

CHINESE LITERATURE



4

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CONTENTS

LU HSUN'S WRITINGS	
A Madman's Diary	3
Confucius in Modern China	15
STORIES	
Two Buckets of Water — <i>Hao Jan</i>	23
Date Orchard — <i>Hao Jan</i>	36
An Old Deputy — <i>Fu Chih-kuei</i>	49
POEMS	
Our Gifts for Chairman Mao (a Tibetan folk song)	61
Song of the Ailao Mountain (an Yi folk song)	63
The Girl Tractor-Driver — <i>Liang Shang-chuan</i>	65
Fetching Water — <i>Yuan Hui</i>	67
REPORTAGE	
The Countryside Is a University Too	69
ARTICLES	
Lu Hsun, a Great Fighter Against Confucianism — <i>Lin Chih-hao</i>	81
Do Musical Works Without Titles Have No Class Character? — <i>Chao Hua</i>	89
INTERVIEWS	
Introducing the Writer Hao Jan — <i>Chao Ching</i>	95
CHRONICLE	102
PLATES	
Studying (traditional Chinese painting) — <i>Hsiung Chao-ju</i> and <i>Lin Yung</i>	48-49
Morning on Taihu Lake (traditional Chinese painting) — <i>Sung Wen-chih</i>	60-61
Dawn Overture (woodcut) — <i>Chao Mei</i>	80-81
Letter from Their Old School (woodcut) — <i>Chang Chen-chi</i>	94-95
Front Cover: Sending a Daughter to the Countryside — <i>Chuan Tai-an</i>	

A Madman's Diary¹

Two brothers, whose names I need not mention here, were both good friends of mine in high school; but after a separation of many years we gradually lost touch. Some time ago I happened to hear that one of them was seriously ill, and since I was going back to my old home I broke my journey to call on them. I saw only one, however, who told me that the invalid was his younger brother.

"I appreciate your coming such a long way to see us," he said, "but my brother recovered some time ago and has gone elsewhere to take up an official post." Then, laughing, he produced two volumes of his brother's diary, saying that from these the nature of his past illness could be seen and there was no harm in showing them to an old friend. I took the diary away, read it through, and found that he had suffered from a form of persecution complex. The writing was most confused and incoherent, and he had made many wild statements; moreover he had omitted to give any dates, so that only by the colour of the ink and the differences in the writing could one tell that it was not all written at one time. Certain sections, however, were not altogether disconnected, and I have copied out a part

to serve as a subject for medical research. I have not altered a single illogicality in the diary and have changed only the names, even though the people referred to are all country folk, unknown to the world and of no consequence. As for the title, it was chosen by the diarist himself after his recovery, and I did not change it.

1

Tonight the moon is very bright.

I have not seen it for over thirty years, so today when I saw it I felt in unusually high spirits. I begin to realize that during the past thirty-odd years I have been in the dark; but now I must be extremely careful. Otherwise why should the Chaos' dog have looked at me twice?

I have reason for my fear.

2

Tonight there is no moon at all, I know that this is a bad omen. This morning when I went out cautiously, Mr. Chao had a strange look in his eyes, as if he were afraid of me, as if he wanted to murder me. There were seven or eight others who discussed me in a whisper. And they were afraid of my seeing them. So, indeed, were all the people I passed. The fiercest among them grinned at me; whereupon I shivered from head to foot, knowing that their preparations were complete.

I was not afraid, however, but continued on my way. A group of children in front were also discussing me, and the look in their eyes was just like that in Mr. Chao's while their faces too were ghastly pale. I wondered what grudge these children could have against me to make them behave like this. I could not help calling out: "Tell me!" But then they ran away.

I wonder what grudge Mr. Chao has against me, what grudge the people on the road have against me. I can think of nothing except that twenty years ago I trod on Mr. Ku Chiu's old ledgers,² and Mr. Ku was most displeased. Although Mr. Chao does not know him, he must have heard talk of this and decided to avenge him,

thus he is conspiring against me with the people on the road. But then what of the children? At that time they were not yet born, so why should they eye me so strangely today, as if they were afraid of me, as if they wanted to murder me? This really frightens me, it is so bewildering and upsetting.

I know. They must have learned this from their parents!

3

I can't sleep at night. Everything requires careful consideration if one is to understand it.

Those people, some of whom have been pilloried by the magistrate, slapped in the face by the local gentry, had their wives taken away by bailiffs or their parents driven to suicide by creditors, never looked as frightened and as fierce then as they did yesterday.

The most extraordinary thing was that woman on the street yesterday who was spanking her son. "Little devil!" she cried. "I'm so angry I could eat you!" Yet all the time it was me she was looking at. I gave a start, unable to hide my alarm. Then all those long-toothed people with livid faces began to hoot with laughter. Old Chen hurried forward and dragged me home.

He dragged me home. The folk at home all pretended not to know me; they had the same look in their eyes as all the others. When I went into the study, they locked me in as if cooping up a chicken or a duck. This incident left me even more bewildered.

A few days ago a tenant of ours from Wolf Cub Village came to report the failure of the crops and told my elder brother that a notorious character in their village had been beaten to death; then some people had taken out his heart and liver, fried them in oil, and eaten them as a means of increasing their courage. When I interrupted, the tenant and my brother both stared at me. Only today have I realized that they had exactly the same look in their eyes as those people outside.

Just to think of it sets me shivering from the crown of my head to the soles of my feet.

They eat human beings, so they may eat me.

I see that the woman's "eat you", the laughter of those long-toothed people with livid faces, and the tenant's story the other day are obviously secret signs. I realize all the poison in their speech, all the daggers in their laughter. Their teeth are white and glistening: They use these teeth to eat men.

Evidently, although I am not a bad man, ever since I trod on Mr. Ku's ledgers it has been touch-and-go with me. They seem to have secrets which I cannot guess, and once they are angry they will call anyone a bad character. I remember when my elder brother taught me to write compositions, no matter how good a man was, if I produced arguments to the contrary he would mark that passage to show his approval; while if I excused evil-doers he would say: "Good for you, that shows originality." How can I possibly guess their secret thoughts — especially when they are ready to eat people?

Everything requires careful consideration if one is to understand it. In ancient times, as I recollect, people often ate human beings, but I am rather hazy about it. I tried to look this up, but my history has no chronology and scrawled all over each page are the words: "Confucian Virtue and Morality". Since I could not sleep anyway, I read intently half the night until I began to see words between the lines. The whole book was filled with the two words — "Eat people."

All these words written in the book, all the words spoken by our tenant, eye me quizzically with an enigmatic smile.

I too am a man, and they want to eat me!

4

In the morning I sat quietly for some time. Old Chen brought in lunch: one bowl of vegetables, one bowl of steamed fish. The eyes of the fish were white and hard, and its mouth was open just like those people who want to eat human beings. After a few mouthfuls I could not tell whether the slippery morsels were fish or human flesh, so I brought it all up.

I said, "Old Chen, tell my brother that I feel quite suffocated and want to have a stroll in the garden." Old Chen said nothing but went out, and presently he came back and opened the gate.

I did not move, but watched to see how they would treat me, feeling certain that they would not let me go. Sure enough! My elder brother came slowly out, leading an old man. There was a murderous gleam in his eyes, and fearing that I would see it he lowered his head, stealing side-glances at me from behind his glasses.

"You seem very well today," said my brother.

"Yes," said I.

"I have invited Mr. Ho here today to examine you."

"All right," I replied. Actually I knew quite well that this old man was the executioner in disguise! Feeling my pulse was simply a pretext for him to see how fat I was; for this would entitle him to a share of my flesh. Still I was not afraid. Although I do not eat men my courage is greater than theirs. I held out my two fists to see what he would do. The old man sat down, closed his eyes, fumbled for some time, remained motionless for a while; then opened his shifty eyes and said, "Don't let your imagination run away with you. Rest quietly for a few days, and you will be better."

Don't let your imagination run away with you! Rest quietly for a few days! By fattening me of course they'll have more to eat. But what good will it do me? How can it be "better"? The whole lot of them wanting to eat people yet stealthily trying to keep up appearances, not daring to do it outright, was really enough to make me die of laughter. I couldn't help it, I nearly split my sides, I was so amused. I knew that this laughter voiced courage and integrity. Both the old man and my brother turned pale, awed by my courage and integrity.

But my courage just makes them all the more eager to eat me, to acquire some of my courage for themselves. The old man went out of the gate, but before he had gone far he said to my brother in a low voice, "To be eaten at once!" My brother nodded. So you are in it too! This stupendous discovery, though it came as a shock, is no more than I might expect: the accomplice in eating me is my elder brother!

The eater of human flesh is my elder brother!

I am the younger brother of an eater of human flesh!

I, who will be eaten by others, am the younger brother of an eater of human flesh!

5

These few days I have been thinking again: suppose that old man were not an executioner in disguise, but a real doctor; he would be none the less an eater of human flesh. That book on herbs by his predecessor Li Shih-chen³ states explicitly that men's flesh can be boiled and eaten; how then can he still deny that he eats men?

As for my elder brother, I have also good reason to suspect him. When he was teaching me, he told me himself, "People exchange their sons to eat."⁴ And once in discussing a bad man he said that not only did the fellow deserve to be killed, he should "have his flesh eaten and his hide slept on". I was still young at the time, and for quite a while my heart beat faster. The story our tenant from Wolf Cub Village told the other day about eating a man's heart and liver didn't surprise him at all — he kept nodding his head. He is evidently just as cruel as before. Since it is possible to "exchange sons to eat", then anything can be exchanged, anyone can be eaten. In the past I simply listened to his explanations and let it go at that; now I know that when he gave me these explanations, not only was there human fat at the corner of his lips, but his whole heart was set on eating men.

6

Pitch dark. I don't know whether it is day or night. The Chaos' dog has started barking again.

The fierceness of a lion, the timidity of a rabbit, the craftiness of a fox. . . .

7

I know their way: they are not prepared to kill outright, nor would they dare, for fear of the consequences. Instead they have banded together and set traps everywhere, to force me to kill myself. The behaviour of the men and women in the street a few days ago and my elder brother's attitude these last few days make it quite obvious. What they like best is for a man to take off his belt and hang himself

from a beam; for then they can enjoy their hearts' desire without being blamed for murder. Naturally that delights them and sets them roaring with laughter. On the other hand, if a man is frightened or worried to death, though that makes him rather thin, they still nod in approval.

They only eat dead flesh! I remember reading somewhere of a hideous beast with an ugly look in its eye called "hyena", which often eats dead flesh. Even the largest bones it crunches into fragments and swallows; the mere thought of this makes your hair stand on end. Hyenas are related to wolves, wolves belong to the canine species. The other day the Chaos' dog eyed me several times: it is obviously in the plot too as their accomplice. The old man's eyes were cast down, but that did not deceive me.

The most deplorable is my elder brother. He's a man too, so why isn't he afraid, why is he plotting with others to eat me? Does force of habit blind a man to what's wrong? Or is he so heartless that he will knowingly commit a crime?

In cursing man-eaters, I shall start with my brother. In dissuading man-eaters, I shall start with him too.

8

Actually such arguments should have convinced them long ago. . . .

Suddenly someone came in. He was only about twenty years old and I did not see his features very clearly. His face was wreathed in smiles, but when he nodded to me his smile didn't seem genuine. I asked him: "Is it right to eat human beings?"

Still smiling, he replied: "When there is no famine, how can one eat human beings?"

I realized at once he was one of them; but still I summoned up courage to repeat my question:

"Is it right?"

"What makes you ask such a thing? You really are . . . fond of a joke. . . . It is very fine today."

"It is fine, and the moon is very bright. But I want to ask you: Is it right?"

He looked disconcerted and muttered: "No. . . ."

"No? Then why do they still do it?"

"What are you talking about?"

"What am I talking about? They are eating men now in Wolf Cub Village, and you can see it written all over the books, in fresh red ink."

His expression changed. He grew ghastly pale. "It may be so," he said staring at me. "That's the way it's always been. . . ."

"Does that make it right?"

"I refuse to discuss it with you. Anyway, you shouldn't talk about it. It's wrong for anyone to talk about it."

I leaped up and opened my eyes wide, but the man had vanished. I was soaked with sweat. He was much younger than my elder brother, but even so he was in it. He must have been taught by his parents. And I am afraid he has already taught his son; that is why even the children look at me so fiercely.

9

Wanting to eat men, at the same time afraid of being eaten themselves, they all eye each other with the deepest suspicion. . . .

How comfortable life would be for them if they could rid themselves of such obsessions and go to work, walk, eat, and sleep at ease. They have only this one step to take. Yet fathers and sons, husbands and wives, brothers, friends, teachers and students, sworn enemies and even strangers, have all joined in this conspiracy, discouraging and preventing each other from taking this step.

10

Early this morning I went to find my elder brother. He was standing outside the hall door looking at the sky when I walked up behind him, standing between him and the door, and addressed him with exceptional poise and politeness.

"Brother, I have something to say to you."

"Go ahead then." He turned quickly towards me, nodding.

"It's nothing much, but I find it hard to say. Brother, probably

all primitive people ate a little human flesh to begin with. Later, because their views altered some of them stopped and tried so hard to do what was right that they changed into men, into real men. But some are still eating people — just like reptiles. Some have changed into fish, birds, monkeys, and finally men; but those who make no effort to do what's right are still reptiles. When those who eat men compare themselves with those who don't, how ashamed they must be. Probably much more ashamed than the reptiles are before monkeys.

"In ancient times Yi Ya boiled his son for Chieh and Chou⁵ to eat; that is the old story. But actually since the creation of heaven and earth by Pan Ku⁶ men have been eating each other, from the time of Yi Ya's son to the time of Hsu Hsi-lin,⁷ and from the time of Hsu Hsi-lin down to the man caught in Wolf Cub Village. Last year they executed a criminal in the city, and a consumptive soaked a piece of bread in his blood and sucked it.

"They want to eat me, and of course you can do nothing about it single-handed; but why must you join them? As man-eaters they are capable of anything. If they eat me, they can eat you as well; members of the same group can still eat each other. But if you will just change your ways, change right away, then everyone will have peace. Although this has been going on since time immemorial, today we could make a special effort to do what is right, and say this can't be done! I'm sure you can say that, brother. The other day when the tenant wanted the rent reduced, you said it couldn't be done."

At first he only smiled cynically, then a murderous gleam came into his eyes, and when I spoke of their secret he turned pale. Outside the gate quite a crowd had gathered, among them Mr. Chao and his dog, all craning their necks to peer in. I could not see all their faces, some of them seemed to be masked; others were the old lot, long-toothed with livid faces, concealing their laughter. I knew they were one gang, all eaters of human flesh. But I also knew that they did not all think alike by any means. Some of them thought that since it had always been so, men should be eaten. Others knew they shouldn't eat men but still wanted to, and were afraid people might

discover their secret; so although what I said made them angry they still smiled their cynical, tight-lipped smiles.

Suddenly my brother's face darkened.

"Clear off, the whole lot of you!" he roared. "What's the point of looking at a madman?"

Then I realized part of their cunning. They would never be willing to change their stand, and their plans were all laid: they had labelled me a madman. In future when I was eaten, not only would there be no trouble but people would probably be grateful to them. When our tenant spoke of the villagers eating a bad character, it was exactly the same device. This is their old trick.

Old Chen came in too in a towering temper. But they could not stop my mouth, I had to warn those people:

"You should change, change from the bottom of your hearts. You must realize that there will be no place for man-eaters in the world in future.

"If you don't change, you may all be eaten by each other. However many of you there are, you will be wiped out by the real men, just as wolves are killed by hunters — just like reptiles!"

Old Chen drove everybody away. My brother had disappeared. Old Chen advised me to go back to my room. It was pitch dark in there. The beams and rafters shook above my head. After shaking for a while they grew bigger and bigger. They piled on top of me.

The weight was so great, I couldn't move. They meant that I should die. However, knowing that the weight was false I struggled out, dripping with sweat. But I had to warn them:

"You must change at once, change from the bottom of your hearts! You must know that there'll be no place for man-eaters in future. . . ."

11

The sun has stopped shining, the door is never opened. Just two meals day after day.

Picking up my chopsticks, I thought of my elder brother. I know now how my little sister died: it was all through him. My sister was only five at the time. I can still remember how sweet she looked,

poor thing. Mother wept as if she would never stop, but he begged her not to cry, probably because he had eaten our sister himself and so this weeping made him rather ashamed. If he had any sense of shame. . . .

My sister was eaten by my brother, but I don't know whether mother realized it or not.

I think mother must have known, but when she wept she didn't say so outright, probably because she also thought it proper. I remember when I was four or five, sitting in the cool of the hall, my brother told me that if a man's parents were ill he should cut off a piece of his flesh and boil it for them,⁸ if he wanted to be considered a good son; and mother didn't contradict him. If one piece could be eaten, obviously so could the whole. And yet just to think of the weeping then still makes my heart bleed; that is the extraordinary thing about it!

12

I can't bear to think of it.

It has only just dawned on me that all these years I have been living in a place where for four thousand years human flesh has been eaten. My brother had just taken over the charge of the house when our sister died, and he may well have used her flesh in our food, making us eat it unwittingly.

I may have eaten several pieces of my sister's flesh unwittingly, and now it is my turn. . . .

How can a man like myself, after four thousand years of man-eating history — even though I knew nothing about it at first — ever hope to face real men?

13

Perhaps there are still children who haven't eaten men.

Save the children. . . .

April 2, 1918

NOTES

¹This was Lu Hsun's first short story, the first peal of spring thunder in the May Fourth literary revolution of 1919. Written in April 1918, it gives a penetrating exposure of the man-eating nature of feudal rule in China which had a history of two thousand years, and fiercely attacks the feudal morality with Confucius as its chief representative.

²The characters Ku Chiu mean "old". This refers to the age-old history of feudalism in China.

³Li Shih-chen (1518-1593), famous pharmaceutical naturalist of the Ming Dynasty. It is not stated in his *Compendium of Materia Medica* that human flesh could be used as a medicine; this was one of the delusions of the madman.

⁴The ancient historical record *Tso Chuan* states that during a siege in 488 B.C. the besieged were so famished that they "exchanged their sons to eat".

⁵Yi Ya, a favourite of Duke Huan of Chi in the seventh century B.C., was a good cook and sycophant. When the duke remarked that he had never tasted the flesh of children, Yi Ya cooked his own son for him to eat. Chieh and Chou were kings of earlier periods. This misstatement is presented as a sign of mental derangement.

⁶A mythological figure.

⁷Hsu Hsi-lin (1873-1907) was a revolutionary at the end of the Ching Dynasty. After assassinating En Ming, governor of Anhwei, he was captured and executed; and his heart and liver were eaten by the governor's men.

⁸The doctrine of filial piety used by the feudal ruling class to poison the people preached that a son should, if necessary, cut off his own flesh to feed his parents.

Confucius in Modern China¹

Recently, according to the Shanghai papers, the completion of a temple to Confucius in Yushima,² Japan, has induced General Ho Chien,³ governor of Hunan Province, to donate it a portrait of the sage from his treasured collection of paintings. Frankly, ordinary people in China have practically no idea what Confucius looked like; for although since ancient times every county has invariably had a temple to the sage, these usually contained no portrait of him. It is the general rule to make portraits or statues of worthies larger than life; but in the case of the very worthiest, a sage such as Confucius, any portrayal at all appears sacrilegious and therefore it is better to have none. This is not unreasonable. Since Confucius left no photograph we naturally cannot tell what he actually looked like, while the few written descriptions we happen to have may be nonsense for all we know. The only way for a sculptor to make a fresh image is by relying on his own imagination, and this is even more risky. Hence the Confucians finally had to adopt Brand's⁴ attitude: "All or nothing."

And yet one does occasionally come across portraits of Confucius. I have seen three of these: one, an illustration to the *Anecdotes of Confucius*;⁵ one, the frontispiece of *Ching Yi Pao*, a periodical published in

Yokohama by Liang Chi-chao⁶ when he was a fugitive in Japan, then brought from Japan to China; and one, a stone relief on a Han-dynasty tomb showing Confucius meeting Lao Tzu.⁷ The impression of Confucius gained from these was that of a very lean old gentleman in a long, wide-sleeved gown with either a sword at his waist or a staff tucked under his arm, who never smiled but looked thoroughly awe-inspiring. Anyone sitting beside him would have to hold himself so stiff and straight that after a couple of hours his joints would be aching, and any normal person would most probably have to beat a hasty retreat.

Later I made a trip to Shantung. While suffering from the roughness of the roads, I suddenly remembered our Confucius. It tickled me to think of that forbidding-looking sage jolting along in a rickety cart as he hurried about his business here in the old days. Of course this was a reprehensible notion verging, in fact, on irreverence, which no disciple of Confucius would entertain. But many young people at that time held unseemly views like mine.

I was born at the end of the Ching Dynasty when Confucius had the awe-inspiring title "Most Perfect, Most Sage King of Culture"⁸ and when, it goes without saying, the Sage's Way held sway throughout the country. The government made scholars read specified works, the Four Books and the Five Classics;⁹ abide by specified commentaries;¹⁰ write a specified form of essay, the *paku* essay;¹¹ and express specified opinions. But these stereotyped Confucian scholars, all knowing quite well that the earth was square, were at such a loss on this round globe of ours that when they fought France and England,¹² lands not to be found in the Four Books, they were defeated. Then, whether thinking it more expedient to save their skins than to worship Confucius and perish, or whether for some other reason, at all events the government and officials began for the first time to waver in their fanatical worship of Confucius, and government funds were spent on large-scale translation of books by foreign devils. In second-hand bookshops today may still be found relics of that period: scientific classics such as J.F.W. Herschel's *Outlines of Astronomy*, C. Lyell's *Elements of Geology* and J.D. Dana's *System of Mineralogy*.¹³

But a reaction was inevitable. So there appeared Grand Secretary Hsu Tung,¹⁴ known as the flower of Confucian scholarship at the end of the Ching Dynasty. He not only scoffed at mathematics as a study belonging to the foreign devils but, although conceding the existence of such countries as France and England, utterly refused to believe in that of Spain and Portugal. According to him, these were names cooked up at random by France and England, due to their own embarrassment at the number of demands they were making on China. He was also the instigator behind the scenes as well as the director of the famous Yi Ho Tuan Uprising of 1900. But the Yi Ho Tuan failed completely, and Grand Secretary Hsu committed suicide. Then once again the government decided there was much to be learned from foreign politics, law, scholarship and technology. This, moreover, was the time when I was so eager to go to Japan to study. I gained my object, entering Kobun College founded by Mr. Kano in Tokyo, where Professor Misawa Rikitaro taught me that water is compounded of hydrogen and oxygen, and Professor Yamanouchi Shigeo taught me that inside its shell a mollusc has a "mantle". One day Dean Okubo summoned us all and announced: "Since you are all disciples of Confucius, go and pay your respects today in the Confucian Temple at Ochyanomizu."¹⁵ I was amazed. I remember thinking: "I came to Japan just because I had lost faith in Confucius and his disciples. Do I still have to worship him here?" I was astounded. And I am pretty sure I was not the only one to react in this way.

It is not only in the twentieth century, however, that Confucius has begun to be slighted in his own country. Mencius¹⁶ criticized him for being "a sage who followed the fashion of the time". In modern terms we should have to call him "a sage in vogue". Of course this was not a dangerous title for him, but neither was it altogether gratifying. In any case, it may not have fitted the facts. Confucius was not to become a "sage in vogue" till after his death: during his lifetime he had plenty of trouble. He rushed this way and that, and though he once held the exalted position of Minister of Justice in the state of Lu he promptly fell from favour and lost his job. Moreover, he was despised by powerful ministers, jeered at by country bumpkins and even mobbed by hooligans; he was gaunt with hunger;

and although he collected about three thousand disciples only seventy-two of these were any good, while there was only one he could really trust. One day Confucius said indignantly: "Since my Way is making no headway, I shall get upon a raft and float out to sea. I am sure Yu will come with me." This pessimistic estimate gives the show away. Yet even this Yu later, in a fight with the enemy, had the strap of his cap cut. But because he really was a faithful disciple, at this juncture he did not forget his master's instruction "A gentleman will not die without his cap", and he went on tying on the strap while the enemy made mincemeat of him. Naturally Confucius was most upset by the loss of his sole trustworthy disciple. It was recorded that when he heard this news he gave orders for the mincemeat in his kitchen to be thrown away.

We may say that the sage's luck took a turn for the better after his death. Because he could no longer pontificate, various authorities started whitewashing him in various ways till he was raised to awe-inspiring heights. And yet, compared with the later imported Sakyamuni Buddha, he cut rather a poor figure. True, every county had a Confucian temple, but this was always a lonely, neglected place where the common folk never worshipped. If they wanted to worship they looked for a Buddhist temple or a shrine to some deity. If you ask ordinary people who Confucius was, of course they will answer, "A sage", but this is simply echoing the authorities. They also respect and preserve waste paper with writing on it; but only because of the superstitious belief that unless they do this a thunderbolt will strike them dead. The Confucian Temple in Nanking is certainly popular, but this is because of all the extraneous amusements and tea-shops there. Though it is said that the *Spring-and-Autumn Annals*¹⁷ edited by Confucius dismayed all treacherous ministers and bad sons, hardly anybody nowadays knows the name of a single one of those wicked men subdued by his pen. When anyone mentions treacherous ministers, people usually think of Tsao Tsao;¹⁸ and this they learned not from Confucius but from anonymous novelists and playwrights.

In a word, it was those in authority who boosted Confucius in China, making him the sage of those in power or those anxious to take power, a sage having nothing to do with the common people. And

as for the Confucian temples, those in power soon lose their enthusiasm for these. Since there are ulterior motives behind their cult of Confucius, once their aim is attained this paraphernalia becomes superfluous, and even more superfluous if they fail. Thirty or forty years ago when all who wanted power, that is, hoped to become officials, used to study the Four Books and the Five Classics and write *paku* essays, others dubbed these books and essays "bricks to knock on doors". In other words, once the examinations were passed these things would be forgotten, just as a brick is dropped once the door is opened. This fellow Confucius has, in fact, been used since his death as a "brick to knock on doors".

A glance at some recent cases makes this still clearer. Since the start of the twentieth century Confucius has had a run of very bad luck, but by the time of Yuan Shih-kai¹⁹ he was once more remembered: not only were his sacrifices restored but bizarre new costumes were designed for those offering sacrifice. This was followed by the attempt to restore the monarchy. That door did not open, however, and Yuan Shih-kai died outside it. That left the northern warlords who, once they felt their end approaching, also used Confucius as a brick to knock at other doors of happiness. General Sun Chuan-fang,²⁰ who controlled Kiangsu and Chekiang and mowed down innocent people at will on the road, revived the Confucian ceremony of the "kottabus". General Chang Tsung-chang,²¹ who wormed his way into Shantung and had more money, soldiers and concubines than he could count, reprinted the Thirteen Classics and, thinking the Sage's Way something contagious like syphilis, chose a descendant of Confucius to be his son-in-law. Yet neither of these generals succeeded in opening the door to happiness.

These three men used Confucius as a brick to open a door, but since times had changed they all failed utterly. Apart from failing themselves, they involved Confucius, making his position still more lamentable. Being barely literate, they caused amusement by insisting on holding forth about the Thirteen Classics; by preaching one thing but practising another they disgusted people further. Those who dislike monks also hate monkish vestments, and now men's clearer perception of the way Confucius was being used as a tool for a specific

purpose intensified their longing to overthrow him. Hence lauding Confucius to the skies inevitably gave rise to articles and other works pointing out his failings. Even Confucius must have had his faults, which normally would have attracted no attention, for a sage is only human after all and human frailty is excusable. But if the sage's disciples come out and rant, making this and that claim for their master and insisting that others do likewise, people cannot help roaring with laughter. Five or six years ago, quite a stir was caused by the performance of *Confucius and Nancy*.²² Confucius in that play may seem somewhat irresponsible and thick-headed for a sage, but considered as a man he is quite a sympathetic character. However, the sage's descendants were so incensed that they took the matter to court. For it so happened that the performance took place in Confucius' home town where his descendants have multiplied exceedingly, becoming a privileged class the like of which Buddha and Socrates must both envy. But, again, this may be precisely the reason why those young people who were not the sage's descendants decided to stage *Confucius and Nancy* there.

The ordinary people of China, especially those known as the ignorant mob, though they call Confucius a sage, have never really looked upon him as such. They accord him respect but have no feeling for him. Yet I fancy no other people in the world know Confucius as well as the so-called ignorant mob in China. Admittedly, Confucius devised outstanding methods of governing the state, but these were thought up to rule the people for the sake of those in authority; there was nothing of any value to the people. This is what is meant by the saying "Rites do not extend to the common people." That Confucius became the sage of those in authority and ended up as a brick to open doors was after all no more than he deserved. We cannot say he had nothing to do with the people, but I fear the politest thing we can say is that he had absolutely no feeling for them. To have no feeling for a sage who had absolutely no feeling for them is only natural. Try any time you like going in rags and barefoot to the sacrificial hall in the Confucian Temple in Chufu to look round, and you will probably be thrown out as fast as when you blunder into a high-class cinema or a first-class tram carriage in Shanghai. For these, as everyone

knows, are for big-wigs and gentlemen: even the ignorant mob is not so ignorant as not to understand that.

April 29, 1935

NOTES

¹This essay, first published in a Japanese magazine in June 1935, came out in Chinese the next month.

Confucius (551-479 B.C.), whose real name was Kung Chiu and who had the cognomen Chung-ni, was a philosopher of the declining slave-owning class and the founder of the Confucian School. Confucius belonged at first to a group of people who conducted funerals and other rites for the noble slave-owners. Later he gathered pupils and started a school, advocating the revival of ancient rites and a return to the old order. He opposed political reforms and did his utmost to resuscitate the moribund slave system. Confucianism was used by the ruling class of succeeding dynasties to bolster up their repressive rule and to poison the minds of the people.

²Name of a street in Tokyo.

³A reactionary Kuomintang warlord.

⁴A character in one of Ibsen's dramas.

⁵This record of the sayings and deeds of Confucius is attributed to Wang Su of the third century A.D.

⁶Liang Chi-chao (1873-1929), a bourgeois reformist at the end of the Ching Dynasty.

⁷Founder of the Taoist School. Tradition has it that Confucius discussed rites with him.

⁸From the Tang Dynasty (A.D. 618-907) to the Ching Dynasty (1644-1911), the ruling class of each dynasty conferred exalted titles like this on Confucius.

⁹The Four Books are *The Great Learning*, *Doctrine of the Mean*, *The Analects* and *Mencius*. The Five Classics are *The Book of Songs*, the *Book of Documents*, *The Book of Rites*, *The Book of Change* and *The Spring-and-Autumn Annals*. These together made up the Confucian canons, ideological instruments to enslave the masses.

¹⁰Referring to the commentaries made by Chu Hsi (1130-1200), most prominent of the Neo-Confucians of the Sung Dynasty, and others of his school.

¹¹The form of essay used in the official examinations from the 15th to the 19th century. Each essay comprised eight sections and the last four, which summed

up the main theme, were divided into two parts, hence the name *paku*, literally "eight-legged".

¹²Referring to the Opium Wars of 1840-1842 and 1856-1860 and the Sino-French War of 1884-1885. These wars of aggression launched by Britain and France ended with the defeat of the Ching forces.

¹³J.F.W. Herschel (1792-1871) was an English astronomer. C. Lyell (1797-1875) was an English geologist. J.D. Dana (1813-1895) was an American geologist.

¹⁴Hsu Tung (1819-1900), a diehard official towards the end of the Ching Dynasty, proposed besieging the foreign legations in Peking with the Yi Ho Tuan forces, but he was not the leader of this uprising. The Yi Ho Tuan Uprising was a patriotic anti-imperialist movement which started in 1900. Hsu Tung's rank as Grand Secretary was equivalent to that of prime minister.

¹⁵A district in Tokyo.

¹⁶Mencius (c. 390-305 B.C.), whose Chinese name was Meng Ko or Meng Tzu-yu, carried on and developed the teachings of Confucius, being the main representative of the Confucian School of his day.

¹⁷A historical record starting with the year 722 B.C. and ending with the year 481 B.C. The comment that these annals dismayed all treacherous ministers and bad sons was made by Mencius.

¹⁸Tsao Tsao (A.D. 155-220), famous statesman and general in the Three Kingdoms period, played a progressive role by ending the contests among various warlords and unifying north China.

¹⁹Yuan Shih-kai (1859-1916) was a warlord in north China. After the bourgeois revolution of 1911 overthrew the Ching Dynasty, Yuan seized power by cunning and made himself president of the Chinese republic. Later, in an attempt to revive the monarchy, he tried to win Japanese support by selling out national rights to Japan. He failed and died execrated by the Chinese people.

²⁰Sun Chuan-fang (1884-1935), a warlord who suppressed Shanghai workers, was defeated in 1926 by the revolutionary forces. The rite of the "kottabus" had been used in feasts in ancient times. In 1926 Sun revived it in Nanking.

²¹Chang Tsung-chang (1882-1932) was the chief warlord in Shantung in 1925 when he reintroduced the worship of Confucius and ordered people to kowtow at the sacrifice to the "sage". The Thirteen Classics are Confucian canons.

²²A play describing how Confucius paid his respects to Nan Tzu, concubine of Duke Ling of Wei. In 1926 students of a Shantung school put on this play in Chufu, the home town of Confucius. The local feudal forces, highly incensed, accused the students of insulting their ancestor. The Kuomintang educational authorities then made an investigation and dismissed the principal of that school.

Two Buckets of Water

Eighteen years ago, as a reporter for a local newspaper, I was sent to the foot of the Yenshan Mountains on an assignment.

The village was quite a distance from the county town, and since I went on foot it was nearly midnight by the time I arrived. Every door was shut and most households seemed asleep. One small window alone shone brightly in the darkness. Like a road-sign, it guided me to a lively meeting-place.

Here, in the packed office of the agricultural co-operative lit by an oil lamp and heated by a stove, I found greybeards, middle-aged peasants with lined foreheads, and spirited lads and lasses. The tang of sweat, the aroma of tobacco and the reek of the burning lamp-wick filled the air. When I arrived the meeting was nearing its end and they were discussing something of minor importance. Party Secretary Hsiao, who was seated in the middle, called for silence. "So that's settled, comrades," he announced. "Starting from tomorrow, our co-op will undertake to keep Second Uncle Han supplied with water. Two buckets a day, each household taking its turn. Agreed? Any other business?"

"No," they chorused.

"Good. The meeting's adjourned." Hsiao closed his notebook.

But from a dark corner someone called out, "Wait a bit!" The others looked round in surprise.

"It's Old Silence speaking up, Party secretary. Quite an event!"

"As the saying goes, 'A wise man has the last say.' He must have some clever proposal."

Amid good-natured banter the man slowly elbowed his way to the front. I scrutinized him as he approached the light. In his thirties, slightly over medium height, although not handsome he was powerfully built and had regular features. The most striking thing about him was his eyes, with their jet-black irises and dazzling whites. The kindness, shrewdness and firmness of his glance made me feel that he would be easy to get on with.

As he came forward he looked around earnestly, his eyes coming to rest at last on the face of the Party secretary. Then, enunciating each word clearly, he said, "We've just got our co-op going and everyone's busy. Second Uncle Han lives all on his own; he doesn't raise pigs or draught animals, so he doesn't need much water. Why trouble everybody to take turns fetching it for him? Since I have to pass his door when I go to the well, I'll just take him two buckets a day. . . ."

This proposal came as such an anticlimax that laughter and chaff broke out from the crowd again.

Party Secretary Hsiao raised his hand to stop the hubbub. "Well, what do you say, everybody?"

"Can do. It's only two buckets after all."

"If he doesn't think it too much trouble, fine."

So a simple solution was found for this simple problem.

Since I had come to write up "advanced deeds", I naturally paid scant attention to such a trifle. As soon as I left the meeting room, I forgot it.

One morning several days later, when Hsiao and I were at breakfast a girl ran in. "Come quick, Party secretary," she cried. "Raker Han is picking a quarrel with Brother Chang-hsin."

"What about?" asked Hsiao.

"About fetching water."

I followed the Party secretary out. The row could be heard from quite a distance away. We hurried to a mouldering gateway where a crowd had already gathered.

A man of forty or so stood in the gateway. This must be Raker Han, I thought. Lean and waxen-complexioned, he had round beady eyes. One foot on the threshold and both arms extended, he was stubbornly barring the way.

Before him stood Ma Chang-hsin, one hand on his waist, the other grasping a shoulder-pole which was hooked to two buckets now resting on the ground. It was early spring with a nip in the air, but although he wore only a blue homespun jacket above his padded trousers his ruddy face glistened with sweat. Throwing out his chest and with one leg bent, he looked determined to enter the courtyard at all costs.

But what with Raker Han's shouting, Ma Chang-hsin's steady retorts, the babble of well-meant advice from the by-standers and the clamour raised by the children all around, I couldn't make out what the dispute was about.

Hsiao squeezed into the crowd, urging them to cool down and argue the matter out. Then he turned to Ma to hear what he had to say.

But Ma was in no hurry. With a sweep of his big hand towards Raker Han he told him, "You speak first."

Raker Han stopped blustering and pulled a long face, then lowered his voice several pitches. "Just look at him, Party secretary," he whined. "Ma's no relative of the Hans and has nothing to do with us either, yet he insists on fetching water for my second uncle. This is a swindle."

In surprise Hsiao retorted, "Our co-op sees to it that no poor peasant without labour power goes short of food, fuel or water. How can you call this a swindle?"

"In the co-op you pool your land and till it together. Don't tell me you look after old people too." Raker Han snorted scornfully. "That's too good to be true. Besides, every family in your beggarly little co-op has its own troubles. You can hardly fill your own stomachs. . . ."

"Too good to be true? We're going to make it come true. That's the advantage of getting organized and going the socialist way. If you don't believe it, just wait and see."

"I believe you, Party secretary," Raker Han protested. Then pointing into the courtyard he said with a shifty smile, "He's my father's first cousin, my uncle. How can I face my relatives if I leave him to be cared for by outsiders now that he's old and ill? How could I square that with my children when they grow up?"

"If you really mean what you say and want to look after Second Uncle Han, we can talk it over and may try you out. . . ."

Before Hsiao could finish and before Raker Han had time to make a show of pleasure at this, Ma stepped forward.

"That won't do," he cut in incisively. "We can't entrust Second Uncle Han to him."

"You keep out of this!" Raker Han was hopping mad. "Even if we don't hit it off, my uncle and I are both Hans."

"Seems to me, being a Han counts for less than being poor," retorted Ma. "When Second Uncle Han was still working on his own last winter, you never fetched him water when he fell ill. He had to scoop up snow from his window-sill when he had nothing to drink. . . . Now you're dead set on looking after the old fellow. You're up to no good, I'll be bound. . . ."

As if pricked by a needle Han shouted, "That's a lie! A dirty lie! You're the one who's up to no good. My uncle has no children, he's old, badly ill, nearly dying, and you want to look after him for a few days so that you can inherit those five *mu* of his by Golden Cock River, and with that property get yourself a wife. . . . Oh, Party secretary, don't let him rob me!" With that he burst out wailing like a woman.

Laughing outright, Ma threw out his big hand again. "So that's what's behind all this, eh? When everyone was farming for himself and, according to the old system, Second Uncle's property would have gone to you, you never lifted a finger to help the old man. Now that we have the co-op, you won't let us take care of him for fear of losing the property. You're obsessed with that plot of land. That's just why we can't put him in your care."

Still sniffing, Han said, "You're just trying to cover up. . . ."

With a glance around him, Ma countered, "As the saying goes, 'A long road tests a horse's strength and time reveals a man's heart.' We'll see in the long run which of us has the better heart, a man taking the socialist road or one taking the capitalist road. Time will show." Then picking up the buckets, he stormed into the courtyard.

Ma's firmness and the suddenness of his charge forced Raker Han to make way so as not to be knocked over or splashed with water. But he raised his voice again, yelping in protest.

A week later I was ready to leave the village. Hsiao said I could get a lift on a cart which was going to the county town to buy seeds. And when I reached the end of the village, the carter turned out to be Ma Chang-hsin.

A boy of four or five, playing beside Golden Cock River, was fingering the young grass which had just broken through the soil. When I stopped by the cart, he ran over and climbed on.

Ma knocked out his pipe, took off his padded coat and wrapped it around the little boy, his big hands tucking in the collar and sleeves to keep the wind out. Smilingly, he caressed the boy's head. Then he took up the red-tasselled whip and shouted at the oxen.

As the cart rumbled off I brought up the matter of fetching water for Second Uncle Han.

Ma looked at me and laughed. "You were there that morning and saw everything, comrade. Different men have different hearts, don't they?"

He told me then about the Han family. Raker Han's father had also been called Raker. He raked away the small earnings Second Uncle Han made by working for a landlord, so that the poor hired hand never even managed to marry. When the old Raker died he left all his property together with his nickname to his son, the present Raker. A well-to-do middle peasant at the time of the Land Reform, the younger Raker grew cotton and tried to make his fortune by speculation. The sight of money set his fingers itching: he couldn't sleep in peace until he had raked it in. For a long time he had coveted the five *mu* of land allotted to his uncle during the Land Reform.

He kept hoping that the old man would die so that he could inherit the land. . . .

As the cart lumbered up a slope, some birds took wing in fright.

"Look, dad! Magpies!" The little boy with us leapt to his feet.

I was astounded. Hadn't Raker Han accused Ma of angling for that five *mu* of land in order to get a wife? How come he had a son already?

Ma reached out to steady the little boy. "Don't move, or you may catch cold. When we get to granny's we'll ask your young uncle to climb a tree and fetch you some magpie's eggs." He tucked the padded coat snugly round the child again. Then his face clouded and he sighed. "If Hsiao hadn't led us to organize a co-op, Second Uncle Han would never have come through last winter alive. I know what it is to be all on your own, how hard it is to farm alone. I was seven when I lost my parents, both starved to death. I wouldn't have lived to see this day if not for the help of other poor villagers." Cracking the whip, his brilliant eyes gazing straight ahead, he muttered, "I managed to keep going until Liberation. After Land Reform I got married and had a home. I thought everything was going to be fine. But individual farming is a dead end. This child was born just five days before the harvest. I was out reaping when the sky clouded over. Afraid that I couldn't bring in all the wheat by myself, my wife came out to help me and was drenched in the rain. . . ."

His eyes reddened and he broke off. Then, raising his head, he threw his shoulders back and cracked his whip again.

A willow by the roadside trembled as a twig in tiny leaf was snapped off by the whip. The little boy grabbed the falling twig in one small chubby hand. Waving it happily, he crowed, "It's green! It's green! Spring is here."

Seventeen springs had come and gone before I had a chance to revisit this mountain village to which my memory so often turned.

Outside the county town, factory chimneys and new red-roofed buildings had risen on the ruins of the old city wall. A cement bridge spanned the river formerly crossed by a wooden ferry-boat.

A red bus, running on the asphalt road flanked with poplars, took

me straight to the foot of East Hill. Covered with trees, their green leaves interspersed with blossoms, it looked like a peacock in his pride; while the water in the new paddy fields by the river glittered like the scales of a golden carp.

The accountant waiting at the bus stop to meet me had many questions to ask. He seemed to know me well, but I just could not place him.

"My father was the co-op accountant last time you were here, but he's now working in the commune. My mother says you used to have meals at our place and" — the young man flushed — "you carried me in your arms when I was a kid." By this time we had reached the door of a new brick building. He called out, "Comrade Liang's here, Party secretary."

The door, which had glass panels, was painted red. It was opened by a man in his forties with greying temples but a ruddy face. From the way he carried himself I recognized him as Hsiao, who at the time of my last visit had been the youngest Party secretary in the district.

Close behind him were a number of men and women, all of whom looked familiar yet strange.

Everything had changed, the landscape as well as the people.

That night Old Hsiao and I, sipping tea and smoking under a bright electric light, were talking about the village's past and its future when someone called softly from the adjoining meeting room, "May I have a word with you, Party secretary?"

Old Hsiao went out. The two men's voices carried clearly to where I was.

"Party secretary, I want the leadership to give me a chance to serve the people."

"Well, in a fine society like ours, you have plenty of chances to do something for the people. What is it you want to do?"

"Make up for my past mistakes. . . ."

"How?"

"By following the example of our brigade leader. . . ."

"Well, go ahead."

"I tripped up, I know, over those two buckets of water. That's where I went wrong. . . ."

"Even if you went wrong, it's the road you take afterwards that counts."

"I assure you, Party secretary, ever since we had an advanced co-op and stopped giving dividends according to land shares, I've admired our brigade leader from the bottom of my heart. And the Cultural Revolution's taught me that it's no good thinking all the time about money. A man who does that isn't even respected by his own children. We have to swim with the stream and follow the fashion. . . ."

"That's not the way to look at it, you know. . . ."

"Another thing, Party secretary. Our brigade leader's plugged away all these years — that took some doing — and he's extra busy right now; so I ought to take over this water-carrying for him. But because I didn't take the initiative, for three days now, with him away at a conference, my uncle hasn't had a drop of water."

"Impossible! Before the brigade leader goes away to any meeting he always parcels out the jobs that need doing, whether big or small. He'd never forget the old man."

"It's the truth I'm telling you, Party secretary. For three whole days I've been squatting at the door from dawn till dusk, and I've not seen anyone take my uncle so much as a bowl of water."

"Solicitous, aren't you? All right, I'll look into it. You'll have to eat your words again, I promise you. You'd better go now. I'll look you up tomorrow at noon. We need to have a good talk."

I had recognized Raker Han's voice but only half understood their conversation. When Old Hsiao rejoined me I asked him whom they had been talking about.

"Don't you remember Ma Chang-hsin? He's still fetching water for Second Uncle Han. Ma was a production team leader when we had co-ops, and became brigade leader after the Cultural Revolution. But all these years, rain or fine, he's taken two buckets of water to Second Uncle Han every day.

"It's quite a story, come to think of it. Two buckets of water don't amount to much, but the tussle over them has gone on non-stop for the last eighteen years. During the high tide of the movement for agricultural co-operation Raker Han, with his old way of looking at things, was afraid that Ma would drop Second Uncle Han now that

all the land belonged to the collective. Then, according to the old custom, it would be up to him to look after his uncle and see to his funeral. So he went to the county town and brought a charge of 'breach of promise' against the co-op. Once again Ma reasoned with him. 'We poor and lower-middle peasants always keep our word. I'll look after him as long as he lives.' Then during the three years of natural calamities Raker Han made trouble again. Just as before, he posted himself at the door and wouldn't let Ma in with his buckets of water on the pretext that he wanted to make Second Uncle Han adopt one of his sons. This time Second Uncle Han rushed out with his stick. 'Get away, you!' he swore at Raker. 'I'll go with the people's commune as long as I live and be buried in the commune's land when I die; and till that day comes I'm going to drink the spring water Chang-hsin fetches me.' Later Ma and I learned that Raker Han had made trouble because of the rumour that the land was to return to its original owners. That was the time, remember, when Liu Shao-chi was calling for an extension of private plots and the free market, pushing his revisionist line in agriculture. . . ."

I was too stirred by this account to make any comment.

Old Hsiao paused for a while to reflect, then said with a laugh, "You heard what Raker Han said just now, didn't you? Times have changed but do these people ever change? Well, in some respects they do. In the past it was property they wanted. But now?" Hsiao pointed at his own head. "Their main fight with us now is here — it's political and ideological."

He went on to tell me that recently the county Party committee had publicly commended certain cadres who had retained their revolutionary drive and gone forward to score new successes. Ma Chang-hsin was one of these. Some members of the county broadcasting station and drama troupe were coming to the village to write stories and songs about him. This news had upset Raker Han. He was afraid these people would find out about the two buckets of water and write him up as a negative character, destroying his "good name". So thinking attack the best form of defence, he had made this fresh attempt to discredit Ma and present himself in a good light.

Hsiao's analysis raised other questions in my mind. I reminded him that we sometimes overlook matters much more important than a mere two buckets of water. Could it be that, in his hurry to go to the conference, Ma had forgotten this chore?

"Not on your life!" Hsiao shook his head. "If by any chance Ma forgot, his wife certainly wouldn't. She's a warm-hearted, very public-spirited woman. They fell in love and got married the year of the Big Leap Forward. . . . I tell you what, to teach Raker Han a lesson and to set your mind at rest, let's go to Second Uncle Han's and find out who's fetched him water the last three days."

Together, we walked down the street fragrant with fruit-blossom. Like a gust of jubilant wind, the sound of laughter swept towards us. Hsiao's torch picked out a group of youngsters heading our way.

"What's all this excitement?" he asked. "Where have you been?"

"We've been to Second Grandpa Han's. He's been telling us the story of our village," said a girl in front.

"Why didn't you go at noon? You should let him rest in the evening."

"He prefers the evening because it's quieter," a young man explained.

"So instead of helping him out, you just ask favours from him."

The young people protested against this unjust accusation.

"That's not fair, Party secretary. Haven't we girls made all his clothes for him?"

"We all help him too. We've repaired his house and built him an outhouse, and we sweep his courtyard," countered the young men.

"Stop blowing your own trumpets." Hsiao raised his voice. "Why don't you fetch him water?"

"Well! How dare we break the brigade leader's rule when even you daren't? We have to support him in his water-carrying."

"Doesn't the brigade leader say those two buckets of water help him to remember class struggle and to continue the revolution? We must learn from his spirit."

Hsiao turned to me with a chuckle. "Hear that, Liang? The young people nowadays have sharper tongues than we did at their age, eh?" Then he told them, "All right, there's no faulting you.

Go home and get some sleep. You'll have to get up early tomorrow to transplant rice seedlings."

In higher spirits than ever the young folk moved on, spreading laughter throughout the village as they dispersed.

Hsiao and I walked on.

Flashing his torch on a gate, Hsiao told me, "Look, Old Ma made this gate for Second Uncle Han."

To me, the old-style double gate looked like a scarlet prize certificate.

Flashing his torch next on a locust tree, Hsiao told me that Old Ma had raised many saplings and planted this tree for Second Uncle Han.

To me, the straight trunk looked like a tall flag-pole. Suddenly we heard a creaking sound behind us. It came nearer, louder and louder.

Hsiao turned and the silver beams of his torch lit up two large feet speeding steadily forward and two old-fashioned wooden buckets. Then we saw a familiar face, eyes with jet-black irises and dazzling whites. . . .

"Old Ma!" called Hsiao, a catch in his voice.

Ma pulled up and asked in surprise, "Why, what brings you out so late?"

"First tell me: are you just back from the commune?" Hsiao's eyes seemed riveted to the brigade leader's face.

"There was nothing on after today's discussion, so I nipped back. By making an early start tomorrow morning, I'll be there in time for breakfast. I won't be late for the meeting."

"You mean to say, these last three days, you've walked two miles here and back each day just to fetch these two buckets of water!" Hsiao appeared astounded.

"My wife's gone to the factory to see our eldest boy. . . . This is nothing but good exercise for me."

"From tomorrow on, till the conference ends, I forbid you to come back."

"That won't do, Old Hsiao. We people must keep our word." With that he started forward and mounted the steps. Having



opened the door by swinging one of his buckets lightly against it, he disappeared into the courtyard.

As the two bucketfuls of clear spring water flashed past me, my heart leapt up as if at the sight of the far-stretching sea. True, two buckets of water hardly amount to much. But for eighteen long years,

thousands of days and nights, as time took its toll of him and as his status changed from that of an ordinary peasant to a brigade leader, he had stuck steadily to his self-appointed task. Such working-class comradeship and perseverance were sterling qualities!

Three days later, when Ma Chang-hsin was back from the conference, I got up early, meaning to pay him a visit.

"You're in luck today," Hsiao told me. "You'll be attending a wedding and joining in a class on family education too."

Then I learned that Ma's eldest son, the little boy who had gone with us by cart to see his granny that year, having finished his term of service in the army, was now working in a factory in the county town. He was getting married today. The girl was a commune member who happened to be Raker Han's niece.

All this was so intriguing, it made me more eager than ever to see Ma. Assuming that he would be fetching water as usual, I decided to wait by the well.

Still the same well of clear spring water by Golden Cock River, set amongst a grove of assorted saplings and trees. The path was smoother than before, the steps more slippery. As I picked my way through a clump of reeds, I saw Ma drawing water from the well. A young man and a girl beside him were both trying to grab his buckets and carrying-pole.

"A long road tests a horse's strength and time reveals a man's heart," I heard Ma say. "You'll have to show us all in practice the stuff you're made of."

"Don't worry. We'll take over the load of revolution from you, not the burden of selfishness from Raker Han." Whose voice was that? That of the young man in army uniform or the girl in a gay print tunic?

The loudspeaker in the fields started broadcasting the beautiful song *Ode to Our Motherland*. And I was carried away by the scene before me: Ma Chang-hsin, his face ruddy in the morning sunshine, as he fixed smiling eyes on the youngsters who were taking over his load.

Illustrated by Chou Szu-tsung

Date Orchard

Arriving at the date orchard, I was back in my home village, Chisu, after an absence of years.

The dates were ripening. The orchard, stretching for miles around, reminded me of a bride in her wedding clothes smiling bashfully as she waited to be fetched to her husband's home. The interlaced boughs, just beginning to lose their green leaves, were bent under thick clusters of fruit. Under the afternoon sun the dates glowed with colour: agate-red, jade-green or a mottled green and russet. The whole orchard was as pretty as a picture.

Stooping, I made my way under the dense, low-hanging boughs which seemed to be stretching out to catch at my jacket, their leaves shimmying and rustling as if in welcome. I was intoxicated by the beauty around me.

I kept on until, in a clearing ahead, I caught sight of a white-washed adobe wall. It was my uncle's home, the only cottage in the date orchard and, to me, a dear, familiar sight. It was here that my mother had brought me as a child to avoid the Japs' "mopping-

up" campaigns. Here that I and my comrades had held meetings and spent the night when I was old enough to join the resistance. At that time, this thatched cottage housed the provincial district office and guerrilla headquarters. The dates served as fine nourishment for the partisans, the owner of the cottage as their guard. Here many wounded fighters recovered their strength.

Crossing a ditch overgrown with wild flowers and grass, I saw once again the wicket gate half hidden behind thick foliage. It was ajar. My uncle was sitting under the big spreading date tree in the middle of his yard. We had met at the bus station the previous day and arranged for my visit today. While waiting for me, with the deftness of long practice, he was weaving a wicker basket. My uncle was known in these parts as a champion date-grower and a warm-hearted fellow always willing to help others with pruning or grafting. Old though he now was, his hands had lost none of their skill.

"Well, uncle, here I am!" I called, stepping in.

"So you came on foot, not by bike, eh?" He turned slowly towards me, a smile on his wrinkled face. "Come on in. Or maybe you'd rather sit outside where it's brighter while I go and make you some tea." With that he stood up, brushed the dust off his trousers and walked stiffly but steadily into the north room.

In his absence I looked eagerly round the quiet, secluded courtyard. A regular date-land, this was. The courtyard was shaded by date trees; strings of dates hung from the eaves of the new tiled house; windfalls were sunning in baskets and on mats on the ground. Unbuttoning my coat, I sat down on a block of date-wood in front of the old date tree. Without warning, a commotion broke out above me and big ruddy dates beat down on my head like hailstones. I jumped to my feet. Before I could raise my head a fresh lot of dates rained down. As I retreated hastily to the gateway, a mocking peal of laughter ran out from the tree.

I looked up in annoyance. Perched there was a girl in black cloth shoes, blue trousers rolled up to her knees and a snowy white blouse, one corner of which had caught on a branch. Her plaits, tied with pink silk bows, were swaying from side to side. But her face was hidden from me by the dense branches.



Who was this cheeky girl? She was still laughing uncontrollably. The situation was saved by my uncle's return with a pot of tea and some bowls.

"Come down, minx! Quick!" he shouted up at her, smiling.

Only then did the laughter stop. "I've been treating our visitor to dates," the girl called back cheerfully. The next second she had scrambled to the ground.

She was a girl in her teens with fine arched eyebrows who surveyed me through narrowed eyes, her nose slightly turned up. As she compressed her lips to hold back her laughter, two big dimples appeared in her rosy cheeks glowing with health. She was energetically rubbing her plump hands, perhaps because she had scraped them while climbing the tree.

Now, with a pert toss of her head she asked, "Why are you staring like that? Don't you recognize me?"

Her naivety made me laugh. Still looking steadily at her I replied, "To tell the truth, I don't." Chisu Village was not large, and I knew most of the youngsters of her age. I thought it possible she might be here on a visit. But she certainly didn't behave like a visitor. I glanced doubtfully at my uncle.

The girl guessed what I wanted. "Don't tell him!" she ordered, tossing her head again and darting round to lean against the old man's back.

Uncle put down the tea pot, scolding, "Look out! Do you want to scald me?" Then he straightened up, tugged at his short moustache, and simply smiled but said nothing.

"Who is she, uncle?" I asked.

"Don't tell him!" The girl clapped one hand over his mouth.

Uncle pushed her hand away, announcing loudly: "A wild-date tree, that's what she is. That's what makes her so prickly."

As if embarrassed, the girl dodged behind his back, peeping out at me with her bright mischievous eyes. Then, in a flash, I recognized her. She was still the child I'd known so long ago. As I sized her up, my boyhood came back to me.

It was war-time. 1945. The date trees were in full flower when a pregnant woman mounted on a donkey came to the orchard. The

third night after her arrival, she gave birth to a plump baby girl in my uncle's cottage.

At that time the Japanese invaders, growing desperate, were frantically seizing grain and killing villagers on the north China plain. Both at the front and in the rear the situation was tense. This woman, who was a district head, wanted to go back to fight when her baby was just two weeks old. She told my uncle: "I leave my child to you, old comrade. I hope you will bring her up to carry on the torch of revolution."

Three months later, sad news came to the date orchard. We learned that the child's mother had given her life for the cause.

So my uncle adopted the child, to whom he gave the resounding name Red Treasure. To her he was father and mother, both. She passed a happy childhood in the date orchard. When her mother first left, my uncle used to wrap the baby in his cotton-padded coat and carry her to the village to find women to nurse her. And the village women lavished such care on her that she never went short of milk, not even if their own babies had to go hungry. So the little girl was brought up by the whole village. Later on, when our children's corps met in the orchard, we often saw her tagging after my uncle. Because he doted on her and the villagers too considered her as someone special, she could do whatever she wanted. She became very self-willed, with a sharp tongue. Then the other kids gave her the nickname "wild-date tree". Several years after Liberation my uncle managed to find out the whereabouts of Red Treasure's father, who in 1955 took her to the provincial capital to study. For six or seven years I had seen nothing of her.

By now, Red Treasure had got the better of her giggles.

"How time flies! You've certainly shot up," I remarked.

"Not fast enough to suit me!" She shook her head. Squatting down to pick up the dates on the ground she asked, "When will you be leaving, brother?"

"Want to come with me?"

"Why ever should I?" She broke into laughter again. "Nowhere else is a patch on this date orchard of ours. Where else could you find dates as sweet as our Chisu dates?"

These were my feelings exactly. In all my travels I had yet to see a place as beautiful as this orchard. Of all the dates I had eaten, none could compare with those of my own village. Was it our local soil or water which gave them their incomparable sweetness?

"She finished middle school last summer," the old man cut in proudly. "She could have lived in a big storeyed building and got herself a fine job in town, but no — she needs must come back to this orchard." He turned to the girl. "Where did you learn such odd ways?"

"From you, of course!" she crowed.

Uncle beamed all over his face, his heart warmed by her answer. The Japs and diehards had smashed his pots and pans and burnt his cottage not once but many times, yet failed to drive him away. Some well-meaning villagers advised him, "Move in with us. It's far too risky out here."

"I can't leave the date trees," Uncle explained. "In these hard times, dates can save lives." Every year, indeed, loads of dates were shipped out of the orchard. Not a fighter in the gullies and plain but had eaten our big Chisu dates. After Liberation, Red Treasure's father urged him to go and live with them in the city. He firmly declined, explaining, "I have my roots here. This is where I'm happy. I'm doing fine now, and while I still have some strength I must do my bit for the revolution."

Red Treasure, her pocket bulging with dates, straightened up now and said to me: "Don't be in a hurry to leave, brother. We've a Youth League meeting in a couple of days and I want you to give us a talk. I hear you've been to Shantung. How are the dates there? Do they have many? Do they taste as good as ours?" Emptying the dates from her pocket on to the mat, she inquired seriously: "What do they do with their old trees? This is a big problem. I can't find a solution for it in any of the books I've read. When the old trees stop bearing they have to be dug up. It's like digging out our own hearts. Have you come across any good method of making the old trees bear, brother?"

The girl had rattled off these questions so fast that no one else could

get a word in edgeways. Did she expect an answer or not? I grinned.

Between sips of date-blossom tea, Uncle advised, "You 'can drop that idea. It won't get you anywhere. How can you turn an old tree young again?"

"Why not? You're too conservative," she retorted.

"Hear that?" Uncle asked me, chortling. "This wild-date's needing me again. Can it be done, or can't it?"

"Of course it can!" Red Treasure snorted. "If not, how come those seven old trees bore so many dates this year?"

"They bore dates, I grant you that. But why? Let's hear you explain the reason. If you can make the other old trees start bearing too, I'll say you're a smart lassie. . . ."

For some reason or other, Red Treasure clamped her lips together. Not another word would she utter. Uncle, as if aware that he had been tactless, immediately changed the subject.

I couldn't understand why old trees were such a sensitive subject. Not liking to pry, I held my tongue.

"Technician, technician!" came shouting from the orchard. As the voices approached, a group of girls, all more or less the same age, appeared at the gate. They lined up there, giggling, and asked Red Treasure: "Hey! Why didn't you answer us?"

Without moving or looking up she retorted crossly: "How was I to know whom you wanted? Here's our master. You can't call me a technician."

The girls exchanged winks and chorused: "Comrade Wild-date, do come!"

Red Treasure rounded on them, raising her fist. "May your tongues drop out if you call me that again!"

The girls scattered, laughing, then surged back to surround her and carry her off.

Uncle and I sipped tea and ate dates while we chatted. The courtyard was quiet now that Red Treasure had left. All we could hear was the occasional plop of ripe dates as the light wind blew them down.

We talked about the change in our village these years, the expansion of the orchard and the experience old hands had acquired in raising

dates. When I spoke of training the younger generation and passing on his experience, Uncle looked thoughtful. He took another sip of tea, looked up, and rubbing his chin remarked: "I've worked in this orchard for sixty years and can't say that I've no experience. The trouble is I can't read or write. I've my own ideas, mind you, but I can't get them out. When County Head Ma was staying here we used to sit up at night talking and he urged me to sum up my experience. There's nothing I'd like better than to pass on the dodges I've learned. I don't want to carry them to the grave with me! But I only know a few characters, and when it comes to writing I'm stumped. All I can do is give on-the-spot demonstrations."

"Now that Red Treasure's back, let her do the writing for you," I suggested.

His face lit up and he slapped his knee. "That's right. It's a good thing she's back. Though it made no sense to me, at first, her coming."

He told me then what had happened.

When Red Treasure alighted that day at the long-distance bus station, several miles away, there was nobody there to meet her. She slung her bedding-roll over her shoulder and hurried back as fast as she could to the orchard.

Uncle asked her, "Which college have you got into, Red Treasure?"

"Date Orchard College — to learn from you to be a peasant."

This wasn't the future Uncle had planned for her. "Your mother left you in my care," he said. "I brought you up and handed you over to your dad, hoping you'd turn out someone useful. Otherwise I'd be letting down my comrades-in-arms as well as those who died for the revolution."

Red Treasure stepped forward, eyes flashing, and shot back: "What sort of people are useful? Aren't you useful? If I learn to be like you, won't my dad be pleased? Could my mother have asked anything better?"

Uncle was floored.

So the girl who had grown up here returned to the date orchard. And her presence there was like a breath of spring. Whatever the hour or season, in the mist of dawn, the blaze of noon or the fading

splendour of sunset, clear laughter could be heard ringing from the orchard and a girlish figure could be seen dancing through it. She followed in her master's steps, digging trenches, pruning branches and catching insects; and all the time she worked she asked endless questions, some of which he was hard put to it to answer. There seemed no end to the girl's thirst for knowledge. She made a mental note of all the old man said and every evening, after a hasty supper, she would write it down in her notebook. If the room was too hot, she would move a table outside to the courtyard. What she wrote Uncle didn't know. He supposed all educated people were fond of writing.

The days slipped away until three months had passed. It was the rainy season at the end of August. One wet day Uncle and Red Treasure took time off to make some dumplings. After the meal, she produced a red-covered notebook and said: "Shall I read you something?"

The old man nodded. Red Treasure began to read. The more he heard, the more excited he grew. It was all about raising date trees, just what he would have said himself if he could have found the words.

"Where did you get hold of this wonderful material, lass?" he asked.

"From you!" she twinkled.

"From me? Nonsense!"

"I did too. I've been writing down every evening what you told me during work. You must tell me if there's anything wrong, and I'll change it. Then I'll send a copy to the county head..."

The old man beamed as he finished this account. For me, it had conjured up an enchanting scene: A summer night, hazy moonlight, with not a breath of wind to stir the trees, the silence unbroken by voices or the shrill of insects. A girl, bent over a small table, was writing intently under an oil lamp. From time to time she paused, frowning thoughtfully, then took up her pen again. Beads of sweat from her heart-shaped face dripped on her hand as she transcribed the experience the old man had amassed in sixty years of hard work, transmuted by her own ardent enthusiasm.

"Let me show you something," said Uncle, standing up and going towards the house.

I heard the sound of a cupboard being opened. Then the old man came out with a package which he was unwrapping. It was a notebook. Patting it with his calloused hand he said, "One notebook's already full. She's started another."

I took the notebook. It was small yet seemed heavy. I opened it and found it filled with writing in a neat vigorous hand. The words seemed to be dancing for joy. A slip of paper fluttered to the ground. Picking it up I read:

COMPACT

Forty-nine old date trees are to be left this year. If no way of reviving them has been found by next year, they can then be cut down or dug up.

Brigade leader Yang Tse
Technician Red Treasure

Observing my bewilderment, Uncle chuckled. "It's very strange," he said. "Those forty-nine date trees were planted before my time. They're so old that for seven or eight years now they've been barren. This spring the brigade leader came to see me about them. I said: better uproot them to make room for new trees. So he sent seven men to do the job. They had just started digging when Red Treasure came back from a meeting. Hearing what was happening, she dashed there to stop them. She begged the brigade leader to keep the old trees while she tried to find a way to make them bear fruit. She kept on at him till he agreed to that compact."

This intriguing episode reminded me of their odd behaviour earlier on when talking about the old date trees.

"Has she found a way yet?" I asked.

He pounded a fist on the table. "That's what's so strange. She hasn't, yet those few trees which the men started digging up all produced a good crop of dates again this year." He paused reflectively. "Red Treasure doesn't know the reason herself. She gave the other trees plenty of water as well as fertilizer. I'd tried that before myself, but it was no use." He broke off then, but presently urged me not to bring this question up in front of Red Treasure. For she

was very worked up these days, trying to figure out why those barren trees had started bearing again.

Uncle and I spent the whole afternoon talking, first in the courtyard and then in the orchard where we went for a stroll. We did not come back till sunset had crimsoned the western sky.

I had not seen Red Treasure since lunch. But now she suddenly darted out from the courtyard.

Standing at the gate, she called: "Hey! Time for supper."

"I haven't got it ready yet," boomed Uncle. He rolled up his sleeves.

Red Treasure barred the way to the northern room. "Don't you stir. Try my cooking today."

"Fine, fine. Let's see what sort of cook you are." Uncle beamed. Seating himself at the table he said to me, "This child wants to learn everything: date-raising, farming, needlework, and now cooking."

Young people are resilient: they soon forget their troubles. Now Red Treasure was once more as carefree and lively as at the time of my arrival. She danced out with a basin in her hands.

The basin was filled with lentil and millet porridge garnished with dates. She gave each of us a big bowlful, but only ladled half a bowl for herself, squatting by the small table to eat. Then, abruptly, her mood changed again. She seemed downcast, restless. No matter how Uncle praised her cooking and tried to humour her, she said not a word.

At last he lost patience and bellowed: "Don't bolt your food!"

"I've something to do." She put down the bowl, took a mattock and hurried away.

I wanted to call her back, but Uncle signed to me not to. When she was out of earshot he explained, "The child's gone to see those old date trees. These days she's got them so much on her mind that she's lost her appetite. If you call me crazy about trees, she's worse. But you have to give yourself heart and soul to a job to make a go of it. Red Treasure's a girl in a thousand — there's no stopping her."

After supper, I went out alone to look for these old date trees and Red Treasure. I saw a group of girls coming towards me through the orchard. They were neither talking nor laughing, but looked

as if they had something on their minds. Before I could greet them they called to me from a distance: "Go and fetch Red Treasure home. We can't budge her. It's getting dark and it's no use her sitting there."

I walked in the direction they indicated. After crossing a ditch I caught sight of Red Treasure seated on a heap of freshly dug soil, a book and the mattock beside her. Her fine brows were knitted and, chin in hand, she was staring at the ground.

Suddenly she jumped to her feet and started digging round another old date tree. The branches of the tree shook as she swung her mattock. After working for a while she mopped her perspiring face, then squatted down to examine the hole she had made.

I wondered whether I should call her or not.

Just then she let out a cry: "Aha! Got you at last!" She leapt for joy as if she had discovered some treasure. Then, snatching up mattock and book, she started racing back. The mattock grazed some branches; dates cascaded down. She was too excited to notice. And when she spotted me she could only gasp out, "Brother!"

"What's up?"

"For months I've been racking my brains. Now I've found the answer."

"Answer to what?"

Laying down the book and mattock, she led me back to the tree where she had been digging. Its branches were so loaded with dates that they were sagging. Pointing to it she said: "Look here! This tree had no dates for seven years. Some of its roots were cut this spring, but I stopped them from digging it up, and fresh roots have since grown. Now look at that tree." She pulled me over to another tree with sparse foliage and no fruit, the roots of which she had also exposed. "This tree wasn't touched this spring, so it still has the same old, bald roots. The difference between the two trees made everything clear!"

"It's not clear to me." I shook my head.

"Don't be so dense! Haven't you ever studied natural science? Plants, like people, need nourishment which they imbibe through their roots. The more roots they have the more nourishment they

get and the better they grow. See this tree. Its roots were cut back in spring, then covered with soil, and a whole lot of new roots have grown from the places cut. . . .”

“I get it!” I cried, clapping.

“This is the method of rejuvenation,” she went on, her face radiant. “We can try it out in future on all our old date trees. Prune the old roots, apply fertilizer, then water them to make fresh root-hairs grow.” While speaking, she picked a few of the biggest dates. “Know what these are?”

“Dates!” I grinned.

“Comrade, it’s a staple food,” she corrected me. “Increasing the output of dates means increasing our country’s food output. Understand?” She put the dates in my hand. “These are fruits of victory, taste them. Aren’t they sweet?”

I popped a date in my mouth and started munching. Sweet? It was sweeter than any date I had ever tasted.

Illustrated by Chen Yu-hsien



Studying (traditional Chinese painting)
by Hsiung Chao-juí and Lin Yung ▶

An Old Deputy

The district Party committee had just concluded a conference lasting three days. As he left the meeting hall Liu Pen-fu, deputy Party secretary of Plant No. 103, caught sight of the deputy head of the district committee's Organization Department.

"Teh-hsiang!" he called, threading his way through the crowd. "Where have you been hiding yourself these last two days?"

"Comrade Pen-fu!" Striding to meet him, Yang gripped Liu's hand. "I'm just back from a meeting at the provincial capital. Yes, Comrade Hsieh Lan-ting sends you his greetings."

"Young Hsieh, eh? Is he still working for the provincial Party committee?"

"He's one of the editors of our provincial paper."

"Very good!"

Taking Yang's hand, Liu led him through the crowd to the shade of a roadside poplar. There they halted.

"I've a manuscript to send Hsieh," Liu remarked.

"So you've written something, eh?" Yang asked eagerly.

"Not I!" Liu laughed. "But . . . I may try my hand later. This was written by Ting Yu, one of our young cadres."

"Ting Yu? I know the name. His workshop's experience in carrying out socialist education was reported in the provincial paper."

"A promising young chap, only twenty-seven. . . ."

"Is that all?" Yang sounded surprised.

"But already he's been Party secretary of our power workshop for three years, and that's our biggest workshop," Liu said approvingly. "Right now he's delving into Marxist political economy."

Yang recalled an evening not long ago at the press hostel when Hsieh Lan-ting had given him an appreciative description of his "old chief". And now this "old chief" was standing here before him. Very touched, Yang blurted out, "It's fine, your concern for young comrades."

"It's the young comrades who are fine," Liu retorted. "They're politically so sharp and full of pep, and they have such revolutionary drive. They do a splendid job. There's nothing they won't tackle." This reminded him of something and he asked, "Comrade Teh-hsiang, now that Old Peng's been transferred, who's going to take his place as Party secretary? Has this been decided yet?"

"Not yet. We're still thinking it over."

"So it's all right if we make a recommendation?"

"What recommendation?"

"We'd like your Party committee to consider letting Ting Yu take over from Old Peng."

Yang, taken by surprise, said reflectively, "We'll think it over, comrade."

"Please do!" urged Liu, wringing Yang's hand.

It was a mid-summer evening. Though the sun sinking in the west was no longer scorching, it was still stifling in this town built on the grassland. Sounding their horns, big lorries loaded with construction materials sped past, fanning the passers-by with gusts of hot air. The scaffolding and towering cranes on both sides made the broad street seem narrower than it actually was.

But Liu Pen-fu was in his element here. The din rejoiced his heart: it proclaimed the town's rapid progress.

Liu had joined the revolution towards the end of the anti-Japanese war, a fifteen-year-old boy from a village by the Huto River. He had fought throughout the War of Liberation then come as a demobbed soldier to this town, where he had now been working for fifteen years. To him, it had become his second home.

Leaving the busy shopping centre, Liu made his way to the industrial district with its forest of chimney-stacks. The first factory he had worked in was Tungfanghung Radio Factory. He had been its first Party secretary when the plant was built in 1958. Some ten years had passed since then but he still kept in close touch with this factory, because he and his colleagues on the Party committee had trained many young cadres from among the workers there who had now become the backbone of the management. Hence his keen interest in the revolution and production here.

Presently, having crossed a railway track, he reached the paper mill in which he had also worked. At that time Hsieh Lan-ting had been deputy chief of the mill's fire-brigade, but two months after Liu's arrival he had been transferred to the office of the Party committee.

Plant No. 103, established during the Cultural Revolution, adjoined the paper mill. Now luxuriant trees grew all around the plant. Each time he came back from a business trip, Liu feasted his eyes on their fresh greenery. As he stepped through the gate, the loudspeaker started broadcasting "News of the Plant". He stopped to listen to the eager voice of the girl-announcer and hailed the young workers, satchels over their shoulders, who were hurrying to the plant's college. His heart leapt up at the announcement that the power workshop would soon plunge into the battle to make a 1,000-ton oil tank. On his way he had been considering raising this problem at the next Party meeting. Evidently during his three days' absence Ting Yu had already solved it. As secretary of the Party committee, he immediately grasped the full implications of this.

The power workshop had originally planned to build a 500-ton oil tank. They were all set to start when word had come down that the

plant was to be enlarged. Ting Yu at once convened a meeting of the Party branch at which it was resolved to build a 1,000-ton tank instead. When this resolution was reported to the management, the chief engineer strongly opposed it. This would mean one month's delay at least, he said. However, most of the members of the Party committee supported Ting. For although this change would mean an initial delay, it would enable them to fulfil their share in the enlargement of the plant several months ahead of schedule. Liu had been wondering if they could get cracking on the big tank at the time originally planned. Before he could bring this up, he had to go to the conference. . . .

Some of our comrades are stuck in a rut, thought Liu, his mind in a turmoil. How can we transform our plant if we stick to the old way? How can we make a leap forward? No! We must break new ground. And that's just what Ting Yu's doing. He's setting a fine example to us all. This is the spirit we need to build socialism.

He was on the point of leaving when he saw Ting Yu and some other young workers hurrying his way. He strode to meet them, exclaiming, "Fine! You've done fine, Ting Yu!"

Ting flushed with embarrassment. The sight of their young Party secretary's red face made the others burst out laughing. That's the way he was — he couldn't abide being praised.

"Is your conference over, Secretary Liu?" Ting asked to change the subject.

"Yes, we didn't waste any time." Liu eyed them appraisingly. "Going to class, all of you?"

Ting consulted his watch. "Yes, it's nearly time."

"Hurry up then," Liu urged. "Don't be late. When you're back you'll have to put me in the picture."

The young fellows went away, laughing and talking. Liu followed them for a moment with his eyes, then made briskly for the canteen. It was long past supper time, so Liu bought two buns and set off to his office. The two buns were finished by the time he reached it. Often Old Peng, the former Party secretary and army representative, had scolded him for his neglect of his health. The clothes-stand

in the corner of the room, on which Old Peng's uniform had often hung, now seemed to be warning him: Look after your health! It also reminded him of Peng's idea of promoting Ting Yu. . . . As soon as the suggestion was approved, he must write to let Old Peng know.

On his desk was a manuscript, an ink-bottle on top serving as paper-weight. He found that it was Ting Yu's article. Funny that the young fellow hadn't mentioned it. Attached to the manuscript was a short note:

Comrade Pen-fu,

I've sorted out these notes as you suggested. They really don't seem good enough to be sent to the press. I hope you'll polish them and put them in shape.

Ting Yu

Smiling, Liu sat down to read the article.

Half a month ago, Liu had read the notes made on their study by the plant's workshop Party secretaries and found that Ting gave the clearest explanation, linking theory with practice, of the class nature of running an enterprise and the distinction between capitalist and socialist administration. So he had asked Ting to write up these notes.

The viewpoint of the article was crystal-clear. Liu read on with great interest. Ting Yu showed a penetrating understanding of the relevant theories in Marx's *Capital*. He had also added factual material to make his argument more convincing. It was, indeed, an article which all management personnel should find worth reading. Having made a few minor changes, Liu started writing a letter to Hsieh Lan-ting.

"Dear Young Hsieh," he started automatically. But on second thought he crossed this out. For the Young Hsieh whom he remembered as deputy chief of the fire-brigade, brave as a soldier yet bashful as a girl, was now an editor of the provincial paper and had become Old Hsieh. Liu took a fresh sheet of paper and wrote gravely, "Comrade Lan-ting. . . ."

Three days later pouring cement — a key step in building the base of the oil tank — started. Liu Pen-fu went first thing in the morning to the work-site.

The huge tank stood there glinting silver in the morning light.

Shouts were ringing out from the work-site. Evidently Liu had come late. Some two hundred sacks of cement and dozens of tons of pebbles and sand had to be poured within the next few hours. The workers pushing carts were racing against time. Young Party secretary Ting in a vest and shorts was pitching into the work as if charging down a football field, at the same time roaring reminders to the others to pay attention to safety. Moved by the sight, Liu rolled up his sleeves and plunged into the battle too.

Liu pushed his cart loaded with pebbles and sand as fast as if he had wings. His spirits soared. And the men seeing this exchanged elated glances, as if to say: There's life in our old chief yet! Sure enough, his heart seemed to be beating just as strongly, his blood racing just as fast, as when he had made forced marches as a young soldier. Why, for the Party's cause, he could still soldier on several dozen years!

It took them less than four hours to finish a task that should have taken six. Then Ting Yu jubilantly called for a break. The workers were gathering round Liu to have a chat when Little Lin of the committee office came running up to call him to the phone.

"Who's rung?" Liu started to rise, but a powerful hand clamped him down. He turned his head to see a cup of water. Gulping it down, he felt cool and refreshed.

Liu hurried back to the office to take the phone. The call was from Yang Teh-hsiang. "Have you read the file we sent you?" Liu asked cheerfully.

"Yes. And I've discussed it with Secretary Chieh Ping."

"Good." Liu cut him short. "What's the district committee's decision?"

"Well, I think I can say it's in line with your recommendation." Yang sounded pleased. "Are you free now? If so, I'll come over to your office."

"I'll go to your place instead."

"No, Comrade Pen-fu, I'll be over right away." With this Yang rang off.

So Liu could not but wait for Yang's coming.

Two days before this, the day after Liu made his recommendation to Yang, with the approval of the plant's Party committee he had sent Ting Yu's file to the Organization Department of the district committee, together with a long explanatory letter. He had never expected such quick results. But judging from what Yang had said, their recommendation had been approved higher up.

Liu hastily changed his overalls spattered with cement slurry, and had a wash in the cloakroom. When he emerged, the technicians hurrying down the corridor wondered what the deputy secretary was looking so pleased about. Chuckling, Liu nodded to them as if to say, "It's still a secret. I can't tell you yet."

However, the district committee's "preliminary opinion" relayed to him by Yang Teh-hsiang came as a bombshell. Old Peng's successor as Party secretary of Plant No. 103 was to be Tehlo Kolma, deputy Party secretary of Tungfanghung Radio Factory, a Mongolian woman. Ting Yu was to take Liu's place. And Liu himself was to be transferred to set up a new bureau — the Electronics Bureau.

"This is a big reshuffle!" Yang leaned forward to watch Liu's reaction. "What d'you think of it, Comrade Pen-fu?"

Liu stubbed out his cigarette in an ash-tray, saying, "Let me think it over, will you, Comrade Teh-hsiang?"

"All right." Yang stood up. "But let us know tomorrow."

"Can do." Liu gripped Yang's hand.

However, he didn't wait until tomorrow. . . .

Liu Pen-fu spent the whole afternoon on the work-site helping the workers to solve a technical problem. As dusk fell it started to rain. He sent Ting Yu and the others back to rest, but he himself was "caught" by the rain in the office.

Switching on the table-lamp he went over two reports and wrote

his comments on them. Then lighting a cigarette he sat down on the sofa.

Tehlo Kolma! He knew her well. She had been born a slave on the Kolchin Steppe in Inner Mongolia. Tall and sturdy, her hair bobbed, her face ruddy with prominent cheek-bones, she usually dressed in faded blue overalls. Not long ago at an enlarged district Party committee meeting, she had faced an audience of several hundred without even turning a hair and spoken up boldly into the microphone. But he still had an equally vivid picture of Tehlo Kolma fifteen years ago, when she was an apprentice of nineteen known as the "Tomboy". At that time the other new apprentices rather dreaded being assigned to the foundry, but this former slave girl went to Liu Pen-fu to ask to work as a founder. In some astonishment, Liu had sized up this lass who was taller than he himself.

"Casting is dirty, tiring work," he told her with a smile.

To his surprise, she held out her big hands for his inspection and said in halting Chinese, "Since I was six these hands of mine worked for the lord, herding his cattle. They're no good for fine work like embroidery." Since then he had kept his eye on Tehlo Kolma. In 1963 before he left the radio factory, it was at his suggestion that she was promoted from Youth League secretary of the foundry to be secretary of the whole factory's Youth League. Now ten years had passed. This young Mongolian woman had not only become deputy Party secretary of the factory but had also been elected to the district Party committee. Her rapid progress rejoiced Liu's heart. He thought: It's because countless cadres like Tehlo Kolma and Ting Yu keep reinforcing our Party that it has such vitality and keeps its youthful vigour. No wonder then that, at the district meeting before Tehlo Kolma had finished speaking, Liu started clapping energetically.

Liu Pen-fu had been transferred a great many times. Sometimes he was consulted in advance; more often the notice came without any warning and he went straight to his new post. He had never refused, no matter whether the change meant promotion or demotion. Today's hesitation was unprecedented. Yang's blithe remark, "It's

in line with your recommendation," was still ringing in his mind. There was a lot he wanted to talk over with the district Party secretary.

He stepped to his desk, took up the receiver and dialled the familiar number. Soon a dear and familiar voice came over the line.

"Liu Pen-fu here." He pressed the receiver to his ear.

"So it's you, Pen-fu!" Chieh Ping was obviously pleased to hear from him. "Has Comrade Teh-hsiang told you about the transfer?"

"Yes. That's why I've called up."

"How do you feel about it?"

"Wouldn't it be better to appoint Tehlo Kolma to the Electronics Bureau?"

"Ah? What, specifically, do you have in mind?" Apparently Chieh Ping set great store by his opinion.

"Tempered in the Cultural Revolution, a generation of young cadres like Tehlo Kolma and Ting Yu have grown up. Isn't it cheering to see our cause flourishing? To know we have so many successors to it?"

"Yes, comrade," Chieh Ping answered, deeply moved. "I'd like to talk this over with you. How about it?"

"Fine. I'll come right away," Liu answered readily.

A car swished through sheets of rain. Twenty minutes later Liu Pen-fu sat in Chieh Ping's office. Yang Teh-hsiang was there too. Chieh Ping poured them each a cup of tea, then told Liu, "Look, I've fetched Old Yang too. Let's have a good talk."

After a sip of tea Liu began: "Tehlo Kolma's not only competent to set up the Electronics Bureau, she should definitely head it. She has high political consciousness and steadfastly carries out Chairman Mao's revolutionary line. Besides, her drive and experience in leadership will stand her in good stead there. Another point we shouldn't overlook is that she's Mongolian and a woman. Our Party has always emphasized the need to train as many minority cadres and as many women cadres as we can. This makes it all the more important to appoint Tehlo Kolma to a leading post."

Liu was obviously speaking from his heart. Chieh Ping as he listened nodded. Yang wanted to raise some objections, but desist-

ed when he saw the rapt attention with which Chieh Ping was listening. He just sipped his tea in silence.

When their conversation turned to Ting Yu, Liu said, "As for Ting Yu, I gave you my views on him in that letter I wrote you. He's a first-rate cadre. We're convinced, if you let him take over from Old Peng, the young fellow will do a fine job."

Now Yang could hold back no longer. He cut in, "But they still lack experience. They both have shortcomings..."

"Shortcomings?" Liu retorted. "Haven't we all? You know quite well, experience comes from practice."

Rain lashed the window-panes as Liu and Yang argued hotly and the district Party secretary listened intently.

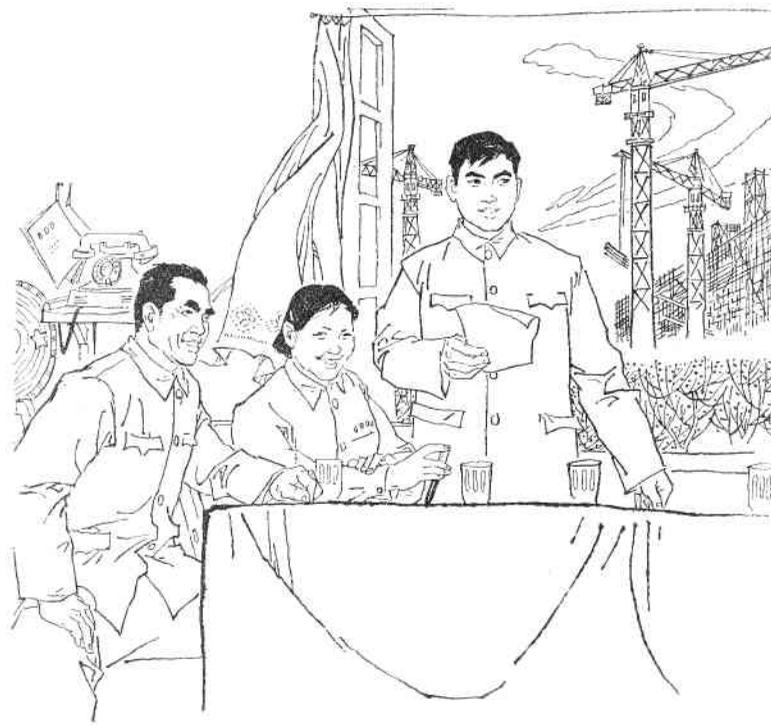
To make his viewpoint more explicit, Liu reiterated: "Comrade Teh-hsiang, one of the duties of us older cadres is to train more successors under the guidance of Mao Tsetung Thought. We must let them have plenty of opportunities to steel themselves in responsible positions."

At this Chieh Ping stubbed out his cigarette and stood up. "Old Yang," he said, "it seems we didn't understand our cadres well enough. On this question of training successors, we should learn from Comrade Pen-fu. He has a better understanding of the problem, and he looks further ahead. We must hand on the torch of revolution — this is vitally important. We must scrap the idea that promotion goes by seniority. In man's evolution from primates it took countless years for him to get rid of his tail. And in our thinking, it seems to me, it's just as difficult to get rid of old ideas."

Yang Teh-hsiang heard Chieh Ping out attentively, and his brows which had been knitted slowly smoothed out.

A few days later, Ting Yu presided over his first committee meeting since his appointment as Plant No. 103's new Party secretary. Tehlo Kolma, now head of the Electronics Bureau in charge of the plant, attended the meeting too. Liu Pen-fu sat beside them, his face radiant.

Not long after the meeting began, Little Lin came in to fetch Liu to take a long-distance telephone call.



Liu hurried to the office and took up the receiver. At once he heard Hsieh Lan-ting's voice.

"Is that Comrade Pen-fu? I've received your letter and the manuscript. Thank you very much for your encouragement and suggestions. All our editors have read Ting Yu's article, and they think it excellent, highly significant. We shall be publishing it in two or three days."

"You must make any corrections that are needed," Liu urged earnestly.

"We have corrected a few slips," said Hsieh. He added, "It's fine that cadres at all levels are studying theory so seriously these days, and to reflect this we want to append his title to the author's

name. Would you tell me which workshop Ting Yu is in charge of now?"

Liu raised his voice jubilantly to reply, "He's just been made Party secretary of our plant!"

"Then what are you?"

"Still deputy secretary."

"Fine!" Hsieh approved. "I know you. I know what kind of deputy you are."

Illustrated by Chen Yen-ning

Morning on Taibu Lake (traditional Chinese painting) by Sung Wen-chih ▶



Poems

Our Gifts for Chairman Mao

— a Tibetan folk song

From ninety-nine streams we choose the clearest water
To brew fresh buttered tea,
And long for the wings of white cranes
To take this tea to our dear Chairman Mao!

From ninety-nine ridges we choose the brightest turquoise
To carve the joy of liberated serfs,
And long for the fleet hooves of chestnut horses
To carry this carving to our dear Chairman Mao!

From ninety-nine hills we choose the whitest camellia
To weave a snow-white *hata*,
And long to ride off on rosy clouds
To present this scarf to our dear Chairman Mao!



Song of the Ailao Mountain

— an Yi folk song

The Ailao Mountain wrapped in clouds
Was a sea of misery.

Our Yi folk felled ninety-nine bamboos
Made flutes nine hundred and ninety-nine,
But could not blow away the clouds from the mountain.

Our Yi folk felled ninety-nine sandal-trees,
Made lyres nine hundred and ninety-nine,
But could not pluck out the sorrow in their hearts.

Our Yi folk invited ninety-nine good singers
To sing all over nine hundred and ninety-nine hills,
But could not voice all their blood and tears and hatred.

Now a golden sun shines on the Ailao Mountain,
The mountain has become a sea of joy.

Today when our Yi folk fell ninety-nine bamboos
To make flutes nine hundred and ninety-nine,
For delight the whole mountain dances.

Today when our Yi folk fell ninety-nine sandal-trees
To make lyres nine hundred and ninety-nine,
Songs of liberation make the brooks gurgle with glee.

Today every one of us is a fine singer,
We sing all over nine hundred and ninety-nine hills,
Yet cannot sing all our praise, all our love for Chairman Mao.



Liang Shang-chuan

The Girl Tractor-Driver

The girls of the Liangshan Mountains are good smart workers,
The soil of the Liangshan Mountains is rich as oil;
When the land cries out to be ploughed and sown
She drives up the iron ox that eats no grass.

Turning up furrows in the waste
The iron ox roars along;
Her father, behind, checks the depth ploughed up;
The furrows have an end, but not his song.

He is making song after song
To praise the first tractor-drivers in these mountains.
Himself, he herded cattle so many long years
Yet owned not a hair of an ox.

Not a hair of an ox, not an inch of land,
His child was doomed from the womb to be a slave;
But democratic reforms struck off their chains
And they stood up, freed from their slavery.

The commune trained her to be a tractor-driver,
Six months she studied in town,
Returning home in spring with the first swallow,
Driving the iron ox right up to the village.

Now our minds and our hands are freed
To build a brave new world,
And this lass who keeps a firm grip on the tractor handle
Will bring fresh loveliness to our great land.



Yuan Hui

Fetching Water

Kiddies of seven or eight
Carry water on their backs early and late;
Grannies of fifty or sixty
Carry water on their backs up hill and down.

Bamboo containers brimming with clear water
Are packed in the crates on their backs,
Then firmly they tighten the ropes
Of coconut fibre....

So deep the valleys, so high the hills!
How many trips a year must they make for water?
And half the water they drink
Is sweated out on the steep mountain track.

The PLA men come to this frontier region
Are so concerned that they cannot sleep at night;
Their very first squad meeting
Discusses this water problem.

The next day they climb the hills
To fell stacks of bamboo and timber;
The bamboo they make into troughs,
The timber into tripods.

Then off they fly with their loads
As if on wings;
A hundred-catty weight is nothing to them,
No climb however long can tire our fighters.

Our soldiers have iron shoulders,
No storm can stop them;
They are carrying guns and troughs
To bring the villagers a better life.

The bamboo toted on our men's strong shoulders
Builds an aqueduct to the village,
And when old folk ladle out the clear spring water
Their eyes brim with tears of joy.



The Countryside Is a University Too

In April 1969, seventeen-year-old Chu Ke-chia graduated from Hainan Middle School in Shanghai.

Seventeen is very young. But Chu Ke-chia had high ideals. He determined to go to Yunnan, to make revolution in that far-away borderland. Not long afterwards, with a large party of educated young people he set out for the Tai Autonomous *Chou* in Hsishuangpanna, Yunnan. The journey took three whole weeks and, on arrival, Chu was allotted to Mengchang Production Brigade. The members of this brigade were all of the Tai nationality.

The Tai poor and lower-middle peasants took good care of these young people from Shanghai, giving them the best bamboo "stilt-houses" and the lightest work. But Chu Ke-chia, who had come here to be tempered, did not want such special consideration. He sought out the instructor and asked to live in the worst house and do the heaviest work.

"But you're still a kid, so green that you've never even seen frogs fighting," the instructor teased him.



However, Chu Ke-chia was set on tempering himself in the vast countryside. He learned to plough in muddy water, transplant rice seedlings in wind and rain, and tote loads across mountains and rivers; while in his spare time he took up carpentry. In a word, he let slip no chance of learning to make himself useful to the Tai people. Sitting round the fire, old men told him of their bitter sufferings in the past and the sweetness of their life under socialism; while old

women taught him sewing and mending. Before long, Chu Ke-chia was able to speak and write Tai and was known far and wide for his skill as a carpenter. He worked till late every night repairing tools for the brigade or making tables and chairs for the commune members. The latter said:

“We can’t do without Chu Ke-chia.”

“And I can’t be parted from you folk,” he told the poor and lower-middle peasants.

Halfway up a mountain which towered beside Mengchang Brigade was a village of the Aini nationality, Moteng Brigade. Red camellias catch the eye from miles away, the fragrance of coconuts carries far and wide, and the fame of this young carpenter soon reached Moteng Brigade. Its old leader often brought down farm tools for Chu Ke-chia to repair and told him about his village up in the mountain. Knowing that it was not an easy trip to make, Chu Ke-chia always did these repairs right away and sometimes saw the old man off, carrying his tools for him for quite a distance. The old brigade leader became very fond of him.

One day, the brigade leader told him about the wretched life of the Aini people in the old society. Though they were now much better off politically and economically under the leadership of Chairman Mao they still had one big problem — illiteracy. Before the Cultural Revolution they had set up a primary school. The three teachers engaged one after the other had all left because life in the mountains was so hard. So all their Aini children, several dozen of them, still had no school to go to.

At this point the old man took young Chu’s hands in his own. “Will you come to our village, lad?” he begged. “We Aini people have courage enough to kill tigers and move mountains. The one thing we’re afraid of is having no schooling.”

Chu Ke-chia was very touched by this appeal. “I’ll come and have a look in a few days,” he promised.

“Good. We’ll be waiting for you.” The old brigade leader went away happily.

The bamboo houses on stilts in Hsishuangpanna were a far cry from the huge storeyed buildings in Shanghai. And now young Chu

had been asked to go where conditions were still harder. What should he do?

That night Chu Ke-chia tossed and turned in his bed, unable to go to sleep. In the mountain, where things were so tough, could he live up to the expectations of the Aini poor and lower-middle peasants? Would he, like the other teachers, quit because he couldn't take the hardships? He recalled Chairman Mao's teaching: **"A good comrade is one who is more eager to go where the difficulties are greater."** With rising excitement he thought, "To do as Chairman Mao taught, I came from Shanghai to this border region. Today, I should take his teachings more to heart and go to where the difficulties are greater."

"I'm going up the mountain!" Chu Ke-chia's resolution was supported by the commune Party committee. But the Tai villagers found it hard to part with him.

With tears in her eyes, an old woman took his hand in hers and said, "You've had a thin enough time of it here with us, lad. Why go to a place where things are even harder?"

The young men hid Chu's things to prevent his leaving. "Do stay and work with us!" they pleaded.

This love and concern for him tugged at Chu Ke-chia's heart-strings. Fighting back tears, he said, "You're just as dear to me as the people up the mountain. Whichever village I go to, my heart's in the borderland. Let me go and be tempered where conditions are tougher."

"We Tai people need him," the instructor put in. "But our Aini brothers up in the mountain need him still more. Since young Chu's taken this bold resolve, we should give him a hearty send-off."

So Chu Ke-chia went to the mountain village.

Things were indeed more difficult up in the mountains. For one thing, there was no level ground to be found. Working from early to late, Chu Ke-chia and the Aini villagers levelled a slope, cut timber and grass from the forest, built classrooms and laid out a playground. Chu Ke-chia's skill in carpentry stood him in good stead now. It did not take him long to make desks, chairs and a ping-pong table, as well as the backboards for playing basket ball.

The day school started the villagers took their children, all dressed in their best, to the school. In soaring spirits Chu Ke-chia mounted the platform and began the first lesson in fluent standard Chinese. The pupils looked at each other. Some put their fingers in their mouths to prevent themselves from laughing.

"Do you understand me?" Chu Ke-chia asked with concern.

No answer came from the class.

"Don't you understand me?" he asked again in Tai.

"*Weseigeyal*" This answer, in Aini, meant: No, we don't!

This dashed Chu Ke-chia's red-hot enthusiasm as effectively as a bucket of cold water. So the children understood no Chinese and only a smattering of Tai. He would have to teach in Aini: that was clear. But he knew very little of the dialect. The disappointment shown in his pupils' eyes made him resolve to learn to speak Aini as quickly as possible.

To help the young teacher, the Aini peasants told him stories about their families and village, and found an interpreter for him. And the parents urged their children to attend school no matter whether they understood or not, to show their support for the teacher. This spurred Chu Ke-chia on to learn more eagerly. He studied Aini day and night, learning from the peasants as well as from his pupils, tabulating words and phrases and making them into songs, picking up new vocabulary wherever he went.

Very moved, the peasants said, "Whatever we need, you learn. You're a true friend in need."

After months of hard work, Chu Ke-chia was able to teach in fluent Aini. He taught the children songs and told them stories too in their own language. Soon they were all devoted to their teacher. And when, for the first time, his pupils wrote, "Long live Chairman Mao!" young Chu's happiness knew no bounds.

"The poor and lower-middle peasants' needs are my call to action; their ideal is mine." This conviction grew on Chu Ke-chia over the years as he learned from the poor and lower-middle peasants.

Thump . . . thump. This was a common sound in the evenings as the village women hulled rice with their pestles. Chu Ke-chia

knew how hard the Aini women worked, farming by day and busy with endless household chores in the evening. When everybody else was in bed they still had to hull rice. He often gave them a hand. But wielding the long heavy wooden pestle soon made him sweat. Besides, there were more than fifty households in the village. How could he help them all? He racked his brains for some way to free the village women from this heavy labour.

The brigade cadres were mulling over the same problem. To get the movement for learning from Tachai going with a swing, they must free the women from this back-breaking work so that they had more time and energy for production. The Aini people determined to find some better way of hulling rice, and the task was entrusted to Chu Ke-chia and a few other young men.

Chu Ke-chia made several proposals. After discussion the villagers decided to buy a tractor to power a milling machine and plough the fields too.

Soon, Chu and some other commune members brought back a tractor. But they couldn't get it to turn the milling machine. For days they fiddled with the tractor, dismantling it then reassembling it. Still they couldn't make it work. Yet the Aini people had pinned their hopes on it.

As the night deepened, the sound of pestles filled the village again. The brigade leader came to Chu's house which was still lit up. Through a crack in the bamboo wall he saw that young Chu was poring over a book. The brigade leader was very touched. He thought: Young Chu gives his whole heart to solving our problems. Just then, along came the instructor and the chairman of the association of poor and lower-middle peasants. Quietly the three entered the house. "You must go to bed now," they said. "Don't overdo it."

"I've fallen down on the job," said the lad in distress. "Those pestles seem to be pounding on my heart."

"Why don't you go down the mountain and pick up some tips from other brigades?" suggested the brigade leader.

Chu Ke-chia brightened up. Of course! Instead of shutting himself up he should go out and learn from others.

After Chu's return they soon got the milling machine going. The chugging of the engine took the place of the pounding of pestles. The Aini women were able to do more productive work.

For some time the Aini poor and lower-middle peasants had wanted to build a hydro-electric station, but the lack of technical know-how had made this impossible.

When Chu Ke-chia went back to Shanghai on his first visit home, he kept this wish of the Aini people in mind. Instead of resting he ran right and left collecting material on how to install a small hydro-electric generator and learning how to be an electrician.

Before the Spring Festival he returned to the village and told the production brigade what he had in mind. At once many peasants came to pass on to him what they knew about the region. Whenever he had time, he sought out those who knew the mountain best to look for water sources, survey the terrain and talk over the plan of construction. After many days of hard work, he submitted a plan to build a reservoir at the top of the mountain fed by waterfalls and springs, then to use the water cascading from the peak to generate power for them.

Young Chu's plan was eagerly discussed by Moteng's Party committee. The brigade leader suggested building the reservoir halfway up the mountain instead of at the top, as this would mean less work and quicker results. Chu Ke-chia hugged him and said, "You know the mountain better than I do." At once he revised his plan.

With the support of the county committee, the construction of the hydro-electric station started. The Aini peasants quarried stone and built a reservoir. Chu Ke-chia worked on the construction site as well as teaching in school.

The Aini villagers said approvingly, "Whatever we want, young Chu makes up his mind to do. The higher our demands, the greater his drive!"

Chu Ke-chia had his ups and downs in his mental progress. As the socialist revolution and socialist construction unfolded many of the young people who had come to the countryside with him from

Shanghai were transferred to factories or service departments. Some of them went to college. He asked himself: What should I do?

Leave the mountain village to go to a new post? He could not bring himself to do that. Looking back over the years he had spent here and visualizing the future of the village, he had not the heart to leave the Aini poor and lower-middle peasants. But by now the village primary school had its own Aini teacher, while a tractor-driver and a "barefoot" doctor, both of them very capable, had been trained. His work could be taken over by other people. To leave or to stay? His mind was in a turmoil.

The deputy brigade leader saw what was troubling him and inquired, "You want to leave us, young Chu?"

The school-children sensed it too. "You mustn't go, teacher," they said. "We love our lessons with you."

Old folk came to beg him to stay. "Building up our country needs men, but a well-educated youngster like you is even more badly needed here," they argued.

The instructor and the brigade leader came to talk to him. "From the point of view of the whole cause of socialism, we're all for you taking up more responsible work and making a bigger contribution to the Party. But you can't go just now. When we asked you up here, certain people spread the rumour: Only students with bad records are sent to the borderland. What you've done here has scotched that rumour. But now that some of the educated youngsters are being transferred to new posts, those same people are saying: Chu Ke-chia is leaving us because the life up here's too hard. Just think. First, those people tried to stop your coming here; now they want to drive you away. Why?"

This line of reasoning and challenging question struck home. Chu Ke-chia remembered how a bad character in the brigade had said to him, "There's no future here for a smart young fellow like you. You ought to leave the mountain." Why should the class enemy urge him to leave? And why should the poor and lower-middle peasants urge him to stay? Was it because they couldn't do without him? Certainly not. It was due to comradely concern. Nothing



was more heart-warming, more precious than this deep class feeling. Leaning against the instructor's shoulder, with a catch in his voice he said, "I can't leave you folk, there's so much I still need to learn from you."

This successful conclusion to his mental conflict made Chu Ke-chia strike deeper roots in the countryside. In 1972, a member of the commune Party committee brought him an application form for admittance to college. "We want to send you off with gongs and drums to study in university," he told him. He wanted young Chu to fill up the form at once and go for a medical check-up. The suddenness of this took Chu's breath away. More scientific knowledge was needed for socialist construction. But this could not shake his firm determination to remain in the mountains. "I can't leave the poor and lower-middle peasants," he said to the instructor. "I can't leave our mountain village. Let me stay here to transform these mountains with you." He requested the commune Party committee, "Let me go on learning and tempering myself here. This village is my best school." Impressed by his determination and revolutionary spirit, the county Party committee approved his request.

So whole-heartedly did young Chu devote himself to the building up of a new socialist village that the Aini peasants called him their "human dynamo". His splendid revolutionary ideals manifested themselves in countless little ways. There was no end to his work every day. His energy was inexhaustible.

He got up at daybreak and sat at the sewing-machine to make clothes for the peasants. He was the first tailor in the mountain village. Every household had clothes made by him.

At eight o'clock, when the sun shed golden rays over the mountain tops, he walked into the classroom. The first revolutionary teacher in the village, his heart's blood was instilled into all his pupils.

At noon, when smoke rose from kitchens and others rested, he functioned as the village's first barber and cut the peasants' hair. Or else he used this time to repair their radios, flash-lights, cigarette-lighters or alarm clocks.

After school ended at four in the afternoon, he set to work again with saw and plane as the village's first carpenter. Every family had chests, tables or stools made by him.

After supper, under a kerosene lamp, he corrected the school-children's homework and prepared the next day's lessons. He also coached pupils who had been absent from class or took part in the various meetings of the village.

Late at night, when all were asleep, he studied Marxism-Leninism and the works of Chairman Mao to arm his mind with revolutionary theory.

On Sundays or holidays, he worked with the poor and lower-middle peasants in the fields.

This was how Chu Ke-chia spent his days. These were the common daily tasks he carried out year after year.

The Aini village was home to Chu Ke-chia and the Aini peasants looked on him as their own son. When his rice was finished, they took him some on the sly; when his water containers were empty, they filled them with spring water; when he ran out of firewood, they cut him more from the hills. Once, overworked, he ran a high fever for days, had to stay in bed and had no appetite. Then villagers flocked to see him. The Aini "barefoot" doctor came several times a day to take his temperature and give him medicine and injections, while an old poor peasant stayed at his side nursing him day and night. Stroking his feverish forehead lovingly, she told him, "You did as Chairman Mao said and struck root in our mountain village. No good son could be dearer to us Aini folk."

"I've done nothing compared with your loving care for me," protested Chu Ke-chia.

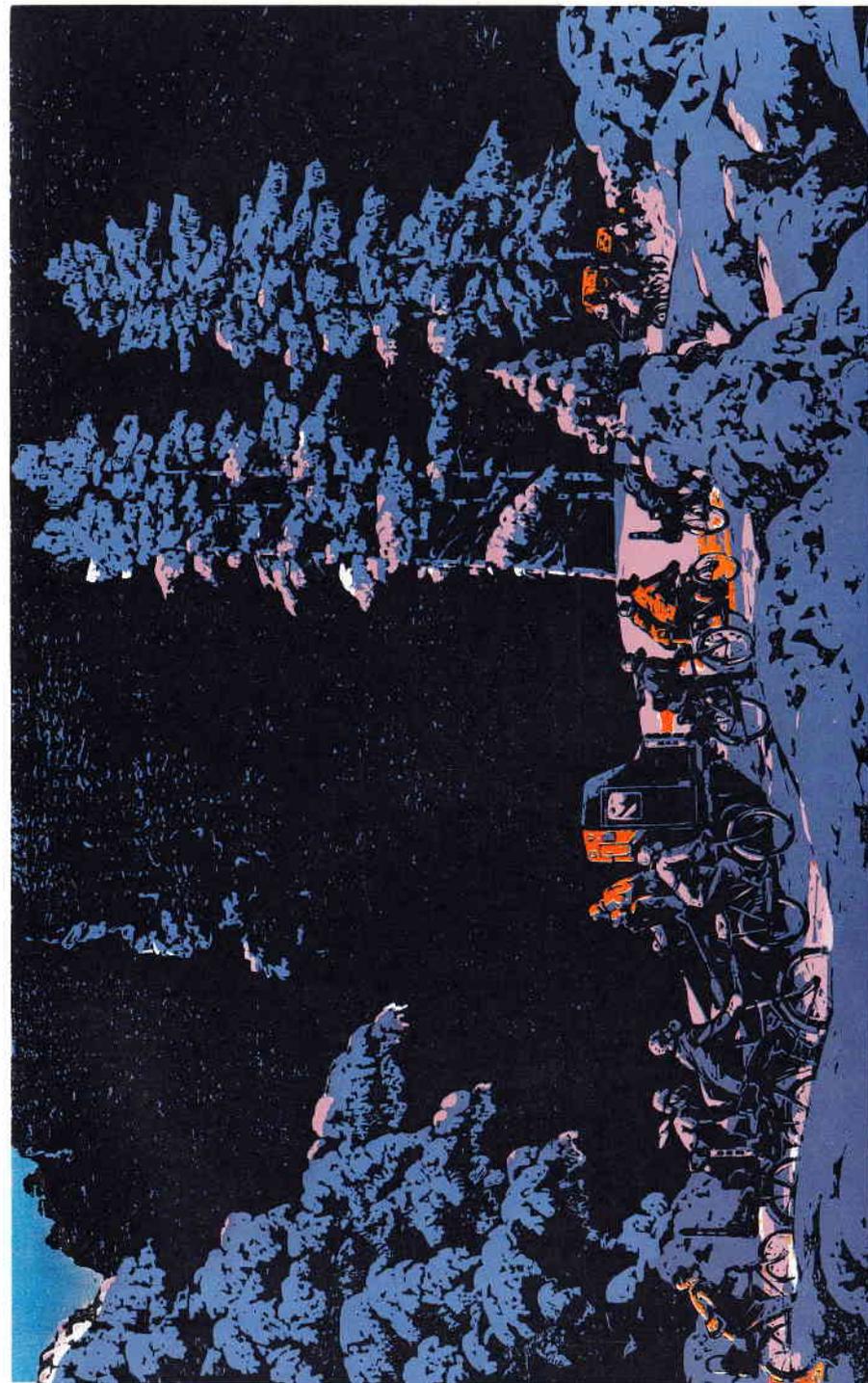
The Aini peasants nurtured Chu Ke-chia with the sunshine and dew of Mao Tsetung Thought. He was tempered too in class struggles, in the battles to transform nature and in bold scientific experiments. Last April, at the age of twenty-one, he joined the Communist Party. Last August, he took part in the Party's Tenth National Congress and was elected alternate member of the Central Committee. The heavy load of revolution was laid on his shoulders. A new chal-

allenge confronted him: How to live up to the expectations of the Party and the people?

The vast forests of Hsishuangpanna are greener than ever. Their huge trees aspire to the skies, stretching their luxuriant foliage to drink in sunlight and dew and thrusting their roots deep into the fertile soil to draw nourishment for fresh growth.

Illustrated by Huang Ying-hao

Dawn Overture (woodcut) by Chao Mei ►



Lin Chih-hao

Lu Hsun, a Great Fighter Against Confucianism

Lu Hsun was the standard-bearer of China's cultural revolution in the thirties, a great fighter in the campaign to repudiate Confucius and Confucian thought.

Confucius, a native of the state of Lu in present-day Shantung Province, was born in 551 B.C. and died in 479 B.C. at the end of the Spring-and-Autumn Period. That was a period of tremendous social upheaval when the slave society was crumbling and the new feudal forces were gaining in strength. Confucius was a philosopher who served the declining slave-owning class and founded the Confucian school of thought. All his life he spared no effort, travelling from state to state, to salvage the slave system. After his death, throughout long centuries of feudal rule, his teachings were revised and developed to become the philosophy for the defence and consolidation of the feudal system. During the May Fourth Movement of 1919 the slogan "Down with the Confucian Shop!" was put forward, and fierce attacks were made on Confucius and Confucian thought. Lu Hsun was the bravest fighter in this struggle.

In May 1918, Lu Hsun published his first short story in the vernacular *A Madman's Diary*, a declaration of war against the reactionary political line and idealist ideology of the Confucian School. Its aim was to expose the evils of the feudal clan system and of feudal morality. Through the words of a "madman" Lu Hsun denounced feudal ethical concepts such as "benevolence" and "righteousness" advocated by Confucius, pointing out that the history of feudalism in China was a history of "men eating men". The "madman" had begun to see through the feudal morality of which he was a victim. He wanted desperately to smash his oppressive spiritual fetters, to break out from the dungeon of darkness and overthrow that "man-eating" society. The "madman's" battle cry shows that Lu Hsun from the very start of his career as a writer directed his attack against the dominant feudal ideology represented by Confucius, and this reveals his thoroughgoing, uncompromising revolutionary opposition to feudalism.

The old society and the old Confucian morality consumed countless human lives: this was the central theme of many of Lu Hsun's works during the May Fourth Period. In his short story *Kung I-chi* an impoverished intellectual, a social outcast, is in the end hounded to death. In *The True Story of Ah Q* the hired hand Ah Q after suffering all kinds of humiliating treatment is finally executed. In *New Year's Sacrifice* Hsiang-lin's wife works hard all her life only to die in the street on New Year's Eve. . . . Apart from depicting the cruel political oppression and economic exploitation these poor people suffered, Lu Hsun also made it clear that their minds had been poisoned by the feudal ideas represented by Confucianism. Kung I-chi's apathy and defeatism were due mainly to his Confucian education and failure in the feudal examinations. Ah Q's views were "absolutely in accordance with the teachings of the sages" — a result of his indoctrination by feudal rule and feudal ideas. And the tragedy of Hsiang-lin's wife showed the utter corruption and cruelty of the four authorities — political, clan, religious and masculine — which were the embodiment of the whole feudal-patriarchal ideology and system. As for Mr. Ting the provincial scholar who took the law into his own hands and had Kung I-chi beaten until his legs were broken, Mr. Chao who

ruined Ah Q and was responsible for his death, and Fourth Master Lu who exploited Hsiang-lin's wife for many years before finally driving her out into the street, all these were faithful disciples of Confucius who used Confucianism to control the people and to kill them without staining their own hands with blood. The "madman" is a heroic figure, the first to denounce China's thousands of years of dark feudal rule.

In Lu Hsun's fight against Confucianism, he paid special attention to the social position of women and young people. He pointed out that such moral precepts as filial piety and chastity were means to control the weak and the young, and in *What Is Required of Us As Fathers Today* said that the Confucian maxim "The filial son is he who during the three years' mourning does not change his father's way" was the root of social retrogression. At the end of *A Madman's Diary* Lu Hsun made the impassioned appeal: "Save the children!" In *My Views on Chastity* he vehemently denounced the Confucian moral precepts of the Three Obediences and Four Womanly Virtues* and the so-called saying "starvation is a small matter compared to preserving chastity." Time and again he pleaded and fought for women and children because these were the main victims of Confucian oppression. Lu Hsun's championship of their cause forcefully revealed the fact that Confucius and Confucianism were the mortal enemy of China's downtrodden people, the most reactionary force destroying the life and hopes of the Chinese nation. He exposed those who called for a return to the past as "murderers of the present" and their vaunted "national essence" from the Confucian junk shop as an ulcer on the body of the Chinese people. Hence his appeal to his countrymen to trample down everything which obstructed their life and development, to wipe out the man-eaters and to create a new age in China's history.

During the May Fourth Movement, the reactionary role of Confucian thought in the current struggle was fully exposed, but

*Referring to a woman's submission to her father, her husband and her son and the virtues she must cultivate in conduct, speech, appearance and accomplishments.

Confucius' role in history was not carefully analysed, nor was the Confucian ideological system criticized and repudiated as it should have been. So before long a reaction to the May Fourth spirit set in and writers of the comprador-bourgeois class represented by Hu Shih once again vociferously advocated "respect for Confucius and study of the classics". This made Lu Hsun reflect more deeply. Why was it so difficult to carry out reforms in China? Thus he gained a deeper understanding of the recurrent, protracted nature of the struggle. *The Study of the Classics in the Last Fourteen Years, Jottings by Lamplight* and other essays of his not only disclosed the reactionary role played by Confucianism at that time but provided a penetrating analysis of the origin and development of the cult of Confucius, successfully integrating the current struggle with an exposure of its historical background. Such essays as *Confucius in Modern China* and *On China's Kingly Way* clearly mark a great advance in Lu Hsun's thinking.

Lu Hsun shrewdly pointed out that Confucius' emphasis on the "will of Heaven" was simply one of his devices to delude people. In his view, Confucius did not really believe in spirits; but his mumbo-jumbo about sacrifices — "worship the spirits as if they were close at hand" — and his claim that "the will of Heaven" was something known to the Confucians alone, meant that the rulers had to turn to them for advice. In fact, Confucius and his gang "relied on Heaven for a living". Lu Hsun showed up the so-called sage as an out-and-out political swindler.

Confucius advocated "self-restraint and restoration of the rites". By the "rites" he meant the old order of the slave system. He wanted men to restrain their desires and actions in accordance with the requirements of the rites, to resuscitate the disintegrating slave system. As early as 1926 in *A Few Parables* Lu Hsun compared such ritualists with hedgehogs huddling together for warmth yet forced to keep a certain distance from each other in order not to be pricked. Lu Hsun wrote in that essay that if an animal without spikes joined the hedgehogs, it would get into trouble. He was identifying the hedgehogs with the oppressors and those animals without spikes with the oppressed. Those with spikes were able to keep

warm and prick the ones without spikes; while the common people, not having spikes, could only blame themselves for getting hurt. This laid bare the class nature of Confucius' saying: "The rites do not extend to the common people." The "rites" were the monopoly of the oppressors and were upheld by force. There was no need of "rites" for the common people, who could be crushed to death. In a word: rites for the powerful and suffering for the defenceless.

"Jen" (benevolence or human-heartedness) is the central concept of Confucianism. To abide by the system prescribed by the rites called for the cultivation of "benevolence". These two were complementary. "Love for the people", "benevolent rule" and the "Kingly Way" were all applications and extensions of "jen". All devotees of Confucius through the ages glorified "jen" as the political and ethical ideal for the whole people. In 1934 Lu Hsun related in *Random Thoughts After Illness* how Mencius, a faithful disciple of Confucius, made the statement: "A gentleman keeps away from the kitchen." Lu Hsun went to the heart of the matter with the comment: The gentleman had to eat beef but was too kind-hearted to watch the ox trembling before its slaughter; so he went away, only coming back after the beefsteak was ready, when he masticated it slowly. Since the beefsteak could not tremble, it no longer offended his sensibilities; so with a mind at ease he ate with gusto, then picked his teeth, rubbed his belly and remarked: "All things are contained within me." Wonderful! To step aside for a while then come back and eat, this was "benevolence". According to Mencius, this "benevolence" applied to governing the state would result in the Kingly Way. This shows the true colours of the Kingly Way: a pose of benevolence by keeping away from the kitchen in order to eat meat and drink blood. Thus there is nothing but a hair's-breadth difference between the Kingly Way and the Conqueror's Way. The first is a matter of pretence and leisurely eating; the second of baring the fangs and bolting one's prey. Lu Hsun said: "Although the Kingly Way in China appears to be the opposite of the Conqueror's Way, the two are actually brothers. The Kingly Way is bound to be preceded and succeeded by the Conqueror's Way."

Lu Hsun also showed that the Doctrine of the Mean, or forbearance, again derived from "jen", was nothing but a weapon of the ruling class, poison to corrupt the masses. He repeatedly praised a stubborn fighting spirit, was in favour of beating "dogs which have fallen into the water", and firmly opposed forbearance and the Doctrine of the Mean. In his last essay *On Death*, Lu Hsun declared that he would never forgive a single one of his enemies.

After showing Confucius up and debunking his doctrines, in the essay *Confucius in Modern China* Lu Hsun described him as a "sage in vogue". Actually, in his lifetime Confucius was not in vogue but met with many rebuffs. That was the inevitable result of going against the progressive trends of the age. Confucius was made into a sage by those in power who whitewashed and glorified him. But Lu Hsun tore off his camouflage to topple him from his throne and show him in his true colours.

All the ways of governing a kingdom worked out by Confucius were designed for those in power. Spokesman of the reactionary forces, he was the chief representative of the culture of the exploiters, a preacher whose task it was to poison the people. Because Lu Hsun aimed from first to last at awakening the masses and raising their consciousness, on the cultural front, on behalf of the majority of the people, he stormed all enemy strongholds. Hence he carried on an uncompromising struggle against Confucius and Confucianism, denouncing them until the end of his life.

Lu Hsun debunked Confucius and his school and attacked all the reactionary attempts to revive the cult of Confucius, because he saw that all diehards faced with defeat were bound to revere Confucius and use his doctrines as their ideological weapon to control the masses. Thus during the reactionary Kuomintang regime Lu Hsun pointed out: "The world today is often governed by Confucian ideas of benevolence and righteousness under the protection of machine-guns." While directing the counter-revolutionary campaign to encircle and wipe out the Communist-led revolutionary bases, Chiang Kai-shek initiated the "New Life Movement", making Confucian ideas the "criteria for the new life", and decreed the restoration of the wor-

ship of Confucius and sacrifices to the "sage". When the Japanese imperialists invaded China, they did so in the name of establishing a "happy land of the Kingly Way" and "reviving the teachings of Confucius". The comprador writer Hu Shih also advised the Japanese aggressors to "win the hearts of the people" by means of the Kingly Way. The renegades Wang Ming, Liu Shao-chi and Chen Po-ta too urged co-existence with the Kuomintang reactionaries in the name of "benevolence" or "loyalty and forbearance".

Armed with Marxism, Lu Hsun in step with the class struggle of the time stubbornly combated the cult of Confucius by writing essays debunking him and fearlessly stemming the tide of reaction.

He made it clear that the cult of Confucius was nothing but a screen for aggression and atrocities by Chinese and foreign reactionaries. It was Confucius' old trick of using "leniency to supplement terror". Lu Hsun cited sanguinary facts — the Japanese aggressors' incendiary bombs and execution blocks — to reveal the true meaning of "Sino-Japanese friendship" and the "happy land of the Kingly Way". He also made plain the reactionary nature of the Kuomintang's grand sacrifice to Confucius and repair of the Confucian temple amid the devastations of war, plague, flood, drought and other calamities.

Lu Hsun correctly pointed out that the cult of Confucius was a way to "enslave the minds of the people". He said: "Hearts can only be subdued by the Chinese themselves, by proxy." When Chinese reactionaries boosted the cult of Confucius and established dictatorship in the field of culture, they were clearing the way for the enemy, abetting the aggressors. As he said scathingly: "Nothing is more important than worshipping Confucius, nothing more urgent than exalting Confucianism. So, provided this is done, we can knuckle under to any new regime. . . ." These scum of our nation are capable of selling anything; they will sell their own souls, their own country. If only they can become the Number One slave or an emperor who takes a foreigner as his father, they are willing to make a foreign chief the "Grand Master of Confucianism" of the Chinese people. In the essay *The Confucian Method* Lu Hsun cited examples from history to show that the adulators of Confucius were a bunch of renegades and traitors devoid of moral integrity and completely shameless.

Confucius in Modern China gives a penetrating analysis of the history of the cult of Confucius in China, summing up the struggles between those who promoted the cult and those who opposed it since the start of the twentieth century and making an over-all criticism of all Confucian worshippers ancient and modern. He pointed out: "Confucius was boosted up in China by those in power. . . . He had nothing to do with the ordinary people. . . . The authorities worshipped Confucius just so as to use the fellow as a brick to knock on doors." "A brick to knock on a door", this biting metaphor exposing Confucius' reactionary role in history is a fine summing up of the true nature and subterfuges of all those diehards who venerated Confucius. This scientific summary of the experience of class struggle through long periods of history has great significance for us today. It helps us to understand the complex phenomena in past political struggles and gives us fresh strength to carry on the fight. Lu Hsun recalled how warlords like Yuan Shih-kai had used Confucius as a brick to open a door. "However, since the times had changed, they all failed completely."

Reviewing the past helps us to understand the present. Lu Hsun's exposure of past worshippers of Confucius helps us to grasp the true nature of present-day worshippers such as the Soviet revisionist clique, Liu Shao-chi and Lin Piao, and to see their ultimate doom. The Soviet social-imperialists dream of destroying us; while whetting their swords they sing the praise of Confucius' "concern for the people". In our socialist time Lin Piao and his clique also picked up this Confucian brick in an attempt to open the door to a capitalist restoration. Lin Piao ranted, "Even if we fail we shall have proved our virtue," as he frenziedly prepared his counter-revolutionary armed coup d'etat. When his plot was exposed he tried desperately to fly to the Soviet revisionists, betraying our Party and country and revealing his true features as a renegade and traitor who longed to be the puppet emperor of a colony. His talk of proving his "virtue" was a sheer lie. He simply dug his own grave and came to a shameful end like all reactionaries in history.

Do Musical Works Without Titles Have No Class Character?

At present musical circles in China are criticizing the erroneous view that a piece of music without a title has no class character. This is a component part of the steadily deepening movement to repudiate Lin Piao and rectify the style of work. The following is an extract from a *Renmin Ribao* article on this subject.

— The Editors

With the deepening of the movement to criticize Lin Piao and rectify the style of work, new victories are being won through struggle-criticism-transformation in the realm of the superstructure. But in spite of the excellence of the situation, class struggle and the struggle between two lines remain very sharp and complex on the art and literature front. The recent outrageous claim that musical works without titles (or abstract music as opposed to programme music) have no social content and simply express contrasting and changing emotions, is a sign of a return to the revisionist line in art and liter-

ature. Should the reactionary nature of this erroneous view be exposed or not? This is a cardinal issue. It involves the question of whether or not the Marxist-Leninist thesis of class struggle should be recognized as a universally applicable truth; whether or not proletarian dictatorship should be exercised in the ideological realm; whether the Marxist critical attitude should be adopted towards bourgeois art or whether this should be "taken over wholesale" as advocated by Chou Yang and other counter-revolutionary revisionists; and whether or not the proletarian revolution in art and literature can be carried through to the end.

For a long time bourgeois theorists have trumpeted that untitled music is a form of "pure music" having no social content or class nature. They contend that music is "simply fantasy, not reality" and that "music is just music and nothing else". The modern revisionists, while paying lip-service to the ties of music with social life, actually try to obliterate the class distinction between proletarian and bourgeois music by describing untitled music as "of the people", "realistic" and so forth. Now why should both the bourgeoisie and the revisionists concoct so many arguments to obscure the class character of art? It is because bourgeois ideology, including bourgeois art, serves to prop up the capitalist system. They dare not openly acknowledge that their art belongs to the exploiting classes. Instead, to disguise the nature of capitalist exploitation, they pose as representatives of the whole people in order to deceive the labouring masses.

Marxist-Leninists hold that all musical works, as a form of ideology, "are products of the reflection in the human brain of the life of a given society". There is no music that is merely "a form of the flow of sounds" without any content; for a composer has clearly in mind what he wants to praise or oppose and what content and mood he means to convey, whether he gives his work a title or not.

For example: When the German bourgeois composer Beethoven (1770-1827) was asked the meaning of his "Sonata No. 17", a composition without a title, he replied: "Please read Shakespeare's *The Tempest*." That play, we know, preaches the bourgeois theory of human nature. Of course, the means of expression of music are different from those of literature. Music uses melodies, rhythm and

harmony to evoke scenes, tell a story or convey emotion, expressing either plainly or relatively subtly and deviously the world outlook, ideas and feelings of the composer. But in any case, the social and class content, thoughts and feelings so expressed can never be abstract, unintelligible "fantasy", for they can be comprehended by applying the Marxist theory of knowledge and class analysis. Take for instance the representative work "Symphony in B Minor", the "Unfinished Symphony" by Schubert (1797-1828), Austrian bourgeois composer of the romantic school. This clearly expresses class feelings and social content although it has no title. This symphony was composed in 1822 when Austria was a reactionary feudal bastion within the German Confederation and the reactionary authorities not only ruthlessly exploited and oppressed the workers and peasants, but also persecuted and put under surveillance intellectuals with any bourgeois democratic ideas. Petty-bourgeois intellectuals such as Schubert saw no way out of the political and economic impasse, but lacking the courage to resist they gave way to depression, vacillation, pessimism and despair, evading reality and dreaming of freedom. Schubert's work expressed these class feelings and social content.

Musical works without titles composed in Europe in the 18th and 19th centuries were products of European capitalist society, upholding the interests of the bourgeoisie and serving the capitalist system. Their content and the ideas and feelings with which they are saturated have an unmistakable bourgeois character. As Marx pointed out: **"Capital comes (into the world) dripping from head to foot, from every pore, with blood and dirt."** But this blood and dirt is what bourgeois music extols. Although certain compositions were to some extent progressive in the sense of being anti-feudal, they failed to mirror the thoughts and feelings of the proletariat; and they are, of course, still more incompatible with our socialist society today under the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Some devotees of western classical music try to cover up its class nature by holding forth in empty terms on the contrasting, changing moods it presents. This view reflects the reactionary bourgeois theory of a common human nature transcending classes. For these moods are no other than those of delight and anger, joy and sorrow

which vary, as do all men's ideas and feelings, according to the times they live in, their society and class. China's great writer Lu Hsun mercilessly repudiated this bourgeois contention that all men share common emotions and feelings. He said: "Of course, it is human nature to know joy and anger, but the poor are never worried because they lose money on the stock exchange, an oil magnate cannot know the trials of an old woman collecting cinders in Peking, and victims of famine will hardly grow orchids like rich old gentlemen..." Are there any feelings that are not stamped with the brand of a class?

"Joy" can be presented in art and literature in sharply contrasted ways. Thus the music for the local despot's birthday celebrations in the third scene of the modern revolutionary dance drama *Red Detachment of Women* uses frivolous melodies and erratic rhythm to expose the landlord's wanton extravagance and profligacy built on the suffering of the working people. In contrast, the magnificent, stirring music for the dance by soldiers and civilians in the following scene conjures up the brilliant sunshine and jubilation in the revolutionary base. Can these two musical passages convey the same emotion?

Again, take the subject of "sorrow". The grief of a feudal monarch after his overthrow is expressed in the verses written by the last monarch of the Southern Tang kingdom, Li Yu (A.D. 937-978), as he hankered in captivity after his former decadent life in the palace:

Carved balustrades, jade flagstones may still remain,
But the rose of my countenance has fled.
If questioned, how great my grief,
Endless as the river in spate flowing to the east!

But the proletarian fighter Lu Hsun portrayed sorrow of a very different kind when he wrote:

A host of dark, gaunt faces in the brambles,
Yet who dare shake the earth with lamentation?
I brood over our whole far-stretching land
And in this silence hear the peal of thunder.

This indignant denunciation of the savage oppression of the people by the Japanese invaders and Kuomintang diehards conveys the class hatred and national resentment of millions of working people. This

militant lament has nothing whatsoever in common with the grief of a feudal monarch over the loss of his kingdom.

As for empty talk about "bright", "healthy" melodies, passing over their class content, this is the metaphysical approach to which the revisionists usually resort when peddling their bourgeois wares. The bourgeoisie may well believe that the works of the 18th-century composer Mozart embody "bright" and "healthy" sentiments. But it is quite clear to our working people that these sentiments cannot compare with the exuberant and impassioned feelings expressed by the chorus "The Sun Rises" in our modern revolutionary dance drama *The White-Haired Girl*. Brimming over with jubilation, this chorus extols Chairman Mao, the red sun in the hearts of the Chinese people, as well as the Communist Party, and conjures up the soul-stirring emancipation of the downtrodden peasants.

Chou Yang and company also insisted that "music is a universal language" in order to cook up a theoretical basis for their attempt to promote the wholesale westernization of our music. Actually, every class speaks its own language and there is no such thing as a so-called universal language transcending classes. The *Internationale* which rings through the world is the common language of the proletariat only. Lenin has aptly said: **"In whatever country a class-conscious worker finds himself, wherever fate may cast him, however much he may feel himself a stranger, without language, without friends, far from his native country — he can find himself comrades and friends by the familiar refrain of the Internationale."** For eighty years and more this stirring song has inspired workers of all countries to unite to smash the old world and fight for the realization of communism. All reactionaries, however, regard this battle-song as a fearful menace and do all in their power to prevent it from reaching the people. Does this show that the reactionaries share a common language with the proletariat?

It was in fact Liu Shao-chi, Lin Piao, Chou Yang and their gang who shared a common language with the bourgeoisie and all reactionaries at home and abroad. They all opposed proletarian revolution and proletarian dictatorship and vainly attempted to restore capitalism in China. This was like the futile efforts of Confucius, the mouthpiece

of the slave-owning class in ancient China, who, grieved by the "disruption of rites and the ruin of music", tried desperately to propagate reactionary music aimed at benumbing and enslaving the people while frantically attacking the new rising folk music in order to preserve the collapsing slave system.

We do not exclude foreign things indiscriminately. We should conscientiously study the revolutionary theory developed by Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin, learn from the revolutionary experience of the working class and revolutionary people in all countries and acquire advanced science and technology. We should also critically assimilate certain techniques from classical bourgeois music, but we should not swallow anything and everything uncritically. As Engels has said, "**The characterization of the ancients no longer suffices today.**" We should adhere to the principle of "**making the past serve the present and foreign things serve China**", learn from the experience in the creation of the model revolutionary theatrical works and produce proletarian music worthy of our time.

Letter from Their Old School (woodcut)
by Chang Chen-chi ▶



Chao Ching

Introducing the Writer Hao Jan

Hao Jan is a writer well-known to our worker-peasant-soldier readers who are very fond of his works. Among the more important of these are the novels *Bright Sunny Skies* and *The Bright Road* and over a dozen collections of some 150 short stories such as *Spring Songs* and *The Breeze in the Willows*.

Hao Jan was born in a peasant family in Chihhsien County, Hopei Province in 1932. From his early childhood he helped his family with work in the fields and because of poverty had had only three years of intermittent schooling by the start of the War of Liberation. During the war he became leader of the children's corps and for a time security officer of his village, joining the Chinese Communist Party at the age of sixteen. After Liberation he worked as district secretary of the Communist Youth League, as a reporter for the local newspaper and as editor of a magazine.

How did a peasant boy with only three years of schooling become a writer? Hao Jan answered this question by saying, "When I first took up my pen I had no idea of becoming a writer, but after I had

written a few things I found myself in the ranks of literary workers.” In other words, he learned to write because that was what the revolution needed.

Hao Jan was doing youth work in a district Party committee in the winter of 1949. One evening, one of his chiefs told him, “We want to start a week of propaganda on boosting production. Will you write a short play on the subject?”

Hao Jan thought he was joking. “All my hands are fit for is hoeing,” he protested. “How can they write a play?”

“This is what the revolution needs right now,” was the earnest answer. “What you can’t do yet, you must learn.”

And so seventeen-year-old Hao Jan set to work at the low table on his *kang* under a small oil lamp. In twenty-four hours he completed a short play based on a true story; and when he and several other youngsters put it on three days later at the market fair it was well received by the peasants. After that he wrote other plays and acted in them too. He also wrote stories and songs for village wall-newspapers, some of which were published in local newspapers.

Not long after that *Hopei Youth*, a local paper, asked him to become one of its correspondents. To improve his writing technique for this new work, he began reading stories about the Chinese peasants’ struggle against the Japanese aggressors and was greatly attracted by this new type of writing.

In 1952, Hao Jan went to study at the Hopei Provincial Youth League School where for the first time he read Chairman Mao’s *Talks at the Yenan Forum on Literature and Art*. He was thrilled by the light shed on art by Chairman Mao’s teachings. “I read the *Talks* through twice at one sitting,” he told me. “Like the sun high overhead it flooded my whole heart with warmth and light. My vision cleared. I felt filled with boundless strength.” It was then that Hao Jan made up his mind to use literature as a weapon, a tool with which to serve the people all his life.

After finishing his studies at the League school, Hao Jan did rural work in his home district until 1956. He helped to set up the mutual-aid teams and agricultural producers’ co-operatives there, and his experience of the militant life at the grass-roots level during this

period stood him in good stead later for his writing. His novels *Bright Sunny Skies* and *The Bright Road*, both of which deal with mutual-aid and co-operation in the countryside, owe much to his experience during these years.

Hao Jan began writing in earnest in 1956 when he was a reporter on the staff of the *Hopei Daily*. Agricultural co-operation was sweeping the province and Hao Jan was tremendously impressed by the changes it brought about in the villages, particularly in the peasants’ mental outlook. He felt impelled to write up, in story form, the new life of these changed, magnificent people around him. In a postscript to his first collection of stories, *Magpies Bring Good Tidings*, he wrote, “I discovered that agricultural co-operation had smashed the feudal economic base entrenched for thousands of years and was bringing about a striking transformation in the superstructure too. I was so carried away every hour and every minute of the day that, although I seized every second I could to write, whether lumbering along in a cart or sitting up by my oil lamp late at night, I couldn’t put down all I had in my heart to say!” This first collection won him popularity among the reading public for its reflection of the transformation of the countryside and its strong tang of village life in north China.

“If you are a bourgeois writer or artist, you will eulogize not the proletariat but the bourgeoisie, and if you are a proletarian writer or artist, you will eulogize not the bourgeoisie, but the proletariat and working people: it must be one or the other.” In line with Chairman Mao’s teachings, Hao Jan always eulogized the working people in his writings.

In 1957 when the bourgeois Rightists launched a frenzied attack on the Party and a sinister wind gusted through the field of literature and art, publications controlled by bourgeois authorities rejected Hao Jan’s works in praise of the proletarian heroes of our times. Though he himself disagreed with the views of these authorities, for a time he doubted the value of his creative writing. It was at this juncture that an old friend, the chairman of an agricultural co-op, visited him. When he heard what had happened, he said indignantly, “Don’t you listen to them. If they won’t publish your stories, let

me take them back to read to our co-op members. We poor and lower-middle peasants like what you write." This lifted a great weight from Hao Jan's mind. He recalled Chairman Mao's words, "All our literature and art are for the masses of the people, and in the first place for the workers, peasants and soldiers; they are created for the workers, peasants and soldiers and are for their use." This incident, a revelation to him, helped him to march more resolutely forward along the revolutionary course for literature and art charted by Chairman Mao.

For over twenty years Hao Jan has followed Chairman Mao's instructions and lived close to the masses, in the midst of their fiery struggles. He has several bases — homes from home — on the outskirts of Peking where he often goes to stay with old friends of more than twenty years' standing. During the day he works in the fields with the commune members there, while in the evenings he attends meetings or talks over production and other problems with the cadres. At night, he sleeps soundly on a warm *kang* in the homes of poor or lower-middle peasants. There are always plenty of odd jobs for him in the villages: The spare-time drama group may ask him to write a skit, an old woman may want him to write a letter to her boy in the PLA or the old storekeeper of the brigade may need someone to make out an inventory for him. Hao Jan does all this warmly and conscientiously.

In 1960 he went to a village in Shantung where besides joining in the farming he helped with the administrative work. Recalling this experience he said, "I took part in practically every event, big or not so big, both in the village and in the county. I not only worked with my hands and my brains but took everything very much to heart. In this way I came to share the feelings of the villagers who had been utter strangers to me before. This brought me much closer to the peasants and enabled me to understand them better."

These close ties, so constantly renewed, with the masses provide Hao Jan with a rich source of first-hand material for writing. In his introduction to *Pearls*, a collection of short stories, he wrote, "I shall never forget how some of these stories were written. It was harvest time and we cadres took turns watching over the

threshing ground at night with the commune members. In the deep of night, I paced round the quiet square covered with grain and bathed in moonlight. As the cool breeze wafted over the fragrance of new rice, countless stirring events sprang to my mind all crying out for utterance. I turned a manure crate upside-down and spread a sack over it. Then by the light of my storm lantern I started scribbling on this makeshift 'desk'."

Hao Jan began mulling over his novel *Bright Sunny Skies* in 1957 but did not start writing it until five years later. By 1965 he had finished it. This long novel totalling 1,200,000 words came out in several instalments. It tells of the tumultuous class struggle before and after the wheat harvest in an agricultural co-operative on the outskirts of Peking in 1957 and gives a successful portrayal of Party Secretary Hsiao Chang-chun who resolutely adheres to the socialist road. This hero is modelled on a grass-roots cadre with whom Hao Jan had been friends for twenty years, and it was with the feeling of a bosom friend that he described this hero. He laughed for joy after recording Hsiao's victory and shed tears over the murder of Hsiao's only son Little Pebble by the class enemy. Both in ideological content and technique, this novel marked an advance on the author's previous works.

Then, tempered in the Cultural Revolution, Hao Jan reached a higher degree of maturity in his thinking as well as in his craftsmanship and consciously endeavoured to write in accordance with the Party's basic line. The first part of his new novel *The Bright Road*, which he began in 1970, was finished within the year. Set in a village in north China, this story reflects the sharp struggle between the working class and the bourgeoisie and between the socialist and capitalist lines in the countryside in the early days after Liberation. It shows that the individual small peasant economy is a blind alley leading back to a restoration of capitalism. Socialist collectivization is the golden road, the only way out, for the peasants. Readers have compared this novel to a vivid landscape painting portraying the class struggle and the struggle between two lines in our countryside.

Hao Jan wrote the first volume of this novel in one of his village bases. Not wanting to trouble the peasants, he installed himself

in an empty, tumble-down shed, papering over the cracks in the walls with old newspaper. This served him as his study and bedroom combined. During intervals between writing, he would work in the fields or visit the villagers. He told me, "It's a joy to live and work with such heroes but even more of a joy when they open their hearts to you and freely tell you their innermost thoughts and feelings."

The poor and lower-middle peasants, for their part, do not look upon Hao Jan as someone special, a "writer", but as one of their close friends. When *Bright Sunny Skies* and the first part of *The Bright Road* came off the press, Hao Jan was greatly encouraged by the letters pouring in from his peasant friends expressing their approval. However, Hao Jan makes strict demands on himself. Before sending any manuscript to the press he always asks for the opinions of workers, peasants and soldiers and revises it painstakingly on the basis of their criticism. After the Cultural Revolution, like other professional writers, he has undertaken to help spare-time worker-peasant-soldier writers. They send him many manuscripts every day and these Hao Jan polishes conscientiously. He also give lectures to young spare-time writers, sometimes even going down to the countryside with them to help them get close to the people. "Revolutionary literature is not the affair of a handful of writers," he says. "Think of all the trouble the Party and the people took to help me along from the day I first took up my pen! Any small success I've achieved is due to their care. How can I forget the broad masses of workers, peasants and soldiers who are so devoted to our literature and art?"

Hao Jan is a tireless writer. "Since the day I first tried my hand at it," he recalls, "I've been consumed by a burning desire to write. And this urge is keener now than ever before." Indeed, unless confined to bed, he hardly lets a day go by without writing. Besides novels and stories, he produces sketches and outlines. His works published since 1956 amount to nearly four million words. But Hao Jan takes no personal credit for this. As he says in the afterword for *Bright Sunny Skies* written in 1965, "A novel of over a million words is a tall order for a young writer like myself, but I have never lacked confidence and drive. The reason is that, like thousands of other literary workers in our country, living in the socialist era and sustained

by the sun and dew of Mao Tsetung Thought, I have my roots in the rich soil of fiery revolutionary struggles and am cared for by the best of gardeners — our Party and the masses. The deeds of my beloved comrades in Tungshanwu Village, the background of my novel, cry out to be written up, while my sense of responsibility as a writer spurs me on to greater efforts. In the course of writing I have received help, encouragement and guidance from my superiors, my comrades and readers. Under such circumstances, how can I lose confidence, shirk my duty or slack?" Hao Jan conscientiously studies Marxist-Leninist writings and Chairman Mao's works, takes an active part in the three great revolutionary movements of class struggle, the struggle for production and scientific experiment and strives to remould his world outlook. This is the basic reason for the success he has achieved in his writings.

In August 1973, Hao Jan took part in the Tenth National Congress of the Chinese Communist Party. As soon as the Congress ended he returned to a commune not far from Peking to work in the fields with the poor and lower-middle peasants. "I shall go on writing all my life," were his last words to me. "And I shall always go deep into life. Time is marching on and writers like us must constantly merge ourselves with the people."

North-China Theatrical Festival in Peking

A theatrical festival of the North China area opened in Peking on January 23 under the auspices of the Cultural Group Under the State Council. Since the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution and the movement to repudiate Lin Piao and rectify the style of work, China's stage has been flourishing. The revolution in art and literature signalled by the success of the model revolutionary theatrical works has brought us many fine new productions, some of which were presented in the North-China Theatrical Festival.

Peking, Tientsin, Inner Mongolia, Hopei and Shansi all sent troupes to this festival. The varied programmes presented included Peking operas, modern dramas, songs and dances, *chuyi* (balladry, story-telling and cross-talk), puppet shows and various local operas sung to folk melodies. These items represented some of the best stage shows produced in recent years in North China.

This festival is of great significance in further implementing Chairman Mao's revolutionary line, promoting the revolution in art and literature and enriching our socialist literature and art.

New Feature Films in Colour

Four new feature films in colour have been showing in China's cities and countryside since January 22. They are *Fiery Years*, *Bright Sunny Skies*, *Green Pine Ridge* and *Fighting the Flood*.

These films, all strongly imbued with the revolutionary spirit of our age, focus attention on class struggle and the struggle between the socialist and capitalist lines, taking workers, peasants and soldiers as their heroes.

Fiery Years depicts some Chinese steel workers who overcome many obstacles and difficulties to produce a special alloy steel. They succeed by means of self-reliance, by "**maintaining independence and keeping the initiative in our own hands**" and thereby frustrate the blockade and sabotage by the imperialists, revisionists and other reactionaries. The chief character Chao Szu-hai, typifying the Chinese workers with a high sense of the struggle between the two lines, is successfully portrayed. The whole film is a tribute to the broad revolutionary vision and magnificent spirit of the Chinese working class.

Bright Sunny Skies is the screen version of Hao Jan's novel of the same name. It shows how, led by the Party, poor and lower-middle peasants headed by Hsiao Chang-chun engage in a stirring struggle during the agricultural co-operation movement against an inveterate counter-revolutionary who has wormed his way into the Party. This film discloses the acuteness and complexity of the struggle between the two classes and the two roads in the countryside as well as the determination of the poor and lower-middle peasants to take the socialist road.

The locale of *Green Pine Ridge* is a production brigade up in the mountains. The conflict here centres round a cart, the issue being: which class is to have the whip hand? Chang Wan-shan, representing the poor and lower-middle peasants, is heart and soul for socialism and utterly devoted to the collective. By successfully projecting this character, the film praises the victory of Chairman Mao's revolutionary line.

Fighting the Flood depicts the heroism of the people of the Haiho River Valley in combating the worst flood of a century. It shows the fearlessness with which the poor and lower-middle peasants fight natural calamities and their willingness to sacrifice themselves for the good of the whole country. It reveals, too, the tremendous superiority of the socialist system.

Two other new films are a screen version of the Kwangtung opera *Shachiapang* based on the modern revolutionary Peking opera, and the puppet film *A Little Eighth Route Soldier*.

Theatrical Performances During Spring Festival

During the Spring Festival this year a great variety of entertainments were staged in Peking, Shanghai and Tientsin. Professional and amateur troupes in these three cities, while continuing to popularize the model revolutionary theatrical works, also put on a number of new performances.

In Peking the repertoire included the modern revolutionary Peking operas *The Red Lantern*, *Red Detachment of Women*, *Song of the Dragon River* and *Fighting on the Plains* by the China Peking Opera Troupe and *Shachiapang* and *Azalea Mountain* by the Peking Opera Troupe of Peking; the modern revolutionary dance dramas *The White-Haired Girl*, *Red Detachment of Women*, *Children of the Grassland* and *Song of the Yimeng Mountains* (the last two performed on an experimental basis) by the China Dance Drama Troupe; and *The Red Lantern with Piano Accompaniment*, the symphonic music *Shachiapang* and the piano concerto *The Yellow River* by the Central Philharmonic Society.

The ten professional art troupes and some amateur art and propaganda teams of Peking also gave a total of two hundred performances of a large number of new items during the holidays.

Shown during the Spring Festival in Shanghai were modern revolutionary Peking operas and dance dramas. At the same time twenty theatres presented instrumental music, songs and dances, modern dramas, local operas (of Shanghai, Shaohsing and the Huai River region), acrobatics, puppet shows, ballads and story-telling — all expressing the militant life of workers, peasants and soldiers. The Shanghai Philharmonic Society played the full-length revolutionary symphony *Taking Tiger Mountain by Strategy*, which has been acclaimed for its revolutionary spirit and national style.

Tientsin audiences were able to see the modern revolutionary Peking opera *Azalea Mountain* and selections from *Taking Tiger Mountain by*

Strategy, *The Red Lantern* and *Shachiapang* as well as new songs and dances, modern dramas, *chuyi* and acrobatics.

Before and after the Spring Festival professional theatrical troupes of the three cities sent teams to give performances in factories, mines, rural people's communes and army units to worker-peasant-soldier audiences.

New Edition of Collected Works of Lu Hsun

A new twenty-volume edition of the *Collected Works of Lu Hsun* has recently been published and is now on sale.

The collection, printed by the People's Literature Publishing House, Peking, is based on the edition prepared by the Lu Hsun Memorial Committee in 1938. The first ten volumes comprise the author's own writings; the rest, his translations of foreign works. Errors in the old edition have been corrected.

The People's Literature Publishing House has also prepared a selection of Lu Hsun's writings criticizing the reactionary ideology of the Confucian School. This volume, entitled *Selected Writings of Lu Hsun Criticizing Confucius and Repudiating Confucianism*, has just come off the press.

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