his powers of observation.

"During your study course, I heard that you visited quite a few advanced communes," he went on. "Our Yao villages can't compare with those go-ahead places either in equipment or in mechanization. Still, under the leadership of Chairman Mao we Yaos have jumped from serfdom to socialism. In that sense we've come a long way, made considerable progress."

And so we fell to chatting.

After crossing several mountains, I was rather tired and wanted to have a rest. But my companion strode steadily on, sometimes even making a detour to examine the crops on some slope. He took a keen interest in everything around us. A plot of taros laid waste by a wild boar made him exclaim with concern: "So many plants uprooted or trampled down! A good many hillside plots have been newly opened up and sown, but the wild boars are a pest. All our brigades should organize teams of hunters to protect the crops." So we interrupted our journey to transplant some taros growing too close together in nearby plots to make good the damage done by the boar.

Towards noon it clouded over, the wind dropped and the air grew sultry. There were no villages hereabouts. What would we do if it came on to rain? I was worried and quickened my pace.

"Just look around," he said reassuringly. "There are people on all these mountains opening up waste land and sowing, or building canals and power stations. Since the new drive last winter to learn from Tachai in agriculture, people have been flocking up here. See all those red banners over the mountain-sides? There are people and work-sheds everywhere you look. If it rains, we'll find shelter easily. Don't worry."

To keep my mind off the impending storm, he started describing how backward these parts had been and what momentous changes had taken place since Liberation. He told me some of the local legends too, and proved a born story-teller. Pointing at some seemingly unremarkable mountain, he would relate a tale which held you spell-bound. Every bush and tree, every boulder held meaning for him. And he made the whole region come alive for me so that, infected by his enthusiasm, I forgot the fatigues of our journey. Sometimes he burst out singing snatches of Yao folk-songs, his deep voice passionate, tender and lilting by turns. Sometimes he thrust a finger between his lips and his shrill whistling set the valleys ringing.

But not a word all this time about his own job.

Clouds were banking up. Thunder was rumbling in the distance. My uneasiness returned. But my companion froze in his tracks as if he had spotted something. Then crouching under a big hawthorn tree, he fixed his eyes on the slope beyond the next thicket. Presently he slipped off his red girdle and passed it to me. "They have sharp eyes and can spot red a long way off," he whispered. "Just hold this for me while I deal with them."

Before I realized what was up, he plunged forward through some pines to climb the hill. Half-way up, he stretched out motionless behind some rocks. Then I heard the crack of his rifle. After this shot he remained where he was, his gun still at the ready, and very soon fired another shot. Then he jumped up and ran forward to retrieve two pheasants. Having scattered some of their bright plumage on the ground, he ran back holding his bag.

"These creatures keep filching our seeds," he told me. "I scattered some of their feathers to scare off others; otherwise they'll eat all our seeds."

A man with a hoe stepped out of the wood just then and accosted my companion. Tweaking the pheasants' tails he commented: "You're really a crack shot!"

"Your brigade ought to organize a hunting team," was the response. "That would safeguard your crops and bring in extra income."

"I thought of that," said the man with the hoe, as if talking to an old friend. "But I wasn't sure whether it was the right thing to do..."

"Growing grain is our main job, of course. But if at the same time you organize side-lines and give them the right lead, that's in accordance with Party policy. We discussed this the other day at the county conference."

"You did?" The other man beamed.

"Sure. In a few days our commune's calling a meeting to decide on the best way to learn from Tachai, and the question of side-lines is bound to come up again. As brigade leader, you must be sure to attend!"

The other man nodded, then said, "Still, bagging game puts no money in our pockets. Just now a trade agent turned up who refused to buy game or other side-line products. He said that wasn't his job."

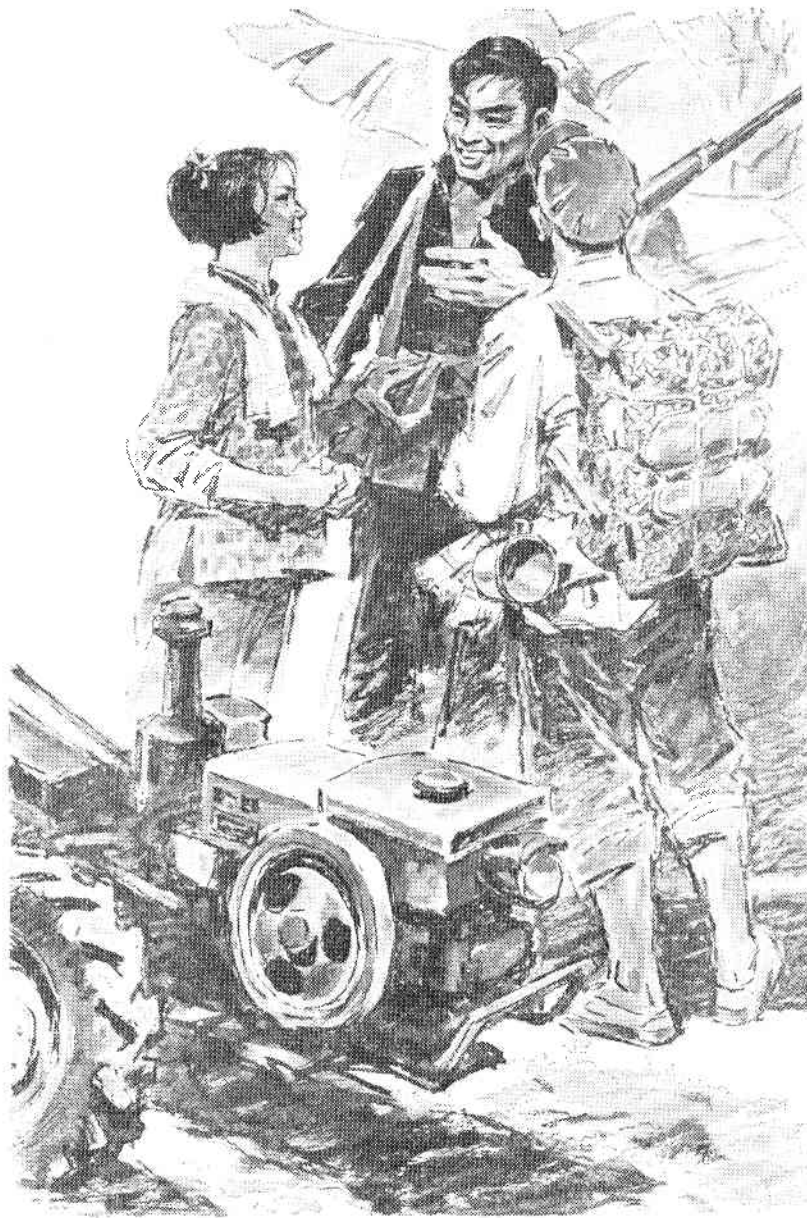
"Is that so? Well, tonight I'll write a note to the county bureau of commerce and have this put right."

"Good!" The other man looked pleased. "In that case, as soon as I get back this evening I'll organize side-line teams. No, I'll do it right away. Look, our people are opening up wasteland over there."

He turned to go, but my companion stopped him. "Remember that growing grain must come first. Don't forget that that's your main task," he reiterated.

By now I was really puzzled. Who was this man? He said he came from Blue Mount but did not work in the commune. In that case, what was his job? My foolish shyness kept me from asking outright.

Some time later we came to a slope where my companion paused to sniff the air and listen intently. "Notice the strong smell of gas-



oline?" he asked me. "That tractor we hear isn't moving — it seems to have stuck. Let's go and see what's wrong."

Sure enough, when we climbed the slope and rounded a bend, we found a mini-tractor halted there, its motor racing. We walked over and saw that it had bogged down in a ditch. The driver, a Yao girl, was trying hard to push it out, but the tractor refused to move. My companion told the girl to stop the engine; laying his rifle and satchel on the ground, he said to me: "Come on. Let's give her a hand. You help the lass lift the front, while I lift the handles. One, two, three!"

He lifted the handles at the back easily, but three times we failed to extricate the front. "You youngsters don't know how to use your strength," he chuckled. "All right. Let's change places."

How could he manage where two of us had failed? Still he insisted on trying. So we changed places, and as soon as he gave the signal we yanked that tractor out of the ditch.

It seemed to me time to be on our way again, but my companion took the handles of the tractor and started ploughing the fields.

"This is great," he called cheerfully. "In the past we Yao peasants hadn't even a buffalo: we had to pull the plough ourselves. Now a lot of youngsters don't know what the older generation went through. H'm. Wonderful soil this is, so black and rich. Provided we work hard, we're bound to get in a fine harvest."

After ploughing a sizable patch he stopped, and asked the girl: "Which village are you from? I don't think I've seen you before, but I can tell from your accent that you're a Yao."

"That's right." The girl smiled. "I finished high school the year before last, and only learned to drive a tractor last year."

My companion beamed. "You young people are lucky," he cried, "learning to drive tractors after finishing school. Sweet fruit from the wild pear tree, that's what you are. But don't forget that the root of the tree is bitter. If not for the Communist Party and Chairman Mao, we wouldn't have tractors today. In the old society we could only swallow our tears. Now you youngsters all have socialist consciousness and education too. How good your life is!... Well,

Young Li, let's be going." As we started off he called back to the girl: "Go slow with your gas — don't waste it."

Black clouds covered the mountains now. It looked as if the whole sky were about to fall. Any moment a downpour would start, yet we had still a long way to go. However, my companion still took a lively interest in all around us, as if he were very familiar with these parts.

A mountain covered with pines and then a stream still lay between us and Blue Mount. But for some reason he led me into a valley. It contained about five hundred acres of good black soil, none of which had been cultivated. Walking with a spring to his step he commented: "The soil here fairly oozes oil. A stick stuck in it would sprout leaves. It's a shame to leave it untilled. This place is called Lake Bottom. The old folk say it was once a lake of clear water overgrown with lotus, with willows all around — mighty pretty!"

Then he changed the subject and said: "Recently the Blue Mount villagers have made up their minds to overhaul these mountains and turn this dried-up lake bed into paddy fields. Look, those men over there are tunnelling through East Cliff to make a canal, so as to bring river water here for irrigation. Another hydro-electric station is to be built on that mountain, giving the commune a whole network of electricity, so that every family has electric light. The county has sent some technicians for the job, and in the next few days we shall be discussing how to speed up the work. You must write a report on this. Come on. Let's go and have a look."

So we spent some time looking at construction sites in the valley.

A wind sprang up suddenly, setting the pine trees soughing and dissipating the sultry, scented air. The eagles which a moment ago had been circling above the peaks were now nowhere to be seen. It began to pelt with rain. We took shelter in a shed at the foot of a cliff.

The rain came down in torrents for an hour or more. Water cascaded down the cliffs into the valley. The track was flooded, but the downpour showed no sign of stopping. It began to look as if we might have to spend the night there.

However, the cloudburst did not last too long. We pressed on, climbed another hill and, descending again, found the stream in fu-

rious spate. From the ford came the sound of shouting, and there seemed to be people floating in the waves. My companion hurried forward. Having heard that someone had fallen into the river, he put down his gun and satchel and plunged in. Soon he reappeared, supporting another man. Others swam over to help, and between them they hauled the drowning man ashore.

The rescued man had swallowed a good deal of water, but he was frantically eager to dive back into the stream. He was a trade agent. When he was crossing the river, some of his goods had fallen into the water, and since he was a poor swimmer he nearly got drowned in the attempt to save them. My companion quickly stripped off his wet clothes and told me, "Look after him, Li. Don't let him get in." He took a bamboo flask of liquor from his satchel and gulped down a few mouthfuls. Then he handed me the flask and plunged back into the water. Since I did not know how to swim, I had to keep the trade agent company on the bank.

My companion was certainly a powerful swimmer. Like a cormorant catching fish, he dived to the bottom and brought up something which he gave to his dog — it had followed him into the water. The dog, swimming to and fro, brought the goods rescued to the shore, while all of us on the bank clustered round marvelling at this co-operation between man and dog. Several young fellows also jumped in to help with the search.

It was nearly dark and chilly in the valley. But my companion and the young men persisted in their rescue operations till the trade agent called out: "It's nearly all here. Come back! The current's too swift."

However my companion would not give up. He came ashore and took the bamboo flask from me. Holding it to his lips, which were numb with cold, he gulped down some more of the fiery liquor. Then handing the flask back to me he said: "Don't wait. Go on to the village. I'll come ashore on the other side. Just take my things to the commune office. I'll fetch them later. After you cross, take the path to the left . . . that pebbly path by the cliff. It'll get you there in less than twenty minutes."

I was touched by his concern lest I lose my way. Next he asked

the trade agent what was still missing, then told him: "I have some dry clothes in my satchel. Put them on. At the end of the valley, on the east side, there's a small trading depot. You'd better spend the night there. Drink some ginger water so as not to catch cold."

The trade agent did not know how to express his thanks. When he declined the offer of dry clothes, my companion ordered: "Li, make him change his clothes."

As I was doing this, my companion plunged into the river again. He dived several times to the bottom, but came up empty-handed. It was getting very dark, and the current was faster now. He kept panting as if exhausted.

"Don't go on looking," pleaded the trade agent.

Other people on the bank chimed in: "He says there's only a package of electric torches still missing. Better call quits. Don't take unnecessary risks."

My companion swam over to speak to the young men, after which they went ashore. He himself remained in the water until the river was completely dark and finally retrieved the electric torches.

He passed the package to his dog to carry to the bank, then swam downstream and climbed ashore a couple of hundred yards away from the ferry. There he crooked his finger and blew a long piercing whistle, pointing at the stony path to urge me to hurry. As he stumped off with his dog, I remembered the dry clothes in his satchel and yelled: "Wait! I'll bring you your clothes."

"No need," he called back. "Just keep them for the time being." He put on a spurt then, breaking into a run.

The trade agent asked me where my companion came from. I had to tell him that I didn't know.

"But didn't you travel together?" he asked incredulously. "Well, I can publish a letter of thanks in the local paper. But how am I to return these clothes?... He told you to take his things to the commune office, didn't he? After a couple of days I'll go there to find him."

It was cold and the road was dark as we left the ferry. Since the commune office lay on the way to Blue Mount, after crossing the river I walked straight to the office.

To collect material for an article on how this district was learning from Tachai, I stayed at the commune office for a couple of days. But my travelling companion never showed up. On my way to the opening meeting of the commune representatives' conference, however, I met the trade agent.

"Thank goodness I've found you!" he exclaimed. "I've looked several times for your companion but never found him." He remarked to the commune's archivist: "This fine weather is the best time for selling goods in the mountains, but I've been waiting to catch him."

I explained the position to the archivist, who asked for a description of my companion. After hearing it he said: "This sounds like Old Tang."

I asked who Tang was.

"He's the head of the section in charge of production in the county Revolutionary Committee. He came to our commune two months ago, bringing a hound. He often wears a Yao costume. Judging by what you've said, it must be him." Then the archivist examined the rifle left in my charge. "See!" he cried. "There's his name carved on the barrel."

So it was. I had really been blind. If I had examined the gun, I would have discovered Tang's name several days ago.

The trade agent's face lit up. "That's good," he said. "Now I know who he is, I can find him."

Just at this moment a dog bounded in, wagging its tail. The archivist recognized it and called its name. It was Tang's dog.

Then Tang himself came in. He was wearing a Yao costume with two long pheasant feathers in his red turban. Pinned to his chest was a piece of red silk, marking him as a delegate to this conference. His eyes sparkled under his thick, sweeping eyebrows, and he cut such a dash that if he hadn't hailed me as he came in I might not have recognized him.

"I've been busy preparing for this conference and running round to various brigades," said Tang. "That's why I didn't come to collect my things. Thank you for keeping them for me."

The trade agent walked over with Tang's clothes, which he had washed and folded neatly. "Thank you so much for the loan..." he began. Before he could say more, someone called from the office: "A phone call for you, Old Tang!"

As he took the call, I heard his voice from the office. "Yes... that's all right... Don't thank me. I suppose your trade agent told you. Many people joined in the search; what I did was nothing... That comrade took a responsible attitude towards state property... Didn't the county committee tell you long ago to buy side-line products? This is one way of supporting agriculture. But one of your trade agents said this isn't their job... Chairman Mao tells us that political work is the life-blood of all economic work; so you'd better give your agents more political education. No need to thank me. I put it all bluntly in that letter I wrote you the other day..."

That was all I heard. But I noticed that when Tang was talking about buying side-line products, the trade agent flushed and broke into a sweat.

Presently my travelling companion rejoined us. Outside we could hear a merry din made by drums, gongs and fire-crackers.

"The delegates have arrived," he said. "Li, let's go. It's been decided to hold the meeting today out in the open, at Lake Bottom in fact, where we were a few days ago." Turning to the trade agent he said cordially: "Comrade, that phone call I had was from your head office. Did you hear what I said? Do you agree with me? If you've time, come along with us now and see how we are transforming nature here!"

The three of us went out together. The sun rising in the east cast a glorious light on hills and valleys vibrant with life, shining on red banners floating in the wind, on villagers fired with determination and enthusiasm. What a glorious spring it was!

The exhilarating scene, the exuberant crowds and their stirring marching songs brought a smile of joy to Tang's face as he strode forward.

Illustrated by Chen Yu-hsien

Guerrilla Contact Station on the River

There was something in the wind that morning at Touchiao, a port on the north bank of the Yangtse. The swashbuckling Kuomintang troops appeared somewhat subdued. Even their wolfish sentries had stopped bellowing at the boats and pedestrians they searched. There were, however, more plain-clothes men than usual hanging about the harbour. Sailboats bobbed up and down on the mighty river while an enemy patrol boat, its siren wailing, streaked past the shore, leaving behind it a plume of black smoke.

Beside a stretch of rushes, some small fishing boats were moored. Among them, on an inconspicuous sampan, nets were hung to dry and a newly washed blue cotton shirt suspended from a bamboo pole in the stern showed up vividly against the white flowering reeds.

There were two men on the sampan. One in his thirties, tall and husky with a square swarthy face, sat in the bow mending his net. This was Li Chiang, the man in charge of the county's guerrilla contact station on the river. His younger brother Li Hai sat in the stern. The two of them had arrived earlier than usual that morning

for they had been given an important assignment the previous night — to take a Communist Party leader across the river. While busily mending their net, they eagerly awaited the arrival of their comrade.

As Li Chiang worked, he watched everything on shore intently. Only a few days previously, the enemy had been swaggering around ferociously, blockading the river, arresting fishermen left and right and burning their boats. It was unusual for these brigands to be so quiet. Frowning, Li stabbed the net with his shuttle as if this would help him to pierce the mystery of the enemy's behaviour.

Two men soon appeared on the road leading inland. Both were dressed like fishermen. The elder, walking in front, looked hale and hearty in spite of his white hair. Over his left shoulder hung an old blue cotton tunic. His companion, who seemed about forty, had a broad, deeply furrowed forehead. As the two approached the enemy's road block, Li Chiang caught his brother's eye and whispered, "Watch out, here come our comrades."

The two passed the sentries without any mishap and after carefully glancing around made straight for the little boat marked out by the blue shirt. Through narrowed eyes Li identified the middle-aged man as Secretary Chao of the county Party committee. "So you're back, elder brother," he called out in greeting. Chao, recognizing the brothers, stepped on board after saying goodbye to the white-haired man who then went on his way.

"Quite a coincidence, my taking your boat again, eh? What luck!" Chao remarked in a low, vibrant voice. All three of them laughed.

Li shoved the boat off with his pole. Chao seated quietly in the bow noticed that the boatmen in two nearby sampans were also pulling away. They kept turning to look at him.

"Whose boats are those?" he asked with a slight frown.

"Uncle Chang's and Young Chen's. Both belong to our contact station. Things looked a bit unusual today so I asked them to stick around in case we needed help."

"You were wise. The nearer the enemy's doom, the harder he struggles. Your work here is vital. We must keep open our communications no matter what happens."

"Don't worry, Old Chao," Li assured him as he rowed the small sampan out into the rapid current.

"You're a fine oarsman, Old Li," Chao remarked.

Li shook his head. "Nothing to boast about. Several times at the start my boat was nearly swamped. But once you get the feel of the water, you've nothing to fear."

"How true, Li. That goes for the enemy too. They look frightening, don't they, with their pillboxes, barricades and road blocks?— But they're like mosquitoes in late autumn with very little time left to buzz." In his excitement, Chao raised his voice slightly, "There's been a fundamental turn in the revolutionary situation. Under the wise leadership of the Party Central Committee and Chairman Mao, our People's Liberation Army has switched from strategic defence and begun a nation-wide offensive. Our troops are going to march south."

"When our army strikes south, the whole of China will be liberated!" exclaimed Li Chiang. "In order to beat Chiang Kai-shek and liberate China, we can face the wildest storm."

"Good. Now we must concentrate on this crossing and be ready to deal with all eventualities," said Chao as he took up an oar too. The three of them agreed on a plan as they rowed the small sampan towards the southern bank.

2

The wind held as Li steered against the current, making for the port of Erhtaosha. Another fishing vessel appeared some distance behind them.

"Old Li, there's a boat tailing us," Chao said.

"So I noticed. It doesn't look like one of ours either." Li handed his oar to Chao again in order to concentrate on the other boat. He had eyes like a hawk, and after long years on the river he could tell by the handling of the oars if the rowers were genuine fishermen or not.

"Is it an enemy boat?"

"Possibly." The pursuer boat had hoisted sails and mounted an additional pair of oars. "Looks like they're after us, Old Chao."

"All right then, we'll go ahead with our first plan."

Li slowed down, waiting for the larger boat to draw near. There were three men in it, all dressed like fishermen. In the bow sat a lanky figure with a pointed chin, deep sunken eyes and a waxen skin. With a shock, Li realized that this skinny creature was the image of the traitor Wang Teh-piao. Yet Li had seen Wang sink in the Yangtse with his head bashed in. How could he still be alive? Li tried again in vain to place the lanky fellow.

Deciding to take the initiative, Li rowed closer to accost the other boat. "Hi, mate, where're you going?"

"Uh... out fishing!" Skinny seemed a little taken aback.

"Where'd you cast your net?" Li went on.

"Hell, just to mention it makes me mad. We cast near Yinsha, but a Kuomintang motor launch came along and drove us off. It seized our whole catch too." He spoke with a great show of indignation.

This reply gave Li food for thought. Casting a net near Yinsha? Yinsha was not a regular fishing ground; the river there was too shallow. Why should they fish there? He scrutinized the other boat again. Everything on board looked normal. Two other men, one tall and one short, were rowing skilfully in the stern. Only their clothes betrayed them. A fisherman often kneels or lies flat on his stomach to lower his nets; so his clothes are worn or patched on the knees and chest. But these two men had patches on their elbows and shoulders.

Meantime, Skinny was smiling to think that his reply had not aroused Li's suspicion. "Where're you people going?" he asked, his beady eyes gleaming.

"Over there to collect some nets we cast." Li pointed into the distance.

"I say, mate, have you worked for many years on this river?" asked Skinny lowering his voice.

"Born and bred on it," Li answered, gripping the oars like a real fisherman.

"Then you must know everything that goes on here."

"I wouldn't say that. But I can give you a pretty good idea where the water's deep or shallow, and where there are fish or turtles."

The man blinked, lowering his voice again. "Listen, mate, we're all poor fisherfolk who've been given hell by this damn Kuomintang army. But now times are changing. I'd like..."

"Why don't you say what's on your mind?" urged Li impatiently. He turned back to Secretary Chao and tipped him a wink.

"I'd like... like to find the guerrilla contact station on the river. Do you know where it is?"

"A few years ago the Japs had a patrol station on the river. Now the Kuomintang army has a police station here. But I've never heard of any guerrilla contact station," Hai, the younger brother, broke in. "Why do you want to find such a place?"

"I'll tell you the truth, brother. I'm from Chiangyin, where I've been helping the Communists. I've an important message for their contact station, but I can't find it. I'm really worried." He blinked again.

That blink! Li's heart missed a beat. It was exactly how Wang Teh-piao used to blink. Could it really be he?

"What important message?" asked Hai.

Thinking that Hai had fallen into his trap, Skinny said with an air of mystery, "It's like this. A communist contact man came from south of the river this morning. He took my brother's boat and said things had gone wrong on the south bank. He'd been sent to tell his comrades on the north bank not to cross over today. Unfortunately, those Kuomintang bandits nabbed him. In a skirmish, this contact man was killed and my brother and his family arrested." At this point Skinny squeezed out a few crocodile tears.

"Really?" remarked Li stolidly. He was thinking fast. Perhaps the enemy had got wind of the fact that an important communist leader was going to cross the river; but our guerrilla contact man would never have revealed such information to a boatman.

Then, click! the tall man in the stern lit a cigarette. Several things fell into place in Li Chiang's mind. What poor fisherman ever used a lighter, he asked himself. Skinny spun round, hoping to cover

up the gaffe, giving Li a glimpse of a long scar on his skull. He undoubtedly was Wang Teh-piao.

Li was right. The traitor Wang Teh-piao, who had worked for the Japanese, had now become a Kuomintang intelligence officer. During the Japanese occupation, Wang had headed the enemy's patrol station on the Yangtse, riding roughshod over the fishermen until the arrival of our New Fourth Army. Our troops ambushed the patrol station and Li Chiang, then a young militiaman, had seen Skinny Wang try to escape by jumping into the river. A comrade had bashed him on the head with a pole after which the scoundrel appeared to sink. That was why Li thought he had been drowned. But Wang must have escaped with only a scar on his skull to show for that blow.

Now this traitor had turned up disguised as a fisherman. He could not be brushed off lightly. The previous evening the Kuomintang river patrols had caught Yang Fa-liang, a deserter from the guerrillas north of the river. Under pressure, this coward capitulated, revealing that County Party Secretary Chao was going to cross the river the next day. This information was turned over to the Provincial Superintendent's Headquarters, with orders that all passing boats should be searched and that section of the river blockaded. Provincial Headquarters had decided to try to catch their victim unawares. To all appearances, they slackened their vigilance, while actually keeping a closer watch on all the river ports. Commissioner Wang himself, disguised as a fisherman, had come out on the river meaning to capture Chao and wipe out the guerrilla contact station in one fell swoop. In addition, they had telephoned the Kuomintang river patrol and had the traitor Yang Fa-liang brought to Erhtaosha where he would be able to identify Chao. The leader of the company garrison at Erhtaosha, Chiang the Hound, was also alerted. Should there be a fight he was to help Wang. But the Hound did not know Wang by sight; so it had been arranged that Wang would show his blue passbook, issued only to members of the Kuomintang secret service, to establish his identity.

Naturally, Li knew nothing of all this. But now that he had recognized Wang as a crafty enemy agent, he decided first to lull his

suspicious and then get rid of him so that they could take Chao across the river in safety.

"Why should we fishermen meddle with such things?" Li asked, as if alarmed by Wang's suggestion. "That kind of thing may cost you your head."

"If the Communists aren't afraid of losing their heads, why should we poor folk be scared when we're given a chance to stand up and have a better life?" retorted Wang, his sallow face assuming a reckless expression.

Extremely poor acting, Li thought, but he was glad to string Wang along. "I don't know anything about this guerrilla contact station, mate," he said. "But I know lots of people on the river. I might help you by asking around."

"If you do that, then thanks," said Wang, convinced that Li had been fooled. "But time is pressing, can you go right now . . ."

"Well," Li looked uncertainly around, then pointed to the two sampans manned by his friends. "Let's ask them first."

Uncle Chang and Young Chen were well aware by this time that something unexpected had occurred. They were slowly pulling in their lines when Li rowed up to them.

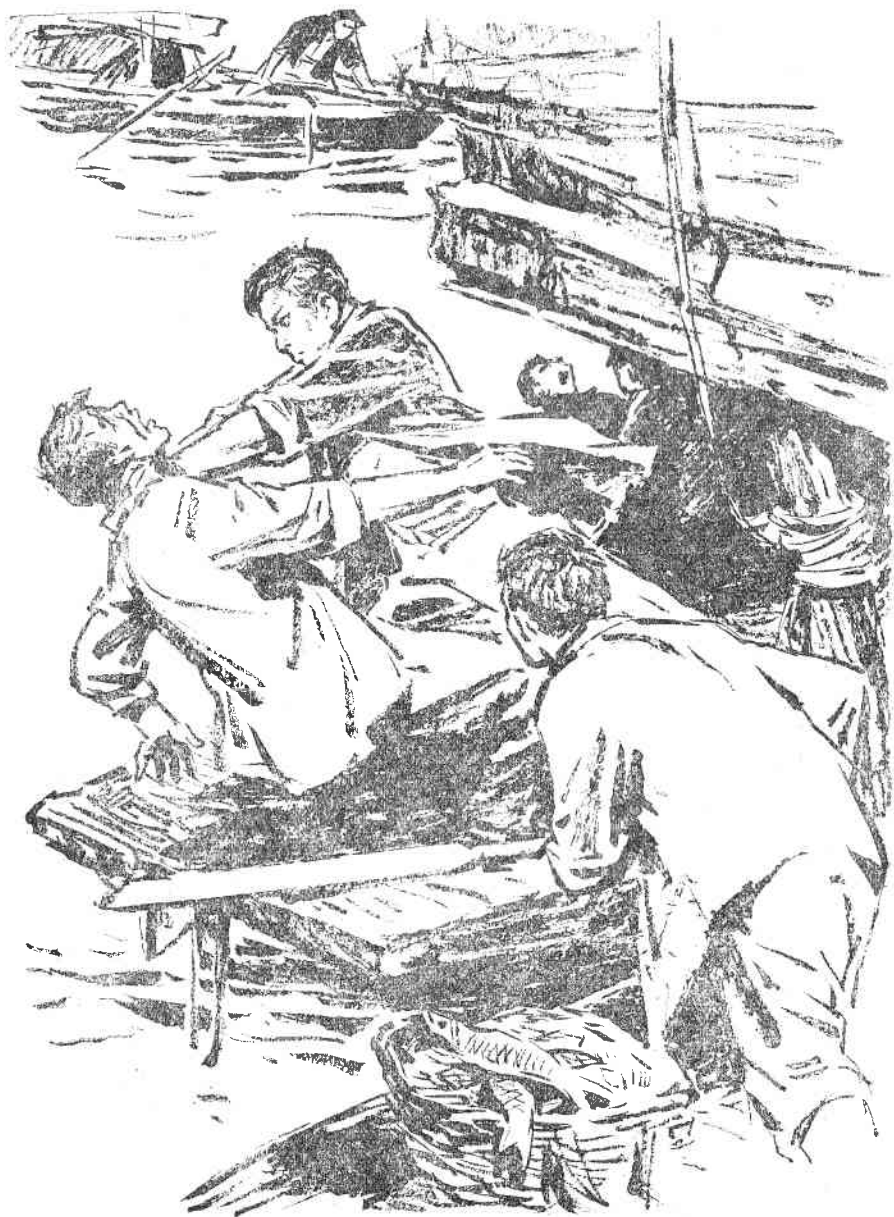
"Hi, Uncle Chang, how's your catch today?"

"Not so good. How about you?"

"We found a big school of fish but our net's too small. We thought of asking you to pitch in with us."

Chang caught his meaning at once and drew alongside. Chen did the same. As they approached, Li said, "Uncle, our friend here has something to ask you." Turning to Wang, he told him, "Uncle Chang here knows everyone on the river. He may know who you're trying to find."

Wang eyed the two boats suspiciously as they closed in. He was opening his mouth to speak, when Secretary Chao gave Li a nod. As the waves swept the enemy's boat closer, Li jumped on to it. His big hands, strong as pincers, caught Wang by his long scrawny neck. Grappling together they fell into the water. Before the other two agents could draw their guns, Li Hai and Young Chen struck each with a bamboo pole. The iron tip of Hai's pole pierced



the tall agent's heart, wounding him mortally as he fell into the river. The short agent jumped overboard and started to swim away as fast as he could. Young Chen dived in after him, grabbed him by the collar and ducked him until he nearly choked to death before hauling him back on board.

Meanwhile Li and Wang were still struggling in the water. Every time Wang bobbed up for air, Secretary Chao who was standing on the deck struck him with his heavy wooden oar. Though Wang was an expert swimmer, he could not take such punishment for long. Soon they dragged him back on board like a drowned rat and Li, searching his pockets, found the blue pass issued by the Kuomintang.

Young Chen had made sure that the short agent did not swallow too much water. Soon he revived. Li and Secretary Chao started to explain the revolutionary situation to this man and the Communists' policy of leniency to prisoners. They told him that if he would make up for his past crimes against the people, a good future lay before him.

"I'll make amends, I promise," the agent swore.

By carefully questioning him Li learned the enemy's whole plan of action, including the important information that Wang Teh-piao and the Hound, the company leader at Erhtaosha, had never met before. When Wang revived from his ducking, they questioned him too. Rolling his jaundiced eyes in fear, Wang gasped, "It's all a misunderstanding, I'm..."

"You rat, Wang Teh-piao!" cried Li.

Wang turned deathly pale. "You... you're..." he babbled.

"You were looking for the guerrilla contact station on the river, eh? Well, I'm Li Chiang, the man in charge of it."

Faced with an opponent whose very name struck fear into the enemy, Wang's pale face turned a blotched purple. Like a gambler down to his last cent, he staked all on one last bluff. "Li Chiang," he gasped, "you must understand the situation. The river is closely watched. All outlets and ports are blocked. They're waiting for you at Erhtaosha. Even if you sprouted wings you couldn't cross

the river." Unwittingly Wang's bluff confirmed the other agent's confession.

"Come to your senses, Wang Teh-piao. Take a good look around. Do you know in whose hands you are now?" Li's tone was biting.

At sight of a dark muzzle on his left and a glittering dagger on his right, Wang stopped blustering. He kept his mouth sullenly shut. Secretary Chao could see that this diehard was not going to give up. Beckoning to Li to join him in the bow, he discussed with him what their next step should be.

How were they to land on the south shore? The others gathered round them. All Wang could hear was the slapping of waves against the small boat.

3

A shrill whistle cut across the silence of the river. Li looked up. In the distance, an enemy patrol launch was cleaving through the water, raising spurts of white foam like the bared fangs of a wolf.

Wang was desperate enough to clutch at any straw to save himself. Tied and gagged as he was, he attempted to leap into the river. Li Hai sprang up and dragged him back again, making the little boat rock dangerously.

A quick decision was imperative. "Get rid of him," ordered Chao. Li seized a torn net, wrapped Wang in it, and having tied a rock to the net shoved it overboard. So the traitor went at last to a watery grave in the depths of the great river.

As the motor launch came closer, Chao and Li decided on their plan to get past Erhtaosha.

"Let's use this wolf-skin," suggested Chao, waving Wang's blue passbook. Li immediately caught on. "That's right, the enemy commander at Erhtaosha doesn't know Wang Teh-piao by sight. He doesn't know me either. Wang's blue passbook in our hands will be our disguise."

"Yes, that's the idea," said Chao and went on to unfold the rest of his plan in detail.

Li then asked Uncle Chang and his other oarsman to row away with his own boat in tow, but to stay near enough to help out if necessary. Li then took Hai, Secretary Chao and Young Chen's mate aboard Wang's boat. Chen remained in his own boat which was tied behind Wang's. His job was to keep an eye on the agent who had been rowing Wang's boat and was now shut up in the hold. Together they made for the launch. As they drew near, Li cupped his hands around his mouth and roared, "Hey, there! Bring your launch alongside!" Like spring thunder, the shout rang across the water.

"Look out, they've guns," yelled an enemy soldier as he caught the glint of a gun barrel. Instantly, all the enemy patrolmen loaded their guns.

Li laughed derisively. Then his face darkened. "You're a bunch of cowards," he yelled. "How can you tackle Communists if you're frightened of your own shadows? Here, catch!" He tossed them a rope.

The soldier who caught it did not quite trust Li although he talked so big. "Who are you?" he asked, putting on a bold front.

"Shut your trap. Tell your company leader, Chiang the Hound, to come out," commanded Li loudly. Then, without batting an eyelid, he sprang onto the enemy boat.

The soldier could see that Li was not to be trifled with. He dashed into the cabin and brought out his scrawny little company commander. The sight of this strange fisherman astounded the Hound. Through narrowed eyes he looked the newcomer over uneasily.

"You must be Company Commander Chiang," said Li, taking the initiative.

"Yes, I am." The bandit eyed Li suspiciously.

"I'm the special commissioner of Headquarters' intelligence detachment. Sorry I had no time to call on you before I started out in disguise on this mission. The job's very urgent, I'm sure you'll overlook my lack of courtesy." Li produced the blue passbook and waved it arrogantly under the commander's nose.

The scrawny little man smiled obsequiously. "Why, you must be Commissioner Wang, sailing on an important mission. I have



been tied up with work lately, too. Please excuse my delay in welcoming you." Though he spoke politely enough, Commander Chiang was still a little uncertain about this stranger. He had never met Commissioner Wang and though this man held the blue passbook, Chiang still had his misgivings for he knew well how wily the Communists were. With a show of cordiality, he offered Li a cigarette and struck a match to light it for him.

"Where have you been working, Commissioner Wang?" he asked.

"Ah, that's a long story." Li knew the man was testing him. Blowing smoke rings in a nonchalant manner, he answered, "When the Japanese came to our county, I came out to head their river patrol station working for national salvation in an indirect way, you know. Since the Japanese surrendered, I've been doing intelligence work outside. I only came here on an assignment about a fortnight ago."

"How conscientious of you to search the Yangtse for enemies as soon as you arrive, commissioner. I take my hat off to you, sir. But, this Yangtse River... uh..."

"Well, what about it?" Li cut him short. "The river can't run away. We know how to handle a little job like this, or we shouldn't be doing this kind of work."

"Ah... yes, quite!" Stuttering a little, the company commander was at a loss for words. This commissioner seemed to know what he was up to and was extremely bold too. If he had been sent by the Communists he would hardly have dared to come straight up to the launch. The scrawny little commander wondered whether he wasn't being unnecessarily cautious.

"Last night," he said, "immediately after your call, I posted plain-clothes men near all the entries to the port and patrolled the river myself as you instructed. I didn't want to slip up or bungle my part in this important mission." This he hoped would flatter the commissioner.

Feeling that everything was under control, Li immediately took the offensive again. "The enemy trying to cross the river is an important Communist official. Don't you think just posting a few additional plain-clothes men is too casual?" Li ranted. "I con-

sider this a dereliction of duty. If our superiors find out about this, goodbye to your captain's bars!" The motorboat was slowing down; the siren wailed again. They must be nearing Erhtaosha. In apparent indignation, Li stalked up and down the deck.

"No, no..." protested the Hound following close behind him. "I know the importance of the task in hand. I assure you I've been very vigilant — not a single leaf has floated past unnoticed since early this morning. But I discovered nothing..."

"Huh! Do you think the Reds are nitwits like you? Can you catch them simply by patrolling at random?... There —" Li pointed inside the cabin of the little boat tied alongside. "The Communists you're after, brother, are right here. Look and see for yourself. The older one is Chao, a Party secretary. The younger one's his river contact man. I caught them, boat and all. If I'd waited for you to take action, I'd still be waiting."

The scrawny little company commander peered eagerly into the cabin. By the door stood a husky fellow holding a pistol. Inside were two men with bowed heads. All his suspicions vanished into thin air. "How smart you are, commissioner — what a haul!"

"Well, we can't be sure yet whether we've nabbed the right man. We must get Yang Fa-liang to identify him. Tell your men to put in to Erhtaosha so that Yang can see our prisoners before we take them to the provincial capital."

The Hound was quite convinced now. "Very good, sir," he muttered.

The motor launch with two sampans in tow neared Erhtaosha. Li stood beside the Hound in the bow. Fully armed enemy soldiers lined the wharf as if prepared for battle. The entrance to the small tributary here was barred with a double row of barbed wire, leaving an opening barely big enough for one boat to pass through. Outside this, several craft were lined up. Yang Fa-liang, the traitor, was peering into their cabins as he went from boat to boat.

Before the motor launch was moored, the company commander jumped ashore. He ran towards the renegade calling, "Mr. Yang! Please come here." Then grabbing the traitor by the sleeve, he

said, "We've caught the Communist secretary. He's on Commissioner Wang's boat. Just come and identify him, will you?" Taken aback at first, Yang trotted after him obediently.

Li realized that this was the hateful traitor. "Open your eyes, man, and make no mistake," he said tersely. "If you slip up now, watch out!"

Yang did not grasp the implication of this, but the authority in Li's voice held him rooted to the spot until told to get a move on. Bending low, he entered the cabin.

Secretary Chao spun round then and the anger in his eyes made the traitor recoil in fear, nearly tripping over a loose plank. Fearfully he emerged from the cabin, gasping, "It's him all right..."

Only then did Chiang the Hound throw caution and doubts to the winds. But before Yang could totter off the boat, Li stretched out a hand to stop him. "Better stay aboard with us. You can testify at the trial." Turning round, he addressed the company commander, "I admit you have a share in our success. When I go back I'll commend you to the higher-ups and see you get your reward. But on one condition. This case is of vital importance, a top military secret. Don't you dare let a word about it leak out."

"Yes, yes." The commander nodded, beaming at the thought of the reward he would receive. "I know the importance of this. My lips are sealed." With a quick glance at his brother, Li said goodbye to the Hound who offered to escort the fishing vessel.

"No, don't bother," said Li. "Your post is here. You must go on patrolling this section of the river."

Nodding and bowing, the Hound climbed back into his launch. When the rope making fast the small boat had been untied, he drew himself to attention, saluted and shouted to his men, "Let them pass!" The enemy soldiers formed ranks, raising their rifles in a salute to Li.

"Hoist sail!" bellowed Li at the top of his voice. Hai jumped up and had the sails up in a jiffy. With the east wind behind it, the fishing boat glided smoothly through the opening. "Goodbye, Commissioner Wang," called the company commander, bowing.

"Forgive me for not escorting you. I'll stay and attend to things here."

Li waved back. "Goodbye, Company Commander Chiang, I'll be seeing you."

The wind bellied the sails as the boat swung upstream. Meanwhile Yang sat dreaming of a rosy future with money in his pocket and a secure position. The sight of him sickened Hai. Giving the traitor a kick, Hai shouted, "You there, Yang Fa-liang! D'you know who we are?"

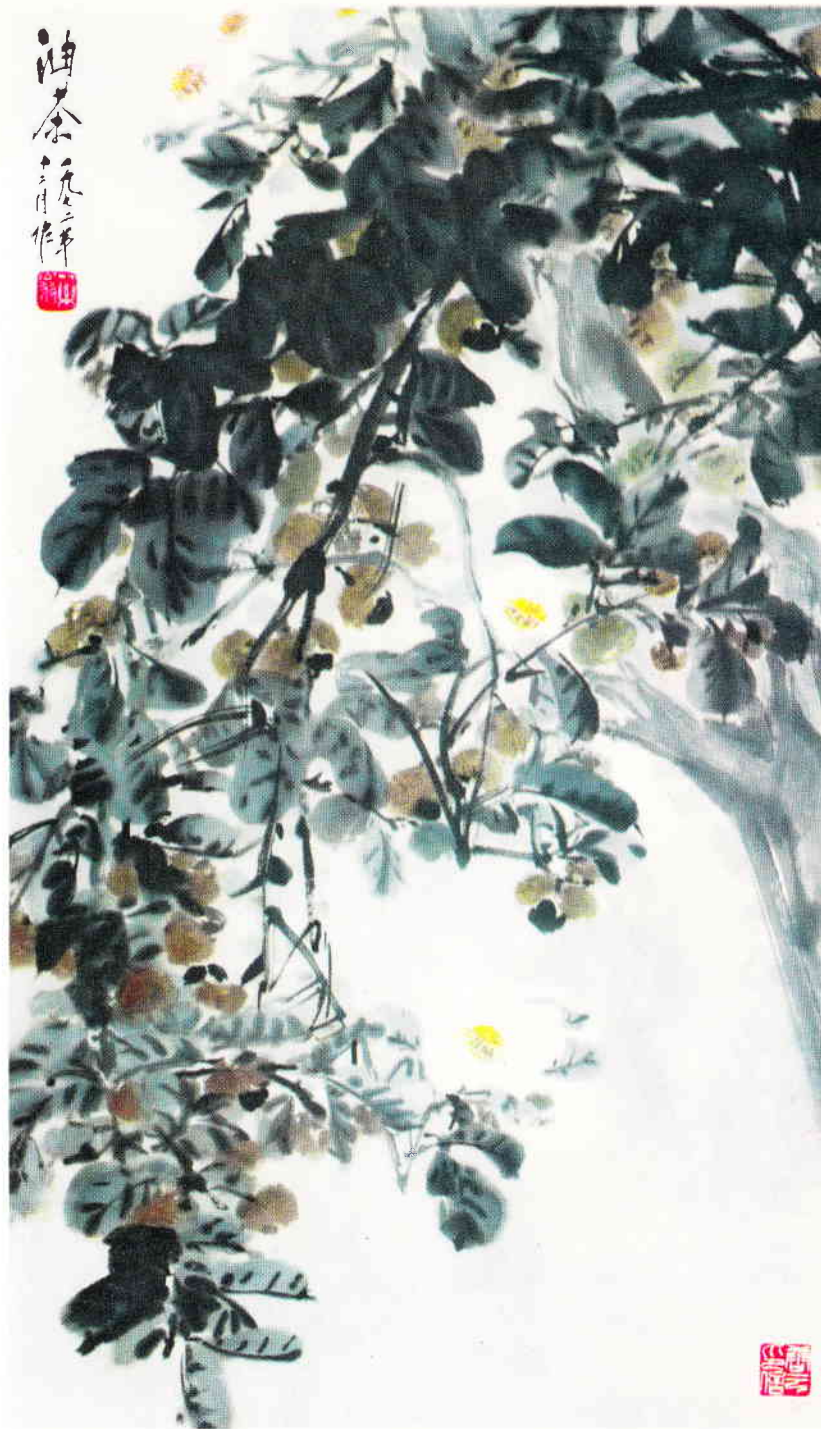
Yang looked up. Secretary Chao stood sternly before him. Scared out of his wits, the traitor collapsed in a heap.

"Tie him up and leave him until the public trial," Chao instructed Li.

The sun slipped down behind the hills leaving a warm glow in the western sky. The sails of the boat were tinted a glorious red, as were the waves and villages along the banks. Standing shoulder to shoulder in the bow, Li and Secretary Chao looked steadily ahead as they held their revolutionary course, sailing on to new battles and new victories.

Illustrated by Huang Chia-yu

Camellia (traditional Chinese painting)
by Tang Yun ▶





Lei Shu-yen

Manoeuvres in the Desert

On the March

A sea, an ocean of sand,
Waves, billows of sand...
This is no march through a desert
But a battle on a raging sea.

Not a bird in sight in the sky,
Sand stretches yellow as far as eye can see;
At every step we sink knee-deep,
Each sand-dune crossed reveals
Fresh wastes of sand....

Fine! This sea of sand
Serves as our drill-ground,

A crucible to temper the resolve
Of fighters who love storm-tossed seas.

The burning sand scorches our shoe-soles,
The pulsing heat dries sweat-soaked uniforms;
Sweat pours from us at each step,
Each step a note
In a stirring marching song.

Sucking toothpaste to moisten parched lips,
We see in fancy the heroes of Sanggamryong;
Half a canteen of water passed round the squad,
When the last man hands it back
Is still half full....

A sudden storm
Lashes the dunes into billows,
But arm in arm we march on,
A rampart strong as steel.

Guided by Mao Tsetung Thought,
Undeterred by hardships and danger,
We trample the sea of sand beneath our feet
And singing march towards the sun.



Fighting a Sandstorm

Who has set the desert rampaging,
Loosing its horde of wild beasts?
Sand-dunes are somersaulting,
Gravel is racing, howling....

Our puny tents
Are flapping like kites in the wind;
Our men joke;
 Old Man Heaven is fanning us —
 It's mighty kind of him.

Arm in arm, a human wind-break,
Guns pressed to their chests,
Our fighters defy the storm,
Humming folk-songs from home.

The desert is flushing for shame,
The tempest has shrieked itself hoarse:
Never before have they seen

Such men who keep going
In the teeth of the storm.

A tent is blown away,
We wrest it back from the gale
And pitch it anew;
Our cooking pans are buried,
We empty out the sand and cook a meal.

The storm has rocked the sky,
Convulsed the earth,
But it cannot lay low our fighters;
Firm as a rock each revolutionary,
These men of iron
No force on earth can move.



Night Attack

Dark clouds contort the night sky,
Thunderbolts crash to the ground;
The storm is running amuck
Like a river in spate.

A storm, this, after the heart
Of our "night tigers",
Come just in time
As we cross the sandy waste
To practise a night attack.

No need for lightning, we can see our way
By the morning sun in our hearts;
Our army is well grounded
In night fighting,
A forced march of sixty miles
Cannot blister our feet.

Pressing through pelting rain,
By-passing the highways,

Slipping like shadows
Past "enemy" sentry posts,
We advance like flowing water.
Clouds lift, the wind drops,
Sunrise heralds our victory:
Our fighters marching over wastes of sand
Against long odds
Have wiped out the "enemy".



Pitching Camp

Far off they seem like bushes,
Close by like canvas billowed out by wind,
Tent after tent
Rising proudly from the desert.

Crawling and wrestling
We drill in the sand and gravel,
Thrust with bayonets and throw grenades
Under the scorching sun,
Laughing when sandstorms darken the sky —
A fine chance to train
For night fighting and close combat.

A drop of water may be as precious as oil,
But we keep the whole world in mind;
The spring breeze may never reach this sandy waste,
But our fighters blossom out
In the glory of youth.

Each tent, an impregnable fortress;
Each bayonet, an impassable line of defence;
Our men's burning love for our great motherland
Has branded loyalty on every heart.

Beside the sand-dunes, by the tamarisks,
We pitch camp and make our home;
We have given our hearts
To this outpost,
Here we have taken root.

Illustrated by Chang Yi-min



Spring in the South (traditional Chinese painting)
by Ai Li ▶

Li Hsi-fan

Landmarks in the Life of a Great Writer

— *On Rereading the Four Prefaces by Lu Hsun*

A great age gave birth to a great writer!

Chairman Mao analysed and evaluated Lu Hsun's relationship with the revolutionary cultural movement of the Chinese proletariat and his great historical role in this way: **"But since the May 4th Movement things have been different. A brand-new cultural force came into being in China, that is, the communist culture and ideology guided by the Chinese Communists, or the communist world outlook and theory of social revolution. . . . For the last twenty years, wherever this new cultural force has directed its attack, a great revolution has taken place both in ideological content and in form (for example, in the written language). Its influence has been so great and its impact so powerful that it is invincible wherever it goes. The numbers it has rallied behind it have no parallel in Chinese history. Lu Hsun was the greatest and the most courageous standard-bearer of this new cultural force."**

From the four prefaces by Lu Hsun reprinted in this issue we can see a general outline of the development of his thought.

Lu Hsun was born in a family of officials and intellectuals which was already in decline, in Shaohsing, Chekiang Province in 1881, forty years after the Opium War of 1840 and thirty years after the Revolt of the Taipings in 1851. Under the corrupt rule of the Ching dynasty, China, once a great empire, had become a semi-colonial country fettered by unequal treaties imposed upon her by the imperialist powers and faced with the imminent danger of partition by foreign powers. The feudal rulers' policy of yielding to the demands of the aggressors while suppressing the Chinese people aroused general indignation and revolt, causing splits within the ranks of the ruling class itself.

During Lu Hsun's childhood there was an attempt headed by Kang Yu-wei and Liang Chi-chao to bring about reform. Lu Hsun himself, owing to changes in his family status and his father's long illness, began to realize what it was like to be poor. He often went with his mother for long visits in the country and came in touch with children of labouring people. This enabled him to see a life different from his own, made him detest his own class and sympathize with those peasant children who were so simple and honest. As we read in his "Preface to *Call to Arms*", in his youth he dreamed of promoting reform, went to study in the Naval Academy, then in the College of Railway and Mining, accepted Darwin's ideas of evolution, then went to study in Japan. By then he was already an ardent nationalist, a young patriot opposed to Manchu domination and foreign imperialist aggression.

In 1903, he wrote a short poem on a photo which he gave to a friend:

The sacred tower, beset by gods' arrows, lies helpless;
Crushed under a millstone my old country dark in the storm.
I appeal to the cold stars which disregard me;
I shall give my life-blood to Hsuan-yuan.*

*Legendary ancestral spirit of the Chinese people.

Lu Hsun made this vow when studying in Japan and longing for his motherland buffeted by wind and rain. It expressed his determination to dedicate himself to saving his nation, and he was true to this pledge throughout his entire revolutionary life, serving the needs of the people and the country.

He first wanted to study medicine to help build his countrymen's faith in reform. Later, when he saw some slides showing a Chinese being beheaded while others stood by watching the spectacle, he resolutely gave up his study of medicine and decided to promote a literary movement to change the spirit of the nation.

Of course, this reliance only on the strength of a few to arouse the spirit of revolt through literature was bound to fail under those historical conditions. In that uncongenial atmosphere his attempt to start the literary magazine *Vita Nova* was abortive.

Though the Revolution of 1911 succeeded in overthrowing the feudal monarchy, it did not bring the new life which Lu Hsun as a revolutionary democrat had hoped for. As Chairman Mao pointed out, the Chinese national bourgeoisie **"lacks the courage to oppose imperialism and feudalism thoroughly because it is economically and politically flabby and still has economic ties with imperialism and feudalism"**.

This weakness and tendency to compromise was very soon revealed after the 1911 Revolution. Although in theory Lu Hsun did not realize that this reflected the inherent weakness of the Chinese bourgeoisie, in practice he could already see that the revolution had brought about no real change. It appeared revolutionary, but the old social order remained. Lu Hsun's immortal work "The True Story of Ah Q" which was included in his first collection of short stories is a powerful criticism of the 1911 Revolution for its lack of thoroughness. In this story, we see how the local magistrate retained his former post, the successful provincial candidate became the assistant civil administrator, the head of the military was still the same old captain, and even the successful county candidate in the Chao family and the Imitation Foreign Devil joined in "to work for reforms". Not only would these characters not allow Ah Q to join the revolution, they even had

him executed. Thus after the revolution, the Chinese peasantry was still being hoodwinked and oppressed.

The failure of the 1911 Revolution disillusioned Lu Hsun, but from it he drew lessons which deepened his understanding of Chinese society. He sharpened his weapons to combat feudalism and imperialism.

“The salvoes of the October Revolution brought us Marxism-Leninism.” So the May 4th Movement of 1919 marked the end of China’s bourgeois revolution and opened a new chapter in the anti-imperialist, anti-feudal bourgeois democratic revolution in China. The proletariat mounted the stage and became the natural leader of the bourgeois democratic revolution. Also in the sphere of culture, Marxist ideology had arrived, **“full of youth and vitality, sweeping the world with the momentum of an avalanche and the force of a thunderbolt”**.

Lu Hsun, the revolutionary democrat, courageously raised his voice in a “call to arms”. Though he modestly said, “Perhaps because I have not forgotten the grief of my past loneliness, I sometimes call out to encourage those fighters who are galloping on in loneliness, so that they do not lose heart,” actually his collection of short stories *Call to Arms* was the first spring thunderbolt in revolutionary Chinese literature. These fourteen short stories were imbued with deep feeling for the Chinese labouring masses. They were a powerful attack on the feudal system and its “man-eating” culture. In these stories Lu Hsun also criticized himself in comparison with the noble spirit of the labouring masses.

Call to Arms shows a strong and clear line against feudalism. So from the very beginning, Lu Hsun was uncompromising in his fight, and laid the first cornerstone for the Chinese revolutionary literary movement.

Although Lu Hsun was not yet a Marxist at this time, he drew great inspiration from the victory of the October Revolution of the Russian proletariat. He praised these men of the October Revolution as “men with ideals”. “In other countries, as we can see, those who resist this are the men with ideals. For their cherished ideals they sacrifice all beside, splintering the enemy’s weapons with

their bones and extinguishing flames with their blood. When the gleam of the sword and the glow of the fire die away, they see the first glimmer of dawn, the dawn of a new era.”

Chairman Mao has pointed out, **“The May 4th Movement came into being at the call of the world revolution, of the Russian Revolution and of Lenin. It was part of the world proletarian revolution of the time.”**

Lu Hsun started his writing in obedience to this demand of history. He proudly declared that his works were “written to order”. “But the orders I carried out were those issued by the revolutionary vanguard of that time, which I was glad to obey, not orders sent down by an emperor, or dictated by gold dollars or at the point of the sword.” He never disguised his goal of serving the needs of the revolutionary struggle.

The theory of evolution, which is that men must survive, sustain themselves and develop, had long been Lu Hsun’s faith. However, in practice his ideas had already gone beyond the theory of evolution and natural selection. He did not believe that human society could naturally evolve and develop, but that progress had to be achieved through hard struggle. “What is a road? It appears through trampling in a place where there was no road, where only brambles grew. Roads have been made before, and there will always be new roads.”

Towards the end of the May 4th Movement period, the united front in Chinese cultural circles began to crack up. The Right-wingers among the bourgeois intellectuals represented by Hu Shih viciously attacked Marxism. The erstwhile progressive magazine *New Youth* changed its character and the group disbanded.

This split caused Lu Hsun great mental anguish.

One-sided belief in evolution no longer suited the demand of the age and Lu Hsun felt it in sharp contradiction with his revolutionary practice. Confronted with the split in the literary ranks, he still had a fervent desire to change society but could find neither the comrades nor the social forces with which to link himself in order to devote his strength to the revolution. Since he could not find the answer to his questions, he was in anguish and mental

conflict for a while. This is amply shown in his collection of prose poems *Wild Grass*.

The brutal slaughter of students by the northern warlord government of Tuan Chi-jui on March 16, 1926 stirred Lu Hsun to action. "Those who drag on an ignoble existence will catch a vague glimpse of hope amid pale bloodstains, while true fighters advance with greater resolution." With fierce anger in his heart Lu Hsun left Peking, a bastion of reaction, and went south to Amoy. When the storm of revolution broke in the south (the northern expedition of the National Revolutionary Army started in July 1926), Lu Hsun saw hope and went to Kwangchow, then the centre of revolutionary forces, to do something useful for the people.

However, before long Chiang Kai-shek betrayed the revolution with his coup d'état of April 12, 1927, slaughtering Communists and the revolutionary masses on a huge scale. In Kwangtung Lu Hsun saw "young people divided into two great camps" and "often those who slaughtered the young people were young people too, and they showed no regard for the life and youth of others which once destroyed could not revive again." He said, "I believed in evolution, was sure that the future would be better than the past and the young better than the old." But now facts "exploded" his "old way of thinking". The fearless sacrifice of the Communists made him see hope for the nation and the revolution.

Thus, after long searching and struggle, Lu Hsun finally found the revolutionary truth of Marxism-Leninism. He went to Shanghai in 1927, and in the first few years there read all the books he could find on Marxism. "I was reading practically all the time." He also made many translations. Arming himself with Marxism, he analysed his own thinking thoroughly, and compared the myth of Prometheus stealing fire for humanity with his translations of Marxist theoretical works. "I am stealing fire from another country in order to cook my own flesh. If this makes it taste better, those eating it will benefit, and my body will not have been wasted."

As Lu Hsun said in his "Preface to *Three Leisures*", during this period he was attacked by all sorts of writers and the struggle was sharp and complex, yet he never gave up his

study, never wavered in his search for truth in Marxism. On the contrary, this pressure from outside made him advance even more boldly. Thus he said frankly, "One acknowledgement I must make to the Creation Society — they 'forced' me to read some scientific literary criticism, which cleared up many questions which had remained unsolved in spite of all written by earlier literary critics. Thanks to this, too, I translated Plekhanov's *The Theory of Art* to correct the one-sided belief in evolution which I, and others because of me, had held."

"A revolutionary is not afraid of criticizing himself; since he knows himself very well, he dares to speak out openly." Lu Hsun's greatness can be seen in that he never tried to cover up his own ideological conflicts. He made high demands on himself and always criticized himself pitilessly, revealing his whole thought to his readers. "Preface to *Three Leisures*" shows his clear attitude. In the "Preface to *Two Hearts*" he made a sincere analysis of himself and openly declared that he was for the liberation of the proletariat. "And my incessant harping on myself, of the way I keep 'knocking my head against a wall' and of my snail-like conduct, as if all the miseries of the world were embodied in me, a scapegoat for mankind, is a bad failing of middle-class intellectuals. It is true, though, that while I started by simply hating my own class which I knew so well, and felt no regret over its destruction, later on the facts taught me that the future belongs solely to the rising proletariat."

"Constantly thinking of China, of the future, willing to do my bit for others" had been Lu Hsun's motto. Though his name made his enemies quake with fear, he never became conceited or stopped making progress. Never satisfied with himself, he always studied hard to remould himself. "It is true that I often analyse other people, but I analyse myself even more often and more ruthlessly."

Going through the 1911 Revolution, the May 4th Movement and the Revolution of 1927, Lu Hsun advanced to the cultural front of the proletariat with his anti-feudal and anti-imperialist stand. Decades of fierce and complicated struggle sharpened his powers of observation and made him put emphasis on practice in revolution. Thus, as soon as he grasped Marxism as an ideological weapon, he

was able to use it effectively in his fight against the various enemies and remained steadfast on the stand of the proletariat.

The collection of essays called *Two Hearts* is an important landmark showing how he had become a Marxist. He said clearly, "Of my writings, perhaps those in *Two Hearts* are the sharpest."

Several important works of his expounding the Marxist standpoint on literature — such as "*Hard Translation*" and the "*Class Character of Literature*", *Thoughts on the League of Left-Wing Writers*, *The Revolutionary Literature of the Chinese Proletariat and the Blood of the Pioneers* — were in this collection.

In his *On New Democracy* Chairman Mao evaluated the last ten years of Lu Hsun's life when he became a Marxist as follows: "**The most amazing thing of all was that the Kuomintang's cultural 'encirclement and suppression' campaign failed completely in the Kuomintang areas as well, although the Communist Party was in an utterly defenceless position in all the cultural and educational institutions there. Why did this happen? Does it not give food for prolonged and deep thought? It was in the very midst of such campaigns of 'encirclement and suppression' that Lu Hsun, who believed in communism, became the giant of China's cultural revolution.**"

Lu Hsun's nine collections of essays from *Three Leisures* to *Last Essays of Demi-Concession Studio* comprise two-thirds of all the essays he wrote. They are a splendid record of how he became the giant of China's cultural revolution in his fight against the Kuomintang's "encirclement and suppression". We have pointed out in a previous article, *Writing for the Revolution* (*Chinese Literature* No. 9, 1972), "During the May 4th period, Lu Hsun started his revolutionary literary career with short stories which have profound social themes and incisive critical impact. As the struggle between revolution and counter-revolution sharpened, the short essay form became his main weapon."

As Chairman Mao has said, "**Living under the rule of the dark forces and deprived of freedom of speech, Lu Hsun used burning satire and freezing irony, cast in the form of essays, to do battle; and he was entirely right.**" Spooks and hobgoblins of the

old society hated such essays to the very marrow of their bones, charged Lu Hsun with various crimes and carried out encirclement campaigns overtly and covertly, mildly and roughly. In order that more revolutionary writers would take up the essay as a weapon to fight the enemy, Lu Hsun explained that the essayist could "react immediately to anything harmful and do battle against it. Sensitive as a nerve and swift as a limb that responds by reflex action to attack.... Writers in the present resistance are fighting for the present and the future; for if we lose the present, we shall have no future."

Despite the enemy's wild clamours, "in a fight one must take sides". The short essay is precisely a form of literature that is tendentious and imbued with a strong political force; so this was the main weapon Lu Hsun chose for battle, and his essays summed up his life's struggle and his revolutionary ideas. They are a record of the experience and lessons of the Chinese people in their revolutionary struggle during this great period of history and they reflect the Chinese people's indomitable spirit, aspirations and confidence in victory.

Lu Hsun's entire life was dedicated to the revolution. We cannot fully understand the tortuous and difficult path he traversed except in the context of the development of the Chinese revolution. But these four short prefaces, although insufficient to give a summary of his life, can at least help to sketch a rough outline of his ideological development.

How the Opera "Half a Basket of Peanuts" Came to Be Written

Today in China, philosophy is no longer just a subject learned from books — a metaphysical study monopolized by a few scholars — but it has become a practical weapon in the hands of the broad masses of the people. It has become essential in the lives of the Chinese people to study philosophy and to apply it to all kinds of problems in work. The Shaohsing opera *Half a Basket of Peanuts* is a new work promptly reflecting this special feature in our contemporary society.

The story tells how ordinary peasants use dialectical materialism to solve contradictions in the family and society. Making use of Chairman Mao's philosophical work *On Contradiction* (1937), it shows the contradiction between the socialist ideology represented by the former poor peasant Hsiao-hua's father and the spontaneous tendency towards capitalism represented by the well-to-do middle peasant Wang Yu-tsai who does not appear in the opera. It also shows the contradiction in the family between Hsiao-hua's father and son

on the one side and Hsiao-hua's mother on the other over how to educate the younger generation with the ideas of communism.

These episodes prove that contradictions still exist in a socialist society, thus revealing the universality of contradiction. Hsiao-hua's mother comes from a poor-peasant background. Though she has some selfish ideas, she ardently supports the collective and socialism. In this she is different from Wang Yu-tsai who is against collective welfare. There is a qualitative difference between the various contradictions brought out in the opera, and this shows the particularity of contradiction. Middle-peasant Wang does not appear in the opera, the social contradiction between him and Hsiao-hua's father is not shown on the stage, but its existence is felt in Hsiao-hua's family and determines or influences the contradictions there. Thus it is the basic contradiction in the opera.

Hsiao-hua's father is a Communist Party member with a Marxist outlook, good working style and militant spirit. He makes a serious study of the contradictions and uses facts to convince people, showing in every way that he is the leading role in the opera. As the hero of the opera, he represents the principal aspect of the contradiction. Finally after studying Chairman Mao's works, Hsiao-hua's mother raises her political level and the contradictions are solved. By using the story to unfold these concrete examples, this opera helps Chinese audiences understand the general principles of dialectical materialism.

Though the opera is short, its theme is significant and thought-provoking. The language is from real life, concise and vivid, and conveys a true peasant atmosphere.

Half a Basket of Peanuts is a product of the integration of literary workers with the masses. In autumn 1970, workers in a meter and gauge factory in Hangchow, Chekiang Province, wrote a short play about how the masses were studying philosophy. It was called *Philosophy Blossoms in a Mountain Village* and told the story of a woman doctor from the People's Liberation Army who had gone to the countryside and cured a former poor peasant of a dangerous disease, then helped his family study philosophy.

The play proved very popular and aroused the interest of professional artists. A *wu-chu** opera company in Chekiang sent their writers to the countryside to learn how the peasants got results from their study of philosophy. Then they revised the play. They decided to leave out the woman doctor and made the peasant Hsiao-hua's father the chief character. Hsiao-hua's elder sister who was a worker in the play was changed into her brother and renamed Tung-sheng. Using the harvesting of peanuts as the core of the story, the revised *wu-chu* opera was called *Half a Basket of Peanuts*.

Later made into a Shaohsing opera, the script was revised again and again after collecting opinions from audiences. The production of this opera shows that only by absorbing nourishment from the masses can the literary workers create new writings welcomed by the workers, peasants and soldiers.

*The *wu-chu* and the Shaohsing opera are different kinds of local opera in Chekiang Province.

Chronicle

Joint Performance by Chinese and Japanese Ballet Artists

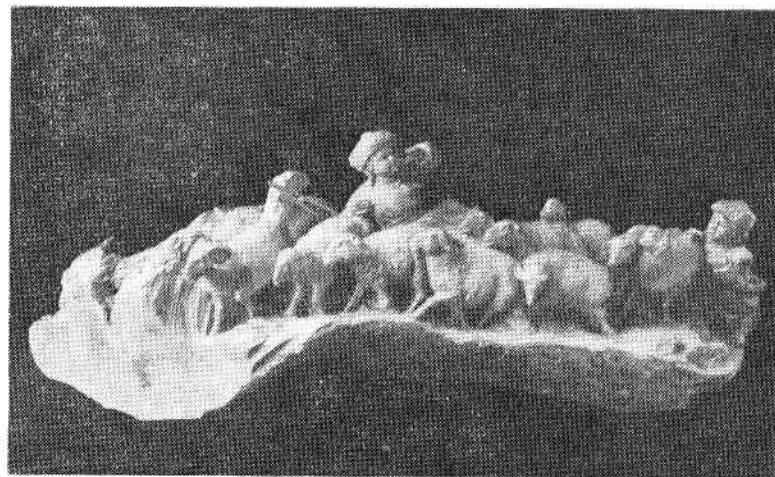
After about a month of painstaking practice and rehearsal in China, seven members of the Japanese Matsuyama Ballet Troupe mastered the dance routines needed for different roles in the modern revolutionary ballet *Red Detachment of Women*. On the evening of February 10, they gave a joint performance of this Chinese ballet with the Chinese Dance Drama Troupe in the Tienchiao Theatre, Peking. Together they created successfully the images of the heroic characters on the stage and were accorded warm acclaim. The Matsuyama Ballet Troupe will perform this ballet in Japan when it returns.

In 1955, Matsuyama Mikiko formed Japan's national revolutionary ballet company. In accordance with the Japanese people's wishes she adapted the Chinese drama *The White-Haired Girl* for ballet and staged it in Japan. This opened a new chapter in the history of China-Japan cultural exchange. Now this Japanese ballet troupe has sown fresh new seeds in the garden of friendship between the two peoples.

New Handicrafts by Young Artists Exhibited in Shanghai

Tempered in the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution many young handicraft artists have matured. Recently five hundred of their new works were exhibited in Shanghai.

A carved lacquer screen *Little Red Soldiers in Nanking*, the boxwood carvings *Little Heroes of the Grasslands* and *A Roving Shepherd* convey the spirit of the socialist age. *Little Red Soldiers in Nanking* depicts a group of children singing and dancing in the park. *Little Heroes of the Grasslands* is of two young Mongolian girls who, during a



snowstorm, succeeded in saving a flock of sheep for their collective. By the artist's graphic delineation of the girls' features and movements and meticulous depiction of their flock of sheep, he has conveyed their great heroism, now so typical. *A Roving Shepherd* portrays an old shepherd singing happily on a mountain slope, whip in hand and sheep beside him. His cheerful facial expression while singing provides food for thought. This work is so lifelike that it brings out the characteristics of wood-carving in depicting human figures.

A jade carving *Three-Crane Tripod* is successfully adapted from a traditional Chinese pattern. The body of the tripod is formed by three cranes. The jade rings hanging on both sides provide balance and dignity.

Jade carving is very complicated. Before the actual work is begun meticulous designing is necessary. That is one reason why the art of jade carving has always been admired both in China and abroad.

New Items of the Peking Variety Theatre

Recently the Peking Variety Theatre staged a series of novel items with revolutionary content and fresh form. These Chinese variety shows are a type of traditional folk art with a history of more than

a thousand years. Based on the labouring people's arts of story-telling, folk and ballad-singing, there are now about two hundred and sixty new varieties. Story-telling and singing are the principal items in these popular variety shows.

The new items praise in various ways the youthful spirit and progress being made by the workers, peasants and soldiers and their new achievements, under the leadership of Chairman Mao, in China's socialist revolution and construction. Accompanied by a dulcimer the Peking ballad *Take the Road Directed by Chairman Mao* describes the struggles between the two lines in the countryside. The performer recites the story of Wang Kuo-fu, a production brigade leader, who was loyal to Chairman Mao's revolutionary line. Determined to take the road of agricultural co-operatives he firmly rejected "the fixing of output quotas based on the household", which originated in the revisionist line advocated by Liu Shao-chi. *An Emergency Telephone Call* performed by a ballad artist from Shantung Province praises the new spirit in our people in the form of a story of the collective effort made by many people to save the life of a sick child. Another item *Master and Apprentice*, a comic dialogue, uses humorous repartee to show how Chinese workers inspire and train the younger generation by words and deeds.

The performers stress the depiction of heroic characters; in their singing they retain the basic traditional features while making daring innovations. This has evoked enthusiastic encouragement from Peking audiences who say, "These items have brought new life to the variety show stage."

An Exhibition of Ancient Chinese Bronze-Age Culture

Prepared by the Shanghai Museum, an exhibition of Chinese Bronze-Age culture recently opened in Shanghai. These Bronze-Age relics provide authentic proof of the high level of civilization in ancient China. The more than six hundred objects exhibited are divided into four sections. The first shows the historical background for the rise of this culture. Many relics and models illustrate the fact that slave society is an inevitable stage in the development of human

history. The second section introduces the different techniques used and their development in the casting of bronze vessels. The third section shows the different stages through which the Bronze-Age art passed in China. Its two thousand years of historical development are divided into different periods according to the forms and designs of the vessels. The fourth section shows bronze objects made by minority nationalities in ancient China.

From the exhibits displayed visitors to the exhibition can see concrete evidence of the Chinese slave society and early feudal society, the class struggles of the periods and their corresponding Bronze-Age culture.

Local Opera Festival in Fukien Province

In Fukien Province there are many types of local opera with distinctive styles and melodies. Recently this province held a festival of various local operas at which thirteen different types were performed by sixteen units. The performances fell into two categories. The first included various adaptations of the modern revolutionary Peking operas, *Song of the Dragon River*, *The Red Lantern*, *Raid on the White Tiger Regiment* and the revolutionary ballet *Red Detachment of Women* and some new experiments in opera from other provinces. The second category was of entirely new creations produced by various troupes. This festival has brought a new look to the Fukien stage.



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Young Botanists (scissor-cut)

by Lin Tsai-hua



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