

CHINESE LITERATURE



1978 11

CONTENTS

CAMEL HSIANG-TZU (excerpts from a novel) — <i>Lao Sheh</i>	3
How I Came to Write the Novel "Camel Hsiang-tzu" — <i>Lao Sheh</i>	59
In Memory of Lao Sheh — <i>Tsao Yu</i>	65
LU HSUN'S WRITINGS	
Poems — <i>Lu Hsun</i>	70
On Lu Hsun's Five Poems — <i>Chou Chen-fu</i>	75
REPORTAGE	
The Goldbach Conjecture — <i>Hsu Chib</i>	78
FROM THE WRITER'S NOTEBOOK	
The Source of Literature and Art — <i>Liu Pai-yu</i>	92
How to Experience Life — <i>Chou Li-po</i>	95
Living Among the People — <i>Hsu Min-bo</i> and <i>Hsieh Shib-chiu</i>	98
NOTES ON LITERATURE AND ART	
A Hundred Flowers in Bloom Again — <i>Tu Ho</i>	105
"The Red Lantern Society" — a New Peking Opera — <i>An Kuei</i>	109
Batik in China — <i>Teng Feng-chien</i>	113
INTRODUCING A CLASSICAL PAINTING	
Wu Wei and His Painting "Fishermen" — <i>Sbu Hua</i>	115
CHRONICLE	118
PLATES	
Horse (traditional Chinese painting) — <i>Hsu Pei-hung</i>	64-65
Magpies (traditional Chinese painting) — <i>Hsu Pei-hung</i>	72-73
Batik Work	112-113
Fishermen — <i>Wu Wei</i>	114-115
Front Cover: The Mountain Towers over the Yangtse — <i>Wei Tzu-hsi</i>	

Camel Hsiang-tzu

Lao Sheh, one of China's greatest patriotic writers, died on August 24, 1966, after persecution by the followers of Lin Piao and the "gang of four". In fabricating the theory of "the dictatorship of a 'black' line in literature and art" in 1966, Lin Piao and the "gang of four" negated all progressive and revolutionary literature and art during the 1930's and during the seventeen years from Liberation in 1949 to the start of the Cultural Revolution in 1966. They labelled artists and writers who had created fine works during these years as followers of the so-called "black" line, persecuting them cruelly and causing the death of some. Maltreated mentally and physically, Lao Sheh died aged only 67 years old.

A ceremony to place his ashes in the revolutionary martyrs' cemetery at Papao-shan was held on June 3, 1978, after the downfall of the "gang of four".

Lao Sheh, who began writing in 1924, dedicated his life to his art. Before Liberation he wrote novels and short stories exposing and denouncing the old society. After Liberation, he wrote the play *Dragon Beard Ditch* and many other works. *Camel Hsiang-tzu*, Lao Sheh's best novel, was first serialized in a magazine and then published as a book. Lao Sheh made some important alterations in the new edition published by the People's Literature Publishing House in 1962. Our translation is based on that edition. The first twelve chapters will appear in this and the next issue of *Chinese Literature*.

— The Editors

This story is about Hsiang-tzu, not about Camel, because "Camel" was only his nickname. So let us start with Hsiang-tzu, just mentioning in passing how he became linked with camels.

The rickshaw pullers of Peiping fall into many different categories. There are strong, fleet-footed young men who rent smart rickshaws and work round the clock, starting work or knocking off whenever they please. They pull their rickshaws to a rickshaw-stand or the gate of some big house and wait for fares who want a fast runner. With luck, a single trip can net one or two silver dollars; but it may happen too that they spend the whole day idle, not even recouping their rickshaw rent. Still, they take this all in their stride. These fellows generally have two ambitions. One is to get a job on a monthly basis, the other is to buy their own rickshaw. For with their own vehicle, it doesn't matter whether they have a monthly job or take odd fares, the rickshaw is their own property anyway.

Then there is a category of slightly older men, and others who for health reasons run not quite as fast, or who for family reasons cannot afford to let a day go by without earning anything. Most of them pull fairly new rickshaws, and because both puller and rickshaw are quite smart-looking they can still demand a respectable price. Some of them work round the clock, some only half days. Of these latter, the more energetic take the night-shift* all the year round. At night more care and skill are needed, so naturally the fee is higher.

The pullers over forty and under twenty find it hard to join either of these categories. Their rickshaws are ramshackle and they dare not take on the night-shift. So they have to make a very early start in the hope that, by three or four in the afternoon, they will have earned enough for the rickshaw rent as well as their daily needs. Their broken-down vehicles and lack of speed mean they must make longer trips for lower payment. They are the ones who haul merchandise to the melon, fruit or vegetable markets, for this they earn less, but at least they can take their time.

The under twenties — some of whom have been plying this trade since they were eleven or twelve — rarely become crack pullers

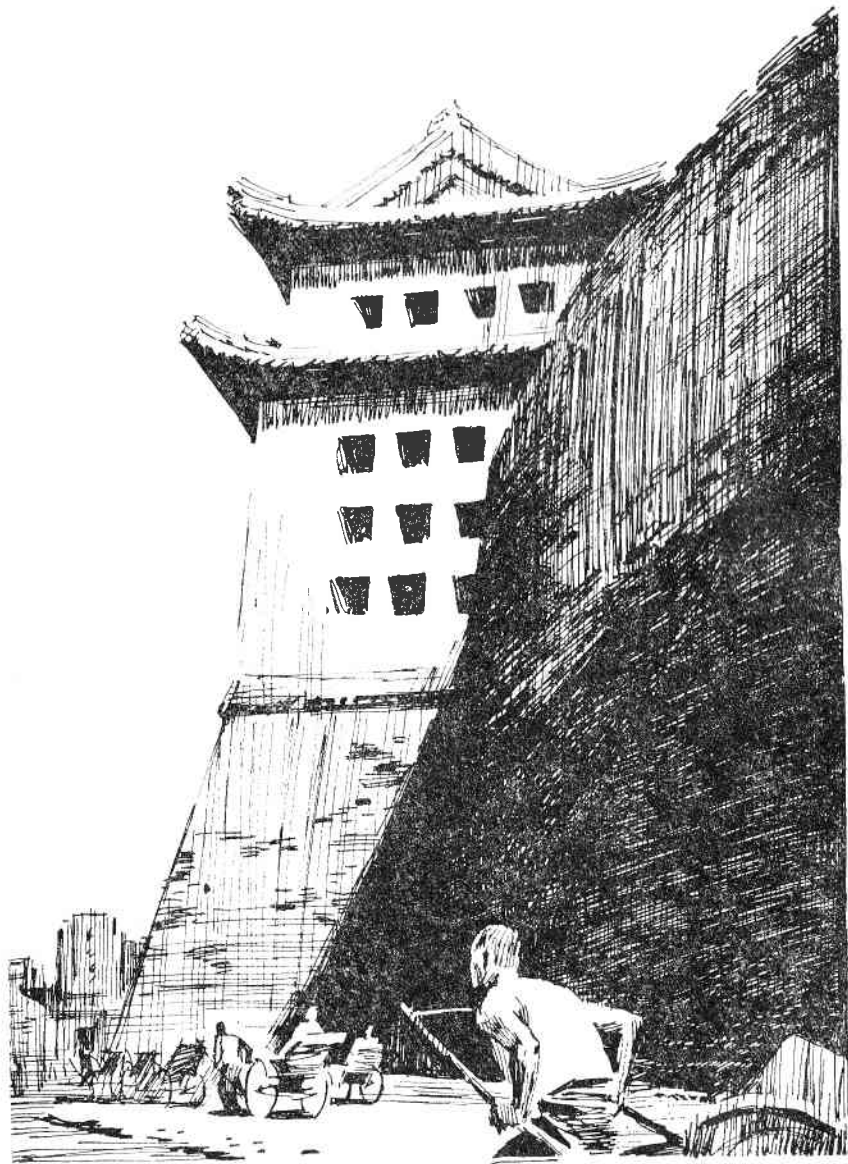
* The night-shift starts at four in the afternoon and continues until daybreak.

later on, because as boys they overtaxed their strength. They may pull all their lives and never make the grade, not even in this trade. As for the over forties, some have strained their muscles by pulling for eight or ten years and are content now to take second place, in the growing awareness that sooner or later they will topple over and die in the road. Their pulling posture, their adroit bargaining, their shrewd use of short-cuts or circuitous routes are enough to make them relive past glories and turn up their noses at the younger generation. But these shades of past glories can in no way diminish their dismal prospects, and so they often sigh as they mop their sweat.

However, compared to another group of over forties, they seem not to have reached rock-bottom yet. This group is composed of men who had never associated themselves with rickshaws but were forced to take up the trade, having reached the end of their tether. When policemen, school janitors and cleaners are dismissed and bankrupt peddlers or unemployed artisans have nothing more to sell or pawn, they grit their teeth and with tears in their eyes take this last desperate step, knowing it to be a dead end. These men have already sold the best years of their lives, and now the maize muffins on which they subsist are transformed into blood and sweat which drip on to the road. Weak, inexperienced and friendless, they are eyed askance by even their fellow-pullers. Their rickshaws are the most wretched of all and their tyres are always having punctures. Even as they run they beg their fares to excuse them and consider a mere fifteen coppers a very good fee indeed.

After this brief analysis, let us come back to Hsiang-tzu's status so as to place him as accurately — we hope — as a specific screw in a machine. Before Hsiang-tzu became linked with the nickname "Camel", he was a relatively independent rickshaw-puller, in other words, he was young and strong and owned his own rickshaw. Belonging to the category of those who owned their vehicles, he was master of his own fate, a high-class puller.

But this was certainly not easily come by. It had taken him one year, two years, at least three or four years; one drop of sweat, two drops of sweat, untold tens of thousands of drops of sweat to acquire that rickshaw of his. He had earned it by gritting his teeth in the wind



and rain, by skimping his food and drink. That rickshaw represented the fruit and reward of all his struggles and hardships, like the single medal of a warrior who has fought a hundred battles. In the days when he rented a rickshaw, he was like a top sent spinning north, south, east and west from dawn to dusk, at the beck and call of others. But this spinning never made him so dizzy that he lost sight of his objective.

In his mind's eye he could picture that distant rickshaw which was going to bring him freedom and independence, becoming a part of him like his hands and feet. With his own rickshaw he would no longer be bullied by the rickshaw owners, would no longer have to humour anyone else. With his strength and his own vehicle, earning his living would be mere child's play.

Hsiang-tzu was not afraid of hardships, nor did he have the excusable but deplorable bad habits of most other pullers. He was clever and hard-working enough to make his dream come true. If his situation had been a little better, or if he had had a bit more education he would certainly not have fallen among the "Tyre Brigade". And no matter what his trade, he would have made the most of every opportunity. Unluckily, he had no choice but to be a rickshaw puller. Very well then, even in this job he would prove his ability and intelligence. Had he been a spirit in hell, he would probably have made the best of his surroundings.

Hsiang-tzu was country born and bred. At eighteen, having lost his parents and their few *mou* of poor land, he fled to the city. He brought with him his country boy's sturdiness and simplicity, and tried his hand at most jobs that called only for brawn. However, he soon realized that pulling a rickshaw was an easier way to earn money. The pay for other hard manual jobs was limited whereas pulling a rickshaw offered more variety and opportunities, as there was no telling when and where one might earn more than one had expected. Of course he also knew that this would not be entirely a matter of chance, that the rickshaw had to be smart and the puller brisk-looking to attract discriminating customers.

But after consideration, Hsiang-tzu felt that he had the requisite qualities, for he was young and strong. Though his lack of experience

meant that he could not begin with a new rickshaw, this was not an insurmountable difficulty; and with his fine physique he was sure that after ten days or two weeks he would be running quite presentably. Then he would rent a brand-new rickshaw, and might very soon land himself a monthly job; after which by skimping and saving for a year or two, even for three or four, he was bound to be able to buy himself a really beautiful rickshaw. Gazing at his young muscles, he felt sure it was just a matter of time. This goal he had set himself could definitely be reached — it was no pipe-dream.

Though hardly twenty, he was tall and well developed for his age. Time had not yet moulded his body into any set form but he already looked like a full-grown man — a man with an ingenuous face and a hint of mischief about him. Watching those high-class pullers, he planned how to tighten the belt round his waist to show off his sturdy chest and straight back to better advantage. He craned his neck to look at his shoulders: how broad they were, how imposing! His slender waist, baggy white trousers and ankles bound with thin black bands would set off his “outsize” feet. Oh yes, surely he was going to be the most outstanding rickshaw puller in town. In his simplicity, he chuckled to himself.

Hsiang-tzu was not handsome. What made him engaging was the expression on his face. He had a small head, round eyes, a fleshy nose, and thick, short eyebrows. His scalp was always shaved clean. There was no spare flesh on his cheeks, yet his neck was virtually as thick as his head. In those days he had a ruddy complexion, and running from his cheekbone to his right ear was a large, bright, shiny scar — legacy of a donkey bite received while napping under a tree in his childhood. He did not pay much attention to his appearance, liking his face just as he liked his body because both were strong and sturdy; in fact, to him, his face was another limb and its strength was all that mattered. Even after coming to the city, he could still do long hand-stands and, holding this position, he felt like a tree straight and erect from top to toe.

Hsiang-tzu was indeed rather like a tree, sturdy, silent yet full of life. He was canny and had his own plans, but did not like to talk about them. Among rickshaw pullers, personal wrongs and diffi-

culties are food for common talk, and whether at rickshaw-stands, in little tea-houses or in the large crowded courtyards, everyone reports, describes or bawls out his troubles. These then pass from mouth to mouth like folk-songs, becoming public property. Hsiang-tzu, being a country boy, was not as glib as city-dwellers. If volubility is a natural gift, then he was clearly not endowed with it, so he did not try to imitate the townsfolk's spiteful talk. He minded his own business and held his tongue, which gave him more time to think and it was almost as if his eyes were always directed inwards. His mind made up, he embarked upon the course he had mapped out; and if he made no headway, he would lapse into silence for a couple of days, gritting his teeth as if gnawing at his own heart.

Once he had decided to be a rickshaw puller he went straight into action. First he rented an old, broken-down rickshaw in order to get some practice. The first day he made practically nothing; the second, business was quite good. But then he was flat out on his back for two days because his ankles had swollen up like two calabashes and he could not even lift his feet. He put up with the pain because he knew that this was inevitable, and unless he passed this test he would never be able to really let himself go.

His feet better, he could run freely and he gloated that now he had nothing else to fear. For he knew the city well, and even if he happened to take the long way round it did not matter, as he had strength and to spare. When it came to learning how to pull that was not too difficult either, with all his previous experience of pushing, pulling and carrying loads on his shoulders or with a carrying-pole. Besides, he figured that by taking care and not competing for fares he could keep out of trouble.

When it came to bargaining over the price of a fare, he was too slow of speech and too easily flustered to compete with his slick colleagues. So he rarely went to the rickshaw-stands but waited around where there were no other rickshaws. In some quiet spot he could take his time over fixing the price, and sometimes he would not even haggle but just say, “Get on, and pay what you please!” His honest, simple, likable face made it hard not to trust him, for it seemed impossible that such a country bumpkin could ever cheat anyone. People

might suspect that he was a newcomer from the countryside who did not know the way and so had no idea of rates. But if asked "Do you know that address?" he would grin knowingly, as if playing the buffoon, leaving his fare quite perplexed.

After two or three weeks, he had really run his legs into condition and he knew his running was a pleasure to watch. The style of running is what indicates a rickshaw man's skill and status. Those who run with their toes turned out, slapping their feet down like palm-leaf fans, are sure to be greenhorns fresh from the countryside. Those who lower their heads and shuffle along, in what looks like a run but is little faster than walking are men over fifty. Other old hands drained of strength have a different method: they strain forward, raise their legs high and thrust up their heads at each step, for all the world as if they are pulling with might and main; but in fact they are no faster than the others, and have to put on this act to retain their self-respect. Hsiang-tzu naturally did not adopt any of these styles. With his long stride, steady back and silent, springy step, his shafts did not rock about and his passenger was borne along smoothly and safely. No matter how fast he was running he could stop in a trice just by lightly scraping his large feet on the ground for a step or two, as if his strength had permeated every part of the vehicle. Back slightly bent, hands loosely holding the shafts, he was lithe, smooth and precise, and though he never looked hurried he ran fast and sure-footedly. All these were rare qualities, even among rickshaw men hired on a monthly basis.

He switched to a new rickshaw. The same day, after inquiry, he found out that a vehicle such as his — with soft springs, fine brass work, tarpaulin rain-hood and curtain in front, two lamps and long-throated brass horn — was worth something over one hundred silver dollars. If the paint and brass work were not in such good condition then one hundred would be enough. So he needed roughly one hundred dollars to buy his own rickshaw. He worked out that, if every day he could put aside ten cents, one hundred dollars would take one thousand days. One thousand days! Why, he could hardly reckon how long that would be. But he was determined to buy his own rickshaw, if it took one thousand, even ten thousand days.

The first step, he decided, was to find a job on a monthly basis. If

he could land himself a convivial employer with many friends, it would mean about ten banquets a month and an extra two or three dollars for him in tips. Plus the one dollar odd he could save from his monthly pay that would come to three to five dollars a month, and fifty to sixty dollars a year! This would bring him much, much closer to his goal. And since he did not smoke or drink or gamble, had no vices, no family, all he needed was to grit his teeth and everything was sure to work out. He swore to himself that in a year and a half, he, Hsiang-tzu, was going to have his own rickshaw. And it had to be a brand-new one, not an old one overhauled.

He really did manage to get a monthly job. But reality does not completely accord with hopes, and though he gritted his teeth for a year and a half, when the time was up his wish was still unfulfilled. Though he landed monthly jobs and took great pains in his work, there are two sides to everything in this world and his cautiousness did not prevent his employers from sacking him. Sometimes after two or three months, sometimes after only a week or ten days, his job would end in smoke and he had to look around again. Naturally while doing so he had to return to pulling fares, which was like riding one horse while looking for another, for he couldn't afford to remain idle.

This was when things would go wrong. He drove himself hard, not just to earn his keep but to go on saving for his rickshaw too. However, forcing oneself is always risky and he found it difficult to concentrate when he ran. His mind kept wandering and the more he thought, the more panicky and upset he became. At this rate, when would he ever get his own rickshaw? Why were things like this? Wasn't he trying hard enough? While so preoccupied, he forgot his usual cautiousness. His tyres picked up bits of scrap metal and punctured, and there was nothing for it but to knock off for the day. Worse still, he sometimes ran into people and once he even lost a hub cap as he was squeezing hurriedly over a crossing. None of this would have happened if he had had a monthly job, but now disappointment made him clumsy and awkward. Of course, he had to pay for the damages and this added fuel to the fire of his desperation; so that, to avoid even greater calamities, he sometimes

slept for a whole day at a time. Then, when he woke up he would hate himself for wasting so much time.

Another thing, during such periods, the more worried he was the more he stinted himself and missed out meals, under the illusion that he was made of iron. But he discovered that he too could fall ill, yet begrudged spending money on medicine thinking he could fight it off. As a result, he grew worse and not only had to buy medicine but also rest for several days in a row. These difficulties only made him grit his teeth tighter and try harder, but that didn't mean the money came in any faster.

He finally managed to scrape together one hundred silver dollars. It had taken him three whole years.

He couldn't afford to wait any longer. Originally he had set his heart on buying the newest, best equipped rickshaw, but now he would have to make do with one within the hundred dollar range. No, he definitely could not wait any more, for suppose something happened to make him lose a few dollars! By chance he heard of a custom-built rickshaw, practically like the one he had in mind, which its would-be purchaser had been unable to pay for. As he had forfeited his deposit on it, the rickshaw shop was willing to let it go for less than its original cost — more than a hundred.

Hsiang-tzu flushed red, his hands shook as he clapped down ninety-six dollars and said, "I want this rickshaw!"

The shop-owner, hoping to raise the price to a round figure, talked volubly, pulling the rickshaw in and out of the shed, folding and unfolding the hood, sounding the horn, each movement accompanied by a torrent of encomiums. Finally he kicked the steel spokes a couple of times.

"Listen to that!" he said. "Clear as a bell! You can pull it till it falls to pieces, but if one of those spokes buckles, you come back and throw it in my face! Not a cent less than a hundred and it's yours!"

Hsiang-tzu counted his money again. "I want this rickshaw. Ninety-six!"

The shop-owner knew he had met someone with a one-track mind. He glanced from the money to Hsiang-tzu and finally sighed, "All

right, for friendship's sake, I'll let you have it. It's guaranteed for six months and, short of smashing the whole works, I'll do all the repairs free of charge. Here, take the guarantee!"

Hsiang-tzu's hands were shaking even more violently as he tucked the guarantee away and pulled his rickshaw out, feeling ready to burst into tears. He made for a quiet out-of-the-way place and stopped to scrutinize this precious possession. He leaned over to see his own reflection in the shiny paint work, and the more he gazed at the rickshaw the more he loved it. Even those parts that hadn't quite come up to his expectations could be overlooked now that the vehicle was his very own. After gazing his fill, he sat down on the new carpeted foot-rest, his eyes fixed on the shiny brass horn attached to the shaft. Suddenly he remembered that he was twenty-two that year. As his parents had died when he was very young, he had forgotten the actual date of his birthday and since coming to town he had never celebrated it. Well, today he had bought his own rickshaw, why not make it his birthday too? He and his rickshaw would have the same birthday, which made it easier to remember, and anyway, since the rickshaw was the fruit of his sweat and blood why shouldn't they be considered as one?

How to celebrate this "double birthday"? Hsiang-tzu decided that his first fare must be someone handsomely dressed, on no account a woman, and ideally the destination should be Chienmen Gate or, as a second choice, the Tungan Market. There he would have a meal at the best food-stall, something like hot sesame cakes with grilled mutton; then if he could pick up another good fare or two, so much the better; if not, he would knock off for the day. After all, this was his birthday!

Now that he had his own rickshaw, things began looking up for him. Whether hiring himself out on a monthly basis or taking odd fares, he need no longer worry about rickshaw rent, all he earned was his own. He was content, grew even more affable, and his business thrived. After six months, he was full of confidence that, at this rate, in another two years at most he would be able to buy another rickshaw, and then another. Why, he would be able to start his own rickshaw business!

But most hopes come to nothing, and Hsiang-tzu's were no exception.

2

Nearly every year, rumours and news of war sprang up with the spring wheat. For Northerners, ears of wheat and bayonets could be said to symbolize their hopes and fears.

Hsiang-tzu's rickshaw was just six months old when the wheat needed a fall of spring rain. Though rain does not always fall when it is most hoped for, war always comes, whether one wants it or not. But whether the news this time was false or true, Hsiang-tzu seemed to have forgotten that he had once tilled the fields, and he did not much care if war devastated the crops or if there were no spring rain. His only concern was his rickshaw. This could provide griddle cakes and all sorts of food; it was a horn of plenty which followed him meekly around. Hsiang-tzu knew that lack of rain and news of war boosted the price of grain; but like all city people, he could only complain, he had no remedy. If grain was dear, what could anyone do about it? This attitude of his made him think only of his own livelihood. He pushed all thought of calamities out of his mind.

It was in such circumstances that Hsiang-tzu took his rickshaw outside the city gates. Rumours had been flying about for over ten days and prices had risen, but for the time being war still seemed remote from Peiping. Hsiang-tzu continued to pull his rickshaw, not considering the rumours an excuse for taking time off. One day, he went to the western city and noticed something unusual. At the western end of Hukuo Monastery Road and at Hsinchiehkou, there were no rickshaws offering to run to Hsiyuan or Tsinghua University. He strolled about the district a while and heard that no vehicle dared leave the city, for whether large or small carts, mule carts or rickshaws, all were being seized just outside Hsichihmen Gate. He decided to drink a bowl of tea then head south. The lack of activity around the rickshaw-stand spelled real danger, and though no coward he saw no reason to put his head in a noose. Just at that moment, two rickshaws heading north appeared. The passengers looked like

two students and the pullers were shouting as they ran, "Anyone going to Tsinghua, to Tsinghua?"

The few pullers at the rickshaw-stand did not reply. Some of them looked at the two vehicles with indifferent grins, others sat there with small pipes between their lips and did not even bother to raise their heads.

"Are you all deaf? To Tsinghua!" the two pullers kept on calling.

"I'd go for two dollars!" a short, shaven-headed youngster said jokingly into the silence.

"Come on then, find another one!" The two rickshaws stopped.

The young fellow was nonplussed. Still no one moved. Hsiang-tzu could see that leaving the city was really dangerous; otherwise why did no one snap up the chance to make two dollars just by going to Tsinghua, a trip which normally cost only twenty to thirty cents? He did not want to go either. But the shaven-headed youngster had apparently decided that if someone else went with him he was willing to take the risk. He eyed Hsiang-tzu and said, "How about it, tall one?"

"Tall one." Hsiang-tzu was tickled, this was praise. He considered the proposition. After receiving that kind of compliment he should back up this daring, shaven-headed shorty. And besides, two dollars was quite a sum, one didn't find that kind of money every day. As for danger, was he sure to run into it? Just two days ago he had heard someone say that the gardens of the Temple of Heaven were crammed with soldiers, but he hadn't seen hide or hair of one himself. Reasoning this way, he pulled his rickshaw forward.

When they reached Hsichihmen Gate, there was hardly any traffic coming in and out. Hsiang-tzu's heart misgave him. Even the other puller was uneasy, but he said with a grin, "Let's go, buddy! If your luck is out it's out, this is it!" Hsiang-tzu knew they were in for trouble, but after all these years knocking about in town he had to keep his word, not back out like an old woman.

Beyond the city gate there was not a single cart in sight. Hsiang-tzu lowered his head, not daring to look right or left, his heart thumping against his ribs. When they reached Kaoliang Bridge, he glanced about but to his relief there was not a soldier in sight. He thought

to himself: After all, two dollars is two dollars and it takes guts to find a windfall like this. The road was alarmingly quiet and, though normally never one for speech, he suddenly felt like saying something to his companion.

"How about taking a short cut on the dirt track? The road..."

"Of course." The other understood at once. "That way is safer."

But before they had branched off the main road, both pullers, their rickshaws and passengers all fell into the hands of about a dozen soldiers.

Although it was already the time of year for pilgrims to offer incense at the temple on Fantasy Peak, a single thin shirt was not enough to keep out the night chill. Hsiang-tzu was unencumbered, being clad only in a grey army tunic and blue cloth trousers reeking of sweat — they had been like this before he put them on. Everything had been snatched from him, his clothes, shoes and hat, his rickshaw, even his cloth girdle, leaving him nothing but a body bruised black and blue and feet covered with blisters. However, his clothes were nothing, his bruises would heal, but his rickshaw, that precious rickshaw for which he had sweated years of blood and tears, had vanished! After pulling it to the barracks it had clean disappeared. All his other trials and difficulties he could dismiss and forget, but how could he ever forget that rickshaw?

He was not afraid of hardships, but he couldn't buy another rickshaw just like that, it would take him at least several years. All his previous efforts had gone down the drain, he would have to start from scratch all over again. At the thought, Hsiang-tzu wept. He hated those soldiers, he hated the whole world. What right had they to bully and humiliate people like this? What right?

"What right?" he shouted.

The sound of his own voice — though it brought some relief — reminded him abruptly of his danger. Everything else could wait for the time being, the important thing was to flee for his life.

But where was he? He couldn't say for sure. These last days he had followed the retreating soldiers, bathed in sweat from head to foot. When on the move, he had to carry, push or pull their equip-

ment; when they halted, he had to fetch water, light the cooking fires and feed the pack animals. From morning till night, he forced the last vestiges of his strength into his hands and feet, his mind an utter blank. When he lay down finally, he went out like a light the moment his head touched the ground, and he felt that it would not be such a bad thing if he never opened his eyes again.

He had a vague recollection of the troops retreating first toward Fantasy Peak; later, when they reached the north side of the mountain, his whole attention had been focussed on climbing, for he was obsessed by fear of falling to the bottom of the valley and having his bones picked clean by birds of prey. They had wound their way through the mountains for several days, till the terrain became less hilly, and one evening as the sun was setting behind them he made out a distant plain. When the bugle for supper sounded, several soldiers returned with rifles on their shoulders and leading some camels.

Camels! Hsiang-tzu's heart missed a beat and suddenly his mind started working again, just as when a familiar landmark recalls everything to a man who has lost his way. Camels cannot climb, which meant that they had reached the plains. As far as he knew, camels were raised in villages west of Peiping. Could it be that all these detours had brought them to Moshih Pass? What strategy this was he did not know, if these soldiers able only to loot and retreat had any strategy at all. But of one thing he was certain, and that was that if they had really reached Moshih Pass, the troops had discovered there was no way out through the mountains and were heading for the plains to get away. Moshih Pass was a strategic link between the Western Hills to the northeast and Changhsintien or Fengtai to the south, while due west lay another way out. As he considered the troops' possible movements he plotted his own route too, for now was the time to make his get-away. Should the soldiers retreat to the mountains once more, he might starve even if he did succeed in escaping from them. So now was his chance if he was going to run for it. His heart was pounding in his chest. These last days, it had seemed as if all his blood had been drained into his four limbs, but now it was flowing back into his chest so that his heart was burning hot while his arms

and legs were icy cold. Feverish hope made him tremble from head to foot.

At midnight, he was still wide-awake. Hope buoyed up his spirits, but fear made him nervous. He wanted to sleep but could not drop off as he lay sprawled out on some hay. Everything was still, only the stars throbbing in time to his heart. Suddenly a camel let out a plaintive cry, not far away. Like a cock's sudden crow in the night, it struck him as forlorn yet comforting.

Cannon rumbled in the distance, very far away but unmistakably cannon. He dared not move, but the camp was in an uproar immediately. He held his breath, now was his chance! The troops would surely start retreating again and most certainly head for the mountains. The experience of the last days had taught him that these soldiers behaved like bees trapped in a closed room, blundering wildly in every direction.

The troops would surely flee at the sound of cannon, so he had better look sharp. Holding his breath, he crawled slowly along in search of the camels. He knew very well that they would be of no help to him, but since they were all prisoners together he felt a certain affinity to them. Pandemonium reigned in the encampment now. He found the camels crouching like humps of earth in the darkness, absolutely quiet apart from their heavy breathing, as if nothing had disturbed them. This boosted his courage and he crouched down beside them, like a soldier taking cover behind sandbags. It struck him then in a flash that the cannon fire coming from the south might not mean a real battle, but it was at least a warning that that way out was closed. So the soldiers would have to retreat again to the mountains. If so, they could not possibly take the camels. So he and the camels were in the same boat. If the troops took the camels, then he was lost; but if they forgot them then he could get away. He pressed his ear close to the ground, listening for footsteps, his heart beating furiously.

He did not know how long he waited, but nobody came to lead the camels away. Finally he plucked up courage, sat up and peered out between their double humps. All was dark around, he could

not see a thing. Now was the time to make a run for it, for better for worse!

3

Hsiang-tzu had run twenty to thirty steps when he stopped short, unwilling to leave those camels behind him. All he had left in the world now was his life. He would gladly have picked up a hempen rope from the ground, for even though useless it would comfort him to feel that his hands were not entirely empty. Of course the main thing was to save his life, but what use was a life stripped bare of everything? He must take the camels with him, though so far he had no idea what to do with them, because at least they were something, and a quite sizable something at that.

He tugged the camels to make them get up. While not knowing quite how to handle them, he was, however, not afraid of them for coming from the countryside he was used to animals. Very, very slowly the camels rose to their feet and, without stopping to make sure that they were roped together, as soon as they were all up he set off, regardless of whether he had one or the whole lot in tow.

Once on the move, he regretted his decision. Camels being accustomed to heavy loads walk slowly. Not only that, but they walk very carefully for fear of slipping. A puddle of water or a patch of mud may make them break a leg or sprain a knee. A camel's value lies entirely in its legs; once its legs are done for, it's finished. Yet here was Hsiang-tzu flying for his life!

Still he could not leave them behind. He would trust to Providence and hold on to these camels which he had picked up for nothing.

After pulling rickshaws for so long Hsiang-tzu had a good sense of direction. Even so, he felt lost. Preoccupied with finding the camels, by the time he had coaxed them to their feet he had no idea where he was, for it was so dark and he felt so frantic. Even had he known how to take his bearings from the stars, he would not have dared to do this; for — to him — the stars seemed still more frantic, jostling each other in the black night sky. He dared not look twice at that sky and lowered his head, his heart filled with impatience but

afraid to move quickly. It occurred to him: With the camels in tow, he would have to take the main road instead of following the foothills. Between Moshih Pass — if it really was Moshih Pass — and Huangtsun, the road was straight, so the camels negotiating it wouldn't take him out of the way either. This last factor carried great weight with a rickshaw-puller, but there was no cover on that road. What if he ran into another lot of soldiers? Even if he didn't, who would believe that he with his tattered army uniform, his muddy face and long hair was a camel-driver? No, he definitely did not look like a camel-driver. What he looked like was a deserter! Being picked up by troops wasn't so serious; but if some villagers caught him, at very least he would be buried alive! He began to tremble all over. The soft steps of the camels padding behind him made him suddenly jump for fright. If he wanted to get away, he had better leave these encumbrances behind. But still he could not bring himself to let go of their nose-string. Better press on, no matter where he ended up, and cross that bridge when he came to it. If he came out alive, he would have got a few animals for nothing; if not, too bad!

However, he did take off his army jacket and rip out the collar; after which the last two brass buttons still doing thier duty were torn off and tossed into the darkness where thay fell without a tinkle. He slung the now collarless, buttonless jacket over his shoulders and tied the two sleeves in a knot on his chest as if he were carrying a pack on his back. He felt that now he looked less like a defeated soldier and rolled his trousers up a bit further. Maybe he still did not seem an authentic camel-driver, but at least he was less like a deserter. All the mud and sweat on his face probably made him look more like a coal-miner than anything else.

Hsiang-tzu's mind worked slowly but thoroughly, and once an idea occurred to him he immediately acted on it. As there was no one to see him in the pitch darkness, he didn't have to act right away; but he couldn't wait as he didn't know how soon the day would break. Since he wasn't going through the hills, there would be nowhere for him to hide, so if he was to travel during the day he would have to convince the passers-by that he was a coal-miner. After acting on

this supposition he felt easier in his mind, as if now the danger was past and Peiping was just around the corner. He must move on steadily to the city and not waste any time, as he had neither money nor food on him. He thought of riding a camel to conserve his strength and stave off hunger; but he would have to make the camel kneel before mounting it and that would mean further delay which he couldn't afford. Time was money. What's more, perched up so high he wouldn't be able to see the ground. If the camel were to fall he would come tumbling down too. No, it was better to continue like this.

He had no idea where he was nor where he was heading, but sensed that he must be walking along a highway. He felt uncomfortable from head to foot and uneasy at heart, due to the late hour, the last few exhausting days and his hair-raising escape. After trudging for some distance, his slow steady steps acted as a soporific. The pitch darkness and the dank mist made him feel more lost. When he fixed his gaze on the ground it seemed hummocky but his feet encountered only a flat surface. Caution and the impression of being taken in increased his uneasiness and irritation. He decided not to look at the ground but just gaze straight ahead and shuffle along. He could see absolutely nothing around him. It was as if all the darkness in the world was waiting for him and that he was going from one black world to another. All the time, the silent camels followed him.

Gradually he became accustomed to the darkness and his mind seemed to stop working. His eyes closed of their own accord. Was he still walking or was he standing still? He was conscious only of a seesaw motion as if rocking on some black sea, and the darkness merged with his sensations, unsettled and confused. Suddenly he felt a jolt, as if he had heard some sound or been struck by some idea — he couldn't say for sure. His eyes opened. He was still moving forward, all was still and what had just occurred to him had slipped his mind. His heart thumped a while, then gradually calmed down. He told himself not to close his eyes again, nor give way to foolish fancies; the main thing was to get to the city as fast as possible. But with his mind a blank, his eyes were liable to close once more;

he must concentrate on something to stay awake. If he dropped in his tracks, he knew that he would sleep for three whole days and nights.

What should he think about? He felt dizzy and uncomfortably damp; his head itched, his feet ached and there was a dry bitter taste in his mouth. All he could think of was his own sorry plight, but he couldn't even concentrate on that with his head so empty and dizzy. It was as if just as he remembered himself, he forgot himself again, like a guttering candle trying to illuminate itself. On top of that, the darkness all around made him feel as if he were floating in a black cloud. He knew he existed, that he was moving forward, but with nothing else to prove it he was as uncertain of himself as if he were drifting quite alone out at sea. Never had he suffered from such an agony of uncertainty and utter loneliness. Although in the normal way he was not much given to making friends, in the broad light of day, with the sun shining on him and everything around him, he did not feel afraid. He was not afraid now, but this uncertainty about everything was more than he could stand.

If camels were as hard to handle as horses or donkeys, he would have had to rouse himself to look after them; but they were annoyingly well-behaved, so well-behaved that they got on his nerves. At the height of his confusion, he had suddenly suspected that they were no longer behind him and this had given him a few bad moments: he almost convinced himself that those large beasts could quietly disappear down some dark side-road without his knowing it and gradually melt away, as if he had a piece of ice in tow.

At some point — he couldn't remember when — he sat down. If he had died then and recovered his memory after death, he would have been unable to say how or why he had sat down, or whether he remained seated for five minutes or one hour. Neither did he know whether he had first sat down and then fallen asleep or the other way round. Probably he had fallen asleep first and then sat down, because his exhaustion was such that he could have slept standing up.

He awoke suddenly. It was not a slow natural awakening but a sudden start, as if in the second it took him to open his eyes he had jumped from one world to another. Still all was dark, but he dis-

tinctly heard a cock crow. The sound was so distinct, it seemed to pierce his brain, making him wide-awake. Where were the camels? Nothing else mattered for the moment. The rope was still in his hand, the camels still beside him. He calmed down. He felt too lazy to get up and was aching all over, yet he dared not go to sleep again either. He must think carefully, that was the thing to do. At this point he remembered his rickshaw and cried out, "By what right?"

"By what right?" Yet shouting was going to get him absolutely nowhere. He went to check on the camels as he still did not know how many he had. Feeling with his hands he counted three. To him that wasn't too many but too few, and he concentrated on them now; for though he hadn't yet thought out the best thing to do with them, he vaguely realized that his future depended entirely on them.

"Why not sell them and buy another rickshaw?" He almost leapt to his feet, but then didn't move, ashamed of not having thought of this most natural, straightforward way out before. But joy was stronger than shame, and he made up his mind. Hadn't he heard a cock crow? Even if cocks sometimes crowed at one or two in the morning, it still meant that dawn was at hand. And where there were cocks there must be a village. Maybe it was even Peihsinan where people bred camels. He must hurry to get there by daylight. Once the camels were off his hands, as soon as he reached the city he could buy another rickshaw. The price must be lower too in these troubled times with fighting going on. All he could think of now was buying a rickshaw. He saw no difficulty in selling the camels.

His spirits rose at the prospect, and all his discomfort disappeared. Had he been able to buy one hundred *mon* of land for the price of these three camels, or trade them for a few pearls, he would not have been so happy. He jumped up hurriedly, pulled the camels to their feet, and started off. He didn't know the present price of camels but had heard that in the old days, before there were trains, one camel would fetch fifty ounces of silver, because camels are strong and eat less than horses or mules. He did not expect to get a hundred and fifty ounces for three camels, all he hoped for was eighty to a hundred dollars — just enough to buy a rickshaw.

As he walked on, the sky became brighter and brighter in front of him. Yes, he was definitely heading east. Even if he were on the wrong road his general direction was right. He knew that the mountains were to the west, the city to the east. His surroundings had been pitch black, but now he could make out light and dark though he couldn't yet distinguish any colours, and fields and distant trees took shape in the gloom. The stars grew fainter and the sky, shrouded by a murkiness that could have been clouds or mist, seemed much higher than before. Hsiang-tzu dared lift his head again. Once more he could smell the grass by the road and hear a few birds twitter. Now that he had made out objects indistinctly, he regained the use of his other faculties too. He could see himself again, and though he was certainly in very poor shape, at least he was still alive — no doubt about it. Life seemed particularly sweet, as it does after awakening from a nightmare.

Having looked himself over he turned to look at the camels. They were just as scruffy as he was and just as dear to him. It was the moulting season and patches of their greyish red skin showed through the scattered tufts of limp, dangling long hair ready to drop from their sides at any moment. They were like huge beggars of the animal kingdom. Most pathetic were their hairless necks, so long, bent and clumsy, craning out like scraggy, disconcerted dragons. But no matter how scruffy they looked, Hsiang-tzu did not find them disgusting because they were, after all, alive.

And he counted himself the luckiest man in the world, now that Heaven had given him these three precious creatures — enough to exchange for a rickshaw. Such luck was not to be met with every day. He couldn't help chuckling aloud.

The grey sky began to turn red, the fields and distant trees seemed darker than ever. Red and grey blended so that in places the sky was lilac, in others crimson, while most of it was the purple-grey of grapes. Presently, bright gold appeared through the red, and all the colours glowed. Suddenly everything became crystal clear. Then the morning clouds in the east turned deep red and the sky above showed blue. The red clouds were pierced by golden rays, interweaving to spin a majestic, glittering web in the southeastern

sky with the clouds as warp, the rays as weft. Fields, trees and wild grass changed from dark green to bright emerald. The branches of ancient pines were dyed red-gold, the wings of flying birds sparkled: everything seemed to be smiling. Hsiang-tzu felt like hailing that expanse of red light for it was as if he hadn't seen the sun ever since the soldiers seized him. His head bowed, his heart filled with curses, he had forgotten the sun, moon and sky. Now he was walking freely along a road that grew brighter the further he walked. The sun made the dewdrops on the grass sparkle, shone on his eyebrows and hair, and warmed his heart. He forgot all his trials, all the danger and pain. What did it matter that he was shabby and filthy? The heat and light of the sun had not excluded him, he was living in a world of light and warmth. He was so happy he wanted to shout for joy.

Laughing at his own tattered clothes and the three moulting camels behind him, he thought how strange it was that four such bedraggled creatures should have escaped from danger and be able now to walk down this sunny road. No need to wonder who was right and who wrong, to him it was all the will of Heaven. Reassured, he continued slowly on his way. As long as Heaven protected him, he need fear nothing. Where was he? He no longer felt like asking, although men and women were already working in the fields. Best to keep going, and even if he couldn't sell the camels right away it didn't seem to matter much. It could wait till he got back to town. How he longed to see Peiping again! Though he had neither family nor property there, it was after all his home. The whole city was his home, and once there he would find some way out.

There was a fairly large village in the distance. The willow trees outside it were like a row of tall guards and some wisps of cooking smoke drifted over the low dwellings. The distant barking of the dogs sounded beautiful to him. He headed straight for the village, not that he expected to meet with good luck there but rather to show that he was afraid of nothing. After all, he was an honest man, why should he fear the good village-folk? Weren't they all basking in the same peaceful sunlight? He hoped to get a drink of water

there, but if he couldn't it didn't matter either. What was a little thirst to someone who had escaped death in the mountains?

The way the dogs barked at him didn't worry him, but the stares of the women and children made him uneasy. He must be a very strange-looking camel-driver for people to gape like that. This nettled him. First the soldiers had treated him like dirt, now all the villagers were looking at him as if he were a monster. What could he do about it? He had always taken pride in his size and strength, but these last days — without any rhyme or reason — he had been shamefully treated. Over the roof of one cottage he glimpsed the bright sun again, but somehow it seemed less enchanting than just a moment ago.

The village had only one main street dotted with smelly puddles of slops and pig and horse urine. Afraid the camels would slip and fall, Hsiang-tzu decided to rest a while. On the north side of the street stood a relatively well-to-do villager's house. It had a tiled building in the back, but just a lattice door in front, with no proper gate and no gatehouse. Hsiang-tzu's heart leapt. A tiled roof meant a man of property, while a lattice door instead of a gatehouse meant a camel-owner. Very well, he would rest here a while and he might just get a good chance to dispose of the camels.

"Suh, suh, suh!" He urged the camels to kneel. That was the only camel-call he knew and he used it proudly just to show the villagers that he really knew his business. The camels actually knelt down, and he seated himself with a swagger under a small willow tree. Everyone stared at him and he stared back, knowing this was the only way to allay suspicion.

Presently an old man came out of the yard. He was dressed in a blue cotton jacket open in front and his face shone. You could tell at a glance that he was a man of property. Hsiang-tzu made a quick decision.

"Have you any water, sir? I'd like a bowl to drink."

"Ah!" The old man, rubbing mud off his chest, glanced appraisingly at Hsiang-tzu then carefully looked over the three camels. "There's water. Where are you from?"

"From west of here." Hsiang-tzu dared not be more specific for he still did not know where he was.

"Soldiers over there?" The old man's eyes were fixed on Hsiang-tzu's army trousers.

"I was nabbed by them, but just managed to escape."

"Ah! No danger to camels outside the western pass?"

"The soldiers have all gone into the mountains. The road is very quiet now."

"Umm." The old man nodded slowly. "Wait a moment, I'll get you some water."

Hsiang-tzu followed him into the courtyard where he saw four camels.

"Why don't you keep my three, sir, and make up a caravan?"

"Hub, a caravan! Thirty years ago I had three! But times have changed. Who can afford to keep camels!" He stood staring blankly at the four animals. After some time he continued, "A few days ago I was thinking of joining up with a neighbour and sending them outside the pass to graze. But with soldiers to the east and soldiers to the west, who dares go out? I hate to see them cooped up here in summer — it really gets me down. Just look at those flies! And when it gets hotter there'll be mosquitoes too. It's terrible to watch good animals suffer and that's a fact!" He nodded repeatedly as if carried away by wretchedness and frustration.

"Keep my three camels, sir, and take the whole lot outside the pass to graze." Hsiang-tzu was nearly pleading. "The liveliest animals, if they spend the summer here, will be half killed by the flies and mosquitoes."

"But who has the money to buy them? Who can afford to keep camels in times like these?"

"Keep them, any price will do. Once I've got them off my hands, I can get back to the city and earn a living."

The old man sized Hsiang-tzu up — he was no bandit. Then he looked back at the three camels outside and really seemed to take a liking to them, though he knew quite well he had no use for them. But just as a bibliophile wants to buy every book he sees and a stud owner hankers after new horses, a man who has had three caravans

of camels is always eager for more. Besides, Hsiang-tzu was willing to let them go cheap. When a connoisseur has a chance to get a bargain, he tends to forget whether it will serve any purpose.

"Young fellow, if I had enough spare cash I really would keep them!" The old man spoke from his heart.

"Keep them anyway, any price will do!" Hsiang-tzu was so much in earnest, the other became quite embarrassed.

"To tell you the truth, young fellow, thirty years ago these would have been three big treasures. But in times like these, what with all the confusion and fighting... You'd better try somewhere else!"

"Any price will do!" Hsiang-tzu could think of nothing else to say. He knew the old man had been telling the truth, but he didn't feel like trying to sell camels all over the place. If he didn't get rid of them, he might get into some other trouble.

"Well, see here, I'm ashamed to offer you only twenty to thirty dollars, but it's honestly hard for me to fork even that out. In times like these — there's nothing to be done."

Hsiang-tzu's heart sank. Twenty to thirty dollars? Why that was nowhere near the price of a rickshaw! But he was in a hurry to clinch the deal, and he couldn't count on having the luck to run into another customer for his camels.

"Give me whatever you can, sir!"

"What's your trade, young fellow? It's obvious you're not a camel-driver."

Hsiang-tzu told him the truth.

"Aha, so you risked your life for those animals!" The old man sympathized with him and was relieved that the camels were not stolen goods. For though Hsiang-tzu's taking them wasn't much different from stealing, there were after all the soldiers in between. In times of war, one could not judge things according to normal standards.

"Look here, friend, I'll give you thirty-five dollars. If I tell you that's not getting them cheap, I'm a dog. And if I could pay you one dollar more for them, I'd also be a dog. I'm over sixty, so what more can I say!"

Hsiang-tzu was at a loss. He had always been tight-fisted. But the old man's frank and friendly way of talking, coming on top of his recent experiences with the soldiers, made him ashamed to bargain any more. Besides, thirty-five dollars in hand was more dependable than a hoped-for ten thousand, even though it was too little for risking his life. Three big camels, alive and kicking, were undoubtedly worth more than thirty-five dollars. But what could he do?

"The camels are yours, sir. Just do me another favour. Give me a shirt and something to eat."

"Done!"

Hsiang-tzu had a deep drink of cold water. Then, clutching his thirty-five bright, shiny dollars and two maize cakes and wearing a tattered white jacket that barely covered his chest, he set off. How he longed to reach the city in one bound!

4

For three days, Hsiang-tzu rested in a small inn at Haitien, now burning with fever, now shivering with cold, his mind a blank. Purple blisters had appeared along his gums. He was racked by thirst but had no appetite. After fasting for three days, the fever abated and he felt as limp as taffy. It was probably during this time that people got to know about the three camels from his delirious raving in his sleep, for when he finally came to his senses he was already "Camel Hsiang-tzu".

Since coming to town he had been known only as "Hsiang-tzu" as if he had no surname. Now with "Camel" tacked on, people cared even less about his family name. He had never worried about his family name before, but now he felt he had got the worst of the bargain, getting so little for those animals yet landing himself with this nickname.

As soon as he could stand, he decided to go out and look around, but his legs were unbelievably weak and when he reached the door of the inn they suddenly gave way and he collapsed on the ground. He sat there in a daze for a long time, beads of cold sweat on his brow.

He bore it stoically, then opened his eyes and heard his stomach rumbling. He felt a little hungry. Slowly he stood up and made his way to a peddler selling ravioli soup from a portable stove. He bought a bowl and sat down on the ground again. The first sip made him want to retch and he kept the liquid in his mouth for some time before finally forcing himself to swallow it. He didn't feel like drinking any more. However, a second later, the soup seemed to have threaded its way down to his stomach and he belched loudly twice. At that he knew he was going to survive.

With a little food in his stomach, he took stock of himself once more. He was much thinner and his tattered trousers were as filthy as could be. He didn't feel like moving, yet was in a hurry to regain his old spruceness, not wanting to arrive in town looking so down and out. But that meant spending money. A shave, change of clothes, new shoes and socks all would cost money, yet he shouldn't touch a cent of the thirty-five dollars, already nowhere near enough to buy a rickshaw. However, he felt sorry for himself. Though he had not spent many days with the troops, it already seemed like a nightmare, a nightmare which had aged him considerably, as if overnight he had added years to his age. His big hands and feet were obviously his own yet it was as if he had suddenly found them somewhere. He felt very bad and dared not recall his past wrongs and dangers, yet he was conscious of them all the time, just as one knows during a rainy period that it's a grey day without looking at the sky. His body seemed to him particularly precious, he really shouldn't be so hard on it. He stood up. Though he knew he was still very weak, he must lose no time in sprucing up, for once his head was shaved and he'd changed his clothes he was sure he would recover his strength right away.

All told it cost him two dollars twenty cents to make himself presentable once more. A jacket and trousers of undyed coarse-grained cloth cost one dollar, black cloth shoes eighty cents, coarse cotton socks fifteen cents and a straw hat twenty-five cents. His old rags he exchanged for two packages of matches.

Clutching his matches he set out along the main road toward Hsichihmen Gate. He hadn't gone far when he began to feel tired

and weak, but he gritted his teeth. He couldn't take a rickshaw, however he looked at it that was unthinkable. To a peasant, eight to ten *li* were no distance at all, and anyway he was a rickshaw-puller himself. Apart from that, it was ridiculous for a strapping great fellow like himself to be beaten by a little sickness. Even if he fell down and couldn't get up again, he would roll all the way to Peiping sooner than give up! If he didn't reach town today then he was finished. The one thing he believed in was his own strength, no matter what illness he had.

He staggered unsteadily along. Not far from Haitien he started seeing stars. He caught hold of a willow tree to steady himself, but though earth and sky were spinning violently he refused to sit down. When the spinning slowed down, then stopped, his heart seemed to drop back from a great height into his chest and wiping the sweat from his brow he continued on his way. His head was shaved, his clothes and shoes were new; he considered he had done quite enough for himself, so now it was up to his legs to do their bit, to walk!

Without stopping again for breath he trudged to Kuanhsiang. The medley of horses and people there, the cacophony of sounds, the stench of dust and the feel of that soft dust beneath his feet tempted him to stoop down and kiss the malodorous earth, the earth that he loved, that was his source of money. He had no parents or brothers, no relatives at all; the only friend he had was this ancient city. It had given him everything. So even if he starved here, he loved it better than the countryside. Here there were things to see and things to hear, light and sound everywhere. As long as he worked hard, there was money past counting here. Endless good things too, more than he could eat or wear. Here even a beggar could get soup with meat in it, whereas in the countryside there was nothing but maize flour. When he reached the west side of Kao-liang Bridge, he sat down on the bank and wept for joy.

The sun was sinking in the west. On the banks, old willows grew crookedly, their tops tipped with gold. There was little water in the river, but a profusion of water-weeds gave it the appearance of a long greasy green belt, narrow and dark, exuding a faint dank smell.

The wheat on the north bank had already grown ears, and the leaves on their short dry stems were covered with dust. To the south, in the lily pool, floated small, limp green leaves, round which from time to time appeared little bubbles. On the bridge to the east, traffic moved back and forth. Seen in the slanting rays of the sun it seemed unusually hurried, as if the imminence of dusk had made everyone uneasy. But to Hsiang-tzu it was all most enchanting. To him, this was the only stream, these were the only trees, lilies, wheat and bridge worthy of the name — for they all belonged to Peiping.

He sat there quietly, in no hurry to leave. Everything about him was so familiar, so dear, he would gladly have sat feasting his eyes on it until he died. After a long rest there, he went to eat a bowl of beancurd at the head of the bridge. The vinegar, soya sauce, pepper oil and chopped chives mixed with the scalding white beancurd smelt so delicious it quite took his breath away. Holding the bowl, his eyes fixed on the dark green chives, his hands started to tremble. One mouthful, and the beancurd seemed to burn its way down his throat. He helped himself to another two small spoonfuls of paprika oil. When he had finished the bowl, his belt was soaked through. Half closing his eyes, he held out his bowl and ordered another portion.

When he stood up, he felt like a man again. The sun was at its lowest in the west, the sunset clouds had tinged the river with pink. He felt like shouting for joy. Fingering the smooth scar on his face and the money in his pocket, he squinted again at the sunlight on the watch-tower. He forgot his illness, forgot everything else. As if spurred on by some great longing, he decided to enter the city.

The gate-way through the city wall was crowded with vehicles and pedestrians of every kind, all in a hurry to get through although none dared move too fast. The cracking of whips, the cries, curses, the honking of horns, the tinkling of bells and the laughter all mingled to form one great din as if the tunnel were an amplifier with each individual in it clamouring. Hsiang-tzu pushed through the crowd, finding place for his big feet now here, now there, like a long, thin fish following the leaping waves, till he squeezed his way into the city. Before him stretched the wide, straight boulevard of Hsinchickou.

At the sight, his eyes shone as brightly as the reflected light on the eastern rooftops. He nodded to himself.

His bedding was still in Harmony Yard on Hsianmen Road, so he naturally headed there. Having no family, he had always lived there though he didn't always pull their rickshaws.

The owner of this yard, Fourth Master Liu, was nearing seventy but was still a trickster. In his youth he had been a military depot guard, run gambling dens, dealt in the slave traffic and lent out money at the devil's own rates. He had all the qualifications for these occupations: strength, shrewdness, social connections and a certain reputation. Before the fall of the Ching Dynasty he had taken part in mob fighting, abducted women of good families and undergone torture. When tortured, he had neither batted an eyelid nor begged for mercy and had earned the reputation of standing firm at his trial.

As it happened, he came out of prison just after the republic had been set up, when the power of the police was increasing. Fourth Master Liu could see that no one could set himself up any more as a local hero. So he started a rickshaw business. Being a local slicker, he knew how to deal with poor people — when to be hard and when to ease the pressure a little. And he had a positive flair for organizing. None of his rickshaw-pullers dared try any tricks on him. Laughing at them one minute and glaring the next, he had them completely flummoxed, as if they had one foot in heaven and one in hell. So they found it best to let him call the tune.

By now he already had sixty-odd rickshaws, even the oldest at least seven parts new, for he did not hire out broken-down vehicles. The rent he charged was higher than in other places, but at the three yearly festivals he allowed two more days rent-free than did the others. His Harmony Yard had quarters where bachelor pullers could live free of charge, on condition that they paid the rickshaw rent. Those who couldn't, yet tried to hang on, would have their bedding confiscated by him and find themselves thrown out like a broken teapot. However, if anyone had some pressing trouble or some sudden illness, they had only to tell the old man and he never hesitated to go through fire and water to help them out. That was another way he had won his reputation.

Fourth Master Liu was like a tiger. Though nearing seventy his back was straight and he thought nothing of walking ten to twenty *li*. With his large round eyes, big nose, square jaw and protruding teeth, he had only to open his mouth to look like a tiger. As tall as Hsiang-tzu, he shaved his head till it shone and had no beard or moustache. He liked to think of himself as a tiger and only regretted having no son but only a "tiger" daughter of thirty-seven or eight. Anyone who knew Fourth Master Liu was sure to know his daughter, Tigress. Because she really looked like one she frightened men away, and though she was a good helpmate for her father no one had ever dared ask for her hand in marriage. All in all she resembled a man, even cursing with a man's forthrightness and sometimes a few extra flourishes of her own. With Fourth Master Liu managing outside affairs and Tigress the inside arrangements, Harmony Yard was most efficiently run. Its prestige was so high in rickshaw circles that the Liu family's methods were often cited by pullers and owners alike, just as scholars quote from the classics to prove a point.

Before buying his own rickshaw, Hsiang-tzu had rented one from Harmony Yard. He had given his savings into Fourth Master Liu's keeping and, when he had made enough, had withdrawn them to buy his own rickshaw.

"Fourth Master, look at my rickshaw!" Hsiang-tzu had pulled his new vehicle into the yard.

The old man eyed it and nodded. "Not bad!"

"I shall be staying here until I find a job by the month, then I'll move out to where I'm hired!" Hsiang-tzu added proudly.

"All right!" The old man nodded again.

So when Hsiang-tzu was hired by the month, he moved to the house of his new employer; and when he lost the job and was pulling odd fares, he lived in Harmony Yard.

The other rickshaw men had rarely known cases of someone living in Harmony Yard without hiring one of its rickshaws. So some people speculated that Hsiang-tzu was a relative of Old Man Liu's, while others even said that the old man had taken a fancy to him and was planning to marry him to Tigress, wanting a son-in-law humble enough to move into their house. There was some envy in

this speculation, but if by any chance it came true then Harmony Yard would be Hsiang-tzu's after the old man's death. So they dared say nothing cutting to Hsiang-tzu himself and only made wild guesses.

Actually Hsiang-tzu's preferential treatment was on another account. He was the kind of person who stuck to his old ways in new surroundings. If he had joined the army, he would never have shammed stupid to bully people as soon as he put on a uniform. In the rickshaw yard he was never idle: as soon as he had stopped sweating, he would find something to do — cleaning the rickshaws, pumping tyres, sunning rain-hoods, oiling the machines. He needed no orders but did these things of his own free will, and cheerfully too, as if it were a real pleasure. The yard generally housed about twenty rickshaw men. When they knocked off, they would sit about chatting or go to bed and sleep. Hsiang-tzu was the only one whose hands were never idle. At first, everybody thought he was sucking up to Fourth Master Liu to get into his good books; but after a few days they realized that he had no idea of ingratiating himself, he was so natural and sincere, and they had nothing to say.

Old Man Liu never gave Hsiang-tzu a word of praise, never cast him so much as an extra glance, but in his heart everything was chalked up. Knowing Hsiang-tzu to be a good worker, he was willing to let him live there though he didn't hire a rickshaw. Not to mention anything else, with Hsiang-tzu there the yard and gateway were always swept clean as could be.

As for Tigress, she liked this tall bumpkin even more for, whatever she said, he listened carefully and never talked back. The other rickshaw men, soured by their sufferings, kept contradicting her. Though she wasn't afraid of them, neither did she pay them much attention, saving all she had to say for Hsiang-tzu. Whenever he found a monthly job, father and daughter would feel as if they had lost a friend. Whenever he returned, even the old man's curses seemed less harsh.

Hsiang-tzu came into Harmony Yard, his two packages of matches in his hands. It was not yet dark and Old Man Liu and his daughter

were having supper. When she saw him come in, Tigress put down her chopsticks.

"Why Hsiang-tzu!" she exclaimed. "Did a wolf run off with you or did you go to Africa to mine gold?"

"Huh!" Hsiang-tzu volunteered no information.

Fourth Master Liu ran his eyes over him, but was silent.

Still wearing his new straw hat, Hsiang-tzu sat down opposite them.

"If you haven't eaten yet, you might as well join us." Tigress acted as if welcoming a good friend.

Hsiang-tzu sat still, his heart suddenly filled with indescribable warmth. He had always considered Harmony Yard his home. As a puller on a monthly basis he often changed masters, and when he picked up fares in the street they were never the same. This was the only place where he had always been allowed to stay, always had someone to chat with. He had just escaped with his life, coming back to the people he knew, they were even inviting him to eat with them. It nearly made him suspect that they were going to cheat him, yet at the same time he felt close to tears.

"I've just had two bowls of beancurd," he said politely.

"Where've you been?" Fourth Master Liu's large round eyes were fixed on him. "Where's your rickshaw?"

"Rickshaw?" Hsiang-tzu spat in disgust.

"Come and have a bowl of rice. It won't poison you! Two bowls of beancurd, what kind of a meal is that?" Tigress pulled him over, rather like an affectionate elder sister-in-law.

Before picking up the bowl Hsiang-tzu pulled out his money. "Fourth Master, first keep these thirty dollars for me." He slipped the loose change back into his pocket.

Fourth Master Liu's raised eyebrows asked more plainly than words, "Where's this money from?"

While Hsiang-tzu ate he told them of his capture by the soldiers.

"Huh, you young fool!" Fourth Master Liu shook his head when he had heard him out. "If you had brought those camels into town and sold them to the knackers you could have got over a dozen dollars a head. In winter, when their coats have grown back, three camels could fetch sixty dollars!"

Hsiang-tzu had already been having qualms, and this made him feel even worse. But on second thoughts he decided that it would have been wrong to sell three vigorous camels to the knackers to be killed. He and the camels had escaped together, they had an equal right to live. He said nothing, but felt easier in his mind.

While Tigress cleared the table, Fourth Master Liu tilted his head as if thinking something over. Suddenly he smiled, showing two fang-like teeth that seemed to grow firmer with age. "So you fell ill at Haitien, eh? Why didn't you come straight back by the Huang-tsun road, you fool?"

"I was afraid I might be caught on the main road, so I took the long way round by the Western Hills. Just suppose some villagers had taken me for an army deserter!"

Fourth Master chuckled and winked to himself. He had been afraid that Hsiang-tzu was lying and that the thirty dollars were loot, in which case he did not want to take charge of it. In his own young days he had broken every law there was, but now that he claimed to have reformed he had to take precautions, he knew very well how to be careful too. That had been the only hole he could pick in Hsiang-tzu's tale. Now that Hsiang-tzu had explained it without turning a hair, the old man was reassured.

"What do you want done with it?" he asked, pointing to the money.

"Whatever you say."

"Buy another rickshaw?" The old man bared his fangs again as if to say, "Think you're still going to live here free with your own rickshaw?"

"It's not enough. If I buy one it's got to be a new one!" Hsiang-tzu was too taken up with his own thoughts to notice those fangs.

"Want a loan? Ten per cent interest. For others, it's twenty-five."

Hsiang-tzu shook his head.

"Better to pay me ten per cent than pay the shop instalments."

"I shan't pay by instalments either," said Hsiang-tzu as if in a trance. "I'm going to save up slowly. When I have enough I'll pay cash."

The old man stared at him as if at some strange cipher which might

disgust you but couldn't make you angry. Presently he picked up the money. "Thirty dollars? You're not keeping anything back?"

"No mistake!" Hsiang-tzu stood up. "I'm turning in now. Here's a package of matches for you." He placed a package on the table, then stood there blankly. "Don't tell the others about the camels," he said.

5

Though Fourth Master Liu never breathed a word about Hsiang-tzu's experiences, the camel story very quickly spread from Haitien into the city. Previously, people could find no fault with Hsiang-tzu, but his doggedness made them feel he was different and rather strange. However, their attitude changed after his nickname "Camel" became known, though Hsiang-tzu retained a grim silence and was far from sociable. The general opinion was that he had made a pile in a shady way. There were various versions of how he had done it: some said he had found a gold watch, others that he had picked up three hundred dollars for nothing; yet others, nodding knowingly, that he had led thirty camels back from the Western Hills.

However unpopular a man may be with his mates, if he comes in for easy money they invariably treat him with respect. Selling one's strength for a living is no easy thing, so everyone hopes for some ill-gotten gains; and these being so rare, a man with the good luck to get some must be a favourite of fortune, different from the common run. So Hsiang-tzu's silence and stand-offishness suddenly became the seemly reticence of a great personage and it was only right for others to make up to him.

"Come on, Hsiang-tzu, tell us! Tell us how you got rich!"

Hsiang-tzu heard such talk every day, but held his peace. When pressed too hard, the scar on his forehead would turn deep red and he would burst out angrily:

"Rich? Me? Then where the devil is my rickshaw?"

True, where was his rickshaw? That set everyone thinking. But it's always better to rejoice than to worry for someone else, so everyone forgot about his rickshaw and thought about his good luck.

After a while, when they saw that he still pulled a rickshaw, hadn't changed his trade or bought himself land and houses, their attitude toward him cooled. And when his name was mentioned, they no longer asked why he was called "Camel" of all animals, but seemed to consider it quite appropriate.

However, Hsiang-tzu could not forget this business so easily. He was longing to buy a new rickshaw right away, and the more anxious he was to do this the more he thought of his first one. Day in and day out he worked uncomplainingly, but his past experiences kept preying on his mind till he felt suffocated. He could not help wondering: What use was it trying so hard? The world didn't give you a fairer deal because you went all out. By what right had they taken away his rickshaw for nothing? Even if he got another one, who knew when the same sort of thing might happen again?

The past was like a nightmare which made him lose faith in the future. He almost envied the others their drinking, smoking and whoring. If trying so hard was useless, why not enjoy the present? They were right. As for him, even if he stayed away from women, why not drink a glass or two and relax? Wine and tobacco seemed to have a special attraction for him, for he felt they were inexpensive yet from them he could surely draw comfort and the strength to struggle on, forgetting his past wretchedness.

Yet still he dared not touch them. He must save every cent he could, only then would he be able to buy his own rickshaw. Even if he bought it today only to lose it tomorrow, he must still buy it. It was his ambition, his hope, almost his religion. If he didn't succeed in pulling his own rickshaw, he would have lived in vain. He didn't aspire to become an official, get rich or go into business. All he was capable of was pulling a rickshaw, so his greatest hope was to buy one of his own. If he didn't, he would be disgraced in his own eyes. From morning till night he pondered the problem and reckoned up his money; forgetting it would have meant forgetting himself and becoming an animal only able to run through the streets with no better prospects at all, nothing to live for.

No matter how smart the rickshaw, as long as it was rented he couldn't put his heart into pulling it — it was like carrying a rock on

his back. Even with a rented one he never slacked, keeping it clean and well-polished and taking good care not to bump or damage it. But this was only from a sense of prudence: he took no pleasure in it.

Yes, cleaning up your own rickshaw was like counting your own money, a source of real satisfaction. So he still kept off tobacco and alcohol and couldn't even bring himself to drink better quality tea. Respectable rickshaw-pullers like himself, after a good fast run, liked to repair to a tea-house to treat themselves to tea that cost ten cents a packet, and two packets of white sugar. That helped them to recover their breath and cool off. When Hsiang-tzu had run till the sweat dripped from his ears and his chest seemed a ball of fire, he longed to do the same, not out of habit or to give himself airs, but because he really needed a good drink. Yet he only thought about it, and stuck to the tea-leaf sweepings which cost one cent a packet. At times he was tempted to curse himself for roughing it like this; but what else could a rickshaw-puller do if he wanted to save a bit every month? Doggedly he gritted his teeth. Just wait until he had his own rickshaw! A rickshaw of his own would make up for everything.

Tight-fisted as he was about spending money, Hsiang-tzu let slip no chance of earning it. When he wasn't hired by the month he worked round the clock, taking his rickshaw out early and bringing it back late, determined to earn a certain sum every day no matter what time it was or how tired his legs were. Sometimes he would not stop at all for a whole day and night in a row.

Previously, he had refrained from grabbing fares from others, particularly from down-and-out old, weak pullers. With his strength and superior rickshaw they were no match for him if he competed with them. But now he had no such scruples. All he thought about was money, the more the better, regardless of what the job was like or whom he snatched it from. If he could get a fare nothing else mattered — he was like a ravening beast. When he got a fare he raced off, relaxing somewhat, feeling that keeping on the move was his only hope of buying a rickshaw.

One way and another, Hsiang-tzu's reputation now fell far short

of what it had been before he became known as "Camel". He often ran off with somebody else's fare, followed by a volley of curses. Instead of shouting back he raced on with lowered head thinking, "If I didn't have to buy a rickshaw I could never be so shameless!" This was, as it were, his unspoken apology to everyone.

At the rickshaw-stands or in the tea-houses, when he saw everybody glaring at him he wanted to explain things. But in view of their unfriendliness, plus the fact that normally he never drank, gambled, played chess or chatted with them, he could only swallow his words and lock them up in his chest. His frustration gradually turned to resentment and he fumed inwardly, so that when they scowled at him he would glare back. It made him feel even worse when he compared their present scorn with the respect they had shown him just after his escape from the mountains. Sitting alone in a tea-house with his pot of tea, or counting the coppers from a recent fare at a rickshaw-stand, he tried with all his might to control his anger. Although he was not afraid of a fight, he didn't want one. The others never balked at a rough-and-tumble but they would have to think twice before taking Hsiang-tzu on, for not one of them was his match while to gang up on him would be a poor show. Hsiang-tzu managed to keep his temper, unable to think of any alternative to sticking it out until he had his own rickshaw, when things would work out all right. He would not have to worry then every day about the rent of his rickshaw, but could afford to be generous and not offend others by taking their fares. That was the way to think, and he eyed everyone as if to say, "Just wait and see!"

He really should not have pushed himself so hard. After his return to the city, he hadn't waited to recover completely before starting work once more. Though he wouldn't admit it, he often felt exhausted, yet he did not dare to rest; and he believed that running and sweating more would overcome this inertia. As for food, he dared neither starve himself nor eat too well. He could see that he was much thinner, but since he was as tall as ever and his muscles were still hard that reassured him. He believed that because he was taller and bigger than others, he could certainly stand more hardships. It never occurred to him that being so big and working so hard he

needed more nourishment. Tigress remonstrated with him several times. "Hey, you! If you go on this way, don't blame anyone else if you start spitting blood!"

He knew she meant well, but because things weren't going as he wanted and he was worn out, he was irascible. He would scowl at her and say, "If I don't go all out, when will I be able to buy a rickshaw?"

If anyone else had scowled at her like that, Tigress would have cursed him for hours; but with Hsiang-tzu she was really extra polite and solicitous. She answered with no more than a curl of the lips, "Even so, you must take your time. Think you're made of steel? You ought to rest for three days!" Seeing that he was unwilling, she would add, "All right, you have your own way. Don't blame me if you drop dead!"

Fourth Master Liu was not pleased with Hsiang-tzu either, because of course the way he went all out and the long hours he worked were hard on his rickshaw. Though rickshaws rented by the day could be taken out and returned at any hour, if everyone were to overtax them like Hsiang-tzu they would be worn out at least six months before their time. Even the strongest couldn't stand such rough treatment. Also, Hsiang-tzu was now so intent on hauling fares that he had little time to help clean rickshaws and do other odd jobs, and this was another loss. The old man felt a bit sore, but said nothing. Rickshaws were rented by the day with no restriction on their hours of use — that was the rule. Helping out was a question of friendship, not a duty, and a man of his reputation couldn't lower himself to take this up with Hsiang-tzu. All he could do was to cast sidelong glances of disapproval and clamp his lips together.

At times he thought of throwing Hsiang-tzu out, but when he looked at his daughter he didn't dare. He had never considered Hsiang-tzu as a possible son-in-law, but since his daughter was fond of this pig-headed fellow, he had no business to meddle. She was his only child, and as there seemed no hope of marrying her off, he really couldn't chase her friend away.

If the truth were told, Tigress was such a good helper he didn't want her to marry at all and this selfish wish made him feel rather

guilty and therefore a little bit afraid of her. All his life he had feared neither heaven nor earth, yet here he was in his old age afraid of his own daughter! He rationalized his mortification by thinking: As long as he was afraid of someone it proved that he was not entirely devoid of conscience. That being so, maybe his crimes would not catch up with him on his deathbed. Very well then, as his fear of his daughter was justified, he mustn't throw Hsiang-tzu out. But this didn't mean that he need put up with any nonsense from her and marry her to Hsiang-tzu. No. He could see she wasn't averse to such a marriage, but Hsiang-tzu hadn't presumed to make up to one so far above him.

So all he had to do was to watch his step. It definitely wasn't worth upsetting his daughter.

Hsiang-tzu hadn't noticed the old man's expression. He had no time for such trivia. If he wanted to leave Harmony Yard, it was not because of any hard feelings but because he longed to get a monthly job. He was a little fed up with pulling odd fares, firstly because others despised him for stealing their customers, and secondly because he couldn't be sure what his daily income would be. Today he might earn more, tomorrow less; there was no way of reckoning when he would save up enough to buy his own rickshaw. Hsiang-tzu liked things that were certain. Even if he saved only a little, so long as he could count on a set sum put by each month, he felt hopeful and reassured. He was one of those people who like things cut and dried.

He found a job by the month. But it turned out just as unsatisfactory as picking up fares in the streets. This time he was employed by the Yang family. Mr. Yang was from Shanghai, his principal wife from Tientsin and his second wife from Soochow. Between them, with their medley of northern and southern accents, they had produced an amazing number of children.

The first day of work there nearly made Hsiang-tzu pass out. Early in the morning, the No. 1 wife went to the market by rickshaw. On her return, the young masters and misses had to be sent to school. Some were in junior middle school, others in primary school, still others in nursery school. Their schools, ages and appearances were different, but they were all equally exasperating, especially in the rick-

shaw, when even the best-behaved seemed to have two more hands than a monkey. The children dispatched, Mr. Yang had to be taken to the yamen. Then Hsiang-tzu had to hurry back to take the No. 2 wife to Tungan Market or to pay some calls. On their return, the children had to be fetched home for lunch. After lunch, off they went to school once more. At this point, Hsiang-tzu thought he could have his own meal; but the No. 1 wife, the one with the Tientsin accent, now ordered him to fetch water. The household's drinking water was supplied by a water-carrier, but fetching brackish water for washing clothes was left to the rickshaw-puller. Although this was outside the terms of his contract, in order to keep his job Hsiang-tzu didn't argue but silently filled the water-barrel. He had put down the buckets and was on the point of picking up his bowl, when the No. 2 wife sent him out to buy something.

The two wives had always been on bad terms, but when it came to household affairs they were in complete accord. They agreed, for one thing, never to allow the servants a moment's respite, and both disliked seeing the servants eat. Hsiang-tzu, not knowing this, thought this first day just happened to be a busy one. So again he said nothing and forked out his own money to buy some griddle cakes. Though it was like spending his life's blood, he gritted his teeth in order to keep the job.

When he got back from shopping, the No. 1 wife ordered him to sweep the courtyard. The master and two mistresses were always smartly dressed when they went out, but the yard and the house were like a huge garbage dump. The sight so revolted Hsiang-tzu that he set about sweeping the yard, so intent on this that he forgot that a rickshaw-puller shouldn't be given odd jobs. The yard swept, the No. 2 wife told him to sweep their rooms while he was at it. Still Hsiang-tzu didn't protest, he was so amazed that the rooms where these smart, respectable ladies lived were too filthy to set foot in!

The rooms cleaned up, the No. 2 wife thrust a muddy brat barely one year old into his arms. Hsiang-tzu felt utterly helpless. Any jobs that took strength he could cope with, but he had never held a baby before. He clasped this little master with both hands, afraid of dropping him if he relaxed his hold and scared of crushing him

if he held too tight. He broke out in a sweat. He decided to give this treasure to Nanny Chang, a woman with unbound feet from northern Kiangsu; but when he found her she let loose a torrent of abuse.

The Yang family seldom kept servants for more than three or four days because the master and two mistresses always treated them like slaves, as if only by working them to death could they get value for the pittance they paid them. This Nanny Chang was an exception. She had been with the family five or six years simply because she dared bawl out anyone who annoyed her — whether master or mistresses she lashed out at them. The combination of Mr. Yang's cutting Shanghai sarcasms, the No. 1 wife's Tientsin invectives and the No. 2 wife's fluent Soochow abuse had been unbeatable until they came up against Nanny Chang, a termagant who could give as good as she got. Like heroes encountering an amazon, they appreciated her worth and kept her on as their lieutenant.

Hsiang-tzu had been brought up in a northern village where cursing was taboo. However, he dared not strike Nanny Chang because no decent man will hit a woman. Not wanting to talk back either, he simply glared. Thereupon she fell silent too, as if sensing danger.

Just at this point, the first wife shouted to him to fetch the children from school. He hurriedly returned the muddy brat to the second wife, who took this as an insult and reviled him roundly. The first wife had been annoyed by his carrying the second wife's child and now, hearing these curses, also raised her unctuous voice to yell at him too. Hsiang-tzu had become a butt of vituperation. He beat a hasty retreat with his rickshaw, forgetting even to feel angry; for nothing like this had ever happened to him before and he literally felt dizzy.

Batch after batch the children were brought back. The courtyard became noisier than a market-place. The curses of three women and the howls of a horde of children made a racket as loud and senseless as when the audiences pour out of the theatres of Tashala after a show. Fortunately Hsiang-tzu still had to fetch Mr. Yang, so he hurried off once more. The cries of people and the neighing of horses in the street seemed more bearable than the pandemonium back in the yard.

It was midnight before Hsiang-tzu, who had been on the go non-stop, could take a breather. Not only did he feel worn out, with a buzzing in his ears; but although the Yang family had gone to bed, he still seemed to hear the curses of the master and mistresses, as if three different gramophones were playing crazily in his brain to torment him. He had no time to think of anything but sleep. But as soon as he entered his little room, his heart sank and he stopped feeling sleepy.

It was a room in the gate-house, which had a door on either side and was divided by a partition in the middle. Nanny Chang occupied one side, he the other. There was no lamp, the only light coming from a small two-foot window which happened to be under a street lamp just outside. The place was dank and fusty, with a layer of dust as thick as a copper coin on the floor; and apart from a wooden plank-bed against the wall, the room was empty. Hsiang-tzu felt the bed and discovered that if he laid his head down he would have to prop his feet up on the wall, while if he stretched out his legs he'd have to sleep half-sitting. He couldn't sleep curled up like a figure eight. After some thought he pulled the bed out cross-wise. This way he could lay down his head and make do for the night with his legs dangling over the other end.

He brought in his bedding from the doorway, spread it out as best he could and lay down. But he was not used to lying with his legs dangling and he couldn't get to sleep. Forcing himself to close his eyes, he told himself consolingly: "Go to sleep, tomorrow you have to get up early. After everything you've put up with why shy at this? The food is lousy, the work too hard, but maybe they often have mahjong parties, invite guests and go out to dinner. After all, Hsiang-tzu my boy, what did you come here for? For money, wasn't it? As long as you can rake more in, you can stand anything." These thoughts made him much easier in his mind, and now the room smelt less fusty. He began to drift off to sleep. Dimly aware that bed-bugs were biting him, he couldn't be bothered to catch them.

After two days, Hsiang-tzu felt completely disheartened. But on the fourth day, some lady guests arrived and Nanny Chang hurried

to set up the mahjong table. His heart which had seemed like a frozen lake felt a sudden breath of spring.

When the two wives started playing mahjong, they handed all the children over to the servants. As Nanny Chang had to pass round cigarettes, tea and hot towels, the troupe of little monkeys were naturally put in Hsiang-tzu's charge. He couldn't stand the imps; but when he stole a glance inside, the first Mrs. Yang in charge of the tipping pool seemed to be taking her job very seriously. He told himself: For all she's such a tartar, she may have sense enough to take such a chance to let the servants make a bit more money. So he was particularly patient with the little monkeys — he owed it to the pool to treat them like young lords and ladies.

The game over, the mistresses ordered him to take the guests home. Both of them wished to leave at the same time, so Hsiang-tzu had to call another rickshaw. The first Mrs. Yang made a great show of searching her person for money to pay the guest's fare, which the latter politely declined a couple of times.

"What, old girl?" bawled Mrs. Yang for all she was worth. "You come to my place and want to pay the rickshaw fare? Come on, old girl, get in!" It was only at this point that she managed to find ten cents.

When she handed it over, Hsiang-tzu saw very clearly that her hand was trembling slightly.

After taking the guests home, he helped Nanny Chang clear the table and tidy the room, then glanced at the first Mrs. Yang. She ordered Nanny Chang to fetch boiling water, and when the servant had left the room she took out ten cents.

"Take this, and stop staring at me!"

Hsiang-tzu suddenly went purple in the face. He drew himself up as if he wanted his head to touch the ceiling, grabbed the ten-cent note and threw it at her plump face.

"Give me my four days' wages!"

"What's that?" After another look at him, without saying any more, she gave him his wages.

Hsiang-tzu collected his bedding and had just walked out of the gate when a torrent of abuse broke out in the courtyard behind him.

That early autumn evening, leaves ruffled by a fitful breeze cast their shadows in the starlight. Hsiang-tzu looked up at the Milky Way so far above and sighed. Such a cool invigorating sky and he had such a broad chest, yet he felt suffocating for lack of air. He wanted to sit down and weep bitterly. Why was it that, strong, tenacious and determined as he was, he got treated like a dog and was unable to keep a job? He not only blamed the entire Yang family but felt a vague sense of despair, a fear that his life would never amount to anything. Bedding in tow, he walked more and more slowly, as if he were no longer the Hsiang-tzu who could up and run eight or ten *li* at a stretch.

The main street was already nearly deserted, its bright street lamps increasing his sense of desolation. Where to go? Naturally to Harmony Yard. But he felt unhappy about it. People in business or those who sell their strength don't worry about having no customers: what worries them is to have one yet fail to make a deal as when someone walks into a restaurant or barber's shop and after one glance around walks out again. Hsiang-tzu knew that finding a job and quitting it was nothing so uncommon, that if one place didn't want him, another would. But for the sake of buying a rickshaw he had worked away so meekly and lost so much face, only to have the job peter out again after three days and a half. He was no different from those crafty fellows who make a habit of changing jobs frequently, and it was this that rankled. He was almost ashamed to go back to Harmony Yard and have everyone laughing, "Well, well! So Hsiang-tzu is one of those three-and-a-half-day boys too!"

But if he didn't go to Harmony Yard, where else could he go? To avoid worrying about it, he trudged in the direction of Hsianmen Gate. The street-side of Harmony Yard was made up of three shop frontages, the middle one serving as the accountant's office. The pullers were only allowed in there to settle their accounts or discuss other business, but were forbidden to use it as an entrance to the yard behind, for the two rooms to the east and west were the bedrooms of the master and his daughter.

Next to the west room there was a rickshaw entrance with a big double gate painted green. Above this, hanging from a thick wire, was a very bright naked light bulb. Beneath this light hung a horizontal iron plaque inscribed with the gold characters "Harmony Rickshaw Yard". This was the gate the rickshaw men used whether they were working or not. The dark green gate and the golden characters shone in the bright glare of the electric bulb while the rickshaws going in and out were very smart-looking too — black or brown, they all glistened with paint and their white cushion covers gleamed like snow. Even their pullers felt a certain pride, as if they were the aristocrats among rickshaw-pullers.

Once inside the gate, if you skirted the west room, you found yourself in a large courtyard with an old acacia tree growing in the middle. The buildings to the east and west which opened on to this yard sheltered the rickshaws. The building on the south side and the small rooms in the little courtyard behind it were the rickshaw men's sleeping quarters.

It must have been after eleven when Hsiang-tzu sighted the brilliant solitary light outside Harmony Yard. The accountant's office and the east room were dark, but a light still shone in the west room and he knew then that Tigress was still up. He planned to tiptoe in so that she wouldn't see him; for he did not want her to be the first to witness his defeat precisely because of her high regard for him. He had just pulled his rickshaw level with her window when she came out from the entrance.

"Why, Hsiang-tzu? What...?" She bit back the rest of her question at sight of his crestfallen look and the bedding in the rickshaw.

Now that what he dreaded had happened, Hsiang-tzu's heart swelled with shame and discomfiture and he stood still, stupidly, speechless, gazing at Tigress. There was something different about her. Whether because of the bright light or because she had powdered her face, it was much paler than usual, and this pallor masked much of her fierceness. There was actually rouge on her lips, which made her a bit more attractive too. All this seemed so strange to him that he felt even more bewildered. Because he had never thought of her

as a woman, the sudden sight of her red lips made him feel rather embarrassed. She was wearing a short silk lined jacket of pale green and wide black crepe trousers.

The green jacket shimmered faintly and a little disconsolately in the lamplight; moreover it was so short that he could glimpse her white waist-band, which set off the delicacy of the green. Her wide black trousers were rustling in the breeze, as if some sinister spirit were trying to escape the glaring brightness and merge with the dark night.

Not daring to keep on staring, Hsiang-tzu lowered his head abruptly, but he still had a mental picture of that small, shimmering green jacket. He knew that Tigress never dressed like this on ordinary occasions. The Liu family was rich enough for her to dress every day in silks and satins; but in her daily dealings with rickshaw-pullers, she always wore cotton trousers and a cotton jacket, so that what designs there were looked inconspicuous. Hsiang-tzu felt as if he were looking at something new and exciting, yet familiar. His bewilderment increased.

His unhappiness and this encounter with such a strange new apparition under the glaring lamplight robbed him of his initiative. He didn't feel like moving, but wished Tigress would hurry back inside, or else give him some orders. He simply couldn't stand this strain, which was unlike anything he had ever known, and quite unbearable.

"Hey!" She stepped forward and said in a low voice, "Don't stand there gawping! Go and put the rickshaw away and then come back quickly. I have something to say to you. See you inside."

Accustomed to helping her with her tasks, he complied. However, tonight she was so different from usual, he wanted to think it over; but just standing there was too awkward, so for want of anything better to do he pulled the rickshaw inside. The southern rooms were all dark, which meant that all the rickshaw men were asleep or hadn't knocked off yet. He parked the rickshaw and went back to her door. Suddenly his heart started to thump.

"Come on in, I've something to say to you," she said half laughing-



ly, half impatiently, poking her head out of the doorway. Slowly he walked in.

On the table were some half-ripe still greenish pears, a pot of wine, three white porcelain wine-cups and a huge plate filled with half a jellied chicken cooked in soy sauce, smoked liver, tripe and other cold meats.

"Look." Tigress pointed to a chair and watched him sit down before continuing. "I'm having a treat tonight after all my hard work. You must have something too!" As she spoke she poured him a cup of wine. The sharp odour of the spirits, mixed with the smell of smoked and jellied meats, seemed extra pungent and heavy. "Drink up! Have some chicken. Don't stand on ceremony, I've already finished eating. Just now I told my own fortune with dominoes, so I knew you were coming back. Pretty good, eh?"

"I don't drink." Hsiang-tzu stared fixedly at the wine-cup.

"If you're not going to drink, then get out! What's the matter with you? Don't you know when someone means well by you? You stupid camel! Wine won't kill you, even I can drink four ounces. If you don't believe me, just watch!" She picked up the wine-cup, drained it nearly dry, then shut her eyes, expelled her breath sharply and held out the cup. "Come on, drink! Otherwise I'll take you by the ear and force it down your throat!"

On top of all his bottled up resentment, this mockery made Hsiang-tzu want to stare her down. But Tigress had always been good to him and he knew she was outspoken with everyone, so he really shouldn't provoke her. Instead, he might as well tell her about his troubles. Though normally not a man of many words, today it was as if he had thousands of them pent up inside him, choking him, and he just had to get them off his chest. Looked at this way, Tigress wasn't mocking him but was honestly showing her concern for him. He reached for the wine-cup and drained it. Slowly, surely and potently the fiery liquor went down. He stretched his neck, threw out his chest and belched a couple of times, rather awkwardly.

Tigress laughed. It had cost him an effort to get the spirits down, and her laughter at once made him glance in the direction of the eastern room.

"There's no one there." She stopped laughing but still smiled. "The old man has gone to celebrate Elder Aunt's birthday. He won't be back for two or three days as she lives out at Nanyuan." As she spoke she filled his cup again.

That set him thinking, and he sensed that there was something fishy in all this. At the same time he didn't want to leave, for her face so close to his, her clothes so clean and glossy, her lips so red, all stimulated him in a novel way. She was just as ugly as ever, but with a new animation which seemed to have changed her suddenly into a different person. She was still herself but with an additional something.

He dare not consider carefully what this new something was, and though for the moment he was afraid to accept it, he could not bring himself to refuse it either. He flushed and to give himself courage drank some more spirits.

A moment ago he had wanted to pour out his woes to her, but now he had forgotten them. Red in the face, he could not stop himself from looking at her. And the more he looked, the more bewildered he felt, for that something which he could not understand was growing more apparent, and the fiery force emanating so strongly from her was gradually transforming her into something abstract and immaterial.

He warned himself to be careful, but he wanted, too, to be bold. One after the other he drained three cups and forgot what caution was. In a daze he gazed at her, wondering why he felt so elated and brave, brave enough to grab immediately at some new experience, some new happiness. Ordinarily he was a little afraid of Tigress; now, there was nothing daunting about her at all. On the contrary, he himself had become so imposing, so strong, he could pick her up like a kitten. The light went out in the room.

The next day, Hsiang-tzu got up very early and went out with his rickshaw. He had a slight hang-over from his first drinking bout, but this didn't bother him. Seating himself at the entrance to a small alley, he knew that the early morning breeze would soon blow his headache away. But other problems preyed on his mind, and he could

think of no immediate solution. The events of the night had left him puzzled, ashamed and unhappy; moreover, he sensed danger.

He could not understand Tigress. That she was no virgin was something he had only discovered a few hours ago. He had always had great respect for her and had never heard any talk of her loose behaviour. Though outspoken and free and easy with everyone, no one ever gossiped about her behind her back. If the rickshaw men had any complaints, they were about her harshness, nothing else. Then why last night's performance?

Foolish as it may seem, Hsiang-tzu began to have doubts about the previous night. Tigress knew he was out on a monthly job, so how could she have waited up just for him? Suppose anyone else would have done just as well. . . . Hsiang-tzu lowered his head. He came from the countryside and though up till now he hadn't thought of marriage, he still had his plans. If he managed to get his own rickshaw so that life became a bit easier, and if he felt like it, he could certainly go back to the countryside to pick himself a strong girl who could stand hardships, could wash clothes and do housework.

Practically all young fellows of his age, even those with someone to keep an eye on them, stealthily frequented brothels. Hsiang-tzu had never been willing to follow suit. In the first place, he prided himself on his determination to make good and wasn't going to throw money away on women. In the second place, with his own eyes he had seen those fools who squandered their money — some of them only eighteen or nineteen — pressing their heads against the latrine wall, unable to urinate. Lastly, he must behave decently to be able to face his future wife. Because, if he did get married, the girl must be clean and spotless, and that meant he should be the same himself. But now, now. . . .

When he thought of Tigress as a friend, she was all right; but as a woman, she was ugly, old, sharp-tongued and shameless. Even those soldiers who had seized his rickshaw and nearly killed him now seemed less hateful and disgusting than her! She had destroyed the decency he had brought with him from the countryside, making him an abductor of women!

What's more, what if word of this spread and reached Fourth

Master Liu's ears? Did he know that his daughter was a tart? If he didn't, then wouldn't he put the whole blame on Hsiang-tzu? If he did, yet had never tried to keep her in hand, what sort of people were they? And what was he if he got mixed up with them? Even if father and daughter were both willing, he could never marry her, not if the old man had sixty, six hundred, or six thousand rickshaws!

He must leave Harmony Yard at once and break with them completely. After all, he had his own ability, and that would enable him to buy a rickshaw and find himself a wife. That was the only square and honest way of doing things. This decision reached, he held up his head again with a renewed sense of manhood. He had nothing to fear, nothing to worry about. As long as he worked really hard he was sure to succeed.

But after missing two fares, his discomfort returned. He wanted to banish this business from his mind, yet it obsessed him. For unlike other matters it could not be brushed aside, even though a solution had been found. He felt as if physically contaminated, as if even his heart had been blackened and he could never wash it clean again. No matter how much he hated her, how much she disgusted him, she still had a hold on him. The harder he tried to put her out of his mind, the more often she suddenly appeared before him in her nakedness, offering him all her ugliness and beauty.

It was like buying a pile of junk and finding, amongst the scrap-iron, a few little glittering baubles hard to resist. Never had he experienced such intimacy with anyone before, and though he had been taken by surprise and seduced, it was still not a relationship that could be easily forgotten. Even as he tried to brush it aside it might quite naturally twine itself round his heart, as if it had taken root there. Not only was this a new experience for him, it disturbed him in a way he could not describe and left him at a loss. He no longer knew how to cope with her, with himself, with the present or the future. He was like a little bug caught in a spider web; however much he struggled, it was too late.

Absent-mindedly he pulled a couple of fares, mulling over the whole business even while running. His thoughts followed no clear order, but would often focus on some observation, some odour or some

feelings, all very vague yet close and real too. It was becoming so unbearable that he badly wanted to go off alone to drink, drink himself into a stupor which might give him some relief. But he didn't dare drink. He mustn't, because of this business, destroy himself. He tried to think of purchasing his own rickshaw, but discovered he could no longer concentrate on it — something always got in the way. Before he could picture the rickshaw, this other thing would stealthily slip out to occupy his mind like a black cloud, obscuring the sun and cutting off its light.

That evening, when it was time to knock off, he felt even more miserable. He had to return to Harmony Yard yet he dreaded going back. What if he ran into her? He pulled his empty rickshaw round the streets and several times was quite close to the yard, yet each time he turned away again, like a child who has played truant for the first time and dares not go home.

Strangely, the more he wanted to avoid her, the more he longed to see her and the darker it got the stronger this longing grew.

In the grip of infatuation he felt bold enough to try again, although he knew it was wrong. It had been like this when, as a boy, he had taken a pole to poke a hornet's nest — he was scared but his heart was pounding as if some imp of mischief was egging him on. Dimly he was aware of a force stronger than himself which was kneading him into a small ball to cast into a blazing fire. He could no longer hold himself in check.

Once again he turned back to Hsianmen Gate, this time with no thought of delay. He wanted to go straight to the office to find her. She no longer had an identity, she was only a woman. He felt himself go hot all over. He had just about reached the gate when, in the light of the lamp, a man of about forty came walking by. Hsiang-tzu thought he recognized the man's face and posture, but he dared not accost him. Instead, instinctively he asked him, "Rickshaw?"

The man stopped, stared at him and said, "Hsiang-tzu?"

"Yes." Hsiang-tzu grinned. "Mr. Tsao?"

Mr. Tsao smiled and nodded. "I say, Hsiang-tzu, if you have no other monthly job, how about coming to my place? The fellow

I've got is too lazy, he never cleans the rickshaw, though he does run very fast. How about it?"

"How could I refuse, sir?" Hsiang-tzu seemed to have even forgotten how to smile. He kept wiping his face with a little towel. "When shall I start, sir?"

"Let me see." Mr. Tsao thought for a second. "The day after tomorrow."

"Yes, sir." Hsiang-tzu also thought a moment. "Shall I take you home now?"

"No need. Remember that I went to Shanghai for some time? After coming back I moved house. Now I live on Peichang Street and every evening I come out for a stroll. See you the day after tomorrow." Mr. Tsao told Hsiang-tzu the number of his house then added, "We'd better use my own rickshaw."

Hsiang-tzu nearly jumped for joy. All the unhappiness of the last few days vanished in a trice, like paving stones washed clean and white by heavy rain. Mr. Tsao was a former employer of his and, though they had not known each other long, they had got on well together. Mr. Tsao himself was a very amiable person; moreover, he had a small family with only a wife and little son.

Hsiang-tzu ran his rickshaw straight back to Harmony Yard. The light was still on in Tigress' room and at the sight he stopped dead.

He stood there for a while and then decided to go in, tell her that he had found another monthly job, hand in the rickshaw rent for the last two days, and ask her for his savings. That would make a clean break. Of course there was no need to say as much, but she would understand.

He first parked the rickshaw in the shed, then came back and boldly called her name.

"Come in!" He pushed open the door. She was sprawled out barefooted on the bed, wearing her everyday clothes. Still sprawling there she asked, "Well? Come for another treat, eh?"

Hsiang-tzu flushed as crimson as the painted eggs which the parents of a new-born child distribute. He stood there for a while, then said slowly, "I've found another job, starting day after tomorrow. They have their own rickshaw..."

Tigress cut in, "You don't know when you're well off, young fellow!" Half smiling, half provoked she sat up and pointed at him. "There's food and clothing for you here. Are you only happy when you're sweating your guts out? The old man can't boss me around and I'm not going to be a spinster all my life. Even if the old man gets mulish, I've got enough tucked away for the two of us to get two or three rickshaws and rent them out. We'd make about a dollar a day, wouldn't that be better than running your stinking legs off? What's wrong with me? I may be a little older than you, but not much. And I can take care of you and pamper you."

"I want to pull a rickshaw." Hsiang-tzu could think of no other argument.

"You really are a block-head! Sit down, I shan't bite you!" She laughed, showing her canine teeth.

Hsiang-tzu sat down jerkily, his muscles taut. "Where's my money?"

"With the old man. You won't lose it, so don't get jittery. You'd better not ask him for it, you know his temper. When you've got enough to buy a rickshaw you can get it back from him and it won't be one cent short. If you ask for it now, he'll curse you till you don't know whether you're on your head or your heels! He's good to you, you won't lose anything. If you're short one cent I'll give you two. You with your peasant mind — don't make me snap your head off."

Again Hsiang-tzu could think of nothing to say. He lowered his head, dug around in his pocket and finally fished out the rickshaw rent which he put on the table. "That's for two days." He remembered to add, "I'm turning in the rickshaw today. Tomorrow I'm taking a rest." Actually he had not the slightest desire to rest, but he felt that this way the break was cleaner. Once he had turned in the rickshaw, he didn't have to stay in the yard any more.

Tigress came over, picked up the money and stuffed it into his pocket. "For these last two days, you've had both me and the rickshaw free of charge! You're a lucky blighter, so don't be ungrateful!" With that she swung around and locked the door.

(To be continued)

Illustrated by Ni Chen

How I Came to Write the Novel "Camel Hsiang-tzu"

I can't quite remember the exact day and month when I started writing *Camel Hsiang-tzu*. Together with all my books, all my diaries of the pre-war days were lost with the fall of Tsinan. So there's no way now of checking up to find out.

This book was a turning-point in my life as a writer. Before I started it, teaching was my profession and writing was only something I did in my spare time. That is to say, ordinarily, I spent all my time teaching and only wrote when school was closed during the winter or summer vacations. I was far from satisfied with such an arrangement, for I could neither concentrate on writing nor enjoy a proper holiday from one year to another. My health suffered. The idea of becoming a full-time writer had already been in my mind when I returned to Peiping from abroad. Only the persuasion of several good friends made me accept a teaching position at Chilu University in Shantung. When I resigned from Chilu University, I went to Shanghai with the main purpose of finding out whether or not it was possible to become a professional writer. In those



Lao Sheh (1964)

days, books were not selling well, and there weren't many literary periodicals. Friends in Shanghai cautioned me against taking such a risk, so I accepted the offer of a post at Shantung University. I do not like teaching. For one thing, I'm not a very learned person and so I sometimes felt uneasy. Even if I had been really able to teach well, it did not afford me the same pleasure as writing. To provide for my family, I dared not impulsively throw away a reliable monthly income just like that. But in my heart of hearts,

I never for one moment relinquished my desire to taste the delights of becoming a professional writer.

It just happened that after two years of teaching at Shantung University, there were some disturbances and, together with many colleagues, I resigned. This time, instead of going to Shanghai to assess the situation and without consulting anyone, I made up my mind to stay on in Tsingtao and earn my living by writing. This was the year before the July 7 Incident in 1937, when the War of Resistance Against Japan began. *Camel Hsiang-tzu* was my first attempt as a full-time writer. I had decided that if it succeeded I could continue to produce two novels a year free of care. However, should it turn out to be a flop, I would have to return to teaching, perhaps feeling so depressed that I might give up writing altogether. That is why I remember the writing of this book as being a crucial period in my development as a writer.

As I remember, it was in the spring of 1936 when I was chatting with a friend at Shantung University that he told me about a rickshaw man who had worked for him in Peiping. The man had bought his own rickshaw but was forced to sell it. This occurred three

times and he remained wretchedly poor. I said at the time: "One could write a story about that." My friend went on to say: "Another rickshaw man was once nabbed by some soldiers. Who would have thought that good luck could come out of such a calamity. While the soldiers were marching, he slipped off with three camels."

I never bothered to ask the names of the two rickshaw men or where they came from. I only remembered what he'd said about them and the camels. That provided the inspiration for the story *Camel Hsiang-tzu*. Spring changed into summer, as I thought about expanding this simple story and turning it into a novel of roughly a hundred thousand words.

Uncertain what use it would be, I started by inquiring about the life and habits of camels from Mr. Chi Tieh-yin, who grew up in the Western Hills outside Peiping where many families in the foothills kept camels. His reply made me realize that I should concentrate on the rickshaw men, using the camels merely as a literary device. To concentrate on camels might entail a special trip to Kalgan in order to know more about the grassland and camels. But I wouldn't need to budge an inch if my main theme was the rickshaw men whom I could observe any day of the week. In this way I linked the camels with Hsiang-tzu, but the camels were there merely to introduce my hero.

How should I depict Hsiang-tzu? First, I considered the various kinds of rickshaw men so as to find a place for him among them. That done, I could describe the other types of rickshaw-pullers in passing, Hsiang-tzu remaining as the central figure, the others as secondary ones. Thus I not only had my hero but also his social environment. This made him seem more real. My eyes were focussed on Hsiang-tzu all the time even when I wrote about others. This was done in order to elicit his character.

Besides his fellow rickshaw men, I thought of the type of rickshaw owners from whom Hsiang-tzu might rent his rickshaw, and of the people who might ride in it. Thus I could expand his world of rickshaw men, introducing people of a higher social status. However, these people were only in the story because of Hsiang-tzu. I was

determined not to let anyone encroach on Hsiang-tzu's place as the hero.

Once I had my characters, it was comparatively easy to work out the plot. Since Hsiang-tzu is the main character, everything in the story must revolve around rickshaw pulling. As long as all the people were linked in some way with the rickshaw, I had Hsiang-tzu pinned down exactly where I wanted him.

However, though my characters and events were all closely related to rickshaw men, I still felt there was something lacking in my description of their way of life. I thought to myself: How does a rickshaw puller feel when there's a sand-storm? Or when it rains? If I could express this in detail, my hero would become more real. His life must be one endless torment, not only regarding his meagre diet but also regarding a gust of wind or a sudden shower of rain, grating on his nerves.

Then I began to consider that a rickshaw-puller like everyone else would have problems other than simply his daily bread. He would have ideals and desires, a family and children. How would he solve these problems? How could he? In this way, the simple story I had heard developed into a story of dimensions huge enough to encompass a whole society. I needed to know not just the little details to be gleaned from his clothing, speech and gestures, but the inner life of the man based on deep observation. It forced me to peer into hell itself. Everything in his outward appearance could be traced to his history and circumstances. I needed to return to his roots before I could depict the bitterness of the society for these poor workers.

From the spring of 1936 and on into that summer, I worked, like one possessed, gathering materials. Many times I changed Hsiang-tzu's life and even his appearance, for when the materials I'd gathered changed, accordingly so did he.

That summer, when I resigned from Shantung University, I started to put Hsiang-tzu down on paper. I had spent a fairly long time pondering over the plot and had collected a large quantity of material, so when it came to putting pen to paper I had no problems. The first instalment of the serial *Camel Hsiang-tzu* appeared in the magazine

Yuchoufeng, in January 1937. At that time, the novel was not yet complete, although I had an outline of the whole story and how long it was going to be. It was an outline detailed enough for me to know the end, otherwise I would never have dared publish it in instalments while I was still in the process of writing. By early summer, I had finished it, twenty-four chapters to be exact. With the magazine publishing two chapters a month, it was just the right number for one year.

As soon as it was finished, I told the editor of the magazine that I was more pleased with this novel than any other of my previous works. Later when it was published in book form, the publisher printed these words in the blurb. Why was I so very pleased with it? First, the story had been sitting in my mind for a long time and I had collected a fair amount of material, so that when I started writing, the words came with precision, my pen never straying from the subject or branching off at a tangent. There was no padding. Secondly, I had just started writing full-time and that was constantly on my mind. Though I wrote more than one or two thousand words a day, when I put my pen down I did not stop but carried on working out the story in my head. Intensive thinking enables the pen to sweat blood and tears. Thirdly, I resolved, right from the beginning, to renounce witticisms and concentrate on writing seriously. Ordinarily, whenever an opportunity for humour arose, I would promptly seize it. Sometimes even when there was nothing really funny about a subject, I would use witty language to give it a humorous touch. Perhaps this helped to make the language more lively and interesting, but equally, at times, it could be quite tiresome. There wasn't that problem with *Camel Hsiang-tzu*. While not completely devoid of humour, the humour was derived from the story itself and was not squeezed in artificially. This decision of mine altered my style slightly. I learned that as long as I had good material and plenty to say, I could succeed without having to resort to humour. Fourthly, once I had decided not to rely on humour, it followed that the language must be very simple and straightforward, limpid, like a calm lake. To achieve this, I paid great attention to avoiding dullness in my quest for simplicity. It happened that at this point my

good friend Ku Shih-chun supplied me with many words and expressions in the colloquial Peiping dialect, which before I had thought impossible to write down. I had previously reluctantly avoided using them in my writing, because I'd thought they couldn't be put down on paper. Now with Mr. Ku's help, my pen became richer as it easily mastered the colloquialisms, adding a freshness and liveliness to the simple language, and making it more authentic to the reader. This is why *Camel Hsiang-tzu* can be read aloud; the language is alive.

There are of course many faults in the book. I, personally, am most dissatisfied with the abrupt ending. Because it was coming out in instalments, I had to write exactly twenty-four chapters. In fact, I should have written two or three additional chapters to round off the story. However, nothing can be done about this now, for I never care to revise anything once it has been published.

Camel Hsiang-tzu's luck wasn't all that good at first. When only half of it was published in the *Yuchoufeng*, the War of Resistance Against Japan started on July 7. As I do not know when the magazine ceased publication in Shanghai, I never knew whether *Camel Hsiang-tzu* was ever serialized from beginning to end. Later, when the Yuchoufeng Publishing House moved to Canton, the first thing they did was to publish it as a book. But I was told the book was barely printed, when Canton fell to the enemy, *Camel Hsiang-tzu* with it. The publishing house moved again, this time to Kweilin, and the book received a second chance of publication, but due to poor postal conditions, there was little evidence of it in either Chungking or Chengtu. Only later, when the Cultural Life Publishing House bought the copyright, did more copies of the book appear in Chungking and Chengtu.

Now, there seems to be a turn in *Camel Hsiang-tzu's* fortunes. According to friends' reports, the book has been translated into Russian, Japanese and English.

1945

Horse (traditional Chinese painting)
by Hsu Pei-hung



In Memory of Lao Sheh

Both Lao Sheh and I endured the miseries and bitter sufferings of the old society. Twelve years my senior, he belonged to an older generation of writers.

Born into a poor family, Lao Sheh had worked both as a teacher and professor. After I had graduated from the Nankai Middle School in Tientsin, I discovered that he had been teaching there, and although he did not teach me personally, I still regarded him as my teacher.

I first met Lao Sheh in Chungking during the War of Resistance Against Japan. Although the Kuomintang had adopted a policy of non-resistance, there was a "China National Resistance Federation of Literary and Art Circles" in Chungking. I remember that it was at this federation that I first saw Lao Sheh. He was so poor that he had no place to live. Sometimes he stayed in the federation office; sometimes he found a shabby little room in a printing press. Despite the blazing heat of summer or the bitter cold of winter, Lao Sheh always buried his head in his writings in his poorly-lit room.

Summertime in Chungking was like stepping into an oven. It

was too hot for people to work. There were no trees, no wind. The beds, tables and chairs would burn your hands even at night. But Lao Sheh, apart from occasionally going out to see friends and attend meetings, would remain in his hot, shabby room, writing day and night. He devoted all his energies to writing. It was on the eve of the War of Resistance Against Japan that he completed his famous novel, *Camel Hsiang-tzu* (first translated by an American, Evan King, under the title of *Rickshaw Boy*). A native of Peking, Lao Sheh was very familiar with the city's lower classes and felt very close to them.

A man with a strong sense of justice, Lao Sheh hated the corrupt Kuomintang reactionaries, who tried to hold back the forces of history, oppressing the people with taxes, exploiting them cruelly and carrying out a policy of appeasement against Japanese aggression. The destitute out-of-work artists, however, who were looked down on by the exploiting classes, were treated as his distinguished guests and dear friends. I remember one poor singer, who was nicknamed "Potato" and who specialized in singing comic ballads. Although Lao Sheh had hardly any money himself, he helped this old artist when he was in difficulties by giving him some money from his royalties. He also composed some ballads for him to sing and helped with some of his family problems. When the Kuomintang agents tried to intimidate the man, Lao Sheh boldly came forward to support him, risking serious consequences to himself.

Lao Sheh was always very generous and hospitable. Despite those days of poverty in that mountain city, Chungking, Lao Sheh would feast visiting friends from afar on money he had obtained by pawning or selling his own clothes. He liked to drink wine, though he could not take much. After a few cups, he would start singing, his resonant voice shaking the four walls of his tiny room.

Comrade Chou En-lai, when he was in Chungking, would often invite Lao Sheh to dinner at the Eighth Route Army Office, and I would also be present. Comrade Chou En-lai would explain the current situation to us, indignantly criticizing the Kuomintang army under Chiang Kai-shek for not resisting the Japanese invaders and for fighting instead a civil war against the Communist Party and the

people. He also patiently told us how the Chinese Communist Party had led the resistance against the Japanese and the struggle for national salvation in the liberated areas. Finally we realized that it was the great Communist Party that was leading the just cause of revolution; that the Communist Party was the hope of China. Some time later, Lao Sheh went with others to visit Yen-an, the headquarters of the Central Committee of the Communist Party. What he saw there convinced him even more that the Chinese Communist Party was the only one that could save China and care for the people.

At the time when Peking was liberated and the People's Republic of China was founded in 1949, Lao Sheh was teaching in the United States. Premier Chou said to me: "Please write a letter to Lao Sheh and ask him to come back. There are many new things for him to write about in our New China." Carrying out his instructions, I wrote a letter to Lao Sheh. He immediately returned to China. From then on, he devoted all his energies to writing about the new society in socialist China. Writings poured from his pen like water from a fountain. Apart from his prolific output, he also used various literary forms: poems in both classical and the new style, stories, dramas, ballads and cross-talk. He even wrote door-posters with a new content for others during the traditional Spring Festival. His versatile pen produced many fine works in the service of the people and the revolution.

Lao Sheh was a talented writer of classical poems as well as being a good calligrapher. He was also generous in complying with practically all requests for his poems and calligraphy which accounted for their wide circulation.

He loved to collect paintings and fan-pictures. Sometimes when I visited him (usually in the afternoons as he did not receive visitors in the mornings), he would cheerfully emerge from his little study and pour me out a strong cup of tea. As he relaxed, he would start to show me the paintings he liked best. Although I knew very little about painting and calligraphy, I was happy to share in the pleasure they afforded him.

Another of his loves was flowers, especially chrysanthemums. When autumn came in Peking, his little courtyard would be adorned

with various magnificent chrysanthemums. They were the result of the efforts of Lao Sheh and his wife, Hu Chieh-ching. Centuries ago, a man of letters, Chou Tun-yi, said: "Chrysanthemums are loved by the recluse." Lao Sheh, however, was anything but a recluse. He loved life, real life. When his chrysanthemums were in bloom, he would invite his friends to come and enjoy them. Sometimes he would treat us to a feast. In those days I liked to drink. After gulping down several cups, I would get so drunk that I would collapse under the table. Everyone would join in the laughter. Such was the pleasure of those friends.

Though proud, Lao Sheh was very modest. He often praised Kuo Mo-jo for his learning and admired Chao Shu-li for his simple style of writing. He was never slow to praise highly the strengths of other writers.

Lao Sheh always saw himself as an ordinary person. His friends and visitors came from all walks of life. In order to write he was always one of the people, experiencing life, fearing neither hardship nor fatigue. He always led a frugal life. He liked to walk in the streets, proud of being an ordinary worker, unlike those dignified writers who looked down on the masses. Lao Sheh never gave himself airs.

The first work that Lao Sheh wrote after Liberation was a play called *Dragon Beard Ditch*. It embodied his deep love for the Party and the people. In his play, he clearly illustrated the complete difference between the old society and the new, revealing the darkness of the past and the warmth of the present. It showed his boundless love for the new socialist China. Premier Chou saw the play several times and asked Chairman Mao to see it too. Chairman Mao praised it highly. The People's Government awarded Lao Sheh the title of "People's Artist", the highest honour that can be given to a writer in New China.

There is a saying: "One's works equal oneself." If a writer's works are piled together, they should be as high as the writer himself. Lao Sheh, a writer from the 1920's, had written profusely since the day he took up his pen. His literary output dwarfed him. Yet he was never satisfied. He always strove to improve his work, so that

book after book sprang from his pen. He was a diligent old writer who never stopped working. In this aspect he is a fine example for us all to learn from.

Camel Hsiang-tzu was Lao Sheh's best novel. It was adapted as a play by the Peking People's Art Theatre's director, Mei Chien, and staged by that theatre. In my opinion it was a very moving production, faithful to the style of Lao Sheh. The audiences acclaimed it.

Lao Sheh loved children too. I remember an occasion in 1962, when I took my six-year-old daughter to see Lao Sheh and we drove northwards along the coast from Kwangchow. He noticed one of my daughter's nursery rhymes and liked it very much. All through the journey he told her stories and fairy tales made up on the spur of the moment. My daughter clapped and laughed in delight. It was such a joy to be with this old man.

His conversation was always interesting. Tales and anecdotes poured from his lips like refreshing water from a mountain spring.

Whenever I recall these admirable qualities of Lao Sheh, I remember fondly that beloved old man.

Inscribed on My Portrait

The sacred tower cannot avert the arrows of the gods;
Like a millstone, wind and rain darken this land.
The frosty stars ignore me when I speak my thoughts.
I'll dedicate my life to the god Hsuan-yuan.

1903

A Farewell to Mr. Obara Ejero,
Returning to His Country
with His Orchids

Broken, burnt, the cassia and pepper; beauty fading;
Alone the orchid, deep in the hills, opens its pure heart.
Why begrudge our friend from afar these fragrant flowers,
In this land of drunkards where thorns and brambles thrive?

1931

A Poem

Thorns flourish in the countryside;
War clouds pall the open sky.
Few enjoy the scent of spring,
And every sound is muted.
Our land abandoned to the despots
By the drunken god,
In the middle of the marching
The stirring strains cease.
The raging wind and waves
Wither the flowers and the trees.

1931

Magpies (traditional Chinese painting) by *Hsu Pei-bung*



A Satire on Myself

Born under an unlucky star,
What could I do?
Afraid to turn a somersault,
Still my head received a blow.
My face hidden under a torn hat,
I cross the busy market.
Carrying wine in a leaking boat,
I sail downstream.
Eyebrows raised, coldly confronting
Accusing fingers of a thousand bullies.
Yet with my head bowed,
I'll be an ox for children.
Secluded in my small attic,
I'll enjoy my solitary state.
Who cares if it's winter or summer?
Who cares if it's autumn or spring?

1932

For an Artist

A wind developed in Nanking;
A thousand forests darkened,
A fog suffocates the sky;
A hundred flowers perish.
I request from our artist
A new composition,
Some mountains in spring,
Painted red.

1933

On Lu Hsun's Five Poems

Lu Hsun's poems, like his essays and short stories, are gems of literature he has bequeathed to us.

Seventy or eighty of his poems exist. A few were written in the vernacular as free verse; some comic verse was written in doggerel. Most, however, were written in the classical style.

The English edition of *Chinese Literature* No. 7, 1964, published eleven of his poems. The five published in this issue are all in classical metres.

The poem, *Inscribed on My Portrait*, was written in 1903 when Lu Hsun was a young student in Japan. At that time, the moribund Ching Dynasty was helpless to prevent the foreign imperialist powers from encroaching upon China. The Chinese people therefore suffered from the double oppression of feudalism and imperialism. Lu Hsun, though abroad, was deeply concerned and homesick for his motherland. He wrote this poem on the back of a photograph in a moment of patriotic fervour. The last line, "I'll dedicate my life to the god Hsuan-yuan", emphasizes his main theme and shows his determination to give his life for China. The god Hsuan-yuan, also known

as the Yellow Emperor, was according to legend, the ancestor of the Chinese people. Here he symbolizes China. This poem reflects the youthful Lu Hsun's ardent patriotism and his democratic revolutionary opposition to imperialism and feudalism.

A Farewell to Mr. Obara Ejero was written in February 1931. He was a Japanese dealer in Chinese curios and orchids in Tokyo. In 1927 when Chiang Kai-shek initiated a counter-revolutionary coup, many Chinese Communists and progressives were massacred. In February 1931, five young Left-wing writers, including Jou Shih, were murdered. The "cassia" and "pepper" in the first line are the fragrant trees symbolizing those revolutionaries who were persecuted and slaughtered by the Kuomintang. The orchids deep in the mountains were the progressive writers who had to hide underground for safety. As China was choked by brambles and thorns, fragrant orchids could not survive. It was fitting that a foreign friend should take them away from China.

The poem without a title was written a month after the previous one. It is set against the background of the Kuomintang's first encirclement and annihilation campaign against the Communists. Between December 1930 and January 1931, the Kuomintang mobilized a large force to attack the Communist-led Kiangsi revolutionary base. Enemy forces everywhere stifled the country. War clouds darkened the sky. Because of the Kuomintang "white terror", the persecuted could not enjoy the spring. It was as if a terrible silence enveloped the country, as only a few rich reactionary families laughed and made merry. It seemed to Lu Hsun as if a drunken god had handed over power to those despots who were suppressing the people and muting all patriotic voices. Before the corruption of the Kuomintang, the progressive forces were like flowers in a storm, withering and dying.

A Satire on Myself was written for the poet Liu Ya-tzu in October 1932. Since Lu Hsun had been persecuted all his life by reactionaries, he joked that he must have been born under an unlucky star. To escape from spies following him, he had to hide his face under a torn hat. Life was precarious, like sailing downstream in a leaking boat. He was never afraid of the enemy, however, "coldly confronting

accusing fingers of a thousand bullies". For the masses he would toil like an ox. Chairman Mao in his *Talks at the Yen-an Forum on Literature and Art* said that these two lines of Lu Hsun should be the motto for all revolutionaries. He praised Lu Hsun highly for his spirit. In the final lines, he works unceasingly, heedless of the changes outside his room.

The last poem, *To an Artist*, was written in January 1933 for the Japanese artist, Mochizuki Gyokusei. During this period the Kuomintang government in Nanking was intensifying its attacks on the Communist revolutionary base, as well as intensifying its suppression and persecution of progressive writers and artists. Lu Hsun knew that this darkness would not last for ever. Revolution must triumph. Spring always follows winter. He asked the artist to paint a landscape in red. Firm in his faith and revolutionary optimism, Lu Hsun already saw the dawn of a new society.

Hsu Chih

The Goldbach Conjecture

Chen Ching-jun, research fellow of the Institute of Mathematics of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, has made an important contribution to the theory of numbers. The following article truthfully records how, despite many difficulties, he achieved this. We have made some cuts in this article. It will be published in its entirety by the Foreign Languages Press, Peking.

— The Editors

Chen Ching-jun was born in 1933 in Fukien Province into a poor family. Life was hardly a bed of roses. His father, a post-office employee, had to travel frequently, while his mother, a kind but care-worn woman, had twelve children. Of the six who survived, Chen was the third. Such large families were more of a burden than a joy to the parents. Thus from birth Chen was both unwelcome and unwanted.

His childhood was unhappy, and his mother, kept on the go from dawn till dusk, had no time to take care of him. After the outbreak of the War of Resistance Against Japan, the Japanese occupied Fukien. Young Chen's life was very insecure. His father was transferred to a small town in Sanyuan County to take charge of a tiny post office situated in an old monastery in this mountain region, which had been a revolutionary base. At that time the forests were cut and burnt, and all the men, young and old, were slaughtered by the Koumintang. Life was hard, especially for the women who were the only ones left. At night, the sound of beatings or shots signalling the execution of some revolutionaries were often heard coming from an internment camp near by. During the day, prisoners in chains were brought out to do hard labour.

Such sufferings made a deep impression on Chen, bewildered by the cruelty he had witnessed. At school he was often bullied and beaten up by his classmates, who would beat him even harder when he did not beg for mercy. These experiences toughened him. The extreme brutality of the old society, which affected him from an early age, made him even more of an introvert. His main love was mathematics and he devoted all his time to trying to solve mathematical problems.

While he was at middle school, a college from Kiangsu removed into the mountains away from the Japanese-occupied areas. Its teachers taught in local middle schools in their spare time. Chen formed a friendly relationship with two of these new teachers of mathematics and physics. They liked their young student. The rough treatment from his classmates made him bury his head more in algebraic equations and increased his love of mathematics. With the victorious end of the war in 1945, Chen and his family returned to Foochow, where he went to Yinghua School. On the staff there was a mathematics teacher, the former head of the Aeronautics Department of Tsinghua University.

This teacher, a scholar, devoted himself to his students and told them many interesting anecdotes about mathematics in his lessons.

Thus all his pupils, even those who had formerly disliked mathematics, became more interested in the subject. He once told them about a famous problem concerning the theory of numbers. When Peter the Great and Catherine I, after him, tried to modernize St. Petersburg, they invited a large number of European scientists, including Euler, a celebrated Swiss mathematician, and Goldbach, a German middle-school teacher and mathematician.

In 1742, Goldbach discovered that every large number was the sum of two prime ones. This was true for every example he calculated, but he was unable to prove his theorem. It was still a conjecture. Unable to prove it himself, he wrote to the famous Euler to solicit his aid. Euler, however, was unable to prove it. Since then countless mathematicians had applied themselves to the problem, but no one had ever been able to prove the conjecture.

This so excited the imagination of the young students that they began to discuss it animatedly.

Their teacher continued: "Mathematics is the queen of all the natural sciences. The theory of numbers is the crown. And Goldbach's Conjecture is the pearl on that crown."

The students were amazed.

Then he added: "You all know even and odd numbers, prime and compound ones. You all learned this in your third year at primary school. Though it seems very simple, it is in fact quite complicated. Whoever can solve this problem will be a really great mathematician."

All the students boasted: "Nothing to it! We'll solve it! We can do it!"

Their teacher laughed at their enthusiasm and told them: "Last night I dreamt that one of you did in fact prove Goldbach's Conjecture. How wonderful!"

Everyone laughed except for Chen.

Although he was very excited by the story, he dared not laugh or else his classmates would have sneered at him. In middle school he was more lonely than ever, isolated by his schoolmates as an

eccentric and sickly oddity. They only spoke to jeer or show their contempt for him. He was an outcast.

The following day a few diligent students, in high spirits, handed in their papers to their teacher thinking they had proved by various methods Goldbach's Conjecture.

"Forget that story," laughed the teacher.

"But we did prove it," they insisted.

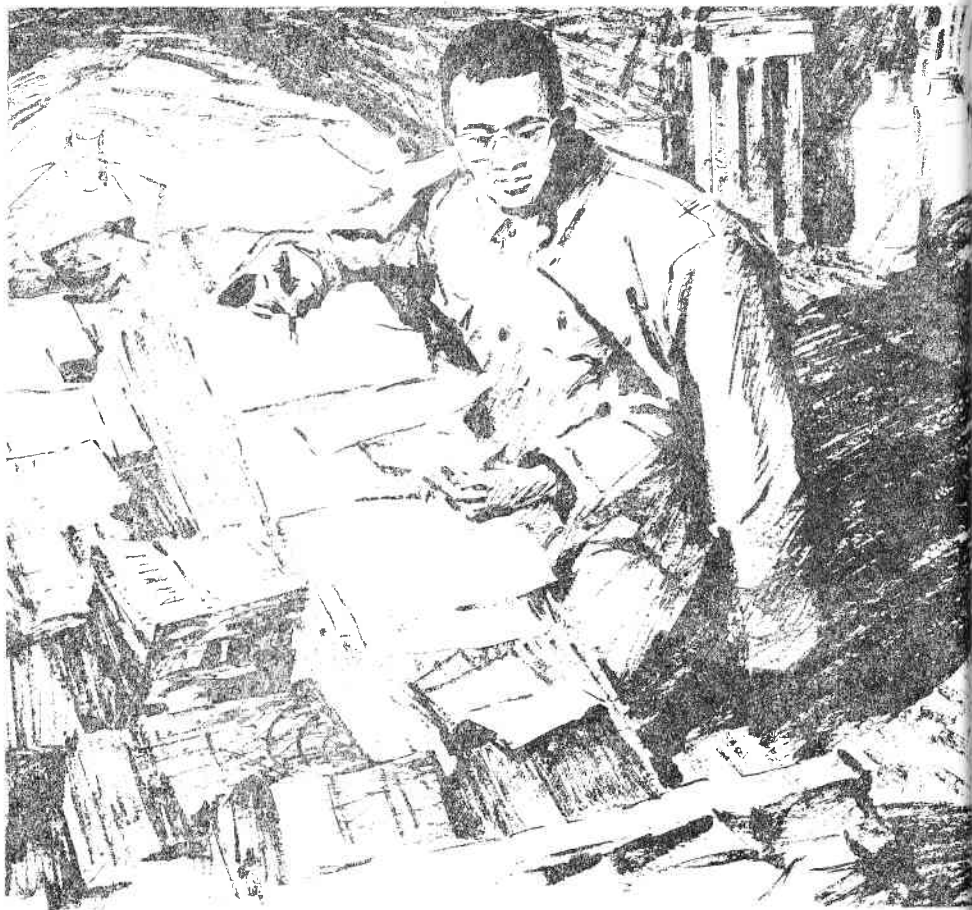
"Nonsense! It's a wild-goose chase. I won't read your papers. That's a waste of time. It just isn't that simple. You think you can fly to the moon?"

Everyone roared with laughter at the students who had written the papers, except for Chen. He was frowning.

The following year, the teacher returned to Tsinghua University and forgot all about his mathematics lessons, never realizing the deep impression they had made on Chen. A teacher is liable to forget most of his students, but his pupils will remember him all their lives.

After the Liberation of Foochow, Chen became a student at Amoy University in 1950. As the country urgently needed more teachers, and since Chen's marks were excellent, he was chosen to finish his studies a year early and become a mathematics teacher in a middle school in Peking in the autumn of 1953. A promising future seemed to lie ahead.

This, however, was not the case. Chen had liked his student days in Amoy University. Only four students graduated in mathematics under the supervision of four professors and one assistant. He had been extremely happy concentrating on mathematical abstractions. During his three years as a student, no one had picked on him or attacked him. Those three years were his golden days, as he immersed himself in mathematics, having little contact with people. And it ended all too quickly for him. He shuddered at the thought of standing in a classroom surrounded by dozens of sharp, mischievous eyes.



His fears were justified. Small and frail, he was hardly a suitable choice as a teacher for a class of boisterous youngsters. He was not very articulate and his throat became hoarse from talking. How he envied those teachers who could impress their pupils! How he despised himself! Since he'd never learnt to take care of himself properly and pay attention to his diet, his poor health and worries finally landed him in hospital, where the doctors diagnosed tuberculosis and a chronic stomach complaint.

In one year he was hospitalized six times and underwent three operations. Though unable to teach, he persevered with his studies, however. The Chinese Academy of Sciences had then published Hua Lo-keng's famous work, *The Additive Theory of Prime Numbers*. Chen acquired a copy as soon as it came out and began studying the difficult treatise avidly.

It happened that Wang Ya-nan, president of Amoy University and translator of Marx's *Das Kapital*, attended a meeting of the Ministry of Education in Peking, where he met a leading comrade from Chen's middle school. He complained about the "talented student" the university had trained. Surprised, Wang decided to take Chen back to the university.

Chen's health improved rapidly. He was assigned by Wang to the university library, where all he had to do was study mathematics. Wang, an economist, knew the value of a talented person when he saw one. Chen justified his confidence in him, burying himself in Hua Lo-keng's *The Additive Theory of Prime Numbers* and his lengthy *Introduction to the Theory of Numbers*. Chen was not alone in having had the good fortune to meet someone who recognized his talents.

Hsiung Ching-lai, one of the older generation of mathematicians and educationalists, was one of the first men to introduce modern mathematics into our country. He had taught at Tsinghua University in Peking during the early thirties. A young mathematician, self-taught and with only three years middle schooling, sent him an article about how to solve algebraic equations. Impressed by the obvious talent of the author, Hsiung immediately invited him to Tsinghua. The young man, none other than Hua Lo-keng, became a librarian there, studying and attending classes. Later he was sent to Cambridge University in England to further his studies. On his return to China, Hua Lo-keng was recommended by Hsiung, then president of Yunnan University, to become a professor at the Southwest Union University. Later Hua also went to the United States to lecture at Princeton and at Illinois. Immediately after Liberation, he came back to China to head the Institute of Mathematics of the Chinese Academy of Sciences.

In the library of Amoy University, Chen wrote a monograph on the theory of numbers which he submitted to the Institute of Mathematics. Chen's talent came to Hua's notice, and he suggested that Chen be transferred to the institute. Just as Hsiung had discovered Hua, so Hua now discovered Chen.

By the end of 1956, Chen arrived in Peking for the second time from the south. The following year, Hsiung returned to China from abroad.

At that time there were many talented mathematicians in Peking. The celebrated older generation of mathematicians included Hsiung Ching-lai, Hua Lo-keng, Min Szu-ho and others. There were also many younger talents. The Institute of Mathematics was renowned for its work in various fields of mathematical research. At the time Chen joined its ranks, Hua pointed out that while mainly concentrating on applied mathematics, they should also attempt to prove Goldbach's Conjecture.

In 1742, Goldbach, in his letter to Euler, pointed out that even numbers no smaller than 6 were the sum of two prime numbers. For example, $6 = 3 + 3$; $24 = 11 + 13$. Someone once calculated every even number in this way until he reached 33,000,000. This confirmed Goldbach's proposition and so it was surmised that even bigger numbers would have the same result too. But the conjecture needed proof, and that was most difficult.

In the 18th and 19th centuries nobody was able to prove it.

It was not until the 1920's that some progress was made. Then between 1962 and 1965 Chinese and foreign mathematicians successively proved $(1 + 5)$, $(1 + 4)$ and $(1 + 3)$.

It was in May 1966, that Chen announced in *Kexue Tongbao* (*Scientific Communication*), No. 17, of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, that he had proved $(1 + 2)$.

After his transfer to the Institute of Mathematics, Chen's talents had blossomed. He made several contributions, improving the results of many Chinese and foreign mathematicians. He worked on the problems of lattice points in a circle, in a sphere; the Waring problem, etc. These alone were a big contribution.

Chen then concentrated his energies on the Goldbach Conjecture. Neglecting his meals, forgoing his sleep he devoted all his intelligence and strength to solving this problem. His health deteriorated but at last he succeeded in proving $(1 + 2)$, which he wrote up in a lengthy monograph.

Professor Min Sze-ho read his work carefully, checking it thoroughly, before he would acknowledge Chen's efforts as correct and reliable. He informed Chen that $(1 + 3)$ had been proved the previous year using computers. Chen had achieved his $(1 + 2)$ through his own calculations. The monograph was therefore too long and he suggested that Chen simplify it.

It was while Chen was revising his paper that the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution began in 1966.

History had never witnessed before such a great mass movement, as one quarter of all mankind, regardless of age or sex, were mobilized. Workers, peasants, soldiers, intellectuals, all were involved. Unmasking and being unmasked, exposing and being exposed, criticizing and being criticized, repudiating and being repudiated, the soul of everyone was touched. The errors of the past had to be righted. Our lives were



filled with meaning and action. Many of the unpleasant aspects of our society were revealed, as the dirt was cleansed away. And the good in our socialist society became all the more apparent.

It was a struggle between progressive and backward forces; between truth and fallacy. It was a struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. A civil war broke out in China. Everywhere there was organized agitation, confrontations and chaos. A proletarian revolution means repeated self-criticism. There were victories and setbacks. It seemed to be constantly going over things, every time raising them to a higher level. It searched relentlessly for its own weaknesses, shortcomings and mistakes. Scene after scene flashed past. Dramas were enacted one after the other. Characters mounted the stage in turn. Some died in ignominy and shame; others like sturdy green pines and cedars weathered the storm or died revolutionary martyrs, to live on in the people's hearts. New pages of history have been written. History has given the verdict on what is right and what is wrong. Those who concealed their evil ambitions have been exposed; those who were innocent have been vindicated. Harvest follows the sowing of the seeds; one always reaps what one sows.

All the sciences were examined. Chen underwent a most severe test. Mathematicians of the older generation became the targets of attack, as did the middle-aged and young. Fierce debates raged day and night. Like a sieve, the Cultural Revolution sifted everything: what should be discarded, what should be retained.

It had been stressed by some that scientific workers should concentrate on their work and channel all their energies into that. Chen was therefore regarded as a typical example of this so-called "bourgeois line". He was called "a revisionist sapling", "an exploiter of the working class", "a typical bourgeois specialist", "an idiot", "a parasite" and many other names by the "gang of four".

After the workers' propaganda teams had entered the various institutes of the Academy of Sciences, Chen was able to study again and work on his research. He worked in a corner of the library where the books were kept. Because of the research personnel's firm insistence, the Institute of Mathematics had continued to subscribe to foreign

materials and journals throughout those chaotic years. Immersed in his calculations, Chen's spirits were raised. His health, however, deteriorated, but he ignored this and mentioned it to no one. He worked day and night continuously.

Our beloved and esteemed Premier Chou was always most concerned about the work of the Academy of Sciences, taking measures to counter the interference of the "gang of four". At the beginning of 1971, a new woman director of the political department of the Institute of Mathematics, Comrade Chou, was appointed. A cadre, Comrade Li, with a worker-peasant background was appointed as secretary of the office Party branch.

On his arrival, soon after National Day in October, Secretary Li searched everywhere for Chen, after Comrade Chou had briefed him on what she had found out about him. He encountered Chen in a corner of the library. As it was a warm day, Li was in his shirt-sleeves, but Chen, being in poor health, was huddled up in his padded jacket.

"Thank you, Comrade Li," Chen said. Chen was in the habit of thanking everyone. He felt close to Li the moment he saw him. "I'm extremely glad to meet you. Really I'm delighted." Li asked if he could visit Chen after work that evening at half past five. Chen thought for a moment and then agreed to meet him at the gate.

"Please don't bother," Li protested. "I'm sure I can find my own way. Don't bother to wait for me." But Chen was adamant and insisted on waiting for Li in case he wouldn't be able to find the way.

Later, after they had met, Chen took Li up to a small room on the third floor. It was apparent that Chen had tidied it up for the occasion. The window was covered over by carefully pasted newspaper, blotting out the autumn sunshine. It had never occurred to Li that Chen lived in such poor conditions. He sat on the bed and commented on the clean covers. Pointing at the blue and white checked sheet, Chen confided that he'd bought it especially in honour of Li's visit. He added: "Thank you so much for coming. I'm extremely happy."

Mathematical formulas are a sort of universal language. Those who have mastered them know that they involve the most strict logic

and dialectical thinking. They can explain the vast secrets of the universe, but few learn this language.

One who could appreciate this was Professor Min Szu-ho, who said: "Chen works extremely well and has recently written a monograph on Goldbach's Conjecture. I've read it, and it is an excellent piece of work."

"You wrote a monograph?" one of the new cadres in charge of the institute asked Chen. "Why don't you show it to us?"

"Because I haven't finished revising it yet," Chen replied.

They hoped he would complete it soon.

Chen's section leader, Old Tien, told Secretary Li to encourage Chen to show his monograph, but not to press him too hard. He must have his reasons for not showing it yet. Chen insisted that he was going over it again and that it wasn't finished.

As Chen has said: "It's true I hadn't finished my monograph. It was complete and yet not complete. Ever since I joined the Institute of Mathematics, I've buried myself in research under the guidance of strict teachers, celebrated mathematicians and the Party organization. I've tried not to let the Party down. I've done research on seven of the thirty outstanding problems in the theory of numbers. I've made a contribution towards solving them. These helped to prepare me to tackle Goldbach's Conjecture. I put all my energies into that.

"In 1965, though I arrived at my $(1 + 2)$ solution, it was by a very complex route. A mathematics paper, however, should be precise and concise. Many roads lead to the same goal, but we should choose the shortest and best one. My 200 pages were correct but too long. Therefore I didn't publish it at the time. Seven years have passed since then.

"People aren't aware how difficult the process has been. I needed to study several foreign languages. I'd picked up English at middle school and Russian at university. Once at the institute, I taught myself to read and write a little French and German. Then I learned to read foreign papers and materials in Japanese, Italian and Spanish. That was pretty difficult, but it saved me time waiting for them to be translated. A knowledge of foreign languages is necessary. I read as much foreign material as possible. The research achievements

of other mathematicians were essential as a basis for my own work, before it became possible to solve a problem like $(1 + 2)$.

"I had to simplify my monograph; it had to be more concise. In places it belonged more to the realms of philosophy. So I worked over it again and again. I made endless corrections. I can't begin to calculate how many changes I made.

"I knew that my health was deteriorating rapidly. I was seriously ill. My lungs and heart were affected. Yet though my strength was failing, my brain remained active and alert. I couldn't stop working. I just couldn't stop."

It was February 1973, and the Spring Festival was approaching.

The day before the festival Comrade Chou asked the other leading comrades to show special concern for those who were unwell. She told them they should follow the example of the Eighth Route Army and care for all sick comrades like Chen who worked very hard. Chen, though almost bed-ridden, had carried on with his research. None of his research was for himself, but only for the people and for the Party.

The day of the festival, Comrade Chou, Secretary Li and several other Party secretaries set off to visit the sick comrades carrying bags of fruit. As Chen lived near by, he was first on the list.

Coming down the stairs, Chen was surprised to see so many leading comrades. Chou explained that they'd come to wish him a happy Spring Festival and asked him how he was. Secretary Li also greeted him and gave him their warm wishes.

"Oh! Is it the festival today?" said Chen surprised. "Thank you very much for coming. Let me wish you all a happy Spring Festival too."

Li suggested that they go to his room, but Chen protested on the grounds that they hadn't warned him beforehand. Chou then suggested that Li should take the fruit up to Chen's room, while the rest of them went on to visit the next family. Li could catch them up later. Then Chou shook Chen's hand and hoped he would get better soon, before leaving with the others.

Li presented the fruit to Chen on behalf of the leadership. Silently Chen accepted it. He went with Li to the door and watched as he caught up with the others. Gazing at them disappearing behind a shop on the road, Chen was overcome with emotion. Hurrying back to his room, he locked himself up in it for three days, not emerging again until after the Spring Festival had ended. On his first day back at work, he handed Li a thick pile of pages.

"Here's my monograph," he declared. "I'm giving it to the Party."

"Is that your $(1 + 2)$ paper finished?" Li asked.

"Yes. Professor Min has read and checked it."

The Institute of Mathematics immediately organized a small symposium and the dozen or so specialists who attended praised Chen's report. Then the monograph was submitted to the academy.

In mid-April 1973, during a meeting of leading Party members of the Academy of Sciences, Vice-director Wu Heng mentioned that an intermediate research fellow in the Institute of Mathematics had made a major contribution to the world of mathematics.

Chen was taken to hospital, as his health had deteriorated. The Shoutu Hospital gave him a thorough examination. He was found to be suffering from various diseases and so he was immediately hospitalized. Chen refused, however, until they told him that the Party and Chairman Mao had wished it.

It was a year and a half later before he left hospital. During that period, Premier Chou and Chairman Hua, then a vice premier, had recommended Chen to be a deputy to the Fourth National People's Congress. He was in the same small group with Premier Chou. When he learned about Premier Chou's illness, he felt so upset that he couldn't sleep for several nights. After the congress he returned to the hospital.

When he was due to be discharged, the doctor wrote that his condition was fairly good after treatment. His temperature was normal; his spirits were better; he had gained 5 kilos; and his appetite and sleep were normal.

Chairman Hua was also very concerned about Chen's work and health and made several inquiries about him.

The West learned about Chen's monograph as soon as it was published, and, as the news spread, it aroused much excitement in mathematical circles abroad. At that time a book, *The Sieve Methods*, by an English mathematician, Halberstam, and a German one, Richert, was in the process of being printed. They immediately added an eleventh chapter entitled "On Chen's Theorem". They described his work as a splendid contribution to the sieve theory.

Now only one step remains to reach the pearl on the crown of mathematics. And this last step is the most difficult. Who will reach the pearl?

Chen Ching-jun is something of a living legend. There were many stories about him. Some were due to misunderstandings; others were malicious attacks to slander the real man. He was not an easy person to understand. He was too sensitive, precocious and a little neurotic. His mind only concentrated on mathematics. He sought refuge there from his mental and physical problems caused by internal and external pressures. Yet it was through his study of mathematics that Chen gradually came to adopt a dialectical materialist outlook. This change in his attitude to life, the concern of the Academy of Sciences and the Party, all helped him to make his great contribution to the proving of Goldbach's Conjecture. The Cultural Revolution also forced a change. He was caught up in it; he was forced back into the world. He could not remain aloof. The attacks and the witch-hunts of the "gang of four" showed more clearly the Party's concern for scientists. Chen suffered from these attacks, but they had a positive side too. As a result of his trials, Chen matured. The sick man has regained his health; the social outcast has become socially integrated. We can be certain that, in the years to come, Chen will not slacken in his efforts to remould himself. He had a rough start in life, but he has made an outstanding contribution to knowledge. Now that life is kinder to him, will he not strive even harder to achieve more?

Illustrated by Huang Ying-hao

FROM THE WRITER'S NOTEBOOK

An enlarged conference of the China Federation of Literary and Art Circles was held in Peking in May this year. During the conference and after it, there were lively discussions among writers and artists. We publish below articles by two veteran writers and a report about the writer Liu Ching (1916-1978) who lived most of his life among the peasants.

— The Editors

Liu Pai-yu

The Source of Literature and Art

It is both common knowledge and common sense that life is the only source of literature and art. So why should I discuss this question once again? The main reason is that during the years of the "gang of four", the reverse situation was the case. They opposed writers trying to learn from life, depriving them of their right to do so. More than that, they dished up some idealistic twaddle about the necessity of deciding the theme before all else and other nonsense, all of which have had a deep and pernicious influence. Another reason is that it appears to most of us socialist writers that while the

question has been apparently settled, there are still areas of uncertainty. Therefore we should consider it more and try to solve the problems step by step in practice.

Life Is the Source of All Art: Writers should live among the people they wish to portray. Otherwise, how could the celebrated 18th-century Chinese novelist, Tsao Hsueh-chin have depicted so vividly all the characters in his long novel *A Dream of Red Mansions*? How else could he have so profoundly analysed and condemned the corruption and contradictions manifest in Chinese feudal society at that time? In a biography of Balzac, it is stated that this great French writer spent his days mixing with decadent French aristocrats and the new emerging bourgeoisie, being accepted into the most inner sanctums of that society. His brilliant characterizations demonstrate his intimacy with the people and their society. Thus he succeeded in achieving his literary aims. As Engels wrote: ". . . His great work is a constant elegy on the irretrievable decay of good society. . . ."

Today we must become intimate with the life of the labouring class consisting of the workers, peasants and soldiers. We should also be familiar with the lives of intellectuals who serve them.

A writer must have a deep love of life and immerse himself in it. If indifferent to life around him, then he becomes blind to even the most stirring events, so that his writing is devoid of them. Life is like a sea, in constant motion, changing. A writer observes and accumulates experiences. He tastes the breadth of life. Then he reaches the depth of life by profound analysis. Only then can he hope to create rich and varied works.

Today our country has entered a new historical period. We must exert ourselves to the utmost to realize our goal of modernizing agriculture, industry, national defence and science and technology by the end of this century. This will produce much that is new, much that is unfamiliar to us. Our writers must reflect on these changes and then express them. Therefore it is all the more necessary to have a correct relationship between life and art.

Creative Art Must Be Derived from Life: A writer observes and then reflects on life. He thinks in images. His familiarity with people, the society and nature depends on the numerous images he has collected. Such is artistic creation. Images do not preclude logical analysis. They complement each other simultaneously.

Materialists hold that objectivity exists in particular images; thinking in particular images starts from the observation of the objective world. The objective world changes constantly; the number of images is inexhaustible; writers are provided with this rich source of creativity. Thinking in images demonstrates that artistic creation springs from life and reality. The images in literature and art have the greatest vitality and the most power to move and persuade people. They should reflect reality vividly, sharply and profoundly. They should provide reality with an ideal.

Themes Must Be Drawn from Actual Life: Themes taken from life are not abstract. They are not dreamt up in a studio. They are derived from life's richness through a process of repeated thought and discrimination and appear in the writer's mind as definite images. Like a flame that illuminates the scattered experiences and welds them together, the theme brings order and the images can be concentrated, generalized and heightened.

Ten talented writers dealing with the same important subject would of course produce ten different works. That is because they are individually different in experiences, thinking etc. Thus each can bring to the same subject something new; each can add a new colour. Themes are obtained from life itself; they are not abstract concepts or sermons.

How to Experience Life

Chairman Mao, in 1942, stated explicitly in his *Talks at the Yanan Forum on Literature and Art* that life is the only source of literature and art. He said: "China's revolutionary writers and artists, writers and artists of promise, must go among the masses; they must for a long period of time unreservedly and whole-heartedly go among the masses of workers, peasants and soldiers, go into the heat of the struggle, go to the only source, the broadest and richest source, in order to observe, experience, study and analyse all the different kinds of people, all the classes, all the masses, all the vivid patterns of life and struggle, all the raw materials of literature and art. Only then can they proceed to creative work." This is the principle that we Chinese literary and art workers must always keep in mind.

It takes hard work to fully extract life's rich deposits. As Chairman Mao pointed out, to observe, experience, study and analyse the life and struggle of the masses for a long period of time is in itself an arduous and complex process requiring a deep understanding of life. Some writers, even though they live among the masses, feel

there is nothing worthy to be written about there. Subsequently they return empty-handed from that richest of sources, because of their mistaken belief that experiencing life is simple and easy. Other writers do not penetrate deeply enough the life of the masses. Lacking a sense of commitment and without careful analysis, they flit from one thing to another, satisfied with the superficial understanding they have acquired. Having skimmed the surface, having failed to find the rich deposits, they are unable to create any truly valuable literary works.

So how do we experience life? The best way, I think, is to experience life in full in one place and look around other situations. That is, after living and working in one place for a fairly long period, go to other similar places for a look and compare. Only in this way can we broaden our vision, enrich our material and deepen our perception of the people and events witnessed. Such understanding is never easily acquired. Repeated observation and study are required. From these we can draw comparisons which will enable us to identify the typical example from the superficial phenomenon. The false can be discarded; the true retained. A writer confined to one place is rather like the man who "sits at the bottom of a well to see the skies". Without breadth of vision, without comparisons, our understanding of life is too limited, too narrow. On the other hand, to have no base, to lack depth, and just go around observing the appearance of things like a man "viewing the flowers from horseback", makes only a superficial understanding possible. Thus both these tendencies, a lack of breadth and a lack of depth, are harmful to a writer.

In short stories and novels, the main subject-matter is people. Therefore we must observe, experience, study and analyse people. But people are not inanimate objects to be handled at will. They are always moving, always developing. Backgrounds and social relationships vary. A person's consciousness is constantly changing, and he confides his innermost thoughts only to those whom he knows best. Understanding people, getting to know them, is therefore a difficult process, requiring time, patience and sensitivity. A knowledge of dialectical materialism produces keener vision. Experiences

of life, struggles, practice in writing and assimilation of good literature both Chinese and foreign all serve to produce clearer vision.

To experience life, go straight to the masses. That is the best way of all. Join their struggles. Participate in their efforts. There you will find each person revealing his thoughts and feelings from his own economic and political standpoint. No writer can learn these without this participation, however much he desires it.

There are other ways of knowing more about a person. You should talk not only to him, but also to his family and relations, his friends and colleagues. Every aspect of his life must be investigated. Observe broadly; observe deeply.

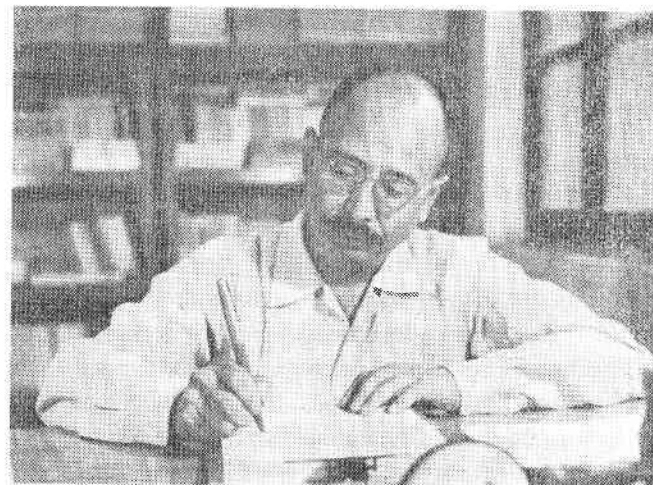
Study also the society in which a person lives at any given moment of time in its development. Study carefully the concrete environment of each character such as the natural scenery, housing or clothing. When writing about a worker, know his machines; when about a soldier, his weapons. Only then, when thoroughly steeped in the character, when thoroughly familiar with his society and surroundings, only then can we hope to write well.

Living Among the People

— About the writer Liu Ching

The writer Liu Ching has made a valuable contribution to modern Chinese literature. The publication in 1960 of the first volume of *Builders of a New Life*, a novel about the mutual-aid and co-operative movement in agriculture marked his maturity ideologically and as a writer. It was rightly acclaimed by critics as one of China's outstanding contemporary novels and one of the literary achievements since the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949.

Besides his writings, Liu Ching has left a revolutionary legacy in the example of his life as a proletarian writer. For decades he served the people by working and living among the workers, peasants and soldiers, writing about their lives. He will remain an inspiration to his readers as a profound, serious writer, whose life style was simple.



Liu Ching at work (1960)

1

Liu Ching was passionately fond of literature during his years at middle school, but he only became involved in revolutionary writing after he had read Chairman Mao's *Talks at the Yenan Forum on Literature and Art*.

Influenced and guided by this, Liu Ching went to Michih County, northeast of Yenan as a secretary to a township in the spring of 1943. The township government was run then by only three people, the head, the instructor and the secretary. His secretarial work was exhausting and the conditions hard. Their diet mainly consisted of sorghum, yams, chaff and dried cabbage. Liu Ching soon became seriously ill. His brother, who was engaged in farming at their hometown, arrived to take him home. The county Party secretary suggested a transfer back to the county town. But Liu, refusing both offers, remained where he was for another three years. His first novel, *Sowing the Seeds*, which described the co-operative movement in agriculture in northern Shensi, was based on his life in this period.

Those three years in Michih marked Liu's entry into the world

of revolutionary literature. He realized that a writer must experience deeply the life of the people. Later, he summarized his beliefs thus: "To write, one must know life first. . . . Everything a writer needs comes from life. . . . Life nurtures, alters and raises the consciousness of a writer."

After Liberation in 1949, Liu Ching completed his novel, *Wall of Bronze*, which was about the War of Liberation. He then left Peking to settle in Shensi and made his home in Changan County. He held the post of deputy secretary of the county Party committee, which gave him every opportunity to familiarize himself with the county's history and present conditions. After six months, he went to work in Huangfu Village, Wangchu District, as a member of the county Party committee. He and his family moved into the Chung-kung Temple, where they remained for fourteen years from 1952 to 1966.

There Liu Ching lived like the peasants, taking part in the village Party branch meetings and in the co-operative movement like everyone else. He would chat with the peasants on their way to market, join in all occasions and activities whether a wedding, funeral, or the building of a new house. If a quarrel broke out, he was there to watch and listen. . . .

He really was like a peasant, dark and small, with his head shaved peasant-fashion. In summer he wore a straw hat; in winter a felt one. His tunic and trousers were peasant style; his shoes with stitched cloth soles. Seeing him among a group of peasants, he would easily have been mistaken for one of them. He betrayed no signs of being a writer.

His relationship to the villagers became very close. He knew their names and all about their lives and family histories. The people were also very friendly to him; they accepted the small dark man as one of themselves. The temple where he lived became the unofficial meeting-place of the village cadres. When in difficulty, they would meet at Liu Ching's home and seek his advice. Sometimes even the Party branch meetings were held there too. Peasants with problems would come and pour out their hearts to Liu Ching and leave with their minds at ease. If a couple were quarrelling, Liu

Ching would be asked to mediate; if a child was ill, he would advise on the treatment.

2

Is living among the masses all that is required of a writer? Liu Ching did not think so. On the contrary, a revolutionary writer should study not only society, but also Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought. He should sincerely remould his world outlook to become a real revolutionary, not just superficially go through the motions. Liu felt that before a writer could create a hero in his story, he should remould himself first. He said, "When a writer reveals the souls of others, he is revealing his own at the same time."

A writer can never be an impassive observer studying the great struggles of the masses. He must be an active participant.

The co-operative movement was spreading to all parts of the country when Liu Ching settled in Huangfu Village. The foundation of the small peasant economy of the past thousands of years was finally being destroyed. Socialism would be taking over the countryside. Liu Ching plunged enthusiastically into this great revolution, joining the village's first mutual-aid team and helping to set up the first agricultural co-operative, the Victory Agricultural Co-operative. Throughout the tortuous course of the movement with its hard battles, Liu Ching took part personally at every stage.

Wang Chia-pin, who was chairman of the Victory Co-op, remembers still how Liu Ching, with the help of a stick, would visit the peasant families each day and talk to them. During a heavy snowstorm in the winter of 1953, trudging through snow a foot deep, Liu Ching reached Wang Chia-pin's home. The Party secretary of Wangchu District at that time was Meng Wei-kang. He recalls how a member of the co-operative wanted to withdraw and farm on his own because there had been a good wheat crop that year. Despite being laid up with asthma, Liu Ching insisted on Meng carrying him across the rising Haoho River to convene a meeting of the co-op members that same evening. He spoke so convincingly that the peasant who had wished to withdraw was moved to tears. The peasants remember

another time when Liu Ching gave a talk on the history of the development of society and the superiority of socialism. The villagers arrived very early at the meeting-place, those at the back edging forward. Liu Ching spoke in such an interesting and lively way that no one wanted to miss a word.

Liu Ching shared the rough and the smooth with the peasants of Huangfu Village. It was there that he wrote *Builders of a New Life*.

He was very concerned about caring for collective property. To help the co-op members raise good cattle and strengthen the collective economy, after many discussions with the cadres and co-op members, he wrote down some rules in the old literary form of three characters in each line about raising cattle. After its publication, it was hailed by literary and art circles, though some felt it was a lesser achievement than the writing of *Builders of a New Life*, and that he shouldn't have taken any time from that. Liu Ching replied: "How can I shut myself up in a room writing a novel, when outside life is full of struggles?"

Those who knew Liu Ching well, knew that he never spoke or wrote about himself. He shunned publicity, refusing to allow a film to be made or special news items about him released. He sought neither fame nor riches. When the first volume of *Builders of a New Life* was published in 1960, Liu Ching handed over all his royalties to the Wangchu People's Commune, of which Huangfu Village was a part. He said: "I'm a commune member. While others do manual labour, I work with my pen. I have my wages like everyone else, so I don't need this money. Let it be used for everyone." Later the commune built a hospital with it.

3

From the time in the early forties when he wrote his first novel in a village in northern Shensi, till he made his home in Huangfu Village, Liu Ching proved himself a worthy member of the ranks of outstanding Chinese writers who followed Chairman Mao's line. Yet, this man was outrageously and cruelly persecuted by Lin Piao and the "gang of four". He was named as a reactionary writer; *Builders of a New*

Life was said to be a bad influence. He was taken to Sian, the capital of Shensi, where he was publicly criticized and then detained.

But those who knew the truth about Liu Ching were bitterly opposed to such persecution and fought against it. When some investigators came to Liu Ching's Party branch secretary to try and dig up some evidence that he had been privileged and not attending the Party meetings, the village secretary strongly refuted the charge, saying that Liu Ching had always paid his Party fees and taken part in their meetings. He asked them what was so special about Liu Ching's case. Then they went to Liu Ching's neighbours to prove that he had lived "in a landlord's compound, leading a decadent life". The only reply they got was: "His old broken-down temple is over there. Go and see it for yourself. Landlord's compound indeed! What shit! Some decadent life! He lives like one of us." The investigators finally managing to dig up something went to the commune to get it certified. The commune cadre was furious when he read it. Shaking his fist at them, he shouted: "This is the Huangfu People's Commune. Who the hell do you think you are coming here and interfering like this?"

But that did not stop the slander, and the attacks became more ferocious. In 1969, one of the "gang of four's" followers attacked Liu Ching as "an active counter-revolutionary . . . an enemy agent . . . a person who has contact with foreigners". After this he was even more cruelly persecuted. His wife, Ma Wei, who had assisted him in his writings, his lifelong companion and helpmate, who had looked after him with meticulous care, died as a result of the "gang of four's" persecution.

Liu Ching's determination never faltered. A Party member for over thirty years, he believed in the down-to-earth spirit of Party members and in their tradition of telling the truth. He therefore examined his own shortcomings and mistakes in the light of the facts, resisting all slanders and falsifications.

Physically frail, his strength, however, in seeking the truth was astonishing.

His political and mental persecution, the physical tortures meted out to him brought about his collapse. His asthma condition worsen-

ed and disease affected his heart and lungs. Critically ill and expecting to die, he asked a cadre from Changan County to take his body after his death to Huangfu Village.

But Liu Ching did not die. The people needed him. The Party needed him. The Party, everyone, was concerned for him. Through the efforts of the cadres and people of Changan County who loved him, Liu Ching was sent to a sanatorium. Then in 1973, a letter explaining all about his serious illness reached Premier Chou's laden desk. Deeply worried, Premier Chou immediately issued a directive, which brought Liu Ching to Shoutu Hospital in Peking, where after some time he began to improve. Yet owing to the interference of the "gang of four", Premier Chou's directive was never fully carried out.

Liu Ching lived to see the smashing of the "gang of four" by the Party Central Committee headed by Chairman Hua, but he knew that he didn't have much longer to live. He worried that he might not be able to fulfil his promise of completing the four volumes of *Builders of a New Life*. He had to work fast. His promise to the people drove him to work against the clock. He spent the whole of 1977 revising his first volume for re-publication. Then the first part of the second volume was also published. Last winter, though critically ill, he continued working on the second part of the second volume from his sick-bed. On 13th June this year, he died.

Last March Liu Ching recorded a talk to young literary workers in Shensi, which was called *Life Is the Foundation of Creative Writing*. In this he said: "I'd like to give you a last piece of advice. Who has a promising future? Who has not? I think those who honestly respect life's laws objectively will have a promising future. Those who abuse them and do as they like will simply end up wasting their lives."

This was Liu Ching's legacy to all young literary workers, the future generation in whom he placed his hopes.

NOTES ON LITERATURE AND ART

Tu Ho

A Hundred Flowers in Bloom Again

Chairman Mao Tsetung, who formulated the policy of "letting a hundred flowers blossom and a hundred schools of thought contend", had, in 1975, severely criticized the "gang of four" for destroying culture both ancient and modern, Chinese and foreign, and reducing the literary and art fields to a wasteland. Chairman Mao said that there were no longer any "hundred flowers" and that people were afraid to write articles and plays. There were no new novels or poems.

In the two years since the smashing of the "gang of four", efforts have been made to restore this policy in the cultural world. Article 14 of the Constitution adopted by the Fifth National People's Congress states: "The state applies the policy of 'letting a hundred flowers blossom and a hundred schools of thought contend' so as to promote the development of the arts and sciences and bring about a flourishing socialist culture." Later, an enlarged meeting of the National Committee of the China Federation of Literary and Art Circles held in May this year discussed how to implement this policy.

This policy was enacted to meet the urgent need of accelerating and developing the culture of our country. In 1951, Chairman Mao issued the slogan of "letting a hundred flowers blossom and weeding through the old to bring forth the new". In 1956, he laid equal emphasis on "letting a hundred flowers blossom" and "a hundred schools of thought contend". Thus the fundamental cultural policy was established. Guided by this policy, an unprecedented flourishing of culture occurred, especially in 1958. New folk-songs appeared throughout the entire country, followed immediately by the publication of a large number of fine artistic and literary creations, such as novels, plays, operas, films, poetry, fine arts and music. Then there was an impetus in the movement in 1964 to revolutionize, both in form and content, the traditional Peking opera.

Why should this policy bring about such a flourishing of socialist art and literature? Basically because it conforms to the laws of development of culture. Lenin, in 1905, pointed out: "In this field greater scope must undoubtedly be allowed for personal initiative, individual inclination, thought and fantasy, form and content." Thus different artistic forms and styles can develop freely, and different schools of thought may freely contend. The question of whether something is right or wrong in the cultural world must be solved by way of free discussion and through creative practice. Without academic freedom, without a democratic atmosphere, but relying merely on administrative power to promote a certain style or school of thought and prohibit others, there can be no cultural richness. On the contrary, our cultural world will be stifled, its development impeded.

Art and literature are a reflection of reality. Thus life's richness and variety must find reflection in literature and art with varied content and themes. There are six political criteria required: it must help unite the people of our various nationalities; it must be beneficial to socialist transformation and socialist construction; it must help consolidate the people's democratic dictatorship; it must help consolidate democratic centralism; it must help to strengthen the leadership of the Communist Party; it must be beneficial to socialist international unity and the unity of the peace-loving peoples

of the world. So long as it adheres to these, then any subject can be adopted. Writers and artists should have the right to choose whatever subjects they are familiar with and like, otherwise our literature and art cannot reflect the true life of the masses.

Variety in content and subject inevitably means a corresponding diversity of forms and styles. Some themes like the historical progress of revolutionary struggles are best conveyed in larger works, while anecdotes from daily life can be presented in short sketches. The various forms and styles of art cannot be substituted for each other, nor exclude each other. Only by allowing diversity can we truly reflect reality in a rich and comprehensive way.

Socialist literature and art must serve the workers, peasants and soldiers. The demands of the masses for a richer intellectual life have increased greatly. Because individuals vary in their needs, interests and tastes, literature and art should satisfy all needs. The masses appreciate works not only about contemporary themes such as the life and struggles of the people, but also those of historical interest. The militant march appeals as well as light music and dancing. Paintings of landscapes, flowers and birds are as necessary as those with revolutionary themes, daily life and people. The cultural needs of the masses are diverse. Naturally they abhorred the stereotyped pieces concocted by the "gang of four" and their followers.

In order to fully develop our socialist culture to serve the needs of the masses, we must encourage the emergence of all kinds of creative activity and give full scope to the talents, originality and individuality of our literary and art workers. The forming of a particular style displays the artistic maturity of an artist or writer. Some for example are more adept at meticulous detail while others have a bold, assertive style. Some are masters at portraying a wide panorama; others excel in depth of characterization. Writers, varying in their personalities, experiences, education and preferences, must necessarily differ in their styles. Thus we encourage our writers and artists to evolve and further develop their individual styles through arduous practice and tireless experiment, that our socialist literature and art may thrive and flourish.

Literary and art criticisms are necessary, in the pursuit of truth. Truth must be sought in various ways. We must fight for it. Only by allowing the people to express their different views, only by allowing discussion, can we understand and acquire truth. To see to it that "a hundred schools of thought contend" is to create a lively political situation.

With the downfall of the "gang of four", cultural workers have been given a new freedom and are now engaged in creating new works. Many good literary and art works, banned for years, have reappeared. Many new works have appeared or soon will appear. After the long dark years of the cultural despotism imposed by the "gang of four", the policy of "letting a hundred flowers blossom and a hundred schools of thought contend" is now brightening our cultural world.

"The Red Lantern Society" — a New Peking Opera

The Red Lantern Society was a detachment of women fighters attached to the Yi Ho Tuan (known in the west as Boxers). A new Peking opera of the same name has recently been staged by the China Peking Opera Theatre in Peking.

Towards the end of the 19th century, as imperialist aggression intensified, the Ching-dynasty Empress Dowager Tzu Hsi only pursued capitulationist policies. Thus with no other alternative, the peasants, artisans and other workers in the provinces of Shantung and Hopei organized themselves into a secret society, the Yi Ho Tuan, and rose in revolt. For a while they controlled the strategic area around Peking and Tientsin, and despite their ultimate failure, their struggle against foreign imperialism remains a glorious episode in our history. The heroism and bravery of the women fighters in the Red Lantern Society, who fought both alongside the men in the campaigns as well as in supporting roles, will never be forgotten.

The opera consists of nine scenes. In the first scene the peasants of Shuangliuchen in Chihli (present-day Hopei) are suffering from



Lin Hei-niang

the effects of a severe drought and are eagerly awaiting the arrival of the Yi Ho Tuan. Instead, foreign cavalry suddenly appear, burning, killing and plundering. A missionary, Father Paul, who is in league with a landlord Pai Wu, seizes the house and land of a poor peasant, Hsiao-yen. Her father is thrown into prison, her mother murdered. Hsiao-yen is about to be arrested herself, when she is rescued by a band of the Yi Ho Tuan insurgents headed by Lin Hei-niang, the heroine and leader of the Red Lantern Society and Tien Fu-kuang, Hsiao-yen's uncle, another leader of the Yi Ho Tuan. Hsiao-yen then joins the Red Lantern Society.

In the third scene, the cunning governor of Chihli, Yu Lu, acting on the secret instructions of the Empress Dowager, invites Lin Hei-niang and Tien Fu-kuang to the governor's house. He proposes various plans to them. Lin Hei-niang, however, sees through his tricks and thus foils his sinister schemes. Yu Lu then threatens them with death. But the Red Lantern Society fighters have been lying in wait near by. They close in and force the governor to comply with their plans. He is to send troops to assist Lin Hei-niang's insurgent army in capturing the railway station of Laolungtou.

In the sixth and seventh scenes the insurgents have captured the station and the Ching rulers, conspiring with the foreign imperialists, plan to lure them to Tientsin, where they will be ambushed and totally wiped out. Pien Tsung, a renegade in league with the missionary Father Paul, is to lead them into the trap. Lin Hei-niang, however,

Lin Hei-niang denouncing the enemy



does not trust Yu Lu's words, suspecting treachery. With a group of fighters she goes ahead to reconnoitre. On the way they are ambushed, and she is seriously wounded. Concealed behind a tree, she overhears the plot to attack them and learns that Pien Tsung is a traitor. She immediately writes this information in her own blood on her handkerchief and hides it in the hilt of her sword. She then tricks Pien Tsung into taking it back to where Hsiao-yen and the other fighters are stationed. Meanwhile the enemy closes in and Lin leaps into a river to escape being captured.

In the last two scenes, Hsiao-yen has received the sword. Aware that there is something unusual about it, she finally discovers the message in the hilt and has Pien Tsung executed. The enemy launch their attack. The Red Lantern Society fighters, grieving over Lin Hei-niang's supposed death, decide to fight the enemy to the last. Suddenly Lin Hei-niang appears; a boatman has rescued her. She insists that Hsiao-yen leads the fighters away to safety, while she and Tien Fu-kuang hold off the enemy. At the end, both she and Tien die heroically.

The Red Lantern Society and the characters of Lin Hei-niang, Tien Fu-kuang and Hsiao-yen, all reflect the indomitable fighting spirit of the Chinese people, who never yielded to foreign imperialism or to the Ching rulers. This opera represents a historic period in the long history of the Chinese people's patriotic struggles.

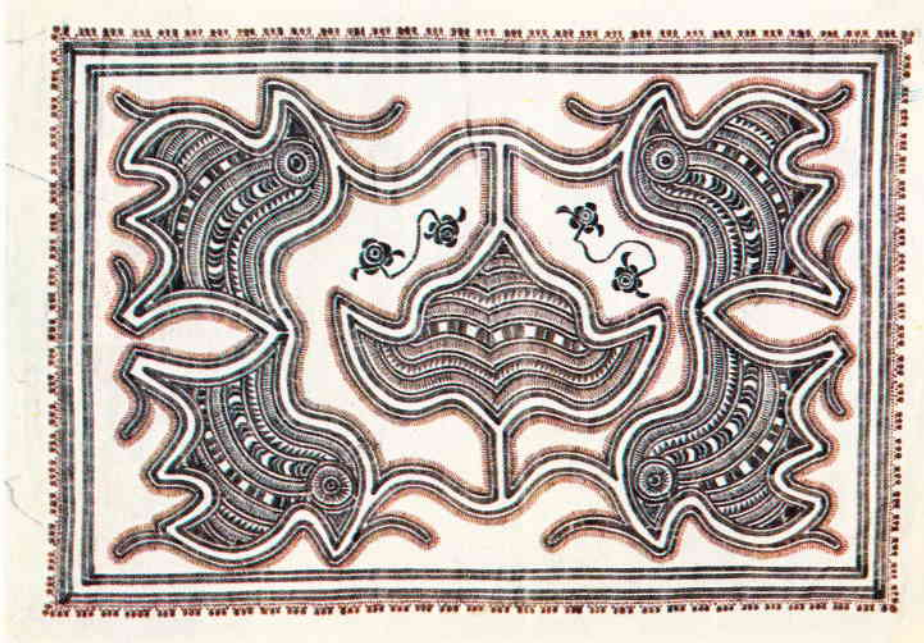
The plot gives full scope to the singing, dialogue, acrobatics and dramatic art of Peking opera.

In 1964, Chairman Mao asked the China Peking Opera Theatre to produce this opera, explaining how the young women fighters of the Red Lantern Society, holding their red lanterns, had practised fighting in the moonlight, and how they had wanted to storm Peking, kill the Empress Dowager and drive out the foreign imperialists. Their actions were full of adventure and drama. During the years when the "gang of four" were suppressing culture, all the good traditional operas, *The Red Lantern Society* included, were banned. It is only since the fall of the "gang of four" that at last Chairman Mao's wish has been realized.

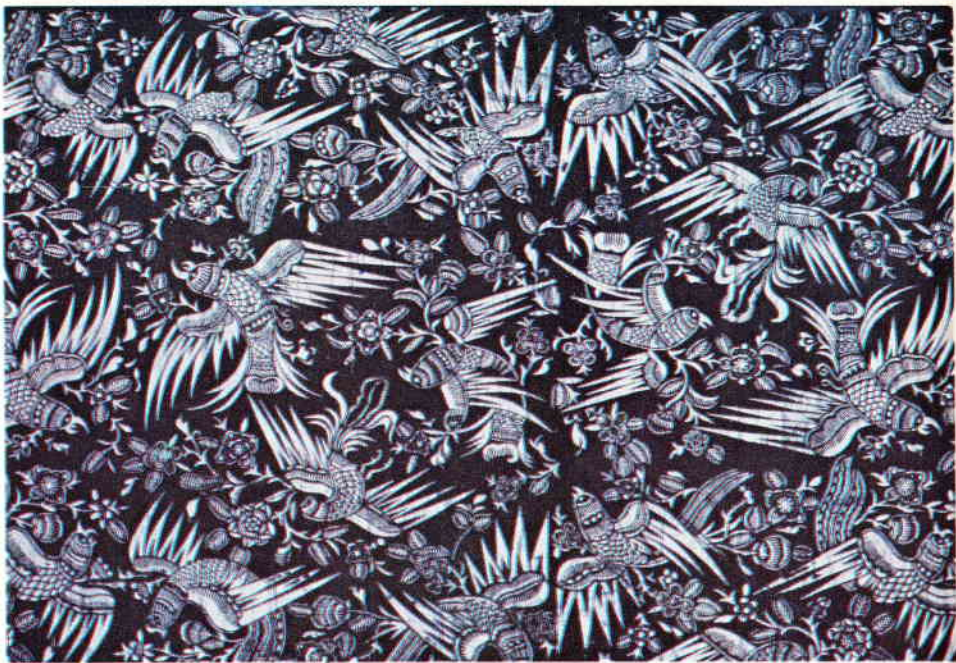


A Miao sash

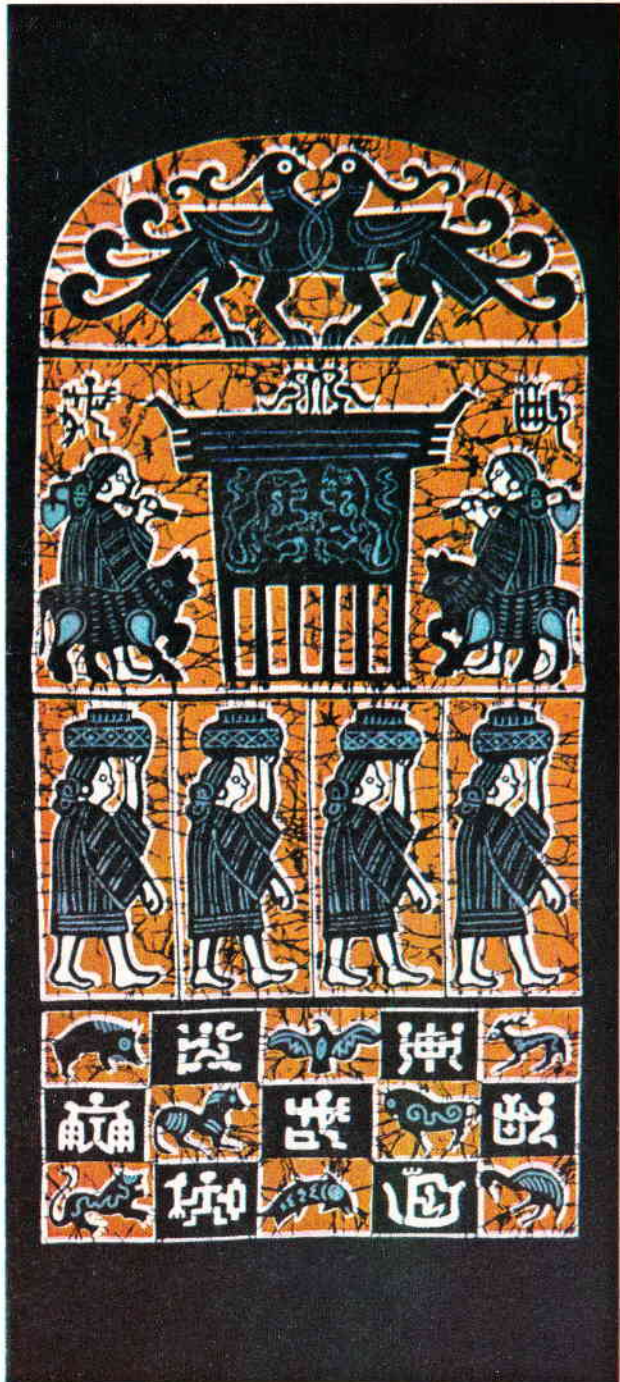
BATIK WORK



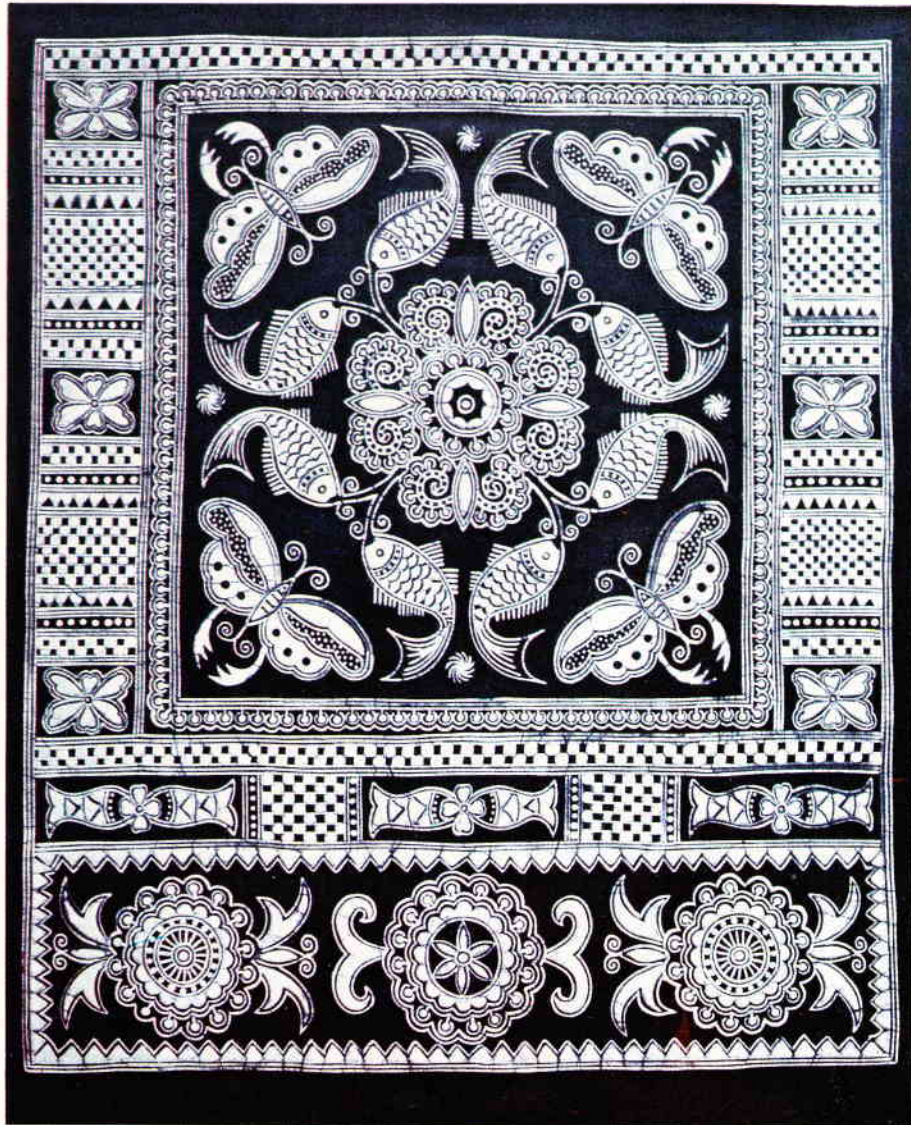
A turban



A bird pattern cloth



A tapestry



A Miao sash

Batik in China

The Miao, Puyi and Kolao national minorities mainly inhabit the southwest area of China. Their attractive villages nestle in the mountains. They are honest and industrious peoples, with a long creative tradition. Their colourful batik work has a history of many generations.

Batik is one of the most ancient dyeing processes in China. It remains as popular as ever among the minority women. Their best designs are made into fine clothes for weddings, festivals, visits and days when the young girls are courted by the young men. Batik decorates their lace, sleeves, turbans, sashes and bags. Young girls in their teens are soon skilled artists. In their leisure-time or in the long winter evenings, they sit chatting and singing by their firesides melting bowls of beeswax and cutting wax designs with their knives on their home-spun cloth. First the cloth is dipped into an indigo dye, the wax removed afterwards with boiling water. Then they repeat the process in other dyes such as red, green or yellow.

Batik patterns abound, but different nationalities have their respective styles. These can be roughly classified into two main types.

One is based on nature; the other on geometric designs. The former includes flowers, birds and fish; the latter lines, curves, etc. Both can be applied on a large piece of cloth, the geometric designs usually serving as a border for the picture in the middle. Girls like to express their thoughts and wishes in some of these patterns. The fish in a local folk-song symbolizes the girls' wishes for an ideal match. The national minorities hold festivals in which the young men and women dress in their colourful clothes with their elaborate batik designs in order to display their technique and attract their admirers' attention.

From ancient times, the prolific fish has symbolized the wish for many children. With the development of society and closer relationships between the various nationalities, the changing way of life has given rise to new subjects. Flower designs on sashes, for example, are often replaced by a picture of Peking's Tien An Men Square. The peony, a traditional Han design, has now been adopted by the Miao people, showing the close cultural contacts between these two nationalities in China.

The arch pattern, an ancient one, is always used for sashes. In our present issue is an illustration of this by the Miao people. The borders are dyed with the arch pattern, while the centre has a spray of cockscomb. Below this are three squares with fish, flowers and again the central cockscomb flower design. It is an exquisite example of the more sophisticated multi-coloured batik art.

Another design is used on the turbans of the Kolao minority. It was sketched directly in black and yellow wax, dispensing with the initial indigo dyeing procedure. It has been carefully drawn to show both light and shade.

The design of the batik tapestry in this issue was copied from a minority cultural relic unearthed in Yunnan Province. It shows the peasants in ancient times working in the fields, with the cracks in the original relic faithfully reproduced in batik.

Fishermen by Wu Wei



INTRODUCING A CLASSICAL PAINTING

Shu Hua

Wu Wei and His Painting "Fishermen"

Wu Wei (1459-1508), the noted Ming-dynasty artist, was recognized as the greatest painter of his time. Born into a poor family in Chianghsia County, Hupeh Province, he was forced to lead a vagabond life when he was still very young because of poverty. On reaching Haiyu County in Kiangsu Province, he was taken in by a rich family as a boy attendant to keep their children company in their studies. As a child he had been very fond of painting, and so he secretly began to draw some landscapes and figures. His master, discovering these one day, was surprised at his talent and encouraged the boy by providing him with brushes and paper.

As a result of his efforts, Wu Wei had already won for himself in his teens a reputation as a boy painter. Later he went to Nanking where an official, who admired his talent, employed him as a private secretary, giving him the name of Hsiao Hsien (little genius). From

then on, Wu Wei used that as his pseudonym, signing it on most of his works. It can be seen for example on the upper left-hand corner of the painting *Fishermen* reproduced in this issue. His fame grew until at last the Emperor Hsien-tsung summoned him to court as a court painter.

Wu Wei was a heavy drinker. One day when he was very drunk, the emperor ordered him to make a painting. Supported by others he arrived at the court, where kneeling on the floor he executed a painting at random with a few simple brush-strokes. The painting, *Pine Trees by a Fountain*, though quickly completed, was both vivid and lively. The emperor was delighted with it and remarked: "This really is the work of a genius." Emperor Hsien-tsung was succeeded by Hsiao-tsung. He made Wu Wei continue to paint for him and even bestowed on him the special honour of a signet inscribed with the characters, "The Greatest Painter".

Wu Wei had absorbed and developed the painting techniques of the Southern Sung-dynasty (1127-1279) painters, Ma Yuan and Hsia Kuei. He evolved a new style of landscape painting that was bold, vigorous and elegant. His special feature is his treatment of mountains and rocks. He used the *tsun* (wrinkles) brush-stroke with an unusual sharpness and employed ink splashing with the effect of whirling clouds. An observer watching him work, it has been said, could never guess at first what he was painting. It was only as he made the finishing touches when the painting could be studied carefully, that one could see the meticulous arrangement of brush-strokes and composition.

An artist of immense versatility, Wu Wei not only excelled at landscapes in the *hsieh-yi* style (free-style) but also was a fine figure painter in the *kung-pi* style (meticulous detail). In the Palace Museum Collection in Peking there is a scroll, *Spring in Wuling* by Wu Wei in the meticulous style, in which all the figures are painted with great delicacy. Wu Wei was also a good portrait painter.

Fishermen is one of Wu Wei's landscape masterpieces. In depicting the life of fishermen, he painted over forty boats dotted over the vast expanse of water. Some of the fishermen are resting as wisps of smoke rise from the stoves on the sterns of their boats. Others in the

bows sit chatting to each other. Some examine their nets while others continue to fish. The whole painting has been executed with the minimum of brush work. Each boat consists of only a few strokes, some only of one. The ink wash is both heavy and light. The figures, simply drawn, are elegant and natural. The rocky slopes, distant hills and mountain peaks show his characteristic sharpness and powerful methodical approach. The whole conveys a spirit of harmony and subtlety.

The painting, 170.8 cm in length and 173.5 cm wide, is in the collection of the Palace Museum, Peking.

“Wenyi Bao” Resumes Publication

Wenyi Bao, the leading literary criticism magazine of China, resumed publication in July after a twelve-year suspension by the “gang of four”.

Launched in September 1949, on the eve of the birth of the People’s Republic of China, the journal was founded by the China Federation of Literary and Art Circles.

The new editor-in-chief of the journal is Feng Mu, a noted literary critic.

In an article, “To Our Readers”, published in its first issue, the journal explains its policies. It states: we will take an active part in the nationwide struggle against the “gang of four”, in exposing and criticizing their counter-revolutionary revisionist line in literature and art. We will strive to fully implement Chairman Mao’s cultural line and to pursue his policy of “letting a hundred flowers blossom and a hundred schools of thought contend”. We will fight to release the creative forces in literature and art to bring about a flourishing of socialist literature and art. We hope to increase the numbers of proletarian writers and artists.

The article continues that since all literature and art spring from the life and struggles of the masses, they must reflect these. The journal will uphold this principle, and encourage those artists and writers who have lived among the masses and are able to reflect life with penetration.

The magazine also carried an editorial in memory of Kuo Mo-jo, the late chairman of the China Federation of Literary and Art Circles, and a number of important speeches delivered at the federation’s enlarged national committee meeting in May including those by Mao Tun, Chou Yang and Pa Chin, vice-chairmen of the federation.

“They Had No Right to Be Born” Restaged in Lhasa

Recently the Tibetan play, *They Had No Right to Be Born*, was restaged in Lhasa, the capital of the Tibet Autonomous Region. It was performed by the Tibet Modern Drama Company.

Written in the Tibetan language, it tells of the tragic love of two young serfs, Drashi and Yangchan. Wishing to marry, they are forbidden to do so by their owner. Yangchan becomes pregnant and is told by her master to have an abortion. Having given birth to twin girls in secret, she drowns herself in a river. Drashi endures great humiliation and hardship in order to bring up his daughters, unable to claim them publicly as his own. The elder of the twins is killed later by the serf-owner, but her twin sister escapes to join the People’s Liberation Army. It is only after the democratic reform following the overthrow of the feudal and reactionary local government in 1959, that Drashi is reunited with his daughter. While the “gang of four” were in control, they banned this play although it reflected the struggles of the Tibetan people.

The play has been translated into the Chinese language and performed in Peking. Many of the actors and actresses of the Tibet Modern Drama Company, which was founded after 1959, are former serfs.

False Charges Against “The Great Days in Shaoshan” Are Refuted

The Great Days in Shaoshan, an essay written in 1965 by Chou Li-po, author of the well-known novel, *The Hurricane*, described Chairman

Mao's visit to his hometown, Shaoshan, in Hsiangtan County, Hunan Province, in June 1959 after an absence of thirty-two years. It was published on April 23, 1966 in a supplement of the *Yangcheng Evening Paper*. The essay infuriated Chiang Ching and her associates because it praised Yang Kai-hui, Chairman Mao's first wife who gave her life for the revolution. This essay, during the Cultural Revolution, was labelled by the "gang of four" as reactionary writing. Chou Li-po was cruelly persecuted, and the newspaper in which it had appeared was unfairly criticized.

Recently the *People's Daily* published a letter by the late Comrade Lo Jui-ching, who had accompanied Chairman Mao to Shaoshan in which he described their visit. By republishing the essay with this letter, the truth of the situation has at last been revealed.

Mechanical Puppet Invention

A new kind of mechanical puppet has been devised by Wang Chia-fan, a construction worker and puppet enthusiast. Rod-puppets were formerly manipulated by two rods attached to their arms. This new mechanical puppet, designed like the human body, is 1.2 metres in height and weighs 1,005 grammes. There are over 400 parts connected to 12 rods. The range of movement possible now is much greater than with the conventional puppets, and it is easier to operate.

"Better Films Wanted"

Recently the *People's Daily* published an article entitled, *Better Films Wanted*, in which it is stated that the masses are requesting more and better films.

Since the fall of the "gang of four", workers in the film industry have produced some good films, but these are still a far cry from meeting the demands of the public. Feature films are lacking both in quantity and quality. Some are still influenced by the "gang of four's" cultural policies and bear traces of these. Workers in the

film industry, isolated from the masses for a long time by the policies of Lin Piao and the "gang of four", are not familiar with the life of the people.

They must now go among the masses to create better films and they must avail themselves of all forms of cinema techniques in order to improve the quality of the Chinese film industry.

Peking Artists Perform for the Taching Oilfield Workers

About 300 artists from Peking recently went to Taching to perform for the oil workers and their families. Taching, in the northeast of China, is the model for Chinese industry.

Five different companies were represented by the artists, including the Chinese Opera and Ballet Theatre, the Children's Art Theatre and the Peking Opera Troupe of Peking. They performed for the drilling teams at their worksites, in workshops and workers' hostels, improvising sometimes with an open-air stage. Among their plays were *Loyal Hearts*, about how Chinese medical workers fought against the policies of the "gang of four", and *The Newspaper Boys*, which tells of how Premier Chou En-lai, during his stay in the Kuomintang-controlled city of Chungking in the 1940's, led the Party newspaper workers in a successful struggle against the Kuomintang reactionaries. They also performed the Peking opera, *The Young Phoenix Rises*, which has a patriotic and historical theme. The programme also included songs, dances and *chuyi* ballads.

The Central National Orchestra and Chorus Resumes Performances

Banned for a decade by the "gang of four", the Central National Orchestra and Chorus has recently resumed giving public performances in Peking. Their repertoire includes both Chinese and foreign classical works, as well as modern instrumental and vocal ones. Formed in 1960, it has 50 musicians and more than 40 singers. Among

their musical instruments are 30 Chinese and national minority ones, which have been improved over the years. This orchestra and chorus made a great contribution in the past to preserving our heritage and developing Chinese music.

The Central Philharmonic Orchestra Resumes Its Sunday Concerts

The Central Philharmonic Orchestra resumed its popular Sunday Concerts, banned by the "gang of four", after a gap of more than ten years. These concerts feature Chinese symphonic music.

Between 1956 and 1966, when the Cultural Revolution started and these concerts were stopped, the orchestra gave over three hundred Sunday performances.

A Hans Anderson Fairytale Adapted for a Chinese Ballet

A new Chinese ballet based on the fairytale, *The Little Match Girl*, by the Danish writer Hans Christian Anderson, was recently performed by the students of the Peking School of Dancing.

Founded in 1954, the school's training programme was interrupted for some time by the "gang of four" while they were in power. This story was selected for adaptation as a training exercise in Western ballet methods for the students.

Burmese Cultural Dance and Music Troupe Perform in Peking

The Burmese Cultural Dance and Music Troupe recently gave accomplished performances in Peking.

They presented a variety of traditional and modern dances. One of these, *Dance of the Boxes*, was very popular in ancient times in Burma.



The recent performances by young male dancers were both lively and humorous.

Another dance, *The Dance to the Classical Song Yamona*, mimics the movements of water birds and fishermen. It shows the Burmese fishermen's love of their work and life.

They also performed a *Puppet Dance* and a short dance drama, *A Mythical Flower*.

The music consisted of traditional Burmese instrumental music.

Algerian Painting Exhibition Opens in Peking

An Algerian Painting Exhibition opened in Peking. On show were more than eighty oils, water-colours and sketches. The artists were both established ones, fighters who had fought for national liberation, and young painters. All reflected the struggles of the Algerian peoples for their liberation and their efforts in building up their country.



Published by Foreign Languages Press
Peking (37), China
Printed in the People's Republic of China

Fruit Harvest (scissor-cut)

by Pan Pao-chi



中國文學

英文月刊1978年第11期

本刊代號2--916

FOR SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION
CONTACT

CB *China Books
& Periodicals, Inc.*

2929 · 24TH ST. · SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94110

415-282-2994

San Francisco · New York · Chicago