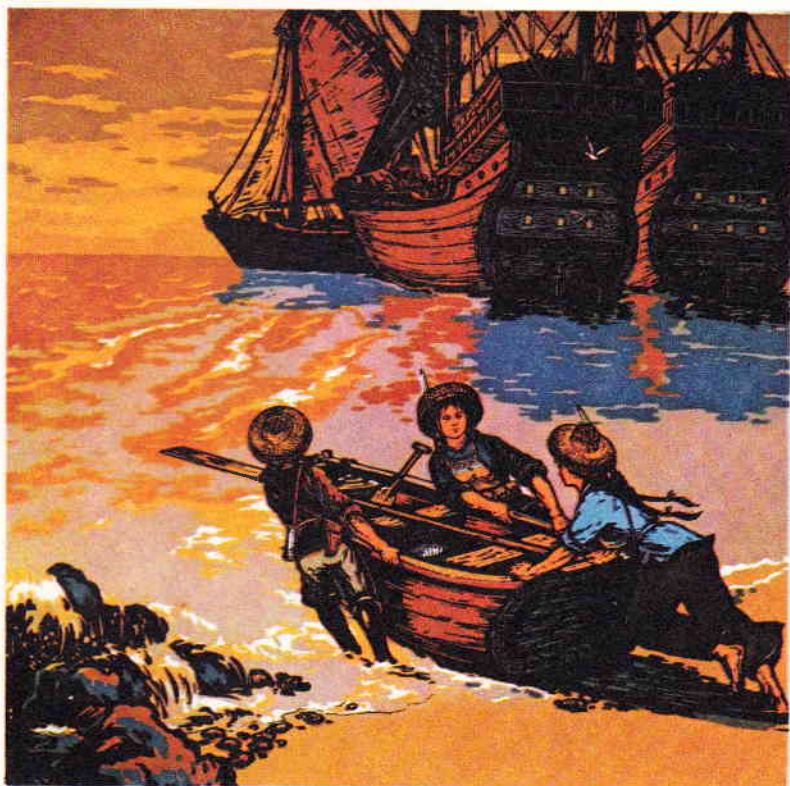


# CHINESE LITERATURE



**Mao Tsetung: Letter Concerning the Study  
of the *Dream of the Red Chamber*  
Poems by Tung Pi-wu**

1977 **11**

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# Letter Concerning the Study of “The Dream of the Red Chamber”

MAO TSETUNG

October 16, 1954

Enclosed are two articles refuting Yu Ping-po. Please read them. It is the first time in over thirty years that a serious attack has been levelled against the erroneous views of the so-called authorities on *The Dream of the Red Chamber*. The authors are two Youth League members. At first they wrote to the *Literary Gazette* to ask whether it was all right to criticize Yu Ping-po, but they were ignored. In the circumstances, they were obliged to write to their teacher at Shantung University, their Alma Mater, and they received support. Their article refuting “An Essay on *The Dream of the Red Chamber*” was published in the university journal *Literature, History and Philosophy*.

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Letter to the comrades of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party and other comrades concerned.

Then the matter came up again in Peking. It was suggested that the *People's Daily* reprint the article in order to start a debate and carry on the criticism. This, too, came to naught because certain persons objected for a variety of reasons (the main ones being that it was "an article written by nobodies" and that "the Party paper is not a platform for free debate"). In the end a compromise was reached and the article was allowed to be reprinted in the *Literary Gazette*. Later, the "Literary Legacy" page of the *Kuangming Daily* carried another article by the two young men refuting Yu Ping-po's book, *Studies on "The Dream of the Red Chamber"*. It seems that a struggle may now be able to get under way against the Hu Shih school of bourgeois idealism in the field of classical literature, which has poisoned the minds of the young for more than thirty years. The whole thing has been set going by two "nobodies", while the "bigwigs" have ignored and obstructed it as is their wont; they go in for a united front with bourgeois writers on the question of idealism and become willing captives of the bourgeoisie. The case is almost the same as with the films *Inside Story of the Ching Court*\* and *The Life of Wu Hsun* when they were shown. *Inside Story of the Ching Court*, which has been described by certain people as a film of patriotism but is in fact one of national betrayal, has never been criticized since it was shown all over the country. *The Life of Wu*

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\**Inside Story of the Ching Court* was a reactionary film which vilified the patriotic Yi Ho Tuan Movement of 1900 and preached capitulation to imperialism. This film of national betrayal was extolled by Liu Shao-chi as one of "patriotism".

*Hsun* has been criticized, but up to now no lessons have been drawn; what is more, such strange things have happened as tolerating Yu Ping-po's idealism while suppressing the lively critical essays by the "nobodies". This deserves our attention.

Towards such bourgeois intellectuals as Yu Ping-po, our attitude should naturally be one of uniting with them, but we should criticize their erroneous ideas which poison the minds of the young, and we certainly should not surrender to them.

#### EDITORS' NOTE:

To celebrate the publication of Volume 5 of Chairman Mao's *Selected Works*, in this issue we are publishing "Letter Concerning the Study of *The Dream of the Red Chamber*" from this volume as well as a facsimile of this important letter in Chairman Mao's handwriting. To help readers to understand its historical background, we are publishing an article by Li Hsi-fan. In addition, we are publishing the 27th and 28th chapters of the novel, now retranslated as *A Dream of Red Mansions*. Our next issue will present the 40th and 41st chapters.

名門也

致前報的兩篇文章作上清  
一閱。這是三十多年以來向所  
謂知識界權威作家的錯誤  
觀點的第一次開火。作者  
是兩個青年團員。起初寫信給文  
藝報詢問可不可以批評被  
譽之不理。然後投文給文  
明時報的文章遺產樣被

拒絕發表。他們不得已寫信給  
他們的母校——山東大學的老師，獲  
得了支持，並在校校刊物「文史報」  
上登出了他們的文章。教孔揚善簡  
論。問題又回到北京，有人要求  
將此文在人民日報上轉載，以  
期引起爭論，廣開言路。又被  
以種種理由給以反對，不能  
實現。結果成文妥協，被允  
許在文藝報轉載此文。

3  
前月，光明日报的文章<sup>③</sup>  
又发表了<sup>两个青年的</sup>较前平的<sup>文章</sup>，  
研究一书的<sup>文章</sup>看<sup>样子</sup>，  
这个<sup>反对</sup>青年<sup>在古典文学</sup>三十年的<sup>文章</sup>  
是<sup>胡适</sup>胡适的<sup>文章</sup>，  
的<sup>文章</sup>也许可以<sup>发展</sup>了。  
事情是<sup>两个小人物</sup>“做<sup>了</sup>”，  
而<sup>大人物</sup>“往往不注意”，  
并<sup>往往加以</sup>加以<sup>束缚</sup>，他们同

4  
是<sup>胡适</sup>胡适的<sup>文章</sup>，  
面<sup>讲</sup>统一<sup>战线</sup>，甘心<sup>做</sup>资产阶级<sup>的</sup>  
的<sup>文章</sup>，<sup>胡适</sup>胡适的<sup>文章</sup>，  
和<sup>武训</sup>武训“<sup>改</sup>改<sup>时</sup>时<sup>的</sup>的<sup>情形</sup>”，  
乎<sup>是</sup>胡<sup>适</sup>胡<sup>适</sup>的<sup>文章</sup>，  
放<sup>松</sup>之<sup>后</sup>，至今<sup>没有</sup>被<sup>批</sup>判。  
判。武<sup>训</sup>武<sup>训</sup>的<sup>文章</sup>，  
至今<sup>没有</sup>引<sup>出</sup>教<sup>训</sup>，又<sup>出现</sup>了<sup>官</sup>

5  
 周平伯的唯心論和阻撓  
 小人物們的批判文章的奇  
 怪事情，這是值得注意的。  
 (我們)

王元愷

九五的氣  
 十月十六日  
 周平伯這一類資產階級  
 知識份子，始終是站在  
 結盟政權，但應予批判他們的毒害青年的行  
 為，不應當對他們投反對票。

STORIES

Wang Yuan-chien

Following His Footprints

Having edged around a cliff hung with icicles, they saw the white peaks of the Snowy Mountains ahead.

A bitterly cold wind blew dark clouds across the sky from behind the mountains, whipping up the snow and enveloping the distant peaks and the nearby cliff. Then a blizzard started. Visibility became so poor that it was difficult to distinguish the track traced out by the troops in front.

Very worried, Instructor Tseng Chao-liang shook his head and drew a deep breath, tightening his grip on the sick comrade he was supporting as they ploughed their way forward through the whirling snow.

It was not until they had reached the snow line on the mountain-side that Tseng had been detailed to form part of the regiment's unit, which brought up the rear helping all sick and wounded comrades who were unable to keep up with the troops. He had already encountered three lots of soldiers, who because of illness had lagged behind, and he had helped them to rejoin their units. He was now

unable to catch up with his own company, because of the sick comrade, whom he had found half an hour earlier lying ill by the path. His speed was reduced because of his having to support the sick man, and the blizzard had begun before they had managed to climb over the Snowy Mountains.

The way became more difficult. Tseng's head felt as if it was swollen and he felt dizzy. His legs were stiff and heavy. Each step demanded every ounce of his strength. There seemed to be a heavy weight on his chest as he gasped for breath, his heart beating fast. His body demanded that he sit down and rest, but his mind told him that he must keep moving, for in such a state of extreme weakness and fatigue it would be fatal to stop. He had been told this when he was given the task of bringing up the rear. If he sat down, he knew he would never rise again.

As if the sick comrade had read Tseng's thoughts, he spoke to Tseng, stopping and leaning on his shoulder. "I've no more strength left," he gasped. Then pleading with Tseng he said, "Listen to me, comrade. Leave me and you go on, I beg you. Leave me alone. . . ."

"Enough of that nonsense," Tseng interrupted angrily. He increased his pace as if to show the man his strength and determination.

After a while the sick man spoke again. "Strength. . . . If only we had some strength. If someone could just give us a little strength. . . ."

Tseng's cracked lips broke into a faint smile. The man had said something that had been in his own mind. However, it was the kind of thing one kept in one's heart, for in such a vast expanse of snowy wilderness, it was an impossible wish. Such miracles do not happen to people who'd practically used up all their strength. His tone softened as he spoke to the man. "Don't waste your breath, comrade, talking like that. Save your strength for later. We will get over the mountains."

Step by step they slowly advanced along the arduous track. Time passed and eventually after more than an hour they had covered the worst stretch.

At last they reached the top. The final effort consumed what remained of the sick man's strength and his head fell forward on to

Tseng's chest. Tseng too felt that he had exhausted his last ounce of strength.

It was at this point that he noticed the scene below and was seized with alarm. Here and there in the snow sat a number of Red Army soldiers; others, evidently new arrivals, were still staggering along but already looking around for a place to sit down too. All looked exhausted after the hard climb to the mountain top in the storm.

Tseng felt his heart contract. He quickly steadied the sick man by his side and pointing the way downhill told him to start the descent by himself, while he hurried to one of the soldiers sitting in the snow. It was too late; the man was already dead. Tseng removed the bag of grenades from the body and slung it over his shoulder. Then he walked towards another young comrade nearby, who was a bugler. Just as he reached him and took his arm, he saw the sick comrade he had helped to the summit sink to the ground.

"What shall I do now?" he said to himself in dismay.

At that moment a hand caught hold of the bugler's other arm.

Tseng felt a weight lifted from his heart. Wiping his hand across his eyes, he looked at the man who had come to his aid. Although the comrade was dressed in an ordinary Red Army uniform, there was something striking about his face. He had the appearance of a kind old man in a fairy tale, his beard and thick eyebrows covered in snow. His eyes, with their kind and wise expression, were familiar to Tseng, but he could not remember where he had seen them before.

Breathing hard, the comrade tried to gather his strength and recover a little from his weariness before starting again. After a moment or two, he nodded to Tseng and said, "All right. Let's get a move on." They helped the little bugler to his feet, while Tseng noticed that there were several other comrades following this man who had come to his aid. All were busy helping soldiers to their feet.

The man gently brushed the snow from the bugler's head and then turned round to address the others. "Comrades, we must press on for the revolution."





His voice was low, but his stirring words caught the attention of all the men, whose eyes shone with excitement and delight. Whispering to each other, some struggled to their feet unaided, while others rose with the help of their comrades. With rifles slung across their shoulders, and arms linked, they formed a human chain as they slowly descended the mountain path.

The sick comrade Tseng had helped to the top of the mountain said something to another soldier near him. Then with an effort he got to his feet unaided and began limping forward. When he

drew nearer, Tseng stretched out a hand to give him support but the man brushed his hand away and said firmly, "Thank you, but no. I'll manage by myself!"

He's got his strength from that veteran comrade and his words, Tseng thought to himself as he looked at the man with respect.

A young man, looking like a bodyguard and supporting a mess cook in his arms, approached the veteran comrade and said in a low voice, "Let's go! You're worn out."

He gently brushed aside the proffered hand and then glanced back at the way they had come before turning round to look at Tseng. Putting his hand on Tseng's shoulder, he asked, "Are you a Party member?"

Tseng replied that he was.

"And you're exhausted, aren't you?"

Looking at the man's kind and concerned eyes, Tseng admitted that he was.

"Yes, conditions are hard," the man said and drew a deep breath. "If there were no difficulties, there would be no need for you, me and all the other Communists to be here." He rubbed his chest with his hand, breathing hard. Then he moved closer to Tseng and spoke in a low voice, "Comrade, you see what it's like. Someone is needed here."

"Yes, I see," replied Tseng, reflecting on the comrade's words.

The man touched Tseng's clothes and his own and then looked round to the others. Tseng realized that he was searching for some clothing to help keep out the cold. The man himself was clad only in a thin uniform and had nothing to spare.

Misunderstanding what the comrade wanted, his bodyguard opened his kit-bag and produced some paper and a pencil.

The comrade nodded and took the paper and pencil. Blowing on his hand to warm it up, he wrote: "Press forward! Don't stop!"

Now understanding his assignment, Tseng stood to attention and asked, "This order is from...?"

Smiling, the man signed his name.

His name was one loved and respected by all the Red Army soldiers, and Tseng was filled with warmth when he read it. His face

flecked with snow, his heart identifying with the ordinary men, this comrade, in poor health, had endured the arduous journey across the mountains like him. And he was the very man who had helped Chairman Mao to organize the Long March.

"Vice-Chairman Chou!" Tseng saluted as he received the order with excitement. He slowly repeated it: "Press forward! Don't stop!"

Comrade Chou En-lai, who was Vice-Chairman of the Military Commission of the Party Central Committee, nodded and said gravely, "There is still a long way to go and there will be many difficulties. When difficulties arise that's when Communists are needed." He took Tseng's hand. "So you pass on this order and assignment to other comrades when you lead another group of sick men forward."

Then Vice-Chairman Chou resumed the march, supporting the little bugler with his arm. After a few steps he turned round and said with concern, "Remember, comrade, don't stand still!"

The storm was gaining momentum.

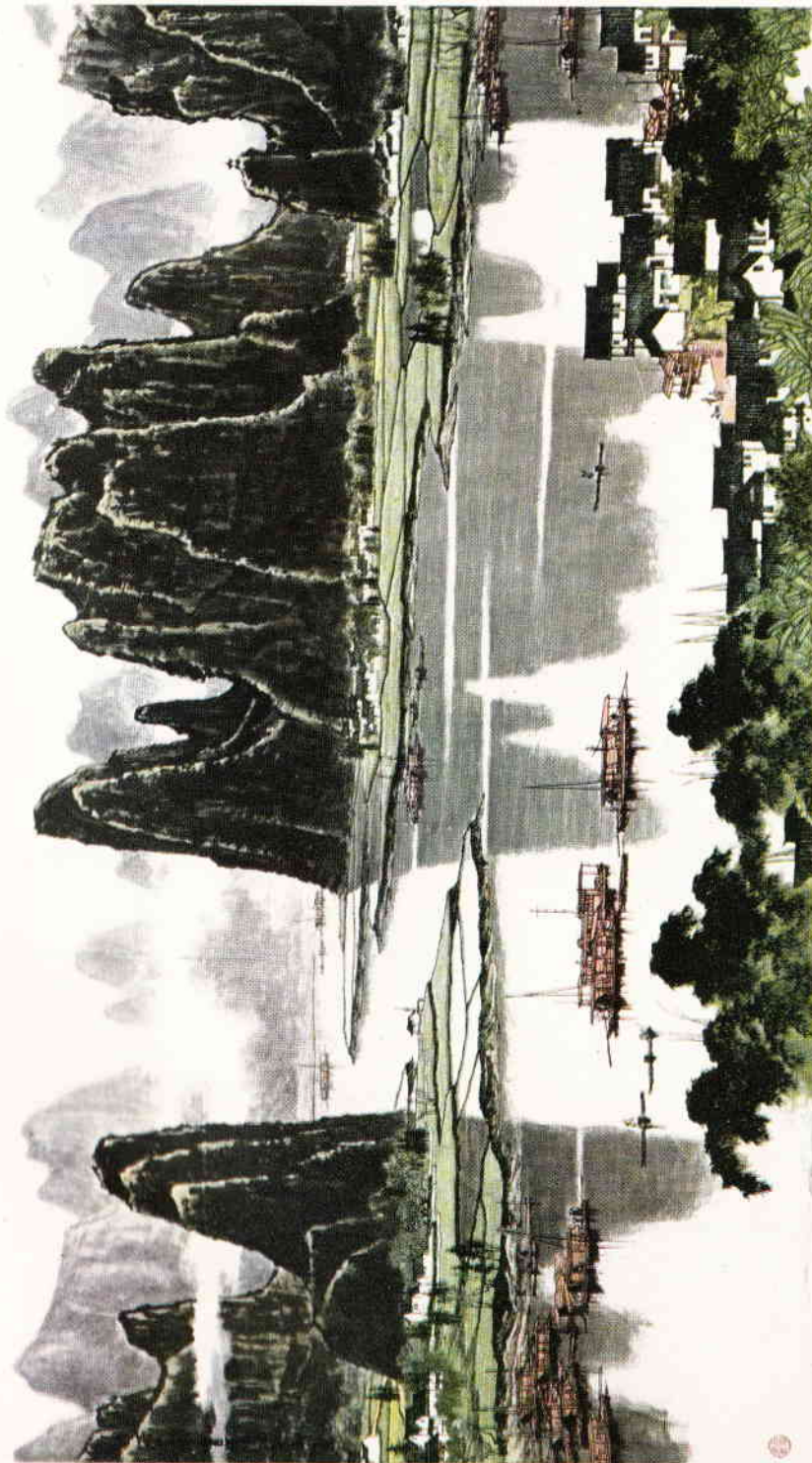
Tseng clasped the order tightly and gazed in the direction of the advancing troops. There was Vice-Chairman Chou with the little bugler on his arm, walking forward through the blizzard, leaving behind a long trail of deep footprints winding over the Snowy Mountains.

Tears came to Tseng's eyes; tears of gratitude for such a man, who could give exhausted men strength and who could inspire and stir the hearts of men, giving all of himself selflessly to others.

*Illustrated by Yi Chung  
and Tien Tung-hui*

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A Scene on the Lichiang River (traditional Chinese painting) by *Pai Hsueh-shih*



## Stick to the Revolutionary Standard

Dusk was approaching, the best time of the day during our march through the marshland.

Trudging along, our company halted on some high ground and camped there. Tents of various shapes made out of bed-sheets or cloth were pitched by the bushes. Reeds and branches were collected and bonfires lit. After a day's hard slog in the rain through the reeds and mud, the Red Army men sat around the bonfires drying their clothes. Some were polishing their guns, chatting and laughing. Basins and mugs with clear water were being heated over the fires.

Sung Hsin-hua, who was in charge of supplies, was not feeling as cheerful as usual. Carrying a bamboo crate, he walked around the fires. To each soldier he gave a piece of yak meat the size of a fist and warned, "Go carefully on the food. This is your whole day's ration." Then he sighed quietly to himself. "What kind of a ration is this?" he thought.

It was the first time that he had issued such a meagre ration since he had become quartermaster. Two days earlier the company had

exhausted their last supplies of *chingko* barley flour, and since then they had not had any grain. Sung had hurried through a rainstorm to regimental headquarters for supplies, but all he had been given there was a scrawny yak. The quartermaster in charge of the regiment's stores told him that there would be nothing more until they left the marshy areas. Then he added quietly, "You know, this has been provided on the instructions of the leaders out of consideration for the men. The comrades in the organizations at headquarters have been gathering wild herbs for food since the day before last."

Sung returned with the yak and had it slaughtered. Although he disliked having to do it, he saved half of the meat ration for the next day, while cutting the other half into equal portions and distributing one piece to each man.

As he walked along, Sung felt his crate getting lighter, while his spirits became heavier. He worried about the men marching on rations of only a few ounces of meat a day. And the future? Just as he was thinking anxiously about this, a voice caught his attention.

"Fine! That's a great idea," said a delighted voice in a Szechuan accent. "How about adding some wild herbs, comrade?"

"Wild herbs? O.K.," replied another voice in a Kiangsi accent. "And if you add some paprika, it'll taste like a Szechuan dish."

"You're going to make it a big feast? Marvellous!" The speaker from Szechuan laughed heartily. "It looks as though our problem's been solved."

Sung saw two men sitting by a bonfire. One of them, Old Hsieh, the leader of the Fourth Squad, was roasting something. His companion stood watching attentively by his side. He must have stood thus for some time, for a pool of water had accumulated from his dripping clothes.

Sung hurried over to them and took out a piece of meat for the squad leader and the other man. The latter pushed his hand away and bent over to examine the crate on the ground.

"Here, take it," Sung sighed. "Because of the difficulty in getting supplies, we've only got small rations."

"That's all right, I don't want it," the man said scratching his head.

"Why not?" Sung asked in surprise. "This is your whole ration for the day. What do you want, then?"

The man reached into the crate and fumbled around for a while before declaring, "I want the hide. Where is it?"

"I threw it away," Sung replied.

"What!" exclaimed the man angrily. "And what about the guts and bones and blood?"

"You can't mean..." Sung was irritated by the man's tone. "Those things are inedible," he protested.

He was about to give the man a piece of his mind when he suddenly stopped short. As the man straightened up, Sung recognized the familiar face with its broad forehead and bushy whiskers. Even his style of dress was not unfamiliar; the homespun woollen jacket, the broad leather belt round his waist and the leather cape on his back. But his eyes, usually genial under his thick brows, were at that moment stern. Sung jumped to attention and said rather sheepishly, "Commander-in-chief..."

Commander-in-Chief Chu Teh cut him short with a wave of his hand and continued, "Inedible? Just come and take a look at this."

Pulling Sung over to the fire, he pointed to Old Hsieh, who was busy at his work and did not notice them. Hsieh picked up a leather sole, cut a slice, which he stuck on the point of his bayonet, and held it over a flame. A hissing sound was heard as the hairs were singed and a layer of blisters appeared. A rather tempting smell of grease filled the air.

"What have you to say now?" Chu asked looking at Sung.

Sung was silent. It dawned on him that the conversation about herbs which he had overheard was concerning the food being prepared now. He flushed with shame and lowered his head remembering the yak hide and guts he'd discarded by the stream.

Meanwhile Old Hsieh put the singed hide into a pot cooking over the fire. With two sticks he fished out another piece of hide now soft from the boiling, blew on it to cool it and walked over to a tent behind the bush.

Chu squatted down and picked up the leather sole to examine it. It was made from hide, partially worn but now well-washed and

ready to be cooked. Lost in thought, Chu raised his head. Then he removed his cape and, taking his bayonet, cut a slice off the hem and held it over the flames like Old Hsieh.

"Commander-in-chief. . . ." Sung said, "I'll go and fetch the hide and guts straight away and. . . ."

Chu interrupted him, pointing to the bush, "Hold your horses a moment."

From behind the bush there came the murmur of conversation.

". . . You eat this and keep the meat for the Second Platoon leader. He's more seriously injured than us. We've still got another week to go and so we must consider the future."

"What about you?" said a young soldier. "I know you're a Party member."

"Not much of one, I'm afraid," Old Hsieh sighed. "I'm just an ordinary sort of fellow and can't help much in times of trouble." There was a pause and then he continued, "But when our Party and Red Army face some difficulty, it won't be much of a problem. We all just chip in together and tackle it, till it's solved."

"D'you hear that?" Chu shot a glance at Sung, who reddened and dropped his head. He thought about what he should do.

"What fine soldiers they are!" Chu said admiringly and in a more friendly tone. Then he put his hand on Sung's shoulder and went on, "They ask for so little, but think and do so much. We cadres ought to keep close to them, learn from them and be concerned for their welfare." After a pause he resumed, "I know you've had difficulties and have been working very hard. But whatever food we can get is of vital importance to our men. Even though provisions are scarce, we mustn't slacken our efforts. We must always use our initiative."

Sung listened quietly, feeling the big hand tremble slightly on his shoulder.

"Our soldiers are the seeds of the revolution," Chu said as he picked up his bayonet again and cut another slice from his leather cape. He singed it over the fire and continued, "Though our means are few, if we all try our best, we'll get them out of this swamp and lead them

to Chairman Mao and the Party Central Committee in northern Shensi."

He spoke in a soft, slow voice, like a bonfire that shed light and warmth in the dark night. Sung felt this warmth and, stirred by his words, said in a tremulous voice, "I was wrong, commander-in-chief. I made a mistake only thinking about our past standards."

"Standards? It's true, we must have certain standards for supplies and also for our thoughts and work." Chu blew on the singed hide and then handed it to his bodyguard at his side. Then he said in a serious tone, "But here is the standard for the marshland — it's our revolutionary standard."

Beckoning to his guard, he strode off.

Sung suddenly thought of something and snatched up a piece of meat which he handed to the guard.

"That's not really necessary, but. . . ." The guard waved the singed hide and a handful of wild herbs. "Having thought of this the commander-in-chief will be going around telling the men in all the other units. Goodness knows when he'll eat his meal."

Standing by the fire, Sung watched the figure of Chu disappearing into the distance. With emotion he murmured to himself, "The standard for the marshland — our revolutionary standard!"

In future they probably would not have to endure such short supplies always, he thought, but the standard would remain. Perhaps one day people would use this standard for their lives, their thinking and their work.

## The Eighth Routers' Hut

One early autumn morning in 1942, I was given a message to deliver to the logistics department on Taku Island and I took along with me fifteen kilogrammes of cartridges for the arsenal there. As soon as I passed Wangchai, a Japanese stronghold, Gold Teeth, the collaborationist who headed the secret agents' team of the gendarmes squad, came after me with a dozen of his men. The only son of the local landlord Lame Liu, Gold Teeth had two huge protruding yellow teeth which his father claimed were "gold teeth" he had been born with. Hence his name. By playing hide-and-seek with them in the thorn thickets I finally succeeded in shaking them off. Stopping to catch my breath, I wiped the sweat from my face, adjusted the bundle of cartridges on my back and advanced north into a stretch of wasteland.

Having grown up in the mountains I had never set eyes before on such a boundless wasteland. I pressed on and on but saw not a single village, met not a soul. And the only plants in that desert were clumps of thorn trees.

As the day wore on the weather became muggy. Each breath of wind was scorching, and the sandy alkaline soil burned my feet.

The whole area was like a big oven. Sweating incessantly I became so parched that my dry tongue couldn't even lick my cracked lips and my throat burned. There was not a single stream, pool or well anywhere. Now I began to understand the comment made by my comrades from the coast of the Pohai Sea: "In Taku Island water's more precious than gold." Platoon Leader Tien had given me a flask of water, but without telling him I had left it behind in order to lighten my load — how I regretted it now. And it struck me how wonderful it would be if somebody could supply water here for the people from the press, hospital, arsenal and bank on the island who had to take this route every day.

Noon was even more suffocating. I could hardly breathe. Overcome by dizziness and nausea, I suddenly collapsed and blacked out. . . .

Then, as if in a dream, I found myself in an orchard where the trees were laden with all kinds of fruit. Clear streams trickled among the trees from behind which my sister walked out. But hadn't she been killed by the Japanese? What was she doing here? Running into her arms, I cried, "I'm thirsty."

"Drink. This is sweet water."

I gulped down cool spring water, indescribably refreshing.

Slowly I came to and opened my eyes to see a woman who was a complete stranger.

"Have some more," she coaxed. "This is sweet water." Putting the ladle into a jar, she fanned me with her conical straw hat and inquired with concern, "Feeling better, young brother?" I nodded, very moved.

After a while I began sizing this woman up. In her thirties, tall, with big eyes under thick brows she had on a striped short-sleeved tunic and a pair of short baggy trousers. She looked every inch a peasant woman. I was about to ask her name and which village she came from when she questioned me first: "How old are you, young brother? What's your name?"

"I'm seventeen, sister-in-law. My family name is Li. Just call me Little Li."

"Going to Taku Island for the first time?"

I was positively stunned. Although she had saved my life, because I was on a mission I couldn't disclose my destination to her. Getting to my feet and pretending to scratch myself I felt the part of my clothes where the message was sewn to make sure it was still there.

"No, I'm not going to Taku Island," I lied. "I'm on my way to the fair at Yungan, but I've lost my way."

She tried to keep a straight face, her long eyelashes fluttering as she looked me over. "Why did you bring cartridges if you aren't going to Taku Island?" she pressed. Then, indignantly, she added, "So irresponsible! Not to tell you to bring water when you're crossing this wilderness."

I sat down in bewildered silence. Then she explained more gently, "I'm not cross with you, Little Li, but with your platoon leader. How can a man in his thirties be so thoughtless as to send you out all by yourself without a proper briefing?"

How queer! How did she know so much about us? Could I talk to her frankly? No. I had better sound her out first. "Sister-in-law, are you . . .?" I started tentatively.

She chuckled. "Yes, I'm your sister-in-law. That's quite true."

I flushed, still with no clue to her identity.

She laughed to see me so red in the face then, biting her lips, controlled herself and wiped the tears of mirth from her eyes. "Sorry. All my fault," she said apologetically. "When I found you were one of us I forgot my manners."

Stunned, I stared at her.

"Well! Doesn't this wrapper belong to your platoon leader, Tien?" she asked outright. "I recognized these three big patches." Then, showing me the letter which Platoon Leader Tien had folded into a triangle, she went on, "I've received the letter too. Many thanks."

It dawned on me that she was my platoon leader's wife. Excitedly I cried, "Sister Ta-shuang!"

I had heard a lot about her. She was a strong character who would rather break than bend. Taken into landlord Chao's house at the age of nine to be a serving maid, she would not let the landlord's wife bind her feet. At seventeen she set fire to Chao's barn and escaped

to this wilderness where she had become head of the women's association during the War of Resistance Against Japan. It was said that she was better than most men at standing guard, patrolling, planting landmines and getting information about the enemy. The story of how, armed with nothing but a spade, she had caught a traitor the previous year during an enemy raid was known to all. Before I set out on my mission Platoon Leader Tien had written her a letter and I had been expecting to see her.

"Forgive me, Little Li. You'll get to know me better after a while. I was saying that your platoon leader was too careless. Right now the enemy blockade is very tight. The Japs and traitors keep patrolling this district and the place is swarming with their secret agents — like maggots in a latrine. Yet he sent you here, not knowing the way, without telling you to bring water."

I explained that I had begged for the assignment thinking that a young man needed toughening and that Platoon Leader Tien was not to blame for my not bringing any water. He had filled a flask for me and stressed the need to take it. Yet, not knowing that ginger is hot having never tasted it, as the saying goes, I had left it behind. She felt better after listening to my story.

"I had a meeting in the district today and collected some herbs on my way back," she told me ruefully. "And you nearly died of thirst. Come and take a rest in our hut."

Going through clumps of thorn trees we came, east of the path, to a low three-roomed thatched hut. Its front courtyard had a wicker fence and in the backyard firewood and straw were stacked. To the east was a thicket of thorn trees. The beams, doors, window-frames and beds in the hut were all made of thorn wood. Beside the water vat at the front door was a wicker basket filled with bowls, saucers and chopsticks. The whole set-up conveyed that here was a family forced by poverty to live in this desolate place. Sister Ta-shuang told me that her village, Chinglin, was fifteen kilometres to the north on Hsiaoku Island. Two months ago, Uncle Chang, secretary of the village Party branch and chairman of the peasant association, had got some militiamen to build and furnish this hut, and provided her with grain to settle down here. Her task was to supply water to the Eighth

Route Army men passing by and heat up the food they brought. People from the press, hospital, arsenal and other units in Taku Island often passed this way — sometimes as many as several dozen per day — and they usually stopped to rest here. This halting-place was especially important for the wounded and sick soldiers being sent from the front to the Taku hospital and who needed boiled water and hot food. As time went by, it became known as the Eighth Routers' hut.

Chatting, she cooked my meal. Heating up some corn buns mixed with wild herbs she washed half a bowl of lentils to make some soup. Just then a boy of twelve or thirteen came lurching along the path with two buckets of water. As she hurried to take over his load she grumbled, "Look at you, you never listen to what I say. Two half buckets are quite enough for you to carry. If you fill them to the brim like this and strain your back you'll have to stop fetching water." After emptying the buckets into the vat she lovingly wiped the little fellow's face. Pointing to me she told him, "This is Uncle Li, Tien Sheng. He's come from your father. Doesn't a boy your age know how to say hello?"

Looking at me with bright eyes under long lashes, Tien Sheng greeted me with a warm smile. He was a healthy boy and the image of his father. He bounded over and threw his arms around me, asking me to take him to his dad so that he could join the Eighth Route Army too.

"Don't pester him, Tien Sheng. Let Uncle Li have a good rest. Are you hungry?" Sister Ta-shuang asked as she fed the fire.

"No. But I'm thirsty." Picking up a jar he began drinking from it. I was shocked, because that was the water in which his mother had just washed the lentils. I warned him, "Don't drink that. . ."

"Never mind. It has settled," said Sister Ta-shuang. "Look, he enjoys it."

True! He gulped down half a jar at one go. But I felt very bad. After fetching two full buckets he shouldn't have to drink this dirty water. It suddenly struck me that Platoon Leader Tien had told me that there was no sweet water anywhere here for more than ten kilometres around. Where had he gone for water?

Tien Sheng told me a local jingle:

Digging wells for brackish water  
We've worn out spades untold;  
But the ancient river-bed's water  
Is sweet — more precious than gold.

Well water was salty here, so close to the coast. But I wondered what was so special about the old river-bed.

"The river dried up years ago," Sister Ta-shuang explained. "We've dug pits there which gradually fill with muddy water, and when the mud has settled we draw the water."

"How far is it from here?"

"Twelve and a half kilometres," Tien Sheng told me.

"Twelve and a half!" I exclaimed incredulously. "Have you nowhere nearer to go to?"

Sister Ta-shuang laughed and shook her head.

A round trip was a whole twenty-five kilometres! The boy could hardly fetch enough by making one trip every day. His mother, busy looking after passers-by in the daytime, must have to fetch water in the evening. I felt conscience-smitten. Walking twenty-five kilometres that morning and carrying only fifteen kilogrammes had fagged me out. Yet they had to cover the same distance every day with two full buckets of water. How strenuous it must be!

"It was rather hard at the beginning," Sister Ta-shuang admitted. "But when I remembered that I was doing my bit against the Japs I forgot about the hardship. And after a while I got used to it. The trip is nothing to me now."

"Mum told me to think of our fighters at the front and the way they're sweating and shedding blood, then I wouldn't feel tired," added Tien Sheng.

Their fine spirit fired me with enthusiasm, restoring my energy. A yacht's power comes from its sail, a man's strength from his heart. Give your whole heart to revolution and you'll have inexhaustible strength.

Sister Ta-shuang gave us a meal — only wild herbs and maize bread but it tasted delicious.



After lunch, she handed me some packets of medicinal herbs saying, "Take these to the hospital. They're short of medicine. And the doctors say these roots and different kinds of bark are most efficacious." She told me which were pain-killers, which stopped bleeding, which helped digestion and which stimulated the circulation. . . .

As I was leaving, she told me that the paths through the thorn thickets which stretched for more than seven kilometres to the north formed a regular maze where it was only too easy to get lost. I must remember to turn whenever I came to a tree from which the bark had been stripped: turn right if a tree on the right was stripped, left if it was one on the left. And I in turn warned her to be prepared for sudden enemy attacks as fresh raids had been planned for that autumn. She said, "Snakes come out of their holes before a storm. These last few days a lot of secret agents have been spotted among the thorn-trees. You must take care!"

Sister Ta-shuang did all in her power to ensure the safety of the comrades who passed this way day after day.

## 2

The second time I approached the Eighth Routers' hut I knew the way. Indeed that was the reason I gave, ten days after rejoining my unit, when I volunteered for another mission to Taku Island. Just as before, Platoon Leader Tien urged me to be very careful. "You're escorting two wounded soldiers on stretchers across three blockade lines, Little Li," he said. "It's a journey of more than a hundred kilometres. It isn't an easy task."

"Don't you worry, platoon leader." I promised to accomplish my task and told him how I planned to go about it. We set out on August 25 as soon as it was dark and two mornings later entered the wilderness. Now an unexpected difficulty cropped up. It had taken us so long to cross the blockade lines that our supply of water had run out. What should we do? Our hope lay in the Eighth Routers' hut ahead.

When we were a kilometre from the hut, Tien Sheng suddenly emerged from a thicket to tell me that a suspicious character, most likely a secret agent, had come to the hut that morning. His mother had sent him to wait here and alert passers-by. The description he gave of this man tallied with Gold Teeth. Better get rid of the vicious swine. Pulling out my pistol I said to Tien Sheng, "Come with me."

"Uncle Li, mum says he couldn't have come alone. His men must be hidden somewhere among the trees. Don't do anything too risky. But don't you worry. Mum wants you and your comrades to wait here while I go home and get you some water."

"No. It's too dangerous bringing water under the enemy's nose," I protested. Hiding the stretchers among the dense trees I crept up to the hut to reconnoitre.

Crouching behind the thorn-trees east of the hut, I parted the branches slowly to have a look. Sitting cross-legged on a wicker stool was Gold Teeth, peering round with his beady eyes as he smoked a pipe. Sister Ta-shuang, sitting opposite, was pulling bean pods from their stalks. Brows knitted she seemed to be thinking of a way to cope with him.

"Have a heart, sister-in-law! Give me a drink of water, please," he pleaded. "We're in the same boat — both poor. I thought, in these troubled times, I could scrape along out here. I'd no idea there was no water."

"Why keep on about it? If you know there's no water why insist on me giving you the little I have? If you drink it, what shall I do?" she retorted impatiently.

Why was this collaborator putting on such a pathetic act? Why had he brought his men to this desolate place? Was it to find out about Sister Ta-shuang and then through her trap some of our comrades? Or to track down a source of water in preparation for the next "mopping up" campaign? Both were possible. If Gold Teeth stayed on, how could we take water for the two wounded soldiers to take medicine with? And the four stretcher-bearers needed water to mix their fried flour too. I was at a loss what to do.

Just then Tien Sheng came walking down the path from the west.

"I'm dying of thirst, mum," he cried. "Why don't you boil some water and cook my meal?"

"I will right away." She got up and went inside.

While Gold Teeth was not looking Tien Sheng indicated to his mother with his fingers that seven of us had come. Then I heard her ladling water into the cauldron.

Approaching the door, Gold Teeth sniggered. "You seem quite well off here. I was told that you fetch water every night. Can you drink so much?"

"You sure are nosy. More inquisitive than the traitors who check up on people," Sister Ta-shuang's voice carried clearly to me. "If you've only just arrived here, how do you know I fetch water every night?"

"It just happened to come to my ears."

"Which son of a bitch has been telling stories? I'll go and give him a piece of my mind."

"No need. But you must know where the nearest water is."

"I thought roughing it here in the wilds I'd be left alone. But it seems there's no peace anywhere. Well, I don't care who pesters me — I'm not afraid of either men or devils."

Gold Teeth grinned. "Don't take offence. I



was too tactless. Forget it, please. You'll know me better in time."

What was the scoundrel getting at? I was very tempted to kill him. When Sister Ta-shuang came out for some firewood, as Gold Teeth had his back to me I straightened up a little to catch her eye. She looked at me with surprise. I made a throat-cutting gesture but she checked me at once with a repressive glance.

"Mum," Tien Sheng cried coming out, "is the water boiling? I'm parched."

"Just a minute. Steady on. Keep cool," she said loudly as she re-entered the hut, obviously meaning these instructions for me.

Soon, she called, "Tien Sheng, go north and see if Uncle Chang is coming. He went to the market to buy vats and should be back by now."

I was surprised by this news till I remembered that during my last visit Uncle Chang, chairman of Chinglin Village's Peasant Association, had said all the pits in the river-bed must be filled up before the next Japanese "mopping up" campaign. If the Eighth Routers' hut was to carry on its work it must store up some water. So the villagers had collected ten big vats. Maybe they were bringing them over today. If they did it would put Sister Ta-shuang on the spot.

Tien Sheng ran a hundred paces to the north and, climbing up the tallest thorn tree, waved and shouted. Vigilantly Gold Teeth sprang up, thrust his right hand into his pocket and rushed over to where the boy was. Coming out of the hut, Sister Ta-shuang spat scornfully behind his skinny back then quickly brought out a hamper from which steam was rising. Setting it down beside a haystack she called to Tien Sheng.

Tien Sheng jumped down from the tree and ran over with Gold Teeth trailing behind him.

"Did you see them?" Sister Ta-shuang asked.

"Yes. They are coming this way with the vats."

Catching sight of the hamper, Gold Teeth sidled over and whipped off the white towel covering it. "Well, well! Where are you taking this?"

I thought we were done for, but Sister Ta-shuang kept calm. Pulling Tien Sheng aside she whispered something to him then said aloud, "Take this to them."

Picking up the hamper Tien Sheng headed north into the thorn-trees. Like a police dog, Gold Teeth followed silently.

When they had gone far enough, Sister Ta-shuang quickly went into the hut and brought out food and water which she gave me. "Sorry to have kept you waiting so long," she said.

So that was why she had tricked Gold Teeth into leaving.

Very touched by her goodness, I couldn't help worrying. "That's Gold Teeth, Sister Ta-shuang. Tien Sheng. . ."

"Don't worry," she laughed. "The militiamen — a whole squad of them — bringing the vats will deal with these fellows. After you've eaten, take the Eighteen Turns route, it's safer that way."

I took the food and water to the wounded and the stretcher-bearers. After we had had our fill we went on our way.

I felt desperately anxious about mother and son till we reached Taku Island and I learned the good news that Tien Sheng had led Gold Teeth and his men into the maze where they were finished off by the militia. If Gold Teeth hadn't run so fast, he would have been captured.

### 3

Wounded in the head in a battle in September I lost so much blood that I kept lapsing into a coma. Vaguely I knew that I was being carried to the hospital on Taku Island.

When I came to again I heard voices saying, "Well, he has pulled through." Opening my eyes, I saw Sister Ta-shuang. I called her, happy to have come back to the Eighth Routers' hut.

Her chignon had gone. Her hair was bobbed. Though she had grown thinner her eyes were as warm as ever. Her tired look made me sure that she must have had a hard time since Gold Teeth got on her trail.

Suddenly the colour drained from her face and she leaned against



the wall, her eyes shut. "What's the matter with you, Sister Ta-shuang?" I exclaimed.

The doctor escorting me said, "She's just given you her blood. She will be all right in a minute."

Her blood was running in my veins! My nose tingled and tears blurred my eyes. . . .

After the blood transfusion I was out of danger. Since the enemy's "mopping up" campaign was about to start and the hospital on Taku Island was evacuating, the leadership decided that I was to recuperate in the Eighth Routers' hut.

Enemy secret agents often came to look for water among the thorn thickets. In order to supply food and water to our troops who would come to resist the "mopping up", five men and eight women had been assigned to work under Sister Ta-shuang in the Eighth Routers' hut.

One evening she relayed the district Party committee's directive to the fifteen comrades in the hut. "The Japanese 'mopping up' is starting," she said. "They're still out to smash our arsenal, press and hospital, and this time they are concentrating their forces for a surprise attack on us. Defence isn't good enough. The army's sub-district Party committee wants us to take the offensive and pin the enemy down here in the wilderness where they have no food or water, then muster all our forces to wipe them out."

Several questions arose in my mind. How were we to supply the army with water? How could we get enough vats to keep it in? Even if we had vats and water how could we hide them? We were certainly up against it.

"Comrades, the Eighth Routers' hut is going to be put to the test," Sister Ta-shuang voiced my thoughts. "We must not let the enemy have a single drop of water. We must guard it with our lives and supply it to our army."

"Sure, Sister Ta-shuang."

"We'll do that even if it costs us our lives."

Everyone was full of determination.

Deeply moved, I told Sister Ta-shuang my doubts. Laughingly she reassured me. "Don't you remember that Uncle Chang sent over ten vats the last time, Little Li? Another village sent us fifteen

a few days ago. With the five we originally had it makes thirty altogether. Each vat can hold sixteen buckets; altogether they can hold over 480 buckets of water. Don't you think that's enough?"

"Yes. Plenty. How did you fetch so much water and where have you hidden it?"

"We relied on the masses. With the district political instructor taking the lead, the people from many villages helped to carry it with buckets and by draught animals. The thirty vats were filled to the brim in just a few nights."

The vats were covered with boards and buried under the road to the west of the hut. The newly filled-in earth road was swept with tree branches and then walked over. No trace of the digging could be detected.

The Japanese "mopping up" campaign started. In the morning of September 17, Sister Ta-shuang sent thirteen people to deliver water to our troops who had come to fight the Japanese. At noon before they had returned, a group of Japanese and puppet soldiers came sneaking up to the hut. Sister Ta-shuang urged me to go into the hiding-place between the double walls. I protested, not wanting to leave her alone. Anxiously she commanded, "You must do as I say here and not come out without my orders." She pushed me into the tiny secret chamber.

The enemy could be heard shouting outside. The door of the hut creaked as Sister Ta-shuang went out.

"Well, well. It's a small world. Remember me?" At the sound of Gold Teeth's voice my heart missed a beat. Through a crack in the wall I could see a dozen puppet soldiers pointing their bayonets at Sister Ta-shuang. A dark stubby Japanese stood behind Gold Teeth. I recognized him as Noguchi, a squad leader of the Japanese logistics department whom I had seen several times when we fought for grain the previous year. Stepping over to Sister Ta-shuang with narrowed eyes, all smiles, he said in broken Chinese, "You keep this place of the Eighth Routers, yes? Tell me, where you hide the water?"

"I don't sell water and I've no water here," Sister Ta-shuang answered calmly.

Gold Teeth hissed at her, "Quit fooling! Who were those people with the vats who killed seven of our men? The Japanese army is lenient and let you off last time. If you don't show your appreciation today you won't live to see tomorrow."

"Never mind." Noguchi stopped Gold Teeth. "Just say where water is, I'll let you live. Plenty money too I give you."

"I have no water," Sister Ta-shuang repeated.

"You big liar. You fetch water every day. Where is it? Where are the vats?"

"The people who bought the vats have sold them at the market in Yungan. My son and I fetch our own drinking water, and we need some for cooking every day," she answered unhurriedly.

"Search!" Noguchi cried hoarsely. The puppet soldiers ransacked the hut, jabbing bayonets into things or kicking them over until the place was a shambles.

The roar of a motorcycle was heard. A Japanese soldier alighted and gave some guttural message to Noguchi—obviously another order to find water.

After the motorcyclist left Noguchi paced the floor like a caged wolf. Suddenly he howled to Gold Teeth, "If she no give water, burn house down!"

My heart thumped. Let them go ahead! I was willing to be burnt to death if the water could be safeguarded. I saw Sister Ta-shuang's brows puckering and then smoothing out again. Patting her hair as if in readiness for some stern ordeal she said loudly, "Hold on. I know where there is water."

Noguchi guffawed. "Fine, fine. Where?"

"East of here."

"How far?"

"About eight kilometres."

"Eight kilometres?" Noguchi shook his head, glaring with bloodshot eyes at Sister Ta-shuang, and growled savagely, "You lying!"

Gold Teeth put in, "Didn't I tell you to quit fooling? You can't afford to offend the Japanese. Show us where the water is to make amends. If you're lying, don't forget you'll pay with your life."



"Believe me or not — that's up to you." Sister Ta-shuang walked away.

Gold Teeth quickly turned to Noguchi. "If we can get water eight kilometres from here, that's not far, Your Excellency. Besides, there's nothing else we can do. So..."

"Show way," commanded Noguchi.

"Do you hear? You're to take us there. Get moving," ordered Gold Teeth.

In silence, Sister Ta-shuang padlocked the door, put the key with its head pointing north on the eastern side of a thorn tree beside the hut and having covered it with sand led the enemy soldiers east.

Before long, Tien Sheng returned. Seeing that the door was locked he fetched the key — its position under the tree was a pre-arranged signal. Opening the door he said to me, "Uncle, mum wants me to tell the militiamen to go and wipe out the enemy in the maze."

"Did you meet her?"

"No. I know from the way she placed the key. I must go now, uncle." He ran off like a colt.

I was desperately worried. To safeguard the water and me, Sister Ta-shuang was risking her own life. I couldn't let her do that.

I took my only two grenades and chased after her.

As the morning wore on, the grey clouds in the sky thickened. There was not a breath of wind, it was suffocating. The thorn thickets were like an oven. My head spun and I felt sick. It seemed that a storm was brewing.

Few people ever went through this natural maze, so despite the pain of my wound it was easy enough to follow the fresh footprints on the labyrinthine track between the thorn trees. Soon I could see the enemy in front. They were dragging themselves along listlessly after Sister Ta-shuang and had lost their bearings completely.

Heads drooping, they staggered on looking quite fagged out. Panting hard, they often licked their parched lips.

Two hours passed and still there was no sign of Tien Sheng and the militia. My anxiety grew. The longer the delay the greater danger Sister Ta-shuang would be in. And now Noguchi cried hoarsely, "Water — where?"

"Ahead." Sister Ta-shuang halted.

Some enemy soldiers seized the chance to lean panting against trees. Others flopped to the ground. Pointing at them Sister Ta-shuang told Noguchi, "Your soldiers are walking at a snail's pace. At this rate, we shan't get there for another two hours."

Noguchi forced his men to get up and set off again. But now, instead of walking forward, Sister Ta-shuang started leading them back the way they had come.

Gold Teeth discovered this suddenly and quickly told Noguchi. Pale with fury Noguchi barked, "Bad woman. Kill her!"

In fury I pulled out a grenade to throw at the enemy. That same instant rifles opened fire and the enemy soldiers fell one by one. It was the militiamen. I hurled my two grenades then with all my might.

Noguchi, Gold Teeth and several puppet soldiers fell like logs. The survivors dashed about like headless flies but very soon were taken prisoner. Uncle Chang and I ran up to grasp Sister Ta-shuang's hands.

"Over two hundred enemy soldiers have been surrounded by our troops in the north," Uncle Chang told us in high spirits. "They'll soon be wiped out."

A triumphant smile lit up Sister Ta-shuang's face. She took the comrades of the Eighth Routers' hut back to uncover the buried vats, then lit the stove to boil water and cook a meal. The dry thorn branches crackled like fireworks under the cauldron as if to celebrate our victory.

Holding a rifle captured from the enemy I left the Eighth Routers' hut with the militiamen to join our troops. At dusk, when the fighting was going on fiercely, Sister Ta-shuang and the comrades from the Eighth Routers' hut brought us boiled water and food. Handing each man his share she cried, "Give it to them hard, comrades! Drive the bandits out of China. Wipe out the invaders!" Fluttering under the setting sun our scarlet banner cast a red glow on the thorn trees and on Sister Ta-shuang.

*Illustrated by Tung Chen-sheng*

## A Would-Be Little Red Soldier

After coming home from kindergarten, Hsiao-kang tied his sister's Little Red Soldier's scarf around his neck and went out to play with his friends. With wooden guns over their shoulders, they marched up and down in front of their houses. They were practising drilling like the PLA, doing left turns and right turns, shouting out commands such as, "One, two! One, two!" Then they would charge at each other with their wooden guns. Hsiao-kang's elder sister, Hsiao-mien, arrived to find them playing happily.

She asked, "Why are you wearing my red scarf, Hsiao-kang?"

"Why shouldn't I?" Hsiao-kang replied.

"Because you're not a Little Red Soldier yet," she retorted.

Not satisfied with this, Hsiao-kang argued, "You just don't want me to be like you."

"It's got nothing to do with that," his sister cried, getting upset. She ran over to him to untie the scarf, but he held it tightly in his hands to prevent her. Forgetting their game, all the other children crowded round to watch.

At this moment, Chou, a kindergarten teacher, passed by and stopped to ask Hsiao-kang why he was quarrelling with his sister.

Hsiao-mien told her that Hsiao-kang wanted to wear her red scarf although he wasn't a Little Red Soldier.

"But I want to be one," Hsiao-kang piped up.

"If you want to be one, Hsiao-kang, then you must listen to Chairman Mao's teachings and be a good boy and try to help others. If everyone says you are a good boy following Chairman Mao, then you will become a Little Red Soldier. But you must be approved by the Little Red Soldier's Headquarters, understand?" Teacher Chou asked him.

"Yes," Hsiao-kang nodded, blinking his big eyes.

"And what's more," his teacher continued, "you're too young still. When you're seven and have started school, then you can join."

Feeling put out, Hsiao-kang muttered, "But I'm only six and that means I'll have to wait for another year."

"Then this year you must work hard and try to be good. Although you aren't a Little Red Soldier yet, you can think of yourself as practising to be one."

This cheered up Hsiao-kang and he asked, "Who will recommend me for that?"

"Well. . ." began Teacher Chou, laughing, "I'll recommend you, of course."

Feeling happier, Hsiao-kang began to untie his sister's red scarf, hesitating for a moment to look at her and asked, "Can I wear it for just a little longer?"

"No. Not for one single minute more," was his sister's firm reply. "You're not allowed to wear it unless you're a Little Red Soldier."

Rather reluctantly, Hsiao-kang took off the scarf and gave it to his sister. But he was happy because he was practising to be a Little Red Soldier.

## 2

That evening, Hsiao-kang's grandma, mother and father were sitting at home after work, when grandma told them: "Grandpa

Wang's daughter is away studying at the moment and his son is in the army. The old man's ill and we comrades of the neighbourhood committee have recently been taking turns to look after him. But tomorrow afternoon all of us have to attend an important meeting arranged by the municipal authorities and we can't find anyone to be with him."

"Shall we keep Hsiao-mien off school for half a day so that she can look after him?" Hsiao-kang's mother suggested.

"No, that won't do," grandma said shaking her head, "because she's going to the factory to learn from the workers at the moment."

"Granny, granny," Hsiao-kang tugged the edge of her tunic. "Let me go and take care of Grandpa Wang. Please."

"There, there," said grandma smiling. "You're only a little boy and you need to be looked after too."

"But I'm six and I'm not a baby. I can get dressed and wash my face all by myself," Hsiao-kang protested.

"Well, if Grandpa Wang doesn't need too much help but just someone to give him a drink, then I think it would be all right to let Hsiao-kang take care of him," his father suggested. "If something goes wrong, he can always get help from the neighbours who work the night shift and who rest at home during the day. And tomorrow we'll come straight home from work so as to be earlier."

Grandma thought for a while. "All right, then," she agreed. Then she explained to Hsiao-kang exactly what he had to do. "The hot tea is in the pot under the tea-cosy. Whenever Grandpa Wang wants a drink, give it to him, but be careful not to let it spill over you. If he wants to have a smoke, hand him the matches, which are kept in the drawer. His spittoon is under his bed. Rub his back when it hurts. Talk to him if he feels a bit bored. If anything crops up that you can't manage, go and ask Auntie Chao or Uncle Chen for help. They are on night shift and will be at home during the day. Don't disturb them unless you need them." Then she stressed that it was very important that Hsiao-kang looked after Grandpa Wang well and she added, "You mustn't go and leave him and play outside."

Hsiao-kang nodded.



Early the next morning immediately he was awake, Hsiao-kang jumped out of bed saying, "I must go and see Grandpa Wang at once."

His mother smiled, "Not now, you silly boy. It's still too early."

Looking out of the window, Hsiao-kang smiled too.

All that morning at kindergarten, Hsiao-kang thought about what he had to do. Time dragged. At last it was lunch time, but his grandma insisted that he have a nap after his meal. After his nap, his grandma gave him a few more instructions and then he went off on his "assignment".

As he entered Grandpa Wang's door, Hsiao-kang saw the old man sitting up in bed trying to fish out something from under his pillow. "What are you looking for, Grandpa Wang?" he asked.

"Why, Hsiao-kang!" exclaimed Grandpa Wang. "At your sister's school they are breeding a lot of fish and I'm weaving a net for them. It's a good thing that you've come because now you can help me with it."

So Hsiao-kang helped him to take out the thread and shuttle from under the pillow and mattress and put a board on the bed. Grandpa Wang set to work, warning Hsiao-kang not to tell his grandma about it. "She'll think it tires me," he explained, "and she won't let me do it any more. But, you know, Hsiao-kang, this kind of work doesn't make me the least bit tired."

Hsiao-kang climbed on to a chair and sat facing the old man. After a while he asked, "Do you want some tea, Grandpa Wang?"

"No, thank you."

Hsiao-kang waited for a bit and then he asked again, "Would you like to have a smoke, Grandpa Wang?"

"No, thank you."

Time passed and then Hsiao-kang, changing his position on the chair, asked, "Does your back hurt a little, Grandpa Wang?"

"No, it doesn't, Hsiao-kang. Now what's the matter? Tell me, did your granny send you here to look after me?" the old man asked. "It can't be much fun for you sitting here with an old man like me. Off you go and play outside with your friends. You must be feeling bored."

The word "bored" touched a chord in Hsiao-kang's mind. He jumped down from his chair and went to the bed. "Are you feeling a bit lonely, Grandpa Wang?" he asked. "If so, I can tell you some stories. Would you like that?"

Grandpa Wang laughed. "What stories do you know?"

"Oh, lots of them about heroes like Lei Feng and others."

"What a clever boy to know so many stories!"

"Now what would you like to hear? What about the one about Uncle Lei Feng?" the boy asked.

Grandpa Wang nodded in approval.

Hsiao-kang began: "Once Uncle Lei Feng went to see a doctor, and on his way he passed by a building site. You know what a building site is, don't you?"

"Yes. That's where a lot of building is going on."

"Well, Uncle Lei Feng noticed that the supply of bricks was too slow and so he found a wheelbarrow and began to take them to the men. Do you know what a wheelbarrow is?"

"A wheelbarrow? Let me see," said the old man pretending to think. "What does it look like?"

"Oh, like a wheelbarrow. You know, you put things in it."

"Ah. Now I know what it is," said Grandpa Wang.

"Uncle Lei Feng worked very hard," Hsiao-kang continued, "pushing one load of bricks after another. He was the fastest of all and though he had a sore tummy, he didn't bother about it. I didn't bother about having my inoculation either. I wasn't afraid of the injection and I didn't cry. And I was the first one to have it."

"That was very brave of you, Hsiao-kang," Grandpa Wang said. "It shows that you are learning from Uncle Lei Feng."

"Why do you say that, Grandpa Wang?" Hsiao-kang laughed. "How can I be learning from Uncle Lei Feng when I never pushed a wheelbarrow?"

"Because you're not afraid of a bit of pain, so when you grow up you may be a hero like Lei Feng."

"Oh, yes, when I grow up I want to work as hard as Uncle Lei Feng and push a wheelbarrow as fast as he did."

"That's the spirit!" cried Grandpa Wang.

Just then they heard a voice calling from outside. "Hsiao-kang, come here. Hurry up!" It was Hsiao-mien.

Hsiao-kang ran outside and asked her what was the matter.

"Our school is going to put on a performance for the steel workers. Let's go and watch it. Can you hear the drums?" she asked.

Hsiao-kang listened to the sound of the drums and gongs. He began to follow his sister but after a few steps stopped. "But I can't come now."

"Why ever not?" Hsiao-mien asked in surprise.

"I've got something more important to do."

"What's that?" When she was reminded of his taking care of Grandpa Wang, she suggested, "Look, you go and watch the performance and I'll go and look after Grandpa Wang."

"No," Hsiao-kang shook his head. "I'm practising to be a Little Red Soldier and I must do what granny told me."

Hsiao-mien tried to persuade him to go. Just then Grandpa Wang called out, "Hsiao-mien, come here, please." Hsiao-mien and her brother ran to the door, but before they entered, the old man said in a serious tone, "Take Hsiao-kang away now, Hsiao-mien. Run along. I want to get some sleep." He pretended to be sleepy.

Feeling a little sad, Hsiao-kang followed his sister, but the sound of the gongs and drums coming from the school soon cheered him up and he ran to watch the performance. After it was over the children went home.

When their grandma saw them, she asked, "Did you finish your assignment, Hsiao-kang?"

Hsiao-kang said nothing.

"If you did, say yes; if you didn't, say no," his father interrupted. "What's the matter with you? Have you lost your tongue?"

Feeling very ashamed, Hsiao-kang lowered his head and said, "No."

"Why not?" his father asked.

"Because Grandpa Wang told us he felt sleepy and said we should go away."

"Grandpa Wang only said that so that you would go and watch the performance, you silly boy," said grandma smiling at him.

Then Hsiao-kang smiled and said, "That was very naughty of Grandpa Wang to play that trick on me. I won't let him do it next time. And if you give me something else to do, I won't let you down."

### 3

Hsiao-mien liked to play at skipping rope, but recently she had been searching around for old, broken coins, nails and other metal scraps, collecting them and putting them in a pile in a corner by the wall. Rusty and old as they were, she would not allow Hsiao-kang to touch them. He didn't mind because he much preferred the nice bright, shiny coins and scraps he kept in his pockets. But he puzzled over why his sister collected them and then didn't play with them. Finally he couldn't stop himself from asking her, and added that he would help her if she wanted.

"You mean you don't know that all over the country people collect scrap metal?" she asked him. "When we send the scraps to daddy's factory, they get put into a furnace and melted down and made into steel for tractors, engines, cars. . ."

Hsiao-kang interrupted, "You mean if we collect some scrap metal now, the new tractors will be made of the steel we have found?"

Hsiao-mien nodded.

"And will the trains and cars be made from the steel we gather?"

"Yes."

"What about the guns of the PLA uncles?" Hsiao-kang reflected.

"Well, it all depends, of course, on how much scrap you collect. If it's a lot, then tractors, cars, guns, ships, trains will all include some of the steel you collect. But if you only collect a little amount, then. . ."

"All right," said Hsiao-kang cutting her short, "we'll collect a huge amount." He immediately took out of his pockets all the coins and scraps and added them to his sister's pile in the corner. Then he went to his desk and took out from a drawer a large, shiny iron ball, which he liked very much, and handed it to Hsiao-mien saying, "Have this." Next he took out his iron roller. Looking at the small pile of scraps he wished he could find a huge piece of iron,

as big as a house. But where? He thought for a while and then exclaimed, "I've got it! The stove, pots and pans, knives and scissors at home are all made of iron. Let's give all of them."

"But you can't do that, they are useful things and not junk," his sister told him.

At that moment their father, who had arrived home without their knowledge, suddenly spoke, "And your iron roller is also useful, Hsiao-kang, because you can use it to grow up to be a strong young man. If you are strong, then you can work well and defend the country."

Hsiao-kang looked at his father, his eyes appealing to him for help. His father seemed to guess what was on his mind, for he said, "You know the big lime pit behind our house. It's full of rubbish thrown into it after everyone did their spring-cleaning for the Spring Festival."

"Of course!" Hsiao-kang cried. "Once I saw Granny Wu chuck out a broken stove cover and there are bound to be other bits of scrap there."

Their father continued, "I've been meaning to clean it out, but I just haven't had a moment. As it's Saturday today and I'm home earlier than usual, why don't we volunteer to clean out the pit? And tomorrow I can cart the refuse to the suburbs to add to the poor and lower-middle peasants' compost."

"Tomorrow the Little Red Soldiers in our school take manure to the peasants and so we could deliver yours too," Hsiao-mien suggested.

"Fine," her father agreed.

With a spade over his shoulder, he walked quickly to the pit, followed by Hsiao-mien and Hsiao-kang, carrying a basket on a pole between them, and running behind to keep up with their father. The pit was full of rubbish. Their father took off his jacket and got into the pit, where he began to work at a fast pace, spadeful after spadeful being thrown out of the pit. Hsiao-kang, longing to join in, swore to himself that he would grow up to be like his father, strong and powerful and hardworking. Each time the children found some scrap metal, they jumped for joy. Their activities drew a crowd

of adults and children, who began to help. With many helpers, the pit was soon cleared and about half a basketful of scrap metal collected, including Granny Wu's broken stove cover.

"Listen, everyone," shouted Hsiao-kang, holding up the broken stove cover. "You mustn't throw away scraps like this because the country needs it and it can be made into something useful."

Everyone laughed.

Hsiao-kang wondered why they were laughing.

When Hsiao-mien went home in the evening, she told her grandma that the Little Red Soldiers in her class had more than fulfilled their assignment of collecting scrap metal.

"Well done," said grandma.

"And I did my job too, granny," Hsiao-kang told her.

"What was that?" grandma inquired.

"I finished my sister's one," replied Hsiao-kang.

Granny began to laugh. "Well, I never! Last time Hsiao-kang didn't finish his own job, and this time he's finished his sister's."

Mother, father and Hsiao-mien joined in the laughter. At first Hsiao-kang felt embarrassed, but then he too saw the funny side of it and began to laugh.

#### 4

One Sunday afternoon, many adults were busy washing clothes or rice and fetching water from the public water tap. Chattering and laughing, no one noticed at first that the sewage pipe had become blocked and that dirty water was spilling all over the ground. Once it had been spotted, some adults tried to unblock the pipe with a steel rod, but it was useless. Next they opened the cover to check that. Hsiao-kang and the children stood around watching, unable to help. Then Hsiao-kang thought of something.

He knew that the outlet for the sewage pipe was at the end of a ditch not far away, where he and his friends had dug for fly larvae the previous winter. He ran there and found that water was dripping very slowly from the outlet. Lying flat on the ground, he peered into it, but couldn't see a thing. The smell was foul. Then he



looked for a branch to poke up the pipe, but the branch was too thin and short, and only a bit of dirty mud was dislodged. Hsiao-kang wondered what to do. Probably the filthy water under the water tap was spreading further over the ground. Dropping his branch, he ran off home, but there was no one there. Finding a thick bamboo pole, he ran back to the outlet by the ditch. He put the pole into the pipe and poked it up. Gradually a lot of mud was dislodged and then after what seemed a long time, a jet of filthy water gushed out into the ditch.

"Hurray! It's cleared," shouted Hsiao-kang jumping for joy, and throwing away the pole. The setting sun was a bright red.

Perhaps it is happy too, he thought. Once he had washed the mud from his face and hands, he set off home pleased with his work.

On the way, he saw two men walking towards the ditch. From a distance he could see many more people had gathered around the tap, praising the person who had solved the problem. This made Hsiao-kang feel very proud.

When he reached home his grandma asked, "Where have you been all this time, Hsiao-kang? And why are your clothes all covered in mud?"

Hsiao-kang put his hands to his mouth and said in a low voice, "Come over here, granny, and I'll tell you."

"What's the secret?" asked grandma.

"Granny..." he began and then changed his mind. After all, it was his secret, so that even grandma shouldn't know.

"Now what's come over you?" asked grandma. "I'm going to go outside and ask." After a few minutes she returned and smiled at Hsiao-kang. "Since it's your secret, you can keep it. I won't ask about it now," she said.

"Do you know it, granny?" Hsiao-kang asked anxiously.

"Know what? I don't know anything. Others can't know your secret." Then grandma went to fetch some water and give him a wash. He was exhausted.

"Look how tired you are," she said half-praising, half-scolding.

At supper, Hsiao-kang dozed off during the meal, so grandma put him to bed immediately after he had finished eating.

Later Hsiao-kang woke up. The light was still on and his mother, father, grandma and sister were working and chatting. Grandma glanced over towards Hsiao-kang and said, "And we still don't know who cleared the sewage outlet."

"What? And you a member of the neighbourhood committee," said mother smiling at her.

"I wonder who did it," said Hsiao-mien. "We must find out and write up a big-character poster praising the person."

Father winked at mother and said, "Look how tired Hsiao-kang is after playing outside all day. He's sleeping soundly now."

Hearing this, Hsiao-kang wanted to jump up and tell his father that his tiredness wasn't from playing all day long. Then he remembered that Uncle Lei Feng never boasted about his good deeds, and so he kept quiet.

His mother went up to him and tucked up his quilt, kissing him gently and whispering, "Now you go to sleep, my good little boy."

The room became silent as the family sat around reading or writing. Hsiao-kang soon fell asleep again and he began to dream.

In his dream he was a big boy, at school, and his teacher Chou tied a red scarf around his neck. There were other boys and girls and they all said he was a good boy, following the teachings of Chairman Mao.

The bright red scarf around his neck did not belong to his sister Hsiao-mien, but to himself.

*Illustrated by Chao Shib-ying*



*Tung Pi-wu*

## Passing Laoshan, Written for Comrades in Yanan

Pale yellow, deep green, patches of red;  
The sunlit autumn hills appear.  
Following the trail of departing wild geese,  
Together we journey southwards.  
As we make our departure, our eyes  
Turn once more northwards.  
Only a brief time we shall be gone,  
Yet there is a sorrow in my heart

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Laoshan is south of Yanan in Shensi. Comrade Tung Pi-wu passed by there on his way to Chungking in 1940.

That words cannot express.  
This night we shall see  
The moon gleaming in Fuchow.\*  
I wonder, can it shine  
Bright and clear as in Yenan?

1940



## Gazing at the Moon During the Mid-Autumn Festival

The autumn moon is brighter this night,  
Shedding its light like liquid.  
In the clear sky, not a wisp of cloud;  
In the still night, dew falls without sound.  
Gazing at the moon, remote beyond my reach,  
Transfixed by this spot, I linger on.  
On such a night, what are my comrades' thoughts  
As they go southwards\* to the battlefield?

1947

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\*Fuchow is an ancient town in central Shensi.

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\*Refers to our counter-offensive against Chiang Kai-shek in the War of Liberation in the period between 1946 and 1949.



## Looking at the Bamboo Outside My Window During My Illness

The bamboo leaves in green persistence  
Are reluctant to turn yellow.  
The slender twigs  
Resist the severe frost.  
When the spring wind returns  
Awakening everything,  
The bamboo shoots will quicken,  
Eager to emerge from the earth.

*4th March 1952*



## Red Cliff Villa

The masses always triumph in the end;  
My stay at Red Cliff was not in vain.  
Who expounded on protracted war?\*  
Who proposed our capitulation?\*\*\*  
Now all questions are quite clear;  
Then doubts were difficult to dispel.

Red Cliff Villa is in Chungking, Szechuan, the Kuomintang temporary capital during the War of Resistance Against Japan (1937-1945). The Chinese Communist Party had an Eighth Route Army office there, and Comrade Tung Pi-wu was one of the representatives.

\*Chairman Mao wrote his great work *On Protracted War* in May 1938 in which he made an analysis of the war situation and affirmed that the War of Resistance Against Japan was a protracted war and the final victory would be China's. Later this proved to be true.

\*\*Chiang Kai-shek was ready to capitulate to the Japanese invaders and secretly communicated with the enemy throughout the war.

I made my home within the tiger's lair;  
The paper tiger duller than the donkey of Kweichow.\*

Red Cliff was an unknown valley,  
Whose splendour shone in the resistance war.  
We were shrouded by a sombre mist;  
Yet our leader like the Pole Star  
Was shining brightly over us,  
While the reactionaries nursed idle dreams.  
A nation's course is not haphazard;  
Workers and peasants steer the helm.

We sought a united front in the resistance war;  
Yet some often went against this line.  
They strove hard to achieve disorder,  
Determined to make the country weak,\*\*  
Skilled in the art of creating conflict,  
Administering the state for selfish ends.  
Those were the days of persecution, peril;  
But we won through all those dangers safely.

Stubborn fools followed the incorrect way,  
Ignoring lessons learnt from history,  
Wrongly regarding enemies as friends,  
Turning hostile to their own people.

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\*According to an ancient Chinese fable, there was originally no donkey in the Kweichow area. Somebody took one into the mountains there. A tiger saw the large donkey and was rather frightened at first. Later it discovered that the donkey was not really fierce, and so it killed and ate it.

\*\*This refers to the time when the Kuomintang reactionaries under Chiang Kai-shek would not resist the invaders but continued to suppress the Communists.

Venting their anger fighting with their brothers,  
While the country's problem was resisting the invader.  
They had the example of Chang's carriage\* overturning;  
Yet they rashly wanted to pursue the same path.

*10th November 1958*

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\*This refers to Chang Tso-lin, a warlord in China's northeastern provinces, who like other warlords fought each other in the twenties, all serving the interests of different foreign imperialists. Chang was finally killed by the Japanese when they dynamited his train.





## Written on the Frontispiece of "Reminiscences of the 1911 Revolution"

In a trice fifty years have passed,  
Revealing the changing fortunes of regimes.  
The Ching empire's dragon flag  
Discarded for ever in the flowing river.

A bourgeois democracy replaced the feudal order,  
Despite fierce resistance from powerful feudal remnants.  
The monarchy, a tainted flower fallen in the mud,  
'Twice tried to return, but all in vain.\*

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The 1911 Revolution was the bourgeois democratic revolution led by Sun Yat-sen in October 1911 which overthrew the Ching monarchy and set up the Chinese republic.

\*At the beginning of the republic, a northern warlord Yuan Shih-kai wanted to restore the monarchy and declare himself emperor. Later another warlord, Chang Hsun, wanted to restore the last Ching emperor, Pu-yi. Both these attempts quickly failed.

Where there are classes, struggle is certain,  
Because of clear contradictions that exist.  
Reflecting on the past, I feel compunction,\*  
We often confused enemy and friend.

The three big mountains\*\* weighed heavily upon us;  
But the unity of the masses proved to be stronger.  
By carrying out the New Democratic Revolution,\*\*\*  
The people led China into a new era.

We had good leaders, the strength of the masses;  
It was essential that the cadres were united.  
Success or failure are not mere chance;  
We should evaluate all our lessons well.

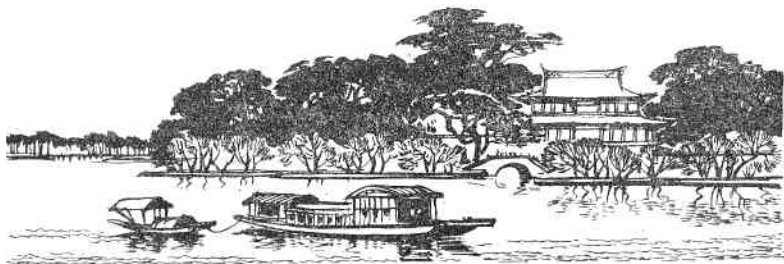
*31st August 1961 at Lushan*

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\*This refers to the fact that although the first aim of the Chinese revolution was to oppose foreign imperialism in China, yet during the 1911 Revolution and the later factionalism of the warlords, people often forgot this.

\*\*Imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat-capitalism.

\*\*\*The democratic revolution led by the Chinese Communist Party which started with the May 4th Movement and continued until Liberation (1919-1949).



## Passing by Chiahsing at the Time of the “Ching Ming” Festival and Visiting the Pavilion of Rain and Mist

The revolution was announced from a pleasure-boat;  
To lead workers and peasants the Communist Party was born.  
At the time of *Ching Ming* I revisited that place,  
And through the rain and mist sought traces of the past.

*5th April 1964*

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The Pavilion of Rain and Mist is by the South Lake in Chiahsing City, Chekiang Province. In 1921 the Chinese Communist Party held the concluding part of its First Congress there in secret on a painted barge. Among those present were Chairman Mao and Comrade Tung Pi-wu. *Ching Ming*, which takes place around April 5th each year, is a traditional festival. People used to commemorate the dead and visit their graves on that day.



## Visiting the Revolutionary Museum at Raining Flowers Hill

Raining Flowers Hill, where heroes shed their blood,  
Proves that the traitors were misguided fools.  
The masses in the end must always triumph;  
History decides the laws of class struggle.

Photographs, mementos, reveal to us their spirit;  
These courageous comrades will ever be remembered.  
Stepping where their blood was spilt, we march forward,  
Exultant and assured, holding the red flag high.

*18th April 1964*

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Raining Flowers Hill is in the southern suburb of Nanking. In the past Kuo-mintang reactionaries executed revolutionaries there. A revolutionary museum has been constructed on the site.



## On My Ninetieth Birthday

Ninety years have passed as in an instant.  
I regret my few achievements in a troubled life.  
To the unjust rule of five regimes\* I was witness;  
Today we are gradually building a new order.  
Altering the exterior is not sufficient;  
Changes must be wrought also in the heart.  
Improving mountains, rivers, we work together.  
Following Marx and Lenin, we shall always succeed;  
I feel sure our goal will finally be reached.

*5th March 1975*

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\*Refers to the Ching Dynasty, the early period of the Chinese republic, the government of Yuan Shih-kai, the northern warlords period, and the regime of Chiang Kai-shek.

## Reading Tung Pi-wu's Poems

I shall never see them again nor hear their voices,  
But their glorious achievements will live for ever.  
Reading their writings again brings fresh inspiration,  
I seem to hear them speak and remember our goal.

These lines were written by Tung Pi-wu in March 1959 after reading poems by former comrades-in-arms who had died for the revolution. And we draw the same inspiration from the several hundred poems left to us by him.

Tung Pi-wu was born in 1886 when old China was under the yoke of a feudal monarchy and foreign imperialist powers. He witnessed the sufferings inflicted on the people by their enemies at home and abroad and, in order to fight for national resurgence and liberation, early in the twentieth century he joined the patriotic Tung Meng Hui Society led by Dr. Sun Yat-sen. He took part in the 1911 Revolution directed against imperialism and feudalism and in the course of his continuous struggle he discovered Marxism. In 1920 he organized a small group of Chinese Communists in Hupeh Province,

and the next year both he and Mao Tsetung took part in the First National Congress of the Chinese Communist Party. Later, under Mao Tsetung's leadership, he made great contributions to developing a Marxist-Leninist Chinese Communist Party, overthrowing the reactionary rule of imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat-capitalism, carrying out the democratic revolution, consolidating the dictatorship of the proletariat and advancing the socialist revolution and socialist construction. His poems faithfully reflect his life as a revolutionary fighter.

As a steadfast fighter for the ideals of communism, Tung Pi-wu was convinced that the Chinese people armed with Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought would overcome all the forces of reaction. At the start of the War of Resistance Against Japan (1937-1945) when the Japanese imperialists overran large parts of our territory and the situation was extremely grave, he wrote with confidence:

Our determined people have formed a great wall;  
We shall certainly drive out the Japanese invaders.

At the beginning of 1944 when Chiang Kai-shek, arch Kuomintang reactionary, sabotaged the united front of the resistance and provoked a fresh crisis, Tung Pi-wu wrote:

The cock crows again and again,  
Proclaiming that the night is nearing its end.

This expressed his conviction that the dawn was coming and before long we would achieve victory.

After the establishment of our people's republic we went through some difficult years when we suffered from serious natural calamities and the Soviet revisionists stabbed us in the back, breaking contracts and withdrawing Soviet experts. In 1961 Tung Pi-wu wrote the poem *Bright Days Are Ahead; We Must Strive Hard* — this title being a quotation from Chairman Mao — which contained the lines:

We are confident that our future will be bright,  
Our teacher's instructions serving as our compass;  
All obstacles and hardships overcome,  
Red flag raised high we'll herald victory.



August 1970 saw a sharp inner-Party struggle between Chairman Mao's revolutionary line and Lin Piao's revisionist line at Lushan, where Tung Pi-wu wrote:

Incessant days of rain, dark clouds in the mountains;  
The autumn chill moves the gods.  
After the rain, clouds part, the red sun shines,  
The woods are warm on this clear evening.

This description of nature has a deeper meaning: there had been stormy scenes like the natural phenomena of rain and dark clouds caused by a small group of careerists in the Party; but the sun was bound to come out again, dispersing the clouds, and there would be another warm, fine day. This is the law too in revolutionary struggle. In one of the last poems Tung Pi-wu wrote, on the occasion of his ninetieth birthday, he expressed his conviction that communism would certainly be realized in future:

Following Marx and Lenin, we shall always succeed;  
I feel sure our goal will finally be reached.

Tung Pi-wu was utterly loyal to the revolution and hated and despised all reactionaries. This comes out clearly in his references to feudal rulers, foreign imperialists, revisionists and diehards of every kind. He used his poems as javelins to attack them, depicting the Japanese aggressors as savage mad dogs and comparing Chiang Kai-shek, who pretended to resist them while actually sabotaging the resistance, to a monkey in a man's hat. He wrote:

In all parts of the world there is filth;  
We can only win freedom clearing it away.

And again:

An ill wind can whip up a thousand waves,  
But our rectitude strikes dread into everything evil.

He was convinced that the people had the strength to sweep away all pests. In 1971 he wrote scathing indictments of Lin Piao and other anti-Party careerists. One of these is as follows:

A small insect may try to impose on the world,  
A chameleon to hide its true colours;

But under the sun their true nature will be exposed;  
How can they topple the mighty Lushan Mountains?

In his eyes, ambitious conspirators who plotted against the Party and Chairman Mao were just despicable insects, no matter how high their status or how great their power. In another poem Tung Pi-wu pointed out that the efforts of the imperialists and social-imperialists to stem the tide of revolution were doomed to failure.

A praying-mantis attempting to stop a carriage  
Is ground to dust as the bridge is built.

His apt use of such classical allusions as this exhilarates Chinese readers.

All his life Tung Pi-wu was loyal to the people and resolutely supported our great leader Chairman Mao. In a poem written for the opening of the Revolutionary Museum he praised Chairman Mao's magnificent achievements in leading our people from victory to victory:

Many heroes banded together to save China,  
One towered above them, radiant as the sun.  
Who else knew a spark would set the plain ablaze?  
His achievements in the last forty years are past counting.

In many poems Tung Pi-wu expressed his joy that in Chairman Mao the Chinese people had a true Marxist-Leninist teacher to chart their course. He wrote:

We in China have our own teacher.  
.....  
Now we have true Marxism-Leninism.  
.....  
With our teacher at the helm  
We sail safely through dangerous shallows.

In a poem written about Red Cliff Villa in Chungking, where he and Chou En-lai stayed during the War of Resistance to combat the Kuomintang reactionaries, he described his belief in Chairman Mao who had risked his own safety and gone to Chungking to confront the enemy.

Some of Tung Pi-wu's poems reflect his deep friendship for other veteran revolutionaries such as Chu Teh, Yeh Chien-ying, Chen Yi, Hsu Teh-li and Hsieh Chueh-chai, as that written in 1940 when passing Laoshan on his way from Yen-an to Chungking in the Kuomintang occupied area. In 1972 when Chen Yi died, he wrote this poem to express his admiration and grief:

I heard that you had long been gravely ill  
And wanted to visit you but was unable;  
I remember how living as neighbours  
I used to welcome your visits;  
You spoke with passion about affairs of state  
And showed a clear grasp of conditions at the border.  
Now the pillar has fallen, I am stricken with grief;  
Who is there left to speak out as frankly as you?

Tung Pi-wu worked indefatigably all his life for the people and the revolution, but was exceedingly modest and never stopped studying hard. His poems testify to this. More than once he compared himself to an old ox willing to accept a heavy load. He wrote:

Like an old ox which no whip can budge,  
Pushed and tugged I blunder on.

This vivid simile depicted his relationship with the Party and the people. After Liberation, although advanced in years, he went on applying himself to the study of Marxist classics and the works of Chairman Mao as well as history, philosophy and literature. He studied some foreign languages too, the better to serve the people. And he wrote poems brimming over with enthusiasm for our socialist motherland. When he was over eighty, his youngest son Tung Liang-keh went to settle down in the countryside as a peasant. Tung Pi-wu wrote him a letter encouraging him to carry on the revolutionary tradition and become a worthy successor to the revolutionary cause. When a grandson was born Tung Pi-wu wrote a poem for him with these lines:

Your parents are in Tsinghsien  
Busily tilling the land;  
May you grow up quickly  
To work as their assistant.

After Tung Pi-wu was appointed acting chairman of the People's Republic of China he wrote:

I am ashamed to be in this high position,  
Having no new achievements to my credit.  
My old capital, never much,  
Has long since been used up.  
Like a worn-out horse  
I long only for my old stable;  
But perched on the plane-tree's highest bough  
I must learn to sing like the phoenix.

These lines show his modesty and his determination to continue working hard for the revolution.

Tung Pi-wu's poems, imbued with optimism, reflect his deep understanding of reality. Widely read and highly cultured, he wrote some significant poems on natural scenery although the majority of his poems have political themes. *Looking at the Bamboo Outside My Window During My Illness* conveys a sense of joy and vitality. Other poems depict China's magnificent scenery with striking imagery and natural language, an example being the poem about Hainan Island:

On the sea we hear of dragons with thrashing tails,  
On the mountains see rocks resembling deer looking back;  
Coconut palms stand in stately ranks;  
Fishing-boats float far, far away.

Such descriptions evoke a feeling of great space and wide vision.

Tung Pi-wu wrote in classical metres which he had thoroughly mastered, his poems in five-character lines being most outstanding. His language is concise and evocative. One poem in five-character lines is *To Women Comrades on the Train from Hankow to Hsiaokean on Women's Day*:

Grass crushed by a stone does not die;  
Flowers bloom though assailed by frost;  
When spring comes and the stone is removed  
They shoot up as if impelled.

Chinese women were cruelly oppressed until they became liberated under the leadership of the Communist Party, and they are making

great progress in the course of the socialist revolution and socialist construction. Tung Pi-wu conjures up this tremendous change, graphically expressing their past sufferings and the great truth that nothing can stop the revolution in which women have such a big part to play.

Tung Pi-wu has left us now for more than two years. The proletarian spirit which shines through his poems will always be worthy of our study; his poems like his name will always be remembered by the Chinese people.

## A Dream of Red Mansions

### CHAPTER 27

#### Pao-chai Chases a Butterfly to Dripping Emerald Pavilion Tai-yu Weeps over Fallen Blossom by the Tomb of Flowers

As Tai-yu was weeping, the gate creaked open and out came Pao-chai escorted by Pao-yu, Hsi-jen and other maids. Tai-yu was tempted to accost Pao-yu, but not wanting to embarrass him in public she stepped aside until Pao-chai had left and the others had gone in, when she came back and shed more tears before the closed gate. Then she went back in low spirits to her room and prepared listlessly for bed.

Tzu-chuan and Hsueh-yen knew their young mistress' ways. She would often sit moodily frowning or sighing over nothing or, for no apparent reason, would give way to long spells of weeping. At first they had tried to comfort her, imagining that she missed her parents and home or that someone had been unkind; but as time went

by and they found this was her habit they paid little further attention. So tonight they withdrew to bed, leaving her to brood by herself.

Tai-yu leaned against her bed-rail, clasping her knees. Her eyes were brimming with tears. There she stayed motionless as a statue, not lying down until after the second watch.

The next day was the twenty-sixth of the fourth month, the Festival of Grain in Ear. It was the time-honoured custom on this day to offer all manner of gifts and a farewell feast to the God of Flowers, for this festival was said to mark the beginning of summer when all the blossom had withered and the God of Flowers had to resign his throne and be seen off. As this custom is most faithfully observed by women, all the inmates of Grand View Garden rose early that day. The girls used flowers and osiers to weave small sedan-chairs and horses, or made pennants and flags of silk and gauze which they tied with gay ribbons to every tree and flower, turning the whole garden into a blaze of colour. They decked themselves out so prettily, too, as to put the very flowers and birds to shame. But time forbids us to dwell on that splendid scene.

Now Pao-chai, the three Chia girls, Li Wan and Hsi-feng were enjoying themselves in the garden with Hsi-feng's little daughter as well as Hsiang-ling and the other maids. Only one person was missing, and that was Tai-yu.

#### CHIEF CHARACTERS IN CHAPTERS 27 AND 28

<b>Pao-yu</b>	<i>Son of Chia Cheng and Lady Wang</i>	<b>Hsi-feng</b>	<i>Wife of Pao-yu's cousin Chia Lien</i>
<b>Tai-yu</b>	<i>The Lady Dowager's daughter's child, Pao-yu's cousin</i>	<b>Ying-chun</b>	<i>Pao-yu's cousin</i>
<b>Pao-chai</b>	<i>Lady Wang's niece, Pao-yu's cousin</i>	<b>Tan-chun</b>	<i>Pao-yu's half sister</i>
<b>Lady Wang</b>	<i>Pao-yu's mother</i>	<b>Hsi-chun</b>	<i>Pao-yu's cousin</i>
<b>The Lady Dowager</b>	<i>Chia Cheng's mother</i>	<b>Li Wan</b>	<i>Pao-yu's sister-in-law</i>
		<b>Hsueh Pan</b>	<i>Pao-chai's brother, Lady Wang's nephew</i>
		<b>Hsi-jen</b>	<i>Pao-yu's chief maid</i>
		<b>Feng Tzu-ying</b>	<i>A curio dealer</i>





"Why isn't Cousin Lin here?" asked Ying-chun. "Surely the lazy creature isn't still sleeping?"

"I'll go and rouse her," volunteered Pao-chai. "The rest of you wait here and I'll soon bring her."

She set off instantly for Bamboo Lodge.

On the way she met the twelve young actresses headed by Wen-kuan, who greeted her and chatted for a while. Then Pao-chai told them how to find the others and, having explained her own errand, followed the winding path towards Tai-yu's quarters. As she approached Bamboo Lodge she saw Pao-yu enter the courtyard. That made her pause and lower her head in thought.

"Pao-yu and Tai-yu grew up under one roof," she reflected. "They're so free and easy together, they don't care how they tease each other or show their feelings. And Tai-yu's rather jealous and petty-minded. If I follow Pao-yu in, he may not like it and she may resent it. I'd better go back."

She had started back to rejoin the other girls when a pair of jade-coloured butterflies the size of a circular fan appeared before her. They fluttered up and down most bewitchingly in the breeze. What fun it would be to catch them! Pao-chai drew her fan from her sleeve and ran after them over the grass. Flitting now high now low, this way and that, the butterflies led her through the flowers and willows all the way to the water's brink. By the time she neared Dripping Emerald Pavilion, panting and perspiring from all her exertions, she decided to give up the pursuit and go back. But just then she heard muffled voices from the pavilion.

Now this pavilion, which stood out in the middle of the pool, was surrounded on four sides by covered corridors with balustrades and connected with the banks by zigzag bridges. It had papered latticed windows on all four sides. Pao-chai stopped outside it to catch what was being said.

"Look at this handkerchief. If it's the one you lost, you can have it. If not, I'll take it back to Master Yun."

"Of course it's mine. Let me have it."

"What thanks am I going to get? You don't expect me to do this for nothing, do you?"

"Don't worry. I promised you something, I won't cheat you."

"I should hope not, after I've brought it back to you. But how are you going to thank the man who found it?"

"Don't be silly. He's a young gentleman. It's only right he should return what he finds. How could I reward him?"

"If you don't, what am I to say to him? Besides, he told me repeatedly he wouldn't let me give you this unless you offered him some reward."

A short silence followed.

"All right," came the answer at last. "Give him this from me to thank him. But swear you won't let on to a soul."

"If I do, may a boil break out in my mouth and may I die a miserable death!"

Then a note of alarm was sounded.

"Goodness! We've been so busy talking, what if someone's eaves-dropping outside? We'd better open the windows. Then if people see us they'll assume we're just chatting. And if anyone comes near we'll see her and can change the subject."

Pao-chai could hardly believe her ears.

"No wonder they say wicked people have always been cunning!" she thought. "How they're going to blush when they open the window and see me! One of them sounded like that sly, conceited Hsiao-hung who works for Pao-yu. She's a strange crafty creature if ever I saw one. 'Desperation drives men to rebel and a dog to jump over a wall.' If she thinks I know her secret there may be trouble, and that would be awkward for me. Well, it's too late to hide now. I must try to avoid suspicion by throwing them off the scent. . . ."

That same instant she heard the creak of a window opening. At once she ran forward as noisily as she could, calling out laughingly:

"Where are you hiding, Tai-yu?"

Hsiao-hung and Chui-erh, who had just opened the window, were staggered to see her before them.

"Where have you hidden Miss Lin?" Pao-chai asked them merrily.

"Miss Lin? We haven't seen her," Chui-erh answered,

"Just now, from the other bank, I saw her crouching here dabbling in the water. I meant to take her by surprise but she spotted me coming and dashed off to the east. And now she's disappeared. Are you sure she's not hiding in there?"

She deliberately went in and made a search before going on.

"She must have popped into some grotto," she muttered. "If a snake bites her, serve her right."

With that she went off, laughing up her sleeve at the way she had foxed them and wondering what they were thinking.

Hsiao-hung, in fact, had been quite taken in. As soon as Pao-chai was safely out of earshot she caught Chui-erh by the arm.

"Heaven help us!" she whispered. "If Miss Lin was here she must have overheard us."

Chui-erh said nothing, and a long pause followed.

"What shall we do?" asked Hsiao-hung.

"What if she did hear? This is none of her business."

"It wouldn't have been so bad Miss Hsueh overhearing. But Miss Lin's narrow-minded and likes to make cutting remarks. If she heard, and gives us away, what shall we do?"

A stop was put to this discussion by the arrival of Wen-kuan with Hsiang-ling, Ssu-chi and Tai-shu. The two girls chatted with them as if nothing had happened until Hsiao-hung saw Hsi-feng beckoning from the slope. Leaving the other girls, she ran over to her.

"Can I do anything for you, madam?" she asked, smiling sweetly.

Hsi-feng had a close look at her and was favourably impressed by her neat good looks and pleasant way of talking.

"I didn't bring my maids with me today," she said. "But now I've remembered something I want done. Do you think you could deliver a message correctly?"

Hsiao-hung smiled.

"Just give me your instructions, madam. If I don't get the message right and hold up your business, you can punish me."

"Tell me, which of the young ladies do you work for? Then I can explain where you are if she asks for you."

"I'm attached to Master Pao's apartments."

Hsi-feng chuckled.

"I see. That accounts for it. All right, if he asks, I'll let him know where you are. Now go to my house and tell your sister Ping-erh that she'll find a packet containing a hundred and sixty taels of silver under the stand of the *Ju*-ware plate on the table in the outer room. That's for the embroiderers. When Chang Tsai's wife comes, she's to weigh it in her presence and let her take it. And there's another thing. I want you to bring me the pouch which is by the pillow on the bed in the inner room."

Hsiao-hung went off to carry out these orders. She returned presently to find that Hsi-feng had vanished. But Ssu-chi had just emerged from a grotto and stopped to fasten her skirt. Hsiao-hung approached her.

"Know where the Second Mistress has gone?" she asked.

"I didn't notice."

Hsiao-hung looked around and went to ask Tan-chun and Pao-chai, who were watching the fish in a pool not far off.

"You'll find her with Madam Li Wan, I think," Tan-chun told her.

Hsiao-hung promptly set off to Paddy-sweet Cottage, but on the way met Ching-wen and half a dozen other maids.

"Still prancing about!" exclaimed Ching-wen as soon as she set eyes on her. "You haven't watered the flowers, fed the birds or lit the tea-stove in our courtyard, yet you gad about outside."

"Yesterday Master Pao said the flowers needn't be watered today — once every other day would do," Hsiao-hung retorted. "I fed the birds while you were still asleep."

"And what about the tea-stove?" demanded Pi-hen.

"It's not my turn today, so don't ask me whether there's any tea or not."

"Just listen to the way she talks," jeered Chi-hsien. "You'd all better keep quiet and let her fool about."

"Who says I was fooling about?" snapped Hsiao-hung. "I've been on an errand for the Second Mistress."

With that she showed them the pouch to silence them, and they parted company.

"No wonder!" Ching-wen snorted as they walked on. "Now that she's climbed to a higher branch of the tree, she won't pay any more attention to us. Our lady may have thrown her a word or two, without even knowing her name, and she's already eaten up with pride. What's so marvellous about running a little errand? We shall see if anything comes of it or not. If she's all that clever she'd better clear out of this garden and stay perched on the top of the tree."

Hsiao-hung could hardly have it out with her. Swallowing her resentment she went on and found Hsi-feng, sure enough, chatting in Li Wan's apartment. She stepped forward to make her report.

"Sister Ping-erh said, madam, that as soon as Your Ladyship left she put away the money; and when Chang Tsai's wife came for it, she weighed it in her presence and gave it to her." She handed the pouch to Hsi-feng and continued, "Sister Ping-erh asked me to tell Your Ladyship: Just now Lai Wang came to ask for your instructions before setting out to the mansion where you sent him, and she sent him off after explaining Your Ladyship's wishes."

"How did she explain my wishes?" Hsi-feng smiled.

"She said, 'Our lady sends her compliments to Her Ladyship. Our Second Master is away from home now, so Her Ladyship shouldn't worry over a couple of days' delay. When the Fifth Mistress is better, our lady will come with her to see Her Ladyship. The Fifth Mistress sent a servant the other day to report that our lady's sister-in-law had inquired after Her Ladyship in a letter, and hoped her sister-in-law here would oblige her with two longevity pills. If Her Ladyship has any to spare, please send them to our lady, and the next person to go that way will deliver them to her sister-in-law.'"

"Mercy on us!" cut in Li Wan with a laugh. "I've lost track of all these ladies and mistresses."

"I don't blame you." Hsi-feng smiled. "There are five families involved." She turned to Hsiao-hung. "You're a good child and deliver messages clearly, not like some who mince their words or buzz like mosquitoes. You know," she turned to Li Wan, "my dear sister-in-law, I can't stand talking to most of the maids, apart from the few in my service. They don't know it, but I find it quite maddening the way they pad out a sentence and then break it down into several, the

way they mince, drawl and stutter. Our Ping-erh used to be as bad as the rest. I asked her: Does a pretty girl have to buzz like a mosquito? And after a few scoldings she improved."

Li Wan laughed.

"Not everyone is a termagant like you."

"But I like this girl," Hsi-feng continued. "Admittedly, her two messages weren't long, but she spoke to the point." She smiled at Hsiao-hung. "You must come and work for me. I'll make you my adopted daughter and see that you turn out all right."

Hsiao-hung burst out laughing.

"What's so funny?" demanded Hsi-feng. "Do you think, because I'm not much older than you, I'm too young to be your mother? If so, you're crazy. Just ask around. There are plenty of people twice your age eager to call me mother — if only I'd let them. I'm doing you an honour."

"That wasn't why I laughed," replied Hsiao-hung. "I laughed because Your Ladyship has got my generation wrong. My mother's Your Ladyship's adopted daughter, yet now you talk of me as a daughter too."

"Who's your mother?"

"Don't you know her?" put in Li Wan with a smile. "This child is Lin Chih-hsiao's daughter."

"You don't say so!" exclaimed Hsi-feng in surprise. "Why, you can't get a word out of Lin Chih-hsiao and his wife, not even if you stick an awl into them. I've always said they were a well-matched couple, deaf mutes the pair of them. Who could have believed they'd produce such a clever daughter? How old are you?"

"Seventeen."

Next she was asked her name.

"I was first called Hung-yu," she answered. "But because of the *yu* in Master Pao's name they call me Hsiao-hung now."

Hsi-feng frowned and tossed her head.

"Disgusting! You'd think there was something special about *yu*, the way everybody wants that name. So in that case, you can work for me. You know, sister-in-law, I told her mother, 'Lai Ta's wife has her hands full, and anyway she's no idea who's who in

this household. You choose a couple of good maids for me.' And she promised that's what she'd do. But instead, she sends this daughter of hers somewhere else. Did she think the girl would have a bad time with me?"

"How suspicious you are," teased Li Wan. "This child was already here by then. How can you blame her mother?"

"In that case, I'll tell Pao-yu to ask for someone else and send this girl to me — if she's willing, that is."

Hsiao-hung smiled.

"Willing? As if that were for us to say! But if only I could work for you, madam, I'd learn some manners and get more experience."

As she said this a maid came from Lady Wang to summon Hsi-feng, who took her leave of Li Wan. And Hsiao-hung went back to Happy Red Court, where we leave her.

Let us return to Tai-yu, who had risen late after a sleepless night. When she heard that the other girls were farewelling the God of Flowers in the garden, for fear of being laughed at for laziness she made haste to dress and go out. She was crossing the courtyard when Pao-yu came in.

"Dear cousin, did you tell on me yesterday?" he greeted her laughingly. "You had me worrying the whole night long."

Tai-yu turned away from him to Tzu-chuan.

"When you've tidied the rooms, close the screen windows," she instructed. "As soon as the big swallows come back, you can let down the curtains. Move the lion door-stops against them to stop them from flapping. And cover the censer once the incense is lit."

As she said this, she walked on.

Pao-yu attributed this cold behaviour to the lines he had quoted at noon the previous day, having no idea of the incident in the evening. He bowed and raised his clasped hands in salute, but Tai-yu simply ignored him, walking straight off to find the other girls.

Pao-yu was puzzled.

"Surely what happened yesterday can't account for this?" he thought. "And I came back too late in the evening to see her again, so how else can I have offended her?"

With these reflections, he trailed after her.

Tai-yu joined Pao-chai and Tan-chun, who were both watching the storks dancing, and the three girls were chatting together when Pao-yu arrived.

"How are you, brother?" asked Tan-chun. "It's three whole days since last I saw you."

"How are you, sister?" he rejoined. "The other day I was asking our elder sister-in-law about you."

"Come over here. I want to talk to you."

The pair of them strolled aside under a pomegranate tree away from the other two.

"Has father sent for you these last few days?" asked Tan-chun.

Pao-yu smiled.

"No, he hasn't."

"Oh, I thought someone told me he sent for you yesterday."

"That someone must have misheard. He didn't."

Tan-chun chuckled.

"These last few months I've saved a dozen strings of cash. I want you to take them. Next time you go out you can buy me some good calligraphy and paintings, or some amusing toys."

"In my strolls through the squares and temple markets inside and outside the city," Pao-yu told her, "I haven't seen anything novel or really well made. Nothing but curios of gold, jade, bronze or porcelain, which would be out of place here. Or things like silk textiles, food and clothing."

"That's not what I mean. No, but things like you bought me last time: little willow baskets, incense-boxes carved out of bamboo roots, and tiny clay stoves. They were so sweet, I just loved them! But then other people fell in love with them too and grabbed them as if they were treasures."

Pao-yu laughed.

"If that's what you want, those things are dirt cheap. Just give five hundred cash to the pages and they'll fetch you two cartloads."

"Those fellows have no taste. Please choose some things which are simple without being vulgar, and genuine instead of artificial. Do get me a whole lot more, and I'll make you another pair of slippers. I'll put even more work into them than last time. How's that?"

"That reminds me." Pao-yu grinned. "I was wearing your slippers one day when I met father. He asked me disapprovingly who'd made them. It wouldn't have done to tell him it was you, sister; so I said they were a present from Aunt Wang on my last birthday. There wasn't much he could say to that, but after an awful silence he commented, 'What a waste of time and energy and good silk.' When I told Hsi-jen she said: 'Never mind that, but the concubine Chao's been complaining bitterly, 'Her own younger brother Huan's shoes and socks are in holes yet she doesn't care. Instead she embroiders slippers for Pao-yu.'"

Tan-chun frowned.

"Did you ever hear such nonsense?" she fumed. "Is it my job to make shoes? Doesn't Huan have his fair share of clothes, shoes and socks, not to mention a whole roomful of maids and servants? What has *she* got to complain of? Who's she trying to impress? If I make a pair of slippers in my spare time, I can give them to any brother I choose and no one has any right to interfere. She's crazy, carrying on like that."

Pao-yu nodded and smiled.

"Still, it's natural, you know, for her to see things rather differently."

This only enraged Tan-chun more. She tossed her head.

"Now you're talking nonsense too. Of course she sees things differently with that sly, low, dirty mind of hers. Who cares what she thinks? I don't owe any duty to anyone except our parents. If my sisters, brothers and cousins are nice to me, I'll be nice to them too, regardless of which is the child of a wife or the child of a concubine. Properly speaking, I shouldn't say such things, but really that woman's the limit!

"Let me tell you another ridiculous thing too. Two days after I gave you that money to buy knick-knacks, she complained to me she was hard up. I paid no attention, of course. But after my maids left the room, she started scolding me for giving my savings to you instead of to Huan. I didn't know whether to laugh or lose my temper. So I left her and went to see Her Ladyship."

But now Pao-chai called to them laughingly: "Haven't you talked long enough? It's clear you're brother and sister, the way you leave

other people out in the cold to discuss your private affairs. Aren't we allowed to hear a single word?"

They smiled at that and joined her.

Meanwhile Tai-yu had disappeared, and Pao-yu knew she was avoiding him. He decided to wait a couple of days for the storm to blow over before approaching her again. Then, lowering his head, he noticed that the ground was strewn with balsam and pomegranate petals.

"She's too angry even to gather up the blossom," he sighed. "I'll take these over and try to speak to her tomorrow."

At this point Pao-chai urged them to take a stroll.

"I'll join you later," he said.

As soon as the other two had gone, he gathered up the fallen flowers in the skirt of his gown and made his way over a small hill, across a stream and through an orchard towards the mound where Tai-yu had buried the peach-blossom. Just before rounding the hill by the flowers' grave he caught the sound of sobs on the other side. Someone was lamenting and weeping there in a heart-rending fashion.

"Some maid's been badly treated and come here to cry," he thought. "I wonder which of them it is."

He halted to listen. And this is what he heard:

As blossoms fade and fly across the sky,  
Who pities the faded red, the scent that has been?  
Softly the gossamer floats over spring pavilions,  
Gently the willow fluff wafts to embroidered screen.

A girl in her chamber mourns the passing of spring,  
No relief from anxiety her poor heart knows;  
Hoe in hand she steps through her portal,  
Loath to tread on the blossom as she comes and goes.

Willows and elms, fresh and verdant,  
Care not if peach and plum blossom drift away;  
Next year the peach and plum will bloom again,  
But her chamber may stand empty on that day.



By the third month the scented nests are built,  
But the swallows on the beam are heartless all;  
Next year, though once again you may peck the buds,  
From the beam of an empty room your nest will fall.

Each year for three hundred and sixty days  
The cutting wind and biting frost contend.  
How long can beauty flower fresh and fair?  
In a single day wind can whirl it to its end.

Fallen, the brightest blooms are hard to find;  
With aching heart their grave-digger comes now  
Alone, her hoe in hand, her secret tears  
Falling like drops of blood on each bare bough.

Dusk falls and the cuckoo is silent;  
Her hoe brought back, the lodge is locked and still;  
A green lamp lights the wall as sleep enfolds her,  
Cold rain pelts the casement and her quilt is chill.

What causes my two-fold anguish?  
Love for spring and resentment of spring;  
For suddenly it comes and suddenly goes,  
Its arrival unheralded, noiseless its departing.

Last night from the courtyard floated a sad song —  
Was it the soul of blossom, the soul of birds?  
Hard to detain the soul of blossom or birds,  
For blossoms have no assurance, birds no words.

I long to take wing and fly  
With the flowers to earth's uttermost bound;  
And yet at earth's uttermost bound  
Where can a fragrant burial mound be found?

Better shroud the fair petals in silk  
With clean earth for their outer attire;  
For pure you came and pure shall go,  
Not sinking into some foul ditch or mire.

Now you are dead I come to bury you;  
None has divined the day when I shall die;  
Men laugh at my folly in burying fallen flowers,  
But who will bury me when dead I lie?

See, when spring draws to a close and flowers fall,  
This is the season when beauty must ebb and fade;  
The day that spring takes wing and beauty fades  
Who will care for the fallen blossom or dead maid?

Pao-yu, listening, was overwhelmed with grief. To know more of this, read the next chapter.

## CHAPTER 28

### Chiang Yu-han Gives a New Friend a Scarlet Perfumed Sash Pao-chai Bashfully Shows Her Red Bracelet Scented with Musk

As we saw, Tai-yu held Pao-yu to blame for her exclusion by Ching-wen the previous night. As today happened to be the occasion for feasting the God of Flowers, her pent-up resentment merged with her grief at the transience of spring, and as she buried the fading petals she could not help weeping over her own fate and composing a lament.

Pao-yu listened from the slope. At first he just nodded in sympathy, until she came to the lines:

Men laugh at my folly in burying fallen flowers,  
But who will bury me when dead I lie?  
The day that spring takes wing and beauty fades  
Who will care for the fallen blossom or dead maid?

At this point he flung himself wretchedly down on the ground, scattering his load of fallen flowers, heart-broken to think that Tai-yu's loveliness and beauty must one day vanish away; and it followed that the same fate awaited Pao-chai, Hsiang-ling, Hsi-jen and all the

rest. When at last they were all gone, what would become of him? And if he had no idea where he would be by then, what would become of this place and all the flowers and willows in the garden and who would take them over? One reflection led to another until, after repeated ruminations, he wished he were some insensible, stupid object, able to escape all earthly entanglements and be free from such wretchedness despite the —

Shadows of blossom all around,  
Birdsong on every side.

Tai-yu, giving way to her own grief, heard weeping now on the slope.

“Everyone laughs at me for being foolish. Is there someone else equally foolish?” she asked herself.

Then, looking up, she saw Pao-yu.

“So that’s who it is,” she snorted. “That heartless, wretched. . . .”

But the moment the word “wretched” escaped her she covered her mouth and moved quickly away with a long sigh.

When Pao-yu recovered sufficiently to look up she had gone, obviously to avoid him. Getting up rather sheepishly, he dusted off his clothes and walked down the hill to make his way back again to Happy Red Court. Catching sight of Tai-yu ahead, he overtook her.

“Do stop!” he begged. “I know you won’t look at me, but let me just say one word. After that we can part company for good.”

Tai-yu glanced round and would have ignored him but was curious to hear this “one word”, thinking there must be something in it. She came to a halt.

“Out with it.”

Pao-yu smiled.

“Would you listen if I said two words?” he asked.

At once she walked away.

Pao-yu, close behind her, sighed.

“Why are things so different now from in the past?”

Against her will she stopped once more and turned her head.

“What do you mean by ‘now’ and ‘the past’?”

Pao-yu heaved another sigh.

“Wasn’t I your playmate when you first came?” he demanded. “Anything that pleased me was yours, cousin, for the asking. If I knew you fancied a favourite dish of mine, I put it away in a clean place till you came. We ate at the same table and slept on the same bed. I took care that the maids did nothing to upset you; for I thought cousins growing up together as such good friends should be kinder to each other than anyone else. I never expected you to grow so proud that now you have no use for me while you’re so fond of outsiders like Pao-chai and Hsi-feng. You ignore me or cut me for three or four days at a time. I’ve no brothers or sisters of my own — only two by a different mother, as well you know. So I’m an only child like you, and I thought that would make for an affinity between us. But apparently it was no use my hoping for that. There’s nobody I can tell how unhappy I am.” With that, he broke down again.

This appeal and his obvious wretchedness melted her heart. But though shedding tears of sympathy, she kept her head lowered and made no reply.

This encouraged Pao-yu to go on.

“I know my own faults. But however bad I may be, I’d never dare do anything to hurt you. If I do something the least bit wrong, you can tick me off, warn me, scold me or even strike me, and I won’t mind. But when you just ignore me and I can’t tell why, I’m at my wit’s end and don’t know what to do. If I die now I can only become a ‘ghost hounded to death’, and not even the masses of the best bonzes and Taoists will be able to save my soul. I can only be born again if you’ll tell me what’s wrong.”

By now Tai-yu’s resentment over the previous evening was completely forgotten.

“Then why did you tell your maids not to open the gate when I called last night?” she asked.

“Whatever do you mean?” he cried in amazement. “If I did such a thing, may I die on the spot.”

“Hush! Don’t talk about dying so early in the morning. Did you or didn’t you? There’s no need to swear.”

“I honestly knew nothing about your coming. Pao-chai did drop in for a chat, but she didn’t stay long.”



Tai-yu thought this over.

"Yes," she said more cheerfully, "I suppose your maids felt too lazy to stir and that made them answer rudely."

"That's it, for sure. I shall find out who it was when I get back and give them a good scolding."

"Those maids of yours deserve one, although of course that's not for me to say. It doesn't matter their offending *me*, but think what trouble there'll be if next time they offend your precious Pao-chai!"

She compressed her lips to smile, and Pao-yu did not know whether to grind his teeth or laugh.

They were summoned now to a meal and went over to his mother's apartment where, on seeing Tai-yu, Lady Wang asked:

"Has Doctor Pao's medicine done you any good, child?"

"Not much," the girl answered. "The old lady wants me to try Doctor Wang's medicine."

"You don't know, madam," said Pao-yu, "Cousin Lin suffers from an inherited weakness and has such a delicate constitution that she can't stand the least little chill. All she needs is a couple of doses to clear this up. Some pills would be best for her."

"The other day the doctor recommended some pills," said his mother. "I can't quite recall the name."

"I can guess," said Pao-yu. "Just ginseng tonic pills."

"That wasn't it."

"Eight-treasure-leonorus pills then? Left restorative? Right restorative? Or, failing that, six-flavour-digitalis pills?"

"No, it wasn't any of those. All I can remember are the words 'guardian angel'."

Pao-yu clapped his hands and laughed.

"I've never heard of guardian-angel pills. If there are guardian-angel pills there must be bodhisattva powders too."

Everyone in the room burst out laughing.

Trying to repress a smile Pao-chai suggested: "Were they heavenly-king-fortifying-the-heart pills?"

"That's it," said Lady Wang. "How muddle-headed I've grown."

"You're not muddle-headed, madam," her son assured her. "Those angels and bodhisattvas have muddled you."

"That's enough from you," she scolded. "It's time your father gave you another beating."

"My father wouldn't beat me for that."

"Since we know the name we'll send out tomorrow to buy some."

"Those remedies are useless," protested Pao-yu. "If you'll give me three hundred and sixty taels of silver, I'll make up some pills for my cousin and I guarantee she'll be cured before they're all taken."

"Have some sense! What pills could be so expensive?"

Pao-yu chuckled.

"It's true. This is a unique prescription. I won't go into all the strange ingredients now, but one's the afterbirth of a first-born child, another's man-shaped ginseng roots with leaves on them — these alone would cost more than three hundred and sixty taels. Then there's polygonum the size of a tortoise, pachyma from the root of a thousand-year-old pine, and other things of the same sort. These are nothing unusual, just ordinary herbs; but the chief ingredient would give you a shock. Cousin Hsueh Pan pestered me for more than a year to give him this prescription. Even then, it took him more than two years and about a thousand taels of silver to have it made up. If you don't believe me, madam, ask Cousin Pao-chai."

Pao-chai raised a protesting hand, smiling.

"I know nothing and never heard a word about it. So don't refer auntie to me."

"After all she's a good girl," said Lady Wang. "Pao-chai wouldn't tell a lie."

Pao-yu turned where he was standing and clapped his hands.

"But it's the truth I'm telling you. Yet you accuse me of lying."

Whirling back he caught sight of Tai-yu, who was seated behind Pao-chai, laughingly drawing one finger across her cheek to shame him.

Hsi-feng had been supervising the laying of the tables in the inner room but now she came out to join in the discussion.

"Pao-yu isn't fibbing," she declared. "It's true. The other day Hsueh Pan came to me for some pearls. 'What for?' I wanted to know."

"He said, 'For a prescription.' And he grumbled, 'If I'd known all the trouble involved, I'd have left it alone.'

"I asked, 'What prescription is it?'

"He said, 'One of Pao-yu's.'

"I hadn't time to listen to all the ingredients he listed. Then he said, 'I could have bought some pearls, but pearls for this medicine must have been worn on the head. That's why I've come to you. If you haven't any loose ones, let me take the pearls from one of your trinkets and I'll find you some good ones later to replace them.'

"So I had to give him a couple of my pearl trinkets. He wanted three feet of red gauze from the palace too. Said he meant to grind the pearls into a fine powder to be mixed with other powdered ingredients."

Pao-yu had punctuated Hsi-feng's speech with cries of "Buddha be praised! The sun shines at last in this room." As soon as she had finished he put in:

"This is actually only a makeshift, madam. The real prescription calls for pearls and gems worn by wealthy ladies of old from ancient tombs. But we can hardly go and dig up graves, can we? So we have to make do with pearls worn by living people."

"Amida Buddha!" cried Lady Wang. "The ideal! Even if there are pearls in old tombs, how can you dig them up and disturb the bones of people dead for all those hundreds of years? No medicine made that way could be any good."

Pao-yu appealed to Tai-yu.

"You heard what's been said. Would my cousin Hsi-feng back me up if I were lying?" Although facing Tai-yu, he glanced at Pao-chai as he spoke.

Tai-yu caught Lady Wang's arm.

"Just listen to him, auntie. When Pao-chai won't back up his fib, he appeals to me."

"Yes, Pao-yu is good at bullying you," said Lady Wang.

"You don't know the reason, madam." Pao-yu grinned. "Even when Cousin Pao-chai lived with her family she didn't know her brother's doings; so she knows even less now that she's in the garden.

But just now Cousin Tai-yu, sitting at the back, made a sign that she thought I was fibbing."

A maid came in then to summon Pao-yu and Tai-yu to dinner with the Lady Dowager. Without a word to Pao-yu, Tai-yu rose and started leading the maid away.

"Won't you wait for Master Pao?" asked the maid.

"He doesn't want anything to eat," replied Tai-yu. "Come on, let's go. I'm going." She walked out.

"I'll eat here with you, madam," said Pao-yu.

"No, no," objected Lady Wang. "This is one of my meatless days, so run along and have a proper meal."

"I'll have vegetarian food with you." He sent the maid away and took a seat at the table.

His mother told Pao-chai and the other girls to go ahead with their own meal and ignore him.

"You'd better go," Pao-chai urged him. "Even if you don't want anything to eat you should keep Tai-yu company, she's not feeling happy."

"Never mind her," he answered. "She'll be all right presently."

But as soon as the meal was over he called for tea to rinse his mouth, suspecting that his grandmother might be worried by his absence and worried himself about Tai-yu.

Tan-chun and Hsi-chun smiled.

"Why are you always in such a hurry, brother?" they teased. "Even rushing through your meals and tea."

"Let him finish quickly and join Cousin Lin," said Pao-chai. "Why should he fool around here?"

Pao-yu gulped down his tea then and left, making straight for the west court. On the way he found Hsi-feng standing in the gateway of her compound and picking her teeth with an earpick as she watched a dozen pages move some flower-pots.

"You've turned up just at the right time," she called to him with a smile. "Come on in. I want you to write something for me."

Pao-yu had no option but to follow her in.

Once inside Hsi-feng called for a brush, inkstone and paper and started dictating to him:

"Forty rolls of red flowered satin; forty rolls of satin with serpent designs; a hundred rolls of imperial gauze of different colours; four gold necklaces."

"What is all this?" asked Pao-yu. "It sounds neither like an account nor a list of presents. How am I supposed to write it?"

"Just put it down. So long as I know what it means that'll do."

Pao-yu did as he was told. And when he had finished she put the list away.

"There's something else I want, if you're agreeable," she then said with a smile. "I'd like that maid called Hung-yu in your place to come and work for me. I'll find you a few others instead later. All right?"

"My place is swarming with people," said Pao-yu. "Take any of them you like. You don't have to ask."

"In that case, I'll send someone to fetch her."

"Do."

He was starting to leave when Hsi-feng called him back, saying that she had something else to tell him.

"The old lady is waiting for me," he demurred. "You can tell me when I come back."

By the time he reached the Lady Dowager's quarters they had finished their meal there.

"Well," his grandmother asked, "what good things did your mother give you to eat?"

"Nothing special, but I had one bowl of rice more than usual. Where's Cousin Lin?"

"In the inner room."

Pao-yu went in and saw a maid blowing at the charcoal in an iron. Two others were chalking patterns on the *kang* where Tai-yu, bending over, was cutting out some material. He walked forward with a smile.

"Why, what are you doing?" he asked. "Stooping like that just after a meal will bring your headache back."

Tai-yu paid no attention but went on with her work.

"That corner of the silk is still rather crumpled," one of the maids remarked. "Better iron it again."

"Never mind it." Tai-yu put down her scissors. "It'll be all right presently."

Pao-yu was digesting this snub when Pao-chai, Tan-chun and the others arrived to chat with the old lady. Soon Pao-chai stepped into the inner room and asked Tai-yu what she was doing, then watched her at work.

"How clever you're getting," she commented, "even able to cut out clothes."

"This is just another specious way of fooling people," retorted Tai-yu.

Pao-chai smiled.

"Let me tell you something funny," she volunteered. "Cousin Pao's annoyed with me because I denied knowing anything about that medicine."

"Never mind him. He'll be all right presently."

Pao-yu told Pao-chai, "The old lady wants to play cards and there aren't enough people. Won't you take a hand?"

Again Pao-chai smiled.

"Of course, that's what I came for."

As she went out Tai-yu called after her, "You had better leave. There's a tiger here who might eat you."

She went on with her cutting and ignored Pao-yu, who suggested with a conciliatory smile: "Why don't you take a stroll before doing any more?"

Tai-yu remained silent.

"Who told her to do this?" he asked the maids.

"Whoever it was," said Tai-yu, "it's none of Master Pao's business."

Before he could say any more a servant came in to announce that someone was waiting outside to see him. As he hurried out Tai-yu called after him:

"Buddha be praised! I hope I'm dead before you come back."

Outside he found Pei-ming, who told him that Feng Tzu-ying had invited him over. Remembering what had been said the previous day, Pao-yu sent for his outdoor clothes and waited for them in the library.

Pei-ming went to the second gate, where he waited until an old woman appeared.

"Master Pao is in the library waiting for his outdoor clothes," he announced. "Do you mind going in to tell them?"

"You farting fool!" she cried. "Master Pao lives in the garden now and so do all his attendants. Why bring the message here?"

"Of course." Pei-ming laughed. "How idiotic of me."

He hurried to the inner gate on the east and got one of the lads playing ball by the paved passageway to run in with the message. The youngster came back after a while with a bundle which Pei-ming carried to the library.

Pao-yu, having changed, called for his horse and set off with only four pages: Pei-ming, Chu-yao, Shuang-jui and Shuang-shou. When they reached Feng Tzu-ying's gate and were announced, Feng came out to welcome them. Hsueh Pan had already been there for some time with a number of singing boys, Chiang Yu-han, an actor who played female roles, and Yun-erh, a courtesan from Brocade Fragrance Court. The introductions were made and tea was served.

Raising his cup Pao-yu smiled at their host.

"Your remark the other day about good fortune and bad has been on my mind ever since," he said. "So as soon as your summons arrived I hurried over."

"How trusting you all are." Feng Tzu-ying chuckled. "That was just an excuse to get you over here, for otherwise I was afraid you might decline. Fancy your taking it so seriously?"

Amid laughter wine was brought in and they took their seats in due order. Feng made one of the boy singers pour the wine and asked Yun-erh to their table to toast the guests. After three cups Hsueh Pan grew rowdy and seized her hand.

"Sing a nice new song for me," he begged, "and I'll drink a whole jarful of wine. How about it?"

Yun-erh had no choice but to take her *pipa* and sing:

*Two lovers have I,  
From both I'm loath to part,  
For while I think of one*

*The other's in my heart.  
Both have so many charms  
They're hard to list;  
Last night by the rose trellis  
Was our tryst.  
One came to make love, one to spy;  
Caught in the act was I  
And, challenged by the two of them,  
Could think of no reply!*

This sung, she said, "All right, now drink a jar."

"That wasn't worth a whole jar," protested Hsueh Pan. "Let's hear something better."

"Listen," put in Pao-yu. "If you drink so fast, you'll soon be drunk and we shan't have any fun. Suppose I empty a goblet first and we play a new game of forfeits? Anyone who doesn't do as I say will have to drain ten goblets in succession and leave the table to wait on the others."

When they all agreed to this, he picked up a goblet and drained it.

"Now," he said, "you must all make four lines about a girl's sorrow, her worry, her joy and her delight, explaining the reason for each. Then you must drink a cup of wine, sing a new popular song, and recite either a line from an old poem or couplet, or a saying from the Four Books or the Five Classics connected with some object on the table."

Before he had finished Hsueh Pan was on his feet protesting.

"I'm not doing that. Count me out. You just want to make fun of me."

Yun-erh stood up to push him back on to his seat.

"What are you afraid of?" she teased. "Don't you drink every day? Aren't you even up to me? I'm going to join in. If you do all right, well and good; if not, it won't kill you to drink a few cups. Or would you rather refuse and have to drink ten goblets and wait on the rest of us?"

All clapped their approval and Hsueh Pan had to subside.

Pao-yu began:

"The girl's sorrow: Youth is passing but she remains single.  
The girl's worry: Her husband leaves home to make his fortune.  
The girl's joy: Her good looks in the mirror in the morning.  
The girl's delight: Swinging in a light spring gown."  
All cried "Good!" except Hsueh Pan, who shook his head.  
"No good," he growled. "He ought to pay a forfeit."  
"Why?" asked the others.  
"Because I didn't understand a word."

Yun-erh gave him a pinch.

"Keep quiet and think out your lines. If you don't, you'll be the one to pay a forfeit."

She accompanied Pao-yu on the *pipa* as he sang:

*Like drops of blood fall endless tears of longing,  
By painted pavilion grow willows and flowers untold;  
Sleepless at night when wind and rain lash gauze windows,  
She cannot forget her sorrows new and old;  
Choking on rice like jade and wine like gold,  
She turns from her wan reflection in the glass;  
Nothing can smooth away her frown,  
It seems that the long night will never pass;  
Like the shadow of peaks, her grief is never gone;  
Like the green stream it flows for ever on.*

The only one not to applaud this song was Hsueh Pan.

"You were off beat," he objected.

Pao-yu drained his cup and picked up a slice of pear from the table.

"'Rain buffets the pear blossom and the door is closed,'" he quoted.

It was now Feng Tzu-ying's turn. He started off:

"The girl's sorrow: Her husband falls mortally ill.

The girl's worry: Her boudoir in the tower is blown down.

The girl's joy: Twin sons at her first confinement.

The girl's delight: Catching crickets on the sly in the garden."

Next, raising his cup, he sang:

*You can bill and you can coo,  
Be an imp of mischief too,*

*But a fairy? No, not you,  
For my word you doubt.  
Ask around and you'll find out  
I love you, yes, I do!*

Then, having drunk up, he picked up a piece of chicken.

"'A cock crows at the moon by the rustic inn,'" was his quotation.

Yun-erh's turn came next and she began:

"The girl's sorrow: Will she find a husband to support her?"

Hsueh Pan sighed.

"Why child," he said, "with Master Hsueh here, what have you to worry about?"

"Don't muddle her," cried the others. "Don't muddle her."

Yun-erh went on:

"The girl's worry: When will the bawd stop beating and scolding her?"

Hsueh Pan cut in, "The other day when I saw that bawd of yours, I told her not to beat you."

"If you interrupt again," the others warned him, "you'll have to drink ten cups."

At once he slapped his own cheek.

"You've been warned. Not another word now!"

Yun-erh continued:

"The girl's joy: Her lover cannot bear to go home.

The girl's delight: The pipes hushed, she plays a stringed instrument."

Then she sang:

*On the third of the third moon blooms the cardamom;  
Fain to creep into it an insect is come;  
Failing to enter it clings  
To the petals and there it swings.  
Dear heart, if I don't let you in,  
Your chances are thin!*

She drained her cup and picked up a peach saying, "'The peach trees are in blossom.'"

It was now Hsueh Pan's turn.

"All right," he said. "Here goes. The girl's sorrow..." A long pause followed.

"What is she sad about?" Feng Tzu-ying prompted him. "Go on."

Hsueh Pan's eyes bulged, he was so frantic.

"The girl's sorrow..."

He cleared his throat twice and persevered:

"The girl's sorrow: She marries a queer."

A roar of laughter went up.

"What's so funny?" he demanded. "Is that wrong? Wouldn't a girl be sad if the man she married insisted on being a bugger?"

Doubled up with laughter they gasped, "Quite right. Hurry up and go on."

His eyes bulging again he proceeded, "The girl's worry..." Once more his voice trailed away.

"Well, what's the worry?"

"The girl's worry: A big gorilla springs out of her boudoir."

Roaring with laughter they cried, "Make him pay the forfeit. The last could just pass but this is impossible."

However, before they could fill the goblet Pao-yu put in, "As long as he rhymes it, that's good enough."

"If the man in charge passes it," blustered Hsueh Pan, "why should you lot kick up such a fuss?"

The others gave way.

"The next two lines are more difficult," said Yun-erh. "Suppose I do them for you?"

"Nonsense. You think I've nothing better coming? Listen.

"The girl's joy: Rising late after her wedding night."

"How poetic he's growing!" they exclaimed.

"The girl's delight: A good fuck."

All turned away crying, "For shame! Hurry up with your song."

Then he sang:

*A mosquito buzzes, hum-hum.*

"What sort of song do you call this?" they demanded.

He went on:

*Two flies drone, buzz-buzz.*

"That's enough. Shut up!" they cried.

"All right, if you don't want it. That's a new song called *Hum-hum*. If you can't be bothered to listen and want me to stop, you must let me off the drinking."

"We'll let you off. You're just holding up other people."

Then Chiang Yu-han took over.

"The girl's sorrow: Her husband leaves, never to return.

The girl's worry: She has no money to buy pomade.

The girl's joy: The wick forms two heads like a double flower.\*

The girl's delight: Husband and wife in harmony."

Next he sang:

*So many charms has Heaven given you,*

*You seem a goddess come down from the blue;*

*And blooming youth, life's springtide,*

*Is just the time to mate the lovebirds true.*

*The watch-tower drum is beating now,*

*The Milky Way gleams high above;*

*Make haste to trim the silver lamp*

*And draw the bridal curtains on our love.*

This sung, he raised his cup and said, "I know very few poems, but luckily I remember a line of a couplet I read yesterday which happens to fit an object on the table."

Having drained his cup he picked up a sprig of fragrant osmanthus and quoted:

"When the fragrance of flowers assails men we know the day is warm."

Everyone passed this, and so the game ended. But Hsueh Pan leapt to his feet.

"You've gone too far!" he shouted. "You must pay a forfeit. How can you mention a treasure that isn't here?"

Chiang Yu-han was puzzled.

\*A superstition meaning her husband is coming.

"What treasure?"

"Don't try to deny it. Repeat that line again."

The actor complied.

"Doesn't the fragrance of flowers assailing men mean Hsi-jen\* and isn't Hsi-jen a treasure?" demanded Hsueh Pan. "If you don't believe me, ask him." He pointed at Pao-yu.

In some embarrassment Pao-yu stood up.

"How many cups should we fine you, cousin, for this?" he asked.

"All right. I'll pay the penalty."

Hsueh Pan picked up his cup and tossed it off.

Feng Tzu-ying and Chiang Yu-han asked for an explanation; and when Yun-erh told them who Hsi-jen was, the actor rose to his feet to apologize.

"You're not to blame," said the others. "You didn't know."

Presently Pao-yu left the room to relieve himself, and Chiang Yu-han followed him out to apologize once more in the corridor. Pao-yu was much taken by his charming appearance. Claspng his hand tightly he said:

"When you've time, do come and see me. By the way, I've something to ask you. In your honourable company there's an actor called Chi-kuan who's known all over the country, but I've never had a chance to see him."

Chiang Yu-han smiled.

"That's my stage name."

Pao-yu stamped one foot in delight.

"What luck!" he cried. "You certainly live up to your reputation. How can I mark this first meeting?"

After a second's thought he drew the fan from his sleeve, unfastened the jade pendant on it and gave this to the actor.

"Please accept this trifle as a mark of my friendship."

"What have I done to deserve this?" Chi-kuan smiled. "All right, I've something unusual here which I only put on for the first

\*The name Hsi-jen, literally "assails men", was coined by Pao-yu with this line of verse in mind.



time this morning. It's still quite new. A small token of my devotion."

He raised his gown to undo the scarlet sash round his waist and handed it to Pao-yu.

"This was part of the tribute from the queen of Chienhsiang," he explained. "Worn in summer, it will perfume your skin and stop you from perspiring. I was given it by the Prince of Peiching yesterday, and I put it on for the first time this morning. I wouldn't dream of giving it to anybody else. Would you mind letting me have your own in exchange, sir?"

Pao-yu took the scarlet sash with the greatest of pleasure, then untied his own pale green one and handed it to the actor. They were both fastening their new sashes when they heard a loud shout.

"Caught in the act!"

It was Hsueh Pan who bounded over to seize them.

"What are you up to?" he cried. "Leaving your wine and slipping away from the feast! Come on, let's see what you've got there."

When they told him "Nothing," he refused to believe them. Not until Feng Tzu-ying came out did he let them go. Then they went back to their seats and drank until the evening, when the party broke up.

On Pao-yu's return to the garden he took off his outer garments to drink tea and Hsi-jen, noticing that his fan-pendant was missing, asked what had become of it.

"I must have lost it out riding," said Pao-yu.

But when he went to bed and she saw the blood-red sash round his waist, she knew more or less what had happened.

"Now that you've got a better sash, will you return mine?" she asked.

Only then did he remember that the green sash belonged to Hsi-jen and he should never have given it away. He was sorry but could hardly explain to her what had happened.

"I'll get you another," he promised.

"I know what you've been up to again." She nodded and sighed. "You've no right to give my things to those low creatures. You should know better."

She let it go at that and went to bed too, afraid to provoke him after he had been drinking.

As soon as she woke the next morning, Pao-yu confronted her with a smile.

"You wouldn't know if a thief came in the night," he said. "Look at your pants."

Hsi-jen looked down and saw that the sash he had worn the previous day was now round her own waist. Aware that he had changed it during the night, she immediately took it off.

"I'm not interested in such trash. Take it away."

He pleaded with her until she consented to wear it. But as soon as he left the room she took it off, threw it into an empty case and put on another. Pao-yu did not notice this on his return.

"Did anything happen yesterday?" he asked.

"Madam Lien sent over for Hsiao-hung. The girl wanted to wait for your return but I didn't think that necessary, so I took it upon myself to send her away."

"Quite right. I knew. There was no need for her to wait."

"And yesterday the Imperial Consort sent the eunuch Hsia here with a hundred and twenty taels to be spent on masses, theatricals and sacrifices on the first three days of the month at Ethereal Abbey. She wants Lord Chen to take all the gentlemen there to burn incense and worship Buddha. She also sent over presents for the Dragon Boat Festival."

Hsi-jen told a young maid to fetch his gifts: two fine palace fans, two strings of red beads scented with musk, two lengths of phoenix-tail silk, and a bamboo mat woven in a lotus pattern.

Pao-yu, delighted with these things, asked if the others had received the same gifts.

"The old lady had an extra sandalwood *ju-yi* sceptre and agate pillow. Lady Wang, Lord Cheng and Madam Hsueh each had an extra sandalwood sceptre. You got the same as Miss Hsueh, while Miss Lin and the three other young ladies were given fans and beads, nothing else. Madam Li Wan and Madam Lien each had two rolls of gauze, two rolls of silk, two aromatic pouches and two pills from the palace."





"How can that be?" asked Pao-yu smilingly. "Why did Miss Hsueh get the same as me and not Miss Lin? There must be some mistake."

"Impossible. Each share was labelled when they were brought yesterday. Yours went to the old lady's apartments, and when I fetched it she said you must go to the palace at the fifth watch tomorrow to give thanks."

"Yes, of course."

He called for Tzu-hsiao.

"Take these things to Miss Lin," he instructed her. "Tell her this is what I got yesterday and she can keep anything she fancies."

The maid did as she was told, coming back to report, "Miss Lin says she received presents too; she wants you to keep yours."

He had the things put away then and washed his face before setting off to pay his respects to his grandmother. Meeting Tai-yu on the way, he hurried up to her with a smile.

"Why didn't you pick any of my things, as I asked?"

Tai-yu had forgotten her earlier grievance in her preoccupation with this new incident.

"I'm not cut out for such good fortune," she said. "I can't compare with Cousin Pao-chai and her gold and jade. I'm just as common as any plant or tree."

Pao-yu caught this innuendo.

"Other people may talk about gold and jade," he protested, "but if such an idea ever crossed my mind, may Heaven and earth destroy me! May I never again be reborn in human form!"

Tai-yu knew from this how hurt he felt.

"What nonsense," she scoffed. "Why make such oaths for no reason? Who cares about your gold and jade anyway?"

"It's hard to tell you all that's in my heart, but you'll understand some day. You're the closest person in the world to me after my grandmother and my own parents. I swear there's no one else."

"There's no need to swear. I know I have a place in your heart. But whenever you see *her*, you forget all about me."

"That's your imagination. I'm not like that."

"Why did you appeal to me when Pao-chai refused to back up your fib yesterday? If I'd refused, goodness knows what you'd have done."

Seeing Pao-chai approaching just then, they moved on. And pretending not to have seen them — although she had — she walked on with lowered head to chat with Lady Wang before going on to the Lady Dowager's apartments. She found Pao-yu already there.

Now ever since her mother had told Lady Wang about the gold locket given to Pao-chai by a monk and his prediction that she would only marry a man with jade, Pao-chai had been rather distant to Pao-yu. Yuan-chun's gift of identical presents to them the previous day had made her even more sensitive on this score. Fortunately Pao-yu was so wrapped up in Tai-yu, so utterly engrossed in her, that he paid no attention to this coincidence.

Without warning now he asked Pao-chai to let him have a look at the red bead bracelet scented with musk on her left wrist. She had no alternative but to take it off. She was so plump, however, that this was by no means easy. And while he stood admiring her soft white arm it occurred to him: If she were Tai-yu, I might have a chance to stroke her arm. Too bad for me that it's hers!

Suddenly remembering the talk about gold and jade, he looked at Pao-chai more closely. Her face seemed a silver disc, her eyes were lustrous and almond-shaped, her lips red without rouge, her eyebrows dark without being pencilled. She was charming in quite a different way from Tai-yu. He was so fascinated that when she pulled off the bracelet and offered it to him, he did not even take it.

Embarrassed by the way he was staring, Pao-chai put the bracelet down and turned to go. She saw Tai-yu then in the doorway, biting her handkerchief with a mocking smile.

"Why are you standing there in a draught?" asked Pao-chai. "You know how easily you catch cold."

"I was indoors until I heard a strange bird-cry. When I came out to look, it was only a silly goose."

"Where is this silly goose? I'd like to see it."

"As soon as I came out it flapped away."

With these words she flicked Pao-yu's face with her handkerchief, catching him right on the eyes. He uttered an exclamation of surprise.

To know what came of this, read the next chapter.

*Illustrated by Tai Tun-pang*



## Restudying Chairman Mao's "Letter Concerning the Study of *The Dream of the Red Chamber*"

Chairman Mao in his *Letter Concerning the Study of "The Dream of the Red Chamber"* pointed out: "Enclosed are two articles refuting Yu Ping-po. Please read them. It is the first time in over thirty years that a serious attack has been levelled against the erroneous views of the so-called authorities on *The Dream of the Red Chamber*." He also predicted: "It seems that a struggle may now be able to get under way against the Hu Shih school of bourgeois idealism in the field of classical literature which has poisoned the minds of young people for more than thirty years."

The so-called authorities referred to by Chairman Mao were the comprador-scholar Dr. Hu Shih who wrote an article *Studies on "The Dream of the Red Chamber"* and Yu Ping-po who wrote *Studies of "The Dream of the Red Chamber"*. What erroneous views did these two "authorities" put forward? To answer this we should first make clear the nature of this well-known Chinese novel.

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Li Hsi-fan, one of the two "nobodies" mentioned in Chairman Mao's letter, is now working as an editor of *Renmin Ribao (The People's Daily)*.

*Hung Lou Meng* or *A Dream of Red Mansions*, formerly translated as *The Dream of the Red Chamber*, is a brilliantly written eighteenth-century novel with progressive significance. It centres round the tragic love between young Chia Pao-yu and his girl cousin Lin Tai-yu, both of them rebels from upper-class families whose romance ends in tragedy. The novel reveals the sufferings of both young ladies and bondmaids caused by the feudal code of morality which often undermined their health or drove them to suicide. However, its greatest significance lies in the fact that through descriptions of four noble families — the Chias, Shihs, Wangs and Hsuehs — and principally the two Chia Houses of Jung and Ning, it exposes the corruption and decadence of the Chinese feudal ruling class, clearly foretelling the inevitable doom of these families and the collapse of the Chinese feudal system which had lasted for more than two millennia.

The author of this novel Tsao Hsueh-chin (?-1763) belonged to a noble family whose ancestors had been favoured and trusted by Emperor Kang-hsi (1662-1722), but the later struggles for power within the Imperial House involved his clan in a series of disasters and their fortunes quickly declined. Tsao Hsueh-chin as a boy lived in luxury; then his family's disgrace and bankruptcy deepened his understanding of the society of that time, especially as his poverty brought him into contact with different social strata including the poor and oppressed.

In eighteenth-century China, feudal society was on the verge of collapse and already embodied certain elements of capitalism linked with rudimentary ideas of democracy. The impact of these ideas affected Tsao Hsueh-chin's thinking, causing conflicts in his mind, and helped him reach a basic understanding of the struggles within the feudal ruling class and the politics of the late feudal period. Such ideas and his personal experience contributed to the masterpiece he wrote. But although nearly all writers draw on their own experience in their creative work, this does not mean that every novel is an autobiography. Yet Dr. Hu Shih and Yu Ping-po interpreted *A Dream of Red Mansions* as an autobiography of Tsao Hsueh-chin,

and by so doing helped to blind readers to its great social significance and historical value.

Hu Shih publicized the following conclusions:

1. This novel was autobiographical. Its hero Pao-yu was a portrait of the author who "deeply repented his past".

2. In this novel's lengthy descriptions of girls and women the author was simply "recording the feelings of different girls of his acquaintance in the past, not satirizing his age".

3. The novel merely presented the ruin of Tsao Hsueh-chin's own family. "It was just an honest account of the natural decline of a family which squandered its wealth and went bankrupt. . . . So this novel is a masterpiece of naturalistic literature."

Yu Ping-po expanded these ideas, also claiming that this novel presented "the author's own life", that "its basic theme is the vanity of everything on earth", and that it was written to express "regret for the past" and "to repent past love".

Thus both Hu Shih and Yu Ping-po concentrated on drawing comparisons between the Tsao family and the fictitious Chia family. Instead of analysing and studying the characters in the novel, they tried to find real persons on whom these characters were based and with this end in view subjected all the episodes in the book to a painstaking and tedious scrutiny, isolating the artistic images which reflected real life from the society and viewing the novel not as a work of art but as a series of disjointed incidents. So this masterpiece which exposed and denounced the feudal system and ruling class of that time was distorted by their landlord-bourgeois views of human nature: all the misery and revolts of the exploited bondmaids were passed over; the tragedy of the young rebels who defied feudal morality was interpreted as the author's repentance for his past love affairs; all the murders committed by the four big families, all the blood and tears shed by the people were forgotten.

In 1919 the Chinese people launched the famous May 4th Movement in Peking against imperialism and feudalism. However, during this stormy period which shook the reactionaries' rule Yu Ping-po declared: "Everything is very dull in Peking with nothing worth talking about; so it is better to chat about *The Dream of the Red Chamber*

to forget the sultry heat of summer." Hu Shih announced even more openly: "Don't imagine I am carrying out researches on this novel in order to teach you how to appreciate it. . . . No, my young friends. I am teaching you how to protect yourselves, so that you won't be led astray by wrong ideas." Thus one of them wanted to offer young people in the May 4th Movement some antidote against the sultry heat, the other wanted to teach them how to insulate themselves from political struggle. Obviously, their real intention was to lead young people astray and stop them from taking part in the revolution.

From the twenties to the fifties, this modern school of "Redologists" dominated the study of classical Chinese literature with their bourgeois idealist ideology. Even after the founding of the People's Republic of China, owing to the protection afforded by Liu Shao-chi's revisionist line in literature and art, Yu Ping-po's book *Studies of "The Dream of the Red Chamber"* was republished under a different name and certain literary periodicals praised it to the skies as a great contribution to clearing up confused thinking about the novel.

Chairman Mao always paid great attention to struggles on the ideological and cultural front. Soon after Liberation, when *Inside Story of the Ching Court* a film of national betrayal and *The Life of Wu Hsun\** a film which praised characters who fawned upon the feudal rulers were first publicly shown, he saw that literary and art circles, especially those communist cadres responsible for leading literary and art work, were capitulating to bourgeois ideas. In this serious situation he issued a call for mass criticism. And on October 16, 1954 Chairman Mao published his *Letter Concerning the Study of "The Dream of the Red Chamber"* which dispelled confusion regarding the study of the novel and pointed out the correct line of approach. He also stated incisively that certain revisionist "bigwigs" had formed a **"united front with bourgeois writers on the question of idealism"** and were **"willing captives of the bourgeoisie"**.

\*The hero of this reactionary film, Wu Hsun, had the slave mentality of feudalism. Praising such a character was an attempt to glorify feudal culture and the landlord class and vilify peasant revolts. On May 20, 1951 Chairman Mao wrote an editorial for *Renmin Ribao* to criticize this film.

Thus initiated and led by Chairman Mao, the struggle to criticize the idealist ideology of the Hu Shih school started and articles repudiating their fallacies appeared in many periodicals and newspapers over a period of nearly two years, making a great impact on Chinese academic circles and on the ideological and cultural front. Hu Shih's true features as a purveyor of imperialist culture were exposed; the new "Redologists" and their works were debunked; and the proletariat by consciously opposing idealism and advocating materialism opened up a new era in the study of classical Chinese literature and in academic circles.

In 1954 while studying Chinese literature at college I took exception to the bourgeois idealism of the Hu Shih school, and it struck me that in academic research bourgeois ideas were still rampant. I knew little Marxism and although eager to learn from Chairman Mao's works my understanding of them was superficial, yet I felt the situation was wrong and was indignant because this research atmosphere did not fit in with the revolutionary reality of our country.

After graduation I came to Peking to work on philosophy in another university, but in my spare time I still loved to study classical Chinese literature. When I read the articles giving a bourgeois interpretation of *A Dream of Red Mansions* and remembered what we had been taught at college, my indignation increased. I saw from Yu Ping-po's article *A Brief Comment on "The Dream of the Red Chamber"* that he was still advocating bourgeois idealist views, and felt impelled to challenge him. So another young comrade and I together wrote the article *On "A Brief Comment on "The Dream of the Red Chamber" and Other Matters*. Having more to say on the subject, we also wrote another article *On "Studies of "The Dream of the Red Chamber" and Other Matters"* which was aimed at Yu Ping-po too. My friend and I also queried the method of teaching classical literature in the universities. These were the two articles mentioned in Chairman Mao's letter. We raised this criticism in the hope of debunking those traditional ideas which had enfeathered our minds, never thinking it would lead to such a serious debate.

Today, as I reread Chairman Mao's significant letter on this subject, though twenty-three years have passed I still feel its powerful impact. Our great leader and teacher Chairman Mao always gave enthusiastic support and encouragement to new socialist undertakings. Though the articles we had written were immature, because Chairman Mao saw the significance of young people making a serious attack on the wrong views of certain bourgeois authorities he expressed his whole-hearted approval and support.

Chairman Mao not only warmly supported our revolutionary action and incisively censured the revisionist "bigwigs" in literary circles, but also restated the Party's policy of uniting with, educating and remoulding the bourgeois intellectuals. He pointed out: **"Towards such bourgeois intellectuals as Yu Ping-po, our attitude should naturally be one of uniting with them, but we should criticize their erroneous ideas which poison the minds of the young, and we certainly should not surrender to them."**

Though Chairman Mao has now left us, his glorious teachings still light our way ahead. Under the leadership of the Party Central Committee headed by Chairman Hua we are stepping up our exposure and criticism of the counter-revolutionary revisionist line of the "gang of four", and this is the continuation of our struggle against bourgeois idealism. Chiang Ching had the nerve to boast that she was a "fifty-per-cent Redologist", claiming that she was the one who initiated the criticism of Hu Shih's bourgeois idealist interpretation of this novel. Since the publication of the Fifth Volume of Chairman Mao's *Selected Works*, the facsimile of Chairman Mao's *Letter Concerning the Study of "The Dream of the Red Chamber"* has appeared in some of our periodicals, proving Chiang Ching's claim a lie. Now that the masses are exposing the way in which the "gang of four" made up stories about the study of this novel, I too must carry out Chairman Mao's behests and take part in this great struggle against the gang with my pen.

## NOTES ON ART

*Fu Tien-chou*

### Some Outstanding Sculptures

Introduced here are a few sculptures which reflect the spirit of the Chinese people in this new stage of socialist construction.

*Wang Chin-hsi — the Iron Man of Taching* is an impressive portrayal of this popular hero who, during his life, was the standard-bearer of the Taching Oilfield. His posture and flaring overcoat show that he was going ahead defying all difficulties. The personification of the Taching spirit, Wang Chin-hsi devoted his whole life to developing China's petroleum industry. By conveying his fighting spirit, the expressive sculpture pays tribute to the mass movement to learn from Taching in industry which is now sweeping our country.

*First Days in the Fields* portrays a girl who has responded to Chairman Mao's call and left her home town, after finishing school, to settle in the countryside. With a hoe on her shoulder and one arm akimbo, she is gazing happily at the distant fields, her serene smile reflecting her peace of mind and eagerness to temper herself in the countryside.

*A Militia Girl at Study* depicts a Tibetan girl reading Chairman Mao's works. The emancipated serfs in Tibet will never forget



First Day in the Fields

by Chang Teh-ti

## Sculptures

A Militia Girl at Study

by Feng Yi-kuei



Wang Chin-hsi — the Iron Man of Taching

by Li Shou-jen



Harvesting Rice  
by Tien Chin-to

their bitter past when they were brutally oppressed and exploited by the serf-owners. They have now come to understand that only by mastering Mao Tsetung Thought can they distinguish friends from foes and guard the people's political power. With this in mind, the sculptor has depicted the girl with a rifle slung over her shoulder, a notebook in her left hand and a pencil in her right, and a look of concentration on her face. Her homely figure though simply executed is appealing, as her whole attitude shows the rapt attention with which she is studying.

*Harvesting Rice* represents a woman commune member of the Korean nationality who is rejoicing over a bumper harvest in spite of natural disasters. Her expression suggests that the scent of rice is being wafted far and wide and she appears to be standing in a paddy field with a sickle in her hand, relaxed and well content. The white marble used by the sculptor heightens the poetic effect.

*Arduous Years*, in *Chinese Literature* No. 10, 1977, reflects a scene from the Long March. In the autumn of 1934, the Chinese Workers' and Peasants' Red Army set out and under the leadership of Chairman Mao marched 25,000 *li* — over 8,000 miles — from south China to north Shensi in order to resist the Japanese invaders. In their year-long trek they went through innumerable hardships and dangers. Apart from combating Chiang Kai-shek's troops, they had to struggle with the opportunists inside the Party and cross snow-covered mountains, swift rivers and treacherous marshlands. *Arduous Years* shows two Red Army men taking a rest. The young fighter in the sculpture is leaning on the older man's shoulder to listen to him playing a flute. Their gaunt features and ragged uniforms evoke the rigours of the march, but the overall impression conveyed is one of optimism and fortitude.



## The Film "Oh, My Motherland!"

A film in colour depicting the life and struggles of the Mongolian people, *Oh, My Motherland!* was recently released and has won nationwide acclaim. The scenario is by the well-known Mongolian author Malchinhu, who wrote it to commemorate the thirtieth anniversary of the establishment of the Inner-Mongolian Autonomous Region.

The story begins in 1945 when after eight years of tenacious resistance against Japan the Chinese people have finally won the war. But abetted by the U.S. imperialists and ignoring the opposition of the people, the Kuomintang reactionaries led by Chiang Kai-shek launch another civil war in an attempt to crush the Communist Party, bringing fresh suffering to the Chinese people. Whither China? Should we build up an independent, free, democratic and united new China which will become rich and strong or maintain the old semi-colonial and semi-feudal China under the dictatorship of the big landlords and big bourgeoisie? This crucial question confronts the people of the whole country including those of the Mongolian nationality. It is at this critical moment in Chinese history that



Batur and Chao Chih-min return to the Bayin-gol grassland

Batur, a Mongolian Communist returns with Chao Chih-min, a Han cadre, to the Bayin-gol grassland where he was born to start revolutionary work among the Mongolian people. This is where the action starts, and the story unfolds a great struggle to decide the fate of the Mongolian people.

As soon as he is back, Batur is plunged into extremely sharp and complex class struggles. Samten, the reactionary overlord who during the war went over to the Japanese imperialists and cruelly crushed the herdsmen's uprising led by the Communists Chingol and Batur, now sides with the Kuomintang reactionaries. To hang on to his vested interests he stubbornly opposes the people's liberation and tries to sabotage it by disrupting China's unity in the name of "Mongolian nationalism".

Following Chairman Mao's revolutionary line and his policy on the national question, Batur and Chao Chih-min mobilize and organize the masses, step by step expanding the revolutionary forces. However, there is deep-rooted hostility between different nationalities

in the area due to the Kuomintang's brutal suppression of the Mongolian people and a long history of Han chauvinism. Uncle Hoshig, a poor herdsman highly regarded by the local people, distrusts Han cadres like Chao and even cold-shoulders Batur because he cannot see the difference between the Communists and the Kuomintang bandits. Only after Batur explains things patiently to him does he come to see that he and the Han comrades are class brothers. Then, his enmity dissolved, he throws himself enthusiastically into revolutionary work and this encourages other herdsmen to rally around Batur. They hand in the guns they have hidden and soon Batur is able to organize them into a Herdsmen's Association. "We no longer weep bitter tears," they sing happily. "We no longer sing songs of sorrow. The wrath and hatred in our hearts have turned into a revolutionary flame."

The flames of revolt which flare up on the Bayin-gol grassland once

Batur helps Hongol to take the revolutionary road



shrouded in gloom make the overlord Samten tremble. He plans to split the ranks of the people of different nationalities by launching a so-called "Independence Movement" at a meeting of the overlords and nobles of various banners. With the approval of the Party committee, Batur slips into the meeting-place and exposes the enemy's treachery by disclosing the true aim of Samten's call for "independence". He also explains the Party's policy on the national question and wins over some of the upper-class Mongolians to side with the people. Samten's plot is foiled, and in this clash Batur's courage, intelligence and selfless communist spirit are fully displayed.

To further expand the revolutionary forces, Batur goes to Heiyunling to look for Hongol, the widow of his comrade-in-arms Chingol and a heroine known throughout the grassland. To avenge her husband's death, Hongol led a revolt against the overlords. But because she lacked a revolutionary orientation, she and her men fought on for a number of years without winning any decisive victory. Batur teaches her revolutionary principles and helps her to take the revolutionary road.

Vicious Samten, unwilling to admit defeat, plots with a Kuomintang secret agent named Pai Ping to have two companies of Kuomintang troops sent to the grassland in the uniforms of the Communist-led Eighth Route Army. They burn, loot and kill wherever they go, hoping thus to destroy the fine relationship between the Eighth Route Army and the Mongolian people. At the instigation of Ligueden, a traitor hidden among her men, Hongol rashly leads her forces out to a place where the enemy have laid an ambush. At this critical point, Batur brings a unit of the Eighth Route Army and they wipe out the Kuomintang bandits. This baptism of fire gives birth to the Bayin-gol Cavalry Regiment.

The struggle intensifies as Samten and Pai Ping hatch more treachery in the overlord's mansion. While the people are making preparations for democratic reforms and setting up their own political power, they plot to form a "Committee of the Mongolian People to Keep Out of the Civil War". On the day of its formation, they tell Ligueden, he must induce some men in the cavalry regiment

to mutiny with him. Ligueden unintentionally reveals this plot one night by talking in his sleep. To escape discovery he kills the man who overheard him and leads a few followers away into the grassland. Hongol is ignorant of the traitor's background. Naively, she goes after them alone to persuade them to return but Ligueden refuses and shoots at her. This painful lesson makes her understand that those who preach "Mongolians must not harm Mongolians" are really vicious enemies.

Under the Party committee's leadership Batur and Chao, relying on the masses, soon uncover the enemy's plots. They decide to put paid to them at a mass rally. On the day when the "Committee of the Mongolian People to Keep Out of the Civil War" is to be set up, Batur and Hongol take some of their men to the overlord's door where they mix with the crowd of Mongolians gathered there. Samten makes an impassioned speech about "resurgence" and "bright future", but before he can finish, Batur jumps up to denounce his double-dealing and his plots to take the side of the Kuomintang. He also announces the Party's policy on the national question. Meanwhile, Chao Chih-min has entered the mansion by the back door with some of his men. Helped by Samten's slave girl they pull the Kuomintang agent Pai Ping out from under the Buddhist shrine where he is hiding. The struggle ends in a new victory for the people.

The film presents a series of fine people with Batur in the lead, thereby portraying the strength of the masses. Each character has his or her distinctive features such as the stubborn honesty of Uncle Hoshig or the impetuosity of Hongol. The whole picture is lifelike and has strong local colour.

Malchinhu, the script writer, has lived for many years among the people of the Mongolian grassland and is here describing events which happened when he was young. Now a leading member of the cultural department of the autonomous region, he has not given up creative writing. He is the author of an earlier film, *Spring in the Desert*, and is now working on the scenario for a new film.

The cast is mainly Mongolian with two of Tahir nationality. The part of Batur is played by Niguemontou, a Mongolian worker

in a printing press who served for some time in the People's Liberation Army. Well acquainted with life on the grassland, he was able to draw on his personal experience as a cavalryman in his portrayal of the leading role. The film also demonstrates that our ranks of film artists of various nationalities are growing and maturing day by day.



## CULTURAL EXCHANGE

*Hsin Hua*

### Tientsin Song and Dance Ensemble Visits Japan

One evening in mid-June, some 500 Japanese friends from all walks of life went to Tokyo's Nakanoku Stadium for a get-together with Chinese artists from the Tientsin Song and Dance Ensemble. Twenty students learning Chinese at the Japan-China College in Tokyo presented clapper verses and other recitations celebrating the friendship between Japan and China and congratulating the Chinese people on their victory over the "gang of four".

The ensemble's performances in Japan comprised many new works as well as a number of old favourites written during the Yenan period thirty years ago when Chinese writers and artists first went among the masses of workers, peasants and soldiers, and others written after Liberation. Among these were songs from the opera *The White-Haired Girl* and the north Shensi peasant operetta *Husband and Wife Help Each Other to Read* performed by Wang Kun; the songs *Nanniwan* and *Golden Embroidery* sung by Kuo Lan-ying; *Tieh Lien Hua*, a Soochow ballad version of Chairman Mao's poem



Wang Kun presents a scroll to Japanese friends

to Li Shu-yi, and selections from the opera *The Red Guards of Hungbu Lake* both sung by Yu Shu-chen; and Ayitula's dance *Picking Grapes*. All these items were warmly received by the Japanese audiences. At a meeting with the singers Wang Kun and Kuo Lan-ying, Miho Mayama, leader of the Shinseisaku Troupe expressed a view shared by many others when he said, "Your performance has shown me something of the new spirit in Chinese literary and art circles since the crushing of the 'gang of four'."

Well-known Japanese ballerina Mikiko Matsuyama met her old friend Wang Kun the day after her arrival. Both of them had played the part of Hsi-erh, the heroine in *The White-Haired Girl*, one in the Japanese ballet version and the other in the Chinese opera. It was more than ten years since they had last met. Matsuyama pinned a spray of orchids on Wang Kun. With tears of joy, they clasped hands for a long time. Matsuyama said, "I've been looking forward to your visit." Wang Kun replied with emotion, "I would never have had the chance to perform again for our workers, peasants and soldiers nor to visit Japan and meet you again if the 'gang of four'"

hadn't been smashed by the Chinese people under the leadership of Chairman Hua." The two of them recalled their first meeting 22 years earlier.

In the spring of 1955 the Matsuyama Ballet Troupe presented *The White-Haired Girl* as a ballet in Japan with Matsuyama in the leading role. In the autumn of that year, the Japanese troupe visited China. At a state banquet in celebration of China's National Day, Premier Chou En-lai said to Matsuyama, "Our Japanese Hsi-erh has returned to the land of Hsi-erh's birth." He then introduced her to Wang Kun and to Tien Hua who played Hsi-erh in the film. Premier Chou told everyone that the Matsuyama Ballet Troupe was the first to adapt the opera into a ballet. He then remarked, "Here are the three Hsi-erhs." In 1958, Matsuyama and her ballet troupe came to China to perform *The White-Haired Girl*. At their request, Premier Chou asked Wang Kun and other Chinese artists to stage the opera *The White-Haired Girl* specially for them.

A few years later, in 1964, when the Matsuyama Ballet Troupe came to China again, Chairman Mao received Mikiko Matsuyama and her husband Masao Shimizu. At that time Chinese artists were

The ensemble giving a performance



staging the musical and dance epic *The East Is Red* under the personal guidance of Premier Chou. The Japanese couple were very interested in the back-drops used in the performance, and one evening after it ended Premier Chou took them back-stage to have a look. Wang Kun who had a part in the production met her friend Matsuyama once again.

In the past ten years Masao Shimizu made several visits to China and more than once he asked about Wang Kun on behalf of his wife but was unable to get any reliable information about her because of the ban imposed by the "gang of four". In October 1976, after the gang had been smashed, Wang Kun made a comeback and sang for the people. When this news reached Japan, Matsuyama and Shimizu were delighted.

When the Tientsin Song and Dance Ensemble arrived in Japan this time, Matsuyama invited all its members to visit her troupe. "When our Chinese friends come to visit us," she said, "I'll dance the part of Hsi-erh to the vocal accompaniment of Wang Kun."

On 17 June, the Chinese ensemble paid their visit to the Matsuyama Ballet Troupe. Matsuyama took Wang Kun home where she showed her the photographs taken with Premier Chou and Wang Kun at the National Day banquet in 1955. Wang Kun helped Matsuyama to plait her hair for her role as Hsi-erh and, when she had put on her costume, appeared hand-in-hand with her before the Chinese and Japanese artists, who greeted them with warm applause. To the accompaniment of Wang Kun's singing of *The North Wind Blows*, Matsuyama danced the scene of Hsi-erh waiting for her father's return. Her graceful dancing was a joy to watch, while Wang Kun's singing was deeply moving. After the performance, both of them as well as many others were close to tears.

In memory of Chairman Mao and Premier Chou who had shown such kindness to the Matsuyama Ballet Troupe, and to mark their reunion in Tokyo, Mikiko Matsuyama presented Wang Kun with a reproduction of the photograph of Premier Chou taken 22 years earlier with Matsuyama, Wang Kun and other artists. In gratitude,

Wang Kun wrote a poem in Chinese and gave it to Matsuyama that same day. The poem reads:

In 1955 at our first meeting in Peking,  
Premier Chou took our hands,  
Talking warmly to us all.  
It became a well-known story:  
How the sisters of two nations  
Played the same stage heroine.  
Today the azaleas bloom red in Tokyo,  
Our reunion comes as our hair is turning grey.  
As I accompany in song  
Your dancing, singing of the whirling snow,  
I sense the Premier beating time.

## CHRONICLE

### 50th Anniversary of the Founding of the Chinese PLA

Stage performances, film shows and exhibitions were held in Peking to mark the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Chinese People's Liberation Army.

On and around August 1, Army Day, army personnel and civilians in Peking attended various evening gatherings.

The army festival began in mid-July and lasted for one and a half months. Over twenty troupes from different army units participated, staging more than fifty performances including modern dramas, operas, Peking operas, ballets, songs and dances, comic dialogue, ballads, acrobatics and other items. Most of them were new creations, but some were old items banned for a long time by the "gang of four".

Eleven feature and ten documentary films, including colour versions of some stage productions, were shown during the film week sponsored jointly by the General Political Department of the PLA and the Ministry of Culture. The feature film *The Long March* is about the Red Army on the Long March. Another, *Flames of War by the Yenbo River*, shows how the army and people in northern Shensi repulsed the attacks of the Kuomintang reactionaries and victoriously defended Yen-an in 1947. *Women Pilots* tells the story of China's first group of women pilots.

An art exhibition of more than 500 exhibits, and a photographic one with over 380 photographs, were on display in honour of Army Day. The subject-matter was varied and the artistic standards high.

The celebrations honoured Chairman Mao and the older generation of revolutionaries in the Party and army. They recalled the glorious history of the victorious army, who followed Chairman Mao's revolutionary line. They also showed the fine, militant spirit of the PLA under the leadership of Chairman Hua today and how, holding high the great banner of Chairman Mao, they are making great efforts to increase their political consciousness and accelerate modernization.

### New Poems by Well-Known Poets

Some older poets, well-known to Chinese readers, have composed many new poems.

Tsang Ko-chia, adviser and member of the editorial board of the magazine *Poetry*, has written many new poems in recent years. In *His Glorious Memory* and *My Last Respects to Chairman Mao*, he expresses his mourning for Chairman Mao. Among his other poems are *Tears — Mourning for Our Respected Premier Chou*, and *Always Acclaim*; the latter praises the victory of the Party Central Committee led by Chairman Hua over the "gang of four". *Catch Up with Taching* concerns the nation-wide movement in learning from Taching. He has also written many poems about life in a May 7th cadre school, from his experiences there during the Cultural Revolution. Presently, he is engaged in reviewing these poems, which will be published later as a collection.

Feng Chih, who works at the Research Institute of Foreign Literature, had translated some years ago Heinrich Heine's *Germany, a Winter's Tale*, and is now preparing it for publication. He has written a preface for the annotated Chinese version. Known for his translation of the *Selected Poems of Heine* and *Travel in the Harz Mountains*, as well as for his poetry, he is also the author of a biography of Tu Fu, a famous poet of the Tang Dynasty.

Li Chi, the editor-in-chief of *Poetry*, has recently published a long ballad, *Oil, the Pacemaker*, of almost three thousand lines, praising the revolutionary spirit and heroic deeds of the Taching oil workers. *Premier Chou, the Taching Workers Remember You!* was written to mark

the anniversary of the death of Chou En-lai. The People's Literature Publishing House has recently republished his long narrative poem, *Wang Kuei and Li Hsiang-hsiang*, which describes land reform in northern Shensi.

Tien Chien, a poet who is familiar with conditions in the countryside, has brought out a collection of short poems written in the last two years entitled *Journey to the Great Wall*, describing the modernization of agriculture. Now he is co-operating with some young writers on a scenario about the Chinese people's efforts to modernize agriculture through self-reliance. After the earthquake in Tangshan, Hopei Province, in July 1976, he went to the stricken areas and wrote many poems about how the people overcame the disaster.

### Newly Published Books and Reproductions

Many books and reproductions have been published recently in Peking.

Among these is a reprint of *Sketches of the Long March*, containing twenty-four reproductions of sketches drawn by Huang Chen during the Long March.

Other new publications are *Paeans to Chairman Hua*, a prose collection, and one of songs and ballads in praise of Chairman Hua entitled *Forward Under the Guidance of Chairman Hua*.

*Comrade Chu Teh in Wartime* is a series of twelve articles recalling Comrade Chu Teh's revolutionary exploits.

Chu Po's novel, *Tumultuous Mountains and Seas*, now available, tells of the fierce battles and life in an anti-Japanese base area. Also recently published is the first part of Kuan Hua's *Chiangchun River*, about the heroic struggles of the people of Chiangchun River, north China, against the Japanese invaders. Other new novels include *The Guerrillas at Swan Pass*, *On the Wings*, *Liberating Shibchiachuang*.

Two new serial-picture books are *The Story of Premier Chou* and *The Story of Commander-in-Chief Chu*. Reproductions of the oil paintings *Battling on the Lobsiao Mountains* and *Dawn over Hungbu Lake* and many others depict the revolutionary spirit and noble qualities of Chou En-lai, Chu Teh, Chen Yi, Ho Lung and other veteran revolutionaries.

## An Exhibition of Calligraphy and Seal Engraving

An exhibition of calligraphy and seal engraving has now opened in Peking. The 70 exhibits are examples of traditional Chinese calligraphy, in the standard, cursive, rustic, clerical and seal scripts. The contributors include some renowned calligraphers, as well as workers, peasants, soldiers, primary and middle school students.

At the entrance is a couplet written by Kuo Mo-jo:

Spring has returned with the fall of the "gang of four",  
This mighty land is eager to advance modernization.

Two lines from a poem by Lu Hsun were written in a vigorous, rustic script by 88-year-old Chou Chien-jen:

Fierce-browed, I coolly defy a thousand pointing fingers,  
Head-bowed, like a willing ox, I serve the children.

Li Shu-yi, now in her seventies, wrote out Chairman Mao's poem *Reply to Li Shu-yi*, to express her deep feelings for Chairman Mao and the revolutionary martyrs. Wu Tso-jen copied out a poem composed by Premier Chou when he was a young man in Japan:

I sail east to the song of the Great River;  
My studies have not shown how to help China.  
Ten years were spent trying to find the way;  
Though I go overseas, my ardour has not cooled.

The calligrapher attempted to show the patriotism and aspirations of the 19-year-old youth through calligraphic art. A scroll bearing a quotation from Chairman Mao, "**Let a hundred flowers blossom and a hundred schools of thought contend**", written in rustic script by the old painter Li Ku-chan, shows the bitterness of all writers and artists against the "gang of four" and their determination to carry out Chairman Mao's revolutionary line in literature and art. "Building socialism in a big way" is written in a bold cursive script by Kao Tung, a 13-year-old boy, an example of the vitality of the younger generation.

Many exhibits were examples of new content in the traditional art of calligraphy. They also demonstrated some artistic innovations.

## Bangladesh Cultural Delegation in China

In July this year, the Bangladesh Cultural Delegation, consisting of outstanding Bangladesh artists, toured China and was warmly received by Chinese audiences.

The visiting artists presented a programme of national songs and dances. Among the dances were *In the Tea Garden* and *Going Fishing*, which were both vigorous and lively, depicting the life and struggles of the people. *Call of the People* reflected the gallant spirit of the Bangladesh people in their fight against colonialism. The songs *The Sun Has Risen in the East* and *Setting Sail* expressed the Bangladesh people's determination to fight against foreign invaders.

The artists also performed *The East Is Red*, some other Chinese songs and a red silk dance, adapted from the Chinese original, showing their friendly feelings towards the Chinese people.







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