

CHINESE LITERATURE

Monthly



October

10

1960

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Greetings to the Third Congress of Chinese Literary and Art Workers

Message delivered on July 22, 1960 by
Lu Ting-yi, Alternate Member of the
Political Bureau of the Central Committee
of the Chinese Communist Party and Vice-
Premier of the State Council, on behalf of
the Central Committee of the Chinese
Communist Party and the State Council

Delegates and Comrades:

On behalf of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party and the State Council, I extend warm greetings to all delegates attending the Third Congress of Chinese Literary and Art Workers, and delegates and council members attending the enlarged Council meeting of the Union of Chinese Writers, the Congress of the Union of Chinese Dramatists, the Congress of the Union of Chinese Musicians, the Congress of the Union of Chinese Artists, the Congress of the Association of Chinese Cinema Workers, the enlarged Council meeting of the Union of Chinese *Chuyi* Workers, the Congress of the Chinese Dance Research Society, the enlarged Council meeting of the Chinese Folk Literature and Art Research Society and the Congress of the Chinese Society of Photography, and through you to all the professional and spare-time literary and art workers of the whole country.

Since the publication of Comrade Mao Tse-tung's *Talks at the Yen-an Forum on Art and Literature*, the revolutionary literature and art of our country have advanced steadily in the correct direction of a literature and art serving the workers, peasants and soldiers. During the past eleven years since the founding of the People's Republic of China, we have steadfastly carried out the Party's policies in literary and art work, conducted a series of struggles against bourgeois ideas in literature and art and cleared the way for the development of socialist literature and art. We adopted the policy of a hundred flowers blossoming and a hundred schools of thought contending; put into practice the system of literary and art workers taking part in productive labour; advocated the method of combining revolutionary realism and revolutionary romanticism in art; applied the policy of critically inheriting and assimilating the legacies of Chinese and foreign literature and art by absorbing the best elements, discarding the dregs and developing the new out of the old; thus enabling our literary and art work to make a great contribution to China's cause of socialist revolution and socialist construction. A powerful force engaged in literature and art has grown up with working-class literary and art workers as its backbone. This revolutionary literary and art force, under the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party and the banner of Marxism-Leninism and the Moscow Declaration, stands firmly in the forefront of the struggle against imperialism, modern revisionism and all kinds of bourgeois thinking, goes deep into the midst of the masses of workers, peasants and soldiers and has produced many outstanding works of a very high ideological and artistic level for which the Chinese people show great appreciation. China's literature and art have already become a mass undertaking of the working people. Millions of workers and peasants are using the weapon of literature and art in waging their struggles, pushing up production and transforming society. All this marks the great victory of Marxist-Leninist thought in literature and art, the great victory of Mao Tse-tung's thought in literature and art.

Literature and art belong to the category of ideology and are a part of the superstructure of society. The theory of historical materialism tells us: the possibilities of development of the social productive forces are unlimited. The relations of production must

conform to the needs of development of the productive forces and the superstructure must conform to the needs of the economic base. China's socialist revolution and socialist construction have made very great achievements in the past eleven years. In the Second Session of the Eighth National Congress of the Chinese Communist Party in 1958, the Party's Central Committee headed by Comrade Mao Tse-tung put forward the general line of going all out, aiming high and achieving greater, faster, better and more economical results to build socialism, which includes a series of policies of simultaneous development. This general line is a product of the integration of the universal truth of Marxism-Leninism with the concrete reality in China's socialist revolution and socialist construction. Under the brilliant guidance of the Party's general line, the masses of the Chinese people created a big leap forward tempo of development in socialist construction and the organizational form of the people's commune. The broad masses of the people throughout the country, inspired by the three red banners of the general line, the big leap forward and the people's communes, have, with great revolutionary enthusiasm and labour initiative, made a continuous big leap forward in industrial and agricultural production. With the Chinese people's great victory in economic construction and the establishment and consolidation of the rural and urban people's communes, a high tide of technical revolution and cultural revolution has come into being. The great Chinese people, full of vitality and with great militancy of spirit, are transforming the backward state of "poverty and blankness" of their motherland. It is on this basis that the great victory of our literature and art has been achieved. The Chinese people's cause of socialist revolution and socialist construction, like the newly rising sun, has a future of boundless brightness. The future of the cause of our socialist literature and art is also boundlessly bright.

Though our people have achieved great victories, there should not be any feeling of self-satisfaction among us. In order to carry our socialist revolution to the end on the economic, political, ideological and cultural fronts and win complete victory, in order to build our country into a powerful socialist country with a modern industry, modern agriculture, modern science and culture and prepare the material and spiritual conditions for our future entry

into communist society, we must still make long-term and arduous efforts. Our literary and art workers must play their important role in the struggle to accomplish these tasks.

The primary task in our literary and art work is to use the weapon of literature and art to greatly enhance the socialist and communist consciousness of the people of the whole country, and raise the level of their communist moral qualities. In order to achieve this aim, long-term and persistent struggles against bourgeois ideology must be waged. In our country, following the achievement of the basic victory in the socialist revolution on the economic front, decisive victories were also achieved in the socialist revolution on the political and ideological fronts during the struggle against the bourgeois rightists in 1957 and the struggle against the right opportunists within the Party in 1959. But we can on no account consider that we have accomplished the task of waging political and ideological struggles against the bourgeoisie. Since China is still backward economically and culturally, survivals of bourgeois rights will inevitably exist for a long time to come. The foreign imperialists, reactionaries of every kind and modern revisionists are trying their utmost to spread the poison of reactionary ideas. The bourgeois world outlook, the political and ideological influences of the bourgeoisie and bourgeois intellectuals, and the influence of bourgeois and petty bourgeois habits will continue to exist for a long time and will stubbornly manifest themselves in all spheres to poison the minds of the masses and young people. The poisonous effects of bourgeois ideas will be smaller if they are met with resistance and dealt blows. Otherwise their poisonous effects on the cause of socialism and communism can be very great. They could confuse the masses, particularly the younger generation, and hamper the advance of socialist society, or even possibly cause socialist society to degenerate towards capitalism. Therefore, in a socialist society, the political and ideological struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie will continue for a long time, now intense, now moderated, until the political and ideological influences of the bourgeoisie are completely eliminated. In a socialist society very many new people will certainly be brought up imbued with communist consciousness and moral qualities. But it would be extremely wrong to presume that all those who grow up in a socialist society are, as a

matter of course, imbued with socialist and communist thinking. Such a viewpoint is tantamount to advocating the abolition of the socialist revolution in the political and ideological spheres, and is therefore extremely harmful.

The abolition or slackening of the socialist revolution in the political and ideological spheres in a socialist society is precisely what the imperialists hope for. Dulles, that reactionary chieftain of U.S. imperialism, before his death, made three speeches — his speech on “Far Eastern Policy” at the California State Chamber of Commerce on December 4, 1958; his testimony at a secret session of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the House of Representatives on January 28, 1959; and his speech on “The Function of Law in the Cause of Peace” at the New York State Bar Association Award Dinner on January 31, 1959. Dulles in these speeches clearly described U.S. imperialism’s sinister designs against the socialist countries. Dulles expressed his fear of the situation in which the East wind prevails over the West wind and the situation in which the relative strength in the world was daily growing more unfavourable to imperialism. Nevertheless, he indicated not only that the United States had no intention of giving up its policy of strength in armaments expansion and war preparations, but also that, as an adjunct to the policy of strength, the United States “hopes to encourage” an “evolution within” the socialist camp and the socialist countries in an attempt to bring about a “peaceful change” of the socialist countries to capitalism and attain its wild ambition of preserving capitalism and eliminating socialism.

Comrades can see that the U.S. imperialists are now carrying out this policy bequeathed by Dulles while the modern revisionists, represented by the Tito clique of Yugoslavia, are charting their domestic and foreign policies to suit the needs of imperialism. This proves that modern revisionism is a product of imperialist policies. In order to serve imperialist policies, the modern revisionists declare that Lenin’s theses about imperialism and his principles of proletarian revolution and dictatorship of the proletariat are outmoded. We have always advocated peaceful coexistence among countries with different social systems. We firmly advocate the strengthening of the struggle of all peoples to safeguard world peace and we have consistently made the greatest

efforts in this connection. The modern revisionists, under the signboard of so-called "active coexistence," are using bourgeois pacifism and the hypocritical ideas of bourgeois "humanism" to confuse the minds of the masses, individualism to oppose collectivism and the bourgeois "human nature" theory* to oppose the Marxist-Leninist theories of class struggle, proletarian revolution and dictatorship of the proletariat. They try to use these preposterous ideas to dampen the revolutionary will of the masses of people in various countries and disintegrate the revolutionary struggles of the peoples of various countries, to obscure the distinctions between revolution and counter-revolution, between socialism and capitalism and between just wars and unjust wars, and to spread illusions about imperialism among the people in a vain attempt to get them to abandon their struggles against imperialism and all reactionary forces and thus achieve the aim of liquidating the revolution. It is quite clear that should the modern revisionists succeed in their attempts, people all over the world and the cause of the world revolution would suffer tremendous losses. All who are loyal to Marxism-Leninism and the revolutionary cause should unite closely to hold aloft the Marxist-Leninist revolutionary banner of the Moscow Declaration, and thoroughly expose and smash the schemes and tricks of the imperialists and modern revisionists. In this important and arduous struggle, the literary and art workers throughout the country can and should contribute their efforts.

We must strengthen the unity of all the countries in the socialist camp headed by the Soviet Union, and concern ourselves earnestly with the just struggles of the broad masses of people throughout the world to win national liberation, democratic freedoms, social progress and world peace. We must support the anti-imperialist, anti-colonialist struggles of the peoples in Asia, Africa and Latin America, support the revolutionary struggles of the workers, peasants and progressive intellectuals in the imperialist countries, support the struggle of all people throughout the world to safeguard peace, and strive to establish a broad united front against the imperialist camp headed by U.S. imperialism.

* According to this bourgeois theory, in class society human thought and emotions are universal and unaffected by class limitations.

Our revolutionary literature and art have always closely served politics and have always faithfully served the people's revolutionary cause. We must continue to maintain and develop this glorious tradition. In order that literature and art may still better serve China's socialist revolution and socialist construction and the struggle against imperialism and modern revisionism, workers in literature and art should raise their level of Marxism-Leninism still higher, earnestly study Marxism-Leninism and Comrade Mao Tse-tung's works, go deep among the workers, peasants and soldiers, take part in productive labour and actual struggles, constantly remould their ideology and enhance their communist consciousness and moral qualities, firmly establish a proletarian world outlook and continuously rid their ranks of bourgeois political and ideological influences.

Our policy of a hundred flowers blossoming and a hundred schools of thought contending is not only completely correct in theory, but has also been proved completely correct in practical work. This policy which was laid down by Comrade Mao Tse-tung in accordance with China's actual conditions is the best one for the development of the sciences, and literature and art in our country. After it was put forward it was opposed by the doctrinaires and distorted by the imperialists, reactionaries and modern revisionists. Some people said that the policy of a hundred flowers blossoming and a hundred schools of thought contending was bourgeois "liberalization," giving representatives of the bourgeoisie the freedom to disseminate their views widely, letting bourgeois ideas blossom freely and coexisting with bourgeois ideas. After the bourgeois rightists got their heads broken in 1957, the imperialists, reactionaries and modern revisionists then said that we had "given up" or "revised" the policy of a hundred flowers blossoming and a hundred schools of thought contending. The imperialists, reactionaries and modern revisionists have interpreted our policy this, that and the other way. That is their business. Our revolutionary literary and art workers have always had a correct understanding of the Party's policies. We have always said that there is a political criterion for the policy of a hundred flowers blossoming and a hundred schools of thought contending, that is the political criterion of socialism and communism. What is the harm of carrying out the policy of a hundred flowers blossoming and a

hundred schools of thought contending under the political criterion of socialism and communism? The only ones who oppose the policy of a hundred flowers blossoming and a hundred schools of thought contending will be those who reject multiplicity in the world and multiplicity of forms, subject matter and styles in literature and art and reject the fact that the development of science takes many different forms and is inexhaustible. Both the proletarian ideology of the majority of people and the bourgeois ideology of some people are objective realities in socialist society. It is impossible to ban bourgeois ideology by administrative decree. Only through protracted and repeated struggle will it be possible to eradicate, step by step, bourgeois political and ideological influences. When we carry out the policy of a hundred flowers blossoming and a hundred schools of thought contending within the ranks of the people, bourgeois ideology will seize the opportunity to crop up. Hence, thorough criticism and refutation of reactionary bourgeois ideology will help temper and educate the mass of intellectuals and increase their political acumen. This will be more beneficial to the ideological remoulding of bourgeois intellectuals and help plough up the poisonous weeds and turn them into fertilizer for the fragrant flowers which will in turn grow still more luxuriantly. What is there to fear? This policy helps the self-remoulding of the bourgeois intellectuals. What are the disadvantages, even to the bourgeois intellectuals? The policy of a hundred flowers blossoming and a hundred schools of thought contending is in essence the mass-line of our work in the fields of literature, art and science. Under the socialist system, it is the mass-line, not the line relying exclusively and one-sidedly on experts, that should be followed in art, literature and science. It is wrong and incorrect to do otherwise. It has already been clearly seen that the implementation of this policy has led to a multiplicity of forms, subject matter and styles in the socialist literature and art of our country, the emergence of a great number of new literary and art workers, the constant shrinking of the market for bourgeois ideology and bourgeois literature and art and the substitution of the new system of democratic management whereby the masses and experts are integrated under the leadership of the Party committee for the bourgeois system of arbitrary management by experts which impedes the smooth progress of literary and art work. We shall persist in the

policy of a hundred flowers blossoming and a hundred schools of thought contending in the future. This is an unswerving class policy of our Party. It will ensure the constant raising of the level of consciousness of all our people, and the smooth progress of literature, art and science. It will ensure that our thinking does not become rigid and sink into errors of doctrinairism and revisionism.

It is unimaginable that literary and art workers who want to portray the workers, peasants and soldiers and serve the workers, peasants and soldiers can do so without rich experience of the life of the workers, peasants and soldiers. Experience has proved that only by going into factories, villages and army companies, leading the life of ordinary labourers, taking part in physical labour and practical work, and sharing the same fate, joys and sorrows as the masses of workers, peasants and soldiers, can literary and art workers fundamentally remould their world outlook, establish a firm proletarian world outlook, and find rich and colourful raw material for literature and art, be familiar with the language of the working people and produce fine revolutionary works of literature and art. Some people with bourgeois ideas have called this correct method of training proletarian literary and art workers "wasting artistic talents." This is utterly wrong. Our literary and art workers must continue to abide by the directives of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party and Comrade Mao Tse-tung and go whole-heartedly among the workers, peasants and soldiers and into the thick of the struggle, the sole, the broadest and richest source of creative work, to extol the new things and new heroes enthusiastically and present the struggles of the revolutionary new-born things against the old things that hamper the advance of the revolution, and thereby serve the great cause of socialism and communism.

Let the literary and art workers of our country unite closely under the revolutionary banner of Marxism-Leninism and under the brilliant leadership of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party and Comrade Mao Tse-tung, to strive to further develop and elevate Chinese literature and art!

May the socialist literature and art of our country prosper and thrive with each passing day!

Long live revolutionary literature and art!

CHOU YANG

The Path of Socialist Literature and Art in Our Country

*Report Delivered to the Third Congress of Chinese
Literary and Art Workers on July 22, 1960*

The Third Congress of Chinese Literary and Art Workers has opened today.

Nearly seven years have passed since the Second Congress was held in September 1953. It is eleven years since the First Congress, held in July 1949. Although ten years or so are no more than a brief moment in the whole course of the history of mankind, yet in this brief space drastic changes have taken place in our country and in the world.

Having won great victories consecutively in the democratic revolution and the socialist revolution, our people today, under the guidance and inspiration of the Party's general line for building socialism, are scoring great successes in industrial and agricultural production as well as on all other fronts. In this vast land of ours a series of new phenomena have appeared. Socialist economic construction is leaping forward continuously and steadily at un-

Chou Yang, well-known literary critic, is a vice-chairman of the All-China Federation of Literary and Art Circles and a vice-chairman of the Chinese Writers' Union. His critical works include *New People's Literature and Art* and *A Great Debate on the Literary Front* (see *Chinese Literature* No. 3, 1958).

precedented speed, the rural and urban people's communes are like the morning sun rising in the east, while millions of people are drawn into the movements for technical revolution and cultural revolution which are carried on with tremendous fervour. An incomparably profound change has taken place in the masses' spiritual outlook. Comrade Mao Tse-tung most aptly used the phrase "so high in spirit, so strong in morale and so firm in determination" to describe the Chinese people during the big leap forward. The heroism displayed by our people in the revolutionary struggle and in productive labour, their lofty ideals and moral qualities, have won the praise of progressive mankind all over the world. Step by step China is changing its state of poverty, weakness and backwardness to take its stand in the world with a magnificent revolutionary attitude, in all the glory of youth.

The broad masses of people of every country in the socialist camp headed by the Soviet Union are successfully carrying out socialist construction, advancing at a speed unprecedented in history. The mighty strength of the socialist camp, and the political consciousness, unity and struggle of the peoples of the world constitute a powerful bulwark against imperialism and in defence of world peace. The imperialist camp headed by the United States is steadily declining further. The war policy and aggressive policy of U.S. imperialism are meeting the opposition of more and more people throughout the world. A Cuban revolutionary poet has written:

People of Cuba!
Learn this sentence of English,
To shout:
Yankees, get out!

These wrathful lines represent the voice of all peoples trampled upon by U.S. imperialism. In Asia, Africa and Latin America the movements for national liberation and democratic revolution are like a rising wind or hurrying clouds. The victory of the Cuban people's revolution, the courageous patriotic struggle of the Japanese people against U.S. imperialism, the Algerian people's war of resistance for national independence, the Congolese people rising against colonialism, the overthrow of traitorous dictators by the peoples of south Korea and Turkey — these have

stirred the hearts of all throughout the world, dispelled many people's fear of imperialism and given courage to the people of the world to struggle against imperialism. In the imperialist countries, there has been a further development of the just struggle of the broad masses against monopoly capital, against fascism, to win and safeguard democratic freedoms, and for social progress. A new high tide has appeared in the struggle embodying the broadest sections of the people against the war forces of imperialism and to safeguard world peace. The time has now come for the people of all oppressed nations of the world to completely shatter the chains of imperialism and colonialism. The day is not far away when imperialism will finally be wiped out from the face of the earth. The superior system of socialism and the beautiful ideal of communism are attracting more and more people in the world.

Literature and art are an expression of ideology belonging to the superstructure, they are a reflection of the economic base, and they are the nerve centre of the class struggle. In the imperialist countries people have observed a scene of fearful spiritual demoralization and moral deterioration. Such a scene is also reflected in the works of literature and art in these countries. The films shown by the chief capitalist countries in the 13th International Film Festival of Cannes held in France this May were, virtually without exception, an agglomeration of sex, obscenity and crime. Even bourgeois critics could not but admit with regret that this was "the most scandalously shameless film festival of all times." This was just a projection of the corruption and decline of the capitalist world. The monopoly capitalists not only make the literature, film and art produced under their control drugs corrupting and poisoning the hearts of men, but through the writers in their employ, are creating a considerable body of sanguinary writings directly serving the war forces of imperialism, which blatantly advocates aggressive war, colonial rule and racial discrimination. In West Germany and Japan, following the revival of fascism and militarism, a considerable body of writing extolling nazi war criminals and the "soul of the Yamato race" has been let loose. Many bourgeois writers and artists in the so-called "free world" are irretrievably sunk in mental despair; some of them regard the end of capitalism as the end of the world and

are fearful and apprehensive, unable to see any hope for the future of mankind; some vacillate between capitalism and socialism; some gradually manage to break through the barrier of a bourgeois world outlook and all kinds of prejudices to turn to the side of the people, the side of socialism.

Progressive, revolutionary writers and artists are discriminated against and persecuted in all sorts of ways in the capitalist countries; yet they are stubbornly persisting in the struggle, and have produced many fine works reflecting the people's progressive aspirations. Many peace-loving writers and artists in various countries of the world have actively participated in the movement to defend world peace. In some places where a storm of national democratic revolution has arisen, revolutionary writers and artists stand in the forefront of the struggle, sharing the destiny of their people, faithfully expressing the people's longing for liberation. Let us here convey our greatest respect to all those writers and artists who are whole-heartedly fighting for peace and democracy, for national independence and human progress.

Our socialist literature and art are utterly incompatible with that literature and art which serve imperialism and the reactionaries. In contrast to the moribund, decadent literature and art of capitalism, our literature and art are revolutionary and full of vitality, a literature and art which inspire the labouring people to rise up to transform the world, to wage a revolutionary struggle. This literature and art describe the wide world of the people, depict the great struggles of the labouring masses, reflect the rise and prosperity of the new socialist world, the birth and development of the new men and women of communism.

The modern revisionists represented by Tito's clique in Yugoslavia distort the correct principle of peaceful coexistence between countries with different social systems and advocate loudly so-called "active coexistence"; they deny the antagonism between the socialist camp and the imperialist camp and advocate the interweaving and merging of the socialist and bourgeois ideological systems. By various ways and means they attempt to disrupt the socialist camp ideologically and politically and eliminate the just struggle of the peoples of the world against imperialism. To this end, the revisionists, co-ordinating with the propaganda machine of the imperialists, are everywhere boosting their rotten

capitalist culture and way of life, and are doing their best to encourage all kinds of ideological trends hostile to Marxism, socialism and the people among the intellectuals, writers and artists of socialist countries. On the front of literature and art, the struggle between the socialist and the imperialist countries, between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, between the forces of progress and those of reaction is extremely sharp.

Revolutionary literature and art are subservient to revolutionary politics, while reactionary literature and art are subservient to reactionary politics. And if ever a revolutionary writer or artist leave the people's revolutionary cause, no matter under what flag, he loses his bearings, gets on to the wrong track, and becomes degenerate or even reactionary.

Our people's present political task is to build up our country at the quickest possible rate warranted by objective conditions, into a strong socialist state with a modern industry, modern agriculture, modern science and culture, and to prepare the prerequisites for the advance to communism in the future. At the same time, together with the peoples of all the socialist countries, together with all revolutionary and peace-loving peoples of the world, we must exert our utmost efforts to oppose imperialism and win lasting world peace. On the ideological front, we must raise still higher the revolutionary banner of Marxism-Leninism, to oppose the reactionary trends of modern revisionism; we must, by means of a protracted, unremitting struggle, root out for good the political and ideological influences of the bourgeoisie among the masses, and greatly elevate our people's communist consciousness and moral qualities. Our literature and art should become sharp weapons to teach the people with the spirit of socialism and communism, with the spirit of proletarian internationalism.

Revolutionary writers and artists should stand in the front line of the people's revolutionary struggle, in the forefront of the age.

Since the First and Second Congress, especially since the big leap forward, extremely great successes have been won in our literary and art work, and extremely rich experience has been gained. Under the leadership of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party and Comrade Mao Tse-tung, we have found the correct path for developing socialist literature and art.

At this Congress, we should make a good summing up of our experience and elucidate how literature and art in our country have developed; we should expound what is the correct direction and path of advance which our literature and art should take, and which benefits the cause of socialism and communism, as well as the development of socialist literature and art themselves; we should explain how sharp struggles have been waged in the field of literature and art in our country between the proletarian line and the bourgeois line, between the communist world outlook and the bourgeois world outlook. These are the main questions which are to be thoroughly discussed at this Congress.

Serve the Workers, Peasants and Soldiers,
Serve the Cause of Socialism

Our literature and art are for the purpose of serving the workers, peasants and soldiers, serving the cause of socialism. Since 1942 when Comrade Mao Tse-tung's celebrated *Talks at the Yenan Forum on Art and Literature* was published, the firm and unswerving line that literature and art must serve the workers, peasants and soldiers has been supported, followed and fought for by our revolutionary literary and art workers. The attainments achieved in our literature and art are the victory of the line on literature and art laid down by Comrade Mao Tse-tung, the victory of Marxist-Leninist principles in literature and art.

In our country, the labouring masses of workers and peasants have become the masters of the country; they have overthrown the oppressors and exploiters and done away with the system of private ownership of the means of production; while members of the parasitic class which lived formerly by exploitation are now being remoulded into labourers who work for their living. The former individual peasants and individual handicraftsmen, by taking the path of co-operation and people's communes, have become collective peasants and collective craftsmen. Whom should literature and art serve if not the labouring masses of workers and peasants, and their intellectuals? Should we serve the landlord class and bourgeoisie instead? I would like to ask who else

is more worthy to be depicted today if not the labouring people? The line that literature and art serve the workers, peasants and soldiers has opened up a new world for literature and art, providing writers and artists with new themes, new subjects to describe and new audiences to serve. This is the direction which all mankind's literature and art must take, and this is a great revolution in literature and art.

Today serving the workers, peasants and soldiers means serving the cause of socialist construction in which millions of people are so enthusiastically engaged, serving the general line of the Party, serving the great communism of tomorrow. It means serving the noble cause of opposing imperialism and securing lasting world peace. It means portraying the great deeds and achievements of our people in the revolution and in construction, portraying their spirit of arduous struggle and lofty communist qualities. It means co-ordinating with the masses' technical revolution and cultural revolution, thoroughly smashing the monopoly of literature and art by a few, and seeing to it that literature and art are accepted and made use of by the broadest masses of workers and peasants.

The proletarian line in literature and art, that literature and art should serve the workers, peasants and soldiers, is sharply opposed to the bourgeois line. This is why it is looked upon with hostility and hated by all reactionaries and revisionists within and without the country. Hu Feng called this line "a dagger"; the Yugoslav revisionists revile it as a "persecution" of writers. This is not in the least surprising. For they hate the working class, they hate the revolution. And in the eyes of bourgeois men of letters, literature and art are the monopoly of a small number of the "upper-class," and are their private property; from their point of view literature and art should praise none but the bourgeoisie and bourgeois intellectuals, should beautify the corrupt way of life of the bourgeoisie and propagate bourgeois individualist ideas and low tastes. How can they, the "literary aristocrats," be willing to portray or serve the masses of workers and peasants? Hence, to develop socialist literature and art we cannot but wage unremitting struggles against bourgeois ideas. These struggles started with the criticism of the film *The Life of Wu Hsun* in 1951, proceeded to the criticism of the

Studies on the "Dream of the Red Chamber" and the criticism of Hu Shih and Hu Feng's ideas and the exposure of Hu Feng's counter-revolutionary clique, down to the struggle against Ting Ling and Chen Chi-hsia's anti-Party clique and other rightists in 1957, and then following them, the criticism of revisionist trends in literature and art. This series of struggles on the front of literature and art is a reflection in the realm of ideology of the class struggle in our country during the period of the socialist revolution and socialist construction. If we take the criticism of *The Life of Wu Hsun* as the first shot fired at bourgeois ideas in literature and art since the founding of our People's Republic then the struggle against the rightists in this field was a decisive battle on this front between two lines, two kinds of world outlooks.

The bourgeois rightists and revisionists are for ever trying to change our literature and art in accordance with their world outlook and aesthetic theory, and they are for ever trying to drag our literature and art on to the capitalist road. In order to clear the path for the advance of socialist literature and art a protracted and repeated struggle against bourgeois thought is inevitable. This is the law of development of socialist literature and art. As a result of these struggles, our literature and art have not "withered," as some reactionary men of letters insist, but have grown stronger and healthier. Now, we can all see, the literature and art of our country are advancing by leaps and bounds along the socialist track.

In our country literature and art are no longer monopolized by a few, but have become the common undertaking of the broad masses of people of every nationality in our land. Revolutionary literature, drama, films and other forms of art have taken a deep hold on our people's hearts. Many new works of literature run into editions of hundreds of thousands or more than a million copies. Film audiences in 1959 reached a total of 4,100,000,000. The new repertoire of traditional operas, modern dramas, new operas, music, dancing, *chuyi** and acrobatics are attracting increasingly broad audiences. Works of fine art are enjoyed by the broad

* Traditional light performances including different kinds of ballad-singing, story-telling and comic dialogues.

masses of people; every year tens of millions of picture books are printed. The labouring masses have realized that literature and art are indeed serving them, truthfully reflecting their thoughts, feelings and wishes, and are "textbooks of life" which encourage them in their work and struggles, and raise their moral character. Workers and peasants are taking a keen part themselves in the creation of literature and art; spare-time art activities and the movement for spare-time writing in factories, villages and the armed forces are unfolding on a scale never seen before. The talented creations of many unknown worker and peasant authors are shining gloriously side by side with the best works of professional writers and artists. Never before have literature and art occupied such an important position in the people's life as today, never before have they played such an important role or received such serious attention from the people. The relationship between literature and art and the labouring people has changed and the nature of literature and art themselves has also changed. By degrees our literature and art are becoming the labouring people's own literature and art.

The most outstanding features of our literature and art are their strong and vivid revolutionary character and militancy. Literary and art workers, in their role as drummers of the age, are using every form of literature and art to give sharp and prompt reflection to our people's struggle against imperialism, and in defence of our motherland and world peace, and the new people and new things which are constantly appearing on all construction fronts of our motherland, enthusiastically depicting the growth of the new in the midst of struggles, showing the positive role of literature and art in close co-ordination with politics. A considerable amount of good writing gives a comprehensive picture and artistic generalization of our people's revolutionary history and actual struggles. Every stage in the history of the people's stirring revolutionary struggle of our country from the time of the Opium War to that of socialist revolution is presented in such novels and stories as *Keep the Red Flag Flying*, *The Song of Youth*, *Three Families Lane*, *Sacred Fountain Cavern*, *Sow-Thistle*, *Railway Guerrillas*, *Red Sun*, *Tracks in the Snowy Forest*, *Sanliwan Village*, *Great Changes in the Mountain Village*, *The Builders*, *Beacon on the Steppes*, *Dawn on the River*, and *The*

Joy of Battle; in such long narrative poems as *The Story of Yang Kao*, *The Carter* and *Tumultuous Years*; in such plays as *The Long March*, *The Red Storm*, *Long Live Our Heroes! Prelude to the Eastern March* and *Locust Tree Village*; in such films as *The Battle of Sangkumryung*, *Commissioner Lin*, *The Storm*, *Nieh Erb*, *The Song of Youth*, *Tung Tsun-ju* and *Youth in the Flames of War*. Pictures of the stirring life on every battlefield in industrial and agricultural construction and the big leap forward are given in such novels and stories as *Steeled and Tempered*, *In Time of Peace*, *Riding on the Wind*, *Dawn in Wind and Rain*, *A Stormy Night* and *My First Superior*; in such plays as *Taming the Dragon and the Tiger*, *A Happy Reunion* and *In Praise of Communism*; and in the films *New Story of a Veteran Soldier*, *Spanning the Yellow River*, *Spring Warmth Among the People*, *Everywhere Is Spring* and *Five Golden Flowers*.

The advanced figures among the masses of workers and peasants have become the major heroes and heroines in our literature and art. Heroic images of workers, peasants, soldiers, revolutionary cadres and revolutionary intellectuals have been created in many good novels, stories, films, plays, paintings and other art forms. Writers and artists have embodied their own ideals in the creation of these heroic figures, presenting a new world, new people and new ideas in their works of art. In the works of recent years one can perceive the obvious trend that writers are giving a more vivid, more profound portrayal of the world-transforming revolutionary enthusiasm of the masses and their magnificent spirit, while their characterization is fuller and much finer than before. In *Keep the Red Flag Flying* we see the heroic history of the older generation of revolutionary peasants in attacking the forces of reaction during the long years of dark rule. Chu Chung personifies in full the age-old class hatred of generations of peasants against the landlords, and the demand for revolution of the peasants aroused and inspired by the Party. *Sow-Thistle* written against the background of all the complex and cruel struggles in the bases behind enemy lines during the War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression, depicts a kindly, brave revolutionary mother. Li Yu-kuo, the Red Army instructor in *The Long March*, devotes his whole life to the Party and the revolution and on the point of death cries confidently:

"Let the revolution gallop forward!" His profile makes an impression on our minds not easily forgotten. *Red Sun* depicts a high-ranking officer, Shen Chen-hsin, who shoulders the heavy responsibility of commanding a decisive battle, but issues his directions with confidence, assured of victory. The soldier Yang Tzu-jung in *Tracks in the Snowy Forest* epitomizes the intelligence and the daring spirit of revolutionary scouts. *The Builders* gives a trenchant description of the fierce class struggle in the villages in the course of co-operation and the different characteristics of villagers of different classes and strata; Liang Sheng-pao gives a true picture of a young revolutionary peasant determined to take the socialist road. Chin Teh-kuei in *Steeled and Tempered*, Teng Hsiu-mei in *Great Changes in the Mountain Village* and the heroines in *New Friends* and *The Story of Li Shuang-shuang* are all lively and vivid pictures of young workers and peasants.

The creation of these characters has answered the question: Who are the heroes of our time? It shows that the working class and labouring people have been given the position due to them in our works of literature and art.

The masses of labouring people are always the creators of human civilization and society's wealth, but owing to the fact that for centuries they were oppressed and exploited politically and economically they were often either ignored or distorted in the literature and art of the past. After the working class entered the arena of history, it demanded that literature and art portray the labouring people correctly, that they become a fighting weapon of the working class.

Back in the forties of the last century, Engels was loud in his praise of the descriptions of "the poor and the despised class" which he found in the works of Dickens, George Sand and Eugene Sue, considering this phenomenon as "a thoroughgoing revolution" in the field of novel writing in Europe. (*The Movement on the Continent*.) Later, in the eighties, he formally laid down before revolutionary writers the task of describing the revolutionary struggle of the working class. Descriptions of this revolutionary struggle should, he said, "lay claim to a place in the domain of realism." (*Letter to Margaret Harkness*.) By the time of Lenin, the centre of the proletarian revolutionary storm had shifted to Russia, and Lenin in his famous *Party Organization and*

Party Literature further put forward the Party's slogan for literature, pointing out: "Literature must become *part* of the common cause of the proletariat," socialist literature should "serve the millions and tens of millions of working people." Lenin, indeed, was the first to formulate the fighting programme of proletarian literature and art.

The new revolutionary literature and art of our country came into being under the impact of the great October Revolution, and are a part of the socialist literature and art of the world proletariat. The Chinese Communist Party, soon after its birth, to meet the needs of the revolutionary struggle, put forward the idea of the creation of a revolutionary literature and art. To open up the road for proletarian literature and art, Lu Hsun, Chu Chiu-pai and many other revolutionary writers and artists blazed a new trail and even shed their blood or laid down their lives. Comrade Mao Tse-tung, on the basis of actual practice in the Chinese revolution, has creatively developed the principles of Party literature formulated by Lenin by indicating clearly that literature and art should serve the workers, peasants and soldiers. As a result, our literature and art have undergone a fundamental, historic change.

Comrade Mao Tse-tung's great contribution to Marxist theory of literature and art lies not only in the fact that he posed most clearly and penetratingly the question of whom literature and art should serve, but also in giving a fundamental solution to the question of how this should be done. Comrade Mao Tse-tung has explored from every aspect the way in which literature and art should serve the labouring people, has formulated the dialectical relationship between popularization and elevation in literature and art, and has laid the main emphasis in all problems on the fundamental question of how literary and art workers should link themselves with the worker and peasant masses and by so doing remould their own world outlook. Only by integrating themselves with the masses of workers and peasants can literary and art workers find the richest source for creation, only so can they become familiar with the new life and the new people, only so can they produce works which will faithfully portray workers and peasants, be loved by the masses and be of benefit to the people. The new age has set new tasks for our literature and art; the writers

and artists of this new age in their life and creation cannot but follow a new way fundamentally different from that of writers and artists in the past — the way of integrating themselves with the masses of workers and peasants. This is the only way for intellectual writers and artists not of proletarian origin to transform their former world outlook, establish a communist world outlook and become truly the spokesmen of the working class. Even the writers and artists from worker or peasant families or those of the younger generation brought up in the new society also need to remould themselves continuously and to maintain close and long-term contact with the workers and peasants. For as soon as they cut themselves off from the masses, from revolutionary struggle and productive labour, they will be unable to stand up to the attack of bourgeois ideas and will take the wrong road by mistake — some may even sink into the quagmire of opposition to socialism. Liu Shao-tang is a case in point. So the very key to the line that literature and art must serve workers, peasants and soldiers lies in the literary and art workers identifying themselves with the workers and peasants.

Since the rectification campaign and struggle against the rightists in 1957, a great many literary and art workers have gone to farms or factories to take part in labour or work at the grass-roots level; and this has played a decisive part in enabling them to merge more completely with the labouring people, in bringing about a change in their world outlook, way of life and views on literature and art. When they themselves take actual part in labour, literary and art workers can really grasp the profound significance of the phrase "Labour is glorious." They have not gone in a special capacity as writers and artists to "experience life," but as ordinary labourers to live and work with the people and join in their labour. This closer contact with the labouring people has familiarized them with those they want to serve and depict, and they have come to speak a common language and share the feelings of the labouring people. Furthermore, influenced by the lofty qualities of the labouring people, their revolutionary consciousness is greatly enhanced. They begin to see the inner world of the labouring people and to find the way to portray them; they understand what the people need, and what works they should create for them. If a writer does not have warm love for

the masses of workers and peasants, is not familiar with the life, feelings and language of the people, how can he write moving works which faithfully reflect the masses of workers and peasants? In the last few years numerous good works can be said to have been produced by writers and artists who have a rich experience of struggle and are familiar with the life of the masses. Following the remoulding of their world outlook and the raising of their political consciousness, many veteran writers and artists have joined the Chinese Communist Party. At the same time, a large new literary and art force has emerged from among the workers, peasants and cadres. A strong force of revolutionary literature and art with writers and artists of the working class as its backbone has grown up.

"Those who teach others must themselves be educated." Since writers and artists ought, through their practice in the creative activity, to teach the people with the spirit of communism they must first learn from the masses of people through their practice in life, learn the people's fine qualities, their labour enthusiasm and their fighting spirit and turn the abstract communism learned in books into a living communism with flesh and blood. The process of integrating themselves with the workers and peasants and taking part in labour is the process of familiarizing themselves with the workers and peasants and, more important, that of transforming their own world outlook. For only through taking part in the revolutionary struggle and the production struggle can writers and artists make the communist world outlook their own soul. At the same time only by taking part in productive labour can our literary and art workers, especially the younger ones among them, gradually overcome the one-sidedness and narrowness caused by the division between mental and physical labour, can they make themselves new people of the communist type with an all-round development. The view that participation in physical labour is a waste of artistic talent is wrong. It merely shows that those who harbour such a view look down upon labour. As a matter of fact, it is in the ranks of the labouring people that countless talents are to be found; and taking part in labour is the necessary way to steel and cultivate the various kinds of talents of the working class.

That literature and art must serve the workers, peasants and soldiers is the most thoroughgoing, most resolute proletarian line in literature and art. It requires literature and art to serve and describe the broadest masses of workers and peasants, and what is more basic, it requires of literary and art workers that they identify themselves with the workers and peasants, thoroughly transforming their world outlook.

Following the changes in the base, the superstructure must change also. But changes in ideology in the superstructure are much slower than changes in the base. This is why, after a socialist society has been established, the political and ideological influence of the bourgeoisie remains for a long time; while even in communist society there will still be struggles between advanced and backward, between right and wrong. This determines that ideological struggle and ideological remoulding are long-term tasks. During the last decade, bourgeois ideas have been under constant criticism in our country, and revisionism has not been able to occupy a dominant position in literary and art circles in our country; but this does not mean that they do not exist — they take their cue from the climate. When there is the least commotion inside or outside the country, they would start making trouble, rising like scum floating on the water to spread once again its poison. The international revisionist trend is bound to have a certain influence in our country. Hence to persist in the line that literature and art must serve the workers, peasants and soldiers, and serve the cause of socialism, we must persist in struggling against revisionism and various kinds of other bourgeois ideas hostile to this line.

Let a Hundred Flowers Blossom,
Let a Hundred Schools of Thought Contend

Literature and art must serve the broad masses of labouring people and the great cause of socialism and communism. This is the sole political line for the literature and art of our country, apart from which there should be no other line. Regarding the style, form, structure and themes in art, however, we are for

greater variety and encourage originality, while opposing monotony, rigidity and narrowness. Our principle is the integration of uniformity in the political line and variety in artistic styles. On the basis of his scientific analysis of the contradictions within the ranks of the people in the socialist society, Comrade Mao Tse-tung put forward the policy of letting a hundred flowers blossom and a hundred schools of thought contend. To carry out the policy of letting a hundred flowers blossom, a hundred schools of thought contend and developing the new from the old, under the line of serving the workers, peasants and soldiers and the cause of socialism — this is the path of development for our socialist literature and art. Practice has proved that this is the most correct, the broadest and the most creative road for the development of our socialist literature and art. This road leads all the talents and creativeness of writers and artists of different schools and styles to one great common goal, linking their individual wisdom with the collective wisdom of the masses.

Let a hundred flowers blossom and develop the new from the old — this is the slogan put forward by Comrade Mao Tse-tung soon after the establishment of our People's Republic for the renovation and development of our traditional dramatic art. This slogan brought about an unprecedented flourishing of our traditional drama. In 1956, Comrade Mao Tse-tung put forward side by side letting a hundred flowers blossom and letting a hundred schools of thought contend as the line for the development of literature, art and science; and this policy was speedily further applied to various political and ideological fronts. Free and general voicing of opinions by the masses, the use of *tatzipao** and big debates have become excellent means of self-education and self-criticism for our people, an excellent means of implementing the mass-line in the people's political life, of bringing into full play the people's initiative and creativeness; they have also become a powerful weapon for the people in their struggle against the enemy.

The policy of letting a hundred flowers blossom and a hundred schools of thought contend and developing the new from the old has promoted an all-round, multiform development in every

* Opinions and criticisms written out in bold Chinese characters on large sheets of paper and posted freely for everybody to see.

branch of literature and art, and speeded up the reform of old traditions. Much effective work has been done to take over and develop our country's heritage of literature and art. We have revived several hundred kinds of local operas which before liberation were at their last gasp or had disappeared from the stage; tens of thousands of librettos and folk ballads have come to light again; countless folk songs of different nationalities, folk narrative poems and folk tales have been recorded, edited and published; a rich variety of folk music, folk dances and folk art has been extensively fostered and enabled to develop. We have opened up one treasure-house after another of the long forgotten folk art and art of various nationalities, clearing away the dust which had covered them for years and in the light of Marxist thought cleaning out the dross to preserve what is good, so that they are transformed and take on a dazzling splendour. Many good traditional dramas, songs and dances, acrobatics, puppet plays, shadow-plays and so forth, after being edited and revised, have won praise far and wide. Traditional dramas like *Fifteen Strings of Cash*, *Drawing Lots for Life or Death*, *Mu Kuei-ying Takes Command*, *Women Generals of the Yang Family*, *The Runaway Maid*, *Story of Funu*, *Father and Son*, *Over the Wall and Away on Horseback* and *The Pursuit of the Fish Fairy*, as well as many other fine dramas which are frequently staged, are the fruits of carrying out the policy of letting a hundred flowers blossom, developing the new from the old in traditional drama. Notable innovations both in the script and the performance have been made in many of these traditional operas. With our new wisdom and technique we have further enriched the fine achievements of our forefathers. This is not merely editing our old heritage, but creating something new. We also have successful experience in using traditional dramatic forms to express modern themes and we have produced a number of operas like *The Red Seed*, *A Chicken Feather Flies Up to Heaven* and *After Winter Comes Spring*, which are welcomed by the people. On our stage, every type of traditional drama throughout the country has produced a number of talented young actors. *Chuyi* as the shock troops of literature and art, are making a useful contribution by the swiftness with which they reflect the contemporary revolutionary struggle. The artists in traditional painting, employing tradi-

tional methods of expression, depict truthfully and with natural ease the life of the new age and the natural scenery of our motherland, enabling traditional painting to gain a new lease of life. The industrial and architectural arts have won acclaim for retaining national features while presenting the style of the new age.

The policy of letting a hundred flowers blossom and developing the new from the old has not only speeded up the renovation of old traditions but has made our new literature and art more national in character. More and more, our novelists and story writers are manifesting a national style in their language, characterization and plots. Our poets, under the impact of the new folk song movement, are striving to develop modern poetry on the basis of classical poetry and folk songs; hence there is a new trend in the style of poetry too. All kinds of painting and sculpture, in the same way, are demonstrating much more vivid national characteristics. Our modern operas have not only presented new revolutionary content but become more national in form too. Successful operas such as *Hsiao Erb-bei's Marriage* and *The Red Guards of Hungbu* are good examples of this. In music, we have produced much instrumental and vocal music unmistakably Chinese in style, expressing the revolutionary enthusiasm of the people in this age of the big leap forward. *The Magic Lotus Lantern*, *The Dagger Society* and *Five Red Clouds* are new attempts at creating a national ballet. Great efforts have also been made to give our modern plays and films more national flavour.

The policy of letting a hundred flowers blossom and developing the new from the old has enabled the literature and art of our various minority nationalities to make rapid progress. These minority nationalities have produced many talented writers, poets and artists. The literary and art heritage of the minority nationalities is also very rich. The re-edited folk narrative poems like *Gada Mirin*, *Ashma* and *Chaosbutun* are gems of popular poetry. Some excellent folk songs and folk legends like *Third Sister Liu* and *Chin Niang-mei* have been successfully adapted for the stage. Many fraternal nationalities are beginning to create their own operas and modern plays.

Because we have carried out the policy of letting a hundred flowers blossom and developing the new from the old, there is now a much greater variety in the form and style of our literature

and art, and their themes cover a much wider range. Novels, short stories, sketches and reportage; full-length drama and one-act plays; symphonic music, chorus singing, songs for the masses and folk songs; oil paintings, sculpture, traditional paintings, woodcuts, posters and cartoons; feature, documentary, news-reel, science, educational and art films, and works of photographic art — the special functions and original features of all these have been brought into full play. We attach importance to works of great length and size created with infinite care and attention as well as to short, terse works with the effect of a dagger or a javelin. Our literature and art not only give serious emphasis to the portrayal of present-day struggles, creating images of contemporary heroes, but represent outstanding characters in history from a new viewpoint. *Kuan Han-ching*, *Tsai Wen-chi* and *Princess Wen Cheng* are successful plays based on ancient history. Children's literature and plays for children which have the task of educating the future generation with the spirit of communism have received special attention.

Guided by the policy of letting a hundred flowers blossom and developing the new from the old, we have taken over and renovated our excellent heritage of literature and art to make it a part of our advanced socialist culture, and at the same time we are investing our new literature and art of different forms and styles with more dazzling national characteristics. These two aspects are converging, interlacing and developing together to form a new socialist, national literature and art of infinite variety.

As early as twenty years ago Comrade Mao Tse-tung proposed that we should evolve a fresh, lively Chinese style and Chinese flavour which the common folk of China love to see and hear. Our literature and art have a tradition dating back thousands of years, have accumulated rich creative experience and have formed our own national forms and styles popular with the people throughout the ages. If revolutionary literature and art possess no national features, if they cannot create new national forms suited to the new content on the basis of our own national traditions, they will not easily take root and blossom among the broad masses of the people. The national character and mass character of literature and art are interconnected, indivisible. Since the May the Fourth Movement our literature and art have widely

absorbed the experience of foreign literature and art, adopting many foreign forms and methods of expression; and this was entirely necessary. Since the founding of our People's Republic, following the development of cultural interflow with foreign countries and thanks to the efforts of translators, we have come into contact with good literature, films and art from various countries of the world on a much greater scale, especially those of the Soviet Union and other fraternal countries, and have absorbed much of use to us; this has greatly benefited our readers, audiences and our literary and art circles. However, all art forms and techniques of foreign origin when transplanted to China must be remoulded and assimilated till they possess national features and become our own. Now our literature and art are more and more manifesting their national character and mass character. Distinctive national originality in literature and art are the concentrated expression of a people's creativeness, the sign of maturity in the literature and art of a class and age.

Letting a hundred flowers blossom has brought about an unprecedented liberation of the masses' intellectual creativeness. In the wake of the big leap forward and the cultural revolution, there arose a high tide of creative activities in literature and art among the masses. On the work-sites and in the villages, poems and paintings cover the walls, while songs echo far and wide. The new folk songs and new wall paintings are the product of the big leap forward and in turn give fresh impetus to the big leap forward. Their revolutionary romanticism and heroic, fresh style reflect the splendour of our age and the style of the masses. The movement for writing reminiscences of the revolution and recording the histories of factories and people's communes has spread far and wide with the co-operation of cadres and intellectuals with workers and peasants. Collective authorship has become one of the important forms in our literary and art creation, and an important method to carry out the mass-line in literature and art. The workers, peasants and revolutionary cadres have made history; now they are taking up pens to write down their own history. Books like *A Single Spark Can Start a Prairie Fire*, *Red Star of the North*, *Red Anyuan* and *Green Trees Spread Their Shade* are among the first precious fruits. Our literature and art are composed of these two elements, the works of professionals and those

of the masses who create in their spare time. These two component parts together make up the splendid variety and wealth of our literature and art.

Letting a hundred schools of thought contend has promoted the lively activities of free debate and mass criticism among literary and art circles and throughout the world of thought. We have launched, through debates, the struggle between two paths in literature and art, and at the same time have carried out beneficial discussions on many problems relating to literary and art creation and theory. Through these debates, the Marxist viewpoint has consolidated its position in literary and art theory and criticism. During the last two years, in the departments of literature in universities and the art colleges criticism on bourgeois theory and ideas in the teaching of literature and art has been carried out; and on the basis of this criticism, the students and the teachers have collaborated to produce works of literary and art theory and histories of literature and art. This marks the rapid growth of new Marxist forces.

We can see from all these aspects mentioned above that the application of the policy of letting a hundred flowers blossom and a hundred schools of thought contend in literature and art has already achieved considerable results, and its correctness has been proved by practice. When this policy was first put forward, however, by no means everyone had confidence in it; indeed, quite a few people have distorted or opposed it.

The imperialist and their lackeys — the bourgeois rightists and revisionists, vainly hoped that letting a hundred flowers blossom and a hundred schools of thought contend would prove a bourgeois policy of “liberalization,” one which would “tolerate” and “compromise” with all bourgeois ideas and anti-socialist poisonous weeds. Misled by their subjective estimate, they broke their heads against the wall in the latter half of 1957, after which they changed their tune and insisted that we had given up the policy of letting a hundred flowers blossom and a hundred schools of thought contend, claiming that it had simply been a strategy or trick for a certain period. The class nature of these gentlemen has completely blinded them. In what way can one make them understand correctly the Marxist policy of the proletariat?

We always hold that letting a hundred flowers blossom means blossoming within the scope of socialism. The flowers to blossom are socialist flowers. We mean, through free emulation, to develop a socialist literature and art, and to oppose literature and art which are hostile to socialism. Letting a hundred schools of thought contend means contending under the guidance of Marxism-Leninism, means propagating and developing Marxist dialectical materialism and opposing bourgeois idealism and metaphysics through free debate. So the policy of letting a hundred flowers blossom and a hundred schools of thought contend is the most correct policy for the rapid development of our literature and art and science; it is not only beneficial in correctly dealing with contradictions within the ranks of the people in the realm of ideology but in competing with and struggling against bourgeois literature and art and their pseudo-science. Just as Comrade Liu Shao-chi has said, letting a hundred flowers blossom and a hundred schools of thought contend is an extremely firm class policy of the proletariat.

The bourgeois rightists and revisionists have tried to utilize the slogan of letting a hundred flowers blossom to bring forth their poisonous weeds hostile to socialism. In their eyes, none of our flowers can be considered flowers. Like those perverts with a strange taste for what is filthy and stinking, they only appreciate the declining, decadent art of capitalism, considering it a fragrant flower. When men's world outlooks differ, their conceptions of beauty differ too. What are fragrant flowers to us are poisonous weeds to them, while what we consider as poisonous weeds they regard as fragrant flowers. They want us to cherish poisonous weeds as if they were fragrant flowers, but of course this is out of the question. Herein lies the main point of divergence and contention on this problem between us and the revisionists and bourgeois literati.

On the question of letting a hundred flowers blossom and a hundred schools of thought contend, we differ from the doctrinaires too. The doctrinaires are cut off from the masses, cut off from reality; they do not understand dialectics; they do not admit that multiplicity exists in the world. They want only the uniformity of the political line, not the variety in artistic styles; they allow

only a single flower to blossom, not a hundred flowers. This is extremely harmful.

Can there be just one kind of flower in the socialist garden? The peony has been called the king of flowers, but if we had nothing but peonies blossoming to the exclusion of all other flowers, no matter how beautiful peonies are, wouldn't people find it monotonous? Monotonous life and monotonous art alike are frowned upon by people. Since the people's life is rich and varied, the literature and art reflecting their life should be rich and varied too. In our society as the material life of the labouring people is getting daily better and their spiritual life is getting richer every day, naturally their demand for material and intellectual products will also increase daily. They ask not only for greater amounts of the products but for a greater variety and better quality. Since people's needs, interest and tastes are different, the greater the variety the better. Only art rich in variety can satisfy the masses' continuously increasing and varied intellectual needs, and can enable writers and artists with different individuality and talent to attain full development. Literature and art must serve politics, which is indeed a very broad field. The ways and forms for literature and art to serve politics are numerous and varied. We advocate works with a high revolutionary ideological content and good artistic form. We advocate literary and art works depicting present-day struggles, and we encourage and help writers and artists to do their best to get in touch and familiarize themselves with the people's new life, throwing themselves into the heat of the people's struggle. At the same time, each writer and artist can, according to his sense of political responsibility, his personal experience of life, his interest and special talent decide what theme to choose and what forms of expression to adopt. The readers and audiences of the new age like stirring works portraying the life and struggles of their contemporaries, as well as fascinating stories from history and legend performed on the stage. They like stirring marching songs, they also like fine and healthy lyrical music and dances. The new age requires more and better paintings of revolutionary history, revolutionary genre paintings and figure paintings, but shouldn't the new-style landscape paintings and flower-and-bird paintings also have a place in our galleries? The people need inspiration

and encouragement in their spiritual life, but they also need things that give pleasure and delight. Provided these do not run counter to the six political criteria specified by Comrade Mao Tse-tung in *On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People*, and most important of all do not run counter to the socialist path and the leadership of the Communist Party, works of art of all forms, themes and styles can be allowed to develop. We advocate using the methods of criticism and emulation to gradually eliminate works which are ideologically faulty or artistically inferior, in order to raise the ideological and artistic level of our works step by step. Socialist emulation in literature and art is the best way to encourage multiplicity in artistic style, develop various schools of art and expedite the raising of the quality of our works.

When we let a hundred flowers blossom, poisonous weeds may appear in the guise of fragrant flowers. Therefore letting a hundred flowers blossom and a hundred schools of thought contend necessarily involve two opposite and interrelated sides: letting a hundred flowers blossom and eradicating the poisonous weeds.

Letting a hundred flowers blossom is a problem within the ranks of the people. The contradictions within the ranks of the people between what is progressive and what is backward, between right and wrong, will always exist. To solve contradictions of this kind, we can use discussion, persuasion, comparison and emulation only, not administrative orders or coercion. In the case of academic problems or questions of art, we are against arbitrary or coercive methods, against crude criticism, but we are for elucidating rights and wrongs by full discussion, till step by step we reach the correct conclusion. In some cases a very long time may be required to differentiate between right and wrong in academic matters, good or bad in art, before a definite conclusion and appraisal can be reached. It is often difficult to judge at a glance whether a new phenomenon is a fragrant flower or a poisonous weed. Some fragrant flowers may also have some partial defects. Therefore one must have an eye for the fragrant flowers as well as for poisonous weeds. We need courage not only in pulling out the weeds but also in protecting the fragrant flowers. So to foster the growth of the new and prevent ideological stagnation and fossilization, we should pro-

mote lively, free debates, we should advocate the spirit of daring to think, speak and act, we should encourage the masses' initiative, encourage boldness for innovation and originality on the part of writers and critics in their creative and theoretical work.

The elimination of poisonous weeds is a problem between us and the enemy. The existence of poisonous weeds is an objective reality. Their growth is decided by definite historical conditions. It is not possible to prevent them from existing and appearing. The problem is what is the most effective way to eliminate the harm caused by poisonous weeds. The revisionists are against fighting poisonous weeds; they are the protectors of all kinds of poisonous weeds; the revisionist current of thought is itself the most harmful poisonous weed. They advocate the policy of liberalism and laissez-faire, "tolerance" and "compromise" on the cultural and ideological front, and their aim is to make socialist countries allow the capitalist reactionary culture to exist legally, to let it spread freely, to poison the people and youth. This of course we resolutely oppose. On the other hand, we do not approve of the method used by the doctrinaires either. They would ban poisonous weeds as soon as they appear; though the simple method of issuing administrative orders may have a temporary effect, it must cause endless trouble in future. This actually means allowing poisonous weeds to remain underground for a while, or allowing them to come out in disguise to cause damage. This is another form of laissez-faire, which will not deal a mortal blow to the enemy. Our policy is: When poisonous weeds start to come out, we let them meet the masses as antagonists, and urge the masses to discuss them freely, so as to let more and more people recognize their real form, to sharpen the people's sense of discernment and fighting ability. We have always believed in and relied on the strength of the masses. We are of the firm belief that truth must finally triumph over falsehood. Therefore we are not afraid of poisonous weeds and opposite views; we are not afraid of carrying out open discussions, not afraid that correct views may at one time meet with attacks and misunderstanding. The experience in the struggle against the rightists proved that this way of doing things was completely correct. The result was that the masses, including young students, were not pulled over to the side of

the rightists; it was through the people's debates and by relying on the masses' strength, that a thorough defeat was inflicted upon the rightists. At the same time practice proved that the discussions and criticism carried out by the masses were also an effective, although bitter, medicine which proved extremely helpful to the bourgeois intellectuals in their ideological remoulding.

Letting a hundred flowers blossom and a hundred schools of thought contend following the line that literature and art must serve the workers, peasants and soldiers and the cause of socialism, at the same time opposes revisionism as well as doctrinairism. And while this ensures uniformity in the political line of our literature and art, it also ensures a variety of different styles. It not only leads writers and artists to integrate themselves with the workers and peasants and establish a revolutionary world outlook, but also gives them full opportunity to develop their artistic originality. That is why we consider this the most correct path of development for socialist literature and art in our country.

The Integration of Revolutionary Realism and Revolutionary Romanticism

In order that literature and art may better reflect our age and more effectively serve the broad masses of labouring people, serve the great cause of socialism and communism, we advocate the artistic method of integrating revolutionary realism and revolutionary romanticism.

The putting forward of this artistic method is another important contribution to the Marxist theory of literature and art made by Comrade Mao Tse-tung. Comrade Mao Tse-tung put forward this method on the basis of the Marxist idea of combining the theory of uninterrupted revolution with the theory of revolutionary development by stages, on the basis of the laws of development of literature and art themselves, and in view of the needs of the current revolutionary struggles. He applied the principle of combining the revolutionary spirit with a realistic approach to literature and art, and dialectically unified the two artistic methods of realism

and romanticism in literature and art, the better to express our present age, the better to absorb comprehensively all the fine traditions of the heritage of literature and art, the better to develop the individuality and styles of different writers and artists; in this way, a spacious, free world has been opened up for socialist literature and art. The integration of revolutionary realism and revolutionary romanticism is applicable not only to the literary and art creation but also to the criticism of literature and art.

Let us first discuss the question of revolutionary ideals in socialist literature and art. The basic spirit of what we call revolutionary romanticism is revolutionary idealism, the expression of revolutionary idealism in artistic method.

The ideological basis of our literature and art is Marxism-Leninism. The Marxist-Leninist philosophy is the most thoroughly revolutionary philosophy; it combines cool-headed scientific analysis with a fervent revolutionary spirit and the practice of the struggle of the masses. The Marxist is at the same time the most sober revolutionary realist and the revolutionary idealist who has the richest ideals. The fundamental difference between us Marxists and the mechanical materialists is that we, on the basis of a correct knowledge of objective reality, pay full attention to subjective activity, pay attention to progressive ideas and scientific foresight, to the great significance of revolutionary vision. A proletarian revolutionary fighter will brave all dangers with resolute fortitude because he is inspired by noble ideals. To us there is no limit to the revolutionary task of transforming the world; today's ideal is tomorrow's reality, while tomorrow new and loftier ideals will inspire us to continue our advance. We struggle and labour in order to keep on transforming advanced ideals into reality.

Our teachers in the proletarian revolution have always relied on scientific foresight and revolutionary ideals to see clearly the course of historical progress. As we all know, Lenin in his book *What Is To Be Done?* urged "We should dream!" In his *Preface to the Russian Translation of the Letters of K. Marx to L. Kugelmann* written in 1907, he sharply condemned those opportunistic gentlemen in Russia at that time who as soon as they were confronted by a temporary decline in the revolution hastened to discard "revolutionary illusions" and turn

to "realistic" tinkering, those "... 'realist' wiseacres ... who are deriding revolutionary romanticism." Comrade Mao Tse-tung, during the years when the Chinese revolution suffered serious setbacks and was temporarily at a low ebb, foresaw that "a single spark can start a prairie fire." In poetic language he prophesied the coming of a greater, more magnificent high tide in revolution like "the morning sun, rising with radiant beams in the east." It is this kind of far-reaching revolutionary vision that has played an inestimable part in the development of human history.

Every class in every age has its own ideal, and has, according to its social ideal and moral standard, created a series of heroic characters in its literature and art. From the whole history of literature it is apparent that all the different nations of the world have poetry in praise of their heroes which has been handed down for centuries. Our past works of literature have created many typical heroes of different ages, and the uncommon character and uncommon deeds of these men are continually on the lips of the people. The Western bourgeois literature during the rise of capitalism also depicted some positive characters embodying bourgeois revolutionary ideas. But after the middle of the nineteenth century, the ideals advocated by the bourgeoisie had been completely destroyed and bourgeois writers could no longer produce outstanding characters of their own class. The works by modern reactionary bourgeois writers are full of sexual perverts, moral degenerates, schizophrenics, misanthropes, as well as rouges, swindlers, gangsters and murderers, who are "heroes" in the eyes of the bourgeoisie now heading towards its end. In the age of proletarian revolution, new heroic characters can only be the advanced elements of the proletariat and the revolutionary people. Hence the creation of new heroic characters has become the glorious task of socialist literature and art.

Our literature and art should create characters which can best embody the revolutionary ideals of the proletariat. These characters are not the products of the writers' fancy but new men and women emerging from the actual struggle. Their noblest attribute is seen in the fact that far from being daunted by difficulties and shrinking back, they never feel satisfied with the victories gained and so stop advancing. They carried through the arduous democratic revolution with their socialist ideals, and today they are

carrying out the mighty task of socialist construction inspired by a higher communist ideal. Lofty ideals and arduous struggle have brought out and steeled their noble qualities and resolute character. They are for ever advancing, for ever walking in the forefront of life. These are the new men and women of socialism and communism, the progressive force that impels the age forward.

Reactionary bourgeois writers and revisionists attack our literature and art simply because they hate the revolutionary ideals expressed in them and the new characters with such revolutionary ideals. They dislike socialist reality, and dislike even more the new men and women of socialism and communism; they cannot believe that the great ideal of scientific communism and the great reality of the revolutionary struggle are able to produce such a countless number of the noblest and finest characters of our age. Those writers with bourgeois prejudices always consider that the advanced characters among the people whom we describe are untrue to life and that only colourless "insignificant individuals" or low, negative characters are "true." They argue that every man has some faults and defects, that in the depth of every heart a secret struggle is waged between darkness and light, and this is what they mean by the "complexity of the inner mind." We are against over-simplifying the inner mind of characters. The inner life of the people of the new age is in the richest and healthiest condition. They know what attitude to take with regard to labour, friendship, love and family life. Of course they must have worries, inner conflicts and shortcomings of one kind or another, or make this or that mistake; but they constantly endeavour to use communist ideas and morality as the highest criteria for all their actions. What has the so-called "complexity of the inner mind" which the bourgeois writers want to depict in common with the rich inner life of the labouring people of this new age? The so-called "secrets of man's mind" which they want to reveal are simply an exposure of their own dark souls. Eager to depict weak-willed people and the petty affairs in which they are involved, they cannot see or are unwilling to describe the heroic characters of today and great struggles, or they foist the low, empty souls of the bourgeoisie into the new socialist or communist men. Their works are shrouded in gloom and they paint completely black the new life of a socialist society and the

fighting life of the masses. The result of this can only make people feel disappointed with socialist reality, and bring about demoralization and a spiritual collapse among the people of the socialist countries. This accords with the wishes of the imperialists, as is very clear when we look at the arguments of the imperialist critics of literature and art. They either exult over the fact that in our socialist countries someone has brought "superfluous people" into socialist literature, or they urge writers of socialist countries to seek out "the tragic illusions of the world." The imperialists and revisionists are certainly leaving no stone unturned in their attempt to infuse into socialist literature and art their rotten bourgeois ideas and sense of despair. Should their attempts succeed, socialist literature and art would decline into another variety of reactionary, decadent bourgeois literature and art, ceasing to be revolutionary literature and art.

Every writer should have his own ideals. Of course, there are various kinds of ideals: there are lofty ideals and petty ideals, correct ideals and wrong ideals, revolutionary ideals and reactionary ideals. Only ideals that conform to the development of objective reality and accord with the interests of the majority of the people are correct ideals. Today, the highest revolutionary ideal of mankind is the realization of communism. The imperialists and all kinds of reactionaries have their "ideal" also, and that is the preservation and expansion of capitalism and the counter-acting and elimination of socialism. Our writers and artists should observe and depict life from the pinnacle of the highest ideal of this age — communism, foster the people's communist moral qualities, and eliminate the remnants of various kinds of old ideas and habits left by the past ages. When compared with the great aim of liberating mankind, all individual desires are petty and not worth mentioning. The ideal of communism should be the soul of our literature and art.

When we lay such emphasis on the revolutionary ideal in literature and art, is it injurious to truthfulness in literature and art?

Our understanding of the question of "truthfulness" and "realism" is completely different from that of the revisionists. The revisionists make frequent and dishonest use of the terms "depicting truth" and "realism" to oppose tendentiousness in socialist literature and art. They deliberately set truthfulness in opposi-

tion to tendentiousness, claiming that tendentiousness hampers truthfulness; actually what they oppose is only revolutionary tendentiousness in literature and art, and their aim is to replace it with the reactionary tendentiousness of the bourgeoisie. They want to sweep away progressive ideals in life. Their so-called realism is a "realism" divested of advanced ideals, which is actually not realism but vulgar naturalism or decadence. Their so-called "truthfulness" is in fact a distortion of reality. We hold that literature and art must be truthful, we oppose false literature and art. We are not among those, however, who believe in "truthfulness for its own sake." In a class society, the writers and artists would always observe and depict reality with a certain class tendentiousness, but the most profound recognition and reflection of the truth of the age are possible only from the standpoint of the progressive class and the people. When a people's writer chooses and describes a certain subject, he must first consider whether it is beneficial to the people. To us truthfulness and revolutionary tendentiousness complement each other.

Speaking of realism, we must quote Engels' famous definition: "Realism implies, besides truth of detail, the truthful reproduction of typical characters under typical circumstances." (*Letter to Margaret Harkness*.) Engels wrote these words to a woman writer. In his letter he criticized her for presenting London workers as too passive, considering that her working-class characters were not sufficiently typical of the London working class which had struggled for decades. What conclusion can we draw from this definition? First, realism must not simply pay attention to truthfulness of detail but truthfulness of detail must obey the principle of typicalness. Secondly, Engels asked the writer to present "typical characters under typical circumstances," which to revolutionary writers means that they are asked to depict new characters and new ideas able to represent the progressive forces of the age, and to depict the heroic struggles of the proletariat and the masses. At a very early period Engels had sharply criticized those works by so-called "true socialists" in Germany for always "praising all sorts of 'petty characters', but not giving praise to strong, heroic, revolutionary proletarians." (*German Socialism in Poetry and Prose*.) However, this classical Marxist writer's magnificent theory of realism has long been most viciously

distorted by revisionists like Hu Feng and Lukacs. Engels raised the problem of realism from the standpoint of a communist world outlook and the interests of the proletariat; he called upon writers to look ahead, to create images of the progressive characters of the age. The revisionists, however, have from Engels' letter reached the fallacious conclusion that in literature and art the world outlook is not important, even claiming that the more reactionary the world outlook the better. They call upon revolutionary writers to look backwards, to model their world outlook on that of Balzac. The time has now come to make a clean sweep of such fallacious arguments.

More than twenty years ago the Communist Party of Soviet Union and Soviet literary and art circles headed by Gorky, on the basis of the experience of the development of Soviet literature, raised the slogan of socialist realism, which has been approved by revolutionary writers throughout the world. In recent years the revisionists have made desperate attacks on socialist realism; their purpose has been to slander the great achievements of socialist literature and attack the socialist system, in an attempt to drag socialist writers to the bourgeois path. They use "depicting truth" as a pretext to oppose the noble task of literature and art which is to educate the people with the spirit of socialism. Chin Chao-yang was an example of this in our country, while other writers whose revolutionary fervour had declined or who faltered in their revolutionary resolve have also been influenced by this revisionist trend. They specialize in looking for the dark corners and garbage of history in present-day socialist life, unable to see the radiant picture of socialist life as a whole and the more radiant future of communism. We hold that literature and art should depict the reality in revolutionary development and the aspirations for a future which is even better, integrating revolutionary realism and revolutionary romanticism. This is a forceful answer to the attacks of the revisionists.

Our age abounds in heroic deeds and achievements of every kind. Never before have the masses of our people displayed so fully their firm revolutionary will and high creative spirit or shown such tremendous revolutionary heroism and revolutionary optimism on all the fronts of national construction and national defence. How then are our literature and art to give a truthful

reflection of this spiritual outlook of the masses, in other words, how to reflect the countenance of our age? Can we reflect it with a melancholy tone, pallid language and a petty, naturalistic method? That is absolutely impossible. We must use heroic language, a powerful tone and vivid colours to praise and describe our age. The revolutionary romanticism in literature and art is the crystallization of the revolutionary romanticist spirit in our people's life. Adopting the artistic method which integrates revolutionary realism and revolutionary romanticism can help our writers and artists to express this heroic age and its heroes most truthfully and most profoundly.

Of course, life is full of contradictions. What is new in life always comes into being and grows up in a conflict with the old. The chief characteristic of our advanced people of today is that they dare to combat all negative phenomena which run counter to the people's interests, they can overcome all manner of difficulties and obstacles and open up a path for the new life. We face squarely the contradictions within the ranks of the people in the socialist society; this keeps us from falling into the error of the non-conflict theory from the very start. Our literature and art must not avoid defects and difficulties, ignore passive phenomena and negative characters, or water down the contradictions and struggles in life; such cheap optimism can only over-simplify life, presenting real advanced people as lifeless men of straw. Works of this sort can neither arouse admiration for what is fine nor indignation against what is evil; they cannot induce men to think about life's problems, and once read they are immediately forgotten. We should praise the new people and new ideas with all our hearts; we should also scourge the old things and old ideas pitilessly. We should give penetrating expression to the sharp struggle between the new and the old; for it is in such struggles that resolute, lofty, heroic characters are formed and manifested.

Comrade Mao Tse-tung in his *Talks at the Yen-an Forum on Art and Literature* said: "An artistic or literary work is ideologically the product of the human brain reflecting the life of a given society. Revolutionary art and literature are the products of the brains of revolutionary artists and writers reflecting the life of the people." This explains that truth in art springs from truth in

life, beauty in art springs from beauty in life. One who does not accept this is neither a Marxist nor a materialist, but a bourgeois idealist. However, merely accepting this does not make one a complete Marxist or complete materialist. Speaking of life and art, Comrade Mao Tse-tung further said: "Although both are beautiful, life as reflected in artistic and literary works can and ought to be on a higher level and of a greater power and better focussed, more typical, nearer the ideal, and therefore more universal than actual everyday life." He also pointed out: "Revolutionary art and literature should create all kinds of characters on the basis of actual life and help the masses to push history forward." Here Comrade Mao Tse-tung has given a most penetrating explanation of the characteristics of literature and art. Life in reality is the fount of literature and art, but literature and art should again be on a higher level than reality; through images they reflect life and create characters; their aim is not passively to reflect reality for its own sake, but actively to reflect and impel reality forward and transform it. This only is the complete Marxist view.

From the outset, human art had both realistic and idealist elements. Later, realism and romanticism developed into two different schools. The realists pay more attention to observation, and are good at presenting accurate pictures of the objective world; the romanticists pay more attention to imagination, and are good at expressing fervent visions of an ideal world. From different angles they both reflect reality and enrich the history of literature and art.

However, in the past there existed a one-sided view about realism and romanticism. When they spoke of traditions of literature and art, many people often merely emphasized realism, as if all realism is good and all romanticism is bad, forgetting this fine romanticist tradition which has grown rich through continuous accumulation in the mighty current of the whole history of literature and art. They consider romanticism as something incompatible with realism. Actually, in the history of literature there has been progressive realism imbued with ideals but also vulgar, short-sighted realism; there has been passive, reactionary romanticism but also positive, progressive romanticism. The difference is determined mainly by the attitude of the writer or artist towards

the people, towards reality. Since many of the outstanding writers and artists in history lived in different ages and had different individual characters and styles, some had a greater share of the realist spirit while in others the romantic spirit predominated; some excelled in meticulous realistic descriptions, others excelled in unbridled passion and bold imagination; yet usually their works show different degrees of integration of these two spirits, realism and romanticism, these two artistic methods. When they exposed various iniquities in society, they always embodied their social ideals, strong feelings of love and hate, clear sense of approval and censure, in the characters they described and in their relationships; at the same time, their great passion and lofty ideals were always stirred up by injustice in reality and had their roots in real life. The *Li Sao* of Chu Yuan shows the poet's concern for his country, his love for the people, his strong hatred for evil and his sublime, magnificent vision, which combined to make it an immortal work. Kuan Han-ching's *Snow in Midsummer* and some other fine Yuan dynasty dramas truthfully depict the cruel reality and warmly express the strong indignation and hatred of those who are wrongly accused and persecuted and the justice which prevails in the end. *Water Margin* presents one hundred and eight heroes of the peasant revolution, each with his individual character; and through the fight put up by these men, who shared glory and dishonour, lived and died together, the author expressed his ideal of "the world as one community, and the brotherhood of man." Dante's *Divine Comedy*, many of Shakespeare's plays, Goethe's *Faust*, all show a wonderful combination of fantasy and truth; while Gorky's *The Stormy Petrel* and *Song of the Falcon* are clarion calls to arouse men to revolutionary struggle; and Lu Hsun's works from *Call to Arms* to *Old Tales Retold* show his sober attitude towards reality and critical spirit as well as the fervent aspirations of a revolutionary idealist.

The integration of revolutionary realism and revolutionary romanticism which we advocate today critically inherits and synthesizes the fine traditions of realism and romanticism in past literature and art, and under new historical conditions, on the basis of the Marxist world outlook, it combines the two in the best manner, forming a completely new artistic method. We are living in the age of the victory of socialism and communism, when men are

leaping from the "realm of necessity" to the "realm of freedom." Our people, now liberated, have begun to be the masters of their own fate; they have far-reaching ideals; they also have rich experience of struggles in revolution and production; their ability to recognize and transform reality is infinite. Thus the most fertile ground in reality is provided for the integration of revolutionary realism and revolutionary romanticism.

Refuting the Bourgeois Theory of Human Nature

Above I have explained our line, path and method in literature and art; there is sharp divergence between us and the revisionists on all these problems. It is, in the final analysis, the divergence between two fundamentally different political lines, two different world outlooks.

Literature and art form one part of the whole political and ideological front, and revisionist ideas in literature and art are not isolated phenomena but the expression in literature and art of revisionist views on politics and philosophy. At present the revisionists are desperately advocating the bourgeois theory of human nature, the false humanism of the bourgeoisie, "the love of mankind," bourgeois pacifism and other fallacious notions of the sort, to reconcile class antagonisms, negate the class struggle and revolution, and spread illusions about imperialism, to attain their ulterior aim of preserving the old capitalist society and disrupting the new socialist society.

The "theory of human nature" is an important ideological weapon of the revisionists. They use abstract, common human nature to explain various historical and social phenomena, use human nature or "humanism" as the criterion of morality and art, and oppose literature and art serving the cause of liberation of the proletariat and the labouring people. People can see that these reactionary ideological trends have already had a most pernicious influence on the people and on the people's literature and art.

The revisionists use literature and art in particular to propagate the theory of human nature and their so-called "humanism." Thus Yugoslav revisionist writers and artists claim: "Art is human-

ism," art should express "the inherent feelings of man," describe "general human nature." Of course this theory is not new. The old revisionist theorist Lukacs claimed that the humanist ideal and principle are the "absolute criteria" in artistic criticism, and this so-called humanist ideal or principle is "common human nature." In China, Hu Feng, the earliest pedlar of these theories of Lukacs, said, "The socialist spirit is the humanist spirit," in other words "philanthropy." Feng Hsueh-feng also claimed that men's basic demand is "the friendship of humanity as a whole." When the rightists were attacking us violently, Pa Jen once more brought out these old weapons to attack socialist literature and art, asserting that revolutionary literature and art lack "human interest" because they do not express "what men have in common" and "lack the humanism inherent in human nature." Thus revisionists, whether Chinese or foreign, all sing the same tune.

What should we understand by humanism? We consider that in class society there is no abstract principle of humanism which transcends the age and classes. In a class society, humanism as an ideology always possesses a class content of a definite age. We must differentiate between proletarian humanism and bourgeois humanism. No matter what the guise assumed by bourgeois humanism, its ultimate aim is to help to prolong the system of exploitation; proletarian humanism, on the other hand, aims to liberate mankind for good from all systems of exploitation. We are for proletarian humanism. At the same time, we make a correct and full appraisal of the progressive role of bourgeois humanism in past history.

Humanism as a trend of social thought first appeared during the Renaissance in Europe. The humanists of that time and supporters of the Enlightenment Movement in the eighteenth century advocated "humanism" as opposed to "divine power," "human rights" as opposed to "the rights of kings," "the emancipation of the individuality" as opposed to "the fetters of religion" of the Middle Ages and all medieval survivals. This trend of thought certainly did play a positive, progressive role in history and many brilliant works were created under its inspiration. However, the bourgeois Enlightenment Movement in Europe called for no more than the establishment of an "idealized bourgeois kingdom" and in that "kingdom" the so-called human rights meant simply

bourgeois ownership, so-called individuality meant only that of bourgeois individualism. The revolutionary bourgeois thinkers of that time regarded the struggle against feudalism as a struggle to establish a social system suited to man's "nature," but that was merely an illusion of theirs. After the bourgeoisie had seized state power, its slogan of humanism, like its other slogan of "liberty, equality, fraternity," lost all its previous anti-feudal lustre and became a fraud to cover up capitalist exploitation in order to deceive the working class and act as an opiate to benumb the labouring people.

A section of the positive romanticist writers and critical realist writers of the nineteenth century brought stirring accusations against the seamy side of capitalism. Many of them also appealed for humanism. But because they were not able to shake off their bourgeois and petty bourgeois limitations, the humanism they asked for was unable to extend beyond the confines of private property and individualism. Their works often ended either in compromise with the bourgeois order or in pessimistic fatalism.

Tito's clique in Yugoslavia in its programme has spared no pains to advocate "humane relationships among people," "human sympathies and comradeship among people," the education of the people with the so-called "humanist spirit," the evaluation of all things from the "humanist angle." They claim that socialism is no more than humanism. Let us see, then, what it is they call "humanism." In their programme they say, "Socialism cannot subordinate man's personal happiness to any kind of 'higher aims' because the highest aim of socialism is man's personal happiness." They set individual happiness and individual interest up in opposition to the lofty ideal of the happiness of mankind as a whole, placing the interests of the individual above all else. It is very obvious that what they mean by "humanism" is in fact bourgeois individualism. One Yugoslav writer in an article praising this programme expressed great admiration for Oscar Wilde's statement: "Socialism itself will be of value simply because it will lead to individualism." This remark is a voluntary confession of what is in fact the thing they call "humanism."

This Yugoslav writer boasted that they were "members of the big family of mankind," and that this big family "stretches to the

east as well as to the west." In England a small group of renegades from communism unfurled the banner of so-called "socialist humanism" and advocated the "indivisibility" of mankind. Modern revisionists mendaciously claim that dividing the world into two camps, socialist and imperialist, is "the root of all trouble." This shows their purpose in advocating "humanism." It is clear that their aim is to deny the antagonism between the two camps, to deny the struggle of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie, to deny all revolutions.

The ideological basis of bourgeois humanism is the theory of human nature while the core of this theory is what they call "love of mankind," and bourgeois writers and revisionists consider this "love" as "common human nature," the eternal theme of literature and art.

We know how pitilessly Marx and Engels laughed at bourgeois thinkers like Kriege more than a century ago for turning communism into rantings about love, and how sharply Engels later criticized Feuerbach's preaching about the love of mankind, considering that this kind of abstract "love" advocated by Feuerbach was in order to reconcile the class conflict; the result is that "the last relic of its revolutionary character disappears from the philosophy, leaving only the old cant: love one another — fall into each other's arms regardless of distinctions of sex or estate — a universal orgy of reconciliation." (Engels: *Ludwig Feuerbach and the Outcome of Classical German Philosophy*.) Now some people within the ranks of Marxists have confused communism with bourgeois humanism, claiming that communism is the "highest embodiment of humanism," the theory of socialism the "most humane" theory, as if there were some mysterious "humanism" which is an immutable absolute truth, as if communism were simply an expression of its final, accomplished stage. In this way they cast aside the great Marxist theories of historical materialism and class struggle to go back to the reactionary bourgeois standpoint of the idealist interpretation of history and the theory of human nature. They say little or nothing about class nature and the class struggle, but a great deal about "human nature," "the love of mankind" and "humanism." They abandon the language of Marxism and do their best to use old bourgeois concepts and terminology to flatter and suit the taste of the bourgeoisie, trying hard to turn

communism into something which the bourgeoisie can accept. The result is that not only have they themselves fallen captive to bourgeois thought, but consciously or unconsciously they have played a part in helping the bourgeoisie to fool and benumb the people.

Of course, there are also some well-meaning people, who, deceived by these fine terms and unable to perceive the truth, have added their voices to the chorus and unconsciously cast Marxism to the winds.

No Marxist, no genuine revolutionary, will propagandize abstract "humanism" and the so-called "love of mankind." In a world where class antagonism exists, where there exist exploiters and exploited, oppressors and oppressed, there can be no "love of mankind" which transcends classes. The Marxist knows only the comradely love of the proletariat, the comradely love of the labouring people, the comradely love of the oppressed people. Because Marxists have a genuine love for the people, they naturally hate those who oppress and exploit the people. Instead of one-sided advocacy of love, they advocate love for the people and at the same time advocate hatred for the oppressors and exploiters. They arouse the people's political consciousness and make them unite to fight and overthrow the unjust social system, to build a bright and happy new life. This is the content of proletarian humanism, the content which revolutionary literature and art should express.

Anyone with a knowledge of Marxism knows that in a class society, there can be no "human nature" transcending classes; there can be only the human nature of this or that class, and that is human nature with the mark of class. The founders of Marxism used "the science of real men and of their historical development" to replace "the cult of abstract man," (Engels: *Ludwig Feuerbach and the Outcome of Classical German Philosophy*) and according to the Marxist interpretation "the human essence is no abstraction inherent in each single individual. In its reality it is the *ensemble* of the social relations" (Marx: *Theses on Feuerbach*). Actually in the view of the revisionists, what they call "human nature" is just bourgeois human nature or bourgeois class nature. In their view, what is in keeping with bourgeois ideas, bourgeois psychology and the bourgeois way of life is human; anything else runs counter to human nature. If a work

of literature describes the selfishness of certain characters, their schizophrenia or dual personality, then it accords with "human nature" and is "human." If a work describes men who have discarded all thought of private ownership and possess communist moral qualities, if it describes the selfless nature of the proletariat, then it is "unnatural," lacking in "human interest," and contrary to "human nature." They have taken bourgeois human nature as the so-called "common human nature."

To use the idealist interpretation of history to oppose historical materialism, to use the reconciliation of classes to oppose the class struggle, to use the theory of human nature to oppose the class theory, to use the reactionary and corrupt bourgeois human nature to oppose the lofty and revolutionary proletarian human nature — this is the essence of the "theory of human nature" of the revisionists.

Modern revisionists observe all phenomena from the viewpoint of the "theory of human nature," and naturally they do the same with regard to the problem of peace and war. They make no distinction between just and unjust wars nor which class is waging the war and for what purpose, but consider all wars as contrary to "human nature," as "inhuman."

The problem of peace and war is the concern of all people throughout the world. All the peoples of the world oppose the war threats of imperialism and long for peace. All revolutionary and progressive literature, films and art have played a great part in the struggle to defend world peace and oppose imperialism and colonialism. We Marxist-Leninists have always opposed the aggressive wars of imperialism. When the aggressors persist in forcing a war upon the people, the people have no recourse but to raise the banner of resistance to aggression, use a just war to stop an unjust war, and defend their motherland with their own lives and blood. This just, courageous and heroic action on the part of the people deserves to be admired for ever. The history of Chinese literature has not a few moving poems condemning the iniquities of aggressive war, and always according the most fervent admiration and praise to those national heroes who resisted foreign aggressors. Many great poets were themselves heroes who resisted oppression and aggression. The Chinese people love peace; yet they are also quite fearless when it comes to resisting invaders

and oppressors. The history of the Chinese people's dauntless, unflinching anti-imperialist struggle in the hundred years and more since the Opium War is a magnificent epic, capable of moving people to tears as well as to song. Though the French *Marseillaise* and our *The March of the Volunteers* were produced in different ages, in different countries and by different classes, they have nevertheless the same power to stir men's hearts. *Iron Stream*, *The Nineteen*, *Chapayev*, *How the Steel Was Tempered*, *The Young Guards*, *The Story of a Real Man* and many other fine books on similar themes by Soviet authors give true expression to the invincible revolutionary resolve of the Soviet people and their incomparable loyalty to their motherland and the cause of communism. These works have provided our people and those of all the world with tremendous inspiration and enlightenment.

Writers of the people can only praise the just revolutionary wars waged by the people of various countries against aggression and oppression, they certainly cannot adopt any other attitude. Yet in recent years there has been a certain confusion over the question of how to depict war in literature and art. Some writers have even adopted a negative attitude towards just wars and wars against aggression in history, as if all wars, regardless of their nature, were wicked and dirty. And they describe these just wars, too, as pictures of "unrelieved gloom." Such writers dwell in great detail on all the cruelty and horror of war, describing the so-called "truth of the trenches," one-sidedly exaggerating the inevitable sacrifice and death in war. The characters in such works seem to go to the battlefield in a completely passive manner as if they were playthings of an irresistible fate, as if on the battlefield they were controlled solely by their simple instinct of self-preservation while in bewilderment they ask this question: "What meaning is there in life?" The authors make their theme the irreconcilable contradiction between the cruelty of war and individual happiness, laying great emphasis on the psychology of despair and the tragic fate of the hero. The whole atmosphere of such works gives readers a strong feeling of sentimentalism and pessimism about war. Apparently the authors have completely forgotten that what they are describing is the people's just war. In such wars, the people show resolute fortitude, an indomitable spirit and a heroic contempt for the enemy; it is precisely the just nature of the war

and the people's noble qualities that conquer horror and death and overcome the enemy's reactionary arrogance. In such wars, although the people may suffer heavy losses and much blood may be shed, everyone with political consciousness can see that the sacrifice of the individual is for the freedom of the motherland and in order to win social and historical progress and happiness for the people as a whole. It is precisely this conviction that impels the people to go bravely to the battlefield and gives them invincible moral strength. This is an unshakable historical truth. To depict a people's just war in a very gloomy and pessimistic manner and invest it with a mood of despair, is a serious distortion of the historical truth of such wars. Such works serve only to undermine the people's faith in their own strength and in the future of their motherland and to destroy the people's fighting spirit in defending their motherland and peace and opposing imperialism; they in no way help in the great task of winning a lasting world peace.

At present, revisionism is the main danger in the international workers' movement. Revisionism in literature and art is also an international phenomenon, and perseverance in the struggle against revisionist ideas is still an important task for our literary and art circles today. Of course, in the struggle against revisionism we must differentiate carefully between those whose whole outlook is systematically revisionist and those who have been temporarily led astray by the deception of revisionism. Revisionism must be completely exposed; while in the case of certain mistaken ideas, the rights and wrongs must be made clear through criticism, so that those comrades led astray can come to their senses and return to the correct stand to advance together with us.

The Critical Revaluation and Inheritance of the Heritage

The approach to past heritage of literature and art is another problem on which there is a sharp divergency between us and the revisionists and bourgeois writers.

Should we in our approach to the heritage adopt the critical Marxist attitude and reevaluate it from a historical viewpoint, taking all aspects into consideration, or should we either acclaim or condemn everything in a one-sided manner? Should we take the fine essence and discard the dregs, or take the dregs and discard the fine essence? Should we develop the new from the old, or retain what is old and outworn? These are the main points of controversy.

The revisionists either spurn the fine classical heritage and recklessly hawk the decadent art of the modern bourgeoisie, or build up a superstitious awe for the heritage of bourgeois literature and art. The aim of both tactics is the same: that is to use bourgeois literature and art to oppose the revolutionary literature and art of the proletariat.

Hu Feng, Lukacs and others give extravagant praise to the bourgeois literature of nineteenth-century Europe. They consider the bourgeois humanistic ideas advocated in those works as the highest ideals of mankind, consider the artistic achievement of those works as a peak never to be surpassed, and describe critical realism as something transcending all ages and classes, completely unrestricted by the world outlook. They use bourgeois literary criteria to judge socialist literature, in an attempt to belittle the achievements of socialist literature, blaming socialist writers for not exposing the "darkness" of socialist society after the fashion of the critical realists and thus depriving literature of its "critical" faculty. Their purpose in putting forward such arguments is solely to oppose the socialist system and socialist literature. These arguments have been refuted as they deserve.

However, there are still some literary and art critics today who call themselves "Marxists," who also have a blind veneration for the literature and art of the past, especially the literature and art of the bourgeoisie of nineteenth-century Europe. They cannot distinguish clearly the line between bourgeois and proletarian literature and art. They confuse the bourgeois humanism of those works with the socialist spirit of today, confuse the bourgeois revolutionary nature of those works with the proletarian revolutionary nature and confuse critical realism with socialist realism, thus causing general chaos in the field of theory. They have forgotten that the literature and art of the past were products of their age

and reflections of it, that it is impossible for them not to have their historical limitations. They have forgotten that the literature and art of nineteenth-century Europe belong essentially to the category of the bourgeoisie and must inevitably have their class limitations. They stress in a one-sided manner the fact that socialist literature and art are by inheritance the continuation of the literature and art of the past, not daring to criticize or break with past traditions, not daring to admit the qualitative change in socialist literature and art.

This blind worship of the legacy of literature and art has had a bad influence on our literary and art circles and young intellectuals. Some literary and art workers have prostrated themselves before the idols of Western bourgeois art till they cannot stand up straight. Some young readers because they lack judgement and the critical ability are unconsciously influenced by the negative features in works of bourgeois literature, and consequently become bewildered in their thought. It has therefore become imperative that we find a correct solution to the problem of how to deal with the legacy of literature and art according to the views of Marxism-Leninism.

Marxists have always advocated a critical attitude towards the cultural heritage. Whenever Lenin spoke of accepting the cultural heritage, he always stressed the need to criticize and transform it. Comrade Mao Tse-tung, dealing with the problem of how to approach the cultural heritage of China and other lands, has consistently opposed making a break with history and rejecting everything of the past, but at the same time he is against bolting things raw and absorbing them uncritically. He proposed that, as regards past culture, we should take the fine essence and discard the dregs. He pointed out: "We must not refuse to take over the legacy from the ancients and the foreigners and learn from such examples, whether feudal or bourgeois. But succession to a legacy and learning from examples should never take the place of the creation of our own work, for nothing can take its place. In art and literature, the uncritical appropriation and imitation of the ancients and foreigners represent the most sterile and harmful artistic and literary doctrinairism." Comrade Mao Tse-tung has used the classical phrase "develop the new from the old" to explain the process of revolutionary development from the old literature and art to the new, from the old tradition to the new.

On the basis of the principle of developing the new from the old we have done a great deal of work in carrying forward and renovating our own heritage of literature and art, and have achieved rich results. I have already spoken about this aspect. Now I want to say something about the problem of dealing with the heritage of European literature and art. The fine heritage of the literature and art of other lands, like that of our country, is an important part of the treasure of human culture, and we must inherit and learn from it. But a critical appropriation is needed whether of our own heritage or that of other countries.

The literature and art of every age are the product of the society and history of the age. So long as classes exist, in every age and every country there is an antagonism between the literature and art representing reaction, representing the oppressing class, and the literature and art representing progress, representing the oppressed. A part of the Western bourgeois literature and art of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries represents what is reactionary and can be studied as negative examples. But what we want to take over critically and develop is the tradition of progressive literature and art. The literature and art of eighteenth and nineteenth-century Europe and Russia made an important contribution to mankind, producing a series of great writers as Goethe, Balzac and Tolstoy. The good works of critical realism and positive romanticism expose the evils of feudalism and capitalism, and to varying degrees express the feelings and aspirations of the people of the time; from them we can understand the old society, absorb the wisdom and fighting experience of the men of the past, inherit their striving spirit and good qualities; at the same time there is much worth learning in the artistic technique with which these works describe life. However, even in the case of these works, we should adopt an analytical, critical attitude, and we must also see their negative side. Although the progressive works of literature of the nineteenth century criticized capitalist society, the great majority of them did so from the standpoint of bourgeois democracy, bourgeois humanism and reformism. Though the world outlook of these writers has its progressive side, its simple materialism and theory of evolution, they were restricted by their class limitations so that they could not make a thorough exposure of the source of social contradictions, much less point out the way to solve these contradictions. Many of the

characters described in these works are individualist "heroes," like Julien in *Le Rouge et le Noir*, who because his personal ambition was frustrated carried out a vengeful, despairing revolt against society, or like Jean Christophe who relied on the strength of individual character and took the greatest pride in his loneliness. If young readers take these characters as their models, far from helping them to build up the new individuality with a collective spirit, this will serve only to destroy it, will simply strengthen old individualist ideas.

By the second half of the nineteenth century, after the proletariat as the grave-diggers of capitalist society had entered the political arena with the most progressive ideological weapon, those critical weapons of bourgeois democracy and bourgeois humanism appeared by comparison most old-fashioned and outmoded. In the socialist society of today if anyone tries to pick up the old spears and javelins of bourgeois humanism and individualism, as the revisionists advocate, to "criticize" the new society and expose the "darkness" of the proletariat and the people, that is an act utterly opposed to the people and to socialism.

In dealing with the heritage of literature and art, the reactionary bourgeois writers and the revisionists invariably choose the dregs and discard the essence, and particularly praise the dregs to the skies to poison the young; while we invariably choose the essence and get rid of the dregs. The revisionists always encourage people to look backwards, while we encourage them to look ahead. We make a scientific analysis of the heritage of literature and art according to the revolutionary world outlook of Marxism and historical materialism, pointing out, on the one hand, the significance and role of good works of the past under the historical conditions prevailing at that time, and assigning them a definite status in history; and on the other hand, we must also point out their significance for the people and the role they play under present conditions—we should pay even more attention to this side and on no account ignore it. Only by paying attention to both aspects at the same time can we avoid one-sidedness and attain an all-round, revolutionary and historical view. In short, we must differentiate between and analyse our own and foreign works of the past, point out which works are still of great value to us and will still be enjoyed by readers today and in time to come because they contain

penetrating descriptions of the social life of that period and reflect the historical truth with moving artistic skill, and whose works lack a profound understanding of the social reality of their day or have even blatantly distorted it and have no artistic merits either. We should also analyse the ideas in these works, which played a progressive part pointing out which of them still retain a positive significance today, which are no longer suited to the present and which under the new historical conditions have become reactionary. We must choose too when we learn from the technique of past masters, and not copy it mechanically. This is the Marxist historical viewpoint and critical attitude which we propose to adopt.

A study and critical reevaluation of the major literary and art works of eighteenth and nineteenth-century Europe is now being carried out in our literary and art circles and in the departments of literature and art in our colleges and universities. To inherit cultural legacy, we must study and criticize it. In order to criticize it, we must study it too; while criticizing is for the purpose of inheriting it better. The process of critical reevaluation is also a process of learning Marxism and studying the heritage. We study the heritage, then criticize it, then study it again, then criticize it again; only by such a repeated process can we critically inherit the legacy of the past in a proper way. Following the accumulation of experience in socialist cultural construction and the raising of the communist ideological level of the people, such critical reevaluation will become more and more exact and penetrating, and in the process of breaking through old traditions, new traditions will be gradually established. We learn while we criticize; in criticizing, we should pay attention to study; in study, we should pay attention to criticism. We must get rid of superstitious awe in our reevaluation of the heritage, and liberate our minds; but then this may lead us to adopt a very harsh attitude and condemn everything; thus we should watch out lest we become harsh. When we study the heritage, it may lead us to copy it and take it over uncritically; thus we must lay stress on a critical attitude, emphasize renovation and oppose conservatism, oppose the blind worship of ancients or foreigners. We should learn from all good Chinese and foreign works of past literature and art, but we must not let the old literature and art fetter us and hamper our creativeness.

The new age demands new literature and art. We want to paint the newest, most beautiful paintings, write the newest, most beautiful poems — this is the demand made on us by the age. Thus we must have our own new ideas, new techniques, new artistic methods and new path for creation. We should learn from the men of the past, but we must not think poorly of ourselves. History always advances incessantly. Those who are born later should have full confidence that they can surpass their predecessors. Because we have a new social environment, new life and new thought, because the masses of people have now been given better conditions than their predecessors to develop their talents, a host of new geniuses will certainly appear among us as a result of persistent, unremitting, earnest and conscientious efforts. In different aspects they will surpass the artistic achievements of the past masters.

* * *

Since the establishment of our People's Republic our achievements in literature and art have been very great. But a full affirmation of our achievements certainly does not mean that we have done well in every respect. Compared with the demands of the age and of the people, what we have achieved is far from adequate. We have not the least cause for self-satisfaction. Our socialist literature and art are in the process of rapid, all-round growth and maturing; they are full of exuberant vitality, but at the same time certain defects are inevitable in this process of growth. Many aspects of our people's rich experience in revolution and construction have not yet been given full artistic generalization and full reflection in art; the ideological and artistic standard of many works falls short of the masses' level of appreciation which is rising daily; some writings still have the shortcomings of formalism or writing according to abstract subjective ideas; modern revisionist views and various types of bourgeois ideas are still able to find their market among our intellectuals, writers and artists; our heritage of literature and art still needs further revaluation and editing; our experience in contemporary literature and art still needs to be further summarized, and our literary and art theory and criticism still need to be greatly strengthened. The Party and the people have the right to demand that literary and art workers make greater and more glorious contributions to the new age.

Comrades, our aim is to create a great socialist and communist literature and art. Our task is an arduous one.

We must make greater efforts to carry out better and more thoroughly the line in literature and art laid down by the Party and Comrade Mao Tse-tung. In literature and art we must uphold the principle of politics in command, and further strengthen Party leadership, for this is the fundamental guarantee that we shall achieve uninterrupted victories in our literature and art. We must continue to struggle against all trends hostile to the Party line in literature and art, continue to struggle against revisionist and all reactionary bourgeois views on literature and art. To dispense with or relax this struggle, to accommodate or compromise with bourgeois views is absolutely impermissible.

Our path is correct. The most central, most basic task at present confronting all literary and art workers is that of producing more and better works. Good works are strength. Writers and artists! Let us further temper and sharpen the weapons in our hands and use them with greater accuracy and skill, let us use all our strength and talent to create works of a high ideological and artistic level to arouse the revolutionary zeal and labour enthusiasm of the masses, to raise the people's socialist consciousness, to train new men with communist moral qualities. We must strive to raise our own ideological and artistic level, on the one hand making a conscientious study of Marxism-Leninism and the works of Comrade Mao Tse-tung, continuing to go deep among the masses of workers and peasants, taking part in labour, and continuing to remould ourselves and raise our ideological level unceasingly; at the same time, we should, on the other hand, improve our art by increased practice, raising our artistic skill unceasingly. Writers should pay special attention to mastering the art of language. Artistic technique is a product of highly skilled and meticulous labour, a means with which the writer or the artist, based on his world outlook, his general culture and profound observation of life, gives artistic representation of reality. Contempt for technique means contempt for human labour and wisdom, and is utterly wrong. Only by means of a highly developed technique can correct political ideas be integrated with beautiful artistic forms to the greatest perfection, can the moving power of art be produced. We must take active steps to develop the

spare-time art activities among the worker and peasant masses, encourage the masses to create, and bring about close cooperation between professional writers and artists and the spare-time art activities of the broad masses. In this way our literature and art will have the broadest possible mass basis, and on this basis we shall foster outstanding talents in every field of literature and art. Professional writers and artists should not cease to make higher and higher demands on themselves, to raise the ideological and artistic level of their works tenfold and a hundredfold, making the utmost efforts to produce works of literature and art which will stir the hearts of millions. Our literature and art should, on the one hand, cultivate communist moral qualities among the people and on the other, enrich their spiritual life, to increase their wisdom and their appreciation of beauty. Our literature and art should make people become nobler, wiser and finer. Aesthetic education is an important aspect of communist education.

We should raise the level of our literary and art creations, at the same we must also raise the level of literary and art theory and criticism. More effectively to promote the healthy development of creative activities, raise the level of the works produced, and help the people to improve their standard of artistic appreciation and judgement, it is imperative that we must have correct and effective literary and art criticism. Our literary and art criticism is based on the standpoint of Marxism and takes the political standard as its first criterion; but at the same time we must make accurate artistic analysis of the work, and establish a scientific artistic standard of our new age on the basis of experiences summarized from our contemporary creative activities. Our literary and art criticism should carry on serious struggles against all hostile and wrong ideological tendencies, at the same time it should boldly and enthusiastically foster new works which have vitality, encourage originality in art and various different artistic styles. We are against a harsh attitude in literary criticism, at the same time we should overcome such pedantic tendencies as ignoring the general trend of the work but finding fault in an over-critical manner with certain details, or the vulgar fashion of acclaiming the work blindly. We must continue to edit and study all the fine heritage of literature and art, including

the theoretical heritage. Many outstanding literary and art theorists and critics have appeared in our history. They have summarized rich experience in creative writing of a certain age or in certain fields and have put forward many penetrating views on the creation of art. We should critically inherit this legacy, using it as material which we must study and adopt to build up the Marxist literary and art theory of our country. We should develop criticism by the masses, to co-ordinate the criticism of professionals with that of the masses; the professional critics should learn to summarize the masses' opinions, to synthesize them and raise them to a higher level so that they become truly the people's literary and art critics. We should pay attention to fostering new forces in literary and art theory and criticism, striving to build up a strong force of Marxist literary and art theorists.

Our ranks of writers and artists are united. We must unite still closer with all the writers and artists willing to take the socialist road in order to strive together. All the writers' and artists' unions and all literary and art organizations should become a powerful nucleus of this unity. We should closely unite with the socialist writers and artists of the Soviet Union and other fraternal countries, develop to a high degree the internationalist spirit of the proletariat and learn from their advanced experience. We should also closely unite with all the progressive, revolutionary writers and artists of the world, especially with those in Asia, Africa and Latin America, forming a broad united front of revolutionary literature and art against imperialism and its reactionary allies in different countries, to strive hard in our common task of opposing imperialism and winning lasting world peace.

I am reaching the end of this report. We look towards the future with infinite confidence in our socialist literature and art. At the time of the founding of our People's Republic, Comrade Mao Tse-tung told us: China will appear in the world as a country with a high level of culture. Our people have three glorious red banners to shine on them: the general line, the big leap forward and the people's communes; we have the rich experience of revolutionary struggle accumulated over a long period and a splendid cultural tradition; we have the guidance of the thought of Mao Tse-tung which integrates the universal truth of Marxism-Leninism

with the concrete practice of the Chinese revolution. We have all the prerequisites for the creation of a magnificent culture. We have already resolutely taken the correct path for the development of socialist literature and art; we already have a powerful revolutionary literary and art force with a nucleus of working-class writers and artists. We have beloved and respected comrades like Kuo Mo-jo, Mao Tun and many other outstanding veteran revolutionary writers and artists, as well as large numbers of talented and promising young literary and art workers who are emerging constantly from the masses. Our ranks are powerful. Provided we are united and remain loyal for ever to the Party and the cause of the people, always retain our youthful revolutionary fervour, remain close to the masses of workers and peasants, and continue to study and to raise our level, we shall certainly accomplish the task given us by history and create works worthy of our age.

Comrades! We are living in the age of the victory of socialism and communism; we are living in a country with an ancient cultural tradition. The nation that has produced Chu Yuan, Ssuma Chien, Tu Fu, Kuan Han-ching, Tsao Hsueh-chin and Lu Hsun, will certainly continue to produce thousands of glorious writers and artists of genius. If our ancestors created great heights of literature and art of different periods thanks to their genius and determined efforts, today under the leadership of the Party and Comrade Mao Tse-tung, provided we combine our individual wisdom with the collective wisdom of the masses, provided we make great efforts to work hard and persevere unremittingly in our struggle, we shall certainly storm still greater new heights of literature and art surpassing all earlier ages. Let us unite closely and strive with all our might to attain our great goal!

The Third Congress of Chinese Literary and Art Workers Held in Peking

The Third Congress of Chinese Literary and Art Workers which opened on July 22 in the magnificent Great Hall of the People in Peking was concluded on August 13. It lasted all together twenty-three days.

Nearly seven years had passed since the Second Congress of Chinese Literary and Art Workers held in September 1953, and eleven years since the First Congress held in 1949. During this period, our literary and art workers, following the directive on literature and art formulated by the Chinese Communist Party and Chairman Mao Tse-tung, have gone deep into the midst of the masses of workers and peasants. They have worked hard in the practice of their art, and have created many fine works of high ideological and artistic level which are loved by the masses, thus making outstanding contributions towards our socialist revolution and socialist construction. Following the big leap forward throughout the country and the situation brought about by the cultural revolution, the movement for literature and art among the worker and peasant masses also greatly developed. Our literature and art have already become the literature and art of the labouring people themselves. Revolutionary literature, films, dramas and various other forms of art have already gone into the hearts of the broad masses. Renovations and further developments on a new ideological basis have been made in all the fine heritage and traditions of our literature and art. Works of literature and art of different forms, themes

and styles have been given the opportunity to develop freely. Our literature and art have truly shown a scene of great variety and splendour with a hundred flowers vying in beauty. A powerful literary and art force with working-class writers and artists as its backbone has been formed. All these show the correctness of the Chinese Communist Party and Comrade Mao Tse-tung's line in literature and art and prove that to carry out the line of letting a hundred flowers blossom, letting a hundred schools of thought contend and developing the new from the old, under the direction of serving the workers, peasants and soldiers, and serving the cause of socialism, is the most correct, the widest path for the development of socialist literature and art.

Two thousand three hundred delegates took part in this congress. They came from twenty-eight provinces, municipalities and autonomous regions, from central state organs and the People's Liberation Army. This is an increase of nearly three times as many as the 776 delegates to the Second Congress. The delegates included people of twenty-seven nationalities. The Tibetan Autonomous Region for the first time sent literary and art delegates from the distant Himalaya Mountains, people who were liberated from the oppression of feudal overlords and started a new life only last year. Among the delegates at the congress were writers and artists who had made outstanding achievements in writing or performance. There were also young literary and art workers who had emerged from the vigorous, spare-time literary and art activities of the masses. There were also leaders and organizers in literary and art work, representing the ranks of professional and spare-time literary and art workers throughout the whole country.

The opening ceremony of the congress was presided over by Kuo Mo-jo, Chairman of the All-China Federation of Literary and Art Circles. He made the opening speech. Lu Ting-yi, alternate member of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party and Vice-Premier of the State Council, delivered greetings to the congress on behalf of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party and the State Council. He said in his address: "The primary task of our literary and art work is to use the weapon of literature and art to greatly enhance the socialist and communist consciousness

of the people of the whole country, and raise the level of their communist moral qualities. In order to achieve this aim, long-term and persistent struggles against bourgeois ideology must be waged." Chou Yang, Vice-Chairman of the All-China Federation of Literary and Art Circles, made a report entitled "The Path of Socialist Literature and Art in Our Country." Mao Tun, Vice-Chairman of the All-China Federation of Literary and Art Circles and Chairman of the Chinese Writers' Union, made a long report on literary writing entitled "Reflect the Age of the Socialist Leap Forward, Promote the Leap Forward of the Socialist Age."

During the Third Congress, the unions or associations in the different fields of literature, drama, music, fine arts, film, *chuyi*, dancing, folk literature and photography also held congresses or enlarged council meetings. At these meetings, the delegates summarized the achievements made and experience gained in all their work, criticized modern revisionist ideas in literature and art, and outlined the tasks to be accomplished hereafter.

During the congress, exhibitions were held showing the achievements on the different aspects of Chinese literature and art. These included the Exhibition of Literary Periodicals and Books, the National Exhibition of Art, the Exhibition of Achievements in Dramatic Work in the Last Ten Years and the Exhibition of Photographic Art.

These various exhibitions, through actual works, photographs, models and newspaper clippings, reflected the great achievements gained in various aspects of Chinese literature and art under the guidance of Mao Tse-tung's thought in literature and art during the last eleven years, especially since the big leap forward, showing the tremendous development of New China's literary and art work under the leadership of the Party.

During this period, the delegates saw performances of outstanding items of the last ten years by art groups in the fields of opera, drama, cinema, music and dance. For instance, the Folk Opera Group of the Kwangsi Chuang Autonomous Region staged for the delegates the opera *Third Sister Liu* which was newly edited and compiled on the basis of a beautiful Chuang folk legend and large numbers of folk songs. This very successful opera was warmly received by all the delegates.



Chairman Mao Tse-tung and other leaders of the Party and the state, Liu Shao-chi, Chu Teh and Teng Hsiao-ping receive all the delegates to the Third Congress of Chinese Literary and Art Workers

China's literary and art work has grown up and matured under the direct leadership and tireless care of the Chinese Communist Party and Chairman Mao Tse-tung, great leader of the multinational Chinese people. At this congress, Party and government leaders, including Liu Shao-chi, Vice-Chairman of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party and Chairman of the Chinese People's Republic, Chou En-lai, Vice-Chairman of the Party's Central Committee and Premier of the State Council, Chu Teh, Vice-Chairman of the Party's Central Committee and Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, all took part in the opening ceremony.

On July 23, Chairman Mao Tse-tung received all the delegates and was photographed with them. When the delegates saw

Chairman Mao Tse-tung, they all felt it was their greatest happiness and incomparable honour. Everyone was moved by Chairman Mao's concern. They wrote down with their pens their feelings at that happy moment, and sang songs of praise. The Tai singer Hanan-chou sang thus with passion:

Chairman Mao, the sun of all nationalities!
 Since your rays have illuminated Hsishuangpanna,
 I have been standing by the Lantsang River
 And singing, welcoming your radiance.

Though songs in praise of you
 Have already filled my bamboo hut,
 Yet I can never finish singing of *
 Your great kindness towards the Tai people.

Chairman Mao Tse-tung's care for the literary and art workers has become a material force, inspiring all the delegates. As a

Chairman Mao Tse-tung with Wang Wei-lin, a hundred-and-nineteen-year-old delegate of drama workers



peasant poet Liang Chuan-kuei has said in his poem: "Beloved Chairman Mao, we advance towards the goal you have pointed out. With these labouring hands, we shall build the world anew!"

During the congress, Premier Chou En-lai, Vice-Premier Chen Yi and Vice-Premier Li Fu-chun came to the meeting and made important reports on the internal and international situation. These reports helped the delegates to see more clearly the extremely favourable situation, with the East wind further prevailing over the West wind, and the daily improving, splendid prospects in our economic and cultural construction. This greatly inspired and educated the delegates.

The closing ceremony of the congress was presided upon by Kuo Mo-jo, Chairman of the All-China Federation of Literary and Art Circles. The two thousand three hundred delegates who took part in the ceremony with joy and happiness in their hearts, thanked the Party and government leaders for the instructions and encouragement they gave to the literary and art workers. In these twenty-three days, the delegates in their speeches during big meetings and in small group discussions, on the basis of their own experience in creative writing and work, elucidated from various aspects the correctness of the Party line in literature and art. All expressed the determination that in future they would accomplish the great tasks given to them by the Party and the people by actual deeds, and make greater contributions towards the literary and art work of the Party and the people. At the closing ceremony, all the delegates with fervent enthusiasm and resolute determination unanimously passed a message of greetings to the Party's Central Committee and Chairman Mao and the resolution of the congress. In the resolution the delegates said unanimously that the literary and art workers of the whole country, following the path pointed out by the Party, must strive to study well Marxism-Leninism and the works of Chairman Mao, raise their political and ideological level as well as their artistic accomplishment, continue to go deep into the midst of the masses of workers, peasants and soldiers, taking part

Long Live the People's Commune →

A collective work by 3rd and 4th year students of the Lu Hsun Art Academy



with them in productive labour and actual work, ceaselessly carry on ideological remoulding, firmly establish a communist world outlook, and try hard to make themselves working-class fighters on the literary and art front.

Then the delegates elected the new leading organ of the All-China Federation of Literary and Art Circles. Kuo Mo-jo was elected chairman, and Mao Tun, Chou Yang, Pa Chin, Lao Sheh, Hsu Kuang-ping, Tien Han, Ouyang Yu-chien, Mei Lan-fang, Hsia Yen, Tsai Chu-sheng, Ho Hsiang-ning, Ma Ssu-tung, Fu Chung, Saifudin and Yang Han-sheng were elected vice-chairmen. Two hundred and twenty-four members of the national committee were also elected.

This congress made an all-round evaluation of the gigantic achievements in literature and art in the last eleven years since the founding of the People's Republic, summed up the rich experience of literary and art work in these eleven years, and further made clear the path for the development of socialist literature and art, namely: To put into practice letting a hundred flowers blossom, letting a hundred schools of thought contend, and developing the new from the old under the direction of serving the workers, peasants and soldiers, and serving the cause of socialism. The congress also stressed the necessity to do our best to strengthen the unity of the socialist camp, headed by the Soviet Union, strengthen the unity with all the progressive, revolutionary literary and art workers throughout the world, in order to form a broad united front against imperialist forces headed by U.S. imperialism. This was a congress of rich ideological content and fighting spirit, a congress full of revolutionary enthusiasm and firm unity, a congress at which the literary and art workers made great resolutions and set forth mighty ideals.

With such resolutions in their hearts the delegates went back to their own posts feeling more elated than ever. They will carry out in their work the spirit of the congress, and make great efforts to develop socialist literature and to create a pinnacle of socialist literature and art in the history of mankind.



LIU CHING

The Builders

Starting below is the first half of volume one of *The Builders*, a novel by the well-known novelist, Liu Ching, which deals with the development of agricultural co-operation in the countryside. Before the novel was published in book form in May 1960, it appeared in the magazine *Shoubuo* (Harvest) which mainly publishes novels and stories. It at once attracted wide attention and won the acclaim of the Chinese reading public.

Under the leadership of the Communist Party, the peasants of China had overthrown the feudal landlords and were given land of their own. But working individually could not relieve them from poverty. They were confronted with an important new problem: Were they going to take the socialist co-operative road to a better living for all, or follow the old capitalist road

to poverty for the many and wealth for the few? Volume one of *The Builders* sharply portrays the struggle between these two approaches during the co-operative movement in agriculture after the land reform.

Liu Ching is not unfamiliar to our readers. *Chinese Literature* No. 2, 1954 carried his *Wall of Bronze*, a novel of the Chinese War of Liberation. Born in 1916 in Wupao County of Shensi Province, Liu Ching has lived in Huangpu Village, Changan County, Shensi Province for many years. Many of the characters of *The Builders* are based on people he learned to know intimately while living in the village. He is now working on the second volume of *The Builders*.

Prelude

1929 was one of the worst years in Shensi Province's long history of famines. During the first snowfall in November, famine victims, moving down from the plain north of the Wei River, filled

the streets of Hsiapao Village. The temple, the clan halls, the grain mills, the grinding sheds . . . were jammed with refugees, men and women crowded together, all speaking in rough up-country accents. For several days after the snow stopped falling, villagers had to go out every morning with spades and mattocks and bury the nameless sufferers who had died by the roadside in the night.

Tillers! In those years, whenever there was a drought they were like blades of grass stricken by the black blight. They simply had no resistance.

Hsiapao was a fine place. It was situated south of the Wei River in the fertile rice paddy area that runs for hundreds of *li* along the foot of the Chinling Mountains. Opposite Hsiapao, in the distance, rose the darkly menacing Mount Chungnan. To the rear of the village was a bluff where a high plateau of yellow soil ended abruptly.

About eight hundred families occupied Hsiapao's thatched huts and tile-roofed houses, strung out in neat lines on the north bank of the green Tang Stream. The villagers had gathered little from the dry land on the northern side. But that summer they had cut barley in the paddy fields on the southern shore; in the autumn they had crossed narrow foot-bridges all along the stream with load after load of rice, the bound stalks dangling heavily from the ends of their shoulder poles. It was this modest harvest which attracted the droves of famine sufferers.

Every day from morning till night, tattered refugees, shoulders hunched, huddled in gateways of the village compounds. Each held a stick beneath his arm — a weapon against wild dogs made of a branch he had pulled down from some tree along the road. The refugees told essentially the same tragic story, and all pleaded to be saved. Some, large hot tears rolling down their wizened faces, asked whether there was anyone who wanted to adopt a small child. It made the villagers very unhappy. Many tried to avoid the famine victims. People who heard their complaints felt so badly that they were unable to eat when they got home.

But Liang the Third,* a former sharecropper who lived on the paddy land south of the Tang Stream, was a man of tougher

* Meaning here the third child born in his family.

fibre. All day long, carrying a short pipe without a mouthpiece — he couldn't afford one — Liang wandered in and out among the refugees. He seemed to be looking for someone. A large powerful fellow about forty, Liang wore an old cotton-padded jacket that hadn't been washed in years. It was a mass of rent cloth with strings of dirty cotton hanging from the sleeves. On his head was a towel cloth that looked as if it had been picked out of a cinder heap, it was so black. But in spite of his appearance, from his lively step and alert manner you could see at a glance that the big fellow was seething with energy. The people of Hsiapao began to get suspicious about Liang's activities.

A few days later, they observed that these activities followed a regular pattern: He sought out only women in their thirties, with or without small children. Some of the villagers wondered: Could Liang, who had lived alone for so many years, be intending anything improper? But he behaved with complete propriety, listening to the tales of misfortune of the women famine victims, meditating on their words and nodding sympathetically.

Then one day, when Liang again came across from the southern side of the Tang Stream, he was a changed man. His head was freshly shaven, the stubble was gone from his face. A round skull-cap borrowed from his brother, Liang the Eldest, who ordinarily wore it only when visiting relatives, replaced his dirty towel-cloth headgear. His old padded jacket evidently had been mended and patched. People hardly recognized him! Grinning broadly, Liang the Third tenderly wrapped in his brawny arms a four-year-old boy who was standing in the snow dressed in a torn padded jacket left to him by his deceased father. Then Liang turned to a widow in her thirties whose ragged garments were nothing but patches, and led her to live with him in his thatched hut on the southern side of the Tang Stream.

Liang's dwelling was across the stream from Hsiapao Village at the eastern end of a small settlement of thatched huts. There were no villages in the paddy area, only scattered groups of four or five families, people whom poverty had driven from neighbouring villages. Forced to take up their abode here, they eked out a bare existence on rented paddy fields. A few of the lucky ones prospered. Their family fortunes grew; they built a home



and compound. But the paddy fields as a whole, from where the Tang Stream flowed out of Mount Chungnan to where it joined the Lu River on the northern plain—an area, roughly thirty *li* long by two or three *li* wide—were an impoverished place known as “Frog Flat.” On summer nights the thrumming of frogs in paddy fields rose to the heavens. It could be heard on the plain a dozen *li* away.

When his father brought him to this land of frogs, seated in a wicker basket suspended from one end of a carrying pole, Liang the Third was only a little tyke. His father settled down in Hsiapao Village and became one of the most “reliable” tenants of the wealthy Landlord Yang. The father was as physically powerful as his son later became. He actually managed to build a three-room house beside the thatched hut they had originally settled in, and found Liang the Third a wife. Having expended his last bit of strength, and full of hope that Liang the Third would continue to improve the family fortunes, he left the world of men, quite satisfied.

But Liang’s luck was bad. Two draught oxen died in succession. Then his wife died in child-birth, and the baby with her. Not only could he no longer rent paddy fields, he was forced to dismantle the three-room house his father had erected so laborious-

ly and sell the timbers and tiles. He himself went back to living in the old thatched hut. Today, the elm trees he had planted on the spot where the house used to stand were higher than the crumbling earthen compound wall and as thick as his thumb.

After the death of his wife, how desolate and lonely the compound was! Facing west, the thatched hut squatted there like a doddering old man. Part of the earthen compound wall had been eaten away by frost and rain, but the lone occupant had no desire to repair it. He kept no pigs or poultry. What did he care if marauding wolves or weasels decided to pay a call in the night? Weeds in the courtyard grew as high as the window-sill, but Liang didn’t bother to cut them down. He never had any visitors anyhow.

But now that he had brought a woman home, the breath of life returned to his compound. The men of a neighbouring family named Jen had already helped him clear out the weeds; the women gave his low-roofed narrow shack a thorough cleaning. Everyone laughed and said that from this day forward Liang’s table and little cupboard would no longer be covered by a perpetual layer of dust.

Forty-year-old Liang the Third was like a child. He couldn’t conceal his joy. He gave the up-country woman some old garments his dead wife had left, insisting that she wear them and convert one of them immediately into a pair of padded trousers for her poor little boy. The child’s bare legs, thin as hemp stalks, trembled with cold beneath his over-sized old padded jacket. Liang boasted to the up-country woman before his neighbours: He was strong. He would go deep into Mount Chungnan; he would fell timber, burn charcoal, cut brushwood. With the earnings from their sale he would again buy a draught ox, rent some paddy land, improve the compound. He would raise the little boy as his own son. Together they would build up the family property. . . .

“I never lie, Little Treasure’s Ma. Do you believe me?”

“I . . . believe you. . . .” The up-country woman looked at her new husband’s powerful frame, saw his enthusiastic expression. Embarrassed by this emotional outburst in the presence of neighbours she had only recently met, she lowered her head. Probably because she had endured hunger and privation for so long,

at the moment her thin waxen face was unable to register happiness.

Liang was disappointed by her reaction. "Well, you'll know me better as time goes on. . . ."

Although he guessed that the woman's feelings were complicated, at the moment he couldn't very well say much to her. All the affection he felt for her, he lavished on the child. When Little Treasure first entered this strange thatched hut, he sat stiff and constrained on the brick bed that heated from beneath and gazed timidly around. It was all so new to him. His eyes avoided the troupe of kids who had gathered at the edge of the bed and were curiously examining their new neighbour.

"Little Treasure," said Liang warmly, walking over to him, "when your ma finishes that pair of pants, you'll be able to go out and play with them." He indicated the other children.

"I don't want to," Little Treasure replied in a low voice, head down, looking at his fingers.

"Why not? In the paddy field ditches there are cranes and blue storks and herons. Wild-geese, too. Did you have those in your old home north of the Wei?" Liang asked laughingly. He was doing his utmost to give the mother and child a good impression of the place, to make them feel at home.

"I won't go," the little boy replied stubbornly. "I'm scared. . . ."

"Scared of what? Water fowl never hurt anyone, silly!"

"I'm scared of dogs. . . ."

Liang burst out laughing. "In good clothes, what dog would bite you? . . ."

With a big thick hand that was as calloused as a tree root, he fondly patted the small head resting on the spindly neck. Liang the Third loved the child like a father. Because the boy's face was so thin and sallow, his brows seemed particularly dark and his eyes especially large; they fairly flashed with intelligence. As the old saying goes: "In a child of three, at one glance you can see what the adult will be!" Liang was very pleased with him.

For the first few days neighbours, men and women, dropped into Liang's shack frequently to see the new arrivals. It goes without saying that his brother, Liang the Eldest, a beancurd pedlar, came, and his nearest neighbours, the Jens. He was even

visited by friends living much further away. When this one left, the next one arrived. Finally, there were so many people that they overflowed on to the flat outside the compound gate, chatting and laughing. The men could not repress their animation; several of them teased him with broad remarks. Of course this was rather disrespectful, but Liang's freshly shaven face wore a proud smile that seemed to say: "So you thought Liang the Third was finished, eh? I'm still going to build a family!"

After a few more days passed, there was no sign of Liang in daylight hours, either in Hsiapao Village or in Frog Flat. But on the sunny side of compound walls that enclosed thatched huts, on street corners, wherever people gathered, peasants were discussing with interest Liang's up-country woman.

"Ah, now there's a wife for you!" some cried approvingly. "Slow to speak but a fast worker. She's a woman who knows her mind. Her parents died in the famine; her brother and sister-in-law ran away from it. With her husband dead, she had no one to turn to. She set out alone with the child from north of the Wei and came all the way down here, the foot of the southern mountains. It wasn't easy!"

"Liang and she must have been fated to marry, so the Old Lord of the Sky drove her down to the banks of the Tang Stream. Does she have only this one child?"

"They say she had a little girl also, but the cold and hunger were too much for her, and she died on the road."

"*Aiya*, the poor woman! How her heart must ache! How old is she?"

"She says she's thirty-two, but she looks at least forty. . . ."

"What are you gabbling about? She's so thin, and all those days on the road in the wind and sun — naturally it put ten years on her! Wait until she's fattened up a bit and gained her strength back, then you'll see!"

"I hear she's wearing Liang's big padded pants. Is that right?"

"Sure. Maybe they're big, but what of it? That padded jacket she came in is so torn, it's pitiful. That's why Liang keeps going up to Mount Chungnan. That mother and son aren't pictures you can hang on the wall. They've got to be fed and clothed! . . ."

All of Hsiapao became involved in a debate as to whether Liang should have picked the woman up in that way. Some

said that although fate had bowled Liang over, he had struggled to his feet. Maybe he could build up the family fortunes again; in a few years the boy would be old enough to help him. If the up-country woman could bear him another couple of kids in his old thatched hut, his chances of recovery would be even better.

But others didn't believe that you got anything so cheaply in this world. Who ever heard of getting a wife without even spending a copper? They were willing to stake their heads on it: After the New Year the woman's brothers would come for her and take her home, or someone from her former husband's family would demand the child, or the woman herself would become moody and demand to go back to her village north of the River Wei. . . . In a word, Liang's thatched hut would never know peace.

"Wait and see!" was the advice of the holders of both points of view.

Making the rounds of Hsiapao every day with trays of bean-curd hanging from the ends of his carrying pole, pedlar Liang the Eldest was quite concerned over people's opinions of his younger brother. His big ears took in every word. Late one night, Liang the Third had just returned from Mount Chungnan with a load of charcoal. He burned charcoal in the mountains and sold it in the city, rising at cock's crow and returning long after dark. Liang the Eldest came furtively to his brother's compound gate and called him out. Then the two walked through the darkness down a path dotted with stubble in the direction of the paddy fields. . . .

The next day, Liang the Third did not go into the city with his charcoal. First thing in the morning he went to Huangpao Town, five *li* upstream. When the peasants paused in their morning's labour for breakfast, someone saw Liang returning home, a basket of bean sprouts, cabbage and bean noodles in one hand, and a jug that must have contained at least a catty of wine in the other. All morning, Liang bustled about the village streets. One moment he was here, the next moment he was there, his big agile body practically flying. He looked very busy, very tense, and very mysterious. When someone called to him, wanting to ask how the up-country woman was faring, he shouted over his shoulder:

"I'm in a hurry. Some other time. . . ."

Night fell. On the gravel and round stones of a bank of the Tang Stream, a lantern flame no bigger than a bean gleamed eerily. Five men, one woman, and a small child, shivering with cold, were gathered around the lantern.

Liang the Third carefully proffered in hands as rough as tree roots the foot of machine-made red cloth he had bought in town that morning. In a moved voice he said:

"Fellow villagers, for our sake you're suffering cold and chill. . . ."

"It's nothing. Say no more. What's a little cold?"

"We hope that you two will live together till you're old and grey. That's all we neighbours want. . . ."

"That's it exactly. Right! You've said it right!" cried Liang.

"All the stars are out. Let's get started!"

Then the poor scholar, who was busy all winter writing deeds for people who had to sell their land, put on his spectacles. He spread the red machine-made cloth on a flat rock as large as a millstone. According to local superstition not even grass would grow on a spot where a contract for the remarriage of a widow was written. That was why the sandy bank of the stream, already barren, was chosen for this ceremony. Liang the Third cautiously held the lamp while the other men squatted down in a circle, their eyes fixed on the brush pen moving over the red machine-made cloth.

After the brush pen was capped in its slim bronze tube, the bespectacled scholar solemnly raised the red cloth with both hands and read slowly the words he had inscribed:

The contractor of this marriage covenant, surnamed Wang, was a native of Liu Village south of Fuping. Because her first husband died and her village was stricken by famine, mother and son were forced to wander from home, with no means of support. Today, plagued by hunger and cold and in danger of losing her life, she is willing to remarry and become the wife of her benefactor, Liang Yung-ching. She makes this contract of her own free will, with no obligations to any third party, and will never revoke it. The male child she has brought with her, known by the infancy name of Little Treasure, also a famine refugee, shall use the surname of his

step-father when he grows up. Word of mouth being unreliable, this covenant is made as written proof of the marriage.

As these final words were intoned, all eyes turned to the long thin face of Little Treasure's Ma, who was listening carefully.

"Agreed?" asked the scribe.

"Agreed," she said quietly, in her up-country accent.

Her thin hands tenderly stroked the head of Little Treasure. The boy was standing in front of her, very close. She looked at the freshly-shaven seamed face of Liang the Third, goodness, devotion and determination shining in her eyes.

"This is a starvation year, Little Treasure's uncle! Why must you go to this expense? As long as you're good to my son, it'll be the same whether we have a marriage contract or not. No matter how hard our life is together, if my son can grow up . . . become a man. . . ."

She broke down and sobbed. Catching her sleeve in withered fingers, she wiped her eyes. The others sadly lowered their heads. They didn't have the heart to view her stricken countenance.

A male valour surged up in Liang's bosom. Standing before the widow and her son, he suddenly felt that he was one of the strongest men in the world.

"Our son!" he corrected her decisively. "Let's have no more talk of 'your son' and 'my son' after this! He must call me 'pa,' not 'uncle'! That's all I have to say!"

After the parties to the marriage, the witnesses and the scribe each put an "X" beneath the place where his or her name was written on the red machine-made cloth, everyone went to Liang the Third's thatched hut where they ate a meatless meal the beancurd pedlar Liang the Eldest had been preparing the whole day, and spoke many auspicious words. Then the guests departed. . . .

. . . The following spring, the famine victims who had spread out in the paddy region along the Tang Stream all disappeared in a few days, like a flock of seasonal birds. People kept an eye on Liang the Third's woman to see whether she would begin gazing off into the distance in the direction of the northern plain. Women neighbours, bringing their sewing, called on her in Liang's thatched hut. They chatted with her, probing for any remark

that might indicate she still thought of her old home north of the River Wei.

But, no. Unless it was necessary, the woman seldom left the compound gate. She sat at home, mending the torn cloth shoes and socks of her man who worked all day in the mountains. Liang was very poor. Even including the paths and what used to be the threshing field outside his gate and which he now planted with vegetables, he had just one and two-tenths *mou* of ground. Only by strenuous labour could he get along.

In the spring, when the city dwellers stopped burning charcoal for warmth but while the paths that went into the mountains were still frozen too solid to permit Liang to go in and fell timber, he cut brushwood on the slopes and sold it as fuel for kitchen stoves in the city or in Huangpao Town. Often the woman would have to wait for him to bring home grain before she could cook. But she didn't mind his poverty. She liked him because he was warm-hearted, because he loved her child, because his neck was iron-stiff and refused to bend under the weight of hardship.

The couple neither quarrelled nor sulked. Hard-working, patient, they reposed all their hopes in the future. Their neighbours, the Jens, often strolled outside Liang's compound wall after the evening meal, cocking an inquisitive ear when they passed the tiny rear window, blocked with dried branches, of Liang's thatched hut. But except for Liang's weary sighs, all they heard was husband and wife discussing how they must build up the family fortunes, come what may, for the sake of Little Treasure and for their own old age. . . .

Ten years passed.

On the site of the razed three-room house, the elms were as thick as rice bowls. Their leaves and branches interlaced dozens of feet above the ground with the foliage of trees which Liang the Third's father and grandfather had planted outside the earthen compound wall. Liang's courtyard, like the tree-lined dwellings of his neighbours, had also become cool and shady. But the family's progress was far behind the development of its natural surroundings. Within the compound walls, the only dwelling was still the dejected-looking old thatched hut.

The family fortunes had not improved!

Liang the Third was past fifty and his back was bent. Where his neck met his shoulder, years of heavy carrying-poles had formed a callous as thick as a fist. Liang had also developed a chronic cough which came back every winter and spring. He no longer had the strength to wrest an income from long treks into Mount Chungnan.

At fourteen Little Treasure had a ruddy face, dark brows and large eyes. He was a good height, and you could see at a glance that he was going to make a fine sturdy peasant. After having been sufficiently instructed by his mother and step-father on how a person should behave, the fourteen-year-old boy confidently began to work. He took a job as a half-pay hired hand for a wealthy landlord named Lu, in Hsiapao Village.

Little Treasure started on the twelfth day of the first lunar month. On the fifteenth at dusk crossing the stream, he returned to the thatched hut. Without a word, he flung himself sobbing on the brick bed.

His mother, now in her forties, patted him gently on the shoulder.

"What's wrong, Little Treasure?"

The boy only sobbed more bitterly.

"Don't cry, child." His mother stroked the towel cloth that covered his head. "Tell ma, don't you want to be a hired hand? If you've changed your mind, your pa can call it off. In another year or two. . . ."

Still weeping, the boy sat up and shook his head.

"What happened? Was the landlord bad to you?"

"I was . . . in the courtyard . . . eating. . . ." Little Treasure sobbed.

"Speak up. Stop crying!"

"The landlord's son . . . crept up . . . and took a handful of dirt. . . ."

"What about the handful of dirt?"

"He threw it . . . in my rice bowl! . . ."

"Why? Did you tease him?"

"I . . . no! . . . That rich kid . . . picks on people!"

Liang who had been listening to all this, his face dark as iron, asked angrily: "And your bowl of rice? What happened to that?"

"The landlord . . . dumped it . . . in the pigs' trough. . . ."

"What did he do to his son?"

"Nothing . . . just scolded him . . . a little. . . ."

Husband and wife, who both had been furious, calmed down and talked the matter over. Since the landlord had scolded his son, they might as well forget it. When you worked for other people and ate their food, all you could do was bow your head and get along as best you could.

"Child!" The mother stroked the boy's head. "You don't understand much yet. Poor families are a grade lower than others. If we want to stop being put upon, we have to build up the family fortunes, raise our own cattle, till our own land. . . ."

"Right! That's it exactly!" Liang inserted. "First get a draught ox, then rent some paddy fields from the landlord, then . . . just like your ma said. Understand?"

And so, that was how poor Little Treasure began his career as a hired hand at the age of fourteen. By the time he was eighteen he was skilled in all things a peasant needed to know and was earning as much as the best paid hired hand in Hsiapao Village. Studying every move of the chief hired hand, Little Treasure learned all about farm work, including the most difficult kinds of sowing. . . .

The third summer after he joined Landlord Lu's employ, he returned home one evening at twilight, leading a little yellow ox calf at the end of his belt sash. He forded the stream and led the ox into the courtyard of the thatched hut.

"What's this?" was how his bow-backed step-father greeted him. There was premonition of misfortune in Liang the Third's bones.

"Lu's old cow has died," the boy reported with a satisfied smile, tying the calf to one of the elm trees. "This calf is too young. Lu was afraid it would die if it didn't get any milk. . . ."

"He's given it to us?" The wrinkled face of Little Treasure's Ma lit up.

"Lu, give anything away? Think again! That pig wouldn't even give you a broken needle — unless you paid him for it! He's known as Lu the Miser."

The boy's parents stared. They asked in unison: "Then what's this all about?"

"I bought the calf for five silver dollars. He's taking it out of my pay."

"*Aiyayaya!* You stupid child! How could you do such a thing!" Liang groaned, his face blanching. The blow was too much. His bow-back scraping the wall, he dropped to his haunches, his grey head sinking despondently on his chest.

He was such a picture of misery that Little Treasure's Ma was on the point of tears. She bitterly upbraided her son.

"You! You're not a child any more. How could you be so foolish? If rich old Lu was afraid the calf might die, what chance have we to keep it alive in a place like ours? Anyhow, you should have talked it over with your pa first. You're much too cocky. That dirty Miser Lu! Cheating our young boy like that!"

Liang rose to his feet and took two steps closer to Little Treasure. On trembling fingers he calculated for the boy what they could have bought with the five silver dollars — How much corn and how many days it would feed them, how much cloth and how many garments they could make of it, how much charcoal and how many months they could burn it. . . . And now. . . . Pointing at the frightened calf gazing uneasily at its new surroundings, Liang cried in great agitation:

"What are we going to do with that puny little thing?" He shook his thin hands hopelessly. Life was just too much!

Little Treasure's Ma sat down on the stone step, which was all that remained of the razed three rooms, and began to weep, dabbing her eyes with the hem of her tunic. When she thought of how poor they were, and how the son she had brought with her had hurt his step-father, and how brashly this boy who was just coming out in the world had behaved, she couldn't help shedding tears for her own unhappy fate. . . .

But Little Treasure was unruffled. In fact he smiled at their worries. When Liang started to untie the calf from the elm tree and wanted to lead it back to Miser Lu, the boy stopped him.

"That's just giving in," laughed Little Treasure, putting one hand on the knot. "We'll never build up the family fortunes at this rate. How many years does a hired hand have to work before he can save enough for a full grown draught ox? The calf only cost a few dollars. Ma can feed it on thin rice gruel. When it gets a little bigger you can cut some grass for it on the stream bank. In a few years, we'll have a big ox of our own."

Liang released the lead rope. So the boy was planning to till the land!

"Will it live?" Liang asked timidly.

"What if it doesn't? It only cost a couple of dollars. Didn't you have two big oxen die on you when you were young?"

The old man dropped his head and walked away, embarrassed beyond words. He felt ashamed. All his life he had worked hard, like an animal, relying solely on his physical strength. He didn't have nearly the brains of this youngster who was just coming out in the world.

Little Treasure's Ma, seeing that Liang was no longer angry, dried her tears and smiled. . . .

Another three years passed. Little Treasure actually made all the necessary preparations for them to farm on their own. One by one, he had bought implements cheaply from Hsiapao peasants who had gone bankrupt. In the compound he built another thatched hut, this one with two rooms — one with a brick bed on which he slept, the other with a trough for the ox, now fully grown and the object of much envy and admiration. Liang was brimming with joy.

He kept his word. The baby girl Little Treasure's Ma gave birth to five years after coming to Frog Flat was already past ten. Liang made a match for the girl and with her engagement gift money bought a child-bride for Little Treasure — the eleven-year-old daughter of another poor sharecropper. From then on, Little Treasure adopted his step-father's surname. Since Liang the Eldest's two sons both had "Sheng" as the first part of their given names and Little Treasure was of the same generation, his given name became officially "Sheng-pao." He was now a man.

. . .

Sheng-pao's eagerness to build up the family fortunes was a hundred times keener than that of his step-father. The first year, he rented eighteen *mou* of paddy land from Miser Lu and borrowed enough from the landlord to spread liberal amounts of fertilizer. Sheng-pao and the old man slaved in the fields all that year. In summer, the busiest season, when Sheng-pao came back at the end of the day he always ate his meals squatting on a comforter spread on the brick bed. Otherwise, when he fell

asleep in the middle of eating, the bowl might drop to the floor and break.

Liang the Third didn't have the strength to go home. He would crawl out of the paddy, his hands and feet plastered with mud, and lie in the green grass by the stream. Little Treasure's Ma would bring him his food. Poor old Liang. Afraid that people might steal his water and release it into their own fields, he slept every night on the bank. The mosquitoes stung his face, arms and legs mercilessly. But the old man worked on without complaining. At times he even smiled happily. Once again he had achieved the incomparable glory of raising his own crop!

To keep their debts down the family tightened their belts. For a whole year they ate no salt and burned no oil in their lamps. . . . That autumn the stack of rice straw on the site of the three razed rooms was higher than the old thatched hut. Unfortunately, they never did get a chance to store the rice in the hampers they made from mats bought specially for the purpose in Huangpao Town.

For after paying the rent share to the landlord and returning his loan for the fertilizer—plus forty per cent interest, they watched the rest of their harvest being carted away by the village tax office. Little Treasure's Ma threw herself down on the stone roller on the threshing space outside their compound gate and wept aloud. Sheng-pao's sister and child-bride joined her in loud howls of grief. The last of their grain was sent off like the corpse of a member of the family. Sheng-pao knitted his black brows in a frown. For several days afterwards he did not speak, mute to all questions.

Liang, his back bent, followed his step-son around. "Don't feel bad, Sheng-pao," he mumbled. "This is the first year, only the first year! We haven't built up any reserve. Be patient. It'll be better after a few years."

"A few years? With a large family like ours, what are we going to eat in the meantime?" Sheng-pao demanded angrily.

"The old saw puts it well: 'Borrow your grain, return it at harvest. And you can glean enough from the threshing field to last another few days.' It's better than working as a hired hand, isn't it? At least we get some stalks for fuel this way."

Yes, what else could they do? Of course it was better than sleeping in the landlord's stable. Sheng-pao's brow smoothed out. He went back to work in their rented fields.

Two more years went by. The Kuomintang government grabbed Sheng-pao for military conscription. Liang the Third determinedly sold the yellow ox and bought him out. To avoid his being dragged off again, Liang sent him to hide on Mount Chungnan. Liang returned the eighteen *mou* to Miser Lu, who rented them to another poor sharecropper. Liang was neither angry nor hurt. He accepted everything that happened; it had to be. The world-weary old man urged his family not to take things too hard. To struggle against Fate was useless.

No longer could they hear the lowing of the ox in the shed. The old man, the old woman, their daughter, and their child-bride daughter-in-law, all depended on the money that Sheng-pao intermittently brought back from Mount Chungnan. They were always hungry.

The old couple had added quite a number of grey hairs. They were more kindly, more affectionate than ever. They had no particular hope; they weren't struggling for anything. They lived quietly, like moles in the ground.

In spring, Little Treasure's Ma, leading her daughter and daughter-in-law, aged thirteen and fourteen respectively, went to the untilled land south of the paddy fields and gathered wild vegetables. In summer they picked fallen wheat heads on the northern plain. In autumn they combed the road for rice grains that had dropped from the carts. In winter they gleaned the paddy fields for rice and barley.

People spoke approvingly of the old couple. Hard times had brought them together; hardship was welding them closer. Liang the Third gave up smoking. Leaning on a stick, he coughed and wheezed along, unable to clear his eternally clogged throat. Little Treasure's Ma drummed lightly on the old man's thin back to ease him. She often looked at him with eyes that once were beautiful but now were surrounded by a web of wrinkles and asked worriedly:

"How do you feel, Little Treasure's pa?"

"Me? Won't die yet!" And he broke into another paroxysm of coughing.

They never spoke now about building up the family fortunes.

In the summer of 1949 the Tang Stream area saw the greatest movement of troops and the worst military chaos since warlord Liu Chen-hua had besieged Sian twenty-three years before. For emergency refuge, the people of Hsiapao began repairing the cliff caves near the northern plain. The residents of Frog Flat dug secret caches inside their compounds to hide their girls and young men. The situation was very tense. It was said of the Kuomintang soldiers retreating from the north that when they saw any property they stole it, when they saw a young man they conscripted him, when they saw a girl they ravished her. Could the doom of the Kuomintang be coming at last? Buddha be praised!

Artillery thundered for several days on the northern plain along the railway and in the neighbourhood of the county seat. Then one night the dogs of Hsiapao, Huangpao Town and Frog Flat barked until dawn. Liang and his wife concealed their daughter and their child-bride daughter-in-law. They themselves curled up in tight balls in the thatched hut. They didn't dare shut their eyes all night. Along the road on the north side of the Tang Stream they could hear voices and the sound of horses and carts, but they were afraid to go out and look.

The next morning, both banks of the Tang were as still as death. Not a person was in sight. After breakfast, someone pounded on the compound gate, frightening the entire household into a fit of trembling. But when the old man opened the gate it was only Sheng-pao, just returning from heaven knows where. His eyes were dancing.

"We've been liberated!" he cried.

"What?"

"The world is ours!"

"Eh?"

Liang blinked. He couldn't make head or tail of what Sheng-pao was saying. Later, he saw Sheng-pao running around Hsiapao and Frog Flat, shouting things which in his opinion were entirely too bold, and he was very uneasy.

Several days later Sheng-pao crossed the stream from Hsiapao and came home for a meal. Slung across his back was a shining

rifle—not one of those home-made jobs that people used for hunting wild boars, bears or leopards on the Mount Chungnan, but the same quick repeating kind that those Kuomintang soldiers who had tried to conscript Sheng-pao a few years before had carried. When Liang saw the thing, his heart suddenly beat faster. He wouldn't let Sheng-pao bring it into the house.

"What do you want with that gun?"

"I'm the leader of our people's militia!" Sheng-pao announced. He explained to the old couple the necessity for a militia, and in an authoritative voice told them that a whole series of tremendous changes were coming—including a division among the people of the land of Yang the Tenant-skinner and Lu the Miser. . . .

"What! Is the Communist Party tough enough to set itself against those two? . . ."

Sure enough, the winter of the following year, Liang the Third was given some ten *mou* of paddy field. The old man walked around in a dream for days. He simply couldn't believe it. In the past he had planned and calculated day and night: Rent some land, put your life's blood into it, skimp, save, buy a paddy field a fraction of a *mou* at a time, and gradually, gradually, build up some family property of your own. He had never been able to do it. Sheng-pao was much cleverer than he, and Sheng-pao had not been able to do it either. But now, people had only to say the word, and the Liang family was the owner of ten *mou* of rice paddy.

Liang just couldn't remain in his compound the winter of the land-reform year. He ran about, his hand cupping his ear, listening here, listening there. Leaning on his stick, he wandered among the paddy fields, peering at the new ownership markers. Different emotions flitted uncertainly across his ashen wrinkled face. At times he looked happy, at times he looked doubtful. His wife was worried. The old man dashed about in the cold wind so much, he coughed all night. But the moment she took her eyes off him, he was gone again. She would hurry to the compound gate and gaze around and there he would be, just as she expected, with his big body and bow-back, alone in the empty paddy fields.

One day she ran after him as usual and tried to pull him home.



"No!" he said firmly, struggling to free his sleeve from her grasp. "I feel too pent up in the house."

"What are you standing here for?"

"I want to see. . . ." He waved his long arm proudly over the paddy fields in a wide sweep.

"What's there to see? It's been divided up among us all."

"I still want to look at it."

"What's wrong with you? Do you ache anywhere?"

"I feel all right."

"What is it then? You've been looking

awfully dazed lately. . . ."

"There's nothing wrong with me."

"If there's nothing wrong, then quit running around."

But no matter what she said, the old man wouldn't return to the thatched hut. Often he would squat by the land that had been given him until long after dark. It was as if he feared that someone might steal it away.

A few days later, Liang heaved a melancholy sigh and finally told his wife what was troubling him.

"Little Treasure's Ma, my mind is as tangled as hemp."

"Why? Isn't everything fine now?"

"To tell you the truth, it doesn't seem real. I think I must be dreaming. I run out and look, but those ownership stakes are still in the paddy fields."

Little Treasure's Ma couldn't help laughing.

"You *are* an old fool!" She pointed at the landlord's possessions which they had received as their portion — the blue glazed

jug, the single-shared plough, the small wooden cabinet. "Don't we have these? You can see them without even getting out of bed. Why do you have to go running around in the fields?"

"I can see them all right. But the land, I'm worried about the land. Land is important!"

One day when they had finished their meal, Sheng-pao got up to leave. He was in a hurry to cross the stream to Hsiapao. A meeting of the township government had been called in the big temple. The old man stopped him.

"Little Treasure, I want to ask you something. This ten *mou* of land we've been given. . . ."

"Be quick, will you?" Sheng-pao was at the threshold. "I've got to go."

"What I want to know is — Are you sure we don't have to pay a single grain as rent?"

"Who would we pay it to? The landlords' old deeds have all been burned!"

"Won't the township government want any?"

"Old muddle-head! How many times do I have to tell you before you'll believe me?"

"Then, according to you, this land is all ours, every bit of it?"

"Right. . . ."

"Wait, Sheng-pao, don't go. Tell me clearly." Liang followed him to the compound gate and grasped his arm. "Where's our deed? The old saw puts it well: 'Don't plant if you have no deed. . . .'"

"What's your hurry? New deeds will be issued after the New Year."

"Ah, I see! Good! Go to it, Little Treasure!" the old man shouted after him from the gate. Sheng-pao was already walking down the grassy path to the stream.

Strength inexplicably seemed to flow back into Liang the Third's shrivelled old body. He made a mighty effort to straighten the back that had been bent for years, and actually managed to walk erect. When spring came, his asthmatic cough was much better. He threw away his stick and moved about his compound in quite a sprightly manner. In Huangpao Town he bought some Mount Chungnan vines and wove a long-handled basket. He went out with it every morning before daylight and picked manure on the

main road from Huangpao Town to the city. His mind was filled with visions of becoming as self-sufficient as some of those well-to-do peasants he knew in Hsiapao.

One night he dreamed that he no longer lived in a thatched hut but in a fine house with a tile roof, and it stood on the site of the three-room building he had razed years ago. The two shacks on either side had been converted into tile-roofed wings! Ho-ho! Liang the Third was the owner of a splendid compound. He wore winter clothes with thick padding. A strong blue sash bound his waist. He was deliciously warm, so heavily upholstered in fact that walking was a bit clumsy. Still, what could he say? The clothes had been made for him by his son and daughter-in-law. They were so devoted. He could only wear the heavy garments and parade about his splendid courtyard.

"Their devotion touches my heart!" Liang thought in his dream. He threw himself with greater zeal into the endless tasks about the house. In the rear courtyard were pigs, chickens and ducks. Horses and oxen munched grass in the front courtyard. Taking care of all these domestic animals kept Liang very busy. But he enjoyed the work. It was a real pleasure. The cries of the pigs, chickens, ducks, horses and oxen, when joined with the joyous shouts of the children at play, are the most intoxicating kind of music to a peasant's ears. Liang positively revelled in them.

When he awoke, he found that he was still lying on the brick bed in his old thatched hut. . . .

"Little Treasure's Ma. . . ." Smiling happily, the old man took advantage of the fact that his daughter and child-bride daughter-in-law were not at home to confide in his wife's ear: "I'm going to tell you something, but you mustn't breathe a word to another person!"

"What is it? What's tickling you so?"

"Listen, if our Little Treasure uses the same strength he put into that eighteen *mou* we rented from Lu the Miser, you and I will have some good days yet, you'll see! This is just between us, now. Do you believe me?"

Little Treasure's Ma smiled at him affectionately. The pleased expression on her wrinkled face gave him his answer.

"I'm telling you! It won't be many years before that three-room house I razed will be built again. If we use our heads a

little it won't have a thatched roof this time — it'll have a tile one! If we two don't live in a tile-roofed house, I may die but I won't close my eyes!" The whiskers around Liang's mouth trembled with the intensity he put into these words.

"You needn't swear it so hard," laughed the old woman. "Let's see if we can do it."

"We *will* do it! We must! Our Little Treasure will see to it. . . ."

But after one more year had gone by, Liang disappointedly came to another conclusion: Sheng-pao wasn't nearly so interested in building the family fortunes as he was in doing his job. When the land deeds were issued and the new owners threw themselves into increasing their family income, some of the village government personnel backslid and devoted a lot of their time to personal affairs. But not Sheng-pao. He was keener on his duties than ever. The township government had only to send for him and he'd drop whatever he was doing on the farm and rush across the stream.

Standing there alone, Liang thought it strange: How could such a clever young fellow lose the peasant's only road to prosperity? His ruddy cheeks, his dark-browed big eyes, his honest looking mouth with its lower lip slightly thicker than the upper — these were still the same. But his heart had changed. It was no longer the heart he had when he tilled those eighteen *mou* of rented land. That heart had been replaced by one that was ardently committed to his job. Sheng-pao's behaviour gradually aroused the old man's anger.

Sometimes Liang suspected that Sheng-pao wasn't satisfied with his skinny little child-bride who was ill so often. One night the old man secretly followed him at a distance to see whether he was going to the shack of that girl with the bad reputation, Blue Moth. But no, the young fellow went straight to the meeting place. Damn it all! These past few years Liang hadn't foreseen that Sheng-pao would be receiving a different type of education outside the home. The young man was cool to building the family fortunes. He was too wrapped up in his public duties.

When the old man learned that Sheng-pao had joined the Communist Party he staggered as if from a blow. For three days he couldn't leave his bed.

"Ai, Little Treasure, what do we want to get mixed up with that party for? We're tillers of the soil. Why should we join? We're not trying to become officials. Can we make a living out of going to meetings? If you've time to spare you ought to spend it fattening up our stock, repairing our tools. Go down and resign from that party right now, you silly fool!"

The reply he received was accompanied by a beaming smile that came straight from the heart.

"That's just giving in!" The young fellow repeated the words he had used a dozen years before when he brought the calf home from Lu the Miser. Only this time his voice was more resonant, more proud.

He's not my own flesh and blood. What else can I expect! The old man muttered to himself.

Not long after, the pathetic little child-bride died. Tears streamed down Liang's ashen wrinkled face. His fingers, gnarled as tree roots, couldn't wipe them away fast enough. The girl had been like a daughter to him. During the years when Sheng-pao was hiding in Mount Chungnan, in the bitter winter when the miry paddy field froze solid, Liang, his wife, his daughter and the child-bride all used to huddle under one miserable comforter. The temperature of his declining old body helped to warm the puny child. She considered him not a father-in-law but a father. Even a stone will heat if you hold it in your bosom for three years!

When the girl was encoffined, the old man threw himself on the brick bed and cried so bitterly that even the neighbours were moved; they averted their faces and wiped their own tears.

Sheng-pao only gazed sympathetically at the departed and sighed sadly. There had never been much of a relationship between them. They were seldom together. He had always felt that to play around with such a pitiful little creature would be nothing short of criminal.

After the girl was buried, Liang the Third took Sheng-pao aside for a heart-to-heart talk.

"Little Treasure," he said, "your pa has let you down. I didn't do a good job. I found you a wife who wasn't strong. But what's past is past. I want you to find a girl of your own liking and remarry right away. You're coming along in the world. You can

get someone easily. Get married, get married, then we can all live happily together. . . ."

But his warm-hearted words drew no more response than if he had been talking to one of the stones on the flats of the Tang Stream. In the spring of 1953 Sheng-pao was really beginning to hit his stride. He plunged deep into the drive to develop mutual-aid teams, doing many things which some people thought were ridiculous, laughable, brainless.

Little Treasure's Ma wondered whether he wasn't being too brash, but she didn't try to impede him, like the old man did. At times she even defended him. The glow of health had returned to her pallid face, and when Liang the Third saw it graced with a loving smile for Sheng-pao he burned with inward irritation.

Their daughter, who had been named Hsiu-lan, was already nineteen. She was studying in the fourth year of primary school in Hsiapao Village. Hsiu-lan also sided with her brother, and this increased the old man's feeling of hurt.

The contradictions and agreements within the thatched hut compound walls of Liang the Third, and the contradictions and agreements in Fifth Village (Frog Flat) of Hsiapao Township were all interconnected during the years of the socialist revolution. They comprise the main content of these "tales from life". . . .

I

Early one spring morning before the peasants living along the Tang Stream wakened from their slumbers, you could hear the sound of the rising waters; the ice and snow on Mount Chungnan were beginning to thaw. On both banks of the stream, in Hsiapao Village, in Huangpao Town, in the near hamlets on the northern plain, roosters in thatched hut compounds amid the misty paddy fields greeted each other and the dawn. Heard from the road winding across the plain, the gurgling of the stream and the crowing of the roosters had a soft elegance which seemed to enhance the hush that falls shortly before daybreak.

The air was fresh and fragrant; it gave you a feeling of exceptional coolness and ease.

Stars faded from the deep blue sky, seen through idly drifting clouds, leaving only the crescent of the waning moon. According to the old lunar calendar, it was the end of the first month. Before the sun rose from the plain around Huangpao Town, the east turned a fishbelly white. Then the morning clouds were encrimsoned, and their hues reflected on the yet unmelted snows draping the weird-shaped peaks of Mount Chungnan. On the wheat shoots, which had recently been hoed, on the green leaves of the young barley in the rice fields, on the tender grass just emerging along the roadside, on the banks of the river and stream, glistening dewdrops were clearly visible.

Liang the Third was one of the few old men in Hsiapao Township in a position to enjoy this morning beauty. He had risen before daylight and filled his basket with manure dropped on the highway between Huangpao and the county seat. As he deposited the contents of his basket on the manure heap outside his compound gate, his daughter Hsiu-lan, who had just left her warm bed, came through the gateway, fixing her hairpins, a school-bag on her arm. She crossed the threshing ground and walked off towards the Tang Stream. Liang's wife had also just got up. She was snapping sticks of the remaining brushwood, preparing to cook breakfast.

Carrying his manure basket, Liang entered the small courtyard. He cast a disdainful glance in the direction of a thatched hut where his step-son Sheng-pao slept alone. Liang hesitated, wondering whether he should wake the "important personage." The old white one-eyed horse in the shed Sheng-pao had built behind the

shack after liberation, whinnied a fond greeting, no doubt recognizing the step of his old master. His belly full of ire, Liang angrily flung the basket into the entrance way beneath the hut's overhanging thatch and stomped into the shed.

A moment later, he came out with a rake in his hand and once more proceeded to



the threshing ground outside the gate. He began raking over the rice roots he had gathered when their mutual-aid team had been hoeing the paddy fields. He had hitched the old white horse to the stone roller on the threshing field and ground off the wet earth from the roots, leaving them to dry in the sun for two days. Dried roots made good fuel!

"Slumber on, my young gentleman!" he muttered balefully. "You can rise when breakfast is ready. Out all night at meetings, can't get up in the morning — what kind of peasant do you call yourself!"

He didn't know at what hour Sheng-pao had returned from his meeting. It was the old man who gave the one-eyed old white horse its nightly feeding. For convenience' sake he slept on a small brick bed in the corner of the shed. "I let you sleep in a nice clean shack, but you never do any farm work," he thought. "Just keep it up, young fellow. See how long I'll go on being your groom! . . ."

"Has Hsiu-lan left for school yet, Uncle Liang?"

The old man looked up. It was Kai-hsia, the daughter of Widow Hsu of Kuan Creek. Humph! Dressed so neat and clean. Must be trying to hook some man!

"She's gone." He went back to his raking, head down, his manner plainly showing that he didn't wish to speak to her.

Kai-hsia's light steps moved down the path leading from the western edge of the threshing ground to the Tang Stream.

Again Liang raised his head. Narrowing his old eyes, he peered distastefully after the girl. She was also carrying a school-bag. Two long braids hung down her back. "You keep away from our Hsiu-lan," he mumbled into his greying wispy beard. "She's not going to turn out like you. Twenty-one years old and still unmarried! Sooner or later you're sure to do something shameless!"

When Kai-hsia's father was still alive, he had engaged her to a man in Chou Village, at the foot of the mountains. The year the region was liberated, the man wanted to go through with the marriage, but Kai-hsia refused. She said she was too young. When she reached eighteen, the legal marriageable age, she still would not marry him because the match had been arranged without her consent, and she had persisted in her refusal. Only recently, when the new marriage law was formally proclaimed, was Kai-hsia able to have the engagement annulled.

In Liang the Third's opinion, only a person with bad intentions could do such a wicked thing. He was afraid that Kai-hsia would influence Hsiu-lan to take the same path. The boy with whom Hsiu-lan's parents had arranged a match had joined the Chinese People's Volunteers and was now fighting in Korea. Liang wanted them to marry soon, but of course at present that wasn't possible.

His wife, who had just filled a jug with water from the spring in the white poplar grove, came walking back along the outer wall of the compound. Good!

"Look here! You! . . ." he cried harshly. Suppressing his anger with an effort, he stared out at the village-dotted plain extending from the foot of Mount Chungnan.

Surprised at his scowling visage, the old woman set down her jug.

"What's wrong? What are you so mad about?"

"Look here, you!" the old man raged, raising his voice. "I ask you! I know you can't control Little Treasure. But can't you control Hsiu-lan either?"

"What's the matter with Hsiu-lan?"

"I'm not talking just to hear my own voice! I'm telling you straight! Hsiu-lan is my own flesh and blood. I engaged her to that boy in the Yang family personally. I'm not dead yet. I'm not going to let her blacken my name!"

"What are you talking about? . . ."

"You tell Hsiu-lan for me! She's not to go running around with that widow woman's daughter Kai-hsia!"

"Oho!" His wife understood at last. She smiled. The thing wasn't nearly so serious as the expression on the old man's face. The wrinkles in the corners of her eyes contracted and she laughed her clear laugh. "Kai-hsia's all right. Are you afraid she'll give Hsiu-lan some disease?"

"Don't argue! What she'll give Hsiu-lan spreads quicker than any disease!"

"If Hsiu-lan changes, you can come to me!"

"By that time it'll be too late!"

"Well, what do you want to do? The girls are both in the same school. . . ."

"There's only one thing. Hsiu-lan can quit!"

"That would be just fine! The man she's engaged to has been decorated for merit in Korea and promoted to chief of his gun crew.

At New Year's time, everyone went, beating drums and cymbals, and congratulated his family. I suppose you heard about that? When the war is over and he comes home, what if he thinks our girl isn't good enough because she has no education? A lot of glory that'll add to your name!"

The old man's whiskered mouth quivered. He wanted to retort but he couldn't think of an answer. He coughed and again began raking over the dried rice roots. After his wife disappeared through the compound gate, he stopped and gazed at the snow-covered peak of Mount Chungnan, turned crimson by the rising sun. He was sorry he had chosen this topic for an opening. He should have spoken about Sheng-pao refusing to get out of bed in the morning. Liang hated himself for being too soft. He always tried to avoid clashing with Sheng-pao directly. What if he was in the Party? Could he do anything to an old man?

By the time Liang had finished raking over the roots, the bright morning sun was already shining on the waters of the Tang Stream.

From the homes in Hsiapao Village and Huangpao Town, north and east of the winding Tang Stream, the smoke of breakfast fires rose, joining together in a cloud like some huge monster which writhed off towards the cliffs at the end of the plateau. People's voices, the cries of beancurd and bean-sprout vendors, rang through the streets of Hsiapao. Rubber-tired carts, bicycles and pedestrians, were already coming and going along the highway from Huangpao to the county seat. By now it was broad daylight.

The old man went back into the courtyard and leaned his rake against the thatched hut. He looked at Sheng-pao's room and took a belligerent stance.

"The sun is shining on your backside! Aren't you ever getting up? Master Liang!"

In the room there wasn't a sound.

"Are you going to sleep till dark?" the old man cried in a higher pitch.

"Who are you yelling at?" Little Treasure's Ma called from the kitchen.

"Our great man! Who else would still be in bed at this hour?"

The old woman appeared at the kitchen door, a poker in her hand. She laughed.

"Why don't you open the door and see if Sheng-pao's there?"

Liang pushed the door open. On the bed was only a pillow. Even the comforter had been taken away.

"Where's he gone?" Liang turned around and demanded hotly. "It's not even a month since the last time he went to the county for a meeting. Where could he have gone?"

"Don't you know?" the old lady smiled. "When Secretary Wang of the district Party committee stayed with us those few days, he helped the mutual-aid team draw up a production plan. We're going to use a new strain of rice seed this year, didn't you hear? Little Treasure went to Kuo County to buy the new seed. . . ."

"When did he leave?" Liang asked furiously through clenched teeth.

"While you were gathering manure."

"Why didn't he say anything to me?"

"He said he told you. . . ."

"He told me, he told me! And I told *him* not to go! Why did you let him leave, eh? Are mother and son working together to kill this old man? What am I to you two, anyway? Your servant? What are you up to? . . ."

Liang charged ranting out of the compound, then charged back in again, slamming the gate each way. He couldn't control himself; he was working himself into a frenzy. Since Sheng-pao wasn't at home, he could really let off steam. He'd never have a better chance!

"Nothing doing!" he raved, once more rushing to the threshing ground outside the gate. "As long as Liang the Third has a breath left in his body, he's not going to let them push him around! And that's the truth!" He was hopping mad.

The old woman, brushwood twigs sticking to her tunic, a poker in her hand, was very alarmed. Liang had been sulking for days, but she had never thought he'd blow up so violently. She knew from his "them" that he was lumping her and Sheng-pao together. Holding on to her patience with an effort, she tried to calm the old man down.

"Quit your yelling, pa," she said pleasantly. "I'm always telling Sheng-pao not to rile you. But he says no matter how he talks to you, he can't get your stubborn old brain to change. He says the

only way is to show you. When you see for yourself, you'll have to believe him. Of course I'm only a housewife. I don't know much about these things. Anyhow, you shouldn't make such a racket. The neighbours will laugh at us."

"Show me, eh? He's wasting his time!" shouted Liang in the general direction of Hsiapao Village across the stream, as if addressing the eight hundred families resident there. "Who ever heard of planting wheat after you've gathered the rice in this part of the country? Did you? . . ."

Liang didn't even look at his wife. He kept his back to her. But she still spoke to him calmly.

"What if I haven't? Secretary Wang knows that our Little Treasure is always doing things for everyone and he's urged him to try it out on our mutual-aid team's land. Our boy is a Communist. Of course he respects Secretary Wang's wishes."

"He's always doing things for everyone! Did he ever do anything for me? Eh?" yelled the old man, glaring and gnashing his teeth. "When I picked him up out of the snow at the age of four and carried him home, he didn't even have a pair of pants to cover his backside. Don't you remember that? A fine mother and son! What's happened to your hearts? Did a dog eat them? I work myself to the bone, bringing him up, and for what? Tell me that!" Liang felt so put upon he was almost in tears.

A sharp pain stabbed through his wife's breast. Her eyes grew large and she burst into tears. She ran into the shack, threw herself down on the brick bed and sobbed bitterly. It was the first time he had ever reminded her, even during a quarrel, of her unhappy circumstances some twenty years before!

Outside the compound, his torn padded jacket scraping the earthen wall, Liang slowly slid to a squatting position. He stopped shouting, but he was still furious. His head and neck were twisted, his felt skull-cap had slipped to one side.

The uproar brought the neighbours — Jen the Fourth and his wife, the widow and son of Jen the Third, the wife, son, and daughter-in-law of blind old Wang the Second. . . . All hurried over to Liang the Third's compound to try and restore peace. Two daughters-in-law of Liang the Eldest started for the compound, but they were halted by their father-in-law halfway. Bald, flecks of grey in his beard, he was quite prosperous now, and had given

up peddling beancurd more than ten years before. During the land reform, he had been classified as a well-to-do middle peasant.

"Where do you think you're going!" he demanded. Pompously, he informed the girls, "There'll be no end of quarrels in that old thatched hut from now on. Are you going to go running over every day? Your uncle Liang the Third is a cast-iron knife. He looks fierce, but goes blunt at the first bump. Don't you think he could handle Sheng-pao if he really were sharp? Go on home!"

Several of the women neighbours hastened into the thatched hut to comfort Little Treasure's Ma. The men spoke soothing words to Liang the Third outside the compound gate.

"*Hai!* Is it worth it?" asked Jen the Fourth with a sigh. His back also was bent with years of toil on Mount Chungnan. "You're old and so is she. What's there to argue about, brother? . . ."

"Uncle. . . ." Huan-hsi, seventeen-year-old son of Jen the Third's widow, squatted down before Liang and urged him sincerely, "Uncle, don't get so mad!"

"*Hai!* You're both old. What's the use of it? . . ." Jen the Fourth, past forty, was very agitated. He was full of well-intentioned advice, but he didn't know how to put it into words.

Squatting by the wall, Liang the Third hooked a hand over the back of his neck and spat angrily. He didn't say a word. These people annoyed him. They all belonged to Sheng-pao's mutual-aid team. They were still poor after the land reform, and they relied on the help of the team to till the land they had received. He'd known it for some time: It was for their sake that his son Sheng-pao was doing so much running around. . . .

The hours of sunshine lengthened with spring. Except for a person here or there gathering water chestnuts or wild vegetables during the day, Frog Flat was deserted. Flocks of honking geese had already bidden farewell to Tang Stream, and flew across the bare mountains of northern Shensi to Inner Mongolia. The long-billed, long-necked herons and cranes left the muddy river's edge for the miry paddy fields and ditches, where they hunted little fish and insects.

Warm rays of the sun shone on the fresh green barley coming up in the rice fields. Buds were darkening the bare branches of the peach trees in the orchards at the southern end of Kuan Creek.

The spring flowers people had planted to protect the grave mounds were now a mass of brilliant yellow.

Spring, ah, spring. To the plant and animal world you bring renewal, hope and joy. But what did you bring for our friend Liang the Third?

He lay alone, his head pillowed on his arms, in the wide wheat field near the bank of Kuan Creek. Liang didn't know what to do with himself. Although he had eaten virtually no breakfast, he didn't feel hungry. He swallowed constantly to moisten his dry throat.

Lying on the soft yellow earth and tender young wheat, he kept crumbling a handful of soil in his fingers as he gazed up at the endless blue sky and the white clouds drifting westwards. A hawk soaring above him gradually circled lower. At first Liang paid no attention, but soon there were four hawks, and then five, and he realized they were after him.

"Spawn of the demons!" he yelled angrily, sitting up. "I'm not dead yet!"

The hawks saw that he was alive. They flew off to seek a meal elsewhere.

Liang had wandered out to the wheat fields aimlessly, and just lay down. He had a vague desire to find someone to whom he could pour out the misery that was in his heart. But after reclining there for a long time, he couldn't think of anyone he could confide in without fear of being laughed at. Family troubles were not a thing to be talked about in public! . . .

He hadn't intended to mention the painful events of twenty years ago, when his wife and little Sheng-pao had entered his door. His rage had made him speak too cuttingly. Only after he had hurt her severely did he realize that he shouldn't have said anything. No matter how intimate you are with people, you shouldn't prod their old wounds.

But he wasn't sorry that he had quarrelled with her. He had planned for some time to blow up at the first opportunity, believing that this would cause the boy's mother to put a check on him. It would be better than clashing with his step-son directly. But his words had been too extreme and his wife had wept bitterly. Liang hated his stupidity; he had no self-control.

Popping firecrackers in a lane in Kuan Creek Hamlet startled Liang from his brooding thoughts.

"A roof frame's being set in place!" Liang sat up and shaded his eyes. He gazed in the direction of the lane, muttering, "A new roof frame. A new tile-roofed house for Frog Flat. . . ."

"I must go and have a look," he thought.

On the southern side of Kuan Creek the land was higher than the paddy fields opposite, and here forty or fifty families had formed a community known as Kuan Creek Hamlet. After the People's Republic was established in 1949, the hamlet residents combined with some forty households of sharecroppers and poor peasants, who had migrated to the paddy fields from other parts of the countryside, to form a single community named Fifth Village, which was under the administration of Hsiapao Township.

The builder of the new house was Kuo Shih-fu, a well-to-do middle peasant. Liang envied him greatly. When Shih-fu came to Frog Flat as a boy with his father and two brothers, they had rented a piece of land, built an earthen compound wall and a thatched shed and moved in. Now they were a family of twenty-odd people, occupying a handsome compound with tile-roofed houses on three sides; today they were completing the square with a new building in the front. For years, Liang had been dreaming of rebuilding the three-room house his father had erected, but he hadn't been able to do even that!

Aiya! What a lot of people were helping! The whole flat seemed to have turned out. Now the helpers were coming down the ladders while the carpenters gave final raps here and there with their hammers to make the roof frame of white freshly planed beams and struts fit more snugly. The central beam and the pillars supporting it were decorated with colourful good luck symbols and auspicious phrases inscribed on red paper. The felt-capped heads of middle-aged and elderly men, the black-hatted and towel-covered heads of the young fellows, the bun-in-the-back, long-braided and short-bobbed heads of the girls and women . . . were all tipped back as their owners gazed up at the new roof.

Liang the Third, in his worn padded jacket, silently slipped in among them. Not even the people next to him turned to see who had come. Liang too tilted back his head with its tattered felt cap and looked.

Now the carpenters tucked their axes and planes into their waist sashes and also descended the ladders. From the near courtyard the delicious aroma of boiled and roast pork was emanating, and the fragrance of strong mulled wine. Shih-fu, and his two brothers, went among the carpenters, the relatives who had sent gifts and the neighbours who had helped with the frame, to invite them for a feast. Some accepted, some politely declined.

Among the spectators, Liang noticed the rich peasant Yao Shih-chieh. Broad of shoulder and thick of waist, at forty he looked ten years younger. Dressed in a clean padded jacket of black cloth, he stood gazing around proudly, chest high. There always was a mocking gleam in Yao's crafty eyes. Now his manner seemed to be saying: "Jealous? You'd better be satisfied with just looking! What if the Communists gave you a bit of land — do you really hope to build a house like this?" Liang could see it in his rich peasant face. No question about it. He knew Yao. No matter how honest and kindly he tried to appear, inside, Yao was all rotten, like his father before him. They came from the same stock!

Aha! And there was Kuo Chen-shan! The big fellow loomed above the crowd like a heron among paddy birds. He was talking to some people around him in his rich resonant voice. Chairman of the village deputies, a Communist who had joined the Party in 1949, he enjoyed the highest prestige of any man in the village. Liang knew that Chairman Chen-shan and rich peasant Yao were a pair of fighting cocks who often pecked at each other. Before liberation, Chen-shan couldn't out-peck Yao; since liberation, Yao couldn't out-peck Chen-shan. During the land reform, the rich peasants had behaved very meekly for a time. When it was over, although they didn't talk tough, their backbones stiffened. Now these two enemies were here as guests of the house-builder, Shih-fu, both waiting to join the second round of feasters. Two strong men, face to face!

"You stick to your Party," Liang respectfully advised Chen-shan, although he didn't speak the words aloud. "But why should you pull our Sheng-pao in too? He isn't the kind who likes to quarrel. If you take him into the Party, how can an old man like me farm alone? You have two brothers. If one of you works on

the outside, the others can still tend the land. It's easy for you to have public spirit!"

Old Liang didn't dare to give voice to these sentiments. In the presence of competent people, or before a crowd, he had an overwhelming feeling of inferiority.

Oh, oh! Old Kuo the Second had come too! Lord of the Sky, an old man like that had walked all the way from the upstream section to see the setting of the roof frame! Liang gazed at Old Kuo, standing there leaning on his stick, his hair and beard snowy white, a man who had worked hard all his life. He was bent so far forward at the waist, his spine looked as if it had snapped. Liang had the highest regard for Old Kuo, of all the residents of the paddy land. When he had migrated to Frog Flat with his son Ching-hsi years ago, he had brought only a few small farm implements whose handles were worn thin with use. Today the Kuos were a large family, and doing well.

Ching-hsi worked tirelessly; his nickname was "Iron Man." He was a very devoted son who never forgot the care his father had given him as a child, after he lost his mother at the age of five. As a sign of gratitude, he saw to it that the old man had two drams of spirits every day.

The sight of that good-hearted and fortunate old man made Liang think of his own disrespectful son. He felt so aggrieved he was almost ready to weep. He hurried over to Old Kuo. Here was the very man to listen to his troubles. This dear old fellow would never gossip about him.

Those who had not been invited to the feast, turned from discussing the new building to the question of village housing in general. Most people lived in thatched huts. In spring they feared the big winds would blow the roof off. In autumn they feared the rains would disintegrate the earthen walls. Who knew how long it would be before they too could construct tile-roofed houses? Could they hope to gather as much rice as Shih-fu? Impossible! Of course it would be nice if every family could hitch up a rubber-tired cart and transport their rice to the Huangpao Town market. Maybe they could get each stalk to grow as tall as a persimmon tree, and they'd knock the rice off with bamboo poles! Ridiculous! A joke!

"Ha-ha-ha! . . ." A dozen bearded and beardless men threw back their heads and laughed towards the clear blue sky.

They observed that Liang the Third and Kuo the Second were standing together, talking cordially. A young prankster in the crowd named Blabbermouth Sun suddenly shouted for everyone to be quiet, then proclaimed solemnly:

"We have here among us another man who is soon also going to build a tile-roofed house. I'm referring to that old boy!" He pointed scornfully at Liang.

The crowd roared with laughter. Showing not the slightest respect for an elder, a man walked up to Liang without a word and snatched at his worn felt cap.

"Let go! Let go!" Liang begged, pressing his cap to his head with both hands.

"No! *You* let go. Let everyone see how much bigger your skull is than the heads of us ordinary folk. They say that all men of high position have big heads, but we've never had a good look at yours. . . ."

Only when the shamefaced Liang vowed he would start cursing, and Old Kuo had added his urgent pleas, did the merciless hand release the tattered felt cap. People looked at Liang with varying expressions in their eyes — sympathetic, contemptuous, uninterested — as he humbly straightened the cap. Liang never got very angry no matter how shabbily he was treated. Until he built up the family fortunes like his eldest brother and Old Kuo, naturally he couldn't hope for respect.

Wagging his white beard, Old Kuo scolded the young men. "Why are you picking on this honest old fellow?" he demanded.

"Haven't you heard?" cried Blabbermouth, clapping Old Kuo on the shoulder. "He's going to be rich. The whole village is talking about the wonder his son Sheng-pao is going to perform with the mutual-aid team he's leading."

"But I thought the leader of their team is Liang the Eldest's son, Sheng-lu. . . ."

"You're behind the times," exclaimed Blabbermouth dramatically. "That was changed long ago. Last autumn Sheng-lu went to the city for a meeting to compare output of the teams and he came back with a citation. Liang the Eldest said, 'Let me see it.' The minute he got his hands on the citation he didn't even look at

it but tore it to shreds. Then he gave Sheng-lu a strong talking-to. After that, Sheng-lu began back-sliding. Early this February it was Sheng-pao who went into the city for the meeting of mutual-aid team leaders. . . ."

"Oh, I didn't know about that," said Old Kuo.

"Even last year, though Sheng-lu was the team leader in name, Sheng-pao did most of the running around!" Liang the Third explained unhappily.

Old Kuo blinked his wrinkled eyelids with their snowy white lashes as he observed Liang's distressed manner. "What if he's become a team leader?" he said soothingly. "Isn't my own son, Ching-hsi, a team leader too?"

"Just listen to you!" Blabbermouth said to Old Kuo with a laugh. "You never come out of the house. You don't know what's going on. How can you compare Iron Man's team with Sheng-pao's? Sheng-pao's team is our district's key team. When he went to that meeting in the county seat, he accepted a challenge from the best team in the entire county. Now he's added three more families to his team." He turned to Liang. "How many families have you got in your team altogether, uncle?"

"Uh . . . eight. . . ."

"You see! Other teams have three, or at most five, and they're only temporary! Big-brain Wang helped them draw up a production plan personally. . . ."

"Who's Big-brain Wang?"

"The Party secretary of our Huangpao District! Who's got more brains than him?"

"*Aiya*, Committeeman Sun," a bystander interrupted in vexation, "they weren't wrong when they named you Blabbermouth. Once you get going, you can't stop! When you meet Secretary Wang face to face, you're always bowing and scraping. But behind his back you have the nerve to call him Big-brain!"

Although the reference to Sun as "Committeeman" was meant as sarcasm, he was in fact one of the five members of the township's civil affairs committee. (Each village within the township had one resident committeeman for each of the township's five administrative committees — civil affairs, taxes and grain, production, education and military.)

Sun laughed a bit awkwardly, but he refused to be diverted. "Now this production plan, grandpa," he said to Old Kuo, "I hardly dare tell you. It might scare you to death!"

"How much are they aiming for?"

"An average of six hundred catties of rice per *mou*, and on their experimental plot — a thousand!"

"*Aiya!* These modern young fellows certainly are bold!" Old Kuo glanced at Liang the Third. Liang was pale with rage. He looked ready to collapse.

"That's nothing!" Blabbermouth continued. "This autumn after they gather their rice, they're not going to plant barley. They think barley's too coarse. . . ."

"What *will* they plant?"

"Wheat!"

"*Aiya!* . . . Land is like a man. You can only take so much out of it."

"So you've got nothing to worry about!" His story finished, Blabbermouth laughed at Liang mockingly, wrinkling his small nose and little eyes. "With each *mou* of land yielding the grain of several, if you can't build a tile-roofed house, who can?"

Glaring, Liang turned his back on him. "Demon's spawn!" he cursed Blabbermouth inwardly. "You make a joke of other people's troubles. I hope you never find a wife! May you die a lonely bachelor! . . ."

The discussion again became general. Some said Sheng-pao was too young and headstrong. Others said he had been given a few words of praise up in the county and now he was walking on air. Someone ventured to predict that if he didn't fulfil his team's plan he'd probably be guilty of a crime. Hadn't the district Party secretary told them, "Plans are the law!" One opinion was virtually unanimous: If Chen-shan, chairman of the village deputies, were in charge of such a mutual-aid team, it might stand a chance. Sheng-pao was overestimating himself. After he cracked his skull, he'd realize that iron was iron and stone was stone. . . .

Liang's whole being was concentrated in his ears. He took in everything people said. And their words chilled him to the heart!

His gaze lingered on Old Kuo's ruddy countenance, with its white brows and beard and crown of snowy hair. He didn't

understand. The old man spoke slowly and in a low voice; how had he been able to teach his son to know his place? Liang was anxious to learn his method.

"Let's go, Old Kuo," he begged. "Let's go to your place and have a chat. What you say?"

"Good! You're usually so busy, even when I invite you, you don't come. . . ."

II

"Hsiu-lan."

"Mm."

"I—I want to ask you something. . . ."

"Well, what is it? Why are you acting so mysterious?"

Kai-hsia looked amused. Her big eyes were fixed on Hsiu-lan, but she didn't speak.

The two girls were returning from school in Hsiapao Village. Walking shoulder to shoulder along a grassy path on the bank of the Tang Stream, they were approaching a narrow foot-bridge. Dusk was falling, and there had been some rain that early spring day. White snow mantled the peaks of the Chinling Mountains. Beneath a scarlet-streaked sky, the deep green waters of the placid Tang Stream meandered across the paler green of the wide southern Shensi plain. The gorgeous background seemed to accentuate the youthful freshness of these pretty country girls.

"What is it? Kai-hsia, speak up, for pity's sake! Quit looking at me so gimlet-eyed. Do you think you can probe into my heart?" Seeing that Kai-hsia only smiled, Hsiu-lan was sure that she had something special in mind.

"Let me ask you," Kai-hsia finally said with a laugh, "where do you go every morning after the third class?"

"To the next classroom."

"Which one?"

"Why, only my regular classroom."

"Pooh-pooh! You may be there, but your heart's not! Think you can fool me? Every day when the postman comes from Huangpao Town, you sneak out the back gate and go to Big Crossroads. What for?"

"You're just making this up!" Hsiu-lan, blushing, protested weakly.

"Oh, am I? I've been watching you for days! And today I caught you. I followed you and saw you go into the post office with my own eyes. Is it because you can't wait to get a letter from Yang Ming-shan? Confess!"

Hsiu-lan's healthy face went red down to her neck. She was a good, honest girl. Her forehead was like her mother's, but her cheek-bones, her mouth and her nose were all like Liang the Third's.

"Don't be too anxious," Kai-hsia teased. "You sent your letter only a month ago. He's on a battlefield in a foreign land. You can't expect a reply this soon! Are you longing for him? Tell big sister, how does it feel to be so terribly in love? . . ."

Hsiu-lan whirled to clutch her tormentor. But Kai-hsia had been prepared, and she fled, laughing. Blushing, biting her lower lip angrily to mask the joy in her heart, Hsiu-lan pursued her hotly. The two girls, holding their school-bags, raced in circles on the grassy bank. Finally, weak with laughter, Kai-hsia collapsed to the ground. Hands strong as a boy's yanked her braids from behind.

"Will you behave or not?" Hsiu-lan demanded of her captive.

". . . Behave. . . ." Kai-hsia was choking with mirth.

"Will you ever dare talk nonsense again? Will you?"

"Never . . . never!"

Only after Kai-hsia vowed that she would guard the secret with her life did Hsiu-lan release her. The two girls resumed their journey back to Fifth Village.

The truth was that Kai-hsia secretly envied Hsiu-lan: Her sweetheart was a hero on the Korean front, while Hsiu-lan herself was leading a settled life at home, attending school. With such a sweetheart any girl would be likely to walk with a light step, study calmly, eat heartily, and dream sweet dreams. Even if she had to wait a few years before she could marry, what did it matter?

Kai-hsia hated the village gossips who said that she had broken her engagement with the Chou Village man because she thought he wasn't handsome. There were always vulgar individuals who judged people with noble ideals by their own low standards!

She couldn't be bothered with them. Since the new society gave her the freedom to choose her own husband, she would certainly seek a progressive-minded young fellow who was doing something useful for the community. That was the only kind of man by whose side she would be willing to live. Although a few years of the flower of her youth had passed in fighting for the dissolution of the arranged match, Kai-hsia was in no hurry. She wanted to be sure that she got the right man.

Hsiu-lan's happiness had a strong effect upon her. Recently she had been thinking of men quite a bit. Not for physical reasons, but compared with Hsiu-lan, she felt that her own life was very empty. She certainly wasn't longing for marriage! If that were the kind of girl she was, she wouldn't have fought for three years until she succeeded in breaking her engagement. She wanted to be the same as Hsiu-lan — to have a man whom she could think of, and who would think of her, a man she could be proud of, who would make her feel warm and sweet!

Kai-hsia was aware of the fact that she had changed a lot since she had broken off the engagement. Before, she used to be lively and gay in the presence of the boys she knew. But now that she had the right to find a husband of her own choosing, afraid of being misunderstood, she was more restrained. She felt that many people, both in the village and at school, looked at her with different eyes. That was unavoidable. She was old enough to be the teacher of the little girls in her third-year class — Kai-hsia was the same age as the young women teaching first and second year. Was it any wonder that she attracted attention?

It was different with Hsiu-lan. Engaged to a man in the Chinese People's Volunteers, she was admired as a hero's prospective bride. Kai-hsia didn't know what her own future would be. At twenty-one, she worried about this problem.

But Kai-hsia never discussed her troubles with anyone, not even Hsiu-lan. Her fair-complexioned face was always tranquil, composed. . . .

After they crossed the bridge, she asked Hsiu-lan, "Have your pa and ma made up yet?"

"They still don't say much to each other. It'll take time for them to get back to normal."

"Is your pa still so crabby?" Kai-hsia queried, concerned.

"He's a lot better," replied Hsiu-lan, sensitively watching Kai-hsia's expression. She deliberately stressed her father's good qualities.

"My pa is really something," she said. "That day he had a long talk with Old Kuo the Second. Old Kuo must have urged him to make up. Anyhow, he came home and apologized to my ma. 'Forget it!' he said. 'Don't feel bad any more. I was wrong! From now on, I won't bother about a thing. Just give me my food and my clothes. That's all I'll ask!' And he walked out and went into the stable. My brother is right. He says our pa has a stubborn streak, but he's very good-hearted. Although he's always grumbling, his hands are never idle for a minute. . . ."

Kai-hsia hesitated a moment. "Your brother is a funny one. At home your folks are quarrelling about him, in the village some people are laughing at him. Doesn't he care? Is he really so sure his mutual-aid team can fulfil its plan? Doesn't he have any doubts at all?"

Hsiu-lan laughed. She had a pretty good idea why Kai-hsia asked this.

"You're the funny one. How could he dash around so cheerfully if he had any doubts? Brother says after the meeting of the mutual-aid team leaders in the county, Secretary Yang had a private talk with him. Brother says with the Party leading things, what's he got to worry about? Don't you know my brother? Once he sees his way clear, eight big ropes can't hold him back."

She was praising him on purpose, for she remembered that Sheng-pao and Kai-hsia had once been very friendly.

Her words went deep into Kai-hsia's heart. The older girl knew him indeed. During the land reform she had seen how, unobtrusively, solidly, he always acted firmly for the common good. But she hadn't guessed that he would have the courage to undertake this startling plan that had the whole township talking. "With the Party leading things, what's he got to worry about?" That was typical of Sheng-pao. . . .

When the girls reached the Liang compound gate, Hsiu-lan invited Kai-hsia in.

"No. It's too late," Kai-hsia said dubiously. "I've got to go home."

But she didn't move. Gazing off at Mount Chungnan, covered with fresh sparkling snow, she thought of how contemptuously old Liang always looked at her, how coldly he spoke. She didn't want to meet him. At the same time, her large beautiful eyes swept through the open gateway and settled upon Sheng-pao's thatched hut. She was very tempted to take advantage of the absence of this boy she so admired to sample the atmosphere of his room.

"Hsiu-lan! Wait a minute!" a deep voice shouted.

The girls turned around. Chairman Chen-shan was coming their way from the stream bank, lightly balancing a huge log on his shoulder. When he caught up with them, the brawny village deputy stood the log on end and held it steady with one hand. His bristly face broke into a friendly smile as he greeted the two Youth Leaguers.

"Are you transporting lumber today, Chairman Chen-shan?" Kai-hsia asked.

"No. I'm coming from a meeting of the township government. I happened to run into a fellow on the road who was taking this log into Huangpao Town to sell. The price was cheap, so I took it off his hands." He looked at Hsiu-lan, "Has your brother come back from the county seat yet?"

"Not yet."

"The township is pushing low-interest grain loans again this year to help peasants who are having a hard time. If people with extra grain lend it to those who are short, there is no chance for the usurers. All the deputies of Fifth Village are going to talk it over in my house tonight. If your brother doesn't get back in time, tell your cousin Sheng-lu to come. His family is the only one likely to have extra grain in this section anyway."

"That's right," Hsiu-lan agreed. "I'll tell him."

"Tell him to be sure to come."

"All right."

"Are you going home, Kai-hsia?" asked the chairman, turning to her with a pleasant smile. "You can carry these charts for me. Don't crumple them."

"Right." Kai-hsia took the roll of papers cheerfully, relieved that she no longer had to ponder whether to go inside. She said goodbye to Hsiu-lan and left with Chairman Chen-shan.

As they walked south along the stream, Chen-shan, shouldering the big log easily, said with a laugh, "I hear you don't like going to school much!"

"That's not true," Kai-hsia replied, surprised. "Where did you hear that?"

"Your ma told me," Chen-shan smiled. He couldn't see her reaction because the log on his shoulder was in the way.

Kai-hsia's face flamed. "Old muddle-head!" she scolded her mother mentally. "Why must you chatter?" But, thinking it over, Kai-hsia decided she was wrong. Why should she conceal anything from the chairman?

"It's like this." Her school-bag in one hand, the charts in the other, Kai-hsia trailed behind Chen-shan on the narrow path. "I'm all confused," she explained in some embarrassment, "I'm too old for school. Even if I finish primary school, I won't go on to middle school. Wouldn't it be better if I started earlier with agriculture, with developing the mutual-aid teams? . . ."

"No!" the chairman of the village deputies retorted unceremoniously, poking his big head with its small peaked cap around the side of the log. "Of course not. If it weren't for liberation could you have gone to school at all? In the old society we muddy-legged paddy dwellers couldn't even send our sons to school, to say nothing of daughters. It's only thanks to the Communist Party and Chairman Mao that we can do it today. As long as the school doesn't say you're over-age, you stay right there and study! Education is a fine thing. Cram in as much as you can swallow; it won't hurt your stomach. Don't laugh. It's true! When you study a lot, your brain gets smarter, you're able to write things. Whatever job you do, Kai-hsia, it's better to be educated. Do you follow me? . . ."

The girl gazed respectfully at the burly chairman, dressed in an old padded jacket and carrying the heavy log on his shoulder, as he strode on ahead of her. Kai-hsia had the highest regard for this peasant Communist who always spoke convincingly. No one could help unravel the knots in her heart better than he.

It was the private opinion of many around Frog Flat that as an administrator Chen-shan was in no way inferior to Secretary Lu of the township Party branch. Only having a large family with many problems kept Chen-shan from giving up farming and

devoting all his time to Party work. Kai-hsia agreed with this view. Her mother had told her: When Chen-shan was a young man, because he didn't have enough land, he had peddled earthenware in the hamlets and villages. When he set his load down in the middle of a village street and cried his wares, many women came out. Although most of them had no intention of buying, Chen-shan spoke so eloquently that they were happy to change their minds. He made them feel that to give their grain for his earthenware jugs and basins was the most intelligent, most sensible thing they could do that day. That's how persuasive a talker Chen-shan was!

Kai-hsia herself had been helped by the chairman's powers of speech. In 1950 when she started school, her ma was opposed. It was Chen-shan, then chairman of the peasants' association, who had talked the conservative old woman around. On the question of breaking off her engagement, she had argued with her mother for three years. In the end again it was the chairman who broke down her ma's old-fashioned prejudices.

Kai-hsia idolized Chen-shan because the clever peasant had been like a brother to her. She was alone in the world except for her widowed mother, but he had brought her into the political life of Fifth Village and taught her, a simple country girl, to know the taste of social struggle, a thing she had never even dreamed of. Today she was a member of the Youth League branch committee of the Hsiapao primary school. It seemed to her that after liberation the sky had become bluer, the sun redder, the earth fresher. She was more and more eager to work for social causes. Kai-hsia felt that only by taking an active part could she be worthy of the country's liberation, of the education and training the Party was giving her. . . .

On the cart road that led through the paddy fields to Kuan Creek Hamlet, Chen-shan effortlessly swung the log over from his left shoulder to his right.

"You go on with your studies for the time being," he said. "Don't get any silly ideas whatever you do. You're not studying for yourself, but for our country. This is the first year of China's big construction programme. Everywhere we're building factories, opening up mines, laying railways. But we've only just started, we're only breaking the ground. Our projects will need more

and more people, and the countryside has to supply them. I hear that even many military men are being switched over to industry. The lower government levels need more people too, no end of them. Do you follow me? . . ."

Walking behind the chairman, her school-bag in one hand and the chairman's charts in the other, Kai-hsia listened attentively. She understood now: the chairman was again opening up a new world for her.

Kai-hsia's heart beat faster. His words stirred her. But then she thought of Sheng-pao, of working together with him in the mutual-aid team movement, and she said:

"I'm more suited to running around in our paddy fields, Chairman Chen-shan. Outside, I probably—"

"Hah, you think of yourself as only one inch tall!" Chen-shan didn't try to get at what was in her mind. He went on pressing his point. "Looking down on yourself was a woman's trait in the old society, Kai-hsia! You ought to understand: A Communist, a Youth Leaguer, male or female, is needed and welcomed in every part of the country! Why?" He lowered his voice. "Because, just like here in our village, Communists and Youth Leaguers are bone to the people's flesh. Don't you know that yet? . . ."

Kai-hsia was very pleased with Chen-shan. He always encouraged her not to underestimate herself.

"Surely you don't mean if the organization sends you you won't go?" Chen-shan persisted. "Last year the provincial cotton mill was looking for women workers. They wanted two from Hsiapao Township. They said naturally Youth Leaguers would be best! At that time, I put your name up. But Secretary Lu said you hadn't broken off your engagement yet; if we sent you, the man's family would say we were preventing the marriage. But what's to hold you back if there's a call from another factory this year? People are fighting for the chance to go to Korea. If you could take part in national construction, would you refuse? In that case what does our country need Party members and Youth Leaguers for?"

Kai-hsia's heart sank. It was a question of principle, the way Chen-shan put it. Was this to be a new turning-point in her life? She'd have to make up her mind quickly — was she going

to become Sheng-pao's sweetheart, or was she going to work in a factory in Sian . . . ?

"Will there be another call from a factory this spring?" she asked hesitantly, beginning to get a little worried.

"I hear a new textile mill has gone up east of Sian. It's bigger than the Number One and Number Two State Mills put together. They'll be needing over ten thousand workers."

Kai-hsia grew even more alarmed. "But there hasn't been any call yet? . . ."

"Not yet. But it's in the wind. Figure it out for yourself. With a mill like that finished, it can't be long before they start wanting people. I guarantee they'll ask for unmarried young folks this time too, including a certain proportion of Youth Leaguers. No question about it! Take my advice, Kai-hsia, and you won't go wrong. Your ma never had a son, though she's always longed for one. Why don't you be a son to her? Be bold, go out into the world! If you agree, you needn't worry about your ma not giving her consent. Just leave her to me!"

Kai-hsia made no reply. Fortunately, the log on the chairman's shoulder prevented him from seeing her expression. Her fair face had grown sombre in spite of the rosy sunset glow. Chen-shan hadn't unravelled the knot in her heart this time. He had added to its heaviness.

Like anyone confronted with an unexpected crisis, Kai-hsia couldn't think clearly. Her feelings were mixed. She wasn't entirely uninterested in working in a factory. It deserved serious consideration. As a personal future it might prove more interesting, more ideal, more useful, than what work in the countryside offered. Certainly its value to the Party and the country couldn't be denied.

Kai-hsia was sorely troubled. Only a few moments before, all her thoughts were of Sheng-pao, and there had been no contradiction between her love for him and her desire to do a useful job. She and Sheng-pao could have a happy home together and at the same time work towards setting new records in rice crop yields.

Kai-hsia didn't feel that her three years of schooling had injected any new element into her choice of a husband. She had started going to school in the first place so that if she were unable

to break off her engagement she wouldn't have to be an ordinary peasant wife after marriage but could participate in the various community activities of Chou Village. It had never occurred to her that a new possibility would crop up abruptly—a possibility that was very appealing as a career, but in sharp conflict with her love.

Life, oh life, why are you always posing such difficult problems? . . .

Kai-hsia had already decided that when Sheng-pao came back with the rice seed he was buying she would go to him and put an end to the unnatural distance they had kept between them during the past two years; she would openly and honestly discuss their feelings for each other. Now she wondered whether such a course was wise.

When Chen-shan and Kai-hsia were about two hundred metres from Kuan Creek Hamlet, to mask her concern the girl said with deliberate sprightliness, "Chairman Chen-shan, many people in the village are laughing at the plan of Sheng-pao's mutual-aid team. What do you think? Can they carry it out?"

Her big eyes gazing anxiously at the chairman walking ahead of her, Kai-hsia waited for his reply. Chen-shan halted, rested one end of the log on the ground and stood it upright.

"Hey! Blabbermouth!" he shouted.

"Ai!" Blabbermouth responded. He was giving some pigs their evening meal beside a thatched hut in the paddy fields.

"Come over here. I've got a couple of forms for you. Fill them out in the next two or three days and deliver them to the township government. . . ."

"Right." Blabbermouth put down his wooden slops ladle and came trotting up along the small path between the fields. The twenty-four-year-old bachelor stared tremulously at the lovely Kai-hsia as he accepted the forms from her hand. After Blabbermouth went back to his pigs, Chen-shan again set the log on his shoulder and strode off vigorously. He made no reply to Kai-hsia's question.

With a timid smile, the girl persisted, "Can they produce so much, Chairman Chen-shan? A number of people in the village are laughing at them. It sounds risky to me. . . ."

"If they can, they'll be of some help to the team's poor peasants and ex-hired hands. . . ."

"Secretary Wang, the last time he came to our village, called the mutual-aid teams 'buds of socialism.'"

But Chen-shan obviously didn't want to discuss this. He gave a stern cough and said, "If it weren't for liberation, if we were still in the old society, you'd be married and living in Chou Village four years by now. After you'd had your first baby you'd be stuck, whether you liked it or not. It would just be your hard luck! In the old days, a woman couldn't read a word. The kitchen stove, the well, the grist mill — that was her whole world. And what could she do about it? But what a difference today! Our women are free! Any woman who uses her head, who studies, who sticks it out, ranks the same as any man. Think it over!"

"All right, I will. . . ." Their paths separated and she said goodbye. From the way the chairman spoke, it seemed to Kai-hsia that he didn't approve of her alliance with Sheng-pao. She wondered whether her mother could have put him up to talking to her about it.

Aiya! What was she going to do? Kai-hsia had a child-like faith in the chairman. He had seen so much more of the world than she! He was already famous in the paddy fields when she was still a toddling infant. During the land reform, Chen-shan became known as the "Dive Bomber." At mass accusation meetings against tyrannical landlords, he had only to give one shout and the accused would wet their pants in terror. Kai-hsia sincerely respected him. To her, his prestige was unshakable.

Of course he was quite right. She knew what liberation meant; she could sense its effect upon her the same way she reacted to hot and cold. The chairman was concerned about her, he encouraged her to progress, without the slightest selfish motive on his part. It was only due to his enthusiastic support of national construction. Why shouldn't she think over his advice? It seemed to Kai-hsia that to go against Chen-shan's wishes was tantamount to going against the wishes of the Party — pure ingratitude!

Ah! What's more the chairman didn't think much of Sheng-pao's mutual-aid team.

He apparently didn't agree that the mutual-aid teams were the buds of socialism. All he conceded was that they might be "of some help to the team's poor peasants and ex-hired hands." Kai-hsia wished she had more than just enthusiasm for building socialism, that her mind was better developed. Who was right — Sheng-pao or Chairman Chen-shan? At first, Kai-hsia had thought that Chen-shan was irritated because Sheng-pao had announced his bold plan before talking it over with him. But now she realized that the attitudes of the two towards the mutual-aid teams were completely different. Maybe the chairman was right. Many of the peasants didn't seem interested in forming mutual-aid teams. As to socialism, most peasants could hardly pronounce the word. It was a brand-new concept to them. Could that be why Sheng-pao's efforts were being laughed at?

"Oh, Sheng-pao," thought Kai-hsia as she turned into her lane in Kuan Creek Hamlet, "why didn't you discuss it with Chairman Chen-shan before you talked so big at the county meeting? You're so rash. How can you succeed without the chairman's help?"

The deepening twilight added to her depression. She was beginning to worry that her loved one might go down in shameful defeat. Chen-shan held such a strong position in the village and in the Party. Unless he supported Sheng-pao and encouraged his team to fulfil its production plan, what odds they would have to fight against! Kai-hsia hesitated. Hadn't she better get hold of Hsiu-lan immediately and have her pass this information on to Sheng-pao? Let him think it over carefully. At least he could modify his goals so that he wouldn't look too bad later on. . . .

But no, that was impossible! Only the grass by the side of the path, the waters of the creek, the barley in the paddy fields, could know the words the chairman spoke to her today! "Whatever you do, you cannot repeat what Chairman Chen-shan said," she told herself. "They're the two Communists in our village. You must never stir up trouble between them. . . ."

When she was taking part in the land reform movement with Sheng-pao, how often she had thought, "Wouldn't I be lucky to have a husband like him!" Although she never said it aloud, her expressive eyes conveyed plainly to Sheng-pao what was in

her heart, upsetting him delightfully. And she knew that Sheng-pao cared for her—he blushed whenever they met. But today, when she was at last free to marry him, this important change had to come into their lives!

“Yes, Sheng-pao, you’re a splendid young fellow!” thought Kai-hsia. “But how can you be so bold and confident about mutual-aid teams and so terribly slow when it comes to me? If only you’d come after me with a little more courage, a little more drive, we might have settled everything before you went off to Kuo County to buy seed, and I’d never have landed in such a fix. . . .”

III

From an oil lamp on an altar table used for offering prayers to ancestors at the New Year, black smoke was rising. The lamp’s feeble light fell on the faces of the peasants sitting or squatting on low benches.

Chairman Chen-shan stood beside the table, leaning against the whitewashed wall, addressing his assembled guests. On the wall were two red satin banners that had been awarded to Fifth Village. One was for having been the first village in Huangpao District to pay the grain tax in 1950. The other was for having taken the most active part, in 1951, in the movement to resist U.S. aggression and aid Korea. Fifth Village had won both these honours under the leadership of Chen-shan, chairman of the village deputies. On entering his thatched hut and seeing these banners, no one could help but say to himself: “This Chen-shan is certainly a forward-going fellow!”

Chen-shan had a remarkable memory. He explained in his own vigorous language the advantages of the plan to lend grain to the needy without forgetting a thing the head of the township government and the township Party secretary had said. Although the poor peasants and hired hands had all been given plots under the land reform, he said, they had little capital to fall back on. Unless the village government could persuade people with surplus grain to lend them some at low interest, they would be forced to borrow from the wealthy at usurious rates. Not many mutual-

aid teams had been formed as yet, and the poor peasants and former hired hands still weren’t firm on their feet. The government had to take a hand. Otherwise they might run up new debts and have to sell the land they had received. . . . Chen-shan made it very plain.

“This shows the importance of village administrative personnel,” he concluded, in language a bit too highflown for his simple audience. “Fellow deputies! After we check up and discover who in each ward is short of grain and who has a surplus, we’ll call a mass meeting and urge every one to cooperate. Any village officer with extra grain ought to be among the first to offer a loan. Our village has never been backward in any way. Let’s not slacken now. We don’t want our neighbours on the northern side of the stream to laugh at us!”

“Cut it short, will you, Chen-shan?” called his mother. She was already in bed in the darkened east wing.

“Lamp oil costs money. You can’t scoop it out of the Tang Stream,” she was heard complaining to her daughter-in-law. “If I had known he was going to talk so long, I would have insisted that he hold his meeting at the school. That’s government lamp oil over there. I wouldn’t care if he talked all night!”

Chen-shan reddened furiously. His mother was making him lose face! He could see that the others were holding back their laughter only for fear of embarrassing him.

Luckily, the old woman said no more. If she had, her important son might have flown at her.

“Anybody have any ideas?” Chen-shan asked, forcing a smile. He dipped his pipe into his tobacco pouch and began filling the bowl. He gazed around the room authoritatively.



There was a dead silence. The snores of Chen-hai — Chen-shan's younger brother — were plainly audible in the west wing; from the east wing came the sound of the ox munching sliced corn stalks. The night was very still. Someone was playing fiddle, soft and pleasant to the ear, in one of the thatched huts in the paddy fields beyond Chen-shan's compound wall.

No one spoke. Deputy from the village's First Ward, Shih-fu, the well-to-do middle peasant, his lowered head crowned by a round felt skull-cap, was squatting on his heels, drawing lines on the earthen floor with the metal bowl of his pipe. Kao Tseng-fu, a hard-up peasant in a torn padded jacket, sat on a stool holding a sleeping four-year-old boy in his arms. Deputy from the village's Second Ward, he gazed with annoyance at Shih-fu's diagram. Third Ward's deputy, Iron Man Ching-hsi, whose filial devotion to his father Old Kuo was so admired by Liang the Third, also had surplus grain. Wearing a towel-cloth head covering, he sat leaning against the whitewashed wall, his eyes closed. He had put in a hard day's work and was worn out!

Sheng-pao, the Fourth Ward deputy, had not returned from the county seat. His alternate, Sheng-lu, had not come either. Instead, the ward had sent seventeen-year-old Huan-hsi. The boy had been instructed to listen and report back what was said, but he was not to speak.

His pipe in his mouth, Chen-shan exhaled smoke through his mouth and nostrils. In a serious but not unpleasant manner, he called:

"Hey, Iron Man! Have you come here to take part in this meeting or to sleep?"

"I'm not asleep!" Iron Man immediately straightened up on his low bench. He smiled awkwardly. "I heard everything you said."

"Well, in that case, what do you think?"

Iron Man gave an embarrassed laugh. He tilted his chin in the direction of well-to-do peasant Shih-fu, still sketching lines on the earthen floor, meaning that Chen-shan should ask him to speak first. Although Shih-fu didn't see this, some sixth sense told him that he was being indicated, and he alertly raised his head. With the habitually conceited air of the wealthy, he cast a supercilious glance at Iron Man.

"Speak your piece!" he ordered. "You've got a mouth of your own, haven't you?"

The honest Iron Man laughed shyly and blinked, his face reddening.

"Go ahead and speak then," Chen-shan said to Shih-fu, sailing with the current. He hoped to get this well-to-do fellow to lend grain again to the needy peasants as he had in the past.

But Shih-fu replied pompously, "Let the others speak first. There's something I have to think over. . . ."

"What is it you're drawing there?" queried Chen-shan. Pipe between his teeth, he carried the oil lamp over and squatted down beside him. Chen-shan saw lines crossing in various directions. "What is this, anyhow?" he asked. "Tell us. . . ."

"It's nothing, really," said Shih-fu with a casual laugh. "Just my new stable. Should I have separate doors for the stalls and the fodder section, or just one? With one door, I'd have to put the trough running north and south. The horses would face east with their tails to the west. If I have two doors, the trough would have to run east and west, and the horses face north with their tails to the south. Both ways have their good points and their bad. With only one door, the stalls would be roomier and I'd save on lumber for the extra door. But it would be a nuisance getting the animals in and out, and the air wouldn't be so good. With two doors, the air would be all right, and I could get the horses in and out easily, but bringing them fodder would be more trouble. I can't make up my mind!" Shih-fu pointed with his pipe at the diagram on the earthen floor.

Rage surged up in Chen-shan's chest; the purple veins in his temples throbbed. He thought: "All the time I've been talking, you've been fooling around with this. And you have the nerve to explain it to me in detail!" The brawny chairman ground his teeth, and the oil lamp trembled in his shaking hand.

But he couldn't let his personal feelings interfere with the grain-lending plan. Holding his fury in check, he said coldly:

"You can figure that out after you get home. First talk about our public business!"

Shih-fu rose to his feet. Haughtily he placed the hand with the pipe behind his back and clasped it in his other hand. Then he stepped forward two paces, chest extended, as if to show every-

one the contrast between his padded jacket of fine black cloth and the tattered garment which Tseng-fu was wearing.

"Friends," he began. In honour of the roof raising on his new house, Shih-fu's moustache had been neatly trimmed. "As you all have seen, this year I'm building a three-room house. In the past, when I had extra grain and you told me to lend it to our poor neighbours, I always did. But this year, honestly, my family is hard up. . . ."

At this, both Tseng-fu and Huan-hsi gave a hoot of laughter. Iron Man either was just playing up to Shih-fu, or perhaps he really thought their interests were the same. Anyhow, he sighed and said:

"Of course, tiles and lumber and wages and meals for building that new house all must eat up an awful lot of grain!"

Chen-shan's big eyes glared at him. Tseng-fu, the sleeping child in his arms, turned to him and said:

"Don't think Shih-fu is as simple as you, Iron Man! He had his building materials prepared two years ago. This year he only had to pay out wages and meals to his workmen. Think it over. Would a man who can plan like Shih-fu ever let himself run short? Like fun!"

Iron Man's laugh was a bit strained. "I didn't know. From what you say, maybe he does have some surplus—" The word "grain" was on the tip of his tongue, but Shih-fu's angry stare made him swallow it down again.

Tseng-fu and Huan-hsi were laughing at him. Iron Man liked to go with the breeze and please everyone, but he was always getting caught in the middle.

"Shih-fu," said Chen-shan sternly, keeping a pleasant expression with an effort, "do you mean to say you don't have two or three *tan* of grain that you can lend to our village needy?"

"I can't spare a single measure! There are more than twenty people in my household; they all have to be fed. And I've got a boy in school in the county seat."

"So the phrase 'All peasants are one family' doesn't mean a thing?"

"Just listen to you! Even my own family won't have enough to eat till the summer harvest!"

"Then we ought to count you in among the needy!" said Chen-shan with heavy sarcasm. He looked at Shih-fu compellingly. He wanted to force him to submit.

But Shih-fu showed no sign of either compliance or agitation. He was obviously striving to give the impression of a serious determined man who had nothing further to discuss.

Chen-shan's bristly face darkened. Shih-fu's unexpected hardness was causing everyone to look at Chen-shan as if to say: "You're the chairman of the village deputies. Why don't you do something?" Chen-shan knew that if Shih-fu wouldn't lend any grain, there was even less hope of expecting anything from Iron Man, Sheng-lu and other ordinary middle peasants. Of course at the township government meeting all the chairmen of the village deputies had said that it was going to be difficult to arrange grain loans this year. But surely at least a little could be done to help the neediest families. Especially since Fifth Village had one of the best administrations in Hsiapao Township.

"Shih-fu!" There was a note of warning in Chen-shan's voice. "Don't decide now. It's true that you're building. But no one's going to believe that a big household like yours can't scrape together a bit of grain to lend. Think it over. Unity between poor and middle peasants is important!"

The well-to-do Shih-fu raised his felt skull-cap with the hand holding his pipe, and with the other pleurably scratched his shaven pate. Shih-fu was past fifty. There were flecks of grey in his close-cropped hair. Everyone watched him, waiting for him to speak. But he only replaced the cap and began leisurely filling his pipe, evidently deep in thought. Then he drew a match from an inner pocket and lit up. . . . Until the meeting disbanded, the arrogant middle peasant maintained his silence.

As the deputies were leaving the dark courtyard, Shih-fu suddenly became very friendly and affable.

"Huan-hsi, my boy!" he called. "Your uncle Jen the Fourth borrowed seven measures of grain from me the spring before last; in the autumn he only returned two. Last year he borrowed five more, but didn't give back a one. That's ten measures, exactly one *tan*, he owes me."

"You . . . what do you mean?" the youngster demanded angrily.

Shih-fu sighed heavily. "Ah, my boy, you don't know what trouble I'm having building that house!"

"Oho!" Huan-hsi at last understood. He shouted: "We're all trying to arrange loans for families that are hard up, and you're pressing to collect old debts! Don't you know that my Fourth Uncle didn't have a furrow of ground to his name before land reform? Two years ago, he was given a bit of land, but he still has to stint and scrape. He never can catch his breath. You're having trouble, but you're building a house! I suppose my uncle's having it easy — out all day with his shovel and mattock working as a day labourer! If he had any grain don't you think he'd repay you?"

"Just listen to the boy! What are you getting so hot about? What am I — a landlord? Are you trying to tell me what to do?"

"Anybody who presses for debts in the spring shortage season is worse than a landlord!"

"Chairman! Did you hear him?" Shih-fu appealed to Chen-shan. "Those loans were made through you personally. You said then that I'd get my grain back in the autumn. If he can't repay me now, it doesn't matter. I can wait. I only asked. But this boy can't even answer me politely. What kind of unity between poor and middle peasants do you call that?"

With a hurt sigh, he walked out of the compound gate, shaking his head.

"We have no grain! Even if you take the case up to Peking, we still have no grain! You can get on your horse and go!" Huan-hsi stood on the clearing outside the gate and shouted after him childishly. A graduate of the township's primary school, he didn't give a rap how prosperous Shih-fu was!

Chen-shan's head felt paralysed, as if it had been clouted by a stick. He wanted to say something that was both biting and yet entirely in keeping with policy: First to criticize Shih-fu for throwing up a smoke screen and passively resisting the government's call; second to criticize Huan-hsi for his bad attitude. But he couldn't think of any suitable words. To put it simply, he was stupefied by Shih-fu's unexpected attack. For the moment Chen-shan couldn't understand what made him suddenly become so inept.

After they all had gone, the big fellow stood alone outside his compound gate. Stars shining through the bare branches of the trees seemed to be laughing at him: "What's happened to your prestige?"

Chen-shan hated himself for not having anticipated that Shih-fu would throw his weight around. Grinding his teeth, he grated, "A fine Communist I'd be if I couldn't handle the likes of you! We'll see about this!"

"Chairman," a low voice called. Chen-shan turned quickly. Tseng-fu was standing behind him, holding his child. With the little boy in his arms and strings of dirty cotton hanging from his torn padded jacket, Tseng-fu presented a forlorn picture.

"You'd better go home and put Tsai-tsai to bed," Chen-shan advised.

"I've been waiting to talk to you alone."

"What about?"

"Yao is moving his grain to his father-in-law's place in Huang-pao Town."

"Why?"

"Why? Would a rich peasant be up to anything good? He says his father-in-law is borrowing it. Actually, they're lending it out in town at high interest!" Tseng-fu dropped his voice lower. "Chairman Chen-shan, I've also heard that Shih-fu is doing the same thing in Tsai Village, using his brother-in-law's name. This campaign to lend grain to the needy, Chairman Chen-shan . . . it isn't going to be easy. . . ."

Accustomed to obedience from every peasant in Frog Flat, Chen-shan couldn't fall asleep, though the hour was late.

Past events, one after another, reviewed themselves in his mind.

Shih-fu and his two brothers had been dressed in clothes as tattered as Tseng-fu's when they first arrived in Frog Flat. Unable to rent enough paddy to meet their needs, they had to hire themselves out as day labourers, like Jen the Fourth was doing today. Shih-fu had worked without a let-up. He never even had time to get his head shaved. Brushwood twigs matted his straggly locks, the flesh between thumb and forefinger on both of his hands was split and constantly bled. The women of the family had only unlined trousers to wear in winter. The children

had no pants at all; their little legs were red as turnips from the cold.

One winter something unexpected happened. A big landlord sold forty-eight *mou* of paddy fields along the Tang Stream to the commander of a Kuomintang cavalry division. The new owner, who was from a warlord family of bandit origin and lived in the county town, knew nothing about raising rice and had neither the interest nor the inclination to deal with the many sharecroppers to whom the land was rented. He sent an emissary into Hsiapao Village to find a single reliable family which could rent it all. Shih-fu and his brothers were selected. As a result, a few years later, Shih-fu was the owner of a horse and cart and had become quite prosperous. The threshing ground outside the brothers' compound gate was piled mountain high with brushwood. Chen-shan could remember this as clearly as if it were yesterday.

Shih-fu often would dress himself neatly, take a pair of bamboo baskets covered by clean white towel cloths, and go into town to pay his respects to his "God of Wealth." Each of the four seasons, no matter how busy he might be, when the peaches were ripe Shih-fu presented peaches, when the persimmons were ripe he delivered persimmons. Duck eggs in spring, melons in summer, lotus in autumn, water chestnuts in winter — these were indispensable "gifts." Each time Shih-fu returned from town, he glowingly exaggerated how well he had been treated in his patron's mansion — How old madame had instructed the armed guard to escort him to her chambers in the main building, how solicitously she had asked him all about the land. . . . He gushed so fulsomely that his audience of sharecroppers was disgusted. "What!" they taunted. "You mean you didn't get down on your knees and kowtow to the old lady?"

But Shih-fu didn't care whether people loathed him or envied him. As the tenant of forty-eight *mou* of paddy, he was able to build up his family fortunes. Every winter bankrupt smallholders, misery written on their faces, sold out to him, placing their land deeds into Shih-fu's horny hand. Finally, his own holdings grew so large that he decided to sublet the rented land. Many of the local sharecroppers played up to him, and from among their number he selected a few to be his sub-tenants, including

the present chairman of the village deputies. Chen-shan at that time, because he couldn't rent enough land, was peddling earthenware on the side.

"How much rent must we give for this paddy?" the new tenants asked.

"The same as I pay the landlord," Shih-fu replied magnanimously.

"And how much is that?"

"I . . . *Hai!* Stream bank land — there's a fixed rate for that."

"Four measures of grain per *mou*?"

"Uh . . . that's right. . . ." Pretending to be searching for something, Shih-fu turned his face away.

A few of the new tenants exchanged glances. Although they were suspicious, they didn't say anything. But Chen-shan fixed his big eyes on Shih-fu's uneasy face.

"I thought you were paying three measures for this land, uncle," he said bluntly. "When did your rent go up?"

Shih-fu flushed crimson. His lie exposed, he blustered to cover his embarrassment.

"Rent or not, that's up to you! You're always the hardest one to talk to! . . ." Shih-fu's tone was that of an elder addressing one of the younger generation.

"Now, uncle. . . ." For the sake of keeping the rent down, Chen-shan threw face-saving to the wind. "Didn't poverty drive us all from our native village to Frog Flat together? What did your family look like then? Beggars who've just had a mouthful shouldn't be hard on starvelings longing for a meal!"

Red and shamefaced, Shih-fu dropped his felt skull-cap covered head. After a while he raised it again and, still blushing, said:

"This really puts me on a spot. Everyone knows how many presents I have to send the landlord each year! You'll all be tilling the land, but he deals only with me. If I gave him less gifts, he might think me ungrateful. If I asked the rest of you to share in the cost, how could we figure what each should give? I thought and thought, and finally decided the easiest way was to ask for a little more rent. So . . . so . . . I really didn't know how to put it to you."

"That's all right. You did the right thing!" Several of the tenants weakened, unwilling to speak further about this delicate subject.

"No! It's not right!" said Chen-shan, his face hardening. "How many *tan* of grain are those presents worth that Uncle Shih-fu gives to the landlord? Have you thought about that? Only a fraction of what he'll be getting if we each add one measure *per mou*!"

Without a trace of civility, he turned to Shih-fu and said: "We'll do it this way, uncle. The next time you want to send gifts, just let me know. I'll get everyone to chip in!"

Shih-fu hated Chen-shan from that day onward. If he saw Chen-shan coming, he went out of his way to avoid him. If he couldn't help meeting him, Shih-fu twisted his lips into a faint grimace of a smile. He might mumble something, or say nothing. But in the paddy fields, Chen-shan had acquired prestige. He was respected as the leader of the exploited sharecroppers.

After liberation, Chen-shan was elected chairman of the village peasants' association and Shih-fu's attitude towards him suddenly changed. Now when they met, Shih-fu's face crinkled in a big smile right up to the corners of his eyes, and he hailed the chairman obsequiously:

"Chen-shan, how are you? Had your dinner yet?"

Then land reform rocked Hsiapao Village like a storm. When Chen-shan strode through the paddy fields, the land trembled beneath his feet. He was the most important man in Frog Flat. His ardent words and bold actions reflected the longing of the poor sharecroppers for land and proper production conditions. Chen-shan's large eyes grew bloodshot from lack of sleep. He hadn't seen Shih-fu for two months. People said the old man was ailing. He couldn't eat. He had become so thin, he was just skin and bones. He probably wouldn't last long. Chen-shan thought it a pity that a man who loved to work so should just fade away.

One snowy night Chen-shan returned home from a meeting of the township government. He climbed onto his brick bed and was taking off his clothes when he heard someone rapping on his compound gate. . . .

"Who's there?"

"It's me," said the voice of Blabbermouth.

Chen-shan went out and opened the gate. But it wasn't Blabbermouth who confronted him! A dark figure, tall and thin, bent far forward at the waist, tottered into the compound. Blabbermouth was holding him by the arms from behind to keep him from falling.

"Blabbermouth, who is this fellow?"

"Me . . ." said Shih-fu in the timid tone of a criminal.

"What is this, anyhow?" Chen-shan demanded, mystified.

The three of them walked into the house — into the same room where the peasants met tonight to discuss the low-interest grain loans. Shih-fu looked thirty per cent mortal and seventy per cent ghost. His eyes were sunk deep in their sockets. He was like a corpse who had just crawled out of his coffin. Chen-shan was shocked.

"Uncle has come to learn nephew's decision," the old man said humbly. His head, topped by a felt skull-cap, hung low.

Chen-shan didn't understand.

"Uncle's fate is in nephew's hands. If you tell me to live, nephew, I'll live —"

"What's he talking about?" Chen-shan asked Blabbermouth.

The garrulous young man coughed, cleared his throat, and plunged into his spiel.

"He's afraid of a public accusation meeting. The past two months he hasn't been able to eat or sleep. If he hears the slightest noise outside during the night, he sends one of his family out to see whether militiamen are watching his house. If anyone drops in during the day, he's sure that it's to summon him to an accusation meeting, and he breaks into a cold sweat. Tonight, he came to my place and begged me to bring him to see you. . . ."

"Hah!" Chen-shan was amused. "He thinks I'll use my position to get even with him for a private grudge?"

Shih-fu didn't utter a sound. He didn't even raise his head.

"You needn't worry!" Chen-shan announced authoritatively. "The land-reform team has analysed your case and decided your class status. You're a well-to-do middle peasant! Formerly, you played up to the landlords. You must recognize your wrong-

doing and reform. From now on you must go along sincerely with the poor peasants and hired hands."

Shih-fu looked up, joy shining in his sunken eyes. His soul had returned to his emaciated frame.

"Relatives or not, we peasants are all one family." Chen-shan couldn't refrain from giving his uncle a bit of a lecture. "You hated me when I wouldn't let you squeeze some extra rent out of us for yourself. You avoided me, you wouldn't even speak to me. Little did you know that your worthless nephew was actually saving you from becoming a sub-landlord!"

Shih-fu hung his head lower than before. He sighed deeply with the air of a man who despised himself thoroughly. . . .

When Chen-shan came home again the next day, his mother said: "Shih-fu has sent us a basket of cakes, a jug of wine and a package of fine noodles. The wine is in the cupboard; I left it for you. The cakes and noodles I sent to your brother-in-law. He's very sick and can't eat rice."

"What! Ma!" Chen-shan's big eyes were popping from his head. "We can't accept presents! We've got to return them! Have you sent them off already?"

"Yes!"

"How could you be so short-sighted? People will say I was protecting him from getting a bad class status!"

"How was I to know?" the old woman argued, using the weight of her position as a mother. "I thought if a man was trying to get on the good side of you and we refused his gifts, he'd feel hurt. You know Shih-fu loves to deliver gifts. He used to send presents to the landlord in the county town. Now he's delivered some to us. How could I tell this was any different? If you must refuse, buy another basket of cakes and send that back to him!"

"Enough, enough, enough!" Chen-shan said to himself. "If we've accepted then we've accepted! I haven't protected him. If people want to gossip, that's up to them. Besides, Shih-fu's such a calculating bird. If, in my position, I return his gifts, he's sure to get hysterical again!"

Chen-shan thought it would be too wasteful to drink the wine. At the next market day he had his younger brother, Chen-hai,

take it into Huangpao Town and sell it and buy the ox a new bridle and halter.

Shih-fu gradually regained his health. When the landlords' fields were distributed, he was strong enough to take part in driving the stakes with the names of the new owners in the plots of paddy. He was extremely zealous in this service to the poor peasants and hired hands. Biting his lower lip with the effort, he pounded the name stakes vigorously. Whenever he met anyone, he would say, like an incantation:

"All peasants under heaven are one family. . . ."

And when Chen-shan, the chairman of the peasants' association, appeared, Shih-fu grew more diligent still. It was as if everything would go to seed were it not for him. Sheng-pao, Tseng-fu and Kai-hsia were irritated by Shih-fu's hypocrisy, but Chen-shan didn't see anything wrong. The fellow was making progress, wasn't he?

After land reform was completed, Chen-shan suggested that a small primary school be built in Kuan Creek Hamlet. Let the children of the poor peasants and hired hands become educated! At a meeting of the whole village, he fixed rich peasant Yao with an imperious gaze and proposed that as a gesture of support to the cultural liberation of the former downtrodden, Yao contribute his four big white poplars to make the beams; the poor peasants and hired hands would contribute the labour. Filled with admiration for Chen-shan's bold plan, every man and woman in Frog Flat watched Yao's unhappy face. Yao hesitated, then raised his head, gave Chen-shan a hostile glare, swallowed hard, and consented.

Immediately, the sly Shih-fu rose amid the crowd. He offered his own two white poplars, to demonstrate, he said, the "unity between the middle and poor peasants." This announcement was greeted by thunderous applause.

During the first general election, on Chen-shan's recommendation, Shih-fu was chosen deputy from east Kuan Creek Hamlet to the township people's council. In the spring of 1951, Shih-fu loaned the needy peasants of his village six *tan* of grain. The following spring, he loaned five more. At meetings of the township government, this brought glory to Chen-shan. The chair-

men of other villages wondered what magic words the chairman of Frog Flat used to make his work go so well. . . .

Now, lying in his bed, Chen-shan muttered: "So that's how it is, Shih-fu! Now that the government has proclaimed the land-reform period over, you've quit pretending!* You've no respect for me at all! You've gone back to what you were before liberation! We'll see about that. If I can't handle the likes of you, I'm no Communist!"

But how *was* he going to cope with the old fox? Shih-fu's huge household was rich in land and had plenty of labour power, both male and female. With this at his back, the wealthy peasant felt powerful enough to challenge the government's call and the Party leadership in Frog Flat. Though Chen-shan racked his brains, he could think of no concrete measures he might take.

He began to realize that he was strong only when he was part of the stirring revolutionary tide. The main force in Frog Flat had not been his personal prestige but the policies of the Party. If his prestige had been high, it was only because he had carried out those policies.

As this understanding dawned on him, the strapping village chairman broke into a cold sweat. He remembered all the criticisms his comrades had levelled against him during the Party rectification campaign. What an upsetting recollection!

IV

Jen the Fourth put on his ragged padded jacket, tied it at the waist with a rope of rice straw, and shouldered his mattock and shovel.

"Send Kuei-hua with my food at noon. I'll be west of Kuo-chia Village, making mud bricks," he said to his wife.

* At the end of the land-reform period, everyone's class status was finally determined and new land deeds were issued. The receipt of a new deed of his original holdings by a rich peasant or well-to-do middle peasant was in effect a guarantee that he would not be considered a tyrannical landlord and be the object of a public accusation meeting.

"Why not let the girl go along with you? She's fifteen. She can help."

"Who'll bring our meal?" Jen was interested in his wife's proposition.

"I will. What are you looking at? I may walk a little slowly because I had bound feet as a child, but I'll get your food to you, I guarantee!"

"What I mean is — if you bring the food, who'll take care of the kids?"

"I can ask Huan-hsi's ma to keep an eye on them, can't I?"

Jen looked at the row of tots still sleeping under the same torn coverlet, their small heads as downy as unfledged swallows. With horny crooked fingers he affectionately stroked the head of the largest boy. He loved this child the best, for this one would be the first to relieve him of some of his heavy labours.

In the rear of the room, the little yellow ox calf began gnawing its trough. They didn't feed it at night. It ate only during the day, when Kuei-hua grazed it on the banks of the stream. Somebody had to watch that calf! It was always wandering into other people's paddy fields, quite uninvited, and gobbling up their barley sprouts. The owners' kids would curse the calf furiously. The calf didn't mind a bit, but Jen the Fourth was very embarrassed.

"No. Kuei-hua will have to tend the calf!" he said decisively. He stepped over the threshold and departed.

Nearly fifty, Jen's back was stooped. The mattock and shovel he carried were both quite comical. The square-shaped shovel had been worn down till it was one third its original size and its edge was round. Only half of the mattock blade was left, and the handles of both implements were curved and thin where Jen's calloused hands had gripped them over the years. People often laughed at him, but Jen still used these tools when he hired out on odd jobs. What was there to laugh about? He couldn't afford to buy new ones. Thanks to land reform his family no longer was hungry from one season to the next, but it certainly hadn't made him rich.

If his burdens eased up a bit and he could draw a few free breaths, he hoped very much to build an ox shed. Who wanted to have his whole family, large and small, all crowded together

in the same thatched hut with an ox calf! It lowed in the middle of the night, demanding to be fed. Or it spread its hind legs — the shameless little creature — and pissed all over the floor!

There was a big hole in the east wall of the hut, which Jen had stuffed with corn-stalks. But now that it was the season for repairing houses, Jen had to go out and make bricks for others. He had to earn some money for grain. Jen couldn't bear to hear the kids crying with hunger!

On the threshing ground before his compound gate he paused and took a deep breath of the sweet fresh air of early spring. Then he coughed loudly and spat, clearing the foulness from his lungs. The air, at least, was free. Why shouldn't he enjoy it?

Huan-hsi, his nephew, had already brought back a load of earth from the foot of the bluff north of the stream and was starting for a second. When he had no other work the diligent primary-school graduate built up a supply of earth for spreading in the ox enclosure.

"Where to, uncle?" asked Huan-hsi.

"Kuochia Village. Going to make a fellow a thousand mud bricks."

"How much is he paying?"

Jen held up his hand, five fingers outspread, and waggled it twice. "Can buy quite a few measures of corn for that," he said with a grin of satisfaction. "Huan-hsi, you ought to get yourself a couple of odd jobs too. This is the slack time of the year. No use waiting for people to come and ask you. Just because you were a student, you mustn't be proud! Find work for a few days and earn some grain for the family. When Sheng-pao comes back and the mountain paths are hard again our mutual-aid team will be going into the mountains."

With a springy step Jen set out through the few peach trees at the northern end of his threshing ground. Huan-hsi followed, his empty baskets dangling from the ends of his shoulder pole. Happy to see his uncle in such high spirits, he decided not to tell him what Shih-fu had said the previous night.

"What did they say last night, Huan-hsi?" Jen asked as they walked along. "Will there be low-interest grain loans this year?"

"Don't ask!"

"Why not?"

"It's hopeless!"

"I'm no blind fortune teller, but I knew this was coming! I never really believed we could get another loan." Jen smiled cheerfully, proud of his analytical powers. "We won't have to borrow grain from the big peasants any more," he said happily. "From now on, we can rely on our own mutual-aid team!"

Huan-hsi was after all only a youngster and he couldn't repress the hot words which still hadn't cooled in his chest. His hatred of Shih-fu and his love of his uncle seized him like demons and forced him to tell Jen the Fourth how the well-to-do peasant had pressed for his debt.

Jen grew tense. Halting, he turned sharply around and demanded hotly:

"Did he blow any other stinking farts?"

"Go on," the boy urged him. "Go make your bricks. You don't have to worry about a wolf or tiger until he comes after you." Huan-hsi knew at once he shouldn't have mentioned it.

Jen's jaunty spirits collapsed. With lack-lustre eyes he stared off at the snow-covered peak of Mount Chungnan. Poor fellow! When a peasant owes a debt his slumbers are always uneasy!

After a while, Jen suddenly started back with a determined stride.

Huan-hsi stopped him. "Where are you going? You promised to make bricks for a man. Why don't you do it?"

"We won't be able to eat with any of the money — why should I be such a sap! Son of a bitch! I'm going to Shih-fu!"

"What for? The loan went through the chairman's hands. Shih-fu can't dun you directly!"

"I'm going to ask Shih-fu to take a knife and kill me and be done with it!"

"Why get yourself all worked up? My guess is he's not really pressing you. He's only using this method to shut the village officers' mouths. Just don't expect any more low-interest grain loans from the big peasants, and you'll be all right."

Jen the Fourth scowled. His thin face was dark as iron.

"Now do you believe what Secretary Wang's been telling us?"

Huan-hsi took this opportunity to educate his uncle a bit more.

"Mutual aid and co-operation are the only way. Unless we poor

peasants organize and help each other in production, we'll never truly be able to stand on our own feet."

After the rain the sun beat down, raising a depressing suffocating steam. It was as if the centre of the earth were on fire; the plain gave off hot vapours. If you picked up some black earth and kneaded it with your hands, it adhered together like a solid muffin. Warm sun of early spring! From the blue firmament, you generously cast your rays on all brick-making peasants, stripped to the waist.

On the threshing ground outside Chen-shan's gate a big yellow ox stood lazily beside the pole to which it was tethered. From time to time it turned its head back, to left or to right, extended its long tongue and licked its gleaming golden hide. A flock of devoted speckled hens followed a proud rooster to the base of a huge pile of stalks and diligently scratched for grains that had been missed. Obviously this was the approach to a large peasant compound.

Chen-shan and his brother Chen-hai were making earthen bricks at the southern end of the clearing. The burly Chen-hai, dressed only in a sleeveless undershirt and trousers, worked quickly, setting mud in the moulds which his brother passed to him. They intended to break up their brick beds and grind the old smoke-blackened bricks into fertilizer for the rice shoots. The new bricks would be used to rebuild the beds.

Blabbermouth Sun squatted beside a stone roller, his head bent over a piece of paper on which he was writing. "Right," he said, halting the movement of his cheap fountain pen. "The First, Second, Third and Fourth Wards' mutual-aid teams are all entered."

"Did you list the able-bodied separately from those who can do only half a day's work?" asked Chairman Chen-shan, shovelling mud into the moulds.

"Yes."

"What about the horses, oxen and donkeys?"

"They're all listed separately. Do you think I make a mistake every time?"

"Second Ward has a lot of middle peasants," Chen-shan said. "But its only mutual-aid team is Tseng-fu's, with four poor

peasants. The last time Secretary Wang came to our village, Tseng-fu said he wanted to get a couple of middle peasants to join. I wonder whether he's been able to do that. You'd better run down and ask him, Blabbermouth, before you finish the list."

"Right!" Blabbermouth assented cheerily. Carrying his sheet of paper, he strode jauntily from the threshing ground, singing a comic song.

As he rounded the western end of the compound wall, he suddenly fell silent. Hastily, he fastened the buttons of his cotton-padded jacket and set his black cap on straight.

Kai-hsia had finished her breakfast and was on her way to school, bag in hand.

Grinning from ear to ear, Blabbermouth hailed her ingratiatingly. "Eaten yet?"

"Yes. . . ."

"Say, see if I've done this right, will you?" Blocking her path, Blabbermouth held the sheet of paper in front of Kai-hsia's fair face, and stared hungrily at her lovely eyes.

The girl forced a laugh. "You make entries all the time. Why should this be wrong?" She slipped around him and hurried on.

"You don't know, Kai-hsia," he shouted after her. "Once I made an awful mistake. The township Party secretary bawled me out. . . ."

"What beautiful long braids!" he whispered to himself.

"She listens to Chairman Chen-shan," Blabbermouth mused happily, as he continued walking south. "Now if I can get him to say a few words for me, the chances will be eight to ten in my favour! . . ."

Narrowing his eyes, he turned and gazed ecstatically at Kai-hsia's retreating figure. Then he proceeded blissfully in the direction of Tseng-fu's thatched hut.

Tseng-fu was one of the unluckiest men alive. Though Tang Stream Gorge in Mount Chungnan was very deep, when you got to Dragon's Lair you reached the end. But to Tseng-fu's hard luck there seemed to be no end at all. When he was six, his father had disabled himself permanently by slicing off four of his fingers while cutting grass for a landlord. Having lost his means of earning a livelihood, Tseng-fu's father was forced to

become a beggar. He brought the boy up on his meager pickings. As soon as Tseng-fu was old enough, he was given into a landlord's service as a hired hand. He stuck it out in this profession until the land reform in the winter of 1950, when he was given six *mou* of land. In the spring of 1951, the people's government loaned him money to buy a draught ox.

Just as he was beginning to get on his feet, his wife died in child-birth, and again he was down. Although he hadn't repaid a copper on the three-year loan, he had to sell the ox to get enough money to bury his wife. The only way he could get his land tilled was to invest, with three other poor peasants, in a single ox—they said wryly that each of them owned one leg.

Looking after the four-year-old little boy his wife had left, half the time Tseng-fu lived like a man, half the time like a woman. At the moment, he was doing a woman's work—grinding corn on the grist mill of his neighbour, the rich peasant Yao.

"Tsai-tsai, is your pa home?" Blabbermouth asked the little boy grandly. He was in high spirits.

"No," replied the child, who was playing in front of the door of the thatched hut.

"Where is he?"

"Over there." Tsai-tsai pointed to the mill shed outside the compound with the tile-roofed houses.

Tseng-fu must have heard them talking. Wearing his tattered padded jacket, and holding the whisk broom used for sweeping the millstone, he silently emerged from the shed.

Bitterness and worry were permanently stamped on Tseng-fu's thin face. A taciturn man in his thirties, Tseng-fu always looked as if he had just been weeping in private. As a matter of fact, even when he buried his wife, he hadn't shed a tear. His hard life had given him the ability to grit his teeth silently and withstand any blows which Fortune dealt him. He never protested, he never complained. With his farm tools, he did a man's work. With his kitchen utensils, he did a woman's job. He often had to carry his motherless child in his arms at night while attending various village meetings as people's deputy. When he crossed the Tang Stream for a meeting of the township council, little Tsai-tsai went with him, riding on his back.

Now, some corn meal still adhering to the tip of his nose, he walked up to Blabbermouth.

"What did you want to see me about?" he asked quietly.

Blabbermouth gazed at Yao's handsome compound and sniffed scornfully. In an officious voice which he hoped made him sound like an official from the county, or at least the township, he demanded loudly:

"What's this? So you're on good terms with the rich peasant again?"

"Who?"

"Is Yao the only man in Kuan Creek Hamlet with a grist mill?"

"What are you driving at?"

"I'll tell you what I'm driving at! People will say one of our village deputies to the township council is getting pally with a rich peasant! No wonder the ordinary peasants are taking up with the rich peasants again, now that they see that the atmosphere of the land-reform days is gone."

"Twaddle!" laughed Tseng-fu. "Don't try putting on airs with me, Blabbermouth. If you've got anything to say, speak up. I'm busy!"

"Have you added any more families to your mutual-aid team?"

"Not one!"

"Why? Didn't you say you were going to add two middle-peasant families?"

"They won't join!"

"Then you're still four able-bodied men and one draught animal?"

"That's right."

After Blabbermouth left, Tseng-fu thought to himself as he pushed the roller around the grist mill: "Chairman Chen-shan's giving most of his time to his own farm. He's gone cold on his community work. My mutual-aid team is short of draught animals. If we could get a couple of middle peasants to join, they'd bring a few animals in. Chen-shan could persuade them; his prestige is high. But though he's promised to speak for us, he's never done it. He turns all the duties the township gives him over to Blabbermouth, while he and his brother Chen-hai run their family's affairs. Blabbermouth's diligence can't be for

the people; he's bound to be up to some trick. He's still got those same greasy ways he had as a salesman in that big merchant's shop in Huangpao Town! If only there was someone who could remind Chairman Chen-shan of his duty. What a pity! He's such a good, capable fellow! . . ."

When he had finished grinding the meal, Tseng-fu went into the flagstone-paved courtyard of rich peasant Yao to return the whisk broom.

"Just put it there!" Yao ordered irritably, his fat face dark beneath his round felt skull-cap.

As Tseng-fu placed the little broom on the window-sill, he took a quick look inside. On the floor were several bulging sacks of grain. Tseng-fu discovered what he had wanted to learn when he purposely borrowed the broom from this courtyard.

"So he's at it again. . . ." Tseng-fu thought to himself discouragedly as he walked out of the compound gate. The thing was like a knot in his heart. Rich peasants were shipping grain to relatives in other villages and, in their names, were squeezing the poor. Needy families in Fifth Village, by devious methods, were borrowing grain outside at usurious rates of interest.

All day Tseng-fu squatted on his heels on the clearing before his thatched hut weaving a rice-straw window screen, at the same time keeping a vigilant eye on the movements of his rich neighbour. He did this neither out of curiosity nor from any sense of responsibility; it was a strong class feeling that made him so concerned about this rich peasant's shipments of grain. The exploitation of any poor peasant hurt Tseng-fu as much as if he had been the victim himself. He hated his neighbour uncompromisingly, to the marrow of his bones. It seemed to him that exploitation by a rich peasant was no less despicable than exploitation by a landlord. During the two-year land-reform period, Yao had turned over to the village government ten *tan* of grain every spring for relief loans to needy families. But now that the new deeds had been issued, the rich peasants, no longer fearful of being classified as landlords, were once more showing their nastiness. Tseng-fu was determined to find out just where Yao was shipping those sacks of grain.

But even when the sun was disappearing behind the Chinling Mountains, and the spring chill was sweeping down on the plain

from Mount Chungnan, and Tseng-fu's fingers were too frozen to go on with his weaving outdoors, he still had seen no sign of activity from his neighbour.

That night, around eleven, the moon shone on the paper window of Tseng-fu's hut. Holding his little son in his arms, he was lying on his brick bed, his eyelids heavy with drowsiness. But like all people with things on their mind, he was unable to sleep. When he heard his rich neighbour's gate creak, his head cleared immediately, and his eyes became alert.

Hastily, he dressed and went out. The dark figure of a man driving one donkey and leading another was passing the cedar-fringed ground of the Yao family cemetery.

"Hum! That fellow's up to no good!" He thought. Tseng-fu quickly shut the door of the hut in which little Tsai-tsai was sleeping and dashed off in the direction of Black Dragon Creek where Feng Yu-wan, leader of the people's militia, lived. The sound of Tseng-fu's racing footsteps roused all the dogs in Kuan Creek Hamlet. Their furious barking accompanied him right to Yu-wan's shack.

"Yu-wan! Yu-wan!" he called, gasping for breath.

"Eh?" the militia leader's voice answered from inside.

"Quick!"

"What is it?"

"Get up!"

An instant later, fully dressed, a rifle in his hand, Yu-wan burst out of the door. His burning eyes fixed themselves on Tseng-fu questioningly. The militia captain was tough and tensed for battle as his hand fumbled for the buttons of the padded jacket.

Tseng-fu grasped him by the arm and in a low voice told him the suspicious circumstances he had discovered.

"The needy families in our village are waiting to borrow low-interest grain, and Yao slips out every night to deliver his grain elsewhere!"

"I'll stop him! I'll ask the son of a bitch what he thinks he's doing!"

Yu-wan flew off down a path gleaming white in the moonlight through a field of dark barley shoots in the direction Tseng-fu had

indicated. Tseng-fu himself set out vigorously for Chen-shan's shack.

"We've got you at last!" he said to Yao mentally with satisfaction. "If you're not lending grain at usurious interest, why should you be sneaking it out in the middle of the night?"

"I'll tell the chairman of the village deputies, then Yao will catch it!" he thought. "Chen-shan will fill his big chest, look Yao in the eye, give a roar like a dive bomber, and Yao will shrink smaller than a mouse when it sees a cat!"

How happy this prospect made Tseng-fu. Everyone respected Chen-shan; Tseng-fu wasn't the only one. Even in the days before liberation when Yao was a little king in Frog Flat, Chen-shan wasn't afraid of him. People called the creek Yao used for irrigation Tyrant's Creek. Any time he wanted water, with a righteous air he would block the outlets of the poor sharecroppers, although they might be just in the process of watering their paddy fields. No one dared to protest.

But one summer big Chen-shan and the strapping Yao fought on the grassy bank of the creek. With Chen-shan holding Yao by the collar and Yao clutching Chen-shan by the shirt, the two men crossed the Tang Stream to Hsiapao Village and marched into the big temple where the Kuomintang township government office was then located. This boldness on the part of Chen-shan made him the hero of all the poor sharecroppers; he had done what every one of them had longed to do but didn't dare.

Tseng-fu was confident that Chen-shan, today chairman of the village deputies, would certainly not permit any rich peasant to sabotage the loan of grain to needy families.

He strode energetically up to Chen-shan's gate and knocked. The chairman responded from somewhere inside. A few moments later, the gate creaked open and Chen-shan appeared, holding together a jacket that was draped over his shoulders, his big body still exuding the heat of his warm bedding. Leaning forward slightly, he listened to Tseng-fu's hasty report. Chen-shan's hatred of Yao and his anxiety to make the grain-lending programme a success whipped him into a rage against the rich peasant. Tseng-fu could feel the hot breath from Chen-shan's hairy nostrils blowing against his face. He had been right to inform the chairman!

"Let me get my belt sash, then we'll go!"

Chen-shan went back into the house. Tseng-fu waited happily at the gate. He was sure that by now Yu-wan's flying legs had caught up with Yao.

But when Chen-shan again emerged from the compound he had changed his tune. "*Aiya*, Tseng-fu, I've just thought it over. We can't do this!"

Tseng-fu hesitated.

"Why not? Our government's calling for low-interest grain loans, and Yao's shipping it out to earn usury. We've a right to nab him and question him!"

"Where is he getting usury? From whom? How many loans has he made? How much interest is he charging? Have you got all these facts?"

"Well, no, not yet. . . ."

"It's no good, Tseng-fu. Yao will never admit it!"

"He won't, eh? Then we'll ask him — if you're not after high interest, why are you sneaking grain out in the middle of the night? . . ."

"And he'll say the grain is his; it's nobody's business whether he moves it during the day or after dark! Tseng-fu, our government has announced that the land-reform period is over, the private property of landlords and rich peasants isn't frozen any more. That Yao is a vicious dog. We've got to be careful with him. There's no law against his shipping his grain," Chen-shan explained reasonably. He knew all the rules.

Tseng-fu was speechless. In his anger, he had acted hastily. Now he hesitated, a little worried. He had forgotten about the land-reform period being over. That was an important point.

"But the call for low-interest grain," he queried after a pause, "isn't that also something our people's government has decided?"

"Hey, Tseng-fu," Chen-shan chuckled, very friendly, "it's only a call. It's not a law. We can't force people to lend. I wish we could still operate like we did during the land reform, brother," Chen-shan added, in a burst of frankness. "It was much easier then. But those days are gone, I'm afraid."

And he gave Tseng-fu some well-meant advice. "Each of us has to start making his own plans, brother. Of course the Communist Party is good to the poor, but it can't run a land reform

every year. The only way a man can pull out the roots of his poverty is by increasing his farm's output!"

The chairman's words chilled Tseng-fu to the heart. His whole body became icy.

"How in the world can I increase output?" he thought. "It's all right for you to talk!" He was beginning to get annoyed with this chairman whom he had respected so.

"But suppose Yu-wan has already stopped Yao? What should we do?" Tseng-fu shivered. He looked very dispirited.

"Do?" Chen-shan gave a self-assured laugh. "Just tell Yu-wan to let the fellow go. If we don't bother him, he won't give us any trouble. It's cold out here! You'd better hurry. Where did you leave Tsai-tsai? You're much too eager!"

Tseng-fu had no strength in his legs on the road home; his head felt wooden. It seemed to him that Chen-shan's show of concern for him was empty, valueless. His future appeared uncertain and difficult. He admitted he shouldn't have tried to stop Yao's grain; Chen-shan understood policy better than he. But Chen-shan's words, the way he spoke and laughed, showed that he was becoming prosperous, that he could no longer sense what was in a poor man's heart. Shortly after liberation, especially during the early stage of the land reform when poor peasants and hired hands were being helped to recognize and join in the class struggle, Chen-shan had talked to them with warmth and sympathy. But he was different now.

This change in the Communist who had enjoyed the highest prestige in the village was a blow to Tseng-fu. He feared that the way things were going it would be hard for him to hang on to the six *mou* he had received under the land reform. What could he do? He was short of food grain; he didn't know where he was going to get the money for this season's fertilizer. He still hadn't repaid the loan from the People's Bank for the purchase of the draught ox. Would he be able to borrow any more? If only he lived further downstream, he could join Sheng-pao's mutual-aid team. Maybe then he wouldn't have these problems. But his land was two *li* away from theirs.

Ho! Ahead, someone was walking towards him with large strides. Who was it?

"Yu-wan!" he called tentatively.

"You're a fine one, Tseng-fu!" Yu-wan's voice rang sharply across the plain in the silence of the night. "You're the limit! Yao was heading for Huangpao, and you sent me chasing off to the south!"

"The crafty devil! He must have started south just to throw people off the track," thought Tseng-fu. "He probably circled round Kuan Creek Hamlet and then turned east. Yao's going to his father-in-law's place again!" Aloud he said, "So he got away. All right, forget it."

Yu-wan pushed his black cap to the back of his head. The perspiration on his broad brow glistened in the moonlight. His rifle slung across his back, he stood before Tseng-fu.

"Is something bothering you?" he asked curiously.

"No, nothing." Tseng-fu was relieved that Yao had not been caught. He was careful not to say anything to this impetuous militia leader that would reveal his dissatisfaction with the chairman of the village deputies. "I'll tell you about it some other time," he said evasively. "Let's go back. . . ."

In the misty night Tseng-fu started home along a greyish path through the dark wheat fields. Walking alone, he thought of his beloved sleeping the long sleep twelve feet under, and of his pitiful little Tsai-tsai whom he had left like some inanimate object on the brick bed in their thatched hut. He thought of the cold manner in which those two middle peasants had refused to join his mutual-aid team. He thought of the trouble he would have half month from now, when his food grain would be exhausted. Tseng-fu's nose itched and tears blurred his eyes. But he bit his lip and wouldn't let them fall. Blinking his eyes a few times, he drew the tears into his throat. He could taste their saltiness as they slid down his alimentary canal into his stomach, which was occupied by only a few bowls of thin corn-meal gruel.

"What are you bawling about!" he berated himself. "Your bones are hard! We'll meet things as they come! You got through the old society didn't you? Even if Chen-shan isn't reliable, the Communist Party isn't just him alone. What are you scared of!"

Spring rain came hissing down. Through the rain-spattered window of the railway carriage Sheng-pao could see in the western part of the Chinling Range the pine-covered slopes of Taipo Mountain, and on the plain of the upper reaches of the Wei, bamboo groves, farmland and towns — all shrouded in a misty white rain that extended over hundreds of *li*.

As the train pulled into Kuo County, dusk was falling on the railway station and the little street that ran off at right angles. In two minutes, the train had discharged a few passengers at the small dripping station and unhesitatingly plunged again into the driving rain.

By then shopkeepers on both sides of the street had lit their lanterns and hung them outside their doors, illuminating the muddy thoroughfare. At the southern end of the street, the Wei River, swollen by the rain, roared through the darkness. It sounded as if the water was rising directly behind the houses. Actually, the stillness of the night was magnifying the noise.

But because the river was so rapid at this time of the year, there was no evening ferry service. Passengers arriving on the late train had to spend the night in town. Attendants from the local hotels were explaining the situation to the newcomers and leading them to their various establishments. In a few moments the little street was empty. Only Sheng-pao remained. Pieces of gunny sacking over his head and shoulders and wrapped around his bed roll, the young peasant stood alone in the inky darkness beneath an old mat awning extending from the wall of the station building.

Why didn't he go to a hotel? Surely they weren't all filled?

No, but Sheng-pao did have a small problem. He had come several hundred *li* to buy rice seed. The better hotels here charged forty or fifty cents a night. Even if you shared a large heated brick bed with several other guests, the cost was twenty cents. Sheng-pao hated to spend the money! When he left his home on the Tang Stream, this item had not been included in his budget. "Any place will do to spend the night," he had thought. He hadn't anticipated that the rain would strand him at the railway station. But he was only mildly disturbed.

"Damn the luck! Where can I go at this hour? . . ."

As he stood in the little street beside the station, his mind went back to the paddy fields of Frog Flat. Money didn't come easily to the poor peasants and former hired hands down there! They tried to make every cent do the work of two. How hard it had been, collecting money for the trip. People in other mutual-aid teams had assured him several times that when he went they would ask him to buy seed for them as well. But when he was ready to set out, none of them produced any cash. He even had to advance money for two families of his own team. If he hadn't, hey! — there wouldn't have been the breath of chance that every member of the team would switch to a better strain of seed as their plan provided.

"Sheng-lu!" Angrily he recalled the behaviour of his cousin, the son of Liang the Eldest. "I've seen through you at last. Before our Party rectification discussions I didn't realize how important mutual-aid teams and co-operative farming are. I thought — you've got a lot of land and good draught animals; you be our team leader and I'll help out. What a farce! All you wanted was to get rich. How could you lead poor peasants and ex-hired hands along the road to socialism? You gave me money for your own rice seed, but when I wanted to borrow three yuan you said that your father controls your family's money, though I know perfectly well that you do! All right! We'll see if I can't buy seeds for the rest of the team members without your help!"

Sheng-pao knew exactly how much money he had brought, how much seed he was going to buy, its cost of transport, and the price of his own round trip fare. How could he spend any extra, just for the sake of a comfortable bed?

People around the Tang Stream had only recently learned that in the region of the county seat there was a fast-growing strain of rice. It could be harvested early enough in autumn to allow the planting of a crop of wheat. The following summer, after the wheat was cut, there would be sufficient time to flood the fields and transplant rice shoots. In this way, with the help of fertilizer, you could get two crops a year. Sheng-pao's mutual-aid team had decided that this autumn they would not plant barley. You call barley grain? Rich peasant Yao and well-to-do

middle peasants, Shih-fu, Iron Man and Sheng-lu, used it only to feed their stock. They never ate the stuff if they could avoid it. But the hard-pressed poor peasants and former hired hands, although they raised rice, could not afford it at their meals. They filled their stomachs with barley, millet and corn. To Sheng-pao this seemed unfair.

Before Sheng-pao had left, Jen the Fourth, his back bent with toil, had said to him gratefully, "If we make a success of this experiment of yours, we'll harvest twice as much from every *mou*. If that happens, my wife and I will pray all our lives for your happiness! What can I say? Our kids will be eating muffins of wheat! No more of that nasty barley. . . ."

"Even if our rice fields yield only two hundred cattles of wheat per *mou*, Comrade Sheng-pao, with five thousand *mou* of paddy in Huangpao District — that's a million cattles of wheat! . . ." Comrade Wang, district Party secretary, had said, his pencil rapping the table for emphasis. He had gazed deeply at Sheng-pao. The young team leader had seen the encouragement and trust in his eyes.

"Even if I have to sleep out under the eaves, I'm going to save that twenty cents!" standing beneath the mat awning, Sheng-pao told himself. Used to the smell of rice root smoke which came from the cook stoves at home, he didn't like one bit the odour of coalballs that filled the small street by the station.

Having made up his mind, Sheng-pao felt much better. Even the smell of burning coalballs didn't seem so sickening. As a child he had begged on the street and slept in a landlord's stable. As a youth he had been compelled to hide out for years in the wilds of the Chinling Mountains. But Sheng-pao never knew the meaning of the word "difficulty." He felt that when doing things for the people, as the Party instructed him to, any "hardship" was really a pleasure. Only those who were always seeking rewards could never forget the hardships they went through for the people's sake. He remembered seeing waiting passengers sleeping in the railway station when he was getting on the train. That gave him a good idea. Sheng-pao grinned. He would spend a luxurious night in the railway station here! No need to sleep out under the eaves tonight! . . .

A piece of gunny sack covering his head, another across his shoulders, a third protecting his bed roll, he walked into a small restaurant, a cheerful smile on his face. He ordered a five-cent bowl of noodles, then drank two bowls of the water in which the noodles had been cooked — there was no charge for this — to wash down one of the griddle cakes his mother had prepared for him. Unpinning the pocket flap of his padded jacket, he held the pin in his lips as he fished out a small red cloth packet. Inside this, wrapped in an old exercise sheet of his sister Hsiu-lan, were the worn bills he had collected from the hard-working members of his mutual-aid team. Sheng-pao selected a five-cent note, so tattered that it was in imminent danger of falling apart, and paid for the noodles.

Although both the restaurant waiter and cashier watched him with derisive smiles, he calmly consumed his dried-out griddle cakes with the aid of the free noodle-water. The fact that others laughed at his frugal peasant ways didn't upset him in the least. On the contrary, he kept reminding himself: When you're away from home, you've got to be cool and careful; otherwise you're liable to make mistakes or lose things. If you fail on this trip, you'll hurt the Party's prestige.

Sheng-pao was an honest fellow. During his two years as leader of the local militia, he had never strutted or blustered. He became a Communist in 1952, at the time of the rectification campaign to educate Party members in accordance with socialist ideology. From then on, Sheng-pao was more conscientious than ever. In both speech and action he appeared maturer than his twenty-seven years. Another man from Hsiapao, who joined the Party the same day as Sheng-pao, gave the impression that he was rather proud of himself the moment he stepped out of the conference room where the group had been formally accepted into membership. Sheng-pao was just the opposite. Feeling that whatever he did influenced not so much his own standing as that of the Party, at times he was, if anything, too reticent. . . .

Leaving the restaurant, Sheng-pao walked across the muddy street to the railway ticket office. In 1953 the small stations on this line still didn't have any electric light. Once the train pulled out, the little station again became as dark as its surroundings. It was lonely and secluded, except at train time. Sheng-pao

lit a match and looked around. He lit a second and chose a place to sleep. Then he lit a third match and spread his gunny sacking on the station's brick floor. He sat down and leaned against the baggage scale while filling and lighting his short pipe: then he stretched out on the sacking and puffed blissfully. Sheng-pao grinned.

"This is a fine place. Quiet, and plenty of room!"

I'll have a good night's sleep here, he thought, and tomorrow, first thing in the morning, I'll cross the Wei, go to the rice region at the foot of Taipo Mountain, and buy our seed.

But perhaps because he was too excited, or maybe because he was in new surroundings, the young peasant so far from home was unable to sleep.

Outside the window of the ticket office he could hear the wind and the rain and the rushing Wei River.

Although far from home, he felt very close to those families living amid the paddy fields of Frog Flat. Sheng-pao thought of his mother. She must be worrying about him this rainy night, wondering where he was. He thought of Liang the Third, his step-father. Was the old man angry because he was taking this trip? He thought of his sister, Hsiu-lan. She was sure to be explaining to old Liang, trying to make him see that Sheng-pao was doing the right thing. He thought of the reliable members of his mutual-aid team—Yu-wan, Huan-hsi, Jen the Fourth.

And then he thought of Kai-hsia, and his mind refused to leave her — this girl who, unknown to him, was wondering whether to become his wife. With his eyes closed, he seemed to see her at his side, smiling, gazing at him fondly, stirring and disturbing him. . . .

They had been together often during the land reform. Both had attended a conference of young activists in the county seat, and they frequently crossed the Tang Stream with administrative personnel and young activists from other villages to attend township government meetings in Hsiapao. Kai-hsia obviously liked being with Sheng-pao. She sat near him at meetings, and walked beside him on the road.

One dark night, when they were returning from a meeting of the township government, they found that the swollen stream had

washed away the foot-bridge. Everyone had to wade across. Blabbermouth wanted to help Kai-hsia, but she politely refused and put her hand in Sheng-pao's. Young Sheng-pao remembered the touch of that hand ever after, although the memory made him unhappy.

Eyeing them suspiciously, people began discussing them behind their backs. At that time Kai-hsia still had not broken her engagement to the man in Chou Village and Sheng-pao's sickly little child-bride was still alive. After receiving a gentle hint from Secretary Lu of the township Party branch, Sheng-pao forced himself to stay away from Kai-hsia.

But now Kai-hsia was twenty-one years old and had ended her engagement and Sheng-pao's pitiful little child-bride had died. Could it be that he and Kai-hsia. . . ? No, it probably wasn't so simple. Today the girl was going to school. Maybe she wanted someone better than a muddy-legged peasant for a husband! . . .

How could he learn what she really thought? His sister Hsiu-lan could find out, but he couldn't bring himself to ask her. "Damn it all! This isn't the sort of thing you ask other people to do for you!"

Still pondering how to fathom Kai-hsia's feelings, he fell asleep. . . .

At daybreak the following morning, a wild-looking young fellow carrying a bed roll under his arm, a towel cloth tied round his head, appeared on the high yellow bank of the Wei River. Cupping his mouth with his free hand, Sheng-pao shouted for the ferry on the opposite shore, and continued yelling until the sleepy boatman came out of his thatched hut. Then he strolled back and forth along the bank, gazing at the scenery, waiting for the ferry. . . .

At what hour the rain had stopped during the night Sheng-pao didn't know. The sky remained overcast; dark clouds were still scudding over the whole eight hundred *li* of the Chinling plain. There probably would be more rain. Taipo Mountain, which he had seen last night from the train, now had its head buried in clouds. Down on the Tang Stream, people said that the weather wouldn't clear until you could see the southern mountains. Maybe it was the same here with Taipo?

He noted with interest that here in the upper reaches, the Wei was narrow and hundreds of feet lower than the plain on either side. Down-river, broad and only a few feet below its flat sandy banks, the Wei changed its course every year. Why was this? wondered Sheng-pao. Aha! Although the sharp slope and rapid flow upstream caused the river to cut a deep bed, the terrain of the lower reaches was flat. There the water was tranquil. The river broadened and formed wide sand banks.

"It's high. The land is high here," mused Sheng-pao. "It's colder here than on the Tang Stream too." Standing still for a long time waiting for the boat, he was conscious of the difference in temperatures.

Why, of course! No wonder they needed a fast-ripening rice. Spring came later here, and autumn earlier, so the rice had a shorter growing period.

Was the soil also different from the soil back home? In the Tang Stream area, the earth was black and clayey. Here the colour was lighter. Sheng-pao bent and picked up a handful of the rain-soaked yellow soil, squeezed it in his fist, then opened his hand. Sure enough, it was less sticky than his paddy field earth. He tossed it away and wiped his hand on a piece of gunny sack.

"Aiyz, will the rice here grow all right by the Tang Stream?" he wondered. "Soil makes a big difference in crops. I've come all this distance. It will be terrible if the seed I take back doesn't grow well."

Sheng-pao began getting worried. He was burning to cross the river and get to the rice-producing area at the foot of Taipo Mountain and learn everything about the qualities of the local rice.

But it wasn't until thick white smoke was rising from kitchen stoves in villages all over the plain that Sheng-pao and a few other passengers were ferried across the Wei.

He stopped for breakfast in a tea-house in the eastern outskirts of the county town, spending one cent for a cup of boiled water, which he drank with a griddle cake he had brought from home. As he was eating, the spring rain began to patter down again. . . .

Sheng-pao came out of the tea-house and looked around. It wasn't raining too hard. He took off the cloth shoes his mother

had made and the white wool socks his sister Hsiu-lan had knitted and wrapped them in the gunny sacking. Then he rolled the legs of his cotton-padded trousers up to his knees so that the white cloth lining showed. He covered his head with one piece of gunny sack, draped another over his shoulders, wrapped his bedding in the third, and set off in the direction of the misty foothills of Taipo Mountain.

"That young fellow's a real hustler!" he heard someone say as he was leaving the tea-house. "What's his hurry?"

Soon Sheng-pao had left the eastern outskirts of the county seat and was striding along through the spring rain. The dark speck he made upon the road was the only thing that seemed to be moving across the vast plain.

His bare feet felt frozen when he first started walking, but before long they became accustomed to the cold sleet rain.

What's the rush, Sheng-pao? Why couldn't you have waited for the rain to stop? After all, how long does a spring shower last? You didn't want to spend money on a hotel room in town, but in the countryside you could have taken shelter from the rain in any village courtyard free of charge. Did you have to prove how rugged you are?

But that wasn't the reason at all. Sheng-pao knew there was a limit to the number of griddle cakes his mother had given him. If he finished them before he got home, what could he eat? Besides, having discovered the difference in the soil here, he was anxious to reach his destination quickly in order to learn whether the local rice seed was suitable for Frog Flat. If he were still at home, waiting ten days more or half a month wouldn't have bothered him. But once he started on his journey, he hated even a moment's delay. That's the sort of person he was.



As he walked along the muddy road through the rain, the rice seed had replaced Kai-hsia in his mind. It was as if his rosy vision of her the night before in the railway ticket office never had occurred. His heart was burning — not with the flames of love, but with the fire of an ideal.

Ah, you young peasants, when your hearts are enkindled you become enchanted. Nothing matters but your ideal. You forget to eat, you forget to sleep. Girls lose their attraction. No hardship daunts you. For the sake of your ideal, breaking off from your parents, even giving up life itself, doesn't seem like too much of a sacrifice.

Twenty years before, when Sheng-pao was a child of six or seven, young peasants in north Shensi had formed Red guerrilla groups in the same idealistic spirit. Comrade Yang, assistant secretary of the county Party committee, himself a north Shensi man, had talked about this at a conference of mutual-aid team leaders in the first lunar month. In those days, he said, north Shensi, like the rest of China, was under the iron rule of the Kuo-mintang army and government, the landlords and the gentry.

But the Red guerrilla groups which the young peasants organized under the leadership of the Communist Party began fighting to overthrow this rule. Secretary Yang said that in 1933 the older peasants thought the young fellows didn't have a chance, that they were just throwing away their lives. But by 1935 the guerrilla groups had become guerrilla detachments, and a Red government had been formed in the hills, and they gave the Kuo-mintang army a very hard time. The older men who formerly had scoffed now joined in the struggle.

After the blood of countless young peasants in army uniform stained the yellow hills of north Shensi in the course of many defeats and victories, finally, the year Sheng-pao became twenty-three, all of the Chinese mainland was liberated. Poor Sheng-pao at last was able to come down from his hide-out in the mountains.

It was in the idealistic spirit of the Red guerrillas that he formed one of the first mutual-aid teams amid a sea of individualistic small-peasant producers. Secretary Yang put it well: The shooting phase of the revolution was over; the revolution to prove the superiority of co-operative farming, to produce more grain, was just beginning. Sheng-pao was determined to model himself after

the older generation of Communists. He would devote all his ardour, intelligence, spirit and practical work to this cause of the Party. Only in this way, he felt, would life be interesting, stimulating!

During this same conference, Wang Tsung-chi, model peasant for the entire province and leader of a mutual-aid team in Tawang Village, Toupao District, had walked up to the microphone. Sheng-pao would never forget the stir his announcement caused.

"In our Tawang Village, except for my team whose members really helped each other, in 1950 the mutual-aid teams were that in name only. But in the next two years, following my team's lead, fourteen teams reorganized themselves and went at it seriously. This month, two of our teams have combined to form an agricultural producers' co-op. . . ."

Sheng-pao was one of three thousand people listening. His heart beat fast beneath his padded jacket. He said to himself: "Wang Tsung-chi is a Communist and so am I. Why shouldn't I be able to do anything he can? His village is in the paddy lands along the Lu River. Mine is in the paddy lands by the Tang Stream. All peasants were equally ground down in the old days. If only someone gives our Tang Stream peasants a lead, they'll be sure to follow!"

But then he had thought, "Aiyah! How can I compare myself to him? He's over forty. I'm only in my twenties, and my standing in the village isn't very high. If Chen-shan were to take charge, and I gave him a hand, we might be able to do it. What a pity that Chen-shan doesn't think much of co-operative farming. . . ."

"Pah! What are you scared of?" he berated himself scornfully. "Wang says the main thing is to rely on the leadership of the township branch and district Party committee. With the Party on my side, what have I got to worry about?"

And so when Wang issued his challenge to sharply increase the output per *mou*, a young fellow in a black padded jacket, a towel cloth tied round his head, stood up in the audience, raised his arm and shouted:

"Liang Sheng-pao, Fifth Village, Hsiapao Township, Huangpao District, wishes to speak!"

After he proclaimed his acceptance of the challenge and came down from the platform, the district Party secretary, smiling, was waiting for him in the aisle. The secretary shook his hand and, grasping his arm warmly, promised to come to Frog Flat after the conference to help him consolidate his mutual-aid team and draw up a production plan. Sheng-pao's heart glowed with joy.

Now here he was several hundred *li* from home, striding through the rain with vigour—a vigour that sprang from the enthusiasm which had possessed him the day he mounted the conference platform.

In spite of the icy spring rain, Sheng-pao was perspiring freely. He had to exert himself every minute to maintain his balance on the muddy road. By noon he had covered thirty *li* and arrived at the paddy fields by the Yahung River. Although he'd had to wring out the guny sacking three times, the rain had not soaked through. His padded clothing was only a bit damp.

How pleased he was with the world, this strong energetic young peasant!

(to be continued)

Translated by Sidney Shapiro

Illustrations by Li Hu

Mechanizing Agriculture →

by Tu Hsien-ching, Chung Tsai-pen,
Lu Shu-chung and Wang Yu-chang

This is one of the four decorative *gouaches* on the four-fold improvements in agriculture: mechanization, irrigation, electrification and chemical fertilization. They depict the fast changing scene of our countryside during the period of socialist construction.



Poems for the People of Congo

WEN CHIEH

Song of Battle

— To our awakened Congolese brothers —

Now the Congo has awakened from her slumbers;
Flow on, Congo, turgid with silt!
Raise your javelins, Negro brothers,
Standing erect on the wild African plain.

From those primeval forests a militant people
Strides over high mountains and deserts;
Their naked feet make the earth tremble,
They beat wooden drums, sound horns!

Sunshine above their heads,
Eternal gold has burnished their dark skins;
Within their broad chests beat stout hearts,
Whose sparks can set the entire plain ablaze.

Rich, fertile land of Congo,
Brave and industrious are your sons.
The sons of the Congo are not to be goaded like cattle,
The sons of the Congo want to live as men.

Wen Chieh, noted young poet, was born in 1923 in Tantu County, Kiangsu. He went to Yen-an in 1940 to join the revolution. Since then he has been actor, newspaper reporter and editor. His main works are *Love Songs from Turfan* and the first book of a long narrative poem, *Tumultuous Years*.

Strike the iron fetters off your ankles,
Wrench the heavy shackles from your wrists;
Pick up stones, brothers, seize clubs,
And teach the colonialists a good lesson!

Asia has an ancient fable:
Asking a tiger's help against a wolf
Must lead to greater trouble;
Brothers, while you drive the Belgian gangsters away,
Beware lest the U.S. pirates steal your property.

No imperialist shall encroach
Upon the sacred territory of the Congo;
The fate of future generations of Congolese
Must be in the hands of the Congolese themselves.

Stand up, independent Congo!
Let the turbulent Congo River seethe;
Raise your javelins, Negro brothers;
Behind you stands mighty China.

TSOU TI-FAN

The Flowing Waters of the Congo

River Congo!
Are you listening to the love songs of your children?
"I built my hut near the Congo,
And it lulled me to sleep."*

Eighty years and more of struggles,
Of blood flowing like a river;
At last the sun shines on the rolling Congo,
And its waters flow like honey. . . .

Eight days after your independence,
Imperialists are whetting their swords by your river again;
Unwilling to accept defeat,
They do not want to hear your songs of triumph.

We know their tricks from of old:
To divide a united country into two
They send their parachutists, their landing vessels,
Hiding behind the tattered mask of the United Nations.

Tsou Ti-fan, born in 1916 in Tienmen County, Hupeh, started to write poetry in 1936. His chief recent works are the collections of poems *Songs to Our Motherland* and *Swift as Wind and Lightning*.

* From *The Negro Speaks of Rivers* by Langston Hughes.

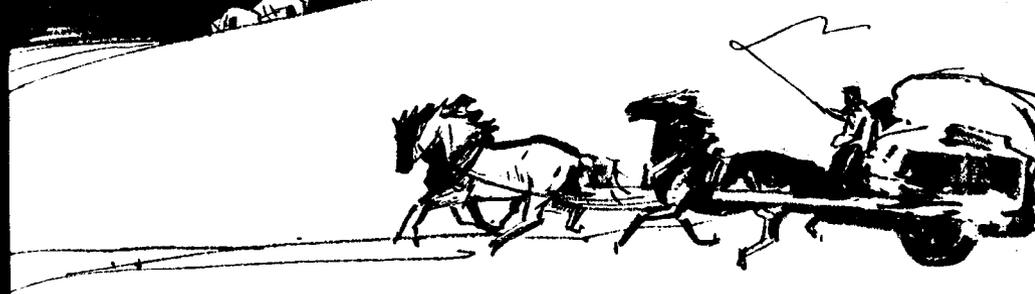
High rise the Congo's waves of revolt,
The men who dealt heavy blows at the slave-traders
Will not let the Belgian wolf and U.S. tiger
Make a pact to split up the Congo Republic.

Men and women by the shores of the Congo,
Rolling waves are singing a marching song for you!
Hurl stones at the Belgian parachutists!
Beat down the imperialist vermin!
With your clubs drive off the Wasp,*
Do not let it approach the flowers of the Congo.

The Congo is an independent state,
Whose people are its police force;
Take up batons to direct traffic,
Take up weapons to resist aggression.
Get out of the Congo, imperialist beasts of prey —
The eyes of all friends are on this flower of the Tropics.

*Translated by Yang Hsien-yi
and Gladys Yang*

* After the Congo Incident, the U.S. imperialists sent their aircraft carrier *Wasp* towards the Congo.



ODSOR

The Old Driver

1

Fleecy white clouds like scutched wool floated leisurely in the late autumn sky. On the golden grassland a rubber-tired cart drawn by three horses was sailing rapidly against the wind. Wild-geese startled by the crack of the whip shot up from the mirror-like surface of the lake and, honking, flew towards the distant sky.

Three men were seated on the cart. An old man in a cadre's uniform of coarse cloth sat in the middle. He was Comrade Dtalsan, the new league chief who had just been demobilized from the army. He and a young cadre, Rabte, were coming to the grazing area to take part in physical labour. Besides, he wanted to go down among the herdsmen and to refamiliarize himself with animal husbandry, a field which he had left for many years. A jeep had been sent for him, but he refused it. He thought it wrong for a person who had come to do physical labour to ride in a jeep. So he and Rabte got a lift on a cart

Odsor, born in 1924, is a Mongolian from Ju-od Yainag in the Inner Mongolian Autonomous Region. He has written a number of short stories, including the collection *The Cuckoos Are Calling*. He is now the vice-chairman of the Inner Mongolian Autonomous Region Branch of the Chinese Writers' Union.

of the Sunrise People's Commune. It was laden with rice, flour, brick-tea, salt, books and newspapers. The driver had to do a lot of rearranging before he was able to make a comfortable place for the two of them.

The old chief was a kind, amiable person, who liked to chat. He began to pour forth as soon as they were outside the city. He knew the mountains and plains in the vicinity as well as his ten fingers. He could connect every mountain and river with the war years in the past and he could tell you a lively battle story about any one of them. Rabte and Dtamtsoo, the young driver, were as enchanted by his stories as children at the sight of honey.

The wheels of the cart rolled quietly over the soft grassland. Looking at the countless fat sheep and cattle by the road the chief felt happy and at ease. His eyes shone brightly. In the afternoon, the sun was blotted out by clouds blown by the cool wind from the perpetually snow-covered Bayan-Khangae Mountain. The chief inhaled deeply and rambled on. But Dtamtsoo, the driver, began to look uncomfortable. He was silent and looked more and more poorly all the time.

"What's wrong, young man? Aren't you feeling well?" asked the chief patting his shoulder. Dtamtsoo, hugging his stomach, turned and answered softly,

"I went out to feed the horse in a thin shirt last night. I might have caught cold. I'm feeling sharp stabs of pain in my chest. . . ."

"Give me the whip," said the chief. "You lie down for a spell under my coat of wolf's fur."

"Oh, I'll be all right, Comrade Chief. . . ."

"Give it to me, lad, it is getting cold. It will be serious if you should catch another chill."

"It's nothing, chief. . . ."

"Do you think that this old man is no good at driving a cart?"

"No, but the wheel-horse. . . ."

"*Hai*, I was a driver of the elegant sedan cart of the Prince's wife, in my youth." He sprang up and wrapped his big fur coat around Dtamtsoo and snatched the whip and reins from his hand. Dtamtsoo could only yield his place to the chief. But he watched him doubtfully. As if showing off in front of

the young men, the chief flourished his whip and drove the cart. As the whip cracked in the air, the stout horses pricked up their ears and broke into a canter. A startled skylark shooting up with frightened chirps, disappeared into the azure sky.

By now Dtamtsoo was hugging his stomach even more tightly and groaning with pain. Beads of sweat as big as beans stood out on his forehead. Although the chief knew of some home remedies to cure him, such as herb medicine or stewed yak juice, he could do nothing since he had neither water nor fire to brew with. He could only tie his belt tightly around the young driver's stomach, cover him up with two fur coats and tell Rabte to look after him.

By sunset thick black clouds had gathered above the grassland. A damp cool wind began to blow fiercely. A storm was brewing. The chief shivered with cold. He put on the shabby fur coat which Dtamtsoo wore in all seasons, cracked his whip and speeded on.

Flocks of sheep as white as snow were streaming down the mountain slope in the distance. Cattle and horses could be seen now and then in the rippling sea of grass. Sailing past the billowing waves of the Shera-taken Plain the newcomers could see now the village at the foot of the mountains and rows of brand-new silvery white houses.

"What is that?" asked the chief pointing at the houses.

"The stud farm of the Sunrise People's Commune," groaned Dtamtsoo raising his head with difficulty. "Chief . . . take me to the stud farm, will you? They have a doctor there."

They reached the farm at dusk. The grassland was shrouded in thick mist. The mud brown mountains and blue sky were invisible now. Cool dampness filled the air. The chief and Rabte helped Dtamtsoo into an office where a doctor with spectacles took Dtamtsoo's pulse.

"Nothing serious," he said. "Make him lie down and sweat profusely. That will easily cure him. You can leave him here." The chief told Dtamtsoo repeatedly to take good care and not to catch any more chills. As he was turning to go, Dtamtsoo grasped his hand and said,

"I have not looked after you at all, chief, instead you. . . ."

"Don't say such things, we are revolutionary comrades." The chief interrupted him. He put Dtamtsoo's hand under the quilt and left.

"*Teb . . . teb . . . teb . . .*" shouted the chief, flourishing his whip as he drove the cart out of the farm gate. Rabte chased after the cart, the chief's coat in his arms.

"Chief, here's your coat. . . ."

"Leave it for Dtamtsoo," the chief waved his hand and drove off.

The sky was even more sombre. The wind from the mountains whistled through the grass. The chief was very worried for the cart was loaded with rice, flour, paper and books. He whipped the three horses hard and the cart rumbled on in the misty evening. The sky was so thick with black clouds that everywhere was pitch darkness. Even the wheel-horse was invisible. Now and then sparks flashed when horse-shoes struck against stones.

After a dozen *li* the chief heard the faint barking of dogs, then he saw flickering lights. He felt calmer. The rainy night recalled to him the hardships and disasters of his youth and the days when he wandered on the Ordos Grasslands with his father who was a hero under the Shedte Lama.* Both he and his father were thrown into jail by the warlords. His father never came out alive; he died there of typhoid. Dtalsan was very young then. The three years he had spent in jail had tempered him and gave him a character of steel. After the death of his father he fought on with his father's friends on the grassland. . . .

2

Tsagan-Dtana, secretary of the Party committee of the Sunrise People's Commune was at a meeting with the production brigade leaders. They were discussing the distribution of the year's income. The secretary was a dark, thin young man who, two years before, had been a first rate herder of horses. Now, the tele-

* Shedte Lama was a hero who organized the herdsmen to resist their overlords and warlords and had established people's power. Many of the men under him became revolutionary fighters.

phone rang and he took up the receiver. He heard the loud voice of the secretary of the banner Party committee.

"This is Tsagan-Dtana speaking," he said.

"The chief is coming to your commune on a cart to take part in physical labour." He heard the banner Party secretary say, "He's getting on in years and not too strong. Don't let him work too hard. Take a bit of extra care with his food and lodging. . . ."

The news made Tsagan-Dtana so happy that he announced it right away. The meeting stopped at once. The secretary of the commune Party committee immediately went to prepare a place for the chief to sleep. Soon the commune members had readied a big six-sided yurt. Alagsha* rugs were spread on the wooden bed together with a brocade quilt and embroidered pillows made especially for guests. When they were still bustling about they heard the sound of the rubber-tired cart and the crack of a whip. They ran out to meet the league chief. At this moment the rain started to pour down on the grassland. The overloaded cart dashed like a big beast into the village.

"*Hai*, come and help me unload," a strange voice called to the people who were running up to the cart.

Tsagan-Dtana saw a man in a shabby fur coat standing by the cart with a whip in his hand. He flashed his electric torch around the cart but there was no one else.

"*Hai*, have you seen the league chief? . . ." Tsagan-Dtana asked eagerly.

Another herdsman shone his torch at the chief's face and asked,

"Where have you come from, comrade? Where is our driver?"

"He is ill and had to stay at the stud farm."

"Are you from the stud farm? . . ." But before he could finish the question the chief snapped out,

"Come, help me unload. Quick."

In the lightning they could see the heavy storm clouds rushing towards the grassland. And raindrops big as bullets were pouring down. The herdsmen had no time to ask any more questions. They rushed up and began unloading the cart. Working with the others the old chief ran back and forth carrying rice and big

* The rugs produced at Alagsha are known throughout the grassland.

baskets of brick-tea. The load was soon shifted to the storehouse. The chief felt greatly relieved, as if he had finished an important task. He walked unhurriedly to the cart and unharnessed the horses. A warm-hearted old man came to help.

"Come and dry yourself in my place, comrade." The old man led the chief to a yurt. The chief shook off the rain from his shabby fur coat and entered. He greeted the people in the yurt according to the custom of the herdsmen and sat down beside the brazier. As he warmed his hands, he offered them his cigarettes. He took to the hospitable old man at once and they soon became good friends. The chief asked about the pasture grass, how the herds were developing, about the fodder harvest, and how the people's commune was preparing for the winter.

The hostess soon brought them thick milk tea. The shiny little table was laden with golden fried rice and all kinds of dairy food. The brazier burned warmly and the mutton soup in the pot smelled enticing.

The chief chattered on energetically about herding: about the spring at the foot of Olyasootae Mountain which flowed in all seasons — the water was clear and sweet and it was a good place for the cattle to pass the winter; about Khalgantae where the grass and water were plenty and the cattle grew especially quick in autumn. In summer, said the chief, it was better to go to the Dalantae which was spacious and cool. . . . All these were known only to experienced herdsmen. Listening to him the people in the yurt became more and more surprised and they exchanged glances.

"You seem to be a good herdsman, my friend," said the host with admiration. "How do you know our place so thoroughly?"

"I was a shepherd of this banner in my childhood and later I came again with the army to wipe out bandits."

"Oh, so that was it," said the old man. "You are no longer young, friend. It's a tough job to handle a cart and horses. Why don't you come here? We need an experienced herdsman like you."

"Yes, I'd like to learn from you . . ." answered the chief. He was thinking he might as well stay at the old man's place for the night for it was rather late. He would see the Party secretary



tomorrow. And in order not to give the host more trouble he decided not to tell him who he was.

As they talked on, from outside the yurt came a voice from the loudspeaker, "Attention! Attention! The weather forecast says that a cold wave is entering our league. The commune Party committee calls on all members to go to the high-yield experimental flock to build sheds and pens to ensure the safety of this year's second batch of lambs. . . ."

"Quick, quick," the cry of the host covered the sound from the loudspeaker. Everyone, young and old, in the yurt was stirred. The old chief put down the bowl in his hand, tightened his belt like a wrestler going to a contest, put on his hat which was still damp and tied his towel around it. He was all prepared to go. But the host stopped him.

"You needn't go, comrade. You are getting on in years."

"You are not any younger."

"Then you must eat something first."

The old chief shook his head, pushed away the host and stepped out of the yurt.

The village was noisy with the shouts of people, the neighing of horses and the clinking of bits; flashes of electric torch crossed with running shadows. It seemed as if they were preparing for a battle.

"Go to the storehouse and get all the ox-hide and rugs. Load them on the carts," someone shouted.

"Get logs too. . . ."

"Hitch up the rubber-tired carts quickly. . . ."

As the chief rushed to the cart shed several people were already there harnessing horses. The roan wheel-horse which had caught cold in the storm was shying madly and wouldn't let anyone go near it. The chief took over the bridle, stroked the horse's neck lightly and patted its back. The horse immediately became as obedient as a child. The chief harnessed the cart and loaded the logs, ox-hide and rugs and made for the high-yield experimental flock. He flourished the whip and shouted to the horses the same way as when he arrived. Rain mixed with his sweat trickled down his face. His coarse cloth shoes squelched and his drenched trousers clung to his legs. Several young herdsmen ran ahead, leading the way. In order to get to the trouble spot quicker they went right through a marsh. The chief's shoes were filled with muddy water. He took them off finally and rolled his trouser-legs up to his knees.

The wind blew harder, and it rained more heavily. Cold rain-water trickled down the chief's back.

Not even thin cattle and newly shorn sheep can stand a storm at the end of autumn, to say nothing of the little lambs. Worried, the chief urged the horses to go faster while he ran beside the cart swinging his arms.

As they crossed a low hill they saw flickering lights in the distance and heard the sound of men and cattle. Happiness surged up in the chief's heart.

The herdsmen of the high-yield experimental flock had already started their fight. Many took the rugs from their yurt to cover the sheep-pen. Some took off their padded coats and wrapped the lambs in them. When they saw the ox-hide and rugs on the cart they ran up shouting happily. They climbed up from all sides before the cart had time to stop and carried away all the ox-hide and rugs.

The Party secretary Tsagan-Dtana walked up and patted the chief on the back saying, "You're a good one, old driver. Please make two more trips."

"All right. . . ." The chief waved the whip and brought around the cart. He made four more trips in the chilly night. It was already dawn when he at last finished and unhitched his cart. He



fed the horses, readjusted his belt and came to the sheep-pen. The herdsmen who had won a victory over the sudden calamity welcomed him with gratitude.

"You've had a tough time, uncle. Come and warm yourself." A middle-aged woman pulled him into her yurt. The herdsmen inside served him hot tea and roasted mutton. The whole yurt was buoyant with gaiety.

"You have given us great help by staying up all night, old man," said the Party secretary gratefully, presenting him a bowl of fermented mare's milk. "Let me thank you on behalf of all of us. Please don't go back to the stud farm. Wait till our Dtamtsoo returns."

The chief took the silver bowl and fingering his whiskers smilingly, drained the koumiss at one go.

"Good! I like people like you. Have some more." The secretary poured him another cup.

The old chief finished the koumiss and gave the silver bowl back to Tsagan-Dtana. Scrutinizing his face, the chief asked,

"What's your name, comrade?"

"My name is Tsagan-Dtana."

The chief nodded with satisfaction, patted Tsagan-Dtana's shoulder and said,

"So you are the Party secretary!"

The grassland waked into activity the morning after the storm. Skylarks chirped noisily. The fragrance of grass was strong. Tall Bayan-Khangae Mountain with a shining silver helmet rose into the red morning rays. The songs of the commune milkmaids

soared above the grasslands. When the gate of the warm sheep-pen was opened thousands of snow-white lambs of improved strain streamed out like flood water through a gap and scrambled to their mothers. The bleating of the sheep and lambs were like a roaring wave.

"Not one casualty among our lambs, Party secretary." A vet reported happily. Tsagan-Dtana turned and said to the chief, "The god of heaven has failed in his sudden attack."

The chief smiled at the sight of the sheep spreading out into the grassland like pearls. He was very pleased and excited. It was unprecedented that a sheep could give birth twice a year. But the herdsmen had succeeded in getting their sheep to bear lambs twice a year in the era of the big leap forward. He looked at the herdsmen with deep respect.

The dark clouds floated rapidly to the south. The sun shone brightly. The chief harnessed the horses and started for the commune office. The herdsmen who had come to join in the fight against nature the night before all climbed onto his cart. With his trouser-legs rolled up, the chief hung his soaked shoes and stockings on the cart as it sailed down the broad road against the comforting breeze. An automatic fodder cutter came into sight. Then came the sound of tractors. Vivacious young girls burst into songs. Their sweet singing voices were carried along on the fresh grassland air.

"When did this old driver crop up in our people's commune?" a girl murmured like a little swallow.

"I don't know. I never saw him until yesterday. He came during the night," said another one softly.

"He's a skilful driver," said a young man who had guided him the night before. "If it were not for him, we would have tumbled over I don't know how many times."

"Old granddad!" A young pioneer pulled the chief's sleeve. "Have you come to be our driver?"

"Yes, you are quite right." The chief turned and stroked the child's head.

They would be passing by the stud farm on their way. Tsagan-Dtana was still thinking about the league chief. "He might have stopped at the stud farm because of the rain." Tsagan-Dtana

decided to ride there and find out. He met Dtamtsoo and another person at the gate.

"Are you all right now, Dtamtsoo!" Tsagan-Dtana called.

"Two injections and I was fine. It was just a little cold," Dtamtsoo answered.

"Did a cart from the city stay overnight here?"

"No," Dtamtsoo shook his head.

"Queer. Maybe he didn't come yesterday." Tsagan-Dtana knitted his brows.

"Who?" asked Dtamtsoo.

"There was a telephone from the banner saying that the league chief had come on a cart. But he didn't show up."

Dtamtsoo and Rabte were petrified. They looked at each other dumbfounded. Then Dtamtsoo asked in surprise,

"Why, didn't he arrive at the commune last night?"

"Not even his shadow," said Tsagan-Dtana stretching out his hands helplessly.

"Maybe he's lost," said Rabte uneasily.

Suddenly Dtamtsoo waved his arm and called, "Why, isn't that the chief?"

"Where?" Tsagan-Dtana looked, his hand shading his eyes from the sun. The chief drove up on the cart at this moment.

"That's him, driving," said Dtamtsoo pointing at the chief who was jumping down from the cart.

Seeing that Dtamtsoo had recovered, the chief laughed and stretched out his hand to him. "So you are all right again, young man." Their hands joined tightly.

Tsagan-Dtana stood there like a log. With his eyes he measured this "old driver" whom he seemed to be seeing for the first time.

He was tall, broad-shouldered and broad-chested, a kind old man a little over fifty. His weather-beaten face wore a smile as innocent as a child's. And his shining eyes, although bloodshot, showed no other trace of fatigue.

Embarrassed, Tsagan-Dtana smiled shamefacedly and approached the chief.

"I am sorry, chief. I didn't know it was you . . ." he said.

"Yo," cried the chief stopping the cart which was still moving forward and took Tsagan-Dtana's hand. "You know me now.

We are people living in the era of labour and struggle. And we often come to know each other in the course of labour and struggle. Isn't that true?"

The people on the cart immediately quieted down. Their glances, warm and friendly, all centred on the chief. And the women, pushing each other, began to whisper.

"It's time to go. Up on the cart, young fellows." Dtamtsoo and Rabte jumped on the cart. The crack of the whip broke the grassland tranquility.

The cart rolled along on the new highway. The grassland was beautiful: Golden grass waved in the late autumn air. Wild chrysanthemums which had been knocked down by the storm raised their heads again. Birds sang sweetly. And the blue sky was so clear that it seemed infinitely high. An eagle, its great dark wings out-stretched, soared high into the heavens. . . .

*Translated by Yu Fan-chin
Illustrations by Shu Lan*

Inside and Outside the Great Wall →
by Liu Kuang

A brief note about the artist appeared in *Chinese Literature* No. 12, 1959, where his wood-cut *Spring Dawn* was reproduced.



The Chinese Style in Art

— *A review of the National Exhibition of Art* —

On the eve of the Third Congress of Chinese Literary and Art Workers, the Union of Chinese Artists held a National Exhibition of Art in Peking. The artistic standard attained by the 910 exhibits showed that the problem with which our artists are most concerned and which they have been trying hard to solve in their artistic practice has now found a satisfactory solution.

This problem is how to use our traditional style of painting with its long history to give free expression to the socialist content of today, and how to make more Chinese the artistic techniques we have learned from other countries. These are actually the two sides of a single problem: namely, how to correctly establish and develop a Chinese style and Chinese line in artistic creation.

Chairman Mao Tse-tung said years ago in his celebrated article *Oppose the Party "Eight-Legged Essay"*: "The foreign eight-legged essay must be banned, empty and abstract talk must be stopped, and doctrinairism must be laid to rest to make room for the fresh and lively things of Chinese style and Chinese flavour which the common folk of China love to see and hear." These words of Chairman Mao Tse-tung constitute an important criterion for estimating our achievement in art. At this exhibition we were gratified to see that our artists have not only succeeded in absorbing the essence of traditional Chinese art and further developing it, but also in absorbing foreign techniques and making them Chinese, the better to express the present life and struggles of our people. This is another great victory of the thought of Mao Tse-tung on the artistic front.

Let me first give my impressions of the portrait paintings shown at this exhibition. A distinctive Chinese style and fresh developments were evident in the portrait paintings in this exhibition. There were four notable paintings of Chairman Mao Tse-tung. Li Chi in *Chairman Mao Travels Through the Whole Country* has used the traditional technique of a high degree of epitomization to bring out his extremely original creative conceptions; thus through the glorious figure of our great leader he vividly expresses and sums up the spirit of the whole Chinese nation during the period of the general line, the big leap forward and the people's communes. This portrait has an original style. The artist, not relying on any single incident, brings out a significant quality of Chairman Mao Tse-tung — his closeness to the people — using expression, movement and dress to convey the leader's sublimity of spirit and other important aspects. The lines and brushwork are concise, fluid, dynamic and forceful, showing an important development of traditional Chinese figure painting. The *gouache* by Wu Pi-tuan and Chin Shang-yi, *Chairman Mao Tse-tung with the Peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America** combines a strong political content with a competent artistic technique. Liu Wen-hsi's lithograph *Chairman Mao in Yen-an* presents the scene in the time of the War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression and the early period of the War of Liberation, when our great leader, Chairman Mao was in Yen-an, the centre of the revolution. It is a painting thoroughly Chinese in style. *Heroes of Our Time*, a large drawing by teachers of the high school affiliated to the Central Institute of Fine Arts, has great range and dignity. Its theme is the national conference of heroes and model workers held in Peking at the end of last October. Taking the large Tien An Men Square as a background, it meticulously depicts Chairman Mao Tse-tung, the leader of the Party and the people, entering the Great Hall of the People with the outstanding representatives of the labouring people. Ordinary workers, peasants and soldiers are the subjects of many other portraits, showing that our new portrait painters have begun to depict the labouring people, so that these tens of thousands of people's heroes will be known to future ages.

* See *Chinese Literature* No. 9, 1960.

Landscape painting in China has a very long tradition. Because it depicts mountains and rivers, some people think that such painting is a form of escape from the struggles of real life, but such a view is undoubtedly one-sided and therefore erroneous. All who have made any study of the history of Chinese art know that landscape painting has always held an important position in it. When men enjoy and extol natural beauty, they usually link it with their imagination and associations in life, considering certain features of natural scenery as the personification of the human spirit. Thus when people admire the sublimity of mountains, the breadth of the ocean, the enduring quality of the pine, the loftiness of the stork, they are admiring the spiritual qualities of man which coincide with these characteristics of nature. This is even more strongly apparent in our new landscapes, many of which embody the ideas and feelings of the labouring people. An example is the large-sized landscape by Fu Pao-shih and Kuan Shan-yueh, *Such Great Beauty Like This in All Our Landscape*,* hung in the Great Hall of the People, which takes as its theme Chairman Mao Tse-tung's poem *Snow*. This not only presents the grandeur of China's countryside, but expresses our people's aspiring spirit and boundless confidence. From it we can see that while our people of six hundred million is eagerly realizing their mighty ideals, our traditional landscape painting guided by Chairman Mao Tse-tung's thought in literature and art is entering upon a newer and finer stage of development. This is merely one of many works which embody the fine, rich and healthy spirit of the workers and peasants.

The most outstanding of the traditional paintings in this exhibition was Huang Chou's *Singing As We Go* which presents the joy of China's different fraternal nationalities in their new life under socialism. Like Shih Lu's *A Scene of Plenty*,** which shows the new appearance in the villages, it combines the basic techniques of Chinese landscape painting with those of figure painting and genre painting, to create a most fresh and natural scene of the big leap forward in agricultural production. *The*

* See *Chinese Literature* No. 2, 1960.

** See *Chinese Literature* No. 9, 1960.

Greatest Miracle, by a group of students, deals with the harnessing of the Yellow River and gives fairly concentrated and comprehensive expression to the great theme of changing nature. It presents that dramatic moment when the current of the river is dammed, conveying the white-hot enthusi-

asm and splendour of the work-site, as well as the heroic spirit and selfless labour of the labouring people in building our country into a powerful socialist state and to realize communism. Though technically this painting is less mature than Huang Chou's *Singing As We Go* and some other works, the artists have made a good attempt to absorb traditional methods of expression. Indeed, all the painting mentioned above, with their distinctive styles and strong feeling of life, show how successfully Chinese artists in recent years, led by the Party and helped by the people as a whole, have developed their originality and rich imagination. This is yet another example in the field of artistic creation of the combination of revolutionary realism and revolutionary romanticism advocated by Chairman Mao Tse-tung.

Another new development of the techniques of traditional Chinese painting can be seen in modern woodcuts. *Winter Sowing in Hilly Country* by Chen Tien-jan, *Midnight* by Chia Hsuan-chun, *Inside and Outside the Great Wall** by Liu Kuang, and *Spring in Northern Shensi*** by Hsiu Chun all show a distinctively national style. *Inside and Outside the Great Wall* is a coloured woodcut which uses a decorative style to show the transformation of desert regions. Tall trees and regular paddy fields, things hitherto far

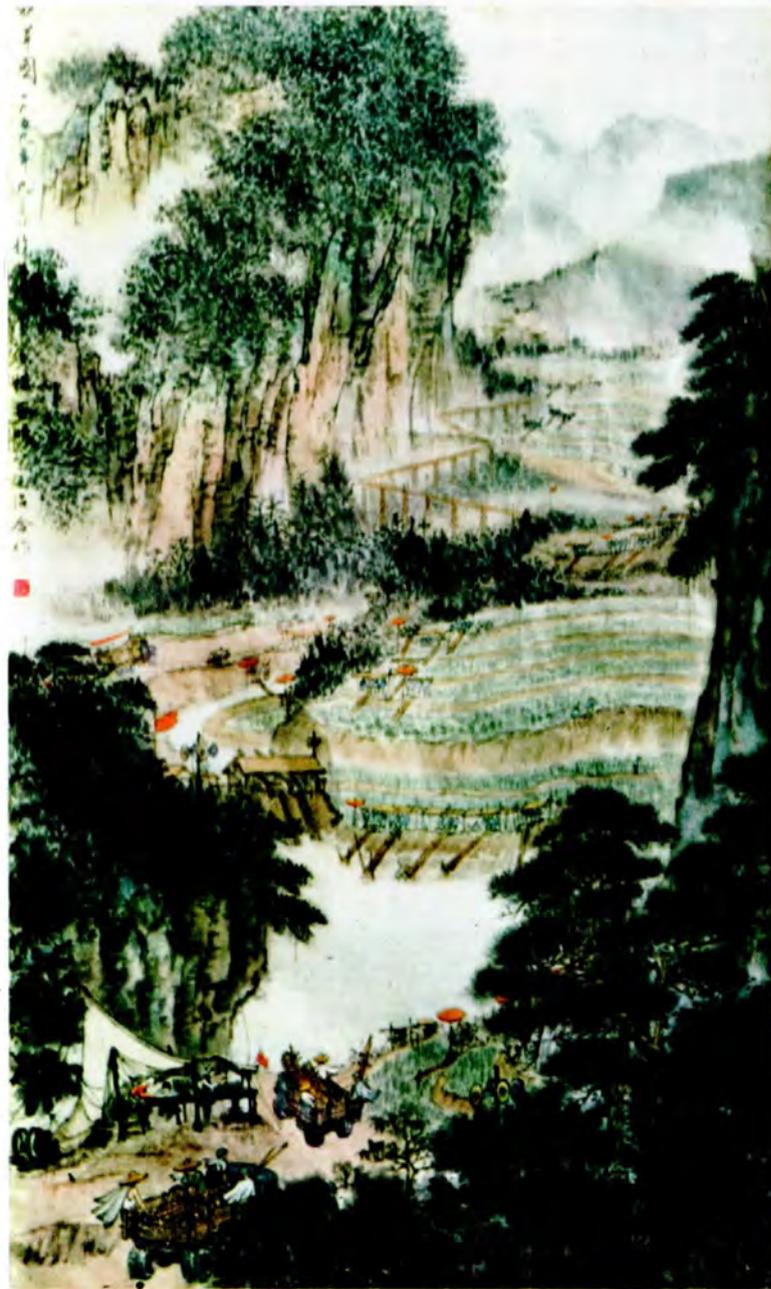
Battling Against the Drought →

by Ya Ming and Sung Wen-chih

This painting shows how our peasants, armed with the belief that "man will conquer Nature," fight with stubborn courage against natural calamities.

Ya Ming's *Morning on Taibu Lake* was reproduced in *Chinese Literature* No. 8, 1960 with a brief introduction about the artist.

Sung Wen-chih was born in Taitsang County, Kiangsu Province in 1919. A graduate of the Soochow Art School, he is teaching art in the Kiangsu Studio of Traditional Painting.



* See the plate opposite p. 178 of this issue.

** See *Chinese Literature* No. 8, 1960.

removed from deserts, appear in this woodcut in a most striking manner, presenting a strong contrast to the arid sand. Today the dream of changing deserts into fertile fields has come true, and this heart-warming miracle is a sign of our new times. It shows us a specific example of how our people are rapidly transforming the old poverty and backwardness of our people. This is the outcome of the hard efforts made by the labouring people under the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party, a symbol of the revolutionary heroism of the labouring masses. Hsiu Chun's *Spring in Northern Shensi* gives a vivid picture of the regular terraced fields which are a special feature of our new countryside. The colour and composition of these fields are both decorative in style, while their symmetrical beauty is most striking, and by this choice of subject the artist pays a high tribute to the infinite creativeness and boundless wisdom of the labouring people.

The outstanding achievement of our woodcut artists lies in the fact that many of them have broken with the old formula in creation and taken over the decorative feature of traditional art to establish an original style, thus acting as a vanguard to carry forward the national traditions and improve artistic technique.

The most prominent feature of the sculptures on exhibition is the strong national style they possess. The Lu Hsun Art Academy's Department of Sculpture has produced two original sculptural groups entitled *Long Live the People's Commune!** They are composed of figures of peasants in the people's communes who are advancing bravely, full of confidence and spirit; young men beating drums and cymbals serve as the focal point, and the whole composition has a unity combining movement and stability. These dynamic, powerful figures show the optimism of our new heroes who scorn all difficulties, the gallant spirit of the people who have become the masters of their own fate and won great achievements in the revolution. They not only personify our people's spirit in this new age but their revolutionary aspirations for a continuous big leap forward in new construction tasks. Thus these fine works have a special significance. Lung Teh-hui's *The Awakening of Africa* and Kuo Chi-hsiang's *A Million Slaves Have Stood Up*

* One of which is reproduced opposite p. 70 of this issue.

have taken over the simplicity, strength and solidity of ancient Chinese sculpture to evolve a fresh style of their own.

Though oil painting has a comparatively short history in China, the oils exhibited showed that our artists have made determined efforts to develop a Chinese style of oil painting; for many of these works approximate to the traditional Chinese taste and the preference of the people. For example, Hsia Chu's *Making Fans* tries to apply traditional principles of Chinese painting to oil painting, adopting the simplicity, the artistic generalization and the concentrated expression of traditional techniques and making effective use of empty space to heighten the emphasis on the main subject. *The Road to Happiness* by Ma Chang-li has poetic feeling and a strong sense of contemporary life. It shows two girls of a minority nationality watching a convoy of lorries approach down the winding highway through the hills, thus reflecting the new life of the minority nationalities in mountain regions after liberation. *The Electrician* by Chang Lung-chi is another moving picture which presents a girl working confidently at her post, devoting all her energy to the building of socialism.

The above mentioned are but a few exhibits of typical significance among the many different forms of art in this exhibition. The general impression was that Chinese art is advancing along the correct path, that our artists, following the policy of letting a hundred flowers blossom and developing the new from the old, are making explorations in carrying forward and introducing innovations in national art forms and styles from different aspects. Taking over the heritage critically and renovating it creatively does not mean adopting Chinese or foreign traditional forms and techniques indiscriminately. It means that artists, on the basis of past traditions, should give their originality full play and integrate truthfulness in reflecting objective reality with individual initiative in expressing thoughts and feelings. In this way they are giving fresh impetus to the general development of new national styles and forms which will gradually unite revolutionary content and good artistic form into an entity, thus bringing about a completely new and splendid scene in our artistic world.



A Hundred Flowers in Creative Writing

— *The Exhibition of Literary Books and Periodicals* —

During the Third Congress of Chinese Literary and Art Workers, an exhibition of works of literature and literary periodicals organized by the Chinese Writers' Union and the Association for Research into Folk Literature was opened in the south wing of the magnificent Museum of Chinese History. Every day workers, cadres and students went to see the exhibition. The first sight to meet the visitors' eyes on entry was two high bookcases placed like a screen displaying several hundred handsomely bound volumes of the best creative writings and theoretical works published in different parts of China in the last ten years. These well-bound books epitomized the splendid achievements gained in modern Chinese literature along the path of letting a hundred flowers blossom and a hundred schools of thought contend and developing the new from the old under the general directive of serving the workers, peasants and soldiers.

The exhibits on display totalled nearly ten thousand literary books and periodicals from eleven national publishing houses and those of twenty-seven provinces, municipalities and autonomous regions.

Peking is one of China's chief publishing centres. The People's Literature Publishing House, one of the largest literary publishing houses, displayed a series of more than fifty selected works of contemporary writers including recent books by veteran writers

like Kuo Mo-jo, Mao Tun, Lao Sheh, Pa Chin, Tsao Yu, Liu Pai-yu, Chao Shu-li and Ai Wu, the novel *The Song of Youth** by young writer Yang Mo, the novel *Tracks in the Snowy Forest*** by Chu Po, Tu Peng-cheng's short novel *In Time of Peace*, Wang Wen-shih's collection of short stories *A Stormy Night*, and Kuo Hsiao-chuan's anthology of poems *Under the Moon*. Here too was Liang Pin's *Keep the Red Flag Flying*,*** in which Chu Chung, who represents the older generation of Chinese revolutionary peasants, makes an indelible impression on readers by his utterly selfless and uncompromising fight against the oppressors. Another novel comparable in scope to *Keep the Red Flag Flying* is *The Builders* by Liu Ching, which is serialized in *Chinese Literature* beginning from this issue. This book was displayed on the stand of the Youth Publishing House. This novel won high praise from many readers as soon as it was published. The hero, Liang Sheng-pao, who splendidly symbolizes the new generation of Chinese peasants, has been hailed as an example for all on the agricultural front.

All the books exhibited by the Youth Publishing House reveal a spirit of youthful vitality. Thus Wu Chiang's novel *Red Sun***** which presents a group of heroes who emerged from the fierce revolutionary war, breathes revolutionary optimism. Other works present unforgettable pictures of such heroines as Liu Hu-lan or heroes as Tung Tsun-jui, thereby educating and inspiring the younger generation. Another significant feature of this publishing house is the colourfulness and clarity of its book designing; the cover of each volume carries striking portraits of outstanding characters which attract readers. The Writers' Publishing House which prints important works by well-known contemporary writers exhibited about a hundred widely read works, among them Yang Shuo's short novel *Farewell to Battle*, the woman novelist Tsao Ming's *Riding on the Wind*, Liu Shu-teh's short novel *The Bridge*, and Tien Chien's long poem *The Carter*. The most outstanding exhibits of the Liberation Army Literature Publishing House were

* See *Chinese Literature* Nos. 3, 4, 5 and 6, 1960.

** See *Chinese Literature* No. 6, 1958.

*** See *Chinese Literature* Nos. 1 to 5, 1959.

**** See *Chinese Literature* No. 7, 1960.



The books and periodicals in the Shanghai section

Chen Chi-tung's play *The Long March** and Wei Wei's collection of sketches *Those Most to Be Loved*, both of which describe dauntless fighters with lofty revolutionary ideals. Here also was the novel by the young writer Feng Teh-ying, *Sow-Thistle*.

Shanghai is another major publishing centre, and this section showed many works by new and old writers like Hsia Yen's play *The Test*,** Chou Erh-fu's novel *Morning in Shanghai* and the woman writer Ju Chih-chuan's collection of stories *Tall, Tall Poplars*. It also exhibited a great deal of writing by the masses. Shanghai, an erstwhile infamous city under the domination of the imperialists and their lackeys, the Kuomintang reactionaries, has changed completely within the ten short years since the working people took power. This year a popular contest was held in Shanghai for the best poems, songs and paintings. And a worker in one mill there wrote:

Molten steel from many furnaces blazes red,
Rolls of silk are embroidered with phoenix designs,

* See *Chinese Literature* No. 2, 1956.

** See *Chinese Literature* No. 4, 1955.

Golden ears of wheat fill the barns;
All these we present to the great Communist Party.

The exhibits displayed by the publishing houses of different provinces, municipalities and autonomous regions showed a rich variety and distinctive features. Kiangsu Province presented an impressive display with thirty novels published in the last ten years and two hundred and five collections of short stories, as well as works of literary theory, folk literature, translations of foreign authors and literary periodicals, all showing the big leap forward in this province in writing and publishing. The stand of Kansu Province disclosed an amazing output of poetry, including many new poems by Li Chi and Wen Chieh voicing passionate praise of the people of that locality whose stupendous energy is creating miracles daily. The regions inhabited by minority nationalities published scarcely any works of literature in the past, but now many literary workers are exploring the wealth of folk literature there and are engaged in creative writing. On the section allotted to Chinghai Province were printed texts and manuscript copies in Tibetan of the *Romance of King Geser* which had disappeared from general circulation for centuries. Now the as-

The books and periodicals in the Sinkiang section



sociation for research into folk literature in Chinghai has collected twenty-five volumes of material on this epic, translated ten volumes and edited four others, so that soon this magnificent poem will be available to readers all over the country. Among the exhibits of the Inner Mongolian Autonomous Region were *Golden Bridge*, a collection of poems by the outstanding Mongolian poet N. Sayntsoqt, the story *Happy Song of Spring* by the young Mongolian story writer Malchinhu, and the novel *Beacon on the Steppe* by Ulanbagan. All these works have a distinctive national style and strong local colour.

The exhibits of Yunnan with its many nationalities had the splendid variety of a peacock's plumage. There were the *Tales of the Yunnan Minority Peoples* with beautiful stories handed down through the ages, the romantic Pai narrative poem *The Cloud Maiden*,* the long Sani poem *Ashma*,** the Tai poem *Ngoping and Sanglo* and other long folk poems. There were also poems by the Tai singer Hanan-chou in a volume entitled *Songs of the Tai People*, and Hanan-ying's *Song of the Flowing Sand River*. These new collections of poetry are joyful clarion calls in praise of our people's new life. Indeed, in every corner of the exhibition it was profoundly evident that throughout the last ten magnificent years literature has served as a battle-drum of the age, inspiring people to go bravely forward.

The photographs of mass literary achievements in different provinces showed the heart-stirring scenes at the village poetry contests, when, as one Honan peasant poet wrote:

Worker and peasant poets
Go up the stage to recite,
Their poems are like wind and thunder,
Their impromptu verses scatter the mist and clouds.

Since the big leap forward of 1958 China has been swept by a great movement to write folk songs. The province of Shantung alone published a hundred collections of such songs. The collection of new folk songs of Kansu on display here has sold more than six hundred thousand copies, while Shensi exhibited three new

* See *Chinese Literature* No. 8, 1959.

** See *Chinese Literature* No. 3, 1955.

books entitled *Paimiao Village Is Poetry Village, Selected Poems by Peasant Poets in Paimiao* and *The Peasants of Paimiao Discuss Literature*. Paimiao is a village in Shensi where the peasants not only compose poetry but are able to comment on it too. *Red Flag Folk Songs*,* a collection made from millions of new songs by the veteran poet Kuo Mo-jo and the noted literary critic Chou Yang, was the most outstanding anthology of this type in the exhibition. This is the new *Book of Songs* of our age of socialism, showing a new content and new spirit. In the preface to this collection, the editors summed up the great significance of the mass movement in the creation of folk songs since the big leap forward as follows: "History will prove that these new folk songs will exercise a greater and greater influence on the development of our Chinese poetry. The history of the development of Chinese literature tells us that every high tide of literary writing has its source deep in folk literature."

Among the writing done by the people were also many volumes of reminiscences of the revolution and histories of factories and people's communes. The most impressive of the reminiscences was the collection *A Single Spark Can Start a Prairie Fire*, two volumes of which have been published. This records valuable material dealing with the early revolutionary struggles written by veteran revolutionaries in graphic and simple language; and its true stories of many revolutionary heroes have become well-known to countless readers. Noteworthy among several dozen histories of factories and mines displayed here were *Red Anyuan* with its account of the revolutionary struggle of the miners in Anyuan in the former Hunan-Kiangsi Border Region, and the first two volumes of *Anecdotes of the Building of the Wuban Steel Works*, written by the steel workers who constructed this plant after the liberation. *Green Trees Spread Their Shade* is one of the histories of people's communes which records how a mutual-aid team in Szechuan took the path of co-operation and developed into a people's commune. These books by workers and peasants, reflecting their lives, are a precious contribution to our new literature.

This exhibition also presented the huge *History of Chinese Literature*, 1,200,000 words in length, and other scholarly works

* See *Chinese Literature* No. 4, 1960.

like the *History of Modern Chinese Literature* written by groups of university students. Such works could not conceivably have been written in the old society by students. The *History of Chinese Literature*, the work of several dozen students in Peking University's Department of Literature, was a history of literature written from the standpoint of Marxism-Leninism and the thought of Mao Tse-tung. After its publication, students of Fudan University in Shanghai and of Shangtung University in Tsingtao also wrote a *History of Chinese Literature, New Treatises on Literary Theory* and the *History of Ideological Struggles in Modern Chinese Literature*. The appearance of these works shows that a new generation of literary theorists has rapidly grown up and is maturing. The Shanghai section displayed the young literary critic Yao Wen-yuan's collection of articles *On Revisionist Trends in Literature*. The Kiangsu section had *Mao Tun's Literary Path in These Forty Years* by the young critic Yeh Tzu-ming. The Hupeh section included nine collections of short articles of which 460,000 copies have been sold. These articles are by responsible comrades of the Hupeh Provincial Party Committee, who have stood in the forefront of the political and ideological struggle to make sharp attacks on all manner of mistaken bourgeois and revisionist ideas. The continuous appearance of works of this nature shows how widely free debate has spread in the literary arena under the policy of letting a hundred schools of thought contend.

Another most gratifying feature of this exhibition as a whole was the number of new works from the pens of old writers and the number of new writers from the ranks of peasants and workers. These new and old writers together form one mighty stream, making up an unprecedentedly great literary force. For example, the Hunan section had two volumes of Chou Li-po's *Great Changes in the Mountain Village*,* a new novel by this veteran writer produced after he went back to live among the peasants in his home province of Hunan after liberation. There were also *A Family of Steel Workers* by Hu Wan-chun, a steel worker in Shanghai, and collections of short stories by factory workers like Tang Keh-hsin and Fei Li-wen, all giving a good picture of the new life of industrial workers today. The exhibition introduced the peasant

* See *Chinese Literature* No. 10, 1959.

poet of Shensi, Wang Lao-chiu, now nearing seventy, who was already fifty-eight at the time of liberation but had never learned to write. At the age of sixty, when he first entered the city of Sian after liberation, he sang a song expressing the feelings of five hundred million Chinese peasants in the new society: "The gate of liberation stands wide open, and peasants who have stood up can walk into the city. . . ." In a few years he learned to read and write and today he is known throughout the country as the peasant poet. His *Selected Poems of Wang Lao-chiu* is exhibited in the Shensi section. Huang Sheng-hsiao, the son of a poor ferryman, became a docker at fourteen and since liberation has written more than a thousand poems and articles praising the new life now that workers have become their own masters. Here is one of his pen-sketches of the dock workers' life:

When our team goes out we carry poetry to the river,
When our team comes back we carry poetry up the slope.
Now dockers can write poetry;
The poems we write spread over all the land.

The poems by the Peking worker Wen Cheng-hsun and the Kiangsu worker Sun Yu-tien, which were on display, have also aroused considerable interest. This proletarian force of old and new writers, which is growing from year to year, has achieved splendid results in Chinese literature during the last ten years.

Visitors left this exhibition with a deep sense of gratitude to those writers and artists who have followed the line pointed out by Chairman Mao Tse-tung and with their hard work enriched the spiritual life of our people. They left, too, confident that these industrious husbandmen in the garden of literature will reap an even larger harvest in future, carrying Chinese literature to great heights.

SON OF THE WORKING CLASS

BY WU YUN-TO

This is the autobiography of Wu Yun-to, one of New China's best-loved heroes. Wu was a coal-miner who was trampled underfoot in the old society. He grew up in the maelstrom of struggle against the Japanese invaders and the reactionaries who were betraying the country. Together with his comrades, Wu Yun-to invented many new weapons for the people's army and set up several ammunition factories. More than once he risked his life in fulfilling his task. Three times he was wounded, the last time so badly that he lay at death's door. But whether making rifles with home-made tools, getting explosives for the people's army from enemy time-bombs, or convalescing from his third wound he never stopped working for the revolution.

The significance of this book is not so much that it is the story of a single hero as that it was because there were countless Wu Yun-tos — simple men of heroic mould — that the Chinese people won through to victory.

illustrated

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Just Off the Press

MY FAMILY

BY TAO CHENG

These memoirs of Tao Cheng, a retired revolutionary woman cadre, have won a tremendous response among Chinese readers since first appearing as a serial in the *Peking Evening News* and *Chinese Youth Daily*. The incidents and events recalled took place in the early years of the Chinese revolution when the Chinese Communist Party's heroic underground workers fought under extremely difficult conditions. Tao Cheng and her family were in the thick of the struggle, and several of them gave their lives in the cause. These memoirs have already had several reprints and the story has also been filmed and adapted for the stage.

The book contains some photographs and prefaces by Hsu Teh-li and Hsieh Chueh-tsai, veteran revolutionaries who knew the author well.

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