

CHINESE LITERATURE



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STORIES

*Chang Yu-hua and
Chou Hsing-fang*

Doctors and Nurses

It was nearly daybreak. A glimmer of light had already appeared in the east. The main building of the People's Hospital was darkly silhouetted against the grey sky. From it wafted the fragrance of flowering oleander tinged with whiffs of disinfectant.

Wang Ken-fu in Bed 27 of Ward 3 had just woken up. Slowly opening his eyes, he saw the night-light glowing by the door and heard the faint snores of the other patients. He licked his parched lips and stared wide-eyed at the ceiling, unable to go back to sleep. Though he had neither heard the cock crow nor looked at the clock on the wall, he knew it must be about five. For, back in his commune, he always got up at this hour to drink some hot tea and make his round of the fields before going home for breakfast, after which he went out again to assign each production group its jobs for the day. This had been his routine since becoming a team leader. But now, just as the busy season of autumn harvesting was about to start, he

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had suddenly fallen ill — and seriously too. It was very trying for an active man like him to have to lie still in bed.

“I wonder how they’re getting on,” he thought, his eyes fixed on the ceiling. “The weather’s been fine and sunny the last couple of days. Let’s hope it holds out till we’ve got in the late crops. . . .” He had a vision of the golden paddy fields and the commune members with their flashing sickles racing each other to get in the harvest.

The door opened noiselessly. Someone in white slipped in. When the figure moved quietly towards his bed, Wang saw that it was Fang Yeh who had been on duty for the last two nights. Ever since he came to this ward the doctors, nurses and orderlies had looked after him very well. This young nurse Fang, in particular, had attended to his every need like a real daughter. Last night, when the pain in his liver had kept him awake, she had noticed this and been worried. He felt very touched by her concern. She had obviously slipped in now to see how he was. He wanted to thank her, but thought better of it. “She’ll be worried again if she thinks I haven’t slept well. She’s been on the go all night and must be tired. If we all seem sound asleep, she can get some rest.” He quickly closed his eyes.

As he breathed deeply and evenly, he listened to her movements. First she tiptoed to his bedside, then moved on to some other beds. He opened his eyes a fraction and saw her carry off several thermos flasks, softly closing the door behind her.

“What a nuisance falling ill like this,” he sighed. “I can’t join in the harvesting and need other people to look after me. It’s burning me up!”

Some time later the young nurse came back to his bedside. “Sleep all right, Uncle Wang?” she asked gently.

“Yes!” Turning his head he raised himself on one elbow. “I felt much better after that injection you gave me.”

She passed him a steaming cup saying, “Have some tea, uncle.”

“How did you know I like tea first thing in the morning?”

Young Fang smiled. “You said so yourself last night.”

Wang recalled that he had mentioned this habit of his while chatting with her the previous evening, and apparently she had taken it to



heart. Before he could make any comment, the girl had propped him up and was holding the cup to his lips.

As he sipped the tea, Young Fang reached under his bed and carried off his bed-pan. He wanted to stop her but she had already left. A lump came into his throat.

That morning, at the end of her shift, Young Fang reported that the patient in Bed 27 had irregular bowel movements.

Lu Yun-fan, the doctor in charge, nodded and said, "All right, we'll keep him under observation." She would have enlarged on her report, but he stopped her. "I understand. Go and rest now."

Though this young nurse looked quiet and retiring, all the patients liked to chat with her. And realizing that most of them were used to an active life on the production front and found the hospital routine boring at first, whenever she had time she would keep them company. Very soon, on their own initiative, they started telling her just how they felt. She would listen carefully, showing her sympathy. If a patient suspected that he was being too garrulous and stopped to watch her expression, her evident interest always relieved his mind — he was glad to know here was someone who really cared. In this way Young Fang made friends with all her patients, who loved her for her gentle ways and warm heart.

During the last few days, Young Fang had taken a special interest in Wang's case. After leaving school she had worked in a commune for some years, only coming to this hospital three years ago. Knowing how selflessly the poor and lower-middle peasants battled to transform nature, she was deeply touched by Wang's anxiety to get back to his brigade. But Wang, a former poor peasant, was over fifty and his illness had developed rapidly. In less than a month he lost over ten pounds, and the preliminary diagnosis was cancer of the liver. She had noticed, however, that he had rather frequent and loose bowel movements. Judging by her own experience of nursing and what older nurses told her, she did not think this a normal symptom of cancer. Although she had told Dr. Lu about Wang's bowel movements, she still felt bothered.

Back in her dormitory, Fang lay down and went straight to sleep. She was tired out after several successive night shifts and attending the young people's Marxist study classes in the day-time. However, within two hours she woke up again. Rubbing her eyes, she remembered the dream she had had. She had dreamed that Wang was cured and going back in high spirits to his brigade. She had gone in the same truck with him and seen the busy harvesters in the countryside. . . .

Abruptly she got up and went to her desk to leaf through a medical handbook. She found a passage which said that it was easy to confuse cancer of the liver with a liver abscess, and the latter could be caused by parasitic amoebae penetrating the intestine wall and passing through the blood to the liver. She wondered: Could Wang's irregular bowel movements mean that he has a liver abscess? She went back to his ward.

Wang's temperature had come down. He was feeling well enough to be glad of a chat. During their conversation the young nurse learned that half a year ago he had had amoeboid dysentery. This made her feel that her guess might be right. She decided to take it up with the doctor.

Just then she heard Young Chiang's shrill voice in the corridor: "Come on, doctor. Make it snappy! It's time for the patients' lunch."

"All right, all right," responded a cheerful baritone voice, and Dr. Lu could be heard leaving his office. Just over thirty, clean-shaven with wide-rimmed glasses, he looked smart and confident as he started pushing the food-trolley towards Ward 3.

"Are you serving meals again today, doctor?"

"That's right. This is one of our innovations since the Cultural Revolution. Doctors, nurses and orderlies must learn to integrate their work."

Talking and laughing he reached the door of the ward, where several of the lighter cases stood waiting. The young orderly Ting announced in a loud boyish voice the dishes for the different patients. The man serving rice by the table was in his forties, wearing an old army uniform, a pleasant smile on his face. His movements were

deft. A new patient from some village went up to him and greeted him in a booming voice as "cook".

"Who are you calling 'cook'?" Dr. Lu by the food-trolley patted the patient's shoulder. "Let me introduce you. This is our Party branch secretary Old Yu."

"Oh, I didn't know!"

Old Yu chuckled. "What's wrong with being called 'cook'? I just wish I deserved that title."

Everyone laughed.

Young Fang and Young Chiang, busy passing round dishes, joined in the general laughter. Young Chiang sang out: "Seems you still have some Confucian ideas, Dr. Lu."

Young Fang cut in: "I think Dr. Lu's made good progress recently."

"Hear that, Young Chiang?" The doctor beamed at this support. "Everything's in process of development. I may be slow at this today, but in a couple of days I shall be faster. I'm already better than when we first tried integrating our work. You'd better watch out. If you stick to the old rules and are too cocksure, some day I shall leave you behind!"

"There's dialectics in what Dr. Lu says," put in Old Yu, raising another laugh.

Dr. Lu now snatched the list from Ting and started to help the nurses distribute dishes. When, having consulted the list, he reached for the ham-and-bean soup for Bed 27, he found the bowl so hot that he nearly dropped it. Young Fang quickly took it over. The layer of oil on the soup caused her some misgivings. However, she carried the bowl to Wang's bed while Dr. Lu blew on his smarting fingers.

Some patients, rice bowls in their hands, came over to ask with concern: "Burn your fingers, doctor?"

"No, it's all right. But this goes to show that Confucius' idea of just studying books and doing no manual work is no good. You see, I've read more books than they have," he pointed laughingly at Young Fang and Young Chiang, "but I'm no good when it comes to serving lunch."

"Right, you're deepening your understanding all the time," quipped Old Yu, provoking another burst of laughter.

When nearly all the lunch had been served, Young Fang went over to Dr. Lu and said: "I want to discuss a problem with you, doctor."

"Right. Let's go to the office." He led the way.

Young Fang had often raised "problems" with him before, and he was accustomed to her frank way of speaking. Though this young nurse who had come to them from the countryside three years ago was quiet, patient and competent, he felt she was too prone to criticism. Once, she had pointed out bluntly that some patients complained that his injections hurt and hoped he would be more careful in future. Another time she told Lu that he walked too heavily on his rounds and woke the patients up. . . . There were many, many other instances. To Lu, these were all trifling matters, yet Young Fang brought them up very seriously. Since this new movement for the doctors, nurses and orderlies to share their work was meant to encourage them to help each other and make criticisms and self-criticisms, Dr. Lu felt he should modestly accept the girl's strictures. And the fact that she wanted to see him about something instead of resting after her night shift suggested that the matter must be serious.

Back in the office he asked her with a smile: "Well, what have you caught me doing wrong this time?"

The girl answered gravely, "Nothing. I just want to talk to you about Wang Ken-fu in Bed 27."

Lu was nonplussed. "All right. Go ahead."

Young Fang explained concisely her theory about Wang's illness, and suggested that his stools should be examined for parasitic amoebae.

As he listened to her, the smile on Lu's face faded. He thought resentfully: Aren't you getting too bumptious? How can you refute the doctor's diagnosis on such flimsy grounds? Your past proposals came within the scope of nursing. There are some things I couldn't know or didn't think of. But diagnosis is the doctor's business. How can you know better than me?

One of Dr. Lu's good points was frankness. So now he rejoined: "Of course it's good to make suggestions, Young Fang. But you

should understand that a doctor naturally takes various possibilities into account in diagnosing a disease." He raised his hands to stop the girl from speaking. "Naturally, I'm not saying that the nurse's observation of the patient is not important. Sometimes such observations supply most useful data which aren't easily detected. However . . . a nurse may sometimes be misled by irrelevant or superficial phenomena. For instance, the patient's complaints may not necessarily be accurate. Take the case of irregular bowel movements, for example. They can be due to a number of different factors. The human body is a very complex mechanism. We shouldn't jump to definite conclusions. Some things which seem to require investigation are actually false scents. You may not be able to grasp this yet. So . . ."

Young Fang listened quietly and thought this over. Though Lu spoke so confidently, it all sounded too theoretical to her, too mystifying.

"Are you absolutely certain, doctor," she asked, "that the patient in Bed 27 has cancer of the liver?"

Dr. Lu was taken aback by this blunt challenge. Scratching his head he answered, "It's hard to be 'absolutely certain' about anything. Still I'm more than ninety per cent sure that it's cancer." He took the case history of Bed 27 from a shelf and thrust it at her. "Look, this is the result of the radioisotope test, the report on the impairment of function of the liver, this the result of the most recent supersonic test. . . ." As he leafed through these sheets, white, yellow and blue, he was thinking: This is probably over your head.

Actually Young Fang had already gone through these reports and jotted down the relevant data in her own notebook. Before her last talk with Wang she had also consulted some other doctors and nurses. She therefore rejoined confidently: "Dr. Lu, these results don't prove that it *isn't* a liver abscess. And some of the tests may not be accurate enough. Take for instance the supersonic test: if the abscess is a deep one, it might not show it the first time."

Dr. Lu smiled. "So you don't believe in such data?"

"No. We should delve below the surface to find the heart of the problem."

Seeing that Young Fang refused to be convinced, Dr. Lu thought: All right, let her have the stools examined. That won't get her anywhere. Then the facts may convince her. He took a wad of forms for laboratory tests and tore off three sheets, then scrawled his name on each.

"Very well," he said. "If you insist you may make some tests. I admire your persistence. But you know, we can't cure diseases by wishful thinking. I'll give these forms to Young Chiang presently. It's time you had some rest."

Young Fang happily snatched the sheets from him. "I'll take them to her straight away." She went cheerfully off.

Several days went by. As Dr. Lu had predicted, no parasitic amoebae were found in three successive tests. This convinced him that his diagnosis was right.

This morning he had to attend an administrative meeting. As soon as it was over, he hurried back in high spirits to make his round of the ward. Coming to Bed 27, he bent down to ask with a smile, "Feeling any better?"

Wang's temperature was usually normal in the morning and he had no pain, so propping himself up on one elbow he said, "I'm feeling fine, thanks."

Lu made him lie down and turned to leave, but Wang grabbed his hand asking: "Doctor, will I be well enough to leave next month?"

"Well, Old Wang, this isn't like harvesting, geared strictly to one season. You'll have to be patient." Lu added encouragingly, "Just relax and rest well."

"Relax? How can I, doctor?" Wang was in a talkative mood. "I shan't be back in time for this year's autumn harvest. Ah, magnificent crops we have! I went to the fields to take a look the day I left to come to hospital. We'll be getting at least eight hundred catties per *mu*. That means our team will exceed two thousand catties per *mu* for the whole year. We couldn't have dreamed of such a thing in the past, doctor! Before Liberation our brigade was so swampy, we never had a good harvest. . . ." Wang's words poured out

like water through a sluice-gate. After a bit he reverted to his main worry. "Doctor, Young Fang tells me that more tests will be needed to find out just what's wrong with this liver of mine. I'll certainly do my best to co-operate. I want to leave hospital as soon as I can. This winter we're building a new canal in our commune. It will be a big job. I must go and do my bit."

Lu at first listened seriously, but soon lost patience. He blamed Young Fang for starting all this. She looks dependable enough, he thought. How can she talk to the patient like this at such a crucial moment? What if he insists on a re-examination? She's simply asking for trouble.

Wang seemed to have guessed Lu's thoughts. He said, "That Young Fang is a fine lass. She told me my case is quite serious and asked me to help by telling you as soon as I feel uncomfortable, so that you can get at the source of the trouble quickly. . . ." He went on eagerly: "At your next meeting, doctor, you must praise Young Fang for us. All of us patients think the world of her. She's been well-educated in the countryside. It's made her very close to us peasants."

Wang's praise of Young Fang sounded to Lu like an indirect criticism of his own methods. He was fuming inwardly but could not very well leave. After glancing around his eyes came to rest on the instrument case in his hand, and that gave him an idea. He took out a thermometer. "Let's see what your temperature is now." He thrust the thermometer into Wang's mouth to stop his flow of words.

"Dr. Lu, this is for you."

At the sound of Young Chiang's voice behind him, Lu turned round. She thrust a sheet of paper into his hand. "Here's the fourth stool test report for Bed 27."

Lu was surprised. He had signed three orders only. How could there be a fourth? He looked at the signature on the chit, and saw that Young Fang had signed it. Frowning, he glanced at the report itself. Again no sign of parasitic amoebae. "Young Fang's really rather childish," he chuckled. "Does she expect to get a different result just by signing another chit?"

"No, doctor, that's not the right attitude," put in Young Chiang. "You weren't at our meeting this morning when we talked this over. We decided we ought to carry on with the stool tests for Bed 27. Young Fang told me to ask you: If no amoebae are found in the fourth test, please issue a chit for a fifth test."

"What?" exploded Lu. This was not like Young Chiang's finding fault with his distribution of food. That was a criticism he could accept. But now she was throwing doubt on his ability as a diagnostician. Intolerable! He demanded loudly: "When you said '*we* decided', who were '*we*'?"

"Young Fang, myself and. . . ."

"And me!" threw in the young orderly Ting, who happened to have overheard this exchange as he was sweeping the corridor outside.

Lu snorted. "You, eh? Well, it's not so simple."

Before he could explain further he caught sight of a familiar figure approaching. It was Young Fang.

She came over and asked: "Has the result of the stool test come?"

The other nurse pointed at the paper in Lu's hand. "There."

Lu passed the report to Young Fang.

After reading it she thought for a minute, then raised her head to meet the doctor's eyes. Her frank gaze rather disconcerted him and he hastily bent down to take the thermometer from Wang's mouth. The temperature was normal. He thought: No wonder he had so much to say for himself just now.

When Lu had put away his thermometer, Young Fang said to him, "Dr. Lu, there's something I want to discuss with you. . . ."

"Right," Lu cut in. "Let's go to the office."

He strode away and she followed. In the office, Lu banged his instrument case on the desk and sat down in a huff, rumpling his hair. Young Fang took a seat opposite him.

"You want to go on making more stool tests for Bed 27?" he demanded.

She nodded quietly.

"Have you no confidence in my judgement?" he rapped out. "Of course we doctors should respect our nurses and learn from

them, but nurses should respect doctors and learn from them too. This new way of integrating our work has got to be based on mutual respect and learning from each other. If we all insist on our own ideas, who's to have the final say?"

Young Fang shook her head. It had always seemed to her that Dr. Lu lacked a full understanding of this new style of work. Now she felt she had found the root of his ideological problem. She could have explained this at length, but that was not Young Fang's way. She simply said succinctly: "Our integration of work is based on serving the patients whole-heartedly without any thought of self."

"As if I didn't know that!" Lu waved this aside, resenting the way she seemed to be trying to pick fault with him. "That's the over-all prerequisite of course, but I'm talking about the immediate prerequisite — the mutual respect all medical workers should have for each other. With that we can't go wrong."

"No, the immediate prerequisite depends on the over-all one," Young Fang retorted. "It's no good talking in abstract terms."

"Who's talking in abstract terms?" Lu was nettled by her calm behaviour. "Isn't this problem we're up against concrete enough? We've made three tests, no, four. Isn't the result clear enough? I wonder, frankly, just what your motive is."

Even this aspersion failed to make the girl lose her temper. She continued calmly: "Dr. Lu, we've found some new evidence."

"So?" Lu adjusted his broad-rimmed glasses. "Well, what is it?"

"I put it down in the case history last night."

That took Lu aback. He still had the ingrained idea that he, and he alone, was in charge of the patients. And prior to this new integration of work he had always written the case history himself; so he had not looked at it this morning. Now he realized the nurses too were entitled to record their observations. He took from the shelf the case history of Bed 27 and turned to the last entry:

. . . For the last few days the patient's temperature has been fairly normal in the morning. Towards noon it varies between 38 and 38.5. During the night it rises to 40 degrees and fever af-

fects the patient's appetite. When his temperature is not too high he has no objection to a diet containing fat and takes ham-and-bean soup for lunch. . . . Such symptoms do not indicate cancer of the liver but rather a liver abscess. I suggest continuing the stool tests and keeping the patient under careful observation.

Fang Yeh

Lu glanced through this in a cursory manner. Closing the record he said: "There's not much point in making such observations." "Why not?"

Annoyed by this interrogation he snapped: "Such observations might have had some value before the diagnosis was made. Now we know it's cancer, they're irrelevant."

"Can you explain that more explicitly, doctor?" Young Fang spoke quietly but her tone was grave and incisive.

"This is hard to explain in a few words, Young Fang. After all, you make your observations for use as reference material, but I have the right to make an over-all analysis and take decisions. I don't have to accept all your suggestions. So I hope you won't be too stubborn. It isn't good either for you or for the work. You're young and want to learn more about medicine — fine. But don't overdo it and get a swelled head just because you're learning a thing or two from books. To be a doctor isn't quite as simple as serving meals. This time you insisted on stool tests and I issued three chits, but then you made a *fourth* test. And what was the result? I hope you'll think this over carefully."

Lu seldom lectured other people like this. All these criticisms of Young Fang today showed that he had finally come to the end of his patience. But having vented his feelings, he felt a twinge of compunction when he noticed that the girl had lowered her head and flushed.

In fact, although Young Fang was very upset, it was not because of personal resentment. What worried her was Lu's ideological problem. Lu was the head of the ward. Though normally he seemed to support the new integration of work, deep in his heart he still clung to Confucian ideas, thinking himself more intelligent than



others because he had read more books. This being so, how could there be a genuine, lasting integration of work? His bourgeois ideas had asserted themselves in his diagnosis of Wang's disease, blinding him to the facts. Yet he was unaware of this, fondly imagining that he had made a good showing in the integration of work. This was very dangerous. After considering this for a while, she raised her head again. "Dr. Lu, you're hampering our new integration of work with your old Confucian ideas. You think yourself wise and all the rest of us stupid."

Lu shook his head vehemently. It seemed to him that Young Fang, for all she looked so modest, was getting above herself. To end this argument he said, "Well, if you have any complaints, raise them at our next department meeting. At the moment I still have the authority to make decisions. Of course, I'm not happy about this talk we've had. I don't suppose you are either. It's only natural to take different views. But how should we solve this problem? Perhaps it would be better if we both made a self-criticism in place of all these recriminations, eh? Let's leave it at that today." Without waiting for Young Fang's reactions, he turned and marched off.

Gazing after him, the girl felt her mind in a turmoil. She stood up, then sat down again. Slowly she took from her pocket a notebook and pen and tried to sort out her thoughts. As the minutes went by her face brightened. It dawned on her that she was battling at the front against old conservative ideas, trying by her actions to combat the last vestiges of the revisionist line. Her heart burned with resolve to put up a good fight. For, in fact, this quiet girl had tremendous daring. When she finally stood up, the sunlight falling on her face made her eyes gleam. Nodding to herself to show her determination, she turned and left the room, going straight to the office of the Party branch.

Towards evening Old Yu, the Party secretary, came to Ward 3. After hearing Young Fang's report, the Party branch had talked the matter over. They agreed that this clash between the doctor and nurses in Ward 3 involved more than a medical problem — it revealed two ways of thinking. So Old Yu had come to the ward to study the problem and endeavour to solve it.

Ward 3 was on the third floor of the main building. The first room by the landing was the nurses' office. The corridor was empty and in the office Old Yu found only Young Chiang preparing the patients' medicine. At the sound of his footsteps she turned and beamed. Putting down the medicine in her hand, she pulled him into the room crying, "Quick, Old Yu! Young Fang and Dr. Lu are having a row."

"What about?"

"Look!" She opened the book recording the doctors' instructions. "Here's Dr. Lu's order for chemotherapy treatment of cancer for Bed 27."

Old Yu read the instruction carefully, then asked, "What's *your* opinion?"

"I'm positive Dr. Lu's wrong!" Young Chiang spoke hotly. "He's not taking a responsible attitude towards the patient, and he pays no attention to our opinions. I'm not going to give that treatment!"

Smiling at her furious look, Old Yu asked again, "What do other comrades think?"

"The same as I do, most of them. They're all in the pantry now. Go and ask them. I'll come when I'm through here." Young Chiang pushed Old Yu out of the office.

That afternoon Young Fang had arrived early for her shift and at once caught sight of the doctor's order for cancer chemotherapy for Bed 27. She was flabbergasted. For chemotherapy, while it destroys malignant cancer cells, at the same time destroys many healthy cells as well. Since Wang's disease was still open to doubt, if it turned out not to be cancer this treatment would weaken his resistance and might make him worse. Young Fang ran off to consult some other nurses, then went to find Dr. Lu.

Lu had volunteered to help Young Ting wash up in the pantry. Sleeves rolled up, a blue apron over his white coat, he was making such a clatter with the bowls that he did not hear Fang's arrival.

"There's something I want to discuss with you, Dr. Lu."

"What's that?" He turned in surprise.

"You can't prescribe chemotherapy for Bed 27."

"Why not? Who says so?" Lu asked angrily.

"*We* do! All of us." She indicated the nurses close behind her.

"Young Fang, you've gone too far!"

Lu was furious. Not content to criticize him, this pig-headed girl even had the nerve to countermand his orders! Outrageous! He started arguing vociferously but she would not give an inch, rebutting him on each point. Soon Lu was bellowing with rage and quite a crowd had gathered. By the time Old Yu reached the pantry, the quarrel was at its height.

"This is very dangerous!" Young Fang was crying. "You've got it stuck in your head that the people on top are wise, those below are stupid. That's Confucianism — it leads to retrogression."

"Seems to me, Young Fang, the one thing you've learned is to stick big labels on people." Lu tore off his apron and flapped it furiously. "Look! Don't I help the nurses and orderlies in their work? Who says I think those on top are wise, those below stupid? Is this retrogression?" He flung the apron at her.

"Dr. Lu!" Old Yu stepped forward and caught the apron. "Why throw that at her, doctor?" he asked gravely. "Because she's criticized you?"

"Old Yu, she's gone too far," Lu spluttered.

Old Yu turned to the others. "What do the rest of you think?"

A general discussion started. Some said that Young Fang was absolutely right, others that Lu was trying to do a good job. Some praised Young Fang's acuteness in grasping essentials, others argued that the doctor had taken part quite keenly in the new movement and to accuse him of retrogression was too harsh.

Old Yu as he listened was secretly pleased with Young Fang. It delighted him to see the rapid progress made by the younger generation in the struggle between old and new ideas. However, since he believed that quite a few other people shared Lu's outlook, he knew that the matter must be handled with care to give the whole staff a better understanding of the significance of the new movement to integrate their work.

"Dr. Lu," he said earnestly, "you have been doing the work of nurses and orderlies, giving injections, distributing medicine, helping

with the meals and washing up. . . . All this is fine. Still, just doing these jobs doesn't mean that you have remoulded your outlook a hundred per cent. You can't say that you've completely discarded those old Confucian ideas. This reminds me of something that happened before the Cultural Revolution, and in which you were involved. Suppose I tell you all the story again. This may help us to see the problem more clearly." With that Old Yu embarked on his anecdote.

One day the operating theatre was crowded. A well-known thoracic surgeon was engaged in a major operation and so, apart from the usual assistant surgeon, nurses and anaesthetist, other doctors and interns had come in to watch. In spite of the throng of people it was very quiet as, with bated breath, all fixed their eyes on the surgeon's hands under the lamp. The chest was cut open. Forceps were clipped to the arteries to stop bleeding. Suddenly a retractor flew from the surgeon's hand, hit the glasses an intern was wearing and clattered to the ground. All looked up in surprise. They saw the intern flush, saw the supercilious look in the chief surgeon's eyes. Then the surgeon signalled to the man with a camera beside him. "Here, take this . . . take that. . . . Another shot from this angle . . . right!" As the flash blazed again and again, a smile appeared on the surgeon's face. Then the others began to understand what had happened.

The patient was suffering from oesophagus cancer. The surgeon wanted to remove all the lymphnodes in the thorax, and to provide a record of his brilliant operation for some future thesis he had ordered pictures of it to be taken. This had prolonged the duration of the operation. The intern, seeing that the patient was growing weaker and weaker from loss of blood, had whispered: "If we don't hurry, professor, the patient may not pull through." This offended the surgeon, who picked up a retractor and threw it at the intern.

In fact, the patient died a few days later, owing to excessive loss of blood and the length of the operation. The indignant intern reported this to the director. However, the director said that, for the sake of research, protracted operations were sometimes necessary. He advised him not to make an issue of it simply on account

of personal resentment. So, instead of receiving support, the intern was rebuked by the authorities.

Old Yu went on with emotion: "I'd just been sent to the hospital from the army, and was a member of the Party branch committee of the surgical department. This incident aroused my indignation, but though I raised the matter at several meetings, it was no use. A revisionist line held sway then in the medical field, and to some people what the expert or authority said was law. If an ordinary intern criticized a doctor, that was considered impertinence; and for a surgeon to throw a retractor at him was perfectly all right. Just think, why did they preach that those in high positions are wise, those below are stupid? They wanted dictatorship of the bourgeoisie."

All present hearing this story clenched their fists.

Dr. Lu was moved too. His eyes on Old Yu he said, "Surely you don't mean I'm tarred with the same brush?"

Actually that intern had been Lu himself. By comparing the surgeon's throwing of the retractor with Lu's throwing of the apron today, Old Yu had given him a big jolt. He hardly knew what to think. Sometimes he felt that he was right, but then he had misgivings. He needed someone to set him clear on this.

Old Yu said encouragingly: "Dr. Lu, the rights and wrongs of any specific case can be thrashed out by reasoning and an examination of the facts, then verified through practice. So we can't say that if a doctor insists on his diagnosis he necessarily considers himself wiser than the nurses. The crucial problem is: do we pay sufficient attention to our colleagues' suggestions and analyse the matter seriously? If, on the other hand, we consider medical knowledge as private capital and the doctor's word as law, this *does* mean thinking ourselves wiser than the masses.

"The aim of this movement to give doctors, nurses and orderlies overlapping functions is not just to make doctors stop giving themselves airs, or to put all medical workers on an equal basis so that they learn to respect each other. We want more than just an appearance of democracy. In the past, under the rule of the revisionist line in medicine, there was a hierarchy with the director, the specialists, professors and doctors on top lording it over the nurses and orderlies.

This hierarchical system kept the hospital under the control of bourgeois intellectuals. By introducing our new system and integrating our work, we have smashed that old rule. Now, under the leadership of the Communist Party, our medical workers can give full play to their revolutionary initiative, whole-heartedly serve the workers, peasants and soldiers, and truly carry out Chairman Mao's revolutionary line. So this integration of our work is a new revolutionary phenomenon. If you consider it from this angle, Dr. Lu, you may get a better understanding of the problem." Old Yu handed him back the apron.

Then Young Fang stepped over and said earnestly: "Dr. Lu, can't we discuss the matter again before making any decision?"

Lu fumbled with the apron in his hands and was silent. At last he said, "I can't make up my mind about a number of problems, both technical and ideological. I'll have to think them over. But we can postpone the chemotherapy treatment. As for the stool tests, we may as well go on with them."

All smiled with relief.

Old Yu could see that Lu was wavering. It was too much to expect him to get straight on everything immediately. He said cheerfully, "This is something that concerns not only Dr. Lu and Young Fang. We had better discuss it together again. One question is the treatment of Wang's illness; another, how to integrate our work."

They all went their different ways then. Young Fang went back for her shift. Dr. Lu put on the apron and continued washing up and Old Yu, rolling up his sleeves, gave him a hand. They chatted as they worked.

The next morning before starting work, Lu went to the office in search of Young Fang. As he put down his surgical kit, he heard behind him a cheerful voice exclaim: "Young Fang, we've found the amoebae!"

Lu turned and saw the laboratory assistant Li. Before he could say anything, Li had thrust a report into his hand.

"Will you give this to Young Fang, Dr. Lu? We've found amoebae in the stool test. See there."



"You have?" exclaimed Lu. "How is it you've come at this hour with the report?" His surprise was due to the fact that, except in emergencies, no work was done in the laboratory at night.

"It was Young Fang's idea." Li smiled. "These amoebae die if exposed too long to the air; and in the last few days Bed 27's been on a course of antibiotics so the number of his bowel movements came down. It happens his bowel movements usually come at night. So she asked us to help her by making the test at night, and of course we agreed. After three this morning she rang me up asking me to fetch the stool. And now we've found the amoebae."

Reading the report Lu said: "It was very good of you to work overtime."

"That's nothing," Li answered. "It's Young Fang who's been working overtime. Her eyes were bloodshot last night. She's been doing successive night shifts and not rested properly in the day-time either. For two whole nights she had not a wink of sleep." Li turned as he reached the door. "I must learn from her spirit!" With a smile he left.

Lu's hand holding the report trembled. His eyes fell on a yellow paper under the glass top of the desk. It was a report on the supersonic wave test. It stated explicitly that there was a fluid wave 4.5 cm on the right anterior axillary line between the tenth and eleventh ribs. He was taken aback, for this clearly indicated that the patient in Bed 27 had a liver abscess, and a serious one at that. Effective treatment must be given at once, or the patient's life would be in danger. His mind in a turmoil, he raised his eyes and saw Young Fang coming in, radiant, carrying a tray of medicine. He hurried to meet her but did not know what to say. Thrusting the result of the stool test at her, he urged: "Look at this, quick."

A month later, in the nurses' office Lu was looking through the case history of Bed 27. Carefully he tore off two blue test reports and one yellow report on the supersonic wave test.

Young Chiang beside him said jokingly, "What a thing to do, doctor! Destroying a case history?"

"Don't jump to conclusions without investigation. I've got Comrade Wang Ken-fu's permission for this. I'm keeping these reports to remind me not to take the wrong line again. Don't you think it's a good idea?" Lu folded the sheets carefully and put them in his coat pocket.

Young Chiang laughed. "You're looking very pleased, doctor. Is it because Wang Ken-fu is leaving today?"

"Don't be sarcastic. You should allow people to correct their mistakes. Besides, it's not dialectics — the idea that people can't have any faults."

"You should leave that argument to someone else, not try to justify yourself." She giggled.

"Not at all. Truth is truth. Why shouldn't I tell the truth about myself?" Lu changed over to the offensive. "As for you, all you can do is pin labels on people. You can't compare with Young Fang. She doesn't talk much, but what she says makes sense. Those years of tempering in the countryside have made her forge ahead of us older people. We must really root up our old Confucian ideas." His solemn expression made Young Chiang laugh even more.



Young Fang came in just then carrying a tray and overheard Lu's praise of her. She blushed. "Dr. Lu, Old Wang's speedy recovery is thanks to the way you treated him and all the time you spent on his case."

"Not a bit of it," disclaimed Lu, touched by her sincere commendation. "I did no more than my duty."

They heard Young Ting's voice outside the door just then. "Uncle Wang's leaving! Fang, Chiang, Dr. Lu . . . come on."

At once they went out. Other doctors, nurses and patients also emerged from the wards. Accompanied by Old Yu, Wang was striding towards their office, his face ruddy, looking far more vigorous than a month previously.

"Well, I'm off," he cried. "Thank you all. Now I can join in digging the new canal!"

They laughed and trooped with him to the stairs. Gazing after Wang, Lu thought: "We've not only cured his illness, but diagnosed mine as well!"

Illustrated by Wang Wei-bsin

A Store Near the People's Square

One evening in 1967, the city was so brightly illuminated that the moon by comparison seemed faint and dim. A propaganda truck was driving slowly along, its loud-speakers broadcasting militant songs of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. There seemed to be more people in the streets than during the day, all of them hurrying purposefully along. In the centre of the city, red flags fluttered over a square filled with bobbing heads. Ever since the start of the Cultural Revolution this square had always been crowded, for it was here that people came to air their views or hold debates, sometimes all through the night.

It was closing time. But a little store near the square was still full of customers, hurriedly paying for and picking up their purchases.

The young salesman Chou Pai-cheng nimbly brought out goods and wrapped them up, his scarlet armband gleaming in the lamplight. All of a sudden, a voice rang out, "Closing time, comrades. Hurry up, please!"

It was Li Yu-tai, an older salesman. His warning created a greater commotion.

"I want a box of stencils!"

"Ten writing brushes, the biggest ones!"

"Comrade!... Comrade!..."

Chou was snowed under by the avalanche of demands. His red armband flashing, his busy hands flying, he served the customers as fast as he could till Li stepped out from behind the counter and yelled, "Please use the back door now."

Busy as he was, Chou went over to him and urged in a low voice, "Don't hurry them so, Old Li."

"This way, this way out," Li shouted, stopping a man who was going towards the front door and pointing the way out through a narrow passage in the back. In the hubbub, he didn't hear Chou's hurried request.

The waiting customers began clamouring for the goods they wanted. Chou rushed back to the counter. It was a long time before the store emptied completely.

Sighing in relief, Li took off his oversleeves and glanced at his watch. "Now we can sit down at last to write out our criticisms, Chou," he said as he spread out a sheet of paper on the glass counter.

Tap, tap... There was a knocking at the door.

"We're closed. Come back tomorrow," Li called out.

But a voice came through the door. "We're writing a big-character poster, and we've just run out of ink, right in the middle."

When Chou unbolted the door, seven or eight people tried to squeeze in.

"Have you all come to buy ink?" Li demanded sternly, standing like a guard, hand ready to shut the door. But the people pushed their way in and asked Chou for ink, colours for gouache, etc. They were delighted at Chou's warm reception. When they had made their purchases, a young man in overalls stepped over to thank Li. "You've supported our revolution!"

Li nodded, although in his heart he was thinking, "But we need to get on with our own revolution tool!" He couldn't stop worrying about what to write.

As soon as the customers had gone, Li closed the door, pulled up a high stool and spread his paper out again on the counter. He

had already written the title: "Resolutely Debunk the Revisionist Line in Running Our Stores." After staring at this for a while he pulled a long face and complained, "We'll never get done if you keep letting customers in. Are we going to have a meeting to criticize the revisionist line tomorrow morning, or aren't we? I haven't even started preparing my talk yet!"

"Certainly we'll have the meeting," Chou said. "What are you going to talk about?"

"Resolutely debunk the revisionist line and Manager Ho Shen-chih's way of putting profit in command," Li answered as glibly as if he were quoting slogans.

"That's too general. Give some examples. Facts speak for themselves and make a deeper impression."

"You're right. But I need time to think up some concrete examples," groaned Li, tapping his ball-point pen against his forehead.

Just then there was another knock at the door.

"Coming, coming." Li stood up, very much annoyed, put his pen down and made for the door. He opened the window in it.

"What do you want?"

"Have you got powder for making paste?"

It was the same young man in overalls.

"Back again, eh?" Li grumbled, his lips set sternly.

"Everything's changing, comrade. This is a period of revolution and putting up big-character posters, slogans and wall-newspapers requires a lot of paste. We had a whole pail of it earlier this evening, but now there's not a bit left."

Chou brought a large box full of packets of paste powder to the door. He handed them one by one through the window. When the young man had all he could carry, he ran back to join his comrades.

Li had just closed the window when Chou cried abruptly, "Quick, Old Li. Get some paper."

"Someone's knocked again?"

"No."

"Oh, I was beginning to think I must be deaf."

"Then you didn't hear someone outside asking for paper?"

Dubious, Li stepped forward and opened the small window. Poking his head through it, he looked round. "Who wants paper?"

"Me!" a middle-aged woman responded. "Your service is excellent. Even though I didn't speak loudly, you still heard me."

Taking up a big roll of paper, Chou told a bewildered Li, "We might as well open the door."

"Open the door?" Li was thinking: If we open the door, the store will soon be full of people again. How will we ever finish writing our criticisms? To avoid the issue, he said, "Give the paper to the customer."

Chou lifted the paper but it wouldn't go through the window.

"Look," he joked, "the window is too small to meet the needs of the revolution." Putting down the paper, he opened one panel of the door.

"Oh! So *you're* making revolution now!" the woman exclaimed.

As both men stared at her in surprise, she added, "Why, the day before yesterday I came here at about this time of the evening for some mimeograph ink. But all I got was 'we're closed'. I peered through a crack in the door and saw a tall skinny fellow. So I pleaded with him. But what do you think he said?" Her voice rose indignantly. "He grumbled from behind the door, 'We didn't set up this store just for *your* convenience.' What sort of person is he to say things like that?"

Chou had got worked up too. "We're now criticizing such attitudes in running a store, comrade. Thank you for giving us such valuable material to use in criticizing the revisionist line our store used to be run on." Turning to Li, he went on, "Ho Shen-chih, our manager, was on duty the evening before last. He's always been against serving at night. He says, 'It's not worth our while to keep the store open at night. The only customers we get are a few peasants bringing vegetables to the city. The money we make doesn't even cover the cost of electricity.' But that's just a pretext. The fact of the matter is: he doesn't want to serve the workers, peasants and soldiers."

Suddenly, a jeep came hooting to a halt before the store. A strapping young fellow jumped off. Chou recognized Chang Wei from

the revolutionary rebels' team of Kuangming Machinery Plant. Not long before, a capitalist roader there, appalled by the workers' criticism of his revisionist way of running the plant, had tried to silence their protests by means of financial pressure. He refused to approve the rebels' requests for supplies, giving them neither paper nor money. The workers had raised money themselves to buy paper. But when Chang Wei came to the store, he discovered they didn't have enough. Chou had made up the difference out of his own pocket. Since then Chang and Chou had become good friends and their friendship grew apace in those stirring days.

"Still open at this hour?" Chang addressed them cheerfully when he caught sight of Chou.

"We're ready to serve the revolution at any time," replied Chou with a smile.

"Great. At daybreak tomorrow morning all the revolutionary rebels of our league are going to hold a rally here. They'll be coming from all over the city to demonstrate against the revisionist line. Tens of thousands of people will be passing your store."

"As the saying goes, 'Grain and fodder must be prepared in advance for the soldiers and horses'," Chou responded warmly. "We'll have tea and refreshments ready for you."

But Li was already worrying: Where were they going to get such things at midnight?

Guessing what was on Li's mind, Chou said, "Would you make some tea while I call up the confectionery?"

Li set up a tripod in front of the store and was carrying out an urn when he heard Chou shouting over the telephone, "What? You've started working at night too? Very good! So we're fighting side by side." While speaking he jotted down some notes. After making several calls, he went over to Li and thrust the pad under his nose. "This is the bakery workers' slogan: 'Increase output for the revolution!' And the confectionery workers': 'Guarantee the supply!'" Chou read them out pointing to each word.

"Old Li," Chou continued, "the Cultural Revolution is sweeping away old habits. Great transformations are taking place. Here, let's open the door wider."

By now, people were coming from all sides for the rally. Revolutionary rebels, red armbands on their sleeves, marched in long, orderly rows like great waves converging on the square.

There were a good many people in the store by then, some munching bread or biscuits, others drinking hot tea or milk. The all-night service given by the store elicited appreciative comments.

Looking at the lively scene, Chou said to Li, "I suggest that our store change its hours. Let's stay open round the clock."

"I agree!" Li responded at once. The events of that night had touched his heart. He too felt that Ho Shen-chih's working style must be criticized. Now he had plenty of things to say at the meeting.

"Tomorrow... No, today!" Li corrected himself, "I'll be the first to speak at the criticism meeting." He glanced at the crowd milling round the door and then at the wall across the street. There, a worker was writing: "Long Live the Victory of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution!"

Chou swung back both panels of the door which had only been half open, resolved that their store would remain for ever open to the workers, peasants and soldiers.

The Ten-Year Plan

Work starts at eight in the machine tool plant. But for Ku Ah-ming, Party secretary of the third workshop, the working day starts at seven. Rain or shine, summer or winter, he is invariably there at seven sharp.

However, in the plant, changes occur with every passing day. At the time our story starts, all the workers were busy discussing the draft for a ten-year plan or, as Old Chou, vice-secretary of the plant Party committee, liked to put it, the changes to be brought about in the next ten years. Take the avenue from the gate to the main building, for instance. That had already changed, for two rows of young poplars had just been planted there.

Only the day before, Ku had noticed the slender silvery saplings shaking in the cold wind. Today, he was surprised to see that thick straw ropes had been wound round the trunks, protecting them from the cold. Bamboo poles supporting some of the smaller saplings formed the character *jen* (人) for "man". There was no need to ask who had done this — it had to be Old Chou.

Ku remembered the week before, while out planting trees in response to the Party committee's call as part of the ten-year plan, he himself

had remarked, "We'll have two fine rows of green trees here next spring."

Old Chou had quickly pointed out that even fine saplings need a helping hand when a storm bears down on them. So Ku was certain that it was Old Chou who had lent them this helping hand.

As he walked on towards the third workshop, the roar of a motor broke the calm of the morning. Wondering who was working at that early hour, he quickened his step. From the door, he caught sight of two grey heads in close consultation in front of a precision tool machine. As the signal lights blinked on and off, he recognized Old Pan, a veteran worker and the third workshop's most skilled technician, deep in discussion with a sturdy figure in a cotton-padded jacket. It was Old Chou. He seemed to be commenting on the shiny new part in his hand. Old Pan pushed a button, and the spindle whirled.

So Old Chou had already arrived to tackle the question of quality. Little Yang had been operating this new precision tool machine for barely a week before an inspector reported that the number of rejects he turned out was too high. That was three days ago and now Old Chou had come to do something about it. For as head of the plant's operations section, Old Chou set high standards. Luckily Ku himself had already decided that Yang must go back to his old lathe. Pleased that he had taken the matter in hand before Chou's arrival, he went into his own office.

He leisurely lit a cigarette before spreading the draft of the ten-year plan out on his desk. The first item on the agenda at their pre-shift meeting that morning was to study the plan in detail, point by point. In ten years' time, this workshop's output alone would surpass the whole factory's present production. His heart glowed at the thought. But there were plenty of obstacles to surmount. Their shortage of technicians, for one thing, was going to present a problem.

He thought about the substandard parts produced by the young workers. This was the result of a decision taken at a meeting of the whole plant held the previous week. Representatives of all the shops had made speeches about the ten-year plan, then the discussion was opened to all. Young Pai, secretary of the third workshop's Youth

League branch, strode up to the platform to speak in the name of three young workers who had just finished their apprenticeship. After a short introduction, he criticized Ku openly. His were fighting words. "Our workshop seems to be having great difficulty in fulfilling the production quota for this fourth quarter, and yet three brand-new precision tool machines are lying idle in the store-room. Why?"

"That's the spirit! They're three young tigers." Old Chou nudged Ku **who** sat next to him on the platform.

"Bold enough to climb up to the sky if you give them a ladder," Ku retorted **wryly**.

"Then why not give them one?" responded Old Chou eagerly. "At the crucial moment we must lend them a hand too."

"What! Give... well, all right." So Ku after some thought supported the young men's request to be allowed to operate the new machines. His speech received an ovation. But who were the workers applauding, the young men or Ku?

The following week, Ku received the inspector's report that the young workers were producing too many rejects. Little Yang was the worst. Ku told him he must give up working on the new lathe. But it was only after a long talk that the young man was persuaded to accept his decision.

He was still lost in thought when Old Pan stepped into his office. A mysterious smile flickered on his face as he handed Ku a "letter" written on the back of an oily scrap of blueprint. Ku saw characters as big as dates:

Ah-ming,

Could you please find out the number of workers in your shop who will be retiring within the next ten years?

Chou Chang-lin

Ku's smile vanished and his black eyebrows knit in a frown. He shrugged, shaking the old cotton-padded jacket draped over his shoulders. As he re-read the note, he thought: "Strange! Old Chou is neither head of the personnel section nor chairman of the trade union. Why does he want this figure?" Then, since Old Chou never acted without reason, he surmised that some problem in his

workshop had caught Chou's attention. That note probably spelled trouble.

That morning towards the end of their pre-shift meeting, Ku asked the question Old Chou had posed.

"Who will be retiring within the next ten years? A show of hands please, comrades." A wry smile played about his lips.

There was a sudden silence in the workshop. The workers, nearly two hundred strong, all exchanged glances of surprise. Old Pan, due to retire the following year, was the first to put up his hand. Then, one after another, the veteran workers raised their hands. Some young workers could hardly contain their laughter. But at sight of the serious expression on the older men's faces, they no longer felt like laughing. Ten years! What did it mean to each and every one? Little Yang, his heart missing a beat, suddenly remembered something that had happened the previous evening.

After a game of table-tennis with Young Pai, he had walked with him to a bench beside the main road in the plant. There, they sat down and had a long talk. In the middle of their discussion, Yang blurted out: "I'm quitting! I'm not up to operating the new machine. Better stick to my old work. That'll save me more dressings down from Old Stick-in-the-Mud!"

"If you do that, you'll only give him a chance to say how right he is," Pai objected. "He's already singing the old tune: 'You can't operate a new precision tool machine if you don't have ten years' working experience behind you!' According to the old rules anyone who produces rejects should lose his bonus or be reprimanded!"

This Old Stick-in-the-Mud was a man in his forties who had been head of the technical section before the Cultural Revolution. Now working at the grass-roots as an inspector, he hated the new ways and kept hankering after the old regulations. So the workers had given him that nickname.

"But Master Ku has already told me that it doesn't matter what type of work we do — helping to build socialism is what counts. What answer can I give to that?" Yang hung his head in discouragement.



"Don't worry. Let's go and find him. Don't forget our pledge at the meeting."

A resonant voice rang out behind them, "How old are you, Little Yang?"

Both looked round. It was the Party vice-secretary. While working near by, Old Chou had overheard their conversation. Wearing only a sweater, he was busy wrapping straw ropes around the slender poplar saplings.

"Twenty." Yang stood up to answer.

"Still a Red Guard at the beginning of the Cultural Revolution, weren't you?" Old Chou asked, working all the while.

"No, I was only a Little Red Soldier."

"Oh!" Old Chou stopped his work. Wiping the sweat from his brow he eyed the young man, his lined face wrinkled in a smile. Then he spoke gravely, "In another ten years, you'll be thirty. Have you thought of that? Each of us must work out his own ten-year plan."

Recalling those words now, Yang felt the weight on his shoulders. He must speak his mind. But seeing Ku gravely counting hands, he sat down again.

Standing high on a bench, Ku surveyed that sea of raised hands and familiar faces. He felt a pang. Sixty workers in all, including himself. . . . These old mates of his, the shop's vanguard in both class struggle and technical innovations, would all be retiring within ten years. Such are the laws of nature, he thought with a sigh.

"The meeting is over," he announced abruptly, sweeping his hand as if to dispel his depression. He jumped off the bench and went back to his office. There he went over the draft of the plan again. He had the feeling he'd left out something in drawing it up, but couldn't put his finger on it. So he decided to consult Old Chou.

Everyone was hard at work to fulfil the production quota for the last quarter. In the operations office, there was a steady rhythm of abacuses clicking, telephones ringing and footsteps hurrying. The walls, too, were hung with production charts, a big blackboard covered with messages and announcements, maps of China and of the world. . . . The place had become a real battle headquarters!

Old Chou wasn't at his desk, but on it lay the shiny new part he had been examining that morning. Ku recognized, at one glance, the reject Yang had turned out a few days before. What a waste of fine steel! He sighed. Then he noticed that the part had been set on the draft of the ten-year plan for the whole plant. Looking closer, he saw that someone had pencilled a comment on the cover. The characters were as big as dates:

Good steel is wasted when the workers are careless. But if we don't tackle this problem correctly, we shall waste precious manpower. The plan is excellent. But let's pause and think. Can it be carried out if we rely only on veterans like ourselves? In the third workshop? % of the men will be retiring in the next ten years. Shouldn't we be as concerned about training the younger generation as we are about the quality of our products? Which one of us has never produced a reject in his life? All masters were once apprentices. We are all cadres who were former workers. Though we do less manual work now we are doing a kind of work which allows no rejects. I suggest discussing this problem at the Party committee meeting called to study the ten-year plan.

Ku's eyes had grown misty. He seemed to see Old Chou himself standing before him, with his greying temples, wrinkled forehead and bright eyes. He seemed to hear him asking these important questions. Although he worked in a small office twenty metres square, Old Chou saw so far ahead. Picking up a pencil, Ku carefully wrote "30%" where Old Chou had left a question mark. He realized now what he had left out in his plan. The word "man" flashed into his mind. That was the vital factor. They needed successors to man their revolutionary posts.

"Where's Old Chou?" he asked.

The man sitting opposite pointed to the blackboard. There it was written: Chou Chang-lin has gone to the Party committee meeting about the plan.

Ku strode out of the office and hurried along the wide tree-lined avenue. Gusts of wind swayed the rows of saplings. Old Chou's

words came back to him: "We should lend a helping hand when a storm bears down on them." He now understood the profound significance of these words. Recalling how Old Stick-in-the-Mud had used Yang's rejects to boost the old regulations, Ku clenched his fist, then marched forward with new determination. He would hold a study class in the third workshop.

The wide roads in the plant compound were bathed in sunshine. In the distance, the young worker Yang was striding along the avenue, full of vigour and vitality, like the sun at eight or nine in the morning.

Illustrated by Chen Yu-hsien



The Glittering Stone

Little Tranor had been missing for two days. Everyone in the village, young and old, was worried. All felt sorry for his mother, Yatso.

"Hasn't Tranor come home yet?" Grandpa Trashi asked.

"No, uncle. But come on in. The milk tea will be ready in a minute." Yatso lifted the flap of the yurt.

"Hasn't Chagdor gone to look for him?"

"No. He went off first thing in the morning the day before yesterday to attend a meeting in the county."

"I'm not staying. Well, don't you worry. Bright as he is, the boy won't come to any harm." The old man went away muttering, "Such a fine laddie. . ."

"Is Tranor back?" called Grandma Yangkyid while she was still some distance from the yurt.

"Not yet. Come in for a cup of tea, Grandma Yangkyid."

"No, thank you. I'm chopping firewood. Tranor used to help me with all my household chores. Now I'm rushed off my feet."

"Take it easy, grandma. I'll send Dronma over to help you when she comes home."

"No need. And you mustn't eat your heart out. The militiamen will find him, don't you worry." Grandma Yangkyid hobbled away.

After a while a couple of children came to the door.

"Is Tranor back, aunty? We want to do our homework with him."

"Wait a bit, he should be back soon."

Disappointed, the children went away.

After cooking supper, Yatso went out of the yurt to meet her two daughters who had been grazing sheep. She hoped that Tranor would return with them. Though normally a cheery soul, her son's disappearance had wiped the smile from her face and put an end to her singing.

All of a sudden the thud of horse-hoofs was heard. She spun round and ran up to three mounted militiamen. Before his horse came to a standstill Zodpa called out:

"Is Tranor home yet, Aunt Yatso? We've searched for a whole day but couldn't find a trace of your little eagle."

"You must be tired out. Come in and have some tea."

"No, thanks. We're going to the commune to call up Uncle Chagdor in the county, and to see if the other communes have any news."

"Don't worry, aunty. Tranor won't get lost. He's as sure-footed as a fawn."

They galloped away.

Yet how could Yatso stop worrying?

After penning the sheep Dronma and Drolma flew home.

"Mom! Is Tranor back?" Each catching hold of one of her hands, the two girls searched their mother's expectant eyes.

"The militiamen were back just now. They didn't find him."

"Give me some food to take, mom. I'll go and make another search," Dronma pleaded.

"Let me go with her, mom," the younger daughter Drolma begged.

Yatso shook her head and clasped the girls to her, as if afraid they would fly away like her son. "No, neither of you is to go. You must be good girls. This is a job for the militiamen. They're ringing up your father too. They'll be able to find him."

Since the girls had plans of their own they said no more, not wanting to upset their mother.

2

Tranor and his two sisters attended the primary school for the herdsmen's children. The teachers taught in the evening or toured the grazing grounds in the day-time giving lessons to the children who minded the sheep or did other jobs for the production brigade. Looking upon the country and the collective as the apple of their eyes, the children took extremely good care of the flock, while Tranor could even treat some of the sheep's common diseases.

Two days earlier, after breakfast Tranor had told his elder sister Dronma: "Jade Rabbit and Silver Flower are bloated. I'm going to Changki Mountain to get some herbs. I'll be back by evening in time to help pen the flock." His bright black eyes on his sister, he waited for her consent.

Dronma ran into the pen and tapped the stomachs of the two sheep. They *were* rather bloated.

"That was quite a storm we had yesterday," she said. "What'll you do if you run into another storm like that in the mountain?"

With fists clenched, Tranor declared, "I'd like to weather one like that!"

"Good." Pleased by his pluck, she said, "Run along. But be sure to come back early." She left with their mother to graze the flock. Tranor went into the yurt to get his herb bag when he remembered that he hadn't yet fetched water for Grandma Yangkyid. Putting down the bag he swung a bucket onto his back. Then he remembered something else.

Early that morning, when his father left for the meeting he had told him, "A geological prospecting team sent by Chairman Mao to

look for hidden treasures is arriving soon. When they come, show them that glittering stone grandpa found."

Happy as a lark, Tranor answered, "Right, dad. I will!"

It then occurred to him that it would be wonderful if he could show the prospectors the place where the stone had been found. Since he was going up the mountains, why not take the stone along and look for its site? He wanted to tell Dronma his idea, but as she was already some way off with her flock he set out with firm steps to fetch the water, leaving a trail of footprints in the damp earth.

When he returned his younger sister Drolma was bottle-feeding a sick calf behind the yurt. He went in hurriedly to collect a rope, a bag and some fried flour. Next he opened his "treasure box" and took out the stone his grandpa had left them. "Ah, treasure stone, I'll find your home today," he crowed. Just then Drolma came in. He shoved the stone into his robe and walked out, afraid that his sister might want to come along too.

But Drolma ran after him. "What's that you've got there, brother? Show it to me!"

"Certainly not."

"But I want to see it."

Tranor put his hand into his robe and caressed the stone fondly. Gravely he told her, "It's grandpa's stone, Drolma. As I'm gathering herbs today, I'm going up Changki Mountain to find its home."

"I want to go too."

"You must stay at home to mind the calf. Doesn't mother say, 'My Drolma is Chairman Mao's Little Red Soldier, she takes such good care of our brigade's calf! Aren't you a good girl?'" Tranor stuck up one thumb.

Her white teeth gleaming, Drolma laughed merrily.

"Well, Drolma, I'm off now."

It was a fine day. Walking quickly Tranor arrived at the foot of Changki Mountain at noon. After gathering the herbs he needed he deposited them in a cave, then started to climb the mountain.

This mountain rose in narrowing tiers like a pine-cone. When Tranor looked up, a sheer cliff hid its peak from sight. No wonder people said that no soaring skylark dared alight on it, no fearless



mother eagle dared let her fledgelings fly there alone. All of a sudden he remembered Yak Rock. Dad had told him that his grandpa had picked up that stone while climbing up the mountain past Yak Rock. So Tranor started to look for that rock. He went on searching until darkness fell. He could not climb the mountain in the dark. Returning home was out of the question too. Determined to find the home of the glittering stone, Tranor decided to spend the night up there and continue his search the next day. He was lucky enough to find a cave two metres deep, big enough for three people to shelter in. He ate some fried flour and soon fell sound asleep.

3

The deep blue sky, with stars for eyes, seemed to be leaning down over the grassland to hear the songs it loved. But the girls had not

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sung for two nights. With a heavy heart fourteen-year-old Dronma was spurring her horse on in search of her twelve-year-old brother, while ten-year-old Drolma, chasing behind her sister, was equally anxious to find him. They had stolen out without their mother's knowing. She must be worried sick now.

Pouting, Dronma recalled Tranor's parting words to her: "I'll be back by evening to help pen the flock." Yet he had stayed away for two days now. It had never taken him more than a day before to make a trip to Changki Mountain. So what could have happened this time? She had decided to go up the mountain and find him. She was worried and hoped he hadn't met with an accident. Maybe she would find him easily, better still he might be on his way home now.

"Sister! Dronma!"

Hearing this cry, Dronma reined up and shouted:

"Drolma! Go home at once!"

45

Whinnying, Drolma's sleek horse reared, then came to a stop. Dronma strained her eyes through the dark, then demanded sternly:

"Who told *you* to come? And on such a skittish horse too."

"I want to look for brother too. Don't be cross."

Dronma glared, but then thought that two might do better than one. She clamped her lips and said nothing more.

The horses cantered on, their riders silent. The moon and stars in the autumn sky were reflected in the irrigation canal like thousands of glittering eyes winking at the two girls.

The caressing night breeze was sweet with the scent of flowers which reminded the thirsty young riders of freshly brewed milk tea. The two horses trotted steadily side by side.

"Do you think the wolves can have got Tranor, sis?"

"Of course not! He knows how to deal with wolves."

"That's right. Remember that time out grazing when he killed two cubs. When the mother wolf charged, Tranor killed her with his dagger before she could scatter the flock. And another time. . . ."

"Oh, what a chatterbox you are. Have you swallowed a thrush's tongue, Drolma?"

"And another night, Tranor and you lassoed that old herd owner when he was trying to destroy our canal. Think I didn't know about that?"

"All right, parrot, you're too smart for me. How's that?"

Her sister's lack of sympathy made Drolma miss Tranor even more. "What a good brother he is!" she thought to herself. Tears dimmed her eyes and sparkled on her eyelashes.

"Brother never snubs me the way you do," she muttered. "He's like Lei Feng in the PLA — always warm and good to his comrades. When he wanted me to ride this horse he said, 'Don't be afraid, Drolma. I'll see that you're all right.' But you. . . ."

"Well, who told you to come? Why didn't you stay at home and look after mother?"

"That time I fetched water for Grandma Yangkyid and fell into the canal, brother fished me out. He said I was a good child of Chairman Mao's, I didn't cry even when I was frozen stiff. And remember that time you went with him to gather herbs and nearly fell over a

cliff? If he hadn't rushed to catch you in the nick of time, you'd have been smashed to pieces. Yet you give yourself the airs of a mountain eagle."

"Well, well. You've got the gift of the gab all right." Dronma couldn't help laughing. They slowed their horses down to an ambling pace, looking carefully about through the shadowy moonlight.

Drolma's stomach rumbled. In her haste to give her mother the slip and catch up with Dronma she had come out without food. But now it seemed that a wild-goose was honking in her stomach. Her mouth was parched too.

"Let's stop a bit and graze the horses," Dronma suggested. "They need to cool off."

She knew just how parched and hungry Drolma must be, both of them having skipped a meal. She dismounted and produced from her saddle-bag a bag of fried flour and a plastic water-bottle. Drolma's face lit up at this show of concern for her. She stretched out her hands.

Holding the things high over her head Dronma asked teasingly:

"Do I give myself the airs of a mountain eagle?"

"Well, why did you call me a parrot?"

"What time do you make it?"

"I think it's after midnight. The moon is riding high. Aren't you going to give me a drink after all?"

"Why are we here, Drolma?"

"What a question! To find Tranor."

"Then, whom do you suppose I brought these for?"

"Why show them to me then? I don't want them. Tranor has had nothing to eat or drink for two days now. I . . . I can stick it out." Drolma hung her head in shame. Taking her in her arms, Dronma clasped her tightly.

The cold wind nipped at them when they sat down. They mounted their horses again and rode on to a foot-hill near the irrigation canal where they stopped and sat on a mound to look around. The shimmering canal looked like a highway. Hunger and thirst aggravated their concern for Tranor. With her dagger Dronma dug up some

bracken roots while Drolma unearthed some reed roots. They chewed these slowly.

"Sis, is that boxful of glittering stones Tranor collected any use for building socialism?"

"Our dad says they are treasures."

"Then our grassland will become even more beautiful!"

"Sure. Even as it is, it's beautiful. Remember the song we used to sing?"

"Of course. Let's sing it now, sis. Brother might hear us."

"Right. The running water can accompany us. I'll start off. One, two, sing!"

The Milky Way sparkles with a myriad stars,
On the grasslands, a canal shimmers
And thousands of herdsmen are singing,
For in their hearts for ever shine
The golden rays of a never-setting sun.

Dronma brightened up suddenly at sight of something. Jumping up she cried, "Look, Drolma, could that be Tranor?"

Drolma leapt nimbly to her feet and raced her elder sister to the canal. Together they shouted:

"Tra . . . nor . . . !"

"Bro . . . ther . . . !"

4

The lantern in Yatso's yurt shone throughout the night as she sat up with bloodshot eyes waiting for her children. Time and again she stoked up the yak-dung fire to keep the milk tea hot. But neither Tranor nor the girls came back. She was so eaten up with worry that she could hardly sit still.

If only the children's father were at home! Zodpa, the militiaman, had promised to call him up at the county. Had he got through to him and could Chagdor come home tomorrow? Would the meeting be over by then?

48

Building an Aqueduct (oil painting)
by *Sun Kuo-chi* and *Chang Hung-tsan*



When the meeting ended, the county Party secretary told Chagdor, Party secretary of his brigade, "I'm giving you an urgent task. Three days ago a geological prospecting team ran into a bad storm in the mountains in your vicinity. We've had no radio contact with them since then. The team, eleven in all, is headed by Chang Yuan-ying. We're concerned for their safety. Go back right away and try to locate them, will you? You must help them in their work and look after their welfare too."

Although it was dark when the meeting ended, Chagdor didn't stop for supper. Taking a bag of fried flour he mounted his horse.

As luck would have it a bright moon lit up the track, cascading silvery beams on the white horse as it galloped over hill and dale.

When it reached the yurt, still lit up, the horse whinnied and stopped.

Yatso ran out, overjoyed to see her husband.

"You're back at last. Thank goodness!"

Struck by her anxious looks, he inquired:

"What's happened?"

"Didn't you get a telephone call?" She had taken it for granted that Zodpa had summoned him home. It turned out that the telephone line was down after the storm, so Zodpa hadn't got in touch with him.

"The line won't be repaired until noon. What's the matter? How are the children?"

"Tranor's lost. And now the girls are missing too."

"What do you mean?"

"Tranor went to Changki Mountain two days ago for herbs and hasn't come home. The militiamen couldn't find him. And last night the girls slipped off when I wasn't looking. They haven't come back either."

"Hum. . . ." Remembering what the county Party secretary had told him, Chagdor started putting two and two together, his brow knit in thought, his firm lips moving slightly. Hitting upon an idea, he swept his long sleeve and went into the yurt. Yatso came in too and poured him a bowl of hot tea. Chagdor accepted it calmly, blew at the butter floating on the top and took a few sips.

"Clouds don't move without a wind, and rain is heralded by clouds. There's a reason for everything. Before I left for the meeting I told Tranor that Chairman Mao was sending us a geological team and when they arrived he must show them my father's stone. He must have gone to Changki Mountain to find the place where the stone came from. Yes. That must be it. Worrying won't do any good, Yatso. When a problem crops up we must analyse the situation."

Yatso began to breathe more freely again.

"We lost touch with the team three days ago," Chagdor continued, standing up to go. "I'll take a search party out immediately. We'll find the children too."

"You haven't had anything to eat yet."

"I'll first call the men together."

Yatso was seeing Chagdor to the door when Drolma came flying up, gay as a lark. She shouted to her parents:

"We have guests, mom and dad. Quick! Come and welcome them."

The worried mother and the worn-out father brightened up at this good news. Yatso clasped her elated small daughter in her arms.

"Look, mom, two uncles have come."

In the rosy light of sunrise they saw Dronma, leading two horses. Behind her walked two young men in blue tunics.

"You're home, dad! Come and welcome the guests," Dronma called out.

"They're the uncles who've come to look for glittering stones." Wriggling out of her mother's arms, Drolma tugged at her father's robe, her black eyes sparkling.

"From the geological team?" Chagdor asked in happy surprise.

"Right. This is Uncle Li Chih and the taller one is Uncle Chang Yung," Drolma introduced them.

"These are my father and mother," Dronma put in.

Chagdor stepped forward with extended arms and cordially grasped the hands of the two young men.

"You've had a hard time of it, comrades. It's an honour to have you with us. Chairman Mao has sent you to survey our grasslands — what a big thing this is for us herdsmen!"

The yurt livened up instantly.

Yatso made tea in a copper kettle, Dronma deftly polished the tea-cups with gilt edges while Drolma in front of the stove plied the sheepskin bellows. Chagdor and the guests were talking like old friends.

"We've fallen in love with your miraculous grassland, Comrade Chagdor," declared Chang Yung.

"We've also fallen for all the treasures in it," added Li Chih.

"And we've all fallen in love with socialism," boomed Chagdor.

The three men laughed jubilantly.

The two sisters joined in their laughter. Infected by their spirit, Yatso put in: "Our girls gave me the slip last night to look for Tranor, but it's two honoured guests they've brought home instead."

"They didn't exactly invite us here, Comrade Yatso..." said Chang Yung humorously.

Drolma made haste to explain, "When the moon sank we sat by the canal to rest. Then we saw a shadow. Thinking it might be Tranor, we ran quickly over. But it was two men. Not knowing whether they were good men or bad ones we pulled out our daggers and dashed up shouting, 'Put up your hands!'" She demonstrated as she spoke.

Chang Yung continued, "We felt reassured when we came to the canal, knowing it must lead to a village. So we drank our fill and had just sat down to rest when we were suddenly challenged by two brave little girls with daggers in their hands. Ha, ha..."

Li Chih added, "To locate the mineral deposits in the Changki Mountain our team had climbed up to the mountain pass by dusk three days before. We had barely put up our tent when a storm broke. That pass is a wind funnel! Gale winds from all directions bore down on our tent like savage beasts. We could hardly keep our eyes open or stand our ground. With all our might we held on to the tent to keep our equipment safe. The storm threatened to tear down the tent, smash our equipment, and even blow us away.

"Raging wind, blinding lightning, deafening thunder and pouring rain — all assailed us together. Arm in arm we pressed ourselves against the tent to safeguard our equipment. What a battle! A

real 'baptism of storm'. But something went wrong with our walkie-talkie. So we two were sent to get in touch with the commune and our headquarters."

With deep feeling Chagdor told them, "The county committee is very concerned about you. I was asked to find out your whereabouts as fast as I could. I must learn from your fighting spirit. You don't know, I suppose, how your team is making out now."

"They're still prospecting on the mountains. We were asked to find out what you people know about possible mineral reserves."

"We'll do our best to help you." Chagdor was flushed with excitement. "My three children started collecting treasure stones long ago. They're real enthusiasts!"

At this, the girls produced their "treasure box" and proudly invited the two geologists to have a look.

The glittering stones, opalescent, orange and turquoise, were really eye-catching.

The girls watched the faces of the young men as they examined the stones. They saw elation turn gradually to indifference.

"What's wrong? Aren't these the sort you're looking for?" Drolma asked, taken aback.

"Isn't there a single useful one?" Dronma was uneasy too.

The two young men exchanged glances.

"These coloured stones are very lovely." Li Chih laughed disarmingly.

The girls pursed their lips in disappointment. They and Tranor had not collected these stone for playthings. They had wanted to contribute their bit for socialism.

But Dronma didn't lose heart. She poured the stones on to the ground.

Chagdor inquired, "Where's grandpa's stone?"

"Yes, show them grandpa's stone," said Drolma.

Tall Chang Yung pricked up his ears. "Another stone? Do let us see it."

Taking heart again, the girls rummaged through the stones but couldn't find what they wanted. "Where's that glittering stone? What's happened to it? Has it flown away?" Dronma asked.

Cocking her head, Drolma thought for a while. "Oh, I almost forgot. Brother has taken it with him."

A smile appeared on Chagdor's face. He turned to Yatso. "Didn't I guess that Tranor had gone up the Changki Mountain to look for minerals?"

Nodding, Yatso accepted the reason for her son's disappearance.

But Dronma stared crossly at her younger sister. "Talkative as a parrot, yet you don't tell us what we need to know!"

"I only just remembered." Drolma pouted.

Li Chih and Chang Yung wanted to know what this meant. Drolma told them how her brother had gone into the mountains two days earlier, and how they had gone to look for him.

"What a fine little chap!" exclaimed Li Chih. "We must go and find him at once."

Drolma cut in, "My brother's just splendid!" Fondling the stones she told them, "He found this one, and this one, in the desert. The hot sand almost scalded his bare feet. He told me when he had found enough stones he would go to Peking and give them to Chairman Mao."

Chang Yung stood up abruptly. "Let's go, Comrade Chagdor. We must find him at once."

Yatso's eyes moistened with emotion. But Chagdor replied calmly: "We'll find Tranor and the geological team too. My guess is that Tranor must've come across your comrades. Sit down. Let's finish our tea first."

Chagdor's calmness and confidence made Chang Yung sit down again.

"Tell me about your father's stone," he urged.

"Oh, that's a long story." Putting down his bowl Chagdor was about to tell the story when a group of poor and lower-middle herdsmen came in, bringing buttered tea, to see the geologists sent by Chairman Mao.

Day was breaking. The mountains and meadows were bathed in golden sunshine. Tranor had climbed up a cliff and, with his robe

tightly belted to serve as a pouch, filled it with the wild berries he had picked. He was eating them as he pressed on, for the boy was determined to find Yak Rock and climb up to the main peak of Chang-ki Mountain.

By noon Tranor was dog-tired, perspiration trickling down from the root of his hair to the nape of his neck, then all the way down his back. He found himself a clean place to rest, meaning to have some food. But before he sat down the boy had another good look at the rock he had chosen to sit on. It was shaped exactly like a yak reclining on the ground!

"Yak Rock!" Tranor shouted joyfully, his arms stretched out. Then he mounted on to the "back" of the "yak".

Beside the rock, Tranor found the path leading to the peak. Like a sure-footed antelope, he started climbing. At the foot of the peak a chilly wind was blowing which very soon dried the sweat on the boy's face. The peak was not far ahead now. Looking down, the mountains below him seemed tiny and dwarfed. Tranor found himself standing on scree. Jumping here and there, he turned over the stones with his hands, kicked them with his foot, eager to find one like his grandpa's glittering stone. But he failed to do so. Not losing heart, he scrambled up to a small but rugged peak, its base littered with stones of various weird animal shapes. These he eyed with amusement as he went on with his search. Suddenly, beside a cleft rock he spotted a pile of stones just like the glittering specimen in his hand. Overjoyed, he rushed towards them, eager to pick them all up.

The sun emerged from behind the clouds, lighting up the path for Tranor, whose robe was filled with glittering stones as he descended the mountain to the place where he had left his medicinal herbs. Having retrieved these, he sat down for a rest. He soon fell asleep, blissfully smiling.

When Tranor woke, he gave a start: it was almost dark! Rubbing his eyes, he was about to start home when he caught sight of a bonfire on one of the nearby peaks. Beside it there was a white tent round which some figures were moving.

"Is that the geologists' tent?" he wondered. He had seen a prospecting team in a film set up a white tent and make a fire; so he guessed that the men there were members of the geological team his dad had mentioned. At once he picked up the herbs and ran towards the bonfire.

It was indeed the geological prospecting team. After being caught in the storm, during which their walkie-talkie had broken down, they had lost contact with their headquarters and the local people. So the team leader had sent Li Chih and Chang Yung down the mountain to get in touch with the local herdsmen. They had been away for three days now. The other team members put up a red flag as they worked on the peaks in the day-time. At night, they stationed themselves on a mountain top and lit a bonfire to attract attention. This was their standard procedure for making their whereabouts known.

Tranor suddenly made his appearance beside the fire and stared, wide-eyed, at the men.

"Hullo there, lad!" one man hailed him. "Do you live on the grassland?"

"Yes. Not far from the foot of this mountain."

"Team Leader Chang," the man called towards the tent. "Come quick! We're not far from a village."

A stocky man lifted the tent flap and came out, throwing his coat over his shoulders. He was Team Leader Chang Yuan-ying. Gripping the boy's hand, he asked, "Well, little master of the grassland, what brings you up here at this hour?" He made Tranor join their circle round the fire.

The boy's face was lit up by the fire. Instead of answering the team leader's question he slipped his small hand into his robe and fondled the stones he had found, asking earnestly:

"Did Chairman Mao send you here to search for 'treasures'? I want the truth now, nothing but the truth!"

For a second this took the team leader's breath away. Then, twinkling, he urged his men, "Speak up! The truth, and nothing but the truth!"

A peal of laughter burst out on the mountain.



But Tranor did not laugh. "In my robe here I have 'treasure stones,'" he said gravely. "If you're not sent by Chairman Mao, you can't see them."

This announcement elated the men.

"Team Leader Chang," one of them shouted. "Did you hear that? 'Treasure stones'! Be our spokesman and tell him the truth."

"Right. Child. . . ."

"I'm not a child," protested Tranor, cutting him short. "I'm Tranor, a member of the Wulungtan People's Commune, a Little Red Soldier of our primary school and later on, when we set up a factory I'm going to be a worker."

The men could no longer restrain themselves and again broke into hearty laughter.

"Fine, fine," Team Leader Chang said. "Comrade future worker Tranor, we're Team 7 of Prospecting Brigade 103, sent here by our great leader Chairman Mao."

A smile irradiated the boy's face. At once he produced a stone and, holding it up, cried eagerly, "Look, uncles. This is one of the glittering stones from our Changki Mountain!"

Team Leader Chang took the stone. All eyes focused on it. Then Tranor fished out all the others he had collected and handed them over. And Chang passed them one by one to the rest of the team. By the light of the flames, they examined the stones intently. The moonlight, the fire-light and the delighted eyes of all were fixed on the glittering stones.

"Will you tell us where you found them, Tranor?" Chang asked exultantly, patting the boy on the shoulder.

"At the foot of Changki Mountain, near a cleft."

Everyone was cheered by this news. "What? Near a cleft? That must be the Cleft Peak of Changki Mountain that we're looking for."

"Meeting you is a great stroke of luck for us, Tranor," Chang remarked. "But how did you know there was ore there?" He took the boy's hand in his own.

"To explain that I'd better first tell you about that stone you're holding. That was left us by my grandpa."

"Left you by your grandpa?" Chang was puzzled.

Tranor's eyes brightened. "Here's the story as I heard it from my dad."

Tranor's grandfather was a veterinarian, who often picked medicinal herbs on Changki Mountain. One day two years before the Liberation of the grassland, he had brought home two glittering stones from the mountain. But next day the chieftain's overseer came to his yurt and snatched away one of the stones. Half a year later, the chieftain sent the overseer to see the old vet.

"Old fellow," said the lackey, "you're in luck. I gave your stone to the chief and he showed it to some foreign geologists. They say it's a rare ore. So the chief has decided to give you a sheep as reward. Come along with me to take it."

The old vet said nothing. What was the bloodsucker up to? he wondered as he followed the overseer.

The chieftain, his eyes half closed, sat cross-legged on a chair draped with a tiger skin, looking like a big tortoise. As the old veterinarian came in he stood up, counter to his usual custom, and greeted him with a hypocritical smile. At a cry from him, two men carried in a sheep carcass, the best part of the mutton already cut off. Looking at the old man, the chieftain said, "I'm giving you this fat sheep as a reward."

With a snort of laughter the vet replied, "You're rapacious enough to swallow a yak, horns and all. What has induced you today to give me a sheep?"

The pousy chieftain plumped back on his seat. "That stone you found comes from my estate. I want to know just where you found it. A foreign geological prospecting team has offered me a good price for the land. Just tell me where the stone comes from and you can take the sheep away with you. Later on, I shall give you money too, hard cash!"

The old man realized that the vicious chieftain meant to sell China's ore to imperialist gangsters. Unable to hold back his fury he roared:

"You want to sell our motherland's ore? To bribe me with a sheep skeleton? Nothing doing!"

"What? How dare you!" The chieftain jumped up.

With a contemptuous look in his eyes, the old veterinarian continued, "You're a faithful disciple of Buddha, aren't you? It was Buddha who gave me that stone you stole from me. Where it comes from, I don't know!"

Like a wild boar hit by a hunter's bullet, the chieftain bellowed for his thugs. He snatched up a whip and rained blows on the old man's head, ordering him to reveal where he had found the stone. This the vet refused to do, even though beaten until he lost consciousness.

Chagdor was twelve that year. With tears of hatred in his eyes, he carried his father home. As he lay dying the old man told his son, "Take good care of the stone. It's our country's precious ore. It comes from the foot of the main peak of Changki Mountain. You can get there by the path going past Yak Rock. Don't let slip a word about this to that heartless chieftain..."

When the old man died, the chieftain tried to force his son to find the ore for him. To keep his secret Chagdor ran away, taking the stone. Not until after Liberation did he return home.

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All the geologists were stirred by this story.

"Your grandpa did right," said one. "Only shameless traitors would sell out our country's wealth. Your grandpa was a fine man!"

The team leader was stirred too. "Don't worry, little comrade," he said to Tranor. "With the leadership of our Party and Chairman Mao, we're going to dig up the treasure buried underground."

"Let's go then!" Pointing to the main peak of the mountain, Tranor jumped up.

"To the main peak of Changki Mountain?" Chang asked.

"Yes. To Cleft Peak at its foot. I'll lead the way."

"Fine. But we'll start first thing tomorrow. What you need now is to stoke up." Turning to the tent, the team leader called, "Bring us some biscuits, desiccated meat and hot water!"

6

Like a spring breeze, the news of the arrival of a geological prospecting team had swept over the grasslands. All the poor and lower-

middle herdsmen were overjoyed. But when they heard that the team had lost touch with the outside world, they felt very concerned. They hurried to the house of Party Secretary Chagdor who was preparing to lead out a search party, and asked him to send their greetings to the geologists.

Chagdor promised to convey the herdsmen's class concern to the team. Then they reminded him to make sure and find Tranor too.

The horses of Chang Yung and Li Chih were adorned with red ribbons by the herdsmen. Drolma and Dronma rode the same horse. They imagined now that Tranor had been unable to tear himself away from the "treasure stones" on the mountain.

Chagdor rode at the head of his orderly contingent, as if leading a combat force or a delegation. Anxious yet elated, they spurred their horses on.

Before the sun could climb high, they arrived at the foot of Changki Mountain. From where they stood a narrow path twisted its way up the mountain. They climbed one slope after another, following the winding trail over grass and flowers, making the best speed they could. From time to time they looked up, scanning the skyline for the prospecting team, till the trail led them to an overhanging cliff. Here they dismounted. Against the deep blue of the sky, green trees skirted the main peak of Changki Mountain. Eagles were flying up and up as if to ride the white clouds.

"Hey, you up there!" little Drolma called to the eagles. "Have you seen men looking for 'treasure stones'? Have you seen Tranor?"

The girls had sharp eyes. Suddenly both sisters cried out, "Look, dad. Red flags!"

The men strained their eyes upward. There, on top of a cliff that looked like a prancing horse, a fiery red flag was fluttering in the sunshine.

"Listen. Someone's singing in the mountain."

Sparkling snow-capped mountains of the grassland —
Beneath them lies the people's treasure.
Hundreds of flowers blossom on the bright grassland,
The herdsmen work hard to build socialism.

"Sis," Drolma spoke up, "that's Tranor's voice! Hear him, dad? Shall we sing too, sis?"

"Yes, it's him! Let's sing," said Dronma. Joining in Tranor's song, their crisp voices rang out:

For in their hearts for ever shines
The golden rays of a never-setting sun.

The mountain was so steep here that they had to proceed on foot. Drolma and Dronma ran ahead of the rest.

"Sister . . . Drolma. . . ." Came a shrill call from above. Looking in the direction of the sound they spotted a boy, a broad-rimmed hat on his head, astride a rock. Bending down towards them, he was laughing. He had a round ruddy face, shining eyes and lips curled in a smile. It was Tranor!

"Tranor. . . ." Dronma and Drolma shouted, pressing on as fast as they could. Tranor came bounding down the slope to meet them and threw himself into his sisters' arms. Laughing and jumping for joy, they cried, "Tranor, Tranor. . . ."

"Why didn't you come home, brother?" Drolma demanded. "You had mom worried stiff and what a time we had of it trying to find you!"

"The neighbours kept dropping in to ask if you were back, Grandma Yangkyid and many others," added Dronma. "The militiamen hunted high and low for you too."

"I showed the team the way to the glittering stones. Whole piles of them, there are! Let me take you there."

The others thronged round the boy, showing their concern in the questions they fired off.

The members of the prospecting team clambered down the mountain too. Chagdor ran to meet them.

"Eagles pick the highest mountains to fly over! So here you are!" he exclaimed. "How goes it, comrades?"

"Team Leader Chang, comrades, we've found you at last," said Li Chih, then introduced them, "this is Comrade Chagdor, the brigade Party secretary. And this is our team leader, Comrade Chang Yuan-ying."

Soon the team was surrounded by the herdsmen. They greeted one another warmly, shaking hands and exchanging congratulations.

"How we've longed for this day! It's grand that you're here at last," Chagdor said. "Let me welcome you on behalf of the Party branch and all the poor and lower-middle herdsmen of our brigade."

Amid applause, Team Leader Chang spoke up, "All our mountains and rivers are linked with Peking. We meet dear ones wherever we go. Thank you all for your warm concern. . . ." His voice was drowned by clapping and by cheers.

Turning to Tranor, Chang went on, "We must also thank little Comrade Tranor. He's the one who led us to Cleft Peak to find such rich mineral deposits. He's made a big contribution to our socialist construction."

More applause broke out. Tranor's face lit up with a smile.

"One thing I must say is this. By coming here we've not only seen this beautiful grassland but the splendid qualities of our poor and lower-middle herdsmen — that's made an indelible impression on us. We're resolved to find more mines in this area, to do our bit for the Party and our motherland. Look, comrades! This is a very rare ore and one which is badly needed." Slipping his kit-bag from his shoulder, he fished out the glittering stones given him by Tranor. As he showed them to the people around, they sparkled in the bright sunshine with redoubled splendour.

Illustrated by Tung Chen-sheng

POEMS

Li Chun

Flowers on the Borderland

The flowers on our borderland are vivid and gay,
The flowers of our borderland are as red as fire,
Each glowing bud becomes a scarlet blossom,
Amid tall grasses that reach to the knee.

Shouldering rifles, our men leave the camp,
Their lusty voices reaching the sky,
As the tall grass ripples, the song ends,
In a flash all our men have vanished from sight.

Vanished from sight? Ah, look with care,
You'll see the gleam of bayonets in the grass;
Is it sunlight on blades of grass or steel?
Difficult to tell in such an ambush.

Larks in the sky continue their songs,
The flowers remain so vivid and gay.
But wait! Are they flowers or red cap-badges?
Difficult to tell in such an ambush.

As bayonets lie hidden in the green,
So loyal hearts lie deep among the flowers,
When a passing breeze brushes the tall grasses,
Bright eyes watch for a hidden enemy.

Neither flowers nor grass fade on the borderlands,
Our northern ramparts are stronger than steel,
Should an enemy dare to invade our land,
Red flowers and green grasses will lead the charge.

Ah, every blade of grass hides one of steel,
Every flower conceals a warrior;
However cold the northern blasts may be,
Our soldiers' young hearts will remain aflame.

Instructor in Political Theory (traditional
Chinese painting) by Wei Kuo-chiang



Spring Rain

Patter, patter, the spring rain falls

Over the borderlands the spring rain falls,
Bathing the earth, its pattering never ceases.
Faster than the beating of drums on the march,
Like the hammering hooves of the swiftest steeds.

In our army headquarters the lights still shine,
While the pattering rain persists. In the lamp's glow
Our men recite from the Marxist classics,
The spring rain refreshing every heart.

Everywhere among them happiness shines,
Like opening blossoms their joy unfolds,
Already in patches the grass is showing green,
Streams are filled with running water.

Along the borderlands when the spring rains come,
The vast grasslands are iridescent,
The peasants' ploughs turn the rich black furrows,
Herdsman play new tunes upon their flutes.

Shouldering guns our fighters go on reconnaissance,
And laugh to see the raindrop-jewelled flowers,
From each they gather renewed strength,
As they tighten their reins and gallop on.

Patter, patter the spring rain falls.

Our Motherland's Spring Waters

Through a rocky cleft a mountain torrent springs;
Its shrill cascade re-echoes in the hills;
O'er steep cliffs it courses, crossing ridges,
Then softly purling it meanders on.
Our soldiers at their bivouac in the hills
Welcome the spring as a travelling companion.
Eddying and swirling it winds its way,
Hurrying along it pipes a sweet melody.
How clear are our motherland's spring waters,
Dancing in the sun, scattering their lacy spray.

The mountain torrent is like my lute,
I toy with it and listen as I please;
To its accompaniment I sing a song,
Its rippling harmonizes with my voice.
I sing of our motherland and its people,
Pouring out my revolutionary resolution;
My song, mingling with the flowing water,
Is conveyed beyond ten thousand hills.
Ah, sweet spring water of our motherland,
How we revolutionary soldiers appreciate you!

I fill my canteen with sweet spring water,
To slake my thirst I raise my head,
And, tipping it up I drink my fill,
Then new vigour courses through my veins.

After draining one long draught,
My resolution rises to a mighty crest.
Heaven and earth take on new dimensions,
Full of determination on I go,
Ah, sweet spring water of our motherland,
Sweeter than milk, balm to my heart.

Through a rocky cleft a mountain torrent springs;
Its shrill cascade re-echoes in the hills;
O'er steep cliffs it courses, crossing ridges,
Then softly purling it meanders on.
It flows on endlessly as does my song,
For there's no end to my revolutionary feelings,
Ah, sweet spring water of our motherland,
Each drop of water nourishes my heart,
My spirits soar higher than its leaping waves.



Pan Fan

Morning Mist

Clearly the rolling hills surround us,
With their peasant families by the thousand,
Then suddenly a gossamer mist descends
Enshrouding the hills till all have vanished.

A giant tractor comes rumbling along
Cleaving a path through the humid haze;
Diesel engines, used for lumberjack's saws,
Beat a tattoo, like muffled battle drums.

Difficult to tell direction, so indistinct the sound
Of horses' hooves and sleds conveying logs;
Puzzling to judge the whereabouts
Of felled trees that come crashing down.

Indiscernible through the opaque blur of mist
Are our many warm pulsating hearts!
But listen, you Greater Khingan Mountains,
To the steps of our marching lumbermen!

See how our banners with the glorious words,
"In industry, learn from Taching,"
Turn all the hills crimson, lead all our people.
Each plank on bridge and tie on railroad bears their sweat.

Warmed by the fires from many a peasant hearth,
The rising mist leaves but a slim white scarf
Around the waist of our highest peaks;
Such beauty inspires our heroes to face new battles.



Tsui Ho-mei

The Unknown Hero

By March, spring has already come to the south;
Deep in the mountains our army camp is gay
With wild flowers, blooming along the bamboo fence;
While the kapok's crimson blossoms edge our stone-paved path.

Along the flower-strewn way come the villagers,
All asking to meet the man named "Wei Jen-min"*
Our secretary scans the platoons' lists of names,
Exclaims, "There is no such man in our whole company."

"But of course there is!" the team leader says,
His voice ringing resonant as a bronze bell.
"He cuts hair for us, fetches water, gathers firewood,
Working in our village during holidays!"

*Transliteration of the Chinese words, "Serve the people."

"Sure there is such a man," a Little Red Soldier says.
"When after rain, on my way to school,
The stream has overflowed and is too deep for me,
He carries me across it on his back."

Hearing this our secretary smiles, relieved.
"There's no need to ask, it's someone learning from Lei Feng."
Then Auntie Chao steps forward to suggest,
"Still, we should express our thanks to your leadership."

"When building our new granary,
He helped by digging in his noon rest hour.
I was afraid your commander might notice his absence
And criticize him too severely."

"What does he look like?" the secretary asks again.
"He's hefty, broad of shoulder, has a red star in his cap."
Our clever secretary looks perplexed,
"But that description fits all our men!"

While he speaks all hear soldiers singing
On their way back from a field exercise,
The villagers stare as they come along the flower-strewn way,
All look so strong and hefty, all have red stars in their caps.

"Why, there he is, that's my man!"
The villagers shout as they point to several men.
Little Swallow, a schoolgirl, grabs the arm of the commander,
While Auntie Chao rushes to the trumpeter. . . .

All our revolutionary armymen learn from Lei Feng
How to serve the people with their whole heart;
Because they serve and love the people,
Each and every one is called, "Wei Jen-min."

From Hundred Plant Garden to Three Flavour Study

Behind our house was a great garden known in our family as Hundred Plant Garden. It has long since been sold, together with the house, to the descendants of Chu Hsi;* and even the last time I saw it, already seven or eight years ago, I am pretty sure there were only weeds growing there. But in my childhood it was my paradise.

I need not speak of the green vegetable plots, the slippery stone coping round the well, the tall honey-locust tree, or the purple mulberries. Nor need I speak of the long shrilling of the cicadas among the leaves, the fat wasps couched in the flowering rape, or the nimble skylarks who suddenly soared straight up from the grass to the sky.

This essay comes from the collection *Dawn Blossoms Plucked at Dusk* written in 1926. See the article on p. 79. After Liberation, both Hundred Plant Garden and Three Flavour Study were incorporated in the Lu Hsun Museum in Shao-hsing.

*The house was sold to a family named Chu who were not actually descendants of Chu Hsi, the reactionary neo-Confucian scholar of the Sung Dynasty.

Just the foot of the low mud wall around the garden was a source of unfailing interest. Here field crickets droned away while house crickets chirped merrily. Turning over a broken brick, you might find a centipede. There were stink-beetles as well, and if you pressed a finger on their backs they emitted puffs of vapour from their rear orifices. Milkwort interwove with climbing fig which had fruit shaped like the calyx of a lotus, while the milkwort had swollen tubers. Folk said that some of these had human shapes and if you ate them you would become immortal, so I kept on pulling them up. By uprooting one I pulled out those next to it, and in this way destroyed part of the mud wall, but I never found a tuber shaped like a man. If you were not afraid of thorns you could pick raspberries too, like clusters of little coral beads, sweet yet tart, with a much finer colour and flavour than mulberries.

I did not venture into the long grass, because a huge tiger-snake was said to inhabit the garden.

Mama Chang* had told me a story:

Once upon a time a scholar was staying in an old temple to study. One evening while enjoying the cool of the courtyard he heard someone call his name. Responding he looked round and saw, over the wall, the head of a beautiful woman. She smiled, then disappeared. He was very pleased, till the old monk who came to chat with him each evening discovered what had happened. Detecting an evil influence on his face, he declared that the scholar must have seen the Beautiful Woman Snake — a monster with a human head and snake's body who was able to call a man's name. If he answered, the snake would come that night to devour him.

The scholar was nearly frightened to death, of course; but the old monk told him not to worry and gave him a little box, assuring him that if he put this by his pillow he could go to sleep without fear.

But though the scholar did as he was told, he could not sleep — and that is hardly surprising. At midnight, to be sure, the monster came! There sounded a hissing and rustling, as if of wind and rain, outside the door. Just as he was shaking with fright, however —

*A nurse in Lu Hsun's family.

whizz! — a golden ray streaked up from beside his pillow. Then outside the door utter silence fell, and the golden ray flew back once more to its box.

And after that? After that the old monk told him that this was a flying centipede which could suck out the brains of a snake — the Beautiful Woman Snake had been killed by it.

The moral of this was: If a strange voice calls your name, on no account answer.

This story brought home to me the perils with which human life is fraught. When I sat outside on a summer night I often felt too apprehensive to look at the wall, and longed for a box with a flying centipede in it like the old monk's. This was often in my thoughts when I walked to the edge of the long grass in Hundred Plant Garden. To this day I have never got hold of such a box, but neither have I encountered the tiger-snake or Beautiful Woman Snake. Of course, strange voices often call my name; but they have never proved to belong to Beautiful Woman Snakes.

In winter the garden was relatively dull; as soon as it snowed, though, that was a different story. Imprinting a snowman (by pressing your body on the snow) or building snow Buddhas required appreciative audiences; and since this was a deserted garden where visitors seldom came, such games were out of place here. I was therefore reduced to catching birds. This could not be done after a light fall of snow: the ground had to be covered for one or two days, so that the birds had gone hungry for some time. You swept a patch clear of snow, propped up a big bamboo sieve on a short stick, sprinkled some rice husks beneath it, then tied a long string to the stick and retired to a distance to hold it, waiting for birds to come. When they hopped under the sieve, you tugged the string and trapped them. Most of those caught were sparrows, but there were white-throated wagtails too, so wild that they died in less than a day of captivity.

It was Jun-tu's father* who taught me this method, but I was not adept at it. Birds hopped under my sieve all right, yet when I pulled

*A simple, honest peasant who sometimes worked as a hired hand in Lu Hsun's family.

the string and ran over to look there was usually nothing there, and after long efforts I caught merely three or four. Jun-tu's father in only half the time could catch dozens which, stowed in his bag, would cheep and jostle each other. I asked him once the reason for my failure. With a quiet smile he said:

"You're too impatient. You don't wait for them to get to the middle."

I don't know why my family decided to send me to school, or why they chose the school reputed to be the strictest in the town. Perhaps it was because I had spoiled the mud wall by uprooting milkwort, perhaps because I had thrown bricks into the Liangs' courtyard next door, perhaps because I had climbed the well coping to jump off it. . . . There is no means of knowing. At all events, this meant an end to my frequent visits to Hundred Plant Garden. Adieu, my crickets! Adieu, my raspberries and climbing figs!

A few hundred yards east of our house, across a stone bridge, was where my teacher lived. You went in through a black-lacquered bamboo gate, and the third room was the classroom. On the central wall hung the inscription Three Flavour Study, and under this was a painting of a portly fallow deer lying beneath an old tree. In the absence of a tablet to Confucius, we bowed before the inscription and the deer. The first time for Confucius, the second time for our teacher.

When we bowed the second time, our teacher bowed graciously back from the side of the room. A thin, tall old man with a grizzled beard, he wore large spectacles. And I had the greatest respect for him, having heard that he was the most upright, honourable and erudite man in our town.

I forget where it was that I heard that Tungfang Shuo* was another erudite scholar who knew of an insect called *kuai-tsai*** the incarnation of some unjustly slain ghost, which would vanish if you doused

*Tungfang Shuo (154-93 B.C.), a writer of the Western Han Dynasty.

**A mythical insect. Tradition has it that Emperor Wu (156-87 B.C.) of the Han Dynasty saw this insect on the road; no one knew what it was, but Tungfang Shuo told him it was called *kuai-tsai*.

it with wine. I longed to learn the details of this story, but Mama Chang could not enlighten me, for she after all was not an erudite scholar. Now my chance had come. I could ask my teacher.

"What is this insect *kuai-tsaï*, sir?" I asked hastily at the end of a new lesson, just before I was dismissed.

"I don't know." He seemed not at all pleased. Indeed, he looked rather angry.

Then I realized that students should not ask questions like this, but concentrate on studying. Being such a learned scholar, of course he must know the answer. When he said he did not know, it meant he would not tell me. Grown-ups often behaved like this, as I knew from many past experiences.

So I concentrated on studying. At midday I practised calligraphy, in the evening I made couplets. For the first few days the teacher was very stern, later he treated me better; but by degrees he increased my reading assignment and the number of characters in each line of the couplets I was set to write, from three to five, and finally to seven.

There was a garden behind Three Flavour Study too. Although it was small, you could climb the terrace there to pick winter plum, or search the ground and the fragrant oleander tree for the moulted skins of cicadas. Best of all was catching flies to feed ants, for that did not make any noise. But it was no use too many of us slipping out into the garden at the same time or staying out too long, for then the teacher would shout from the classroom:

"Where has everybody gone?"

Then everyone would slip back one after the other: it was no use all going back together. He had a ferule which he seldom used, and a method of punishing students by making them kneel which again he seldom used. In general, he simply glared round several times and shouted:

"Get on with your reading!"

Then all of us would read at the top of our voices, with a roar like a seething cauldron.

We all read from different texts:

"Is humanity far? When I seek it, it is here."*

"To mock a toothless man, say: The dog's kennel gapes wide."**

"On the upper ninth the dragon hides itself and bides its time."***

"Poor soil, with good produce of the inferior sort interspersed with superior produce; its tribute, matting, oranges, pomelos."****

.....

The teacher read aloud too. Later, our voices grew lower and faded away. He alone went on declaiming as loudly as ever:

"At a sweep of his iron sceptre, all stand amazed... The golden goblet brims over, but a thousand cups will not intoxicate him..."*****

I suspected this to be the finest literature, for whenever he reached this passage he always smiled, threw back his head a little and shook it, bending his head further and further back.

When our teacher was completely absorbed in his reading, that was most convenient for us. Some boys would then stage puppet-shows with paper helmets on their fingers. I used to draw, using what we called "Chingchuan paper" to trace the illustrations to various novels, just as we traced calligraphy. The more books I read, the more illustrations I traced. I never became a good student but I made not a little progress as an artist, the best sets I copied being two big volumes of illustrations, one from *Suppressing the Bandits*,***** the

*A saying of Confucius from the *Analects*.

**A line from the school text *Jade Forest of Sayings for the Young*.

***From the Confucian classic the *Book of Changes*. This work, written as a handbook for divination, was used by the feudal ruling class to enslave men's minds. This particular saying means that it is better not to advance until the time is ripe.

****From another Confucian classic the *Book of History*, a collection of documents believed to date from before the eighth century B.C. This book records that in the time of Yu the tribute from different districts was divided into nine categories, reflecting the class relationships in early slave society.

*****These lines from a narrative poem written in the Ching Dynasty (1644-1911) describe the pride and arrogance of some noble.

*****A reactionary 19th-century novel slandering a peasant revolt.

other from *The Pilgrimage to the West*.^{*} Later, needing ready money, I sold these to a rich classmate whose father ran a shop selling the tinsel coins used at funerals. I hear he is now the shop manager himself and will soon have risen to the rank of one of the local gentry. Those tracings of mine must have vanished long ago.

September 18

^{*}A novel about gods and demons written in the 16th century by Wu Cheng-en.

NOTES ON LITERATURE

Li Yun-ching

On Reading "From Hundred Plant Garden to Three Flavour Study"

Lu Hsun's criticism and exposure of Confucianism permeate not only his brilliant short stories and essays but his reminiscences too, as we can see from the recollections of his childhood published in this issue.

This reminiscence was written in September 1926. In it Lu Hsun (1881-1936) paints a vivid picture of his early education, exposes the corrupt, reactionary nature of Confucianism and forcefully attacks the feudal educational system based on that reactionary ideology.

After 1921 when the Chinese Communist Party was founded, Party leadership gave a powerful impetus to revolutionary mass movements in China. In 1926, the national revolutionary army in Kwangchow started its Northern Expedition to overthrow the warlords in the north. Frightened by the high tide of revolution the warlord government in Peking through its ministry of education compelled primary school-children to study Confucian classics, alleging that these classics could save the nation. Reactionary bourgeois scholars such as Hu Shih

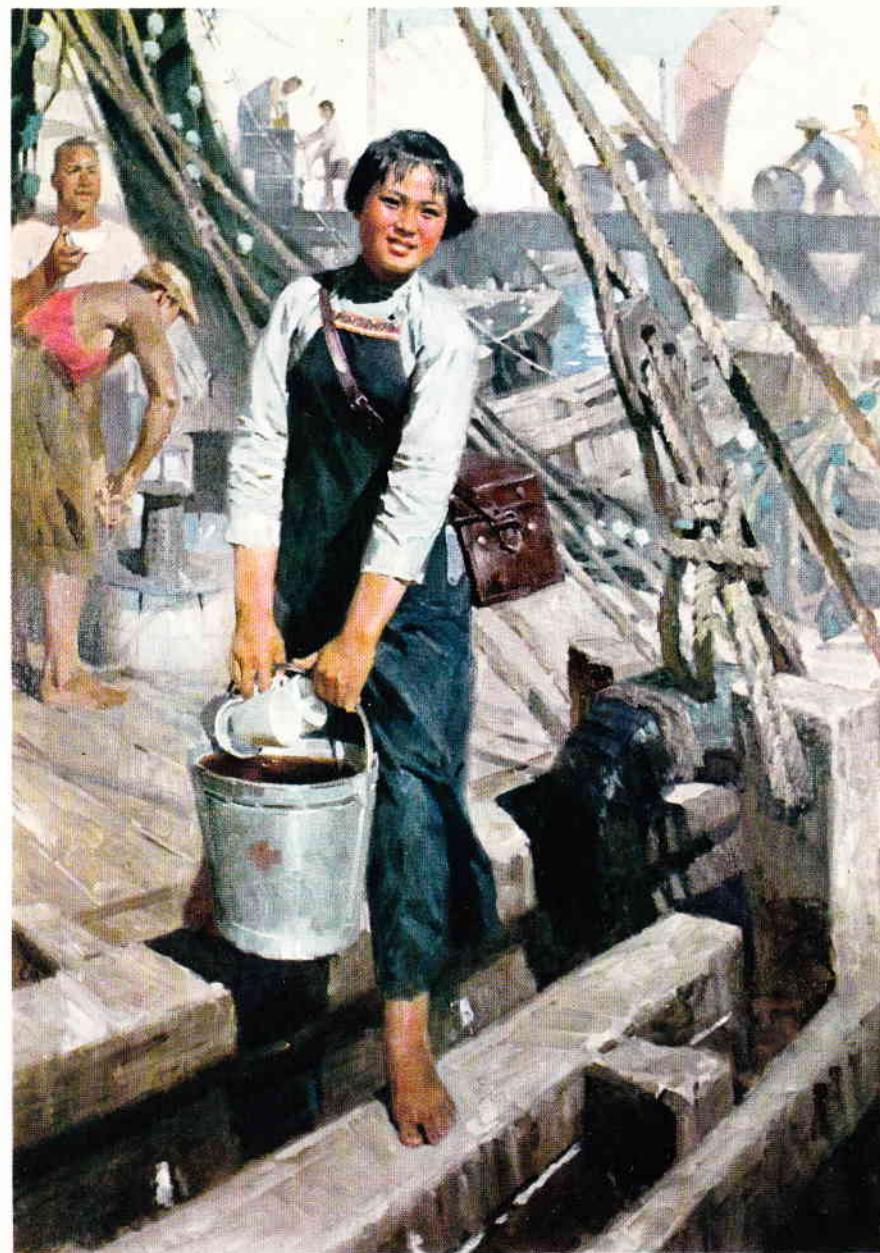
also urged young people to enter research institutes to make a study of China's ancient culture, immersing themselves in old books. Their aim was to fool the people, lead the youth astray, and obstruct the growth of the revolutionary mass movements led by the Communist Party. In a word, they attempted to stop the irresistible spread of Marxism-Leninism by means of Confucianism.

Lu Hsun while in Peking battled bravely against the reactionary cult of Confucius. He wrote various essays commenting on the contemporary study of the Confucian classics which were selected as texts for school-children, disclosing the reactionary nature of this education. He pointed out trenchantly that this emphasis on the study of ancient culture was nothing but a trap, that the claim that Confucianism could save the country was nothing but a stratagem used by the diehards. The northern warlords and their flunkies knew perfectly well that they could not make China independent and strong through the study of the Confucian classics, yet they made this claim to fool the people for their own ulterior motives — so as to maintain their reactionary rule.

In the autumn of 1926, persecution by the northern warlord government forced Lu Hsun to leave Peking and go to teach in Amoy University, but there too he found the cult of Confucius and official pressure for a return to the past. He wrote this and other reminiscences to attack this retrogressive trend.

This essay is divided into two strikingly contrasted parts, the first dealing mainly with Lu Hsun's childhood delight in Hundred Plant Garden, the second with the stifling atmosphere of Three Flavour Study. His happiness in the garden sets off his wretchedness in the school. Readers cannot but feel disgusted by the feudal educational system and Confucian ideology which poisoned the minds of the young and broke their spirit.

Lu Hsun starts by describing the site and fate of the garden, stating satirically that "it has long since been sold, together with the house, to the descendants of Chu Hsi". In this way he pokes fun at Chu Hsi (1130-1200), the chief protagonist of Confucianism in the Sung Dynasty, and at the same time shows his affection for the garden. To grown-ups, there was nothing too attractive about this garden



overgrown with weeds, but a small boy chafing at feudal Confucian restrictions and with a love of nature viewed it quite differently. Despite the lapse of so many years, Lu Hsun retained the fondest memories of the place and therefore wrote with feeling: "In my childhood it was my paradise."

The essay goes on to describe the wonders of this garden so full of life with its wide range of plants, trees, insects and birds. Lu Hsun was particularly fascinated by the foot of the low mud wall where field crickets droned away while house crickets chirped merrily, where stink-beetles if you pressed a finger on their backs emitted puffs of vapour from behind, where grew milkwort with swollen tubers. . . . All these were a source of endless interest and novelty to a child with an inquiring mind. And we see his natural curiosity, his keen urge to learn more about nature, from the way he played with the insects and pulled up the milkwort to examine its tubers. However, the feudal society and his feudal family would not allow him the freedom to develop his mind. Very soon he lost his paradise and was sent to Three Flavour Study to study the classics.

The later part of the essay presents his experiences in this school run on strictly Confucian lines — a painful ordeal for a freedom-loving boy. His devotion to the garden made him bid a fond farewell to its insects and plants, dear companions of his childhood. This shows his longing for freedom, his aversion to the stultifying Confucian system.

We are given a detailed description of the ceremony of bowing to the teacher. This was done before the inscription on the central wall and the painting of a fallow deer — "deer" in Chinese is a homophone for the character meaning "official emolument". This suggests that the spectre of Confucius dominated this classroom. The ultimate aim of feudal education was to achieve official rank and emoluments through a study of the Confucian classics and to lord it over the common people. Thus Confucius preached: "In study there is emolument."

The focal point of Confucius' reactionary views on education is that one who studies well can become an official. And the core of the feudal education based on Confucianism was the reactionary

concept of "self-restraint and a return to the rites". Confucius tried to train talents for the moribund slave-owning nobility of his time. The basic method he advocated for this was the cultivation of virtue behind closed doors and contempt for manual labour, while his trump card in suppressing dissident views and fettering the minds of his pupils was to present his teachings as sacrosanct.

Ever since Confucianism had been made the state cult on the recommendation of Tung Chung-shu (c.179-104 B.C.) in the Han Dynasty, all the reactionary rulers of successive dynasties used Confucianism as a tool to control the people, and so the Confucian ideas on education had become the foundation of the feudal educational system. From the sixth to the start of the twentieth century, the official examination system had further systematized the reactionary views of Confucius on education. And it was through these official examinations that most of the feudal officials were recruited. Three Flavour Study was one of the countless schools where the minds of young students were poisoned.

School-children were compelled to practise calligraphy, compose couplets and study Confucian texts in preparation for the official examinations. The content and method of the education in Three Flavour Study were based on reactionary Confucian ideas. Because Confucius advocated a return to the rites, schoolboys must learn to respect the sovereign and to recite such gibberish as "Poor soil, with good produce of the inferior sort interspersed with superior produce; its tribute, matting, oranges, pomelos." By memorizing passages from the *Analects* about "humanity" and other idealistic Confucian virtues, their minds were indoctrinated with reactionary political and ethical concepts.

The teacher also tried to cut the pupils off from real life, forbidding them to listen to anything happening outside the classroom window, and making them concentrate on reading the books handed down by the sages of old. They must take no part in productive labour and no interest in social affairs; even to leave the room and play in the garden at the back was forbidden.

Not only were boys discouraged from thinking for themselves and playing an active part in society, even asking questions was reprehensi-

ble. So when Lu Hsun raised a question, the teacher was displeased and "looked rather angry". Since the teacher held himself so aloof and frowned on the pupils' natural curiosity, considering it as unruly, the children could only recite the reactionary teachings of the Confucians. So Three Flavour Study and indeed all feudal schools were centres for the dissemination of Confucianism by the reactionary ruling class.

The feudal authorities used this education to train submissive officials. In the hope of preserving their rotten rule, they tried to cut young people off from the progressive trends of the day and from the labouring masses. Their aim was to poison the minds of the young, to produce officials to help them to suppress the masses, and docile slaves who would never rise in revolt.

These measures to enslave the minds of the people show the reactionary nature of the feudal educational system. However, Lu Hsun and his classmates did not knuckle under to this oppressive system. Whenever they had a chance, they would slip away to the backyard to have some fun, picking winter plum, hunting for the moulted skins of cicadas, or catching flies to feed ants. Even when confined to the classroom, they would seize each opportunity when the teacher was absorbed in his reading to stage puppet-shows or trace the illustrations in novels. Lu Hsun's reminiscence clearly brings out this truth: the feudal educational system which enfettered and injured the young was bound to be resisted by the younger generation. In the course of historical development, it must ultimately be destroyed.

Spurred by the present movement to repudiate Lin Piao and Confucius, the socialist revolution on our educational front is making rapid headway. We are now introducing far-reaching changes in our educational system, and many new phenomena have appeared. Workers, peasants and soldiers are today going to college, while school graduates are settling down in the countryside and mountain districts. A new generation of socialist youth is emerging. The scenes described in Lu Hsun's essay have become a thing of the past.

Yen Chien

A Selection of Peasants' Poems

The working people are the creators not only of the material wealth of society but its cultural wealth as well. In socialist New China, the workers, peasants and soldiers are masters of our country both politically and culturally. The publication of the *Selection of Poems from Hsiao-chin-chuang* by the Tientsin People's Publishing House last December once again testifies to this.

At present, creative writing and art work by workers, peasants and soldiers is developing vigorously in our country. As new writers and artists appear one after another, typical examples of a whole county or a whole brigade doing creative literary or art work also crop up. In the county of Huhsien in Shensi, for instance, more than 500 cadres and commune members do spare-time painting and an exhibition devoted to Huhsien peasant paintings held in Peking in 1973 was a demonstration of their achievements. The new volume of poems from Hsiao-chin-chuang in Paoti County, Tientsin, is another example. In this agricultural brigade of 101 households, nearly two hundred commune members, cadres, women and educated youth write poetry in

their spare time. Last year alone they wrote more than a thousand poems and songs. Both these examples point to the vigorous development of spare-time creative work in literature and art which is an important phase of the deepening revolution in literature and art now going on in our country.

This new volume includes 106 poems written by 63 peasant poets. Their fourfold contents are: singing the praise of Chairman Mao and the Chinese Communist Party, criticizing Lin Piao's counter-revolutionary revisionist line and Confucianism, praising the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution and socialist new things, and reflecting the heroic spirit of the poor and lower-middle peasants in changing heaven and earth. This brand-new poetry reflects the new thinking and working style of our poor and lower-middle peasants.

Once a desolate alkaline swamp flooded nine years out of ten, Hsiao-chin-chuang's poor and lower-middle peasants lived in dire poverty before it was liberated in 1945. Land reform was carried out soon after Liberation. Responding to Chairman Mao's call to get organized, the poor and lower-middle peasants took the road of agricultural co-operation and in 1958 set up a rural people's commune. In 1965 they also harnessed the tempestuous Chaopai River which had so often inundated Hsiao-chin-chuang in the past. This enabled farm production to develop to a certain extent, bringing improvements also to the peasants' living conditions. But Liu Shao-chi's counter-revolutionary revisionist line hampered rapid growth for it made some people put undue emphasis on sidelines at the expense of agricultural production.

After the beginning of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution in 1966, the broad masses of poor and lower-middle peasants repudiated Liu Shao-chi's line. They also learned from the experience of Tachai Brigade in Shansi Province. As a result tremendous changes occurred in Hsiao-chin-chuang.

Our poor and lower-middle peasants have come to understand from the bottom of their hearts that Chairman Mao's revolutionary line is their lifeline, for they have noted the difference between the new society and the old, witnessed the struggle between Chairman Mao's revolutionary line and Liu Shao-chi's counter-revolutionary

revisionist line and marked the changes brought by the Cultural Revolution. It is therefore with deep feeling that they sing of Chairman Mao and the Chinese Communist Party.

Party secretary of the brigade Wang Tso-shan writes:

A spring wind covers the vast green plain,
Golden waves ripple across broad acres.

.....

Hearts full of love we gaze towards Peking
And sing our bumper harvest song to Chairman Mao.

Wang Tu, leader of the militia company in Hsiao-chin-chuang, writes:

Fond hopes of so many years,
Happy dreams of a thousand nights.
How many times have I gazed at the far North Star,
And envisaged red lanterns on the Tien An Men Gate.

The peasants of Hsiao-chin-chuang who know what it is to love and to hate have used poetry as their weapon in the movement to criticize Lin Piao and Confucius which started last year, repudiating these reactionaries' line which advocated retrogression and a restoration of the old order. Wei Wen-chung, an old poor peasant who started working for landlords at the age of ten, wrote with bitter anger of his own childhood:

Lin Piao calls for a "return to the rites",
That only rouses my furious heart.
In that venomous old society,
I slaved away when barely ten.
Hungry, cold and much abused,
My tears flowed like a torrent,
My body was covered with sores.
Our great leader Chairman Mao
Rescued me from that living hell,
Lin Piao had the nerve to try a restoration,
I'll struggle against him till the end.

Numerous new socialist phenomena have appeared in Hsiao-chin-chuang since the Cultural Revolution and many poems reflect this theme. For example the study of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought is an important item in their political night school where the poor and lower-middle peasants study theory avidly. In a poem entitled *The Theorists*, spare-time night school teacher Wang Hsu depicts their eagerness graphically with these lines:

I walk the whole length of our village,
Patrolling it from one end to the other.

.....

Many households are still busy,
Golden light gleams through the windows,
So industriously are our theorists studying.

In the movement to learn from Tachai, they use poetry to express their bold spirit and lofty aspirations in their struggle with Nature as they dig irrigation channels and collect compost, reclaim land and improve soil or work on a threshing floor piled high with new grain. They sing:

Snowflakes dance and the wind dries sweat,
There is no winter amid such happiness.
Battling with Nature our hearts afire,
We'll turn our alkaline swamp into a golden plain.

Singing to urge each other on, one pile-driving team sings:

One, two, three and three, two, one,
Work chants link our hearts as one.
Every stone weight pounds with force,
Cracking frozen earth until it bursts.
Big chunks crumble into mounds of earth,
Enough to fill several barrows.

The wheelbarrow team promptly replies with these lines:

Elm-wood handles and rubber tires,
Sturdy shafts to bear a heavy load;

With rolled up sleeves, unbuttoned shirts,
We can carry up to half a ton.

The Hsiao-chin-chuang poems are vivid with the tang of rural life and the radiance of revolutionary ideals. In evocative everyday language, they are lively and rhythmic, breaking through the conventions of old poetry and thoroughly discarding the pretensions and embellishments of feudal-bourgeois men-of-letters. Fresh and wholesome, they are starting a new style of socialist poetry.

New people sing new songs and the freshness of the poems reflects the people's newer spirit. Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought heightens the peasants' political consciousness while the victory of Chairman Mao's revolutionary line inspires them with enthusiasm to write. With their life and work providing an inexhaustible source for creative writing, their poems are imbued with a lofty spirit, deep feeling and a strong flavour of our new times.



Ploughing the Sea (oil painting)
by *Tang Chi-hsiang* and *Yu Kuo-bung*

CHRONICLE

Educated Youth in the Countryside Write Poems

During the movement to criticize Lin Piao and Confucius, the educated young people who have gone to live and work in Chuchow County, Hunan Province, have written many poems to criticize and condemn Lin Piao and his counter-revolutionary revisionist line and the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius — those reactionary ideas of moribund exploiting classes. At the same time their poems sing the praise of the socialist new countryside and show the determination of the young people to carry forward the revolution there. An example is this poem by Yang Kuo-ping:

Battle drums thunder amid hurricanes;
Red flags unfold in the east wind.
Taking the road of merging with the workers and peasants
Our future is most bright.
Lin Piao's dirty nonsense
Cannot fool sons and daughters of the working class;
Never will the evil fog of Confucius and Mencius blur our vision.
.
Along the golden road pointed by Chairman Mao,
Persisting in work in the countryside
Onward we march, ever forward!

Encouraged by the new spirit of the masses of women who are breaking down old customs and habits and taking an active part in

building the socialist countryside, young Kuo Chen-hsing wrote the poem *Girl Tinker in the Commune*. Its subject smashes through traditional restrictions and whole-heartedly serves the masses of commune members.

Now, in villages where these young people live, every wall is covered by their revolutionary poems, and their revolutionary songs can be heard everywhere. The fire of life and struggles in the countryside gives rise to their militant poems, which in turn kindle them with greater enthusiasm in pushing forward the criticism of Lin Piao and Confucius.

A Peasant Night School of Fine Arts

Since the Peasant Night School of Fine Arts in Hsinan Commune of Mengtzu County in Yunnan Province was set up in 1972, its students have created more than two hundred works of art and held four exhibitions of traditional Chinese paintings, New-Year pictures, scissors-cuts, wood carvings and clay sculptures.

In the course of the movement to criticize Lin Piao and Confucius, the students have drawn and edited three sets of serial cartoons with the common title *Lin Piao and Confucius Are Jackals from the Same Lair*, published a special cartoon feature *Criticize Lin Piao and Confucius* and painted many murals.

With the help of this night school, many peasants and educated young people in the commune have taken up the brush and carving chisel to create works reflecting their own life of struggle.

Ho Chu-yung, a nineteen-year-old member of a women's scientific and technical group in one production brigade, recently did the painting *Women Technical Group*. Chou Hung, a Little Red Soldier of eleven, has produced two paintings *Pathbreaker in the Movement to Criticize Lin Piao and Confucius* and *Mother Teaches Me Mending*.

The local Party organization and government are giving attention and support to the students' activities in the arts, explaining to them the creative experience of the peasant painters of Huhsien, and supplying art reference books and instructors.

Literary and Artistic Creation in the Lunglin Minorities Autonomous County in Kwangsi

Several minorities nationalities — the Miao, Yi, Chilao and Chuang — live together in the Lunglin Autonomous County in Kwangsi. They have always loved folk-songs. And since the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, they not only sing them but compose new ones. At present over three hundred people in the county are engaged in amateur creation of literature and art. Some villages have formed mass groups for such activity and developed it on a broad scale.

Young Li Jung-chen, of Miao nationality, is the daughter of a salt carrier for the landlords in the old society who then lived in deep misery. After Liberation things changed vastly for her family. Now her brother and sister are receiving higher education. Taking the experience of the two generations of her own kith and kin as background, Li wrote a long poem, *Music and Songs Ring Out*. It describes a Miao girl going to a university, the great transformations in the villages of this nationality, their happy life today.

Yang Pa-chi, a poor peasant of sixty-two, toiled as a farm hand for seven landlords and local despots in the old society. Finally he went blind amid these hardships, and had to live by begging from door to door. The Liberation brought new life to Yang Pa-chi and, after medical treatment, he recovered his sight. His poems are profound in their feeling for the Party and Chairman Mao.

Besides poems, the amateur writers and artists of the autonomous county's nationalities have produced works of many other types — play-scripts, fiction, ballads, drawings, paintings and so on.

Ancient Palace Site Unearthed in Hupeh

Palace foundations of the Shang Dynasty dating back 3,400 to 3,500 years and a tomb containing skeletons of slaves slaughtered as human sacrifices were discovered in September, 1974 in the ancient city of Panlung in Huangpi County, Hupeh Province.

The palace site is rectangular, measuring 38.2 metres from east to west and 11 metres from north to south. It shows that the palace,

built on a rammed earth platform, had four chambers encircled by a corridor. There are 43 holes where big posts once stood under the eaves around the corridor as well as holes for smaller supporting columns. This bears witness to the wisdom and skill of the Chinese labouring people who erected such a magnificent building over 3,000 years ago, in the middle of the Shang Dynasty, when many tools such as the axes and chisels were still of stone. The excavation of this new site proves that Shang Dynasty culture had already spread to the valley of the Yangtse River, and provides important scientific data for the study of slave society in China.

At the tomb site, many valuable relics were found well-preserved. Although the inner and outer wooden coffins had rotted, their shape could still be discerned. An exquisite animal-mask design and thunder and cloud decorations carved on the outer walls of the outer wooden coffin represent China's earliest extant wood carvings. Funerary objects include more than 60 articles of bronze, jade and pottery. The biggest is a bronze *ting*-tripod 55 cm high. Artistically superb is a bronze *yueh*-axe, 41 cm long and bearing dragon and cicada designs.

Three skeletons of sacrificed slaves were found in the tomb. They give ample evidence of the crimes of the slave system, and are thus a powerful refutation of Confucius who strove with all his might to preserve slavery, and embellished it as "the rule of benevolence".





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