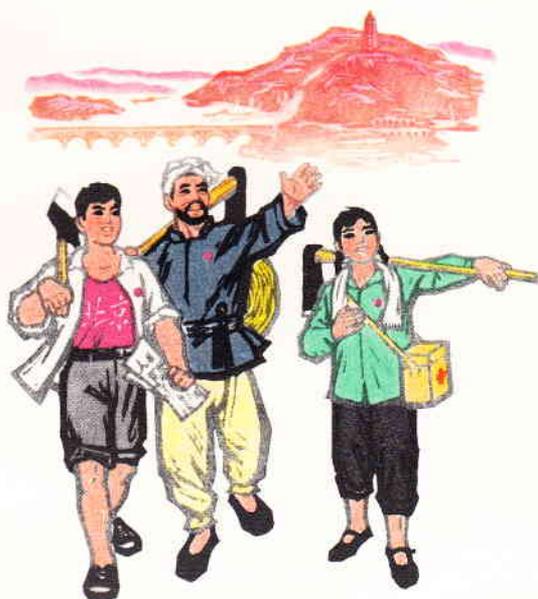


CHINESE LITERATURE



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Front Cover: The Yen-an Spirit

Chu Yu-tung

The Call

As luck would have it, Wei Hua met Mama Chin as soon as he arrived by bus in New Village.

Wei and Mama Chin's son Yu-huan used to serve in the same company in the People's Liberation Army. Just a year before, Yu-huan had been transferred to work at battalion headquarters but the two of them, though separated, still belonged to the same battalion. Wei had heard that Yu-huan came home on furlough ten days previously. He therefore asked, "Where's Yu-huan, aunty?"

"There. . ." the old woman answered, pointing to the swirling dust on the road. "In today's last bus to town."

"On business?"

"Back to the battalion."

"Back to the battalion?" Wei was puzzled, for he knew that Yu-huan's holidays were not yet up.

Mama Chin produced a telegram from her pocket and handed it to Wei. "Have a look at this," she said, "it came at noon."

Wei unfolded it and read: "Emergency mission for whole battalion. Return at once." This was a surprise. Saying goodbye

to Mama Chin, he hurried towards the post office at the west end of the village.

A girl was on duty behind the counter. "Comrade, is there a telegram for me?" Wei blurted as he strode in. The girl must have sensed the urgency in his voice as she looked up to scrutinize the PLA man standing before her. He was covered with dust, carried a bag in one hand and had a satchel slung across his shoulder. Apparently, he was on his way home.

"Comrade, will you first tell me your name and . . .?" the girl asked politely.

Wei flushed at his own stupidity and quickly added, "I'm sorry. My name is Wei Hua. I'm from Weiwan Village."

The girl smiled and went into the inner room to check her records. Before long she came out, saying, "No, there's no telegram for you, comrade."

"Please notify me immediately if there is one."

Actually, this request was quite unnecessary for this post office was an advanced unit known throughout the province for the good work of its postmen. Newspapers, letters and parcels were handled with great accuracy. As for telegrams, they were always delivered promptly.

Wei left the post office but still felt a bit uneasy. "Since there is an emergency mission for the battalion, why's there no telegram for me?" he wondered as he walked off towards his village. "Perhaps it's because Yu-huan's at headquarters and I'm in the company. My telegram will likely arrive a bit later than his. It'll come this evening or tomorrow morning." As Wei Hua stepped out along the road Chairman Mao's words rang in his ears, "**Heighten our vigilance, defend the motherland!**" He felt that this was a call to him, telling him he should not wait for the telegram asking him to return to his company. He put down his bag, fished out a Train and Boat Time Table from his pocket and studied it.

Unfortunately, all buses and boats had already left on their last trips. If it were earlier he could have gone back at once, but now he had to wait. The quickest way to get back was to take the 9:20 train the following morning at Hankow. So he decided to take his things home and have a meal first, then march twenty kilometres by

night to the county town. From there he could catch the morning's first steamer, which would take him to Hankow by daybreak. . . . It was a well thought-out plan. He hurried on his way.

II

In August, it is sultry in the south. Although it was near sunset and a soft breeze cooled his face, Wei was hot and all of a sweat when he arrived at Weiwan, his own home village.

Weiwan Village, beside a lake, was a fishing hamlet surrounded by water on three sides. "The Wei Peninsula," as people used to call it, was very beautiful. Before liberation, most of the villagers were fishermen and an old folk song of the poor fisherfolk is still deep in the villagers' memory:

The boat floats with broken oars,
We fishermen live on water;
By day we are drenched in rain,
At night in a rickety boat we huddle together.

After liberation the village changed greatly and the people began to farm so that they led a new and secure life. Now the fields were covered with golden ripening rice, the ears waving in the evening breeze, while the fragrance of water chestnuts and lotus drifted across the lake. It was a lovely waterside village!

However, Wei was in no mood to enjoy such beauty. He brooded as he eyed the expansive lake, "If I can go by boat from here, it'll take me directly to Hankow. . . ." But he quickly abandoned the idea.

True enough, in the past, people visiting their families in Hankow, or going there to sell fish or buy goods, usually went by boat, for it only took five or six hours to row across the lake. Later, when a highway was built around the lake, they went to the city by bus via New Village. Though they had to walk some distance to reach the bus stop, it was still quicker and a more comfortable way to travel. They could make the trip and be back on the same day. Therefore, nowadays, except for those who took loads of lotus roots by boat to town or brought back fertilizer to the village, no one ever went by water any more even during the day. Naturally there was no boat going at night.

When Wei reached home, he found the door locked. His mother had not returned from the fields. He put down his bag beside the door, took out a few parcels and a notebook and went off to see the old Party secretary.

After her day's work Mother Wei started for home. A group of youngsters who had seen Wei ran to tell her, "Big Brother Hua's come home."

"Not really!" Mother thought to herself, "didn't he say in his letter a few days ago that he wouldn't be coming back?" She hurried home and found her son's bag lying outside the door, but no son. From experience she knew where he must have gone. Previously, when Wei had come home on leave he would put down his bags and go off immediately. "When a soldier comes home, he should report to the local Party organization," he had said. "I must go to see the Party secretary first." No doubt, he must have gone to visit the old Party secretary now.

She unlocked the door, took his bag into the house and hurried to the kitchen. As she bustled about preparing a meal, she heard her son calling, "Ma!" She turned and there he was: her tall, good-looking son standing there in front of her. She was too happy for words. After a moment's silence, she asked, "Didn't you say you were too busy to come back?"

"My commanders and comrades are concerned about you and urged me to come back to see you," Wei explained. "They booked my ticket and arranged everything for me."

"How kind of them!" Mother's face was beaming as she resumed her cooking. From time to time she peeped at her strong, well-built PLA son, then suggested that he should change his sweat-soaked clothes. But he replied, "It doesn't matter. We soldiers are used to it." When Mother wanted to warm some water for her son to take a bath, he said, "No, mother, I've something more important to do after dinner." Mother thought her son had just become rather careless of his own appearance, she had no idea of the plan he had made.

By the time Mother put the washed rice into a pot to boil, it was already twilight and the chickens were returning to their coop. She went out into the yard and closed the coop. Wei followed her out.

"Do the wild cats still come to our coop, ma?" he asked, for he knew that these wild creatures used to steal some of their birds.

"Yes," Mother answered. "Wild cats and skunks do sometimes find their way into the yard at night. We always have to be on the alert."

"Those rotten thieves! They steal in at night. . . ." Wei murmured thoughtfully, more or less to himself, rather than to his mother.

Mother did not notice her son's expression, she was absorbed in removing the top cover off the coop and stretching a hand in to catch a plump scarlet-combed cock. She wanted to kill it to make a special dish for her son. But before she could catch the rooster, Wei stopped her.

"Don't kill it, ma," he said. "An ordinary meal will do. I have to go right after dinner." He did not know that in his haste, he had made a slip of the tongue.

"What!" Mother was taken aback. "Where are you going when it's already so late?"

Wei tapped his forehead with his fingers as though regretting that he had let out his secret. Mother and son went back to the kitchen and, while helping her, he told her about his plan. He began with Yu-huan's telegram and how he had returned to his battalion promptly. Mother nodded approvingly as she listened. She praised Yu-huan and his mother for doing the right thing.

"You know, ma," Wei reminded her, "we led a dog's life before liberation. It's all due to the Party and Chairman Mao that I grew up and became a PLA fighter. I joined the Party and now I'm a political instructor. If the army has an emergency mission, it means the Party's calling us. D'you think I could remain at home? If the imperialists, revisionists and reactionaries are launching an attack on us, can we let these wild cats and skunks catch us unawares?"

Busy cooking, Mother remained silent, mulling over every word her son said. She had made several dishes, including some egg soup. Thoughtfully she tasted each of them to see if they were what her son liked. She felt that her son was right and was particularly glad that he had not forgotten their class origin and their hatred of the op-

pressors for she still shuddered whenever she thought of the bitter past.

One autumn day the same year that Wei was born, a local gangster and his lackeys swarmed on board their dilapidated boat demanding a tax. Too poor to pay any, Wei's father argued with these heartless bullies. Because he did this, they knocked the poor fisherman off his boat into the lake and pounded him on the head with oars. Wei's poor father drowned. To keep her hatred alive, Mother gave Wei the name of "Oar". The following year, the people's army swept across the land, the People's Republic of China was established and the fishermen were freed from their oppressors. Mother knew it was the Party and Chairman Mao who had saved her son and hoping he would be able to serve his country well when he grew up, she changed his name from "Oar" to "Hua-tzu" — meaning China's son.

With this sad recollection Mother's eyes were moist. To hide her sadness from her son, she turned her back and pretended to wash some bowls.

"We've overthrown the landlords and local gangsters, ma," Wei said to comfort her. "But that's not enough. Only by wiping out all exploiters and oppressors from the globe can we poor working people enjoy a secure and happy life." Mother again nodded without a word.

At that moment the old Party secretary entered the house and from the outer room overheard some of the conversation between mother and son in the kitchen. Wei had told the old man that he was going back that same night. Afraid that the boy's mother would feel bad about this, the old Party secretary had hurried over his own meal and come to help persuade the old woman. Since mother and son were still talking, he did not want to interrupt them, so he sat down in the outer room, filled his pipe and began to smoke. On the wall opposite him there was a picture taken from the revolutionary Peking opera *Taking Tiger Mountain by Strategy*. He stared at it and saw written beneath it: "A Communist always heeds the Party's call." He thought, "Wei is right to go back immediately."

In the kitchen, mother and son were still talking.

"Listen son, I don't mean that I won't let you go." That was Mother. "But you haven't received either a telegram or a letter asking you to go back. You've only got wind of it, so why are you in such a hurry?"

Wei was prepared for this. "Ma," he explained patiently, "I've already told you Yu-huan's telegram said: emergency task for the battalion. I'm in one of the battalion's companies. That means our company has an emergency mission too. You know, ma, when we soldiers are given a new task, we don't sit still."

"I know," Mother smiled. "I won't keep you long. But you must be tired now after that long journey in the bus and then walking here on foot. Have a night's rest at home and start back early tomorrow morning. That'll be more convenient than walking at night."

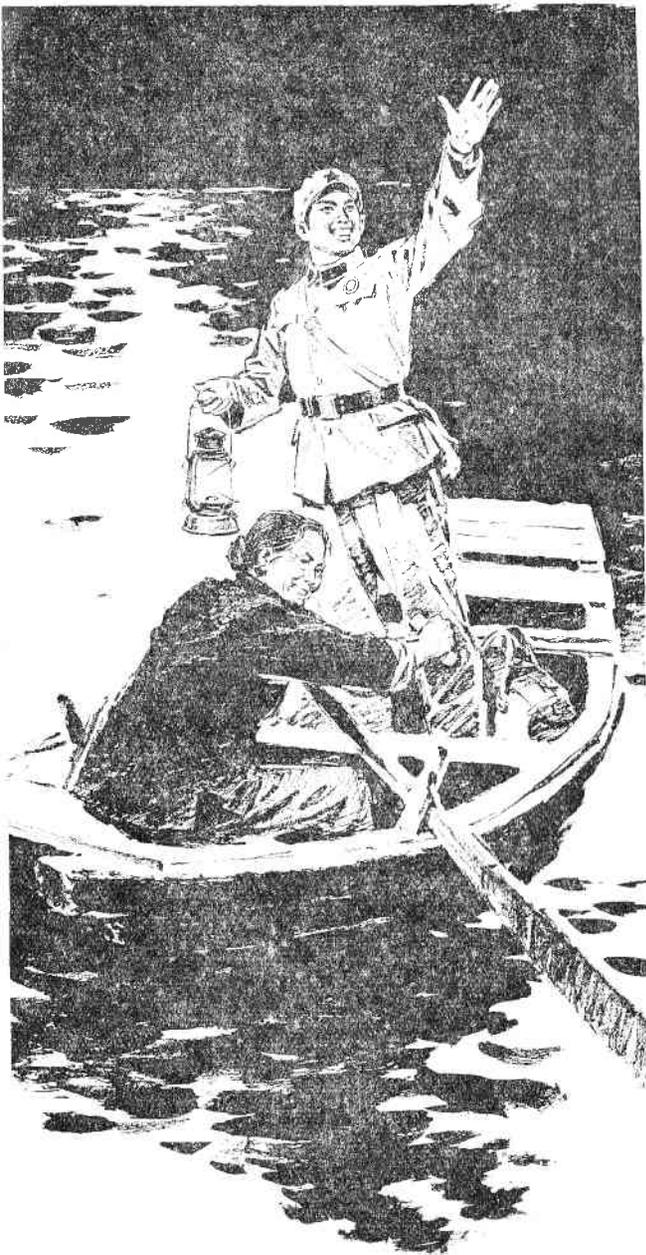
"I'd better go tonight, ma. We PLA men take action as soon as an order's given. That's our tradition." As he added another handful of fuel to the fire, the steam curled up from under the lid of the rice pot and an appetizing aroma filled the room.

What could a mother say to such a son? She could only agree with him. "All right, all right," she said. "Have your dinner and you can go!" She took the lid off the rice pot. "*Aiya!*" she cried. "With all this talk I nearly let the rice burn!" She began to laugh.

The old Party secretary walked into the kitchen. "It was a fine talk, sister," he said to Mother. "Hua-tzu is certainly a qualified political instructor. Every word he said hit the nail on the head. It didn't take him long to make his mother listen to reason." He laughed together with her.

"Hua's uncle, do you think I need him to give me a political talk?" Mother joked as she offered the old man a chair. "I understand Hua-tzu and why he insists on going back. He was only seventeen when he joined the PLA. Because he is my only son, my opinion was asked for. Did I say a word against his joining up? Don't you remember, old secretary?"

Of course he did. He not only remembered that moving scene, but also what happened later on. Two years before when Wei had led his company to reclaim land from the Hunghu Lake, he passed



through New Village. A neighbour saw him there and suggested he come back to see his mother. But he did not turn up, and Mother had not complained. Last spring, though Wei had leave for fifteen days, he spent his time at home helping to train the village militia. Mother said not a word against it, but supported him throughout.

“Are you praising you son or yourself, sister?” the old Party secretary asked.

“Neither,” Mother chuckled. “Too much praise makes one conceited. If he listens to Chairman Mao and works well, I’m satisfied.” Then she turned to Wei and urged, “What are you waiting for, son? Start eating, then you can be on your way. Come on and join him, old secretary.” Saying this, Mother went out. Neither of the men guessed what she was up to.

III

After the meal, the old Party secretary and the young political instructor talked about the village militia. Before long Mother returned with two oars. “Get your things ready, Hua-tzu,” she ordered. “I’ll have a quick bite and then row you across the lake. It’s better than your walking in the dark to town and still might miss the first steamer there.” She stood the oars up against the wall as she spoke.

Both the old Party secretary and Wei were astonished. They had never thought of her doing such a thing. Actually, when the old Party secretary went over he not only thought he would help Wei persuade his mother but also intended to accompany the young PLA man on his nocturnal march to town. Now Mother, by her quick action, had gone a step ahead of him.

Wei understood his mother as well as she understood him. Once a decision was made, she never changed it. He looked long at his mother’s receding back not knowing what to say, then he began to put his things together. There really was not much for him to do. Just leave his Mother the things he had bought for her and ask the old Party secretary to pass on some gifts to the old people in the village. As for the books the militiamen had asked him to buy, he had already left them with the Party secretary. His clean underwears were still in his satchel.

Having finished her meal, Mother came out of the kitchen to the outer room. She took the hurricane-lamp down from its post, filled it with kerosene, trimmed the wick and lit it. She flipped some dust off her tunic, rolled up her sleeves and said, “Let’s go!” Briskly, she stepped out of the house.

Mother led the way till the three of them came to the lake, then mother and son jumped into a small boat, unmoored it and made off. Standing quietly on the bank, the Party secretary gazed at it disappearing in the darkness and listened to the sound of the oars in the water. Suddenly a bicycle bell tinkled behind him and a girl shouted, “Comrade — Wei — Hua —” The voice sounded familiar, but the old secretary did not recognize it for a moment.

The girl rode up and jumped off her bicycle, calling loudly, "Old secretary!"

"Is that you Young Lo?" the old man asked.

Young Lo was the girl Wei had spoken to in the post office when he arrived at New Village. "Just now we received a telegram for Comrade Wei Hua," she gasped, still out of breath. "I hurried to his house but nobody was in. A neighbour told me he'd just left for the lake, so I came on here." She handed the telegram to the old secretary.

The old man took it. In the light of the girl's flashlight, he tore it open and read: "Emergency mission for the battalion. Return at once." Pointing to the telegram, he said smiling, "Young Lo, yours is an advanced post office. But this time you've lagged behind."

"What? He's gone!"

"Yes." The old secretary pointed to the lake, over which hung a curtain of evening mist, but the dipping of the oars in the water could still be heard faintly in the distance, where the glimmer of the small hurricane-lamp still showed. A full moon was rising, its silvery rays etching the willows and reeds along the bank. Even the distant hills seemed near. The night was calm and beautiful.

The girl understood completely and with some emotion she said, "PLA men always answer the Party's call promptly."

Illustrated by Chen Yu-hsien

Sailing Down the Yangtse Gorges (painting in the traditional style)
by Li Hu ▶

The Yangtse Gorges refer to the Chutang, Wu and Hsiling Gorges in Szechuan Province on the upper reaches of the Yangtse. Travelling through the Gorges rife with hidden reefs was considered dangerous even in day time and impossible at night. After liberation, the river was dredged and beacons and signals were put in so that night navigation is now possible.



Bright Clouds

The morning air was crisp and sweet. Along the street the low fence was covered with the green leaves and young tendrils of climbing beans and half-open convulvulus blossoms. As I walked past, the dewdrops beading the thick foliage were shaken onto the loose soil at the foot of the fence.

Following the directions offered by a neighbourhood child, I went on down the street looking for the team leader's house. Soon, I noticed a very tall white poplar on the north side with an old grind stone beneath it. This must be it.

Quietly, I entered the half-opened gate of dry sorghum stalks. In the yard two white geese, necks stretched, hissed angrily. A flock of speckled hens flapped their wings as they scurried from under my feet. Outside the window of the north room, a woman was standing on a high stool papering the window. She wore her hair in a knot at the nape of her neck but as she had her back towards me, I could not see her face. I imagined she must be the team leader's wife.

"Is the team leader home, sister-in-law?" I asked, coming to a standstill.

"No," she answered without turning her head or stopping her work.

"Where is he?" I took a step forward.

"He has two legs under him, where can't he go?" This retort, rugged as a rock, was hurled back at me.

I've come specially to see the team leader on my first visit to Nantsun Village. When I met him in the commune office a few days back, I made an appointment to meet him here this morning.

"If I happen to be out for a while, my wife is sure to take care of you," he had assured me, giving me the impression that his wife must be a clever, capable and hospitable woman, like so many wives of leading village comrades I'd met before. I didn't expect to be snubbed like this the moment I set foot in their yard and couldn't quite make up my mind whether to stay or leave. Probably, the impression I had gathered from her husband was misleading. She might be the kind of woman who objected to his working for the collective and often being away from home with little spare time to help her fetch water or watch the baby. That was perhaps why she was annoyed when people came to their house looking for her husband. I decided I'd better go and wait in the office of the production team. But before I could turn away, I heard her call out, "What's the matter? If you've something to say, say it." Fixing the last of the white squares of paper onto the window, she did not even bother to look round at me.

"I've come to see the team leader," I said again, a little exasperated.

"Ha... ha..." she laughed, startling me with her sudden outburst. Lightly, she jumped off the stool, and stalked towards me, her head high, chest out, looking so militant that I had the feeling she was on the point of driving me out of her yard.

I glanced at her in annoyance. She seemed to be around thirty and had round eyes and thin lips in a squarish face with a pointed chin. Tall and slim, she wore ordinary cotton clothes, well made,

though faded from much washing. There was that special air of smartness about her peculiar to capable, strong-minded women.

"Oh!" she suddenly cried out in surprise. "I thought it was San-niu from the west end. Your voice is just like his. Comrade, where did you come from?" She appeared on the verge of laughter again but restrained herself as she eyed me curiously.

My answer was polite but cold.

She changed her casual air. "Do come in and sit down," she invited, nodding gravely by way of greeting. As I walked slowly towards the house, she turned and went in. She emerged again, in the twinkling of an eye, a kettle in her left hand and a low stool over that arm while in her right arm she hugged a small table with short legs. Two tea cups were hooked on the fingers of her right hand. The table and stool were placed before me in a jiffy and I immediately smelled the fragrance of newly-brewed tea. She did everything with such efficiency that after my initial surprise I realized here was a woman who not only had a sharp tongue, but was very capable as well.

"Here, come and sit down. Have some tea. It's refreshing. He has to go to town this morning, but he's not gone yet. Doing a bit of work in the fields with the other members. I can tell you, it's no simple task to be a team leader. All year long and never a good night's sleep. Luckily, he's a very strong constitution because he's had to rough it in the fields with his father ever since he was very small. Someone else would have collapsed long ago. Why don't you sit down? He'll be with us in a moment."

As the woman talked she deftly poured me a cup of tea. When I picked up the cup to drink, she stood beside me, her arms akimbo, to continue her tale of the morning. Perhaps she wanted to explain the cause of her earlier rudeness or maybe she just wanted to let off steam about the unfortunate San-niu whom she mistook me for. "It made me angry so early in the morning. Fortunately, I'm not narrow-minded. Anyone else in my place would have been annoyed. This morning, the team leader asked me to find lodgings for a comrade from the provincial paper —"

At this point, as if she had made a sudden discovery, she smiled at me. "Oh! That reporter must be you. And I thought since San-niu had an unoccupied room which is nice and big and they've no children, it'd be just ideal for you to do your reading and writing in without being disturbed. I went there to discuss this with his wife. I used my most persuasive voice, gave her every reason I could think of . . . but that selfish woman positively refused. What's more, she insinuated that I was intentionally making trouble for her, that I thought her so soft I could take advantage of her. Called me a busy-body, she did. Well, I was so angry I nearly burst. If it weren't for the sake of the team leader, I'd have quarrelled with her."

She hesitated a moment before continuing, "You see comrade, though I come from a poor family, I was an only daughter and spoiled. I've had my way in the house since I was small so I'm very headstrong. If right's on my side, I don't bow to anyone. Nobody dares to think of throwing sand in my eyes. But ever since he became leader of the team, it has more or less cured my wilfulness. I have to think twice before I take a single step. For instance, when the team was distributing straw for fuel the other day and the separate piles were all ready, I went for our share right away. I'm impatient by nature and always want to get a thing done as quickly as possible. But when I got there, nobody had touched the piles. I came back empty-handed. After all, it was the team leader who saw to the distribution. If I was the first to carry a pile home it would seem as if I went early specially to pick out the biggest pile. Why be so hasty? I waited until all the other households had chosen and taken theirs away, then I took the last pile home." She was so good-natured really that after all this grumbling, she chuckled as if laughing at herself.

Two plump hens headed for the bowl of paste she had left under the window, burying their heads in it, pecking eagerly. She shooped them away and placed the bowl on the stove inside the house. Turning to me, she said, "You can stay here with us. Our rooms are not very big but we'll move into the room on the east side. You can stay in this west room where it's cooler. Our Little Yao is very mischievous. I've asked my mother who lives at the west end of the

village to take him during the day. We'll only bring him back in the evenings so he won't bother you with his noisy ways. Do settle down here with us for the few days you're going to spend in the village. You know you can't be too particular in a hilly village like ours. I was just cleaning up the place."

The white geese started hissing again. Turning round, I saw the team leader coming in through the gate.

He was an extremely robust, well-built man about thirty. His complexion was fair but his cheeks and chin were dark with a stubby beard. He was smiling and appeared jovial and easy going. His forehead was slightly wet with sweat. In his arms he was carrying several shabby, old harness pads.

"Have you just come, Comrade Liang?" he asked, nodding to me cordially. Then, turning to his wife, he asked, "Have you made arrangements for his lodgings?"

She answered him rather crossly, "No. I'm still waiting for you to come and arrange it. You're the team leader."

He dropped the harness pads, flipped the dust off his arms and, pulling up another little stool, sat down opposite me. After filling my cup with more tea he poured himself some. Sipping it, he turned to his wife with a smile, "So you quarrelled with San-niu's wife again, eh?"

She whirled round, her anger flaring up once more. "Me quarrel with her?" she demanded. "As if I have the time and energy to do that."

"Never mind who quarrelled with whom. You should first examine yourself and see whether you were in the right," said her husband.

"Hey, what's this?" she cried. "It's up to you to say who's in the right this time. Listen, I'll start from the beginning. . . ."

"Never mind," said the team leader waving his hand. "You needn't say any more, I know all about it."

She flushed. "D'you mean you won't let me speak? Is this a democratic style of work for a team leader?"

"All right, all right. If you like I won't do anything all afternoon but just sit at home listening to you. Will that do?" Turning to me, he smiled proudly. "This happens with us all the time." After

another sip of tea, he asked his wife, "Has anyone come asking for me?"

She turned her head away on purpose, answering crossly, "Of course. The carters were looking for you again. They want you to hurry up and buy them some new pads."

"Oh, that again."

"Yes, of course. Without harness pads, can animals pull carts? Why don't you buy them some today when you go to town. I'm sick and tired of their coming here asking for pads."

"Ho, buy this, buy that! Do you think we've a printing press hidden in the team's office and can make our own money?" He was serious now. Pointing to the old pads, he said, "If these were patched and mended, they'd do instead of buying new ones."

"Well, you go ahead and mend them. Don't leave them here."

The team leader's black eyes twinkled. "I must find some skilful person to mend them."

She snorted and stamped into the house.

The team leader exchanged a few more casual words with me before he observed that the sun was getting high in the sky and stood up to leave. His wife dashed out to call him back. "Weren't you going to find someone to mend these pads? Why leave them here? They're dirty and smelly. I'll throw them in the gutter if you don't take them away."

"Oh, yes, talking to Comrade Liang, I clean forgot about them. Oh dear, we'll need them when the carts go out this afternoon." The team leader tapped his forehead as though making fun of himself. With a smile, he turned to his wife, "I say, d'you think you could help out?"

She cocked her head. "I'm not skilful. Besides, it's none of my business."

"How difficult it is to ask a favour! All right it's none of your business." So saying, he headed for the door.

She rushed out to stop him. "What kind of a team leader are you? Even if this is just a work assignment, you ought to ask me politely."

He laughed. "Polite words are easy. Listen, comrade, will you please do it, for my sake and..."

She was convulsed with laughter. Stretching out her hand, she said, "Give me some cloth to patch with. Am I to mend them with my lips?"

"Cloth? Oh, I forgot, we haven't any in the office. I'll tell you what. Use some of your own. The team will return it some time in the future."

"Return it? When have you ever returned anything of mine that the team used? Take them away. I told you it's none of my business."

"Look," the team leader suddenly cried out. "The chickens are running wild all over the kitchen stove."

Both she and I turned to look at the stove but there was not a chicken on it. When we looked back the team leader was disappearing out of the gate. I roared with laughter.

"You wretch," said she, pretending to gnash her teeth but laughing in spite of herself. "He's tight-fisted, that's the trouble. Won't let anyone take a cent out of the team's account."

She took me into the house. I saw that she had the room nicely cleaned for me. There was not a speck of dust anywhere. A few of the team leader's awards were hung on the walls and a picture of him with other model workers at the county congress. There were also two coloured film posters which have now replaced the old-fashioned New-Year pictures as decorations for the walls in many peasant houses. The room was not very big but it was bright and roomy enough.

She brought the low table inside, placing it on my *kang* bed. "Now you can settle down to your work. If there's anything you want, just call me."

I had taken a liking to my warm-hearted, outspoken hostess. "Sister-in-law," I said, "what's your name?"

"My family name's Li," she said, "and my own name is Bright Clouds."

"What a pretty name."

"Pretty? The team leader thought up that name for me, the year our people's commune was founded. I said, at the very beginning, why give me such an attractive name when I'm such a rough and ready person. But he insisted." She giggled like a girl. I could see she liked the name all the same.

"Are you a leader of some group in the team too?"

"Do I look like a leading comrade? No, I'm not." But, as if afraid I'd look down on her because of it, she quickly added, "Whether you're a leading comrade or not you can still serve the people. Since he works for the collective day in and day out, summer or winter, I feel I'm serving the people if I help him so that he's more time to do his work better. Don't you think so?"

Before I had time to reply, there was the sound of hurried footsteps in the yard.

"Is the team leader home?" It was a man's husky voice calling.

"No, he isn't," Bright Clouds snapped, in the same hard voice with which she had greeted me earlier.

"Doesn't matter if he isn't. I want to speak to you."

"Out with it then," said Bright Clouds going out to the visitor.

"There's that plot of millet on the western slope. I don't know whether it should be hoed or not. Yesterday evening when work was assigned for today, nobody mentioned it."

"Since that millet's on the west side, it belongs to your sector. Do you think it needs hoeing?"

"Without rain, it would have been all right to leave a few more days. But it sprinkled a little last night. That soil's no good. One day's hot sun will make it as hard as a rock. Then hoeing's difficult."

"Then, you ought to get a few members to hoe it. Do it while the ground's still nice and soft." Bright Clouds spoke loudly, betraying her anxiety.

"I thought since the team leader's not home...."

"Sh...." She cut him short, then her words, like a handful of pebbles, rattled on again. "What's the matter with you? You've a good heart and you think of the production team's interest. What's more, you've an eye that notices what should be done. The only



trouble is you don't dare take the initiative and say what you think. That won't do. The production team belongs to all of us. The team leader can't be everywhere. When he's not home, we should all act like masters of our own house."

"That's all very well, but I . . . I . . ."

"Quit dawdling. It'll soon be noon, then the ground'll be too hard to hoe. Hurry out there with some others and hoe that millet. If you're criticized for it, say it was my idea."

"Since the team leader's not home and you'll take the responsibility, then I'll be bold enough to do it," he said cheerfully. The man seemed to be pleased. His footsteps receded.

I sat reading on the *kang* bed. Bright Clouds did not return to my room. She must be sewing under the pomegranate tree outside my window I thought, for I could hear the snipping of her scissors and the rustle of the pads as she turned them about. She was humming a tune softly, accompanied now and then by the cackling hens.

Before very long another visitor arrived, this time an old woman. "From which direction did the sun rise today?" she asked with a chuckle. "I've never seen you tied down to sewing while it was daylight. How come you're behaving so quietly today?"

"If I wasn't doing this, would I be eating people?" Bright Clouds retorted by way of greeting the new arrival. She remained where she was outside my window.

"Since the team leader's gone out, we were all wondering why you weren't somewhere around shouting orders left and right. We didn't hear your loud voice at the team's office, the barn-yard or the weaving section. Not anywhere in fact."

"I don't dare give any more orders. Didn't you see the team leader criticize me severely in front of several people yesterday morning? Said my attitude towards San-niu's wife was no good." Bright Clouds was angry again at the recollection and her voice rose. "I can take it if the criticism's correct, but I won't if it's not just. I've already told him, from now on he can be team leader and I'll just be a commune member. I'll have nothing more to do with his work. After a spot of labour during the day I'll take it easy, sit back on the *kang* and play with my baby."

"Did you really tell him that?" asked the old woman, in mock surprise.

"Well, I will, if he makes me really mad." Bright Clouds threatened.

"I don't believe you. You're only talking." The old woman laughed. Then she asked, "Bright Clouds, what's that you're making?"

"Please don't ask me, as it is, I'm mad enough. You know, that man's tactics are terrible."

"Terrible? Why, our team leader's pure gold washed out of the sand, a downright, honest person," said the old woman hiding her amusement. I gathered she was teasing Bright Clouds.

"Listen, the carters are going to Peking on a transport job this afternoon. For several days now, they've asked him to buy new pads for the animals. He knows quite well that the old pads are in bad shape but he doesn't want to spend money on new ones. I don't know where he dug out these this morning, but he brought them here, all smelly and dirty. When I asked him what they were for, he said he wanted someone skilful to mend them. . . ."

"He meant you."

"I'm no fool. Don't I know it! I thought that since he wanted me to do something, he couldn't just expect me to understand unless he asked me nicely. He can go ahead and suggest all he likes. I'll just pretend to be dumb. I've quit stretching out my hand to do things. It never gets me anywhere. If it's well done I don't hear a word of praise, but if something goes wrong, he criticizes me severely. So why should I do this? It's none of my business and I'll certainly not bother."

The old woman was laughing heartily. "Oh, Bright Clouds, loud may you cry, 'It's none of my business!' but what, if I may ask, are you doing right now?"

"That's why I said his tactics are terrible. He knows me inside out," said Bright Clouds laughing too. "Tell me, do you think it's possible for me not to bother? If the animals have no pads when the carts go out, what will happen? Why, it'll be bad for our team's work."

They laughed together loud and heartily.

When at last they stopped, Bright Clouds said, "Anyway, this is the very last time. In the future, I'm not going to bother about anything, however important it is. I'll let him know I'm not to be trifled with."

"I came here with something really important to ask the team leader," said the old woman. "But I can see your heart is set on not bothering, so it's no use my telling you about it. I'll just have to wait till the team leader gets back. Of course this'll mean holding up important business, but what can one do? The team leader's not at home."

"Don't go yet. Tell me, is it urgent?"

"Oh, rather."

"Well, tell me what it is then."

"You're not going to bother any more, so what's the use of telling you?"

"So you've also learned how to torment me. If it weren't for the fact that I don't want you to hold up any important business, I wouldn't ask you at all. I'd push you out through the gate. Tell me, what's up?"

After another laugh, the old woman said seriously, "Haven't you heard already? Yu-wang's wife at the east end was taken ill suddenly and had to be rushed to the hospital early this morning..."

"Oh, that. I knew about it before you did. I was the one who helped to find men to carry the stretcher, this morning."

"But just now the hospital sent word saying that she'll have to be there at least a week or so. She's nursing a baby too, you know. What's to be done?"

"Oh, yes, we'll have to think and make arrangements." Bright Clouds said this under her breath. After a few seconds, I heard her get up from her stool as she said, "Let's go and see how things are. We'll have to consult the other women neighbours."

Bright Clouds fussed about in the yard a bit before she came to my door. "Comrade, please stay here for a while. I have to go out on some business. I'll be back soon. If anyone comes for the team leader, ask him to wait for me." She left with the old woman, the sound of their laughing voices drifting back to my ears.

The bright sunshine cast a fine leafy pattern of the pomegranate tree across my window-panes. Golden shafts crept into my room from the doorway. It must be nearly noon.

Bright Clouds came back flushed and perspiring. But she seemed to be extremely happy. Bustling in and out of the house she fed the chickens, shooed away the geese, brought kindling and lit the fire in the stove. In between, a few visitors came looking for the



team leader. Evidently she was too busy now to chat with them and instead gave them terse, precise instructions before sending them off.

When I went out to the other room, she was busily cooking. But when the fire was burning well, she sat by the stove sewing away at great speed on the pads. Finally, she bit off the thread, looked up to smile at me and ran off with the whole lot in her arms.

I went out for a stroll around in the yard. The team leader came home.

"Well, Comrade Liang, have you settled down in your lodgings?" he asked, smiling, one hand wiping the sweat from his brow.

"Sister-in-law was very kind. She helped me arrange everything nicely."

"Yes, she's much better at this sort of thing than I," he said. "Her only trouble is that loose tongue and quick temper. But if you know her better and understand her temperament, you find that these are actually one of her attractions. We've been married more than ten years; we never quarrel over family matters."

Just then Bright Clouds came back with a baby. He was a bright little fellow. His dark eyes took in everything around him. A very cute little chap.

As the team leader took the child from his wife, he asked it lovingly, "Have you been fed yet, my sweet? Come, let's have a kiss."

Bright Clouds deftly laid the table. Lunch was ready.

The team leader asked some questions about various things in the village all of which she answered without a moment's hesitation. "Yu-wang's wife was taken to hospital this morning. I wonder how she's doing. Are there any news from the hospital yet?" he finally asked.

Bright Clouds laughed. "You ask about this and that. Why don't you ask about your precious pads?"

"I suppose you've thrown them into the gutter, so why ask about them?" answered her husband with a grin. "Really, I should find time to go to the hospital this evening to see how Yu-wang's wife is getting along. Perhaps you'd help me by making the trip to find out how she is?"

"The hospital has sent word already, she's to stay at least a week."

The team leader kissed the baby in his arms. "In that case what about this little one?" he asked. "He can't stay in the hospital with her, can he?"

Bright Clouds was very smug now. "You're way behind things, comrade. We've made all the necessary arrangements. We women neighbours will take turns caring and feeding him, beginning with me on duty today..."

I stared at the smiling baby in the team leader's arms. So this wasn't their own Little Yao my hostess had been telling me about that morning.

Illustrated by Yen Kuo-chi

The Pulse

Just to the right of the entrance to our army camp was a little building standing all by itself. This was the dispatcher's office. The mail from the post office was sorted there for the companies to pick up, and from there the camp's mail was sent to the post office. Pan Yuchuan, the dispatcher, had worked industriously and carefully, day in and day out, and for the past year not a letter or newspaper, remittance notice or parcel, had been pigeon-holed wrongly. Not one mistake in the mountain of mail he had handled.

On this particular morning the clear sunlight slanting in through the windows made the room extremely bright.

Everything was going according to the daily routine which Pan had established. As he read out the names of the companies, the newspapers flew like huge butterflies from his hands into the pigeon-holes. It made the new dispatcher, Li Mai-feng, dizzy to watch.

"When I can do that like you, I'll be happy!" said Li with admiration.

"Nothing hard about it. All you need is care and patience."

Pan had taken to his new partner. He'd heard that the latter liked to use his brains. Soon after Li had joined the army, he had been assigned to the artillery company as a rider. Several of the horses just arrived from Sinkiang were quite wild. The one that kicked and bit the fiercest the men called Towhead Tiger because, though a roan, he had a streak of white on the forehead. None of the riders could manage him.

"Let me try," said Li, rolling up his sleeves. "The more spirited the horse, the better he'll turn out!"

More than once Li was kicked and bitten, and one day when Towhead Tiger broke loose and ran away, he had to chase him forty *li*. Nevertheless, the rider had tamed the horse, and now Towhead Tiger was the company's best horse.

Later Li was transferred to kitchen duty. For cooking out in the field he experimented with a dozen stoves made of earth and finally invented one that could be used at night without showing light. Thus he solved a long-standing problem. A person who can do that must be the type that is careful and patient. So from the beginning Pan was glad Li had come, and helped him in every way to become familiar with the work. Though it looked easy, the job really wasn't so simple.

Li was getting along fine. In three days he basically knew what to do though he was still slow at sorting the papers and letters. No matter, practice would improve that. Yet, there was a certain something that Pan didn't quite approve of: a kind of over-eagerness, though he'd been there so short a time, to master everything at one fell swoop. That just wasn't possible, thought Pan. It took time and practice—look how long it had taken him!

Again he cautioned Li. "Take it easy. Remember, if you get rattled you'll only make mistakes. Do everything systematically, step by step..."

As the pair worked on, they suddenly heard the door squeak open and Comrade Wang came in. He was in charge of the camp's political study.

"Comrade Pan..."

"Anything I can do for you?" Pan smiled and stepped towards him.

"Yes. Could you tell me why our newspapers always arrive so late?"

"It's like this," Pan hurried to explain, "the bundle comes in on the five a.m. train and the post office delivers it at eight."

"Oh." Wang seemed to be thinking over this explanation. "Then that's why they're late..."

"That's not late! We always read the paper on the same day it comes!"

"But could we get it any earlier?"

"Earlier?" Pan scratched the back of his head. "Well, all right, we'll try to portion out the papers quicker and let you have yours first, Comrade Wang." When he'd finished speaking, Pan looked at Wang as if to ask whether there was anything else he could do for him.

Wang stood meditating for a moment, then without saying any more, left.

Usually this sort of thing ended when a good explanation was given, and Pan's responsibility as a dispatcher was finished. Therefore, after seeing Wang to the door, he went placidly on with his work.

"Why does he claim the newspaper is late?" asked Li, jerking up his head.

"Well, we work as fast as we can, don't we?" The newspapers kept flying into the compartments.

"Why is it only he who says the papers are late?" Li asked again after a while.

"Well, since he's in charge of political study and propaganda work, naturally he wants to see the paper first."

This kind of an answer didn't satisfy Li and he went on mulling over the matter. If Wang says the paper is late, he doesn't say it without a reason. Suddenly he slapped the desk.

"He's right! The paper *is* late!"

Pan nearly jumped out of his skin. "What d'you mean — late?"

"You see, the papers get here at eight o'clock and by the time we distribute them, it's nine. But the men should read them in their study period before seven-thirty every morning. When Wang said

the papers were late, it wasn't that he wanted to see his first. Not at all! He was thinking of their current-events study period."

Such a brain wave as this, Pan certainly hadn't expected. But, how could they solve the problem when the post office didn't deliver the papers till eight?

"It's a matter that's out of our hands," Pan declared. "We've done all we can."

"Have we?" Li sounded doubtful. "The train arrives at five o'clock, at five..." he muttered. "Well, why can't we go and pick them up ourselves?"

"From the viewpoint of what's best for the men, your initiative is fine," Pan replied after considering what Li had said. "But the idea's not practical. We could go early for the papers... that's nothing, but how can we demand that the post office people divide out our bundle first? They have their regulations."

For a long while Li didn't say anything. Pan thought he had convinced him. But far from being convinced, Li was wondering why it was that every time Pan said anything, if it wasn't the word "routine", it was the word "regulations" that came out. Of course there was a lot he could learn from Pan's careful way of work and his patience, but it struck him that Pan was lacking something. What was it? Wasn't he being tied down by convention and all those "regulations"!

"There's something to what you say, but have you consulted the post office?"

"No, but..." Pan wanted to explain.

"You haven't? Then why are you so sure it can't be done?"

"Well..." Pan couldn't imagine how Li could think of so many questions about those newspapers. But he was still as patient as ever. "We can't make other people change their routine just for us, can we? How can we bring this up with them?"

"Why not? We're all serving the people, aren't we?"

Pan still didn't agree but he could think of no answer. Finished with the newspapers, he started to sort the letters. As it happened, the address of the second letter he picked up was unclearly written. Sighing, he left it on the desk.

Li looked at the envelope. Yes, the address was incomplete. These past few days he had seen several letters like this one. They were first placed in a box with other letters waiting to be claimed. If no one claimed them within a week, they would be stamped "address unclear, return to sender". But, he mused, the men far from home were looking forward to letters from their families. And, if the letters were returned, the families would certainly be worried. Pan explained that he had asked everyone who came for mail whether they recognized the names. He had done all he could, so now he'd have to return the letters to the post office. Still, this "dead letter" that morning made Li begin to wonder.

"Is there no other way to deal with this kind of letter?" he queried.

"What other way is there?" Pan countered.

"Can't we go to the units and inquire?"

"So many units — how can we? Anyway, when they came for their mail, we did ask..."

Staring at these letters they could not deliver, Li fell silent.

These problems he'd bumped into made him wonder. Yes, though he still wasn't very familiar with his new post, he felt the dispatcher's office could improve its style of work.

II

That afternoon, Pan and Li cycled to the post office. After picking up the afternoon mail Li walked over to Comrade Huang, a girl with two thick black plaits, who portioned out the papers into bundles.

She was reading a newspaper and the news must have been good for she was smiling.

"Looking in the paper?" Li asked.

"Look here!" Huang raised her head. Though not on familiar terms with Li, she had seen him several times. She handed him the paper. "Look, at one place they've downed a plane, and they've wiped out puppet troops at another — the Vietnamese people are doing all right!" She tossed one of her plaits over her shoulder excitedly.

"One of our aircraft gunners, when he read how the Vietnamese are shooting them down, said he's going to bring down a dozen if they come," observed Li. "And it is really amazing: He practised so much — never thinking about fatigue or anything like that — that one day in a dust-laden gale he hit the target every time he shot."

Huang listened, wide-eyed. "That's just what I like to hear. Tell me more!"

"Well, there was the soldier who read about how the fighters of the liberation army in south Viet Nam fight with bayonets against the American invaders, and he said, 'Those fellows are really daring! Whatever the enemy fears, that's what they perfect themselves in.' He picked up his gun, like this..." Li found himself making the motions of bayonetting. "And he struck that straw dummy seven hundred times!"

"Seven hundred times!" Huang was all admiration.

"Yes. You know, the news in the papers is a great inspiration to us. New progress in our country's construction and the victories of the people everywhere in the world help us raise our consciousness and make us want to train even harder. So the earlier we see the papers, the earlier we can use them. Each word gives us new strength. Isn't that so?"

"Right!" Comrade Huang was completely won over.

Now Pan realized what Li had been leading up to. Sure enough, Li brought out his suggestion. "Comrade, I have something I'd like to consult you about. I'd like to ask whether we could have our newspapers a little earlier every day. Would it be possible for us to pick them up as soon as they come off the train?"

"As soon as they come off the train?"

"Yes." Li hastened to explain. "Our newspaper-reading time is before seven-thirty each morning. If we could hand them out early, the men could go to the drill ground fresh from reading them, feeling the hope our country has placed in us and enthused by news of the world revolution."

"Fuel!" Huang stood up excitedly, tossing her other plait over her shoulder. "Come and get your bundle of papers at five-thirty. I'll report to the leaders right away. I'm sure they'll agree."

“Very good! Thank you, Comrade Huang,” said Pan and Li in unison.

III

Early the next morning Li had already come back with the papers when Pan got up.

“I didn’t hear the alarm clock at all,” said Pan, embarrassed.

“Doesn’t matter. Hurry and wash. As soon as the bugle sounds, we’ll deliver them!”

Pan hurried through his washing and then, on their bicycles, they made the rounds of the companies. Wherever they appeared they were hailed.

“Our dispatcher’s office is really making a leap forward!”

“Our dispatchers are revolutionizing their work again.”

One political instructor thanked them over and over when they gave him his paper.

All of this praise made Pan happy but it also made him uneasy.

At every company Li showed the men the five “dead letters” and soon four of them had been “resurrected”. For the fifth they had to inquire at six companies before they found the person to whom it was addressed. The sender had written the name the recipient was known by in his home and no one in the army could identify it. When the soldier saw the letter he jumped for joy.

“It’s from my mother. I’ve been in the army six months and this is the first time I’ve heard from her.” He tore it open and as he read it, his eyes filled with tears.

“A medical team has come to our mountain valley,” he shouted. “My grandmother has been blind for twenty years, and they’ve cured her!”

In such a situation how could the men not be as stirred as he was? Pan grasped Li’s hand. “Well, this trip of yours wasn’t for nothing!”

IV

After supper Li made a notation in his diary and went out. Alone in the quiet hut, Pan turned over in his mind the events of the day. He thought of that political instructor’s warm thanks when they handed him his newspaper, of the joy of the recipients of those “dead letters”, and especially of the soldier with his eyes full of tears. That was his first letter from home since he’d joined the army — could this be Pan’s fault? In the past he had always thought he was being very responsible in his work, and because his comrades praised him, felt good in his heart. But Li had been like a powerful wave, sweeping the work of the dispatcher’s office ahead. He, Pan, had been there longer and ought to have known the work better, yet those big problems right in front of his eyes he hadn’t perceived until Li, in a twinkling, had discovered and solved them. What was it that enabled Li to do this?

“Comrade Bethune’s spirit, his utter devotion to others without any thought of self, was shown in his boundless sense of responsibility in his work and his boundless warm-heartedness towards all comrades and the people.” Pan looked at this quotation from Chairman Mao which Li had put on the wall. And below it was written: “What does it mean to have a ‘boundless sense of responsibility’ and a ‘boundless warm-heartedness’? I understand it like this: It means there’s no ceiling or floor to improving your work; that when you’ve done well you can still do better, and when you’ve gone forward you can still go further. It means that beginning from your own particular job you think of the whole revolution and of your responsibility to the world revolution.” These words struck Pan’s brain with the force of a hundred hammers, opening his eyes.

Just then Li walked in. “Li, you really take your study seriously! I’d like to see more of your study notes if I may. I’m sure there’s a lot I could learn from them.”

“Oh, they’re not very good, but take them if you wish.” He drew a red notebook from his drawer and handed it to Pan, then set the alarm for five a.m.

Pan opened the notebook. It was quite full. He could tell that some of the lines were newly written:

Some of my comrades commented that I've come to a quiet place. Yes, the dispatcher's office looks quiet with only the two of us. But a Communist can't pass his days in quietness. In the dispatcher's office, through all the mail we handle, we can feel the pulse of the whole camp. I must always be on the alert so that I can feel the pulse of the army as it strides forward on the road to revolution.

Pan read the rest of the notebook, then returned it to Li. "You know how to put things, Comrade Li. Yesterday when we were talking over the newspaper problem, I still... Well, shutting myself up in this little room, I got over-satisfied with myself..." He was smiling and a little embarrassed.

"Listen, I have to improve my work too. There's simply no end to revolutionizing oneself!"

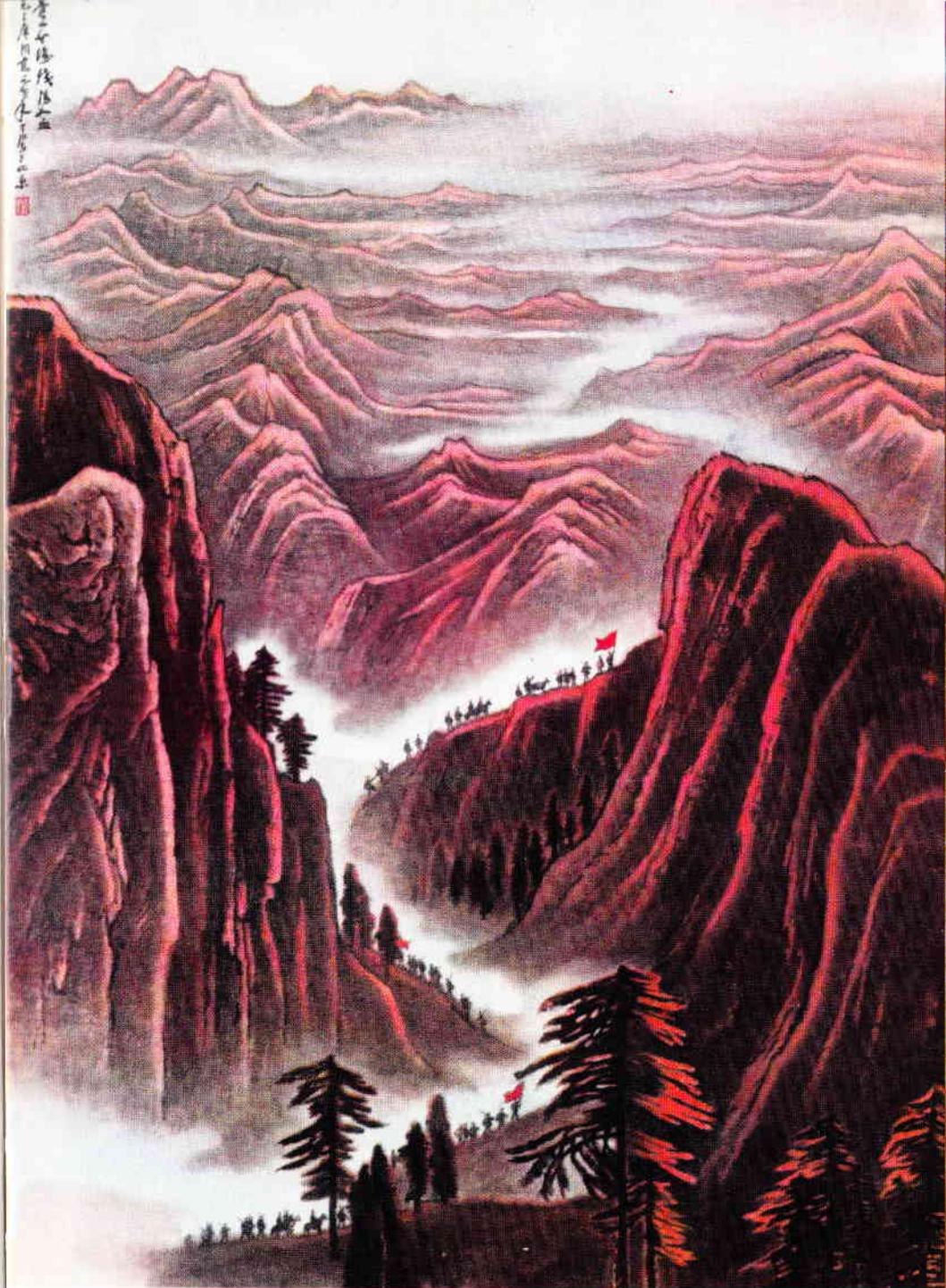
They talked eagerly thinking up other ways of getting the newspapers and mail out to the men.

The light was out and the room was quiet, but Pan couldn't calm down for a long time. The alarm clock on the desk ticked as it never had before, faster and louder. Pan lay listening. His pulse seemed to be beating with the clock and behind them he seemed to feel the pulse of the whole camp.

Loushan Pass (painting in the traditional style)
by Li Ko-jan ▶

The painting takes its theme from the last two lines of Chairman Mao Tsetung's poem *Loushan Pass* written in February 1935 during the Long March. The two lines read:

There the hills are blue like the sea,
And the dying sun like blood.



Training a Doctor

An old soldier, tall and sturdy but greying at the temples, hurried along the twisting mountain path leading to Ravine Village. He was Liu, leader of a PLA medical team in the mountainous region of northern Kwangtung.

The medical team had just held a short term training course for bare-foot doctors* in a local people's commune. Each of the commune's 160 production teams agreed to send a representative and 159 trainees turned up for the course. The only absentee was Tan Teh-fu, from Ravine Village in a most remote part of the commune. Old Liu felt something had to be done about this. As soon as the training course ended, he decided to go down to this village himself and train Tan Teh-fu to make up for what he had missed by not attending the course. Liu had already heard something about this man who was nicknamed Mountain Tiger.

Tan was well-known throughout the commune as a remarkably good agricultural worker. He was known for his will power and

*Medical trainees from among the peasants who do medical and health work in addition to their regular job in production.

it was said that if he'd set his heart on something, he'd stick to it and could go on working for three days and nights without batting an eye. However, if he wasn't so inclined, three days and three nights were not enough to talk him into it. When his team nominated him to train as a bare-foot doctor, he didn't like the idea at all. His old team leader went to talk to him three times but met with passive resistance every time. Tan simply had no enthusiasm for the job. Liu therefore was not at all certain what kind of reception he would receive at Ravine Village from such an unwilling student.

This village, where a team lived, was far away from both the commune office and other brigades. What was more, the homes of the team members were scattered over quite an area. People used to say:

Ravine Village has fifteen households,
If two neighbours would talk, they must shout across a gorge.
It spreads over three hills, nine ravines and eighteen gullies,
To reach a single family you must walk for an hour.

Naturally, a bare-foot doctor would be most useful in such a village. He would bring the concern of Chairman Mao to the poor and lower-middle peasants and give them medical aid as well as warm comradesly help. Old Liu was well aware of the significance of his trip and remembering this he hurried on.

When Liu arrived at Mountain Tiger's house, Tiger was out at work. Liu noticed the various farm implements out in the yard. He picked up an extra large pick. It weighed at least five pounds. Tiger must be quite a man to swing such a heavy tool, Liu thought.

"Who's snooping around in my house?" someone asked as he entered. There was no need to ask who this heavily-built young man was for he could be none other than Mountain Tiger.

"Finished your early morning stint, eh?" Liu asked.

"Yes. Comrade . . . you . . ." Tiger answered vaguely, bewildered to find a PLA comrade sitting in his house.

"Ha . . . ha . . ." Liu laughed at Tiger's embarrassment. "Why is the famous Mountain Tiger suddenly so shy? Come, sit down and rest your legs."

Tiger's furrowed brows smoothed out at Liu's hearty manner. "Sit down, comrade," Tan invited and started to fix the broken handle of the hoe he held in his hand.

"What's your name?"

"Didn't you just call me?"

"Only by your nickname."

"My name's Tan Teh-fu," Tiger said sheepishly.

Liu walked over to the pick and asked, "This thing's rather heavy, isn't it?"

"Five pounds."

"I thought usually half that weight was enough."

"With this tool I can do twice as much work in one stroke."

Since Tiger had now lost his initial shyness, Liu turned the talk to his reason for coming. "I hear you're the team's bare-foot doctor, eh?" Tiger realized that this man must have come to persuade him to study. He promptly shut up and concentrated on fixing the handle of his hoe.

Liu could see that he had blundered. Just as he was racking his brains for some way to improve the situation, someone outside called, "Mountain Tiger!" Tan leapt to his feet. "Comrade, please excuse me," he mumbled and was out of the yard in one stride.

In this first round, Liu knew he had been defeated. He stood up and, looking through the open window saw Tiger disappearing down the road. "A bit of tempering in the right heat will quickly shape him into good material!" he muttered to himself.

In spring, every day makes a difference, but in summer, every hour of work counts. The mountain slopes, already cloaked in lovely pale green, were a scene of bustling activity. Ravine Brigade had finished its first round of hoeing and both men and women members were cutting timber.

The fine pines and firs were piled onto wooden-wheeled carts and taken down a newly-opened path to the valley where strong young men carried them on their shoulders to a river. There they would wait for the mountain torrents which would carry them, tied into rafts, down stream to a saw-mill and then on to distant corners of our vast country.

Mountain Tiger who had earned that name for his tenacity and skill as a lumber-jack was not quite himself that morning. He didn't even shoulder the logs well. Ming, his partner at the other end of the log they were carrying, said to tease him, "I say Tiger, are you drunk or something today?" Tiger took no notice of Ming. He was still bothered about his encounter with Liu the previous day. He was a little sorry he had cold-shouldered Liu in the way he had. He felt he should do something to make up for this rudeness to an elderly PLA comrade. But what if Liu again raised the subject of training to be a doctor. Tiger's head was spinning. He was still mulling over this as he walked back to the felled timber, stopping by a big, heavy pine. With one mighty heave, he lifted the lower end.

"Here, let me be your partner," someone offered. Tiger discovered that Old Liu had been following him. Only then did he realize that because of his absent-mindedness, his old partner Ming had left him to find a more congenial workmate.

"But comrade. . . ." Tiger protested feebly as Liu deftly lifted the other end. Bending one knee slightly, he shifted the log to his shoulder.

"Let's go," cried Liu, lurching a little to one side with his first two steps.

"Can you manage, comrade?" asked Tiger. "Better let me carry it alone." Tiger began to move the weight more his way.

"It's all right. Let's go."

"Heave ho . . . heave ho" The two, chanting a work song and walking at the same pace, made for the stream.

The whistle for a break sounded just as they dropped their load.

"Come, let's go and sit down over there."

"Good," agreed Tiger as he brushed the sweat off his face. He was reacting with much more warmth towards Liu than he had the previous day.

"I haven't done this sort of work for quite some time. At the beginning, my legs didn't obey me so well." Liu admitted as he sat down. Tiger said nothing, but looked at Liu with interest, handing him his own towel to mop his face. Then Tiger plunked himself

down on the damp sandy bank. Liu produced his tobacco pouch. He rolled a cigarette and handed it to Tiger.

Tiger accepted the cigarette. "Old Liu, do you PLA men fell timber too?"

"The People's Liberation Army is a big school. We do everything. But if you want to know the kind of work I do, I'll have to tell you how I began, many years ago."

"When?"

"Way back before 1939. When I was a young chap still at home, I used to work for landlords as a lumber-jack. But I changed my job after I joined the people's army."

"What did you do then?"

"I became a medical orderly. Nowadays, that's what people call a bare-foot doctor."

At the word "doctor", Tiger's heart began to pound. He didn't want the conversation to turn that way again, so he decided to keep his mouth shut. Liu, however, continued, "To tell you the truth, at that time, I didn't want to be that kind of a soldier either, a 'soldier behind the frontline', we called it. Because I was reluctant, Instructor Kao in our medical unit nabbed me for a talk one day. As it happened, just when the two of us sat down an urgent order came for a first-aid team to go to the frontline where we were attacking an enemy stronghold. Kao got to his feet at once. 'Come on!' was all he said. Although he hadn't yet straightened me out in my thinking, I was tickled by the idea of going to the frontlines. I followed close at his heels.

"The enemy stronghold was well armed and barricaded. To blow it up, the small obstacles had to be demolished first, then it was necessary to cross the moat, then scale the walls in order to place dynamite at the bottom of the fortress so that the whole place could be blown up. In the first rush, a few comrades were wounded. We went over to rescue them but a barrage of bullets whistled past us. Instructor Kao, seeing we were in danger, flung himself on us, covering me and a wounded man with his own body. There was another volley of bullets. . . . By the time I turned over to get up, I saw blood all over the instructor's head and back. He opened his eyes

only after I'd shaken him several times. With trembling hands he pulled out a few bottles of medicine and some absorbent cotton from his pocket. He only managed to say, 'Young Liu, I . . . I'm finished . . . you . . .' He died without finishing his sentence. Then I began to understand the importance of protecting the life and safety of one's comrades-in-arms in battle and the deep significance of this in ensuring victory."

Old Liu's tale made Tiger's head throb. He began to see that brave fighters who dare to attack are certainly necessary in battles but so is the rear force working behind the frontlines. There is a difference in their tasks because of the division of labour but their target is the same — for the revolution and for victory in the battle.

"This is true in battles and also in building socialism," Old Liu continued. "Chairman Mao teaches us: **'These battalions of ours are wholly dedicated to the liberation of the people and work entirely in the people's interests.'** When we wield a hoe, it is to build up the mountain regions. When we shoulder a medical kit, it's also to build up the mountain regions."

"And to protect the health of poor and lower-middle peasants and implement Chairman Mao's proletarian line in the medical field," Mountain Tiger sprang to his feet to add to what Liu was saying. Everything was perfectly clear to him then.

"How right you are," said Liu.

"Old Liu, will you begin teaching me this afternoon?"

"You've just had your first lesson!"

Smiling, the Tiger tossed a stone into the rapidly flowing river and the sound of Old Liu's laughter was lost in the gurgling water.

Mountain Tiger began to study medicine.

During the day Old Liu and Tiger went to work, their first-aid kits slung over their shoulders. During the break, they talked to poor and lower-middle peasants about their health and attended to their common ailments. The short interval before and after a meal they used to practise acupuncture and when walking along the fields or up the mountain sides, Liu taught Tiger how to spot different me-

dicinal herbs. After dark, they studied Chairman Mao's works together by lamplight.

Tiger was a brave young man and he never complained about the slight pain he felt when trying out the acupuncture needle on himself. But when it came to precise needling on others, he faced a real problem. The slender acupuncture needle was almost lost between the fingers of his giant paw so that he was slow in inserting it and more often than not, he did not do it quite accurately. However, Tiger was determination itself; finally he managed to overcome this difficulty.

Before very long, Ravine Village had its own bare-foot doctor. Liu, a veteran fighter who, following Chairman Mao, had fought his way both in the north and south was delighted with the quick progress of his young student. But he continued to think of all he should still do to help Tiger improve.

One day, Liu went to the commune office for a meeting. Li Wen-po, a high-school graduate, whose family lived on the northern slope of a gully, had recently returned to live in the village. New to the strenuous work of the mountainous region, he failed to settle down at home and hankered after an easier job somewhere else. Before he'd done three days' stint with the team, he fell "ill". So, when Tiger returned from work at dusk, he took up his kit without pausing for a meal or even a drink of water. He climbed the north side of the gully in one breath and soon reached Li's home.

"Hello Wen-po, my lad," said Tiger warmly as soon as he entered the house. "How come you're ill only a few days after you're back?" Wen-po didn't even look at the bare-foot doctor. Tiger felt as if he had had his face slapped, but he controlled his temper and asked, "What ails you? Let's see what I can do." The patient was silent for a moment, then he glared at Tiger and said sulkily, "My legs ache, so does my back and my heart."

"Let me give you some acupuncture. A few needles will relieve the pain," Mountain Tiger offered helpfully. Wen-po, however, only felt aggravated by Tiger's kindly insistence. Sarcastically, he remarked, "Fancy a lumber-jack venturing to handle a needle like a seamstress. Why don't you put sticks into your nostrils and pretend

you're an elephant?" Tiger was not the man to swallow such an insult. He turned on his heels. . . .

When Liu returned from the meeting he heard about the incident and went to look for Tiger right away. Here was a good opportunity to help Tiger raise his understanding one step further.

Tiger was feeling thoroughly fed up. He had no desire to eat supper. His pick over his shoulder, he went up to a clearing and started to grub out a tree stump. After working for some time, with one last mighty swing of his pick, he dug out the root of a camphor tree.

"Good for you!" Tiger turned and saw Liu coming up the slope. "You did that in one stroke, eh?"

Still looking despondent, Tiger said, "I'll say not. It took a lot of work before it came out completely."

"Oh? Is it so difficult?" asked Liu. "Here, let me have a try." He took over the pick and after a few swings grubbed out a stump. "I don't think it's so very difficult," he said.

"But you didn't dig out all the roots."

"Roots?"

"If you don't dig out all the roots, they'll sprout again next year." Tiger took up the pick himself and set to work again. Liu sat down.

"Of course you understand much more than I do about this sort of job," he said deliberately. "But what you just said has set me thinking. Treating a patient is like grubbing out stumps, you've got to dig out the whole root of the trouble and that takes a lot of effort. Unless you do that you can't say you've served the people totally and thoroughly." Liu lit himself a cigarette before continuing, "Whatever we do we can't forget ideological and political work. Our lifeline is politics and we must never let go of it." Then he explained to Tiger why it was necessary to win over educated young people like Wen-po and teach them revolutionary principles, not only in theory but in practice, because they were an important force in building up the rural areas.

Mountain Tiger listened. Every word and every sentence sank deep into his mind. His feeling of frustration dissolved into thin air. The boy Wen-po had been studying in the city for some time and was no longer used to hard physical labour. Tiger knew and understood,

more or less, why he felt a little "ill". But why was it when he had been to see the boy that evening, Tiger had only asked where he ached but forgot to ask about the root of his trouble — what was on his mind? Tiger felt his face flush as he blamed himself for being so stupid. Liu noticed his chagrin and was about to say something soothing when Tiger straightened up.

"I understand now, Old Liu. To treat a patient we must first think of him as a person. To cure a disease we must cure the 'root'. I'll go to see Wen-po again right now. I'm going to have a good talk with him."

Liu was pleased. "Mind you don't quarrel with him," he urged. "Don't worry!" Tiger took up Liu's kit and dashed off. . . .

Li Hsueh-ao

A Precious Souvenir

— to the Hon Gai Colliery, Viet Nam

I brought home this lump of coal,
So black and glossy,
As a precious souvenir
Of my visit to Viet Nam.
It has no golden glint,
Yet it is immeasurably
More valuable than gold;
It has none of the fragile loveliness
Of a work of art,
Yet it is so much more beautiful.
I place it in the brightest nook

Li Hsueh-ao is a worker poet.

By my window, so that now and then
It will remind me of the Hon Gai Mine.
When I took it to the Great Wall,
Our miners there loudly praised
Their Vietnamese comrades-in-arms.

Oh, Hon Gai,
Hero city of Viet Nam,
Oh, Hon Gai,
Heroic mine in north Viet Nam!
As long as the red lilies bloom
On all your mountain slopes,
Will the black coal flow in a torrent
From your many pits.
How short was my visit,
Yet your battle songs
Are still ringing in my ears!

Brave are your miners,
Each red heart defies
The U.S. aggressors
And struggles for national salvation;
Firm are your miners,
Each has the steel-like quality
Of the working class.
When enemy planes soar and swoop,
Each miner plunges in to battle,
Each a fighter, gun in hand!
When enemy planes are beaten off,

Each is a miner again,
Speeding his drill to cut coal!
Showing such a fine spirit in waging
Decisive campaigns and winning
Decisive victories, you have composed
Many brilliant poems of people's war!

Conscientious are your miners,
Scornful of all hardship;
Optimistic are your miners,
Each displaying his good intentions.
When U.S. criminals drop their bombs
All over the mining region,
Seams of coal and rocks
Are blown sky high!
But in the trenches and foxholes
Miners continually joke and laugh,
Their words are gay and full of fun.
"With their bombs these U.S. bastards
Are opening up new pits for us,
How good they are to increase our production
By many thousand tons!"

Beautiful is the surrounding countryside,
With orchards and green hills here and there;
How fertile is your native soil,
Cocoanut groves and paddy fields are everywhere.
Bomb blasts from U.S. planes
Can never destroy your heroic profile,

Bomb blasts from U.S. planes
Can never blot out your charming landscape.
Look! The miners have changed
Bomb craters into excellent fish-ponds,
And the mounds of earth around them,
Into luxuriant banana groves!

Glorious is your coal-field,
Where against the azure sky
Red flags flutter in the wind;
Vast and deep are your pits,
Long, long are your roads that lead
To every part of Viet Nam.
Hanoi Power Station needs your coal
To generate electricity;
Your coal is used for making steel
In the Thai Nguyen Steel Plant;
Your coal feeds the locomotives
That pull the long freight trains
As they roll on at full speed.

Abundant is your coal,
It supplies a thousand factories;
Of high quality is your coal,
It gives intense heat and light.
In resisting U.S. aggression
And defending your land,
You're making a tremendous contribution
To your people's magnificent efforts;

To crush the U.S.-puppet clique
You've sent your finest youth
To the front ranks of the valiant people's army.
The lively faces of Hon Gai miners
Are seen here and there!

Oh! Hon Gai,
Hero city of north Viet Nam!
Oh! Hon Gai,
Heroic mine in north Viet Nam!
As the new year comes around again
My memories of your heroic miners
Become even deeper.
I hear your good news once more:
The production plan for 1971
Has been excellently fulfilled,
The red lilies bloom brighter than ever!
Here, our Chinese miners
Applaud your new victory!
Here, our Chinese miners
Are overjoyed at your success!

Oh! Hon Gai,
Hero city of north Viet Nam!
Oh! Hon Gai,
Heroic mine in north Viet Nam!
At the dawn of this new year,
From each and all our Chinese miners
Please accept heartfelt wishes!

May your drills and excavators work full speed
To produce the coal your people need!
May you make new contributions
To the great cause of resistance
To U.S. aggression and for national salvation,
As you march in the foremost ranks
Till final victory is won!



Lu Hung

The Lumbermen

At midnight we camp in the depth of the forest.
At daybreak we drink from fresh mountain springs.
Rifles slung on shoulders, axes by our sides,
We've come to settle on the slopes of the Khingan Range.

When the first shafts of light disperse the mists of dawn,
Deep in the woods we fell the tall timber.
Here stand a million trees, warriors to command,
Tall and strong, their limbs as hard as steel.

Men and trees bound in the same purpose,
The ring of axe on bough is a song of our speed:
"Our motherland is advancing like a galloping horse,
Many a big building is waiting for beams and rafters."

Up and down our silvery axes flash,
Logs roll down to the river, through the gorges.
To the flowing water that carries them,
We add the sweat that from our labour flows!

Forests are nourished by sunlight and rain,
People are matured by Mao Tsetung Thought.
Look! The morning sun tinges the green mountains,
A million red pines shoot up from the fertile soil.



Chao Cheng-min
(Worker)

Spring Flowers in Full Bloom

In the depth of freezing winter,
Why do warm raindrops splatter down?
In this ice-bound compound,
Why are flowers blooming at our mill?

Because our welders are working on a lofty scaffold.
In spite of cold their sweat showers down like rain,
From their welding irons a million fiery petals fly,
Decorating our mill with a thousand flowers.

The great new year of 1972, we salute you.
Please accept our welders' gifts —
Fiery showers of flying sparks,
Clustering as beautifully as spring flowers.

Spring Comes to Kweilin (painting in the
traditional style) by Tao Yi-ching ►



A Forced March

Scaling green hillsides,
Following mountain streams,
Our Steel Company steps out smartly
At the head of the marching column.
After a forced march of six miles,
Our company commander calls out,
“Comrades, are you tired?”

“No! We’re not tired!”
Comes the quick response from our ranks.
So, wiping the sweat from shining faces
On we go in double quick time.
Without one pause, we’re up and over
The peak of Pearl Mountain in one stride.

This and the following two poems were written collectively by a group of fighters who took part in a long distance march during a military exercise.

“We’ve done another nine miles already,”
Again the company commander asks,
“Suppose we have a break now?”
The warriors answer with one shout,
“No! We’re not tired!”

Grasping our rifles tightly,
Swift as a gust of wind,
Our company thrusts its way,
Straight to the peak called Tiger’s Snout.
When we arrive at last at our billets
Out comes the regimental commander
To greet us with a smile.

“You comrades of the Steel Company
Are really worthy of your name!
But you must be tired out by now....”
The answer comes just the same,
“No! We’re not tired!”

Very satisfied and with loving care,
The commander says, all smiles,
“My dear comrades ‘Never-Tired’,
I insist you turn in right away!”

A Willing Guide

At midnight in a raging snowstorm,
A troop arrives at the foot of Taiku Ridge.
Jutting rocks and tangled brushwood block the way,
Where is the trail up to the summit?

A light flickers like a firefly. From a hut
Comes an old man, lantern in hand,
“Dear PLA comrades, come on. I’ll lead you,
I know the way across this ridge.”

“On such a night of freezing wind and snow,
We mustn’t think of asking you to guide us.”
From the old man comes a peal of laughter
While the peaks keep echoing his joy and glee.

“Old I may be, but I’m still a commune fighter.
In the past I was a guerrilla messenger,
I know this ridge like the palm of my hand.
Come! We must stretch our legs tonight.”

A red lantern guides us as we pass the crest.
Then the storm ceases and the east glows red.
What a moving picture against the driven snow,
Of armymen and people together as one family.



The Giant’s Shoes

After a mock assault and surprise attack,
Our troops bivouac at Pine Village.
Big Liu, a fighter in Squad No. 2,
Arrives with cloth shoes worn right through.

The men are concerned, but not one of them
Carries a spare pair of such big shoes.
With a broad grin Big Liu laughs and says,
“I like walking barefoot better anyway!”

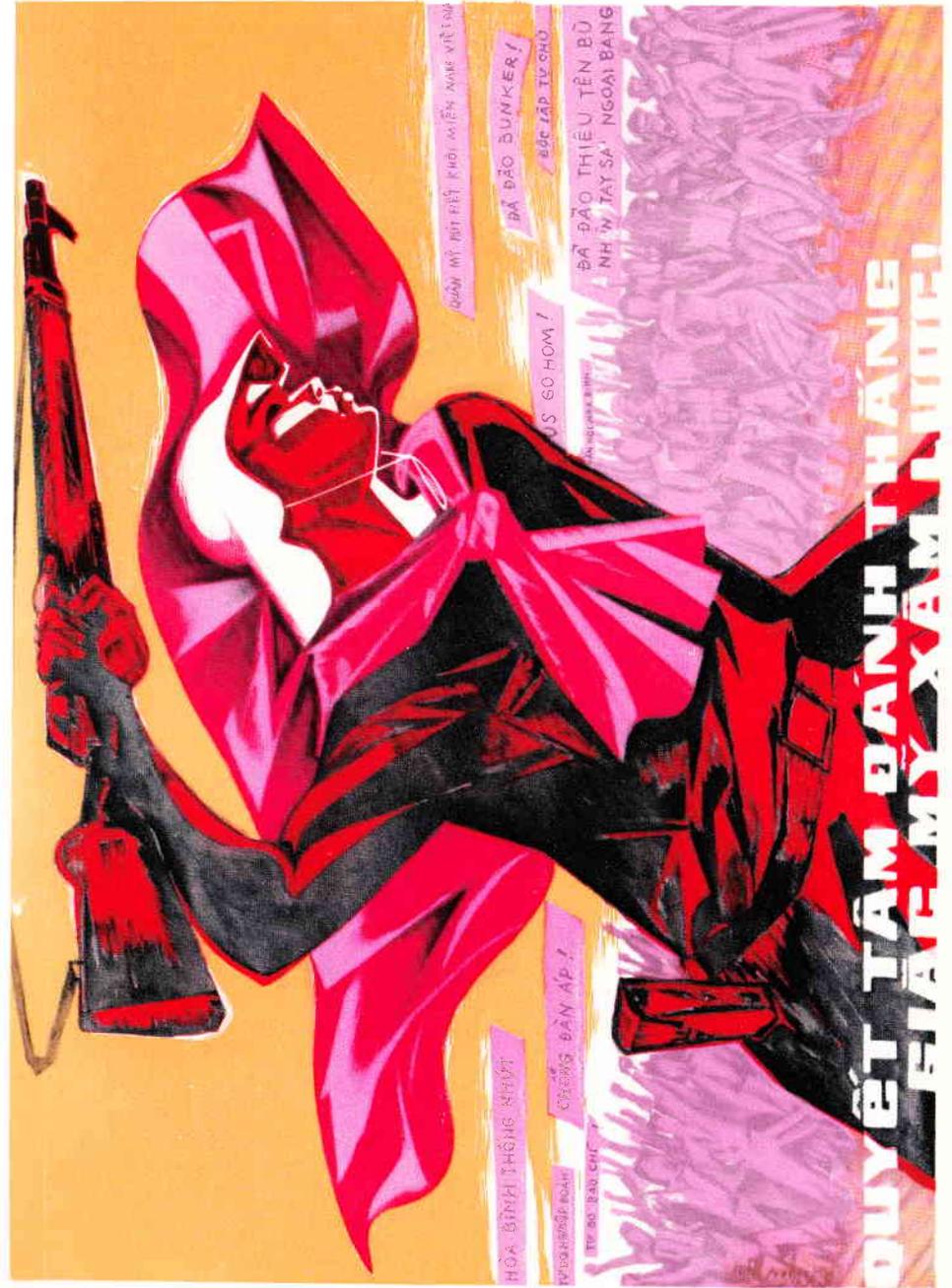
At dawn next day when the bugle sounds,
The village Party secretary arrives, carrying
A pair of brand-new shoes, each neat stitch sewn with love.
Armymen and people are as close as fish and water.

The new shoes fit Big Liu just fine.
He's very grateful. Cudgelling his brains, he asks,
"Did a scout come from the village last night,
And measure my big feet while I slept?"

The Party secretary chuckles. Waving his pipe
He solves the puzzle and explains quite easily,
"When you carried water for the villagers last night,
They measured your bare footprint in the mud!"

Determined to Defeat the U.S. Aggressors (poster)
by Do Xuan Doan ▶

This is an exhibit in the Art Exhibition on
Vietnamese Resistance to U.S. Aggression and
for National Salvation. See the comments
on page 95.



Kuo Mo-jo

Li Po and Tu Fu as Friends

EDITORS' NOTE: This is a chapter from a recent book on two influential Tang Dynasty poets *Li Po and Tu Fu* by Kuo Mo-jo who is himself a well-known poet and literary research worker. The book written during 1968 and 1969 when the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution was in full swing, was published in November 1971. It is the fruit of extensive study and careful appraisal of the two poets' works and other relevant material. Divided into two parts, each devoted to one poet, it runs into more than two hundred thousand words.

The author approached his subject from the viewpoint of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought to the best of his ability. By analyzing the two poets' family backgrounds, economic positions, political activities, ideologies and methods of writing and by comparing their differences, he makes a new assessment of them and refutes the traditional conception that Tu Fu was a better poet than Li Po.

A first of its kind on Chinese classical writers since the cultural revolution, this book has blazed a new trail for the study and critical assimilation of China's ancient cultural heritage.

Li Po (701-762) and Tu Fu (712-770) met at Loyang sometime between spring and summer in the third year of Tien Pao (744). Li

Po, then aged forty-four, had just left the capital Changan. There he had been basely slandered by Kao Li-shih, a favourite courtier of the emperor Hsuan Tsung and was dismissed from the palace with a gift of some gold. Tu Fu was then thirty-three. It was ten years since he had "sadly failed in the Imperial Examination". They were in the prime of life, talented, proud of themselves, but ignored by the court.

In the autumn of that year, they made a pleasure trip together to Liang (present-day Kaifeng) and Sung (present-day Shangchiu). Another poet Kao Shih (702-765) joined them. In his later years Tu Fu reminisced about the occasion in his poems *Dispelling My Rambling Thoughts* and *Old Excursions*. After the trip they journeyed several times to the Chi-Lu area (present-day Shantung Province), often accompanied by Kao Shih. That was the heyday of their friendship. In the poem *Call at Fan's Hermitage with Li Po* there are these lines:

I feel for you (Li Po) as a brother

.....

We drowse on the same bed while drunk

And hand in hand we go for walks.

It seems their affection went far beyond that of mere brothers.

When they were together they found it difficult to part; when they did part they lived in each other's thoughts.

When I am alone in my vacant study

I can think of no one else but you.

These are the first two lines of Tu Fu's poem *Longing for Li Po on a Winter Day*. They shared not only the same interest in life but also the same religious faith. Together they enjoyed wine and wrote poetry; together they played chess and went hunting. Together they roamed the land in quest of Taoist saints and the secret of longevity; together they made plans to practise alchemy and search for the elixir of life. Tu Fu's first poem about his poet friend *To Li Po* is a vivid portrayal of them both:

In autumn examining ourselves, we find we are still leading a floating life.
Nothing accomplished in alchemy, we feel ashamed before Ko Hung.*

*A Taoist alchemist (c. 281-341).

We drink heavily and sing madly to while away our empty days.

We are riotously proud and defiant, but who appreciates us?

Past commentators regarded this poem as a piece of advice given by Tu Fu to Li Po. Obviously this is wrong, because they overlooked the phrase "examining ourselves" in the first line and completely ignored the fact that Tu Fu also believed in the magic power of Taoism and the art of alchemy. What is more, he too was addicted to drinking, no less than Li Po. "Empty days" and "who appreciates us?" express his contempt of and indignation at the society of his time, and complain about both his own and Li Po's talents being neglected.

In his poem *Excursions in My Youth* Tu Fu described himself as a young man in these words:

Defiant of conventions, I take to wine,

Devoted to justice, I abhor wickedness.

.....

I look into the world in my drunkenness,

How petty are men of affairs!

Nothing could be more "riotously proud and defiant" than this attitude. In his poem *This Evening* he called himself a "hero" at an inn at Hsienyang when he "shouted hurrah while winning at a dice game!"

It is quite clear that Tu Fu felt great sympathy for Li Po. Of Tu Fu's 1,440 poems extant twenty mention Li Po, and of these ten are devoted exclusively to him: two poems under the title *To Li Po*, *Call at Fan's Hermitage with Li Po*, *Longing for Li Po on a Winter Day*, *Remembering Li Po on a Spring Day*, *Dreaming of Li Po* (two poems), *Longing for Li Po Who Is Far Away*, *Twenty Couplets to Li Po* and *Not Seen*. The poems in which Li Po is mentioned include *Farewell to Kung Chao-fu Who is Returning to East of the Yangtse on Excuse of Being Ill* and *Compliments to Li Po*, *The Eight Immortals of the Winecup*, *To Hsueh Hua While Drunk at the Feast Given by Su Tuan and Hsueh Fu*, *Old Excursions* and *Dispelling My Rambling Thoughts*.

The poems in which Li Po is not mentioned but only referred to are too numerous to specify. In the poem *Lamentation on Cheng Chien and Su Yuan-ming* we find these lines that refer to Li Po:

Where are the talents today?
Great writings no longer exist.

Tu Fu made this dissatisfied statement on the score that his four close friends, all eminent writers and poets of the time, had died in succession in three or four years: Wang Wei (701-761) in 761, Li Po in 762, Cheng Chien and Su Yuan-ming in 764. In another poem, *To Kao Shih-yen*, Li Po is remembered although not mentioned by name in these lines:

Dead is my friend who discussed literature with me;
In vain do I frequent wineshops, all by myself.

Kao Shih-yen was a nephew of the poet Kao Shih "who discussed literature" with Tu Fu and died in 765. This reminds us of another poem by Tu Fu, *Remembering Li Po on a Spring Day* in which these lines stand out:

When shall we again chat about literature
Minutely by a jug of wine?

Now let's compare them with these lines in *Dispelling My Rambling Thoughts*:

I think of my friends Kao Shih and Li Po
Enjoying our company in a wineshop.
Both made brilliant remarks on literature
Which brighten up my heart.

It goes without saying that Tu Fu had Li Po in mind while writing *To Kao Shih-yen*.

Again in the preface to the poem written on the twenty-first day of the first lunar month in the fifth year of Ta Li (770) *In Reply to the Late Kao Shih Who Wrote a Poem on the Seventh Day of the First Month*, Tu Fu wrote: "Among my bosom friends in the country only Li Yu, Prince of Hanchung, and Chin Chao-hsien of Chaochow are still living." By this time the poet Tsen Shen (715-770) had also died, sometime in the latter half of the twelfth month in the fourth year of Ta Li. Apparently Li Po was included among those deceased "bosom friends".

Li Po, eleven years older than Tu Fu, had the same affection for his younger friend. But he did not leave us as many poems about Tu Fu — altogether four written while they were travelling in the Chi-Lu area. There must have been poems both before and after this period, but all had been lost. Based on the number of poems they wrote to each other about their friendship, former commentators came to the conclusion that Li Po was less attached to Tu Fu. This is a sheer distortion of facts. Here I quote the four poems written by Li Po to Tu Fu.

Seeing Tu Fu off at Shihmen to the East of Lu County:

Days remaining are few after this drinking,
So we go sightseeing all over the place.
When shall we meet again at Shihmen
And once more drain the golden flask?
Autumn waves ripple on the waters of Ssu,
The sea reflects the mountain Tsulai.
Off we go on our journeys like floating clouds,
Let's now empty the goblets in our hands.

The first line indicates that they would have to part in a few days. That is why they wanted to drink together and enjoy the landscape to their hearts' content. The same idea is also implied in these lines by Tu Fu:

We drowse on the same bed while drunk,
And hand in hand we go for walks.

Likewise, Li Po's expectations

When shall we meet again at Shihmen
And once more drain the golden flask?

find expression in Tu Fu's lines:

When shall we again chat about literature
Minutely by a jug of wine?

Although Li Po did not use "brothers" in these poems, it can be seen clearly that their friendship is more than the word implies.

Here is another poem entitled *At a Farewell Drinking Party with Counsellor Tu and Censor Fan on an Autumn Day*:

I find autumn very pleasant.
 Who says it is sad?
 The setting sun floats over the mountains,
 The waters match the clear sky.
 Carrying with us the wine of Lu in a jade flask
 We stop for a drink before we part.
 We dismount under an ancient tree
 And hang our sashes on its bough.
 We play music in the bower on the river,
 The notes fly energetically in the heavenly gusts.
 Evening clouds vanishing, the waters growing dark,
 Wild geese disappearing into the greying sky,
 And thinking of our journeys ahead,
 We begin to feel utterly lost.

Something is wrong with the title, because at the time when Tu Fu was travelling with Li Po in the Chi-Lu area he held no official post. Although he later became "Tso Shih Yi" (Left Counsellor) to the emperor, Tu Fu had never been "Pu Chueh", the counsellor named in the title of the poem. That is why commentators in the past refused to identify "Pu Chueh" (Counsellor) with Tu Fu. But Tuan Cheng-shih, a Tang Dynasty scholar, in his *Miscellaneous Notes of Yuyang* made this remark: "Many people talked only of the episode about Tu Fu on the Fanko Mountain in Li Po's poem *To Examiner Tu in Jest*. But I have found another poem by the same poet entitled *At a Farewell Drinking Party with Counsellor Tu and Censor Fan on an Autumn Day*. Here I quote the first two lines and the concluding two lines as proof."

Although Tuan wrongly called Tu "Examiner", he refers unmistakably to Tu Fu. Indeed, both *To Examiner Tu in Jest* and *At a Farewell Drinking Party with Counsellor Tu and Censor Fan on an Autumn Day* were addressed to Tu Fu exclusively. Li Po certainly did not intend to address the latter poem to Fan, to whom he only wanted to *show* the poem simultaneously. But the word "show" was missing in various hand-copied or printed texts. Later commentators marked the place with the character "pu", meaning "filling", while others added another character "chueh", meaning "blank", and still later commentators interpreted the two characters combined as an official title "Pu Chueh" (Counsellor). Although the poem

was not addressed to Fan as pointed out in *Miscellaneous Notes of Yuyang*, yet we can identify him with the name mentioned in the poem *Call at Fan's Hermitage with Li Po*.

The two poems of Li Po about Tu Fu were written during the same period, in the same season and almost in the same district. Another two poems on their farewell written during the same period testify to the fact that prior to their parting they certainly did "go sightseeing all over the place". The last line of the poem, "We begin to feel utterly lost" had almost the same connotation as Tu Fu's line "I can think of no one else but you."

Let's read another poem under the title *To Tu Fu from Sand Dune City*:

Why have I come here after all?
 Alone I live in this Sand Dune City.
 Day and night I hear only autumn whispers
 From the old trees outside the city wall.
 It is no use to get drunk on the wine of Lu,
 Nor can the music of Chi soothe my nerves.
 All my thoughts flow on to you
 For ever southward like the waters of the Wen.

Sand Dune City had nothing to do with Sand Dune Terrace or Sand Dune Palace at Chulu in present-day Hopei Province. In his poem *To Hsiao Who Goes on a Trip to Central Lu and also to My Son Pochin* Li Po wrote this line, "My home is situated by the side of Sand Dune." Obviously this was where Li Po once had his residence. But he was not with Tu Fu at the time. That is why his thoughts for his poet friend flowed on ceaselessly like the waters of the Wen River. Neither the wine of Lu nor songs of Chi could console him. What friendship could be greater than this?

The fourth poem *To Tu Fu in Jest* Li Po wrote about his friend, however, was unjustly misunderstood by commentators. The phrase "in jest", by the way, was added to the title by later scholars.

Here on the top of Fanko Mountain I meet Tu Fu
 Wearing a bamboo hat in the blazing mid-day sun.
 How have you fared ever since, my thin scholar?
 I have toiled on writing poetry.

This poem was missing from the *Collected Poems of Li Po*. This accounts for the doubt as to whether Li Po ever wrote it. Meng Chi, a Tang Dynasty scholar, quoted it in his *Notes on Poets* and pointed out that it was a satire on Tu Fu's pedantry. Another Tang Dynasty scholar, Tuan Cheng-shih, made a similar remark. Their views represented the current opinion about this poem in the Tang Dynasty, and have been regarded as conclusive for a long time. The *Literary Biographies* in the *History of Tang* has this to say:

Among the poets of the later years of Tien Pao, Tu Fu and Li Po were equally famous. But Li Po, while proud of his unconventional, unrestrained style, ridiculed Tu Fu as a pedantic poet. Hence the poem *To Tu Fu in Jest*.

Nothing is more unjust than this statement. The last two lines of the poem have been wrongly construed. They are not satirical at all but represent a dialogue between the two poets. To be precise, the third line is Li Po's question while the fourth is Tu Fu's answer. The meaning is: "May I ask why you look so thin?" "Because I have been working hard writing poetry." Former scholars interpreted such a friendly conversation showing Li Po's great concern for his friend as satire. What a distortion of facts!

True, Tu Fu worked hard on his poetry. This has been confirmed by the two lines from his *Poem Written While the River Was in Flood*:

I am addicted to the composing of fine poetry.
I'll not die happy if I fail to produce good lines.

Certainly he worked laboriously! He would work himself to death in order to produce a fine line. In *Twelve Poems to Disperse My Afflictions* he had these lines:

I must remember by heart all of the two Hsiehs' lines
And work tirelessly to learn from Yin and Ho.*

In order to write good poetry himself he read the works of the two poets Hsieh Ling-yun and Hsieh Tiao over and over again and learned from Yin Keng and Ho Hsun how to work hard. "Working hard" is what he understood of himself, of ancient poets as well as his contemporaries.

*All these four poets lived in the Southern Dynasty (420-589).

Your verses are fresh and pure, true to poetry,
From them I know how tirelessly you must have worked.

These two lines taken from Tu Fu's *To the Hermit Juan* illustrate how deeply Tu Fu was aware of the great pains a poet must take in his composition. "Taking great pains" must result in the loss of weight or "becoming thin". Again, in the poem *Written While Ascending the Bell Tower of Ssu-an Temple in the Dusk and Shown to Pei Ti*, Tu Fu wrote this line: "I know you have been losing weight writing poetry." It is a most adequate footnote to the lines "How have you fared ever since, my thin scholar?" and "I have toiled on writing poetry."

The above quotations provide enough material for us to understand the implications of "working hard" and "becoming thin". Yet such a serious and intimate poem as the one by Li Po has been regarded as "a satire" or "in jest", to ridicule Tu Fu's "pedantry"! This is a gross injustice not only to Li Po but also to Tu Fu.

In the Tang Dynasty imperial civil service examinations were held in poetry writing. To lose weight because of writing poetry was by no means disgraceful. Han Yu (768-824), a well-known Tang Dynasty essayist, in an epitaph he wrote for his friend the poet Meng Chiao (751-814), described the poet as having "pricked his eyes and heart" and "upturned his stomach and kidney" in his search for the right words for his poems. This is what writers of later eras termed "draining the heart of its blood".

Li Po was an unconventional romantic poet. But he was no less painstaking in poetry writing. The first poem of his *Fifty-nine Poems Written in the Classical Style* begins with these lines:

No longer can we read sublime poetry as that in the *Book of Odes*,*
Old as I am, I would keep on writing, but to whom?

and ends with these lines:

My ambition is to edit and write poems
Whose brilliance may go down the millennia.

*Confucius edited *Book of Odes*, the first standard work of poetry in Chinese literature.

I will strive to attain the heights of Confucius,
Who stopped writing only after the *chilin's** death.

From these lines we can see that Li Po was very serious about his work and determined to realize his ambition.

In a word, *To Tu Fu in Jest* is neither a "satire", nor written "in jest", still less a fabrication by later poets. It is at once affectionate and moving, testifying to the great friendship Li Po cherished for Tu Fu. The same idea is conveyed in the line "In autumn examining ourselves, we find we are still leading a floating life" in Tu Fu's *To Li Po*. They fit in with each other perfectly.

Li Po and Tu Fu did not stay long in the Chi-Lu area as travelling companions. In autumn, in the fourth year of Tien Pao, Li Po went south and Tu Fu west. In his *Remembering Li Po on a Spring Day*, Tu Fu wrote these lines:

I am like trees in spring north of the Wei,
You wander like evening clouds east of the Yangtse.

This is a factual account of their circumstances at the time. They never had an opportunity of meeting again later.

During this separation which lasted thirteen or fourteen years, they lived through great upheavals caused by the rebellions of An Lu-shan and Shih Ssu-ming's armies.** Then Li Po was out of favour with the emperor and exiled to Yehlang (near Tsunyi, Kweichow Province). This gave rise to a great change in Tu Fu's attitude to Li Po. From admiring and longing Tu Fu turned to sympathizing with and sorrowing for his friend. In the autumn of the second year of Chien Yuan (759), Tu Fu wrote *Dreaming of Li Po* (two poems). The concluding four lines read like this:

Who says Heaven's net*** is wide spread?
It only entangles you in your old age!

*It was believed that the capture of the legendary animal the *chilin* coincided with the completion of the immortal work *Spring and Autumn Annals* by Confucius and thus symbolized the end of his life.

**Frontier guards which revolted in the fourteenth year of Tien Pao (755) and devastated the country for seven consecutive years.

***Chinese metaphor for "justice".

Fame may last thousands of years,
But for you nothing remains but oblivion.

He feared that Li Po might die with his wrongs unredressed and his name obliterated for ever from memory.

Tu Fu at the time lived in Chinchow, an out of the way place cut off from the outside world. He did not know what actually had happened to Li Po. As a matter of fact, when he wrote these poems Li Po had been pardoned already and was on his way back from exile, enjoying the scenery on Lake Tungting. Another poem *Longing for Li Po Who Is Far Away* composed almost at the same time shows a similar lack of information and is infused with still greater melancholy:

Cold wind blows up from the world's end.
What is your state of mind at the moment?
When shall the wild geese bring me news of you?
Flooded are the autumn lakes and rivers!
Great writings seldom go together with good fortune,
Vampires and monsters always lie in wait for victims.
Perhaps you share the same thought with the wronged soul*
And are communicating with him in the Milo?

Tu Fu imagined that Li Po, on his way to exile in Yehlang, might follow the route westward through the northern part of Hunan, where his friend, while passing River Milo in which Chu Yuan lay drowned might have cast a poem into the river for the "wronged soul" of the ancient poet. Although this was not the case, Li Po at the time was certainly somewhere near Yuehyang in the vicinity of the Milo. Actually he was sailing on Lake Tungting enjoying the landscape. He even wrote a very romantic line to describe his state of mind on the occasion:

How much would I slash off Chun Hill!

When later on Tu Fu received authentic information about Li Po, he wrote differently about his friend. In *Twenty Couplets to Li Po*, altogether in two hundred characters, Tu Fu practically wrote a bio-

*Referring to Chu Yuan, a well-known ancient patriotic poet who, slandered by wicked ministers to his sovereign, drowned himself in River Milo.

graphy of his poet friend, about whom he knew not only the life but also the mentality. It provides us with valuable material for the understanding of their friendship. I try to explain it here stanza by stanza.

First stanza:

Several years ago there was an audacious man
Who called you an incarnation of god from heaven.
Every word from your pen arouses great storms,
Every line moves saints and spirits alike to tears.
Your fame has grown rapidly ever since,
From obscurity you emerge to the world's attention.

"Several years ago" I believe refers to the eighteenth year of Kai Yuan when Li Po reached the age of thirty and was visiting the capital Changan for the first time. This was the year Li Po referred to in his *Letter to Han of Chingschow* "At the age of thirty my writings in criticism of ministers and courtiers have become known". "Audacious man" refers to the poet Ho Chih-chang who called himself "an audacious man from Ssu Ming". He ranked first in "the Eight Rambling Immortals of the Winecup". Su Ching, another of the "Immortals", died in the twenty-second year of Kai Yuan. Consequently their "rambles" must have taken place before that year.

Meng Chi in his *Notes on Poets* (Section III, *On Sublimation*) had this to say about Li Po:

When Li Po came to the capital from Szechuan, at first he stayed at an inn. Impressed by his fame, Ho Chih-chang went to see him and was his first visitor. He was stunned by Li Po's unconventional appearance, so he asked the poet if he would show him some of his writings. Li Po presented his poem *Difficult Journey to Szechuan*. Before he had finished it, Ho Chih-chang exclaimed time and again in admiration. He ended by calling Li Po an incarnation of the god of poetry from heaven. He bartered his turtle-shaped official golden badge for wine and sat drinking with the poet through the night until they were utterly intoxicated. There was hardly a day that they did not meet. After that Li Po's reputation spread far and wide.

This passage corroborates what Tu Fu said in his poem about the poet, and is most reliable. Here I may just as well quote a few words from Fan Chuan-cheng's *New Epitaph* to verify Meng Chi's statement:

Ho Chih-chang read the poet's *Song from a Crow's Perch* and sang it. He remarked: This poem can move saints and spirits alike to tears.

This comment is identical with these lines of Tu Fu:

Every word from your pen arouses great storms,
Every line moves saints and spirits alike to tears.

The first line refers to the *Difficult Journey to Szechuan* while the second to *Song from a Crow's Perch*. Both Meng's and Fan's observations supported each other.

Many scholars differed in their interpretations of *Difficult Journey to Szechuan*. Some maintained that it was a satire on Yen Wu, others on Changchou Chien-chiung, still others on the emperor Hsuan Tsung's flight to Szechuan. But they are all guesswork. Hu Chen-heng in his *On Li Po's Poetry* had this remark to make:

Difficult Journey to Szechuan was written in the style of ancient duets. During the Liang and Chen Dynasties the style was still in vogue and many poets imitated it. This type of song does not necessarily have a political point to make....

Li Po's poem was written sometime between the reign of Kai Yuan and that of Tien Pao.... It was improvised on the inspiration of the moment and made no particular point about current affairs.

On the whole this remark is correct except the assertion that the poem was written sometime between the reign of Kai Yuan and that of Tien Pao. It should be a product of Li Po's youth, sometime before the eighteenth year of Kai Yuan, a time when Li Po showed his "rare gift and elegance" (Su Ting's comment on Li Po at the age of twenty). The poem describes the hazards of the journey in northeastern Szechuan, but does not have a single word about the splendour of the landscape in the southeast. This shows that Li Po's knowledge about Szechuan was limited.

Second stanza:

Your talented writings receive special favour,
Indeed they spread far and wide as masterpieces.
In the imperial barge you sail sightseeing till evening
And you win a newly embroidered silk gown.
You visit the inner hall of the palace,
Trailing a large train of purple clouds.

This stanza describes Li Po's second entry into the palace which took place in the first year of Tien Pao (742). He received special favour from the emperor Hsuan Tsung who gave him the post of Literary Attendant. During this period Li Po wrote a number of poems about his life in court: How he was summoned by the emperor to draw up edicts in the inner hall of the palace, how he kept the sovereign company sailing in the imperial barge on moonlit nights or wrote poems that were without parallel in his day.

As to the "newly embroidered silk gown" the *Biography of Sung Chih-wen* in the *History of Tang* has this to say:

Empress Wu Tse-tien came to the Lungmen in Loyang. She ordered her courtiers to write poems to celebrate the occasion. Tungfang Chiu, Historical Recorder of the state, was the first to finish one. The empress awarded him an embroidered silk gown. But when Sung Chih-wen presented his verse, the empress found it much better, so she withdrew the gift from Tungfang Chiu and conferred it on Sung.

Li Po was so favoured by the emperor he became an "intellectual wrapped in purple clouds", with a train of sycophants paying him homage. Li Po described it in these lines:

In the old days they laughed at me for my humbleness and poverty,
But today they crowd around me to solicit favour and friendship.

(*To My Cousin Parting for a Long Journey*)

"In the old days" refers to the eighteenth year of Kai Yuan.

Third stanza:

You returned to ordinary life by the emperor's permission
And came to see me, all the more intimate
Your desire to retire is at last granted,
Your integrity maintained, though out of favour.
We chat fervently about fellow hermits,
And the fond wine brings out our latent naivete.
Drunk, we dance at night in the garden of Liang,
Singing, we stroll on spring days along the Ssu waters.

The emperor was influenced by the wicked slander of his favourite courtiers and dismissed Li Po from the palace with a grant of gold. Tu Fu tried to smooth over this incident by saying that Li Po looked upon his high position in court as no more than floating dust and

that, although out of favour with the emperor, the poet retired calmly and gracefully preserving his integrity. Then Tu Fu went on to elaborate, saying that because of this incident they could meet at Loyang and renew their friendship — a desire which could not have been realized otherwise.

Tu Fu also relished the occasions when they could chat at random about everything under the sun. And he felt so pleased that Li Po appreciated his candour and simplicity. They were both fond of wine and in their cups they returned to their original frank and artless selves. While tipsy they danced under the moon in Liang's garden — this actually happened when they were on a sightseeing tour in Liang and Sung. And they roamed along the river Ssu in the spring breeze, singing to their hearts' content — this was what they did when they journeyed together in the Chi-Lu area.

Fourth stanza:

You feel unhappy about the waste of your talent.
The way is not straight, and virtue lacks support.
You remain an obscure hermit although as bright as Mi Heng*
And live a scholar's life, destitute as Yuan Hsien.**
In your quest for such simple food as sorghum and corn,
All you get is the pearl-barley scandal.

Here Tu Fu stressed Li Po's unusual gift and regretted that his friend found no opportunity to give it full play, because human life was such that few people would help talent. So Li Po had to remain as poor as Yuan Hsien, though his endowments matched Mi Heng. He had to leave his seclusion to find a post that would provide a living. But before his modest wish could be satisfied, wild scandals were circulated against him. One case was that of Ma Yuan (B.C.14—A.D.49) a Han Dynasty general, who brought a cartload of pearl-barley from the south but was charged with receiving bribes of pearls.

It was very likely that many intellectual-officials at the time slandered Li Po as having received heavy bribes from the prince of Yung,***

*A well-known scholar (173-198) of Late Han Dynasty.

**A hermit of Spring and Autumn Period (770-475 B.C.).

***The Tang Dynasty emperor Hsuan Tsung's son under whom Li Po served for a short period as an official.

and this is probably why Tu Fu mentioned the episode about Ma Yuan. Li Po also tried to exonerate himself in one of his poems:

The five hundred ounces of gold granted me
I give up as smoke and cloud.
Though I refuse both the gold and post,
My reward is exile to Yehlang.

(To Magistrate Wei)

Here Li Po particularly pointed out the amount of gold given him and his refusal to accept it. Undoubtedly he was trying to dispel the slanders heaped on him. On the other hand, Tu Fu wrote a different version, saying that Li Po left his seclusion to seek an official post for no other purpose than to make a living. However well-intentioned Tu Fu might have been, Li Po, so proud and so recalcitrant, would certainly not feel very thankful.

Fifth stanza:

Oppressively hot are the Five Ridges.
In exile you go to Three Perils.
How long will you have to wait for the *foo* bird?
Not a few tears must you shed for the *chilin*.

In these lines Tu Fu was referring to Li Po's exile in Yehlang. Five Ridges were situated in present-day Kwangtung Province, a place of exile in the Tang Dynasty, while Three Perils (*San Wei*) is to be found twenty *li* southeast of present-day Tunhuang. The *Book of Hsun* in the ancient classic *Shang Shu* characterizes the place in this way:

Kungkung was exiled to Yuchow, Huang Tou banished to Chungshan, San Miao driven to Three Perils, and Kun executed at Yushan. With these four arch-fiends suppressed the entire world offered allegiance.

By connecting Li Po with Three Perils Tu Fu must have irritated his poet friend, because in this way he unwittingly compared Li Po with San Miao, one of the "four arch-fiends". Here Tu Fu certainly tried to produce a couplet balanced with antithesis by equating the character "five" with "three". But he forgot the poem was addressed to Li Po. No matter how liberal-minded and unconventional Li Po might be, he could not help but be hurt.

The "foo bird" is taken from the story about Chia Yi.* When he was banished to Changsha to be a tutor to the Prince of Changsha he wrote a *fu*, an essay in verse, *On the Foo Bird* to console himself. The *foo* was supposed to be an inauspicious bird, but it could tell fortunes. In the essay Chia Yi described how he asked the bird to tell his fortune. It gave an optimistic reply couched in metaphysical language full of Taoist ideas. Here Tu Fu obviously likened Li Po to Chia Yi.

The *chilin* has its origin in the story about Confucius who stopped writing his great work *Spring and Autumn Annals* when he heard that a *chilin*, a miraculous mythological animal, had been captured. According to the *Annals* in Kungyang's edition, Duke Ai of Lu "in the spring of the fourteenth year went west on a hunting expedition and killed a *chilin*". When Confucius heard the news tears broke out in his eyes. The *chilin* was regarded as a "benevolent animal" and supposed to appear only at a time when universal peace reigned under the rule of a sage king. Apparently the miraculous animal had come out at a wrong time, and thus lost its life. Saddened by this unhappy event, Confucius ceased once and for all the writing of his classical work *Spring and Autumn Annals*. The story is repeated more or less in the same vein in Kuliang's edition. But Tso Chiu-ming's edition recorded it differently, to the effect that Confucius did not stop writing the book "until his death" in the fourth month of the sixteenth year in the reign of Duke Ai of Lu. As to the reason why Tu Fu introduced this story into the poem, I will give the explanation in a later passage.

Sixth stanza:

Su Wu longed to return to Han.
How could Huang Kung serve the ruler of Chin?
The sweet wine was declined at the feast,
A statement came from the prince's dungeon.
Now that you have been chastised by law,
Who made the fresh proposal now?

The first four lines allude to historical facts which, however, did not quite suit Li Po's case. The first line purports to say that

*Writer and thinker living from 200-168 B.C.

Li Po, like the general Su Wu of the Han Dynasty who was taken prisoner by the Huns, had always wanted to leave Prince Yung. The second line refers to Hsia Huang-kung, one of the "four old men of Mount Shang" who refused to serve the conqueror emperor of Chin. It is hinted here that Li Po was originally reluctant to enter into service with Prince of Yung. One can see at once how incongruous it is to compare Li Lin and Prince Yung with the Huns and the emperor of Chin.

The third line is based on a story about Mu Sheng, a classicist of the Western Han Dynasty. Prince Yuan of Chu, grandfather of Liu Wu, Prince of Chu, had great respect for Mu Sheng. The latter never drank. So whenever Prince Yuan invited him to a feast, some sweet drink symbolizing wine was always placed before him. When Liu Wu succeeded to the throne, he followed the family tradition by doing the same. Once, however, he forgot it. Mu Sheng said to himself: The prince no longer esteems me, it's time for me to quit. And he left with the excuse that he was ill. Tu Fu used this story to illustrate that Li Po had long since had the idea of leaving Prince Yung.

The fourth line is also based on a story of Western Han Dynasty. Prince Hsiao of Liang put the scholar Tsou Yang to jail. The latter wrote the prince a letter from prison to exonerate himself. It was couched in a classical style, refined and full of feeling — a rare piece of classical literature extant today. The prince released Tsou Yang at once after reading the letter. Tu Fu, while writing this line, obviously had in mind such poems as *To Minister Tsui Huan*, *A Song of Indignation*, and *In a Mood of Great Sadness*, which Li Po composed in jail at Hsunyang. Li Po recovered his freedom through the intervention of Censor Sung Jo-ssu.

In the last two lines Tu Fu brought up the question that as Li Po, although guilty of wrongdoing, had received due punishment according to the law of the time and the case had been cleared up by Tsui Huan and Sung Jo-ssu, who then had made the proposal to send the poet into exile? Later editors, failing to understand rightly the line "Who made the fresh proposal now?", interpreted the word "proposal" (yü) into "justice" of the same sound, with the result that

the line is read as "Who will stand up to voice justice?", which is wrong.

Last stanza:

Growing old, you hum your new verse under the autumn moon.
Newly recuperated, you saunter along the river in the evening.
Don't complain about the emperor's lack of favour,
I will sail to heaven to find out for you the reason.

In the first two lines we can see that Li Po, already a frail old man, deliberated on his new poems under the moon in autumn, or during his gradual recovery from illness when he occasionally took a walk along the river in the evenings. In the last two lines Tu Fu advised Li Po not to bear a grudge against the court. He volunteered to go to heaven (meaning the court), to find a way out for him, or rather they would go together. Tu Fu was very vague here. It seems that he would like to ask for instructions from the emperor or leave everything to the whim of fate.

Earlier commentators maintained that this poem was written in the second year of Chien Yuan (759) at Chinchow. But its content proves to the contrary. All the poems Tu Fu wrote at Chinchow such as *Dreaming of Li Po*, *Longing for Li Po Who Is Far Away* and others show his lack of information about his friend. But the present poem is different. It gives us a graphic picture of Li Po's life and mentality at the time, about which Tu Fu seemed thoroughly familiar.

Growing old, you hum your new verse under the autumn moon.
Newly recuperated, you saunter along the river in the evening.

These lines describe how Li Po was struggling with illness at Tangtu, just a year prior to his death in the first year of Pao Ying (762). The poem was written undoubtedly in the autumn of that year when Tu Fu was in Tzuchow. His brother Tu Chan, living in Tu Fu's "thatched cottage" at Chengtu, often travelled between Chengtu and Tzuchow. Tu Fu must have heard all the necessary news about the outside world from him.

We can also deduce from the poem, which was addressed to Li Po, that they often exchanged writings with each other. Of course

this communication was possible only when Li Po had a fixed abode. Judging by the circumstances Li Po must have written to Tu Fu immediately after he had settled down at Tangtu in the second year of Shang Yuan (761). Otherwise Tu Fu could not have known so well about Li Po's life, thought and plans to quit Prince of Yung. This is the only logical conclusion we can draw.

Now we can have a correct explanation about the line "Not a few tears must you shed for the *chilin*" in the fifth stanza. Li Po must have sent to Tu Fu his first poem in *Fifty-nine Poems Written in the Classical Tradition* — and of course other writings as well. I have quoted the last four lines of this poem. I may as well repeat them here:

My ambition is to edit and write poems
Whose brilliance may go down the millennia.
I will strive to attain the heights of Confucius
Who stopped writing only after the *chilin's* death.

The last line fits like hand in glove with Tu Fu's line "Not a few tears must you shed for the *chilin*". It was no mere coincidence.

Since it was "addressed" to him sometime before his death Li Po must have read the poem. What did he think about it? In my opinion Li Po could hardly be pleased with *all* the lines. The line "In exile you go to 'Three Perils'", as pointed out above, has flaws in its metaphor. But there is a still greater blunder which must have greatly disappointed Li Po. To have been basely slandered before the emperor during the first years of Tien Pao was a great misfortune for Li Po. But Tu Fu took this unhappy incident lightly by saying, "You returned to ordinary life by the emperor's permission." It is likely that Tu Fu wanted to show his "loyalty" to the emperor by not complaining about the court, but he is certainly too "kind" to bad people by not condemning such "base slanderers" and "base courtiers" as Kao Li-shih and Chang Chi.

Li Po left the mountain Lu Shan and accompanied the Prince of Yung on a tour of the south. Although this aroused many unjustifiable accusations, it could hardly be regarded as a crime. Pi Jih-hsiu in his *Poems of Seven Loves* rightly ignored this point. Li Po was behaving in accordance with the emperor Hsuan Tsung's idea, that is making use of the military strength of the Prince of Yung to wipe

out the invading hordes in order to save the people. But under Tu Fu's pen Li Po comes out as a man inviting punishment by attempting to get an official post for a living. This must have been a gross injustice to Li Po.

Now we can understand the real meaning of the last poem of the *Fifty-nine Poems Written in the Classical Style* by Li Po. It reads:

All birds crowd in prosperous trees
While poor fish keep to drying ponds.
Alas, you friend who have lost favour,
What good counsel have you in mind for me?

The first two lines are easily understandable. People in general (ordinary birds) tend to gather around men of power and wealth while destitute folk (poor fish) remain without resources for ever; in other words, people of the same sort always band together, each kind struggling for their separate future. Here the poet hints at the inconstancy of friendship — and this is the focal point of the poem. The last two lines may be paraphrased like this:

Ah, you the same destitute wanderer show such concern for me,
Tell me, then, what advice you wish to give me?

Isn't man "who has lost favour" a reference to Tu Fu? Li Po must have written these lines after receiving Tu Fu's poem. They are a testament of Li Po's disappointment. The great friend he expected Tu Fu to be is no longer the one who had been so attached to him many years before, although Tu Fu was in the same destitute position as himself.

The last poem Tu Fu wrote about Li Po is *Not Seen*. There is a note attached to it: "I have not received any news from Li Po lately." It was probably composed at Tzuchow in the second year of Kuang Teh (763), the next year after Li Po's death. Li Po might have been so disappointed after reading Tu Fu's *Twenty Couplets to Li Po* that he ceased to communicate with him. It is also possible that Li Po, being severely ill, could no longer write to his friend. Tu Fu's *Not Seen* expresses the author's great sympathy for Li Po:

I have not seen Li Po for long.
What a pity that he had to feign madness.

Men of affairs wished to kill him,
I alone cherish his talent.
Swiftly he produces a thousand poems,
Drifted by fate he buries his sorrow in wine.
Once he studied at his retreat in the Kuang Hills.
Can he now, with his hair greying, return there?

The phrase "to feign madness" is an unusual revelation. Li Po in his time might have been called "mad" by scandalmongers. That is why Tu Fu spoke in defence of him, insisting that his friend simply feigned madness. Indeed, no trace of "madness" can be found in any of Li Po's writings and poems. In his *Song of Laughter* Li Po replied to this accusation of madness in this way:

I laugh at it! I laugh at it!
Ning Wu-tzu, Chu Mai-chen,
Each with a load of firewood on his back,
Singing songs to the beats on the horn-cup.
You do not recognize me face to face.
Aren't you even worse than the man of "feigned madness"?

This is a box-on-the-ear for the slanderers and their followers. Li Po was not "mad". Only those who did not know him regarded him as "mad". Since Su Tung-po of the Sung Dynasty, many people have denied this poem and another one *The Song of Sorrow* as Li Po's work. This is a completely incorrect verdict. These two and some others like *My Thoughts While Drinking Alone in a Cold Night* and *A Reply to Wang* are a thorough revolt against the convention of trying to be "kind but moderate and restrained" in the presentation of feelings in verse making. They reveal to us the positive aspect of Li Po. The above verdict was undoubtedly passed under the influence of the ghostly old dogmas in poetry writing.

The line "Men of affairs wished to kill him" provides a valuable clue to the understanding of Li Po's situation at the time. It discloses the attitude the rulers and officialdom in west Szechuan took towards Li Po. Tu Fu's effusive outburst of sympathy for Li Po under such circumstances is a sure sign of his friendship for the poet. But he only sympathized with Li Po's gift. He did nothing to clear up the injustice to his friend. To him Li Po had to feign "madness", be-

cause he had committed a crime that deserved capital punishment, although Tu Fu believed his friend should be saved.

Sympathy of this kind could go no further. That is why in his poetry Tu Fu limited himself to praising Li Po's swiftness, and stressed Li Po's solitude — his extreme loneliness in life shorn of friends and society — and his indulgence in wine as a means of escape. All Tu Fu could offer his friend was the suggestion to return to his old retreat in the Great Kuang Hills, in his native county Chang-ming, where he could pass his old age buried among his books.

Judging by all the evidence we have at hand Tu Fu's evaluation of Li Po falls far short of the standard Li Po thought he had attained. In his appraisal of poetry, for instance, Li Po looked down on the poetic style of the Six Dynasties.

Since days in the reign of Chien An
The prized showiness counts for nothing.
(First poem in the *Fifty-nine Poems Written in the Classical Style*)

This is how Li Po assessed the poetry of the Six Dynasties, although he held the poets of that period such as Tao Yuan-ming, Hsieh Ling-yun and Hsieh Tiao in esteem.

On the contrary Tu Fu valued highly the prose and poetic works of that period. To him Yin Keng, Ho Hsun, Pao Chao (414-466) and Yu Hsin (513-581) were great poets. He qualified Li Po's best lines as "having in most cases attained the height of Yin Keng" (*Call at Fan's Hermitage with Li Po*). Or he likened Li Po's poetry to that of Yu Hsin and Pao Chao in this way:

Fresh and pure, comparable to Yu Hsin;
Elevated and gallant, in the style of Pao Chao.
(*Remembering Li Po on a Spring Day*)

In the poem *To Hsueh Hua While Drunk at the Feast Given by Su Tuan and Hsueh Fu* Tu Fu juxtaposed Li Po with Hsueh Hua in connection with Ho Hsun, Liu Hsiao-chuo, Shen Yo, Hsueh Tiao and Pao Chao, all well-known writers of the Six Dynasties. But this Hsueh Hua, whom Tu Fu regarded as Li Po's equal and superior to all the other writers mentioned above, has not left a single poem. The praise showered upon him by Tu Fu must have been made in a fit of drunk-

eness. But he always expressed the same view in his judgement of Li Po's poetry, putting him on a par with the poets of the Six Dynasties.

In this respect Tu Fu's *Six Poems Written in Jest* is of great interest to us. It is a criticism on poetry, and in my opinion mostly on Li Po's poetry. The first poem praises Yu Hsin, while the second and the third eulogize the "four eminent early Tang poets" — Wang Po, Yang Chiung, Lu Chao-lin and Lo Ping-wang. Strange as it may seem, these poets never appear in Li Po's poems extant today. The fourth poem represents Tu Fu's appraisal of his contemporaries. I may as well quote it here:

Praised be these poets for their talent and ability.
Who among our contemporaries can stand out like them?
All we see today are kingfishers among *lan chao* flowers,*
Never one that can spear whales in the deep seas.

"These poets" apparently refer to Yu Hsin and "the four eminent poets" — Wang Po, Yang Chiung, Lu Chao-lin and Lo Ping-wang. Tu Fu believed that no later poets had ever surpassed Yu Hsin and "the four eminent poets". He was all the more in doubt whether any one among his contemporaries had achieved the similar prominence.

According to some literary critics the *Six Poems Written in Jest* were composed by Tu Fu in the first year of Pao Ying. Li Po died in the eleventh month of that year. In other words, he was still alive when the poems were written. It therefore follows that in Tu Fu's eyes, Li Po was not an "eminent poet", and no other poets could match Yu Hsin and "the four eminent poets" either. The best they could produce was only something similar to kingfishers among the *lan chao* flowers. As to masterpieces endowed with the power that could spear whales in the deep seas they still had to be anticipated.

In the fifth poem Tu Fu insists that he himself must work harder in order to attain the height of Chu Yuan and Sung Yu and not lag behind the literati of the Liang and Chen Dynasties. In the sixth poem he advised his fellow poets to learn from the ancients, to whom they must pay due respect.

**Campsis Grandiflora*, a common Chinese flower.

Although Tu Fu did not name Li Po in these six poems, I believe he wrote them with his poet friend in mind who was very contemptuous of the prose and poetic writings of the Six Dynasties. In order not to hurt Li Po's feelings Tu Fu added the phrase "in jest" to the title. Actually he was in earnest. These poems set a high standard for himself. But Li Po's demand on himself was not low either. In his poem *A Song to Scholar Wang of Linchiang* he modestly describes himself in these terms:

How I wish to lean against the sky over the sea
And down my lethal sword on the whales!

This is tantamount to saying that he still did not have the power to "spear whales in the deep seas".

Tu Fu promised to work diligently and to "climb to the height of Chu Yuan and Sung Yu in order to match them". He admired Sung Yu and regarded the poet as his teacher. To praise him he placed him side by side with the poet Chu Yuan. As a matter of fact Sung Yu's writings were no model, because Li Po who had already surpassed them never regarded this ancient poet as an eminent one. The first two lines of his poem *At a Farewell Drinking Party with Counsellor Tu and Censor Fan on an Autumn Day* are opposed to Sung Yu. They read:

I find autumn very pleasant.
Who says it is sad?

It is Sung Yu who described autumn in a poem as a depressing season — a description which won Tu Fu's admiration. Tu Fu echoed Sung Yu in his poem *Thoughts on Ancient Relics* with these lines:

The falling leaves made me understand better Sung Yu's sadness.
Elegant, refined, his poems are my models.

From this we can see how Tu Fu differed from Li Po.

As to Chu Yuan's accomplishments, neither Li Po nor Tu Fu aspired to reach his status. Tu Fu was fond of writing poems in regular patterns and with antithesis. Yuan Chen, a Tang Dynasty critic, in his *Epitaph for Tu Fu* praised this form of verse in these terms:

It matches ancient poetry in elegance and refinement and assimilates the best of Shen Chuan-chi and Sung Chih-wen. Its style excels that of Su Wu and Li Lin, its power overshadows Tsao Chih and Liu Chen. In loftiness it surpasses Yen Yen-nien and Hsieh Ling-yun, and it can be compared with Hsu Ling and Yu Hsin for fluency and beauty. It has absorbed all the best qualities of the ancient poets and yet preserved a unique charm of its own. . . .

Ever since poets came into existence in this world there has been not a single one to compare with Tu Fu.

No praise could be higher for a poet. The most interesting thing is that among the ancient poets this critic never mentioned Chu Yuan. Among the "contemporaries", however, he did not miss Li Po.

At the time Li Po, a native from Shantung, came to the fore with his amazing writings. People coupled his name with Tu Fu, calling them Li-Tu. He wrote poems and songs in the classical folk tradition, narrating and describing things in a tempestuous and unbridled style free from all conventions. But compared with Tu Fu he is slightly inferior. The scope of Tu Fu's composition is wide and his use of antithesis and rhymes varied, extending to over a thousand words or several hundred in the least. Tu Fu's style is lofty and unrestrained, full of emotion and artistry, knitted into a form that conforms to poetic rules and yet stands above the ordinary. Li Po could hardly expect to be compared with Tu Fu technically, still less in intrinsic quality.

Such praise of Tu Fu and such depreciation of Li Po became the definitive criterion for criticism of both poets among feudal intellectual-officials. As a matter of fact, the patterned verse in regular rhymes and rhythms adapted by Tu Fu is simply an offshoot of the euphuistic prose of the Six Dynasties, of which the eight-legged essay of the Chin Dynasty is a variety. Feudal rulers set this type of writing as a standard for the imperial examinations. It is in fact a kind of literary game, in which words are piled up and laden with bookish allusions. It is therefore entirely divorced from the people, "standing above the ordinary" as Yuan Chen put it. To Li Po who had deliberately tried to break down literary conventions, it was exactly the kind of stuff he refused to write. Tu Fu, on the other hand, indulged in this game in his old age, to while away his idle days and to show off. Yuan Chen, too, became addicted to it. It was the Tang Dynasty essayist and poet Han Yu who main-

tained an unbiased attitude. I may as well quote the first six lines of his poem *To Chang Chi*:

Li Po and Tu Fu's writings will live for ever,
Shedding brilliance thousands of miles away.
Foolish are those petty persons
Who vainly attempt to slander them.
They are like gnats that try to shake a giant tree,
Ridiculous and ignorant of their own abilities.

Here Han Yu put Li Po on a par with Tu Fu. To those who used to belittle Li Po and praise Tu Fu this is tantamount to raising Li Po above Tu Fu. But whatever status these two poets may be given, their "brilliance" today is by no means dazzling. Li Po's poems written in the tradition of ancient folk song (*yueh fu*) and "freed from conventions in verse making", in all fairness, have much more poetic quality and vitality and are much closer to the people than those of Tu Fu which conform to the "verse patterns and rhyming schemes". Indeed, Tu Fu's best poems are not among those of euphuistic patterns which he had taken such great pains to write.

The extraordinary thing, however, is that after the establishment of the People's Republic of China, many literary historians are still shackled by the criterion set by Yuan Chen, of belittling Li Po and praising Tu Fu. They have passed unfair judgement on these two poets.

A few years ago a new theory came to the fore regarding which of them was the better poet. Here I shall give an example, together with my remarks about it:

Chien Ko was a hazardous but strategic place for, relying on this, warlords could hold a piece of territory as their private property, plaguing the people there. He (Tu Fu) was very angry about this: He heaped curses on god and vowed that he would slash it off from the earth:

I must blame the Almighty
And slash off this strategic place from earth.
Let's compare these two lines with Li Po's lines:
How much would I slash off Chun Hill
To ease the flow of the Hsiang waters!
Inexhaustible is the wine in Paling
That makes Tungting Lake's autumn drunk.

Here we can see the difference between the two poets. They have the same romantic ideas and feelings. But they differ in motives and aims.

(Hsiao Ti-fei: *Tu Fu Studies*, page 59, 1959)

But in what way do their motives and aims differ? The author does not elucidate. But his idea is clear. He means that Tu Fu wanted to relieve people from their misery (actually Tu Fu was thinking more of the court) by “slashing off the strategic place” from the ground but Li Po had a different aim in wanting to “slash off Chun Hill”. Hence Tu Fu was a people’s poet while Li Po was not. But why should Li Po want to “slash off Chun Hill”? What were his motives and aims? This is something worthy of careful consideration.

The phrase “slash off Chun Hill” is in the first line of the last poem of the *Three Poems Composed After Getting Drunk During an Excursion on Tungting Lake with My Uncle*, written in the second year of Chien Yuan. Li Po had been pardoned by the emperor and was on his way back from exile to Yehlang. He took the opportunity to enjoy the scenery on the river Hsiao Hsiang. The time was autumn. I may just as well once more quote the related lines here:

How much would I slash off Chun Hill
To ease the flow of the Hsiang waters!
Inexhaustible is the wine in Paling,
That makes Tungting Lake’s autumn drunk.

When we read the lines we may get the impression that Li Po wanted to “slash off Chun Hill” for the purpose of having as much wine to drink as possible; in other words, he thought of the water of the lake as wine and wanted to remove Chun Hill so as to enlarge the lake as though its capacity were not enough to hold the “wine”. If this were true, then Li Po was mouthing nonsense in a state of drunkenness.

Those who are fond of wine also like to enjoy natural beauty. Chun Hill is a beautiful scenic spot on Tungting Lake. The last poem in the series *Accompanying Uncle Yeh and Chia on an Excursion to Tungting Lake* (five poems), written about the same time, describes the beauty of Chun Hill in this way:

Once departed the Princesses never revisited the Hsiao Hsiang,
Leaving the autumn rushes by the waters growing rank.

The lake is clear and free of dust like a jade mirror
On which stands Chun Hill, as in a painting.

Isn’t it ironic to want to “slash off Chun Hill” together with its superb beauty? But this is only superficial reasoning. We can go on asking: Where, then, does the wine come from? Can the water in the Tungting Lake and the Hsiang River be turned into wine? With this enquiry we would probably come nearer to Li Po’s intentions.

Tungting Lake is a natural outlet for the Yangtse. When the river is swollen in summer, the water usually reaches such a high level that it flows into the Tungting Lake. But in autumn, after the flood has receded, large stretches of land around the lake are “freed”. That is why even in the Tang Dynasty people enclosed land around the lake for cultivation. Tu Fu confirmed this practice in his poem entitled *Passing the Night by the Green Grass Lake*:

The Tungting Lake is still in full view,
The Green Grass Lake being its continuation.
Laying oars aside, they begin busy farming.
The bamboo sticks show the waters receding.

The Green Grass Lake lying south of Chun Hill is an extension of Tungting Lake. The third line tells us that with the ebbing of the flood the peasants put aside their oars and take up hoes to reclaim land. Later annotators pointed out that “people cultivate land around the lake” (Yang Lun: *Annotations to Tu Fu’s Poems*). This is correct and must have been practised even before the Tang Dynasty. We should be thankful to Tu Fu for providing us with such testimony.

From this we can trace Li Po’s “motives and aims”. His intention to “slash off Chun Hill” in order to expand the River Hsiang must have been motivated by the desire to see the peasants either reclaiming more land or enlarging the surface of the already cultivated area. Does this have anything to do with “wine” and “autumn” mentioned in the poem? Of course. They are related by association, and very closely.

Autumn is the season for harvesting. The ancients called a rich harvest a “good autumn”. Wine in the olden times was always distilled from grain. Only rich harvests of grain provided an inexhaust-

ible supply of wine in Paling. The poem *July* in the *Odes of Pin* edited by Confucius has this description of autumn:

The ninth month is cold with frost;
In the tenth they sweep their cornyards clean.
Good wine, in two vessels kept, they take.
“We’ll kill lambs for the feast,” they say.
“And to the country school quickly we go,
“And the cup of rhinoceros’ horn we raise,
“And wish each other long life, a long, long life.”

A joyous feast to celebrate a good autumn harvest! To quote Li Po again:

I find autumn very pleasant.
Who says it is sad?

These two lines are derived from the above poem. Isn’t the motif of the line “How much would I slash off Chun Hill!” also closely related to it? That Li Po attached great importance to it can be proved by this poem of his *Thoughts on Farming*:

Chia Yi was banished to exile for three years,
While Pan Chao made a duke of ten thousand *li* fief.
Wouldn’t it be better to be a simple farmer
Watering his white calf by the clear stream?

We can now say definitely that Li Po wanted to “slash off Chun Hill” for the benefit of farming; in other words, he wanted to enlarge the area of crop land. The “inexhaustible wine in Paling”, therefore, is not intended for himself and his few friends to get drunk on, but for all the people of Paling. And it is only in this way that the beautiful scenery of Tungting becomes intoxicating — ecstatically intoxicating. So Li Po’s motive behind his wish “to slash off Chun Hill” comes from his real concern for the welfare of the people.

Some people may say that Li Po also wanted to “smash the Yellow Crane Tower”* and “overturn the Parrot Flats”** in his poem *To Wei Ping at Chiang Hsia*. They are similar in tone to “slashing

*A temple-like tower inhabited by priests and overlooking the Yangtse River near present-day Wuhan.

**Situated opposite to the Yellow Crane Tower across the Yangtse.

off Chun Hill”. Aren’t they wild effusions of the poet when drunk? What kind of motives and aims come in here, then? My answer is that they come in these lines:

A monkish atmosphere reigns supreme here
Making the landscape so unpleasant to gaze on!

Li Po was unhappy to see so many attractive scenic spots in our country spoiled by the presence of monks and temples, which were offensive to his eye. That is why he wanted to “smash” and “overturn” them all; in other words, construction must be preceded with destruction. Although his motives and aims are different in these lines from those in his desire to “slash off Chun Hill”, yet they are identical in his handling of the dialectical relationship between destruction and construction.

Some people may argue, “You’re so partial to Li Po that you cudgel your brains to justify your praise of him and depreciation of Tu Fu.” Well and good. Let me cite another example to show the contrast between the two, although I am afraid the contrast may not be very favourable to Tu Fu.

How I want to break off the branches of cassia* in the moon
And take them to those who are shivering in the cold!
(Li Po: *To Tsui Wen Brothers*)

How I wish to hack off the branches of cassia in the moon
So that it can shed much brighter light.
(Tu Fu: *Looking at the Moon on the Hundred-and-Fifth Day*)

Both poets show extraordinary imagination in their lines, but their “motives and aims” are different. Li Po, with a view to providing the people shivering in cold with firewood (not intellectuals cold-shouldered by the men in power), wanted to fly to the moon to break off branches of cassia, while Tu Fu, being very homesick, his tears flowing like “golden waves” of moonlight, wished to hack off the branches of cassia so that he could give vent to his nostalgia by shedding tears to his heart’s content. “The hundred-and-fifth day” (after the winter solstice) was called “Cold Food Day”, which,

*The shadows in the moon are supposed to be a cassia tree in Chinese mythology.

according to the lunar calendar, falls two days before *Ching Ming**. Tu Fu at the time was living in the capital of Changan while it was occupied by invaders. Under the moon on this "Cold Food Day" he thought of his dear ones living elsewhere. That is why the first two lines of this poem run like this:

Passing the Cold Food Day homeless and alone,
I have nothing but tears like golden waves.

The lines about the cassia tree follow immediately after these. In the opinion of past annotators, if the boughs of the cassia tree in the moon were hacked off, travellers could see their homes beyond the horizon. Of course there was nothing scientific about this. As it was, Tu Fu failed to see his home, so he had "nothing but tears like golden waves". And the more "golden waves", the more the tears. In this poem all that Tu Fu cared about was his own personal emotions — an indulgence that contrasts sharply with what Li Po had in mind: poor people. Of course we should not praise Li Po and belittle Tu Fu merely because of this example. But neither should we reverse the situation on the evidence of a few lines.

On the whole Li Po's character as well as his poetry show that he was more attached than Tu Fu to the common people. In *The Eight Immortals of the Winecup* Tu Fu gives a lively portrayal of his poet friend in these four lines:

Over a jugful Li Po can write one hundred poems.
The market wine-shop of Changan is where he sleeps.
To the emperor who asks him to board the imperial barge
He says, "Your humble servant is a god of wine."

Li Po lived close to the common people while maintaining a contemptuous attitude towards sovereigns. This is the positive side of his character now freed from indulgence in alchemy and the quest for magical power as well as for high official positions or title. People love such a poet. Among all the classical poets of China, Li Po is probably the first who won such great popularity among the people.

*The day on which the Chinese in the old days visited the tombs of their dear ones and ancestors.

Let's read another poem by Li Po entitled *With Mother Hsun at Five-pine Hill*:

At the foot of Five-pine Hill
I stay alone, with small comfort.
Farm folk toil hard in the autumn,
My neighbour husks her grain in the chill night.
Kneeling, Mother Hsun offers me a dish of *tiao-hu**,
Moonlight makes the white plate sparkle.
With a pang I remember the washer-woman** of old;
I thank her again and again.
But I cannot eat her food.

In ancient times people rested on the floor, generally in a kneeling position. In later days people sat with their legs drawn under them or cross-legged — a manner introduced by other races. But as the guest was sitting in a kneeling position, the hostess had to kneel too when offering food. Today people still carry on this practice in Japan, where it was introduced from China in the Sui and Tang Dynasties. That Li Po compared Mother Hsun with the washer-woman of old must come from the idea he had of comparing himself with Han Hsin. So the poem must have been written in his younger days. He was well acquainted with the hardships of toil on the land as testified by these lines:

Farm folk toil hard in the autumn,
My neighbour husks her grain in the chill night.

He was thoroughly grateful for the hospitality extended to him by the old peasant woman. He could hardly eat the food, although he thanked his hostess three times, so greatly was he touched.

Now his *Song of Chiupu* (16 poems) should come to our mind. It eulogizes metal workers and is the only one of its kind, not only among Li Po's poems, but also in the whole of classical Chinese poetry. Here is the fourteenth poem:

The furnace flares up between the earth and sky,
Red stars dance wildly in the purplish smoke.
The red men brighten up the moon night,
And the cold river vibrates with their songs.

*The seed of *zizania aquatica*, which the poor used as a substitute for rice.

**At the beginning of the Han Dynasty when Han Hsin, later Maquis of Huaiyin, was still poor and unknown, a washer-woman took pity on him and fed him.

This is a powerful hymn to metal workers although it is so brief. "Chiupu, a place rich with silver and copper ores." (*Geographical Record, History of Tang*) "The red men brighten up the moon night" and "And the cold river vibrates with their songs" form an antithetic couplet. Ancient annotators were at a loss as to the meaning of the phrase "red men". The faces of the metal workers labouring by the furnace were scorched red, so much so that they intensified the brilliance of the moon. Hence "red men". They sang while working and their songs stirred up big waves in the nearby Kuei River. This little poem unrolls before us like a scroll giving a graphic picture of workers in the heat of the furnace.

Poems like this which describe the life of workers and peasants with warmth, although they may not be masterpieces that "spear whales in the blue seas", certainly are not the type of things as "kingfishers among the *lan chao* flowers". They are poems imbued with genuine feeling for the common people.

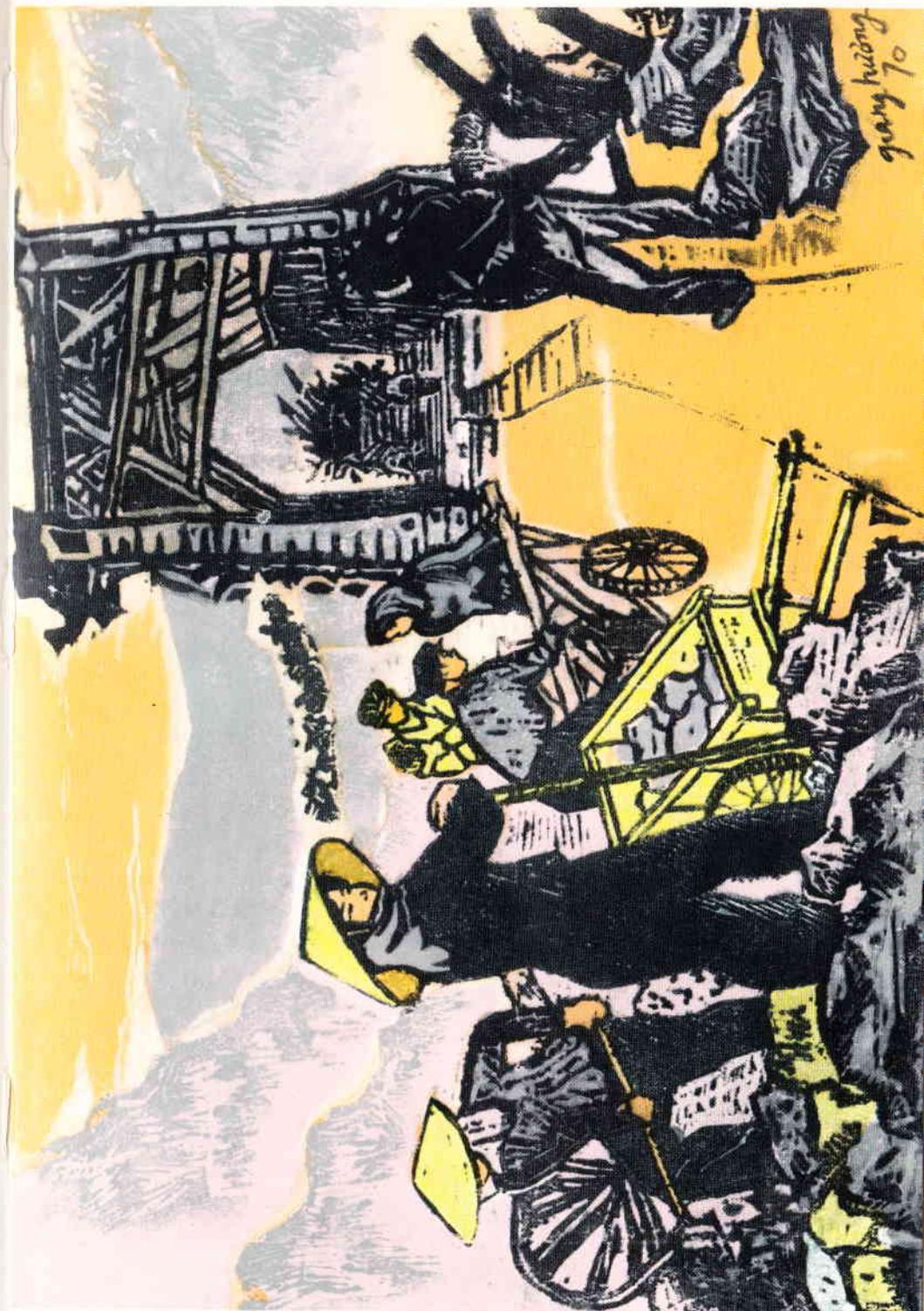
Li Po loved wine. He made great friends with wine-shop keepers. His *On the Death of the Good Brewer of Hsuan Cheng* bears witness to his affection for the men in the street:

Old Man Chi is now living in the world beyond.
He must still be brewing the fine "Old Spring".
But as Li Po is not there in the night tavern,
To whom can you sell your wine?

"Good brewer" means nothing more than small tradesman who brewed and sold wine. This poem shows that Li Po never regarded himself as a man of any social position. To him all men were equal. That is why the common people were also fond of him. In the old days village wine-shops used to put out lanterns or banners in front of their doors as signs of their trade. On them such characters as "Li Po's Favourite Place", "In Li Po's Tradition" were often inscribed. Such spontaneous attachment to Li Po could be found practically everywhere in our country. Tu Fu was also fond of wine. But no wine-shops advertising themselves with signs such as "Tu Fu's Favourite Place" or "In Tu Fu's Tradition" were ever found or heard of.

People's predilection is different from that of official-literati or intellectuals in general. They have their own preference.

The Bridge at Ham Rong (woodcut) by Vu Giang Huong ▶
An exhibit from the Vietnamese art exhibition. See next page.



In Praise of the Heroic Vietnamese

EDITORS' NOTE: The Art Exhibition on Vietnamese Resistance to U.S. Aggression and for National Salvation was held in Peking at the beginning of this year. On display were 229 works by 138 Vietnamese professional and spare-time artists over the past ten years. We print below comments on these by three members of the Chinese Artists Delegation which visited Viet Nam last October.

Kao Hung:

Not long ago we visited one of our neighbouring countries — the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam, and so were particularly inspired by the fine paintings recently displayed at the Vietnamese art exhibition.

The several brilliant paintings portraying President Ho Chi Minh, great leader of the Vietnamese people, attracted our attention and filled us with deep respect and love. Vietnamese artists have depicted him in a number of poses, nearly always in the midst of workers, peasants and soldiers, showing their profound love for him. The poster



Uncle Ho Is Still Marching Among Us

Uncle Ho Is Still Marching Among Us is very popular. During our tour, we saw it wherever we went. Vietnamese comrades told us: "Drivers wish to have their trucks painted as a background to Uncle Ho. Tank men hope their tanks will be included. Everyone wants to be with him." The glorious image of President Ho lives for ever in the hearts of the Vietnamese and encourages them to advance from victory to victory.

The works displayed at this exhibition are rich in anti-imperialist content, have variety in form and a distinct national style. They highlight the determination of the fighting Vietnamese to answer President Ho Chi Minh's call: **"So long as a single aggressor remains in our country, we must continue the fight and wipe him out,"** in order to liberate the south, defend the north and unify the fatherland. Heroes who rely on their own efforts, struggle unyieldingly, fear no brutality and dare to fight are successfully portrayed in these works of art.

Some of the most vivid and militant works of art from the anti-U.S. front were hung on the walls of the first exhibition hall. They represent brave militia women, their machine-guns aimed at marauding enemy planes; people's fighters, keeping a close watch on the enemy's every move; armymen and civilians, united as one, angrily lobbing shells into enemy positions; old militiamen, shooting down enemy planes with their rifles; old women dauntlessly ferrying the people's armymen across a river; and group after group of young people, full of hatred for the enemy, marching to the front. These lively scenes remind me of the unforgettable days we spent visiting heroic Viet Nam.

Fighting in close co-ordination with the brave Laotians and Cambodians, the Vietnamese are giving the U.S. aggressors and their running dogs a sound trouncing. A poster, *The Peoples of the Three Countries of Indo-China Are Closely United*, vividly depicts this. While defending themselves from U.S. aggression and struggling for national salvation till they win, the Vietnamese are displaying a great selflessness and dauntless revolutionary spirit. Many pictures emphasize this. Among them is *Thai Nguyen Steel Plant*, a large lacquer carving showing the vigorous development of industrial production. The lacquer painting, *Construction for Water Conservancy*, the poster, *Bumper Harvest* and the oil painting *Spring Sowing*, all portray the triumphant mood of the Vietnamese who have won victories both in their battles against the enemy and in production.

Never for a moment have the people and artists in the north forgotten their compatriots in the south. Quite a few works at the exhibition are devoted to life and struggle in the south. One of these is the lacquer painting *Chest and Gun*. In a traditional art form much admired by the Vietnamese, it is full of praise for the heroic south, whose people are undaunted by enemy brutality and fear no sacrifice. It is a vivid picture of the fierce confrontation between people and enemy, when the U.S. aggressors and their Saigon puppet troops, at the end of their tether, try to destroy a village with gunfire but are stopped by angry villagers. The artist shows his class feelings in this magnificent work. He portrays the villagers prominently and in glowing colours, as a powerful bastion of iron, while the U.S.-puppet troops, though armed to the teeth, are relegated to a dark



Spring Sowing

corner in the background. The villagers, fearless in defence of their homes, face the enemy in anger, while the U.S.-puppet soldiers, well armed but morally weak, are shown as despicable cowards. This sharp contrast foretells who will win the final victory.

President Ho Chi Minh once told Vietnamese artists, **“With regard to your creative work, it is necessary that you understand, get in touch with and go deeply into the people’s life. Only by so doing, will you be able to convey the heroism and determination of our soldiers and people as a whole and contribute to the development and improvement of these qualities.”** Following this teaching Vietnamese artists, while participating in battle and production, have created a variety of art works. They have left their footprints everywhere—from battlefields on the frontline to fertile fields in the rear, over mountains and plains, in bustling factories and mines, in production to support the front, and in hospitals and schools. The works on display at the exhibition are the fruits of their efforts in practical struggle.

Kuan Chi-ming:

As an artist working in the Chinese People’s Liberation Army, I visited Viet Nam recently with other members of a Chinese Artists Delegation. The brave and industrious people of Viet Nam, their fertile land and majestic waterways left an indelible picture in my mind. Back in Peking, I was inspired again at the Vietnamese art exhibition. Here on display were outstanding works by professional artists as well as some created by soldiers, workers and peasants in their spare time. A variety of media were used. There were oil paintings, pencil sketches, water colours, woodcuts, posters and works in the traditional Vietnamese style such as painting on silk and lacquer and lacquer carving. All show the splendid achievements of the Vietnamese in their heroic resistance to the U.S. invaders, display many facets of socialist revolution and construction and reflect the people’s noble sentiments and tumultuous life of struggle. How well I remembered those bold, determined faces, the tall buildings and sturdy huts still standing surrounded by rubble, the beautiful fields dotted with bomb craters and serene battle stations. Fumes of gunpowder and the fragrance of flowering rice seem to emanate from some canvases and in others the magnificent vitality of the people portrayed thrilled me. It seemed as if I were once again among our friends and comrades in the Hong-ha Delta or by the Song Hien Luong River.

One day I visited an anti-aircraft unit of the Vietnamese People’s Army, one honoured for the merit it had won in battle. I saw for myself how our Vietnamese comrades-in-arms swung their anti-aircraft gun into position, always on the alert for U.S. raids. The oil painting, *President Ho Inspects an Anti-aircraft Unit* shows his concern for the fighters as well as the soldiers’ steel-like determination.

The woodcut, *Old Militiaman of the Mountains*, the water colours, *Militia Women of Bao Ninh* and *She is Ready to Open Fire* and the two in gouache, *Sending Her Son to Join the Army* and *Off to the Front* all recall the nobility of the people’s war in Viet Nam. When we were there, we visited a team of old militiamen at Dong Hoi, noted for having shot down some enemy planes. The youngest among them was 49 years old. However, they were all young in spirit, for not only had

they brought down U.S. planes with simple militia weapons but captured some pilots alive. Militia women in Viet Nam were also most active. They work in anti-aircraft units, do sentry duty, road and bridge maintenance work and other hard labour to support the front. The militia women in charge of an artillery unit in the Quang Binh district had a record of four enemy warships sunk. When they told us this, they laughed and mocked the U.S. imperialists for being paper tigers. At Thai Binh we were presented to Bui Tien Phan, an old man who had sent all seven of his sons and daughters into the army. Some of them had won the title of "Brave Fighter Against the U.S. Aggressors" and three of them had already given their lives for their country. To show our deep respect for this admirable old man, we painted his portrait. We found that the Vietnamese people, men and women, old and young were fully mobilized, armed and united in their efforts against the enemy. We heard many moving incidents fit to be sung about or painted but they are too numerous to mention here.

Sing a Song for My Dear Uncles



During our visit we were particularly aware of the revolutionary optimism among both civilians and armymen, a spirit defying brute force, cruel oppression, hardship and difficulties. In spite of the length of the war and the arduous conditions, in spite of the constant zooming of heavy bombers overhead and bursting bombs close by, the people of Viet Nam remained undaunted. Their proud songs and happy laughter sounded throughout the country, their delightful children danced charmingly, their machines ran at full speed, rich crops rippled in the breeze and life and vitality abounded everywhere. We visited a factory set up in a cave in Thanh Hoa where the workers welcomed us by holding a gala art performance. We were told that the more intense their work, the fiercer the battle raged, the more need they felt for cultural activities to enhance their own militant spirit. They said with pride: "Our songs overwhelm the sound of enemy bombs." The oil painting *Sing a Song for My Dear Uncles* realistically depicts this spirit. It portrays a chubby little girl, without any shyness, singing to several Vietnamese People's Army men sitting together under a green canopy of leafy trees. The soldiers appear inspired as she sings of their exploits and urges them to continue fighting bravely. The pen drawing *Fighters of Dao Con Co Enjoy a Performance*, also on this theme, presents with profound feelings the revolutionary optimism found only in just revolutionary wars.

Using paint brushes and pencils as sharp weapons to unite, encourage and educate the masses and attack the enemy, the revolutionary artists in Viet Nam are making valuable contributions to the magnificent cause of resistance to U.S. aggression and for national salvation.

Liu Chun-hua:

At the exhibition there was a painting on silk, *Deep Friendship Between Viet Nam and China — Comrades and Brothers*, which depicts the two great leaders, Chairman Mao Tsetung and President Ho Chi Minh shaking hands. This moving picture showing the meeting of the founders of revolutionary friendship between China and Viet Nam reminded me of my recent visit to that country.

There, the people welcomed us as if we belonged to their family. Wherever we went, they served fragrant tea and picked sweet bananas for us. Sitting together, we chatted to our hearts' content. They told us many stories about the valiant Vietnamese people's resistance to U.S. aggression and were loud in accusing the imperialists of their heinous crimes. In a bamboo cottage at Cao Bang, an old uncle brought out home-brewed rice wine to celebrate with us their victory in the struggle against the U.S. invaders. Together we drank to the unshakable revolutionary friendship between the peoples of Viet Nam and China and our unity in a common struggle. Beside a gun position on the shores of Quang Binh, brave militia women sang songs of friendship:

Our mountains hug your mountains,
Our rivers flow into your waters.
Together we embrace the Eastern Sea,
Our friendship is as radiant as the morning sun.

and

Close and united,
Our forces are strong,
Fighting shoulder to shoulder,
We are mighty and strong.

A feeling closer than that of family relationship linked our hearts together. Never in my whole life will I ever forget those memorable hours.

Because Vietnamese artists go among the fighters in the front ranks they are able to create excellent works of art that convey the people's steel-like determination to win final victory. The woodcut *On the Bridge* gives a realistic picture of a battle to defend a transportation route. The enemy attempted to cut a vital transport line and so prevent aid from the north reaching the fighting front in the south. But wherever the enemy destroys a bridge, a floating one is quickly improvised; wherever a road is bombed, the people quarry stone and build a new one to ensure a continuous flow of traffic along the route. The pencil drawing *The New Bridge* depicts a bridge built by heroes. We went over it ourselves when we were there and noticed broken

girders jutting out close to the new floating bridge. Bomb craters dotted the banks but heavy trucks were already crossing the improvised one. The artist has successfully caught the vital quality of this people's war and has painted a graphic record of the U.S. imperialists' crimes.

Chest and Gun, a lacquer painting in the rich national style depicts a confrontation between coward puppet soldiers and some brave women in the south. It demonstrates why the people's force is invincible.

This exhibition revived my memories of Viet Nam. I seemed to see again a whole nation of revolutionary heroes performing immortal deeds, fighters at their battle stations, old aunties working behind the lines, brave young militia men and women harvesting rich crops. I am fully convinced that the Vietnamese people's iron determination to liberate the south, defend the north and further unify their fatherland is unshakable. The works of art displayed at this exhibition are realistic pictures of the people's revolutionary strength and foretold the ultimate victory of people's war.

This art exhibition also gave us a good opportunity to learn from our brothers and comrades. As a whole, these 229 exhibits presented, in beauty of line, vivid colour and excellent composition, a magnificent panorama of the Vietnamese people's struggle. Their militant spirit was evident always, whether in the fine outlines of the sketch *Corner of a Park in Hanoi on Sunday*, or in the delicately-carved lacquer work *Thai Nguyen Steel Plant*, whether in the sweeping brushwork of the oil painting *Spring Sowing* or the delicacy of the painting on silk, *Deep Friendship Between Viet Nam and China — Comrades and Brothers*. We are happy to share the joy of struggle and victory with our Vietnamese comrades-in-arms. We artists will learn from them how to go deep into the fiery struggle and take up our paint brushes to make them serve as sharp weapons in the service of the socialist revolution.

Japanese "Haguruma" Theatre in China

The Japanese "Haguruma" Theatrical Company directed by Natsuko Fujikawa, arrived in Peking on December 26, 1971 on a friendly performance tour of China. On January 15 this year it gave as its première in the capital the full-length drama *Raging Waves*.

On January 19, Chou En-lai, Member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and Premier of the State Council, and other leaders of the Party and government attended a performance presented by the Japanese artists. During the interval, they met the director, deputy director, leading actors and others.



During its stay in Peking, the company also presented three one-act plays *A Town on the Lower Reaches of the River*, *The Japanese Revolution Is Sure to Win* and *Angry Flames over Okinawa*. These excellent performances fully reflected the militant spirit displayed by the heroic Japanese people in their struggle against the U.S.-Japanese reactionaries' revival of Japanese militarism. They were warmly received by Peking audiences.

After one month of successful performances in the capital the company left for Shenyang and other cities.

Amateur Performances Increasing

Under the guidance of Chairman Mao's proletarian line on literature and art, the number of performances by amateur artists in Peking has increased greatly during the past year.

For the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Communist Party of China, in early July last year, more than fifty shows were put on by 3,000 amateur performers from various organizations in Peking alone. They included excerpts from or complete model revolutionary theatrical works. Audiences in the capital were very appreciative.

The popularization of the model revolutionary theatrical works has spurred mass amateur activities in which a great number of activists have taken part. The Peking municipal Party committee called a meeting last year for both professional and amateur literary and art workers for a discussion on how to stimulate the campaign. Many suburban districts and counties also organized study classes for the same purpose.

Factories, people's communes, government organizations and schools often held recreational gatherings on red-letter days at which short items were shown. These were ingenious, impressive, varied in style and rich in content, vividly reflecting achievements in socialist revolution and construction.

Professional art troupes also helped amateur troupes raise their artistic and technical level. The Peking Opera Troupe, for example,

assisted in the rehearsals of over two hundred amateur propaganda teams and did an excellent job in promoting these spare-time performances.

Festivals in Anhwei and Chekiang

At the beginning of this year two theatrical festivals were held respectively in Hofei, the capital of Anhwei Province and Hangchow, the capital of Chekiang.

Twenty professional troupes and amateur propaganda teams jointly presented fifty items at Hofei while more than one thousand professional and amateur artists produced forty-eight items at Hangchow. These festivals were fine displays of the theatrical creations fostered and promoted during the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution.

The items were all newly created by local artists in the two provinces. Their themes were varied and artistic forms colourful. Worker, peasant and soldier heroes and the victories won by them during the socialist revolution and construction were depicted from different angles. In addition to Peking operas, modern plays, dance dramas, songs and dances and *chuyi* ballads, there were also many other types of folk opera. Guided and influenced by the model revolutionary theatrical works, these local operas, after being carefully transformed and revised, appeared before audiences under a new guise and were much admired by the masses. Products of mass artistic creativity, these performances certainly will accelerate a further development of the theatrical arts.

During the festivals the participants studied together Chairman Mao's article *Talks at the Yenai Forum on Literature and Art* (May 1942), learned from each other and exchanged experiences.

"Cultural Relics" No. 1, 1972 Published

Cultural Relics No. 1, 1972 appeared in January this year in a new format. The new issue of this monthly magazine on Chinese historical relics contains over a hundred pages, and carries a series of articles introducing and commenting on a large number of treasured his-

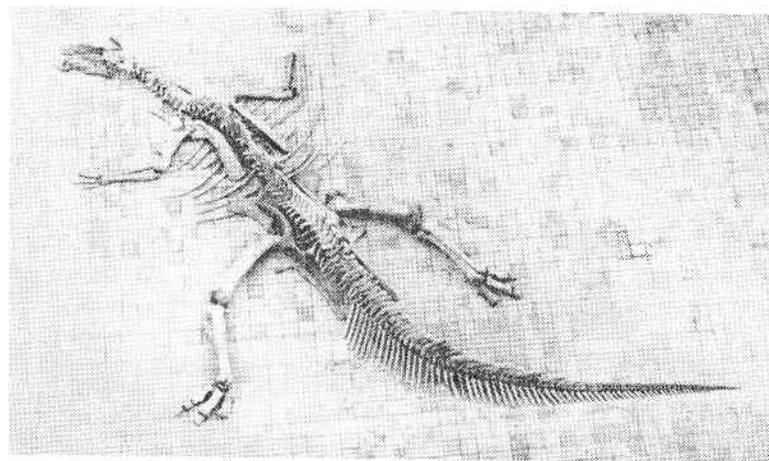
torical relics excavated during the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. There are over 200 photos, including twelve coloured plates.

One article in this issue refers to a batch of Tang Dynasty (A.D. 618-907) manuscripts and documents unearthed from 1966 to 1969 from some ancient tombs in Turfan, Sinkiang. These materials provide reliable data for the study of the history of west China and an effective proof that the "western region" is similar to other parts of the country. These facts clearly refute the fallacy that the Great Wall was China's northern border and her western boundary never went beyond Kansu and Szechuan as is shamelessly peddled by the social imperialists who cast an avaricious eye on China's territory.

In the same issue, many articles tell moving stories about workers, peasants and soldiers who were very concerned about and interested in the archaeological work and who participated in the excavations and guarded the historical treasures.

Big Fossil Dinosaur Found in East China

A big fossil dinosaur found in Shantung Province, east China, by Chinese geologists has been confirmed by palaeontologists as belonging to a new species of duck-billed dinosaur. The discovery provides



reliable data concerning the geological strata of the late cretaceous period some one hundred million years ago in eastern Shantung Province.

It was in August 1964 some dinosaur fossils were first found by a group of geologists in Shantung's Chucheng County. During the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, geologists, palaeontologists and workers in various scientific departments, helped by local people, carried out large-scale excavations in the area over a period of time and have been able to reconstruct the complete skeleton.

This duck-billed herbiferous dinosaur lived beside fresh-water lakes during the later part of the cretaceous period of the Mesozoic era. The animal walked erect on its hind limbs. A fossil of the same kind measuring five metres high was excavated earlier in the Laiyang administrative region of Shantung Province. The fossil found this time measures eight metres from toe to crown and is nearly fifteen metres long from head to tail. It is thought to be the biggest duck-billed fossil dinosaur ever unearthed anywhere.

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On the Long March with Chairman Mao

By **Chen Chang-feng**

(In English)

The Chinese Workers' and Peasants' Red Army, led by the Chinese Communist Party and Chairman Mao Tsetung, carried out the world-renowned Long March of 25,000 *li* (12,500 kilometres) between 1934 and 1936.

At the end of 1933, the reactionary Kuomintang forces launched its fifth campaign of encirclement against the Central Red Army. It was owing to the erroneous "Left" line in the Party that the Red Army failed to smash the enemy's attack and had to withdraw from the revolutionary base in Kiangsi and embark on the Long March in October 1934.

In January 1935 the Party Central Committee convened the Enlarged Conference of the Political Bureau at Tsunyi, which put an end to the "Left" opportunist leadership in the Party and established that of Comrade Mao Tsetung. After that, the Red Army, under the correct leadership of Comrade Mao Tsetung, frustrated the encirclement, pursuit and interception by hundreds of thousands of enemy troops and succeeded in reaching northern Shensi, bringing the Long March to a victorious close.

This book gives a graphic account of the author's own experience between 1930 and 1936 when he served as Chairman Mao's orderly and later as his bodyguard, his impressions of the Chairman's life and work, especially during the Long March, and the activities of the Red Army in time of trial.

132 pages

18 × 12 cm.

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In His Mind a Million Bold Warriors

by *Yen Chang-lin*

(*In English*)

The author was leader of Chairman Mao's bodyguards during the period 1946-1951. In the two reminiscences that make up this book, he gives a vivid description of his impressions of the Chairman's life and work in 1947 when Chiang Kai-shek concentrated a large force to attack Yen-an, nerve-centre of liberated areas, and was utterly defeated, and brings into bold relief Chairman Mao's military thinking and revolutionary outlook.

88 pages

18 × 12 cm.

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