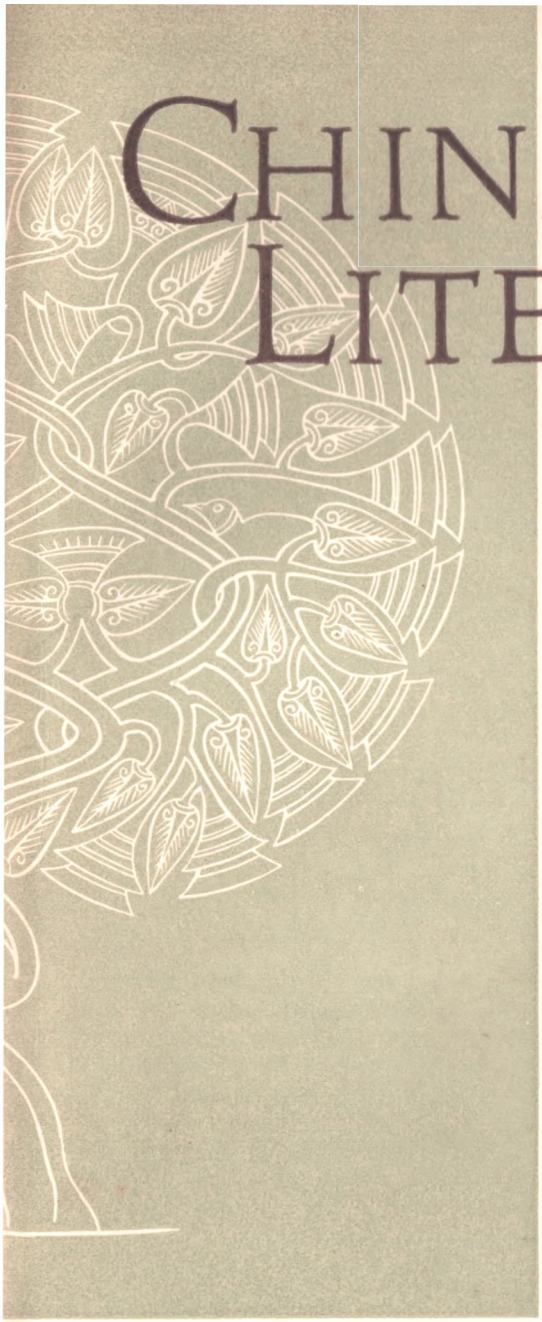

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NEXT-TIME PORT

1. In Which We Start with Tang Hsi

THIS story is called Next-Time Port. In other words, it's a story about a port. Why should a port have a name like that? Why should the boats sail next time? What does it mean? Is it a good thing or not? Suppose you wanted to sail a little earlier?

Don't be in such a hurry. Let's start with a boy called Tang Hsi.

Hsi was in the fourth form at primary school — in other words he was ten at the time of this story. He was a very thin boy, with a big head and long, skinny legs. He didn't look too strong, the way he kept yawning during his homework, but the moment he started playing he had plenty of energy and looked fit for anything. His arithmetic and Chinese weren't too good: he was always getting "3"* for one or the other. Yet you couldn't really call him stupid, because he could skate and swim, or play football, or catch fish with his hands or a line, hit sparrows with his catapult, catch insects, mould things out of clay, carve figures on his desk with a penknife, and make cardboard masks in which he looked like some fierce hero of old. In fact, he could do pretty well everything that boys of ten like doing.

As he was so fond of playing that he could never have enough of it, his elder sister, Mei, called him Can't Play Enough. Naturally Hsi didn't approve of this nickname. If you asked him, it wasn't a case of playing too much or never playing enough, but of playing too little and always

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The author was born in Wuchang, Hupeh, in 1915. He is a well-known writer of children's stories, four of which were published in *Chinese Literature* 1956, No. 1. *Next-Time Port* appeared in 1957.

*Marks in Chinese schools are graded from 5 to 1. 5 is full mark. 3 is a passing mark.

being interrupted. Look at all those games of football in which he was just racing down the field or about to shoot when the bell went. Or those times after supper when he was shouldering his home-made wooden rifle and fighting with the boys in the backyard — maybe in the middle of a charge — when it suddenly grew dark and mother would make him go home to do his homework. Even on Sundays things weren't exactly to his liking. One Sunday afternoon, for example, he went out of the city to fish. He hadn't been sitting long by the pool, and had only a few stickle-backs and sprats in his jar with one or two measly minnows — not even a single bream — when Mei loomed up behind him. Goodness knows how she had found him. She started lecturing him immediately.

"You really have no sense of time! Do you know it's nearly six?"

"So what?" retorted Hsi crossly. "I'm not afraid of you, you little old woman!"

He was rather put out all the same. For some time now there had seemed to be a voice nagging at him from morning till night: "Six, half past seven, quarter past eight, twelve o'clock! . . ." In other words: "Get up, go to school, time for class, another class, lunch-time, dinner-time! . . ." His form master, mother and Mei seemed to go out of their way to bother him. It really made him furious.

But whether he was furious or not, there was always someone to say: "Quarter to two, quarter past four, half past nine, twenty-five to ten! . . ."

Gradually Hsi realized that there was a peculiar thing which liked nothing better than making trouble for him and spoiling his fun. It was a queer invisible thing called Time, and it was the worst of the lot. It was obviously Time that was bossing his form master, and mother and Mei, and making them boss him. And yet Mei kept saying to him: "Keep your eye on the time! Keep your eye on the time!" as if Hsi could boss Time.

What was behind all this? If Time was something you could keep an eye on, what was it really like, and what made it such a nuisance?

Of course, Hsi wasn't really worried by these problems, and didn't have to cudgel his brains to solve them. If he were allowed to handle Mei's alarm clock, he would have the answers at once. Wasn't all time packed away in big and small clocks?

But Mei never let him touch her clock. It was a small red clock which stood on her desk, and really looked great fun.

Once when Mei was out, Hsi couldn't resist quietly picking it up.

First he just rubbed the glass with one hand. Yes, that was where Time lived, inside there where a heart seemed to be beating. As there was no one about, he slowly stretched out his other hand.

He turned the clock over and examined the bells carefully, as well as the long hand, the short hand, and the keys. "How did Time get in here?" he wondered. "And what else is there inside?"

There was no one to answer him. The clock just went on ticking softly: tick, tock, tick, tock.

He longed to open it and have a look, but the thought of how angry Mei would be frightened him off. Then he had a good idea.

"I'll just try out the bell to see what makes it ring," he said under his breath. "I'm not going to spoil it. . . . No one could blame me for that."

He turned the clock upside down and took hold of a key, but it was too stiff to turn. He tried another key. This one turned all right, but the bell did not ring. Then he tried the key in the middle, muttering: "That's funny. Those two thingamies are dumb — not a sound out of them."

There was suddenly a shrill ringing.

"Ting-ling-ling-ling! Ting-ling-ling-ling! . . ."

Hsi jumped with fright, forgetting Mei was out, dropped the clock on the desk and rushed out of the room. The alarm went on shouting after him, as if to tell the whole house how naughty he had been.

2. *The Little Man in the Clock*

HSI had been right. Time did live in the clock, and a curious little creature he was too. A few days later Hsi saw him for himself and they had a talk, in fact the two of them quarrelled.

It happened on Saturday evening.

On Saturday afternoon mother had bought tickets for Hsi and Mei to see a cartoon called *The Adventures of the Black Bear* after supper. Hsi didn't know this though, and after school he went with two friends to buy stamps. They didn't stay long in the stamp shop, and after buying some stamps they went straight home, just stopping in front of a few shop windows on the way. Yet funnily enough he didn't get home till after six. Mother was very annoyed. And Mei chose this moment to tell her how bad Hsi's marks had been recently. Mother asked at once for his mark book. Yes, during the last fortnight Hsi hadn't got a single 5. He had managed a 4 for Chinese, but had got 3 again for his arithmetic homework. Then mother discovered that he had not been doing his sums properly. She wouldn't let him go to the cinema, but said he must make up his sums between supper and nine o'clock.

Before setting off for the film, Mei thought she would comfort Hsi, but soon she was lecturing him again. She put the clock on his table.

"I'll let you use my clock this evening," she said. "But you must be on your honour and do your sums properly till nine o'clock — this will be a test for you. This is all because you were lazy, you know. That's why mother won't let you go to the film this evening. You really must show

more sense of responsibility. . . ." She warmed more and more to her subject. If she hadn't been afraid of being late for the film, goodness knows when she would have stopped.

Hsi felt it was most unfair. On most days he would have made a scene, because he was sure he had done nothing wrong, but when mother was angry it didn't do to make excuses. After Mei had gone he sat down in front of the clock.

After several yawns and a great effort of will, he found his arithmetic book. Slowly he copied out:

"Yesterday the grain depot handled 165 sacks of beans. . . ."

He stopped there. He was not interested in the grain depot. Somehow or other it was only too easy to imagine himself in the cinema with the rest of the audience. On the screen a big, clumsy black bear stood up like a human being, and started padding along on its hind legs. Then it slowly started to dance. After that he saw all sorts of amusing puppets, fighting and tumbling over each other. But before he could get a good look at them they disappeared. He had heard from his friends what fun *The Adventures of the Black Bear* was, and told his mother about it twice before she would buy the tickets. Now his chance was gone. Mother probably wouldn't buy him another ticket. It really was too bad. He imagined Mei sitting watching by herself with a smug smile on her face. That reminded him of the lecture she had just given him.

Tearing a page from his exercise book, he set about drawing a caricature of Mei. He made her worse-looking than she was. First of all, he gave her an enormous mouth. That was to show that she liked telling tales. Then he drew a pointed nose. That was to show how sharp she was. As a matter of fact, Mei's nose was rather pointed, but not as pointed as he made it. When the drawing was finished it didn't look like her, so he rubbed it out and started again. After he had done this several times, the result was a huge, smudgy black nose. He hadn't done this on purpose, mind you. Then he spent a long time giving her a lot of tangled hair, a regular bird's nest. For fear no one would recognize who this was, he wrote at one side: "This is Mei." Now people would know that this was his sister and not some other girl. Last of all, he drew two lines from her mouth around a lot of dots and a large exclamation mark. That, it goes without saying, was to show how she lectured people.

"Tick, tock, tick, tock, tick, tock. . . ."

The clock was suddenly ticking very loudly. Hsi had a look at it. It was three minutes to seven, and he hadn't yet finished a single sum. He hastily copied out a few more words:

" . . . The number of sacks of rice. . . ."

He suddenly remembered the Hungarian stamps he had bought. Were they still there? He just had to get his notebook out of his pocket and look at those stamps with dogs on them.

He started admiring them. What splendid dogs they were, and what jolly colours! Last time he had tried to swop two Japanese stamps with Tieh-so for one of these, and Tieh-so had refused. Now Hsi had some of his own, and if Tieh-so came asking for Japanese stamps he wouldn't swop with him. Tomorrow he'd see which of them had the best Hungarian stamps.

He fetched his album from the cupboard. As the stamps seemed in rather a mess, he began to sort them. But that was no easy job. Which country did this one belong to? He finally just stuck them in anyhow.

"Tick, tock, tick, tock, tick, tock! . . ."

The clock was nagging at him again. Hsi saw it was thirteen minutes past eight. He scribbled quickly:

" . . . 8 times as many as the beans. The total of rice. . . ."

The next moment his eye fell on the picture of Mei. It struck him that she was very like their maths teacher, Miss Wang, in many ways. Miss Wang was a real terror, always glaring at people, and Mei was always ticking him off. It was hard to understand all Miss Wang said, and Mei liked to use all sorts of new terms too. Of course there were some differences. Miss Wang wore glasses for short sight, and Mei had never worn glasses. If he added a pair, she would look more like a little old woman than ever, and almost as ugly as Miss Wang. "That's it! That's the way!" Hsi drew in the glasses, chuckling to himself.

He was just in the mood for drawing. After Mei's glasses he drew a small black bear by her, a tin soldier, a puppy, a plump duck, and whole rows of puppets, too many to count. He drew one after another, meaning to make a play out of them.

"Tick, tock, tick, tock, tick, tock! . . ." called the clock again, even more loudly this time.

Hsi looked up, but before he could see the time there was a click and the back of the clock swung open. Before he knew what was happening, a little man shot out of the clock. He dashed furiously towards Hsi, shouting:

"You *are* the limit!"

Hsi remembered seeing a little man like this in some fairy tale. He had on a pointed hat and checked overalls like a clown. His voice was very clear, and his face was like a child's except that he had a beard.

"This must be Time," thought Hsi. "He's angry because I've been drawing for so long."

"I was just drawing for a few minutes," he hastily explained.

Time shook his head violently.

"Don't tell lies! Do you think I don't know what you've been up to?"

"Honestly, I'm not lying." Hsi felt nervous. "I haven't done anything bad. I was just drawing for a bit. And I went through my stamps — that's all. I'm going to do my arithmetic now."

Time went on shaking his head.

"I don't believe it. I don't believe it! What other mischief have you been up to? Out with it now!"

"Why should I tell you?" Hsi was getting angry too. "Mind your own business!"

"This *is* my business."

"It isn't."

"It is."

"It isn't, so there!"

They shouted back and forth till Time was nearly speechless with rage and seemed ready to cry.

"All right, I wash my hands of you!" he shouted. "I'm going. You can do what you like, and play as long as you like. You say it's none of my business, and I'm sure I don't want to have anything to do with you. Being with you nearly drives me off my head. Do you think I can't play, or don't like playing? I'm going off now to enjoy myself. Goodbye!"

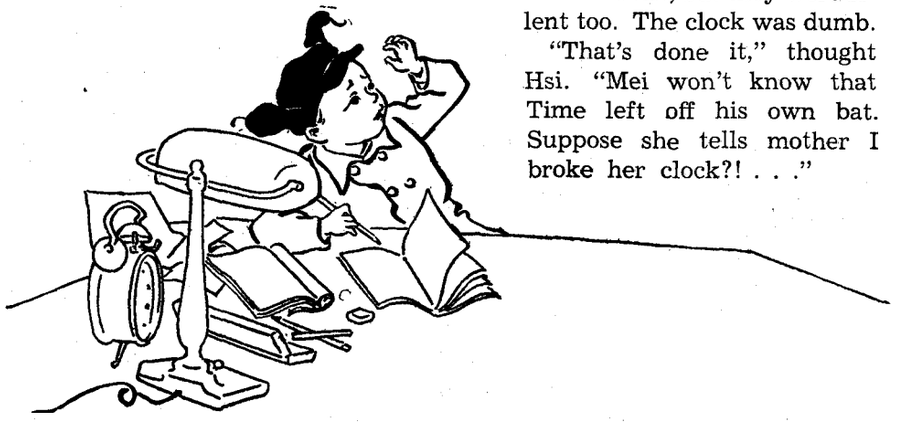
With this Time took a few wheels out of the clock, and quickly fitted them together like a bicycle. He jumped lightly into the saddle, took off his hat and waved it at Hsi with a final: "I'm off."

Hsi wanted him to wait while he thought things over, but before he could say a word Time went on:

"I'm not coming back. Not unless you ask me, that is. Goodbye."

He whizzed up to the window-sill on his bicycle, did some stunt riding there, and shot straight up the window-frame to disappear through the hole left for the chimney of the stove.

The moment Time disappeared the clock stopped ticking. Hsi picked it up and gave it a few hard shakes, but still it made no sound. He tapped the two bells, but they were silent too. The clock was dumb.



"That's done it," thought Hsi. "Mei won't know that Time left off his own bat. Suppose she tells mother I broke her clock?! . . ."

3. *The Picture of Mei Is Angry Too*

WHILE he was worrying about what Mei would do, his drawing of her **sat up. This** Mei was uglier than his real sister, and more of a spoil-sport **too. Pointing** an accusing finger at him, she asked:

"Why has the clock stopped?"

"I don't know," said Hsi. "I didn't do it."

"You must have!" The drawing flared up. "It must have been you! I'm going to tell mother. I'm going to tell Miss Wang too, and Mr. Chang and Miss Li. You didn't do your arithmetic. . . ."

"Please don't tell them. I'll do it now."

Mei shook her head so that her tousled hair flapped.

"I don't believe you! You've no intention of doing it. You've broken my clock and annoyed Time so much that he's gone away, and you don't mean ever to go to school again. . . ."

With her huge mouth, this Mei was a worse windbag than his real sister. She went straight on, and he couldn't get a word in. Touching her glasses she scolded:

"And another thing — why make me such a sight? Do I really look like this?"

The sight of her big black nose and all that matted hair made Hsi very uncomfortable.

"I didn't do it on purpose. I can't draw hair. . . ."

Mei produced a comb and tidied her hair as she went on lecturing him:

"Why don't you learn to draw properly? Your arithmetic is no good, neither is your drawing. Your Chinese is no good either. You're not good in any of your subjects! You just bully smaller children and make trouble. I'm going to tell mother. I really am!"

"Oh, don't! Please don't!" Hsi was properly frightened now. "I'll never draw you again, I promise I won't!"

"Oh, no!" Mei glared at him. "I've got to tell. You don't do your homework, you spoil my clock, you scribble silly pictures, you dirty your exercise book, and you answer me back all the time! . . ."

There was nothing Hsi could do — he couldn't get round this Mei he had drawn. Upset and angry, he took to his heels while Mei shouted after him:

"Stop! Where are you going?"

He rushed away without a look behind.

Outside it was too dark to see a thing. Yet oddly enough he didn't bump into anything, nor did he fall down. He dashed along, afraid Mei would catch up with him.

He ran as if he had wings till someone called:

"Hsi! Hurry up and go to the film!"

As soon as Hsi heard there was a film, he forgot everything unpleasant that had happened.

"What film?" he asked, stopping.

"A good one, a cartoon. There's a splendid football match in it. Get a move on! If you're late, there'll be no seats left."

Hsi couldn't tell from the voice who it was speaking.

"Who are you?" he asked.

"Me."

Still Hsi didn't know who it was.

"Who's 'me'?"

"It's me, silly. Don't you know an old pal?"

Hsi walked over. He had never set eyes on this old pal before. This was the first person to befriend him since Time had left him. But can you guess who it was?

4. *Grey Rat*

IT was Grey Rat. Normally Hsi couldn't have had such a friend, but now that Time had gone, all sorts of odd things were happening, and this was one of them — Hsi had met Grey Rat whom he didn't know was his friend.

Though Grey Rat wasn't too old, he had a few whiskers. From the way he kept doubling up you couldn't tell whether he was extra polite or simply afraid of the cold.

"How is it I don't know you?" asked Hsi.

"What d'you mean?" Grey Rat smacked his lips. "You know me. I'm Grey Rat. They call me Never Enough. You're Hsi, and they call you Can't Play Enough. . . ."

Hsi promptly corrected him huffily:

"I'm not Can't Play Enough. My name is Hsi."

"Never mind! It's all the same. Don't you remember your old pal?"

"I seem to remember you." Hsi felt he must have seen this creature somewhere. "Are you really a rat?"

Grey Rat winked his beady eyes rapidly.

"I certainly am. I'm certainly not, I mean. I'm a toy rat. I'm such a good sort that everyone likes me. Have you forgotten how much you like me?"

Hsi remembered that he did have a toy like this. His rat had an elastic band. If you wound this up, it could run about by itself.

"Do I honestly like you very much?" he asked.

"Of course! Come on and play."

"Where shall we go?"

"To Happy Land. You can't imagine anywhere more amusing and better fun. There are so many toys you can choose whatever you like, and play as long as you like. And there's no need to do arithmetic."

Hsi was decidedly pleased.

"Are there films there?" he asked.

"Plenty. You can see as many as you like. There's a swimming pool too, and a skating rink, and. . . ."

Hsi wasn't at all annoyed now with Grey Rat.

"Honest to goodness?" he asked. "Well, what are we waiting for?"

Grey Rat looked him slowly over from head to foot.

"It won't do." He shook his head. "They won't let you in like that!"

"Why not?" Hsi was taken aback.

"Don't get excited. It's all right. All you need do is change your shadow."

"Really and truly?" Hsi jumped for joy.

"I wouldn't deceive you," replied Grey Rat solemnly.

Then he told Hsi that Happy Land was where all the toys lived. But the toys couldn't stand children, who were always teasing them. So they were all against letting children in. As soon as they saw a child coming, they shut and barred the gate. If Hsi put on a toy shadow, though, they would take him for a toy and let him in. Of course, this was a trick. But instead of thinking carefully, Hsi asked:

"Will you change your shadow too?"

"I don't have to." Grey Rat winked his beady eyes again. "I'm a toy to begin with, not a boy. Toys don't have to change, only children. As you're a boy, you must change. Otherwise you can't go in and play."

Hsi didn't suppose there was much to this business of changing shadows, and he was very keen to go in. He'd do it!

"What sort of shadow will you give me?" he asked. "Not anything too big, I hope."

"There aren't any big ones, don't worry. I'll find you a smart little shadow."

Suddenly Hsi thought of something. He had never changed shadows before, but he had had a tooth out.

"Does changing shadows hurt?" he asked.

"No, not at all." Grey Rat grabbed one of his legs. "It's just a question of a small operation."

5. *The Shadow Who Could Talk*

GREY Rat promptly produced a pair of scissors, with which he started to cut off Hsi's shadow. It hardly hurt at all, that was a fact. It was just a little ticklish, so that Hsi felt like giggling. In less than no time Grey Rat cut Hsi's shadow from his heels, and it thrashed about like a fish that has just been landed. To tell the truth, Hsi had never paid any attention to his shadow before, and had no idea that it was alive. He was wondering rather unhappily what to do, when Grey Rat picked up his shadow, crumpled it like torn paper and threw it away. Then he produced another from his pocket, and attached this quickly to Hsi's heels.

Straightening up, he admired Hsi's new shadow.

"Look at yourself," he said. "What a smart shadow you've got now! Whoever sees this shadow will think you're a handsome clay doll."

Hsi looked down and was shocked by what he saw. His new shadow was a long one. Though not too big, it was horribly ugly — a cross between a rat and a skinny old man.

"This horrid thing isn't one bit like me!" he cried. "Look it's got whiskers — how nasty!"

"You're the one who's ugly! Why should I look like you? You're you, I'm me!"

Hsi was staggered to hear his shadow speak up loudly. He had never known shadows could talk. And this shadow had a voice like a goat, an extremely powerful voice.

"Don't be angry," Hsi put in nervously. "All I said. . . ."

The shadow cut him short with a loud bleat:

"What d'you mean by 'All I said'? Just keep your mouth shut. I'd have you know that we are equals. That means you can't say whatever you please about me. In fact, that's not all — you must do as I say."

"Do as you say?" muttered Hsi. "I'll have to think that over."

"There's no time for that. You just do as I say!"

"Don't start bickering now," urged Grey Rat. "Hsi's got a smart, intelligent new shadow, better than any other shadow. Hsi's a good boy. He'll do as his shadow says."

That kept the shadow quiet for the moment. But he was remarkably talkative. Presently he started bleating impatiently:

"When are we going? How dull it is standing here! Weren't you talking just now of going somewhere to play. . . ."

"To Happy Land," put in Hsi.

"Hold your tongue!" snapped the shadow. "I know. We're going to play in Happy Land. Get a move on then. Let's start."

"Don't be so impatient," said Grey Rat. "We're going."

6. *On the Way*

SO they set out. If you hadn't read the first part of this story and met them on the road, you would think there were only two of them: Hsi and Grey Rat (nobody would take the shadow for a person). But we know there were three of them: Hsi, Grey Rat, and a bad-tempered, talkative shadow. They walked on and on down a long, long road.

Hsi had a lot of trouble with his new shadow on the way. It was so heavy for one thing. (This was another difference between this new shadow and his old one, which had weighed nothing at all.) Dragging this shadow along was like wearing father's waterproof boots — each step cost quite an effort. When Hsi slowed down, the shadow nagged at him. And when he walked so fast that he started perspiring, the shadow still grumbled at him:

"Faster! Faster!"

Yet when Hsi went faster the shadow complained again:

"Why go so fast? Do you want to tear me to pieces?"

"Yes, Hsi, do be more careful," said Grey Rat.

Presently the shadow bleated again:

"How inconsiderate you are! You're kicking up so much dirt that you've made me quite filthy!"

"I didn't mean to," Hsi apologized. "I'll be more careful next time."

So the three of them went along. In that murky half light it was hard to tell whether they were in a lane, a valley or a forest. They rounded one corner after another and travelled on and on, exactly how far or how long it was hard to say.

"How long does it take to get there?" asked Hsi, whose legs were beginning to ache. "We've been walking for hours and hours."

"Oh, no!" said Grey Rat.

"He's afraid!" sniggered the shadow. "He's afraid!"

"I'm tired," retorted Hsi. "We must have walked for several hours at least."

"You're wrong," said Grey Rat coldly. "There's no Time now, so no one keeps track of the hours. It doesn't matter how long you walk."

"That's right," agreed the shadow. "We can walk as long as we like. I'm not tired, yet you say you're tired. What bosh!"

"I'm carrying you along," objected Hsi crossly. "You don't have to do a thing. Of course you're not tired. I'd have you know my legs are aching."

"Stop bickering now," said Grey Rat. "I'll teach you a spell which will stop you feeling tired.

Say I'm tired, and you're a fool;
Sweets and soda after school!

There's another spell to stop your legs from aching:

They don't ache! They don't ache!
I'll play football in the break!

And I know another to make you tired — want to hear it?"

"No, no spells like that," put in Hsi quickly.

He started chanting the other two:

Say I'm tired, and you're a fool;
Sweets and soda after school!
They don't ache! They don't ache!
I'll play football in the break!

Reciting these several times did make him feel much better. So the three of them went on through the dusk, turned to the east, turned to the west, and travelled on and on.

After some time the shadow said:

"Grey Rat, teach me that spell to make people tired. It's so dull not being tired at all."

"All right." Grey Rat nodded. "Here it is:

Tiredness, tiredness, here it comes!
Swot for exams and do your sums!"

This reminded Hsi of something.

"Oh, dear! I still haven't done my arithmetic."

"There you go again," sneered the shadow. "What a coward you are. If I were you, I'd just refuse to do it!"

"Never mind," Grey Rat consoled him. "You can do it next time just as well."

"Mother will scold me," said Hsi.

"You *are* the limit!" exclaimed Grey Rat. "You mustn't be afraid when your mother scolds you. She can't be really angry with you. Have you forgotten the sweets and toys she once bought you after a scolding?"

"But there's my sister too. . . ."

"That little old woman!" bleated the shadow loudly. "No need to be afraid of her! Draw a big cartoon of her on the blackboard to show all her classmates, and then see if she dares go on lecturing you!"

"Yes," said Grey Rat. "A very good idea."

"All right then," said Hsi. "I'll just play this once, not next time."

"Right!" cried Grey Rat and the shadow together. "Just this once. Of course you won't play next time."

7. *Next-Time Port*

So the three of them went on through the dusk, turned to the east, turned to the west, and travelled on and on. Then — what time it was no one knows — they came to Happy Land.

This place had another odd name, which was Next-Time Port. It really was a rather peculiar place. There were a great many boats by the wharf: steamers, steam launches, yachts, trawlers, cargo boats, everything down to skiffs with two paddles, but not one of them was moving. There was scarcely any smoke coming from the steamers. The wisps of smoke in one or two funnels were like smoke in a picture, quite still, not rising or falling. It was the same with the yachts. Most of the masts were bare, but one or two were half-reefed, with their sails quite still. What could this mean?

"Why?" asked Hsi. "Why are none of these boats moving?"

"Need you ask?" The shadow gave an unpleasant laugh. "You really are a fat-head."

"The boats here don't move," said Grey Rat. "In other words, they don't sail."

"You mean they never sail?" asked Hsi.

"That's not what I said! They're not sailing this time, but next time they will. If you don't believe me, wait and see. These boats are sure to sail next time."

Hsi had another look and noticed that the sea here was like ink, black and murky, without any waves or so much as a ripple.

"Why?" he couldn't help asking again. "Why doesn't the water here move?"

"Haven't we told you already?" snapped the shadow. "It's not moving this time, but next time it will."

Hsi looked at the sky. A few clouds were hanging there, each in one fixed place, quite still. They seemed to have frozen and were thick and heavy, yet none of them came down.

"Those clouds aren't moving either," he remarked. "I suppose they'll move next time too?"

"That's right," said Grey Rat and the shadow together. "Next time."

"Well, what about these flowers?" He was looking at a bush near by, almost stripped of its leaves but with some buds, none of which had opened yet. "Will the flowers come out next time too?"

"Of course not till next time." The shadow took him up short.

"It's always 'next time, next time,' " said Hsi. "When is 'next time' actually?"

"When?" repeated Grey Rat. "Who knows? Have you forgotten that we haven't any time now? So there are no hours, no mornings or evenings, and no days."

That was a funny business — no hours, no mornings or evenings, and no days. While Hsi was puzzling over it he heard a curious regular wheezing, as if someone were working a bellows.

"What's that?" he asked.

Grey Rat listened, and clapped his paws.

"A song, fine! It's Tin Soldier — the best musician here."

"Beautiful!" cried the shadow. "Beautiful! He sings so clearly and with such spirit, it's a treat to hear him."

"Do you call that a song?" asked Hsi after listening for a while. "It sounds like snoring."

"Don't talk rubbish!" protested Grey Rat. "What do you mean by snoring? I hear this almost every night when I come out, more times than I can count. On the nights when I hear this song I have good luck, and everything goes swimmingly. If I don't hear it, or if it stops suddenly, that's very bad. I won't tell you why it's bad. Oh yes, this is a song, we're not deceiving you!"

In the distance Tin Soldier was singing away: "Hu — lu, hu — lu, hu — lu. . . ."

"He's certainly quite a singer," said Hsi, "keeping it up so long without feeling tired."

"I can do that too!" Grey Rat started snoring loudly.

Then the shadow chimed in, like a goat.

8. *White Porcelain Man*

IN front there was a fence. And written in big characters on a brass plate hanging from a pillar was the name Next-Time Port. This was the main entrance. Beside the gate was an iron bed on which lay a very fat man with his head on a high pillow. Between yawns he was reaching under his pillow for food. This was White Porcelain Man. As soon as he saw Hsi and the others, he shouted:

"Keep out! Keep out! Tin Soldier told me to keep guard here. Only his friends can go in."

Grey Rat stepped forward and said:

"Wohoyo! (This was White Porcelain Man's name.) Don't you remember me? I'm a good friend of Tin Soldier."

White Porcelain Man peered at him from the corner of his eye.

"I remember!" he said with another yawn. "You're Never Enough. We're good friends. How I've missed you! Are you well? No question about it, of course you can go in. But don't make me talk too much. My health isn't good and I mustn't talk too much. So, dear friend, I can only tell you very simply, in other words, shortly and briefly, that I am now trying to reduce and to lose five pounds, no more and no less. I'm sure you realize that to lose five pounds isn't an easy business, not easy at all. So I have to get more sleep, or at least more rest. And I have to eat specially well. I'm tired out with all this sleeping, resting, eating and drinking. Dear me! I'm afraid I can only give you a general idea like this. There are many other troubles that I can't go into now. It's a fact, a great many doctors have advised me to reduce by five pounds, no more and no less, and the way is to sleep and eat more. That's why. . . ."

He reached under his pillow for another handful of sweets, and stuffed them into his mouth till his cheeks bulged.

"If you go on eating like that you'll get fatter and fatter," said Hsi.

White Porcelain Man glared at him, and went straight on:

"Who are you? I don't know you. I doubt if you're my friend, in fact I'm sure you're not. Do you know who I am? I'm Wohoyo, White Porcelain Man. Everybody knows Wohoyo, Tin Soldier's friend. Do you believe me? Right, silence means agreement. As Tin Soldier's friend I can't make mistakes, not any mistakes at all. Dear me! You shouldn't make me talk so much. My health isn't good enough to talk a lot. So I can only tell you very simply — as simply as I told my good friend Grey Rat just now — I must eat more to lose weight. In other words . . . dear me! What was I saying? Oh, I remember. You've made me talk so much again that I'm tired out. I can't admit a bad character like you. Besides, what's more important, I don't know you. Grey Rat is Tin Soldier's good friend, and my good friend as well. He knows me, and I know him. Of course he can go in. But you can't."

"Let him in!" begged Grey Rat. "His name is Hsi. He hates doing sums, and he's a good friend of ours."

This made White Porcelain Man quite pleased again.

"I know! I know! This is Can't Play Enough. I know him. He can go in, that's all right! This is a fine place where you've nothing to do but play, and there's no need to do any work. But what worries me a little is that he's not a toy yet. Has he changed shadows?"

"Yes, he has!" put in the shadow before Hsi could say a word. "I'm an old shadow, and. . . ."

"And a smart one," added Grey Rat. "He's Hsi's new shadow."

"No!" protested the shadow. "I'm not his shadow at all. I'm not like him in the least. I don't do as he says, and he has to do as I say. He's practically *my* shadow!"

"I'm not!" objected Hsi crossly. "I'm not your shadow. If you talk like that I'll get rid of you."

"You dare! You dare!" screamed the shadow.

White Porcelain Man roared with laughter.

"Never mind, never mind!" he said. "It doesn't matter which of you is the shadow. Come on! First come in and have a nap."

"He doesn't like naps," said Grey Rat. "He likes to play."

"To play?" said White Porcelain Man. "All right, go and play. You can sleep later."

He opened the gate in the fence, and let them in.

9. *Hsi Teaches Arithmetic*

THIS was a world of toys, just as Grey Rat had said. The first things Hsi and the others saw when they went in were Baby Bear and Velvet Duck. Of course they were both toys. But in one way they were rather like Hsi — they didn't like homework either. There had been a time when sums gave Baby Bear toothache, and a difficult problem gave Velvet Duck a pain in her legs. So one day, like Hsi, they left home and came to this place where it was all play and no work. Yet when Hsi met them they were doing a sum. Do you know why? Well, they had played with everything here till they were tired of all the toys and wanted a change.

"Let's play at arithmetic," said Baby Bear.

"Oh yes! That's a new game," agreed Velvet Duck.

Hsi found them squatting with bent heads by a sand pit, drawing one circle after another.

"What are you drawing?" he asked.

"Big apples," said Baby Bear.

"Pah!" sneered the shadow. "They're not round. They don't look like apples at all!"

"Don't talk like that!" Hsi stopped him hastily.

Baby Bear and Velvet Duck didn't know that Hsi had a shadow that could talk. They thought what the shadow had said and what Hsi had said to the shadow had been said to them by Hsi.

"What!" Baby Bear was annoyed. "Why ask a question if you won't let us answer?"

"Who are you?" asked Velvet Duck crossly. "Rude, stuck-up thing!"

"I'm so sorry," Hsi apologized. "I'm Hsi. I'm not really stuck-up, and I didn't mean you just now. I simply wanted to ask why you are drawing so many apples."

"This is a sum, you see," said Velvet Duck.

"An arithmetic sum," explained Baby Bear. "A hard one! Mother brings in four plates of apples. There are two on each plate. . . ."

This time the shadow kept quiet, but Grey Rat put in:

"Why play at arithmetic? That's no fun."

"It *is* fun!" cried Baby Bear and Velvet Duck.

"All right. Let's do it together," suggested Hsi. "What else does the sum say?"

"It's like this," said Velvet Duck after some thought. "Six apples are given to the little boys. How many apples are left?"

"There are only two apples to each plate," said Baby Bear. "That's not enough to give the little boys six."

It seemed so easy that Hsi decided to help them.

"How silly you are!" he said. "Oh . . . sorry! I'm sorry! Don't be cross. Didn't you tell me there were four plates of apples, in other words eight apples? That's enough, isn't it?"

The shadow yawned, and Grey Rat yawned after him.

"Are there as many as eight?" asked Velvet Duck. "How many boys are there? The sum doesn't say."

Hsi nearly lost patience again.

"If the sum doesn't say, we needn't bother about it."

"How can we work out the answer then?" asked Baby Bear.

"Don't work it out," Grey Rat gave another yawn. "There's no point in working it out."

Baby Bear was a stubborn little fellow. The more you argued with him, the more set on a thing he became. When his teacher told him not to play, he simply had to play. And now that Grey Rat told him not to do this sum, he simply had to do it.

"We're going to work it out!" he shouted. "It's fun!"

"It's fun! It's fun!" cried Velvet Duck.

Grey Rat disliked arithmetic so much that when he heard this he yawned twice running.

"All right, it's fun. Get on with it," he said. "I've rather a headache, so I'll go on ahead to rest for a while with my friend Tin Soldier. See you later!"

He went off on his own.

"Grey Rat isn't a good student," said Velvet Duck. "Just hearing the word arithmetic gives him a headache. I used to be like that. Talk of arithmetic. . . ."

"Made your legs ache!" cried Baby Bear. "My teeth used to ache. Later even my fur ached."

"What! What!" cried Velvet Duck. "How can fur ache? Don't be silly!"

The shadow burst out laughing. Baby Bear thought it was Hsi, and said to him:

"What are you laughing at? It's the truth I'm telling you."

"You ought to help, not laugh at us," said Velvet Duck. "It's not kind to laugh at people."

"I didn't laugh." Hsi was terribly embarrassed. "That wasn't me. I wouldn't laugh at you. Anyway, never mind that. Let's do this sum. It's a very easy one. You just have to know your two-times table. I learnt that ages ago. Now I can multiply right up to a million."

"My! Aren't you clever!" exclaimed Velvet Duck. "What is a million?"

"Don't be in such a hurry! A million is ever so many twenties. You haven't even learnt your two-times table, yet here you are asking about a million. Listen carefully now. This is how you do this sum. . . ."

Hsi cleared his throat to start teaching Velvet Duck and Baby Bear. But having cleared his throat, he found he had nothing to say. He didn't think much of his own arithmetic teacher, but now that he was teaching himself he realized how difficult it was. He cleared his throat again and said:

"For instance, to work out this sum you must first know what method to use: addition, subtraction, multiplication or division. And you must understand the principle. . . ."

"Prince Po?" asked Velvet Duck. "Who's he?"

Hsi had heard his teacher use the word "principle," but he couldn't explain what it meant. He thought for a time, cleared his throat once more, and went on:

"Not 'Prince Po' but 'principle.' A 'principle' is a 'principle.' But let's leave that for the time being. It doesn't matter. You see, you've got to understand that this sum is divided into two steps. . . ."

"What do you mean by 'two steps'?" asked Velvet Duck.

"Don't keep interrupting!" begged Baby Bear.

Hsi thought for a bit, and decided that "two steps" wasn't easy to explain either.

"Right! Don't keep interrupting!" he said. "First draw four plates."

"I'll draw them!" cried Baby Bear.

He promptly traced four circles carefully in the sand.

"That's it," said Hsi. "Those are the four plates. Now draw two apples on the first plate . . . right! And two apples on the second plate . . . right!"

"Hey!" cried Velvet Duck suddenly. "That apple's so big it's going to roll off the plate."

"No, it's not!" growled Baby Bear.

"Never mind if it is or not," said Hsi. "It'll be given away anyway very soon. If you make such a noise I won't go on."

"We won't make a noise. Go on."

Hsi helped Baby Bear to finish drawing the apples, and went on:

"Look, now we'll divide the apples. Six are given to the little boys, aren't they? Then watch: one, two, three, four, five, six. . . ."

As he was counting, he rubbed out the apples on three plates.

"You've given them the plates too!" cried Velvet Duck. "But how many little boys are there really?"

"Didn't I tell you we needn't worry about the number of the boys?" He was losing patience again. "Tell me, how many apples are left?"

"Three," answered Baby Bear promptly.

"Three? Have another look."

Baby Bear and Velvet Duck looked carefully.

"Three!" they shouted together. "Two apples and one plate."

Hsi stood up and sighed.

"You're asked how many apples are left, not how many plates. Aren't there one, two, two apples? Understand?"

Baby Bear said nothing.

"No," said Velvet Duck.

"Why not?" asked Hsi grumpily. "What don't you understand?"

"Who's going to eat those two apples that are left?" asked Velvet Duck with a long yawn.

The shadow burst out laughing again, and said loudly:

"Anyone who likes. Anyone but you two dunces."

10. *The Skating or Swimming Pool*

BEFORE Hsi could silence the shadow, Baby Bear had spotted him.

"My! Hsi's shadow can speak!" he cried.

"Don't say that!" The shadow objected loudly. "I'm not his shadow. He's *mine*!"

"This shadow can talk," said Hsi rather sheepishly. "He's a bit conceited though, and likes to say whatever comes into his head."

"He can speak?" Velvet Duck was staring hard at the shadow. "Does that mean he can sing too?"

"With a voice as loud as that, his singing must sound like a trumpet," said Baby Bear.

The shadow took this as a compliment.

"I sing even better than a trumpet," he said proudly. "I can talk and sing, and I know everything. Because I'm intelligent, most intelligent."

"Do you really know everything?" Velvet Duck took him at his word. "Well then, tell us what to do now after our lesson."

"Go and play, of course."

"Smart chap!" Baby Bear jumped for joy. "He's really intelligent!"

"He *is* clever!" said Velvet Duck. "When we used to play all the time we got tired of it, but after a lesson we feel like playing again."

"Me too," said Hsi. "What shall we play?"

"Anything you like," said the shadow. "I can play at anything. What do you like: skipping, football, cycling, drawing, marbles, climbing trees, catching birds. . . ?"

"I'd like to swim," said Velvet Duck.

"Swimming is fun," said the shadow. "I like the breast-stroke best. I also like the crawl, the back-stroke, the side-stroke, the overarm stroke, the dragon-fly stroke. . . ."

"There's no such thing as a dragon-fly stroke," put in Velvet Duck.

"Who said so? If I say there is, there is! Anyway all the different strokes are fun. Just getting into the water is fun, and even swallowing a few mouthfuls of cold water is better than drinking hot water."

"I want to skate," said Baby Bear.

"To skate?" said the shadow. "That's even more fun. I love skating. I can do any kind of step you name without falling. And after skating you can play ice hockey or eat bits of ice. . . ."

In his excitement, Hsi interrupted the shadow:

"I like both swimming and skating — what shall I do?"

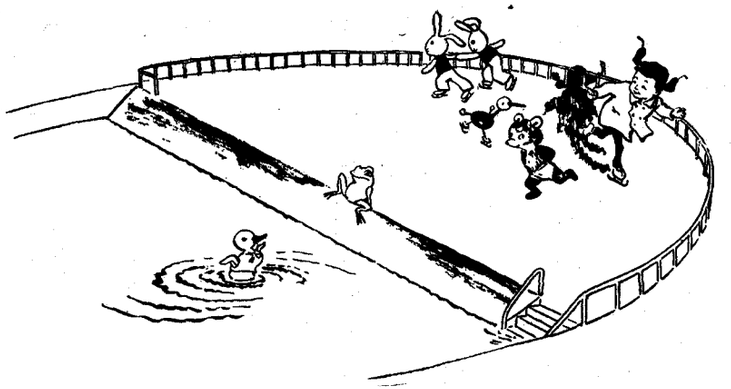
"That's fine," said the shadow. "You're just like me. You must do whatever I say. I tell you there's a Skating or Swimming Pool here. Half of it is ice, and that's a skating rink. The other half is water, and that's a swimming pool. Velvet Duck can swim there while Baby Bear skates and Hsi and I do both — skate a while then swim a while, swim a while then skate a while."

"Oh, yes! Good!" cried the other three.

"I'll show you the way," continued the shadow. "But promise to do as I say!"

"We will!"

They set out for the Skating or Swimming Pool. On the way the shadow gave loud marching orders:



"Straight on, turn east! Straight on, turn south! Straight on, turn west! Straight on, turn north! Here we are!"

It was true that by going east, south, west and north as the shadow said, they had reached the Skating or Swimming Pool in next to no time.

It was a most extraordinary pool, a huge lake half of which was frozen over, with a great many skates piled beside the ice. The other half was clear water without so much as a speck of ice, and in it were floating a great many red and green rubber tyres, all well blown up.

Hsi could have jumped for joy. He had never been able to skate and swim at the same time before, but now he could do both. No wonder Grey Rat called this Happy Land — you could have more fun here than anywhere else in the world.

Baby Bear lost no time in putting on a pair of skates and starting skating. Velvet Duck, it goes without saying, dived straight into the water. Hsi was so busy skating and swimming that he got quite tired. He would skate for a while, then swim for a while, skate for a while with Baby Bear, and then jump in the water to swim with Velvet Duck.

This went on and on. As there was no Time, they could do as they liked. And they seemed to have been enjoying themselves for ages, yet also just for a few moments. Finally Hsi got rather tired. And suddenly in the distance he heard a thudding noise: Pu-tung! Pu-tung! Pu-tung!

What ever was that? It sounded something like a machine, though not quite.

Hsi looked up and saw not far from the Skating or Swimming Pool two toys sitting under a small tree. That seemed to be where the thudding noise was coming from. What could they be doing? He ran over to find out.

11. *Wooden Man and Rubber Dog*

ONE of the toys was a lean and ugly, stiff wooden man, the other a jolly, friendly rubber dog. Wooden Man was crying bitterly, Rubber Dog, most upset, was wiping away his tears.

"How do you do?" Hsi greeted them quietly.

Rubber Dog gave a broad grin.

"How do we do? I'm doing very well, thank you. But Wooden Man isn't doing at all well. He's unhappy. Look at him — he's crying."

"I'm not!" Wooden Man rubbed his eyes with his fists. "I wasn't crying."

"You were!" said Rubber Dog. "You were crying a moment ago, and there are still tears in your eyes. I asked you to stop, but you wouldn't."

"I did not cry! Never!" Wooden Man's lips trembled and he burst into tears. He buried his head in his hands, and big tears like pearls rolled down to the ground.

"Look, those are real tears," Rubber Dog told Hsi. "He may be made of wood, but he weeps real tears, real salty tears. He has a real heart too, of real flesh. Listen! You can hear it beating quite distinctly — pu-tung, pu-tung! If you don't believe me, listen. Wooden Man's upset."

Pu-tung, pu-tung, pu-tung! . . .

The thuds were made by Wooden Man's loud heart-beats. Whatever had made him so upset? As Hsi couldn't think how to comfort him, he said:

"Maybe if you swim for a bit you'll feel better."

"No!" Wooden Man shook his head.

Wooden Man didn't like talking, and usually spoke in half sentences or just one or two words. If his friend Rubber Dog wasn't there to explain what he meant, other people found it hard to understand him.

"He hasn't finished," said Rubber Dog. "He means that swimming would be no use. The more he swam the worse he would feel. Right, Wooden Man?"

Wooden Man nodded.

The shadow, who had been quiet for so long, now bleated suddenly:

"Look at his ugly, gaping mouth! Isn't he a fiend! For shame!"

"It's not good to sneer at people all the time," said Hsi indignantly.

"What?" The shadow was indignant too. "Have you stopped carrying out my orders again? I shall say just what I please! With that huge mouth and those beady eyes, the more he cries the uglier he looks. He *is* a fright!"

"My!" Rubber Dog turned to Hsi in surprise. "So your shadow can speak. And what a terror he is!"

"I'm glad you recognize that." The shadow laughed proudly. "I'm a real terror, I am!"

"Will you tell me why Wooden Man is so upset?" Hsi asked Rubber Dog.

"I'll have to tell you a story to explain that."

This is the story.

There was a little girl here — a toy of course — called Rag Doll. She was a dear, good creature. She always spoke very softly, for fear her breath might disturb the motes of dust in the air and frighten them. And she always walked with a light, light step, for fear of harming the tiniest insect on the ground — she was even afraid of hurting the pebbles and sand. As she was very hard-working and loved flowers, she was always watering the trees and plants here, although they never blossomed. She kept hoping to find one out in flower, never mind how small. She was ever so clean too, and kept washing her face and brushing her teeth. When she wasn't doing this, she was washing her hands. As she was delicate and her face was pale, all the toys were afraid she might fall ill.

"Do be careful!" they said when they met her. "Don't get too tired!"

But in a white house here lived two wicked men: Tin Soldier and White Porcelain Man. They were not like the other toys. They never did a stroke of work, but just bullied other people, Rag Doll for instance. They pulled her into their house and wouldn't let her go, but made her sweep and wash and cook, and generally fetch and carry for them. They never let her rest. She could rest "next time," they always said, but as "next time" never came she could never rest. After a while she fell ill. Wooden Man was the first to hear of her illness. He didn't know what to do, and started crying as if his heart would break. When Rubber Dog heard the news, he didn't know what to do either. To start with he begged Wooden Man not to cry, but it was no use! The more he said the more Wooden Man cried.

When Rubber Dog reached this point, Wooden Man's pearly tears began to flow again. He rubbed his eyes furiously and said:

"Good girl, Rag Doll. Ill now — poor thing! . . ."

"She's too spoilt," sneered the shadow. "What does it matter if she's ill for once?"

"Does matter! It does!" Wooden Man sobbed aloud.

"Don't cry now," said Hsi. "Let's think of a way to save her."

Rubber Dog bounced up in excitement.

"To save her? Count me in!"

"Me too!" Wooden Man had stopped crying.

Baby Bear and Velvet Duck stopped playing and ran to join them.

"Where are you going?" they shouted. "We're coming too!"

"To save Rag Doll," said Rubber Dog.

"Not us! Not us!" The shadow answered for them. "We haven't played long enough."

"Rag Doll's ever so sweet," said Baby Bear. "We ought to save her. We don't mind not playing."

"That's right!" said Velvet Duck. "We've played enough."

"Go if you want," said the shadow. "I'm not going. And neither is Hsi."

"Who says I'm not?" demanded Hsi angrily.

"I do! If I won't let you, you can't go!" The shadow was angry too.

Hsi argued with him for ever so long. But no matter what he said, the shadow wouldn't agree.

Then Baby Bear produced a penknife, and handed it to Hsi.

"Here you are! Let him stay behind if he wants to. Cut him off, and each of you can do as he likes."

"Don't do that! Don't do that!" screeched the shadow. "Think how ugly you'll be without a shadow!"

"Honestly?" Hsi was taken aback. "Will I be ugly without a shadow?"

"Of course not!" said Baby Bear.

"If you're thinking of the look of the thing, the two of us can share my shadow," said Rubber Dog. "Mine's a very decent shadow. Never a peep out of it."

"Mine's a good shadow too," said Velvet Duck. "I'll lend it you if you like."

" . . . Lend you . . . my shadow," sobbed Wooden Man. "Don't . . . need one."

"Don't cut me off!" The shadow was in a panic. "I'll go! I'll go!"

"He's too horrid," said Baby Bear. "You'd better get rid of him."

"I won't have it! I won't have it! Nobody's going to cut me off!" The shadow was shouting and crying at the same time.

When Wooden Man heard this, his heart started thudding again—pu-tung, pu-tung — and his nose turned red.

"Poor thing . . . crying. Don't cut . . . him off."

"But you're not to do any more shouting!" Hsi warned the shadow.

"All right."

"Nor jeer at people any more!" said Rubber Dog.

"All right."

The shadow became much quieter. For quite a long time he didn't utter a word.

So, headed by Rubber Dog, they set off to find the white house in which Tin Soldier lived.

Kweilin Landscape by Hu Jo-ssu

12. *Straight Snake*

THEY hadn't gone far when they heard someone calling from the roadside:

"Hullo, friends! Where are you off to in such a hurry?"

A thin paper snake was lying in a clump of grass swallowing something. As Hsi had once owned a snake like this, he was not afraid of it.

"We're going to save Rag Doll," he said.

"Rag Doll's fallen ill of overwork," added Rubber Dog. "We want to rescue her from Tin Soldier's place. Why don't you come with us?"

"Dear me! Dear me!" The snake sighed. "Is Rag Doll ill? I *am* sorry. She's a good friend of mine. I'm quite devoted to my friends and just love helping them. I don't know how I could live without my friends — I doubt if I could swallow a single frog."

As he was speaking, he swallowed a frog whole. At once a bulge appeared in his throat, and started slithering slowly downwards.

"So you're going to save Rag Doll?" he went on. "That's good, that's fine! If I weren't in the middle of a meal, I'd certainly go with you. But as you can see, I'm busy eating a frog, so I can't go."

"Does that frog taste good?" asked Velvet Duck.

"I'm rather hungry myself," said Baby Bear. "My tummy's rumbling."

"Frogs aren't very good to eat," said the snake hastily. "So I won't offer you any. It can't be helped, you know. As a very wise big fish once said: Big fish eat little fish, and little fish eat shrimps. And as a very wise wolf once said: Wolves travel a thousand *li* for meat, and dogs travel a thousand *li* for rubbish. That's why a simple snake like myself can eat nothing but a little frog. Frogs don't taste nice at all, the meat is bitter, and as I've only the one I won't ask you to be my guests. I'm very fond of you though, because we're such good friends."

"That's right," said Hsi. "I know you. You're Paper Snake."

The snake nodded.

"What a good memory you have!" he said. "My name isn't Paper Snake though, but Straight Snake, because I'm such a straightforward fellow. There's no poison in me at all. I'm polite to everyone. I sympathize with everyone."

"Fine . . . fellow," whispered Wooden Man, very moved.

"So modest too," said Velvet Duck.

Just then a frog slipped out of the snake's tail. He promptly seized it and swallowed it again. Then he gave an embarrassed laugh.

"This can't be helped, you know. Big fish eat little fish, little fish eat shrimps, wolves eat meat, and dogs eat rubbish. A straightforward

snake like myself just eats a little frog. As I've only got this one frog, and it's such a lean little thing, I can't offer you any. But I'm very fond of you all, and it hurts me not to be able to entertain you."

As he was speaking, the bulge in his throat started slithering downwards again. The frog must have found it very stuffy in there, for it kept wriggling about inside the snake.

"Come on!" said Rubber Dog. "Hurry up and find Tin Soldier!"

"When you see Tin Soldier, give him my regards," said the snake.

"He's a bad egg," said Baby Bear. "Why should you send him your regards?"

"A slip of the tongue, a slip of the tongue," said the snake hastily. "What I meant was: Give my regards to Rag Doll if you see her. But I'd advise you not to go. I've just remembered what a temper Tin Soldier has."

"That doesn't matter," said Hsi. "We'll make him see reason."

"I wouldn't be so sure." Straight Snake shook his head. "Once Tin Soldier loses his temper, he just won't listen to reason. He's a terror when he flies into a rage."

"There you are!" The shadow piped up again. "I told you not to go, but you insisted."

"You keep quiet!" said Hsi. "We're going, and that's that."

The frog had slipped out from the snake's tail once more. At once the snake seized and swallowed it again.

"Why do you go on and on eating that same frog?" asked Velvet Duck wonderingly.

The snake sighed in a most pathetic way.

"Why? Because this is the only one I have — what else can I eat? Don't worry about the frog. He doesn't mind. He's my friend too. He's really a splendid frog. You must have seen that he wasn't at all upset."

"What!" said Baby Bear. "You swallowed him so fast, how could we see whether he was upset or not?"

"Good for you!" said Straight Snake admiringly. "I can see you're a clever fellow. When it comes to swallowing, I *am* very fast. That's a weakness of mine. You were absolutely right. You've got sharp eyes!"

When Baby Bear heard this, he stopped being annoyed.

Rubber Dog pressed them again to go on.

"Are you sure you must save Rag Doll?" asked Straight Snake. "Go along then. But don't blame me if Tin Soldier loses his temper. And remember to give my regards to Rag Doll if you see her. She's my good friend and a really charming girl — how I miss her! Goodbye! Goodbye! Please don't forget me, friends!"

13. *The White House*

RUBBER Dog led Hsi and the others away. Before long they reached the white house where Tin Soldier lived.

This was an expensive-looking, ugly house. The walls were a dazzling white, but inside all was dirt and disorder. There were gold velvet curtains to all the windows, but many of them were in tatters, sagging on the window ledge. Cobwebs hung from the ceilings like little flags. The lower half of the walls was covered with pencil drawings. There was a great deal of furniture in the house, all of it gold-inlaid, but it was stacked up anyhow. Some tables were piled on beds, some chairs on tables. And strewn over the tables, chairs, beds and floors were pillows, quilts, bottles and tins. You couldn't move without treading on a pillow, bumping into a bottle, or knocking over a teacup or something of the sort.

The gate of the house was tightly closed, so they could not get in that way. All the windows were wide open though, and they looked inside. Tin Soldier, White Porcelain Man and Grey Rat, in long nightgowns and big bedroom slippers, were feasting at a round table, with no idea that they were being watched.

As Tin Soldier liked to keep saying "No," his nickname was No-no-no. He was tall and thin, with hunched shoulders as if he were afraid of the cold, and there was always a dewdrop at the end of his nose. He was holding an immensely long cigarette, like a new lead pencil, and he kept smoking while he was eating. The clouds of smoke he puffed out encircled the three of them. As Tin Soldier smoked, the other two kept sneezing: A-tchew! A-tchew!

Tin Soldier stood up and flourished a goblet of wine.

"I'm drinking to your sneezing, no, to your stopping sneezing!"

The three of them gulped down three big goblets of wine.

Tin Soldier sat down with his feet on the table, and went on:

"As I'm not fat enough, I've got to put on a little flesh. So I can't not eat some more sponge-cakes."

He grabbed a cake, stuffed it into his mouth, and swallowed it.

"I'm too fat," said White Porcelain Man with a long yawn. "By too fat I mean too fleshy. So I must lose some flesh. The doctors tell me that to lose weight I must eat more. That's why I must eat more cakes too."

He grabbed a cake and stuffed it into his mouth.

Grey Rat snatched up another cake.

"I don't want to put on weight or lose it," he said, "but I want to eat plenty of cake. As you're eating, I'll eat too."

The three rascals roared with laughter.

"Not bad! Not bad!" said Tin Soldier. "We can't not eat a lot of cakes. With Rag Doll here we needn't stir a foot or lift a finger. When the food is finished, we'll tell her to fetch some more."

The three of them started bawling for more cakes.

Presently Rag Doll came in from the kitchen with a huge plate of cakes. The cakes were golden yellow, but her face was very white. The plate was so large and there were so many cakes on it that frail little Rag Doll could hardly carry it. She pinched her lips together as she walked slowly along, a step at a time. She was panting, and her face was growing whiter and whiter.

"She's tired out," whispered Hsi outside the window.

Wooden Man's heart started thumping loudly again — pu-tung, pu-tung!

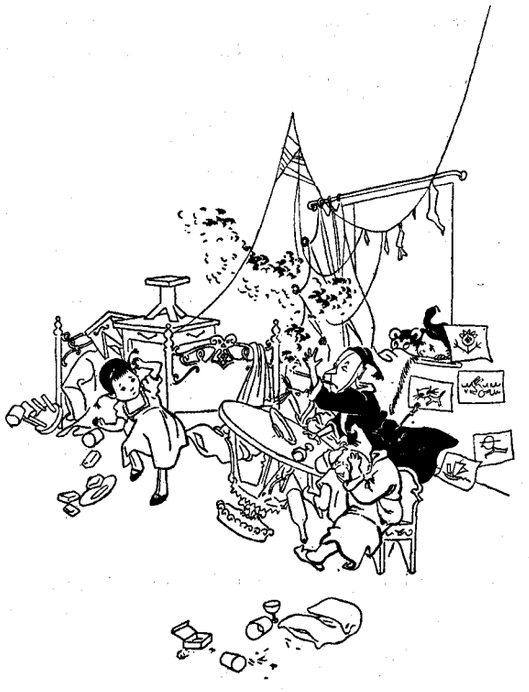
"Careful!" Rubber Dog warned him. "Don't let your heart make such a noise. It would spoil everything if Tin Soldier and the others heard it."

Inside the house Tin Soldier, smoking and banging the table, was urging Rag Doll to hurry.

"Get a move on! Do you want us to starve to death? Good heavens! I'm fainting with hunger!"

"I'm ill from undernourishment!" boomed White Porcelain Man. "Hurry up, can't you!"

Rag Doll was very nervous. Just before she reached the table the smoke made her sneeze, and she dropped the plate.



Dong!

The three rascals leapt to their feet.

"Was that a clock?" asked Grey Rat, stopping his ears.

"It sounded awfully like a clock." White Porcelain Man was trembling. "It really did. . . ."

"No, no, no! It wasn't a clock!" shouted Tin Soldier angrily. "It wasn't a clock, though it sounded just as horrible."

Rag Doll was white as a sheet now. She didn't say a word, but just started crying softly.

Tin Soldier grabbed pillows and bottles, and hurled them like a madman at the ceiling. Cobwebs started falling one after the other. The room was filled with dust.

After throwing things for a while, he craned his neck to bawl at Rag Doll:

"Why did you sneeze? Why did you make such a noise smashing that plate? Don't you know that I can't bear the sound of a clock? No, no, no! This wasn't a clock, but never mind. It sounded just like one — disgusting sound! I could burst with rage! I'll see you pay for this!"

"Lock her up in the kitchen," said White Porcelain Man. "Don't let her out again."

"No, no, no! We won't let her out!" thundered Tin Soldier. "We won't let her cry, we won't let her shed tears, and we won't . . . we won't . . . won't . . . won't."

Rag Doll was weeping more bitterly than ever.

Outside the window Hsi whispered to the others:

"Quick! Let's climb in quickly and rescue Rag Doll!"

Just then the shadow shouted to Tin Soldier:

"Look out! Look out! Hsi and the others are coming to rescue Rag Doll. Shut those windows, quick!"

"Shut the windows! Shut the windows!" yelled Grey Rat inside. "Hsi's come to rescue Rag Doll."

"They're here!" screamed the shadow. "They're here!"

"What! How dare they?" Tin Soldier drew a glittering sword. White Porcelain Man seized a bottle as his weapon. The three rascals rushed to the window.

"Run! Run!" cried Rubber Dog. "They're armed!"

Hsi and the others ran.

"After them! After them!" bleated the shadow. "They're running away!"

Hsi could not make the shadow keep quiet, but rushed along dragging him with him. They ran and ran, for how long no one knows, and finally panted to a stop. Luckily Tin Soldier and the others hadn't followed them.

14. Hsi Takes His Leave of the Shadow

EVEN though Tin Soldier hadn't followed them, our friends weren't at all pleased. Because now that Rag Doll was locked up in the kitchen she must be very unhappy, and her illness was bound to grow worse. What ever was to be done? They felt more and more upset.

"It's all the fault of Hsi's shadow," said Rubber Dog. "If he hadn't called out, we could have rushed in and rescued Rag Doll."

"That's right," the others agreed. "By calling out he stopped us from rescuing her, and we were nearly caught by Tin Soldier ourselves."

Baby Bear produced his penknife again and offered it to Hsi.

"Go on! Cut off that nasty shadow!" he said.

Hsi took the penknife from him.

"Hey! What are you doing?" cried the shadow.

"I'm leaving you," announced Hsi. "You're not my own shadow, only one I changed into. And you keep making trouble for us. I don't want to be stuck with you all the time. You won't do as I say, and I can't do as you say."

"From now on neither of us need order the other about." The shadow wasn't shouting now. "We can talk things over together."

"That won't do!" cried the others. "You can't talk things over with him!"

"Goodbye!" said Hsi to the shadow. "Goodbye!"

"I won't have it!" The shadow made a terrible fuss. "You can't get rid of me without my permission. Besides, once you've cut me off who'll be *my* shadow? If I can't find another shadow I shall be finished."

"What's that!" exclaimed Velvet Duck. "You've got it the wrong way round. If you can't find another *master*, you mean."

"Well, if you like. Whose shadow can I be in future?"

Wooden Man lowered his head in thought.

"Yes," he said. "If no one . . . wants him . . . how sad . . . he'll be!"

"Don't talk nonsense!" The shadow took offence again. "Why should no one want me? I'm such an intelligent shadow that everybody likes my company. I can make whoever's with me happy."

"Why don't I feel happy then?" asked Hsi.

"That's your fault for not doing as I said. . . ."

"Don't waste time talking to him," said Baby Bear to Hsi. "Hurry up and cut him off."

"Don't! Don't!" howled the shadow. "I haven't agreed to it. You mustn't do it! You're all bad lots! I shall tell Tin Soldier and get him to carry you off and lock you all up!"

Hsi squatted down, opened the penknife, and carefully cut the shadow off his heels. It simply tickled a little just like the first time, but Hsi didn't dare laugh. The shadow rolled on the ground, sobbing and screaming.

"Shove him into a hole somewhere," said Rubber Dog. "Otherwise he'll fasten on to someone else and make no end of trouble."

Luckily there was a ditch near by, and they all helped Hsi push the shadow into it. For the moment Hsi was a boy without a shadow.

He felt much lighter than before. In fact, to begin with he couldn't get used to it and kept thinking something was missing. Would he be able to get another shadow? And if he didn't, wouldn't he find it rather awkward? Well, these problems didn't occur to him at the time, because he was too busy thinking how to rescue Rag Doll. How on earth was he to do it? Tin Soldier and his cronies were armed, and certainly wouldn't give her up willingly.

What was to be done? None of them had any idea. In the end it was Rubber Dog who thought of a way. He remembered that there was an old dough man here, very old and very wise. If they went to him, he might be able to tell them how to rescue Rag Doll. The others thought that was a good idea, and set out with Rubber Dog to find Old Dough Man.

15. *Papier-Mâché Cock*

OLD Dough Man lived in a rickety packing-case at the foot of an ordinary knoll. So they went to look for a rickety packing-case at the foot of an ordinary knoll. But while they were on the way, in other words before they reached the knoll and found the rickety case and Old Dough Man, they came across Papier-Mâché Cock. He was standing all by himself on top of a high chimney. Dressed in a black velvet coat with a border of red and green, he was strutting round and round the chimney top. Hsi looked up and caught sight of something red and green moving up there.

"What's that bright thing on the chimney?" he asked.

Papier-Mâché Cock, who had very sharp ears, immediately introduced himself.

"I'm surprised you have to ask! Everyone knows Papier-Mâché Cock who stands higher than anyone else!"

"See how stuck-up he is!" whispered Velvet Duck.

"Stuck-up?" The cock had heard her. "What's stuck-up about me? Everyone calls me stuck-up. If they want a comparison, they say proud as a cock, as if all cocks were proud, but that's absolute nonsense. Just tell me, in what way am I proud? I don't think I'm proud at all. I really can't see it."

Actually, of course, Papier-Mâché Cock was *very* proud. He considered everything about himself the best in the world: his voice, his way of walking, his clothes and so on. He always threw his chest out when he walked, and looked down on other people. As if that weren't enough, he thought he should stand higher than everyone else to show

how superior he was. So he found this chimney and perched on top of it. And there he stayed even when he was bored, not liking to come down. When he found it too dull, he minced round the edge of the chimney as if he were taking a stroll. Sometimes he longed to have someone to talk to, but usually there was no one. So when he saw Hsi and the others he was ever so keen to keep them for a really good chat. He watched them out of the corner of his eye, and when they said nothing he asked:

"Why don't you say something? Where are you off to in such a hurry?"

"To find Old Dough Man," Hsi told him.

Papier-Mâché Cock crowed with laughter.

"What do you want with that dried-up, skinny old fellow? He can't even sing — he can only play the flute. I can't bear flutes."

"He's very clever, though," said Rubber Dog. "He'll be able to tell us how to rescue Rag Doll."

"Oh? What's the matter with Rag Doll? She's a brainless creature with no voice at all, and a coward into the bargain."

"Tin Soldier has locked her up in the kitchen," said Baby Bear. "Don't ask so many questions. Come on down and help us rescue her."

"What an idea!" Papier-Mâché Cock shook his head. "I've no time to go with you."

"Aren't you just standing on the chimney with nothing to do?" asked Velvet Duck.

"What do you know about it?" Papier-Mâché Cock was angry. "Standing up here is work. I'm thinking. Thinking is work."

"What are you thinking about?" asked Wooden Man. "Will you tell us?"

"Certainly." Papier-Mâché Cock was pleased again. "I was having very, very important thoughts. In fact, I was wondering how heroes are made. Quite a problem that. For instance, what clothes must you wear and what songs must you sing to be a hero. . . ."

"Don't listen to him," cried Baby Bear impatiently. "We haven't got all day."

"Silly bear!" Papier-Mâché Cock was cross again. "You just don't understand."

"Ah . . . stuck-up . . . really . . . " said Wooden Man.

"You don't dare be stuck-up!" The cock pointed at Wooden Man. "You haven't got what it takes. You're just a damp hunk of firewood, and you'd smoke so much if you were burnt that people's eyes would water. Your own eyes are always wet too. What's so wonderful about you?"

The others were furious.

"Wh-what's so w-w-wonderful about *you*?" stuttered Rubber Dog.

"Me?" Papier-Mâché Cock preened himself. "I'm a big cock. You're all standing down below, while I'm on top of the chimney. I'm extremely busy. If I were to cough, everyone would say: 'Listen, Papier-Mâché Cock's coughing again. How can anyone who's so busy find time to cough? He really is wonderful! Wonderful!' That's me. You're just Rubber Dog, and all you can do is wag your tail underneath my chimney. All Velvet Duck can do is say 'What's that?' — she can't sing a single song. And Hsi is nothing but a lazy schoolboy. There's nothing wonderful about that — I can be lazy too. He can climb roofs, but not chimneys. I'm Papier-Mâché Cock, Papier-Mâché Cock!"

Papier-Mâché Cock was so carried away by his eloquence that he went on and on as if he would never stop.

"Let's go," said Hsi. "Pay no attention to him."

They all moved quickly on.

Papier-Mâché Cock crowed with laughter again, and shouted after them:

"Why are you going? You don't dare listen! You're afraid because you don't know how to answer! . . ."

16. Old Dough Man

THEY walked on and on past quite a few knolls till they couldn't hear the cock's howls of laughter any more. Soon they heard a different sound, ti-liu, ti-liu-liu — the trills of a flute. In front of them was the ordinary knoll with a rickety packing-case under it, where Old Dough Man was lying playing his flute.

Old Dough Man was really old. He had a thick beard and very little hair. Though he was playing as hard as he could, he kept on making mistakes. And this annoyed him so much that he was frowning as if his shaggy eyebrows were one straight line.

Without stopping for breath, Velvet Duck burst out:

"We . . . we! . . ."

"Keep quiet!" bellowed Old Dough Man. "Can't you see what I'm doing? You've made me go wrong."

He put his flute to his lips and started again.

"Honestly," said Baby Bear, "we've come to see you."

"There, you've put me off again!" He was even more annoyed. "I told you to keep quiet, but you went and talked! You can see me now, can't you? I'm here, but where has my music got to? Hurry up and tell me that!"

"I don't know," mumbled Baby Bear.

Old Dough Man picked up his flute with a thoughtful frown, closed his eyes and started again. Ti-liu, ti-liu, ti-liu-liu. . . .

"Honestly, we came to see you," said Hsi after a bit. "Tin Soldier's locked Rag Doll up."

"What!" Old Dough Man jumped to his feet. "Rag Doll locked up! Why didn't you say so before? Tut, tut! Why can't you children say what you mean? Well, if Rag Doll's locked up, why don't you rescue her?"

"We've tried," said Rubber Dog. "But when Tin Soldier drew his sword we ran away. Can you tell us how to rescue her?"

Old Dough Man scratched his head.

"How to rescue Rag Doll? If Tin Soldier has a sword, I wouldn't dare go there either."

Wooden Man's lips trembled, and tears rolled down his cheeks.

"Why are you crying?" snapped Old Dough Man. "I've got a wonderful plan, but I won't tell it you. It's a sure way of rescuing her, though."

Velvet Duck jumped for joy.

"Lovely! Lovely! If you won't tell him, tell me!"

"Tell you? Oh, no. It's a secret. I can't tell anyone."

"Just give us a hint," begged Hsi. "Just one little hint."

"No, not even a hint." The old man shook his head. "You know, when Tin Soldier and the others have had a good feed they go to sleep. Once they're asleep, if anyone goes to the back of the white house and calls under the kitchen window: 'Come on out, Rag Doll!' she'll open the window and come out. I can't give away a secret like that, can I?"

"What else?" asked Hsi.

"What do you mean — 'what else?'? That's an even bigger secret. Not far from the white house is a tower which Tin Soldier uses as his storehouse. It's full of nice things to eat. Anybody who goes there can have a good feed and take a little nap. When Tin Soldier and his cronies sleep, they snore. You can hear their snores from that tower, and if you come down while they're snoring they won't wake up. Then you can run to the window at the back of the white house and call: 'Rag Doll! Rag Doll! Open the window and come out!' Then you'll have rescued her, won't you? I can hardly tell you a secret like that, can I?"

"It's a funny thing," said Rubber Dog. "I seem to understand it all without your telling me. All right, there's no need to go on. But. . . ."

Old Dough Man glared at him.

"What do you mean by 'But. . . .'? Do you want me to take you to find the storehouse myself? Impossible!"

"We'd never find it ourselves," said Velvet Duck.

"So Velvet Duck wants me to take you. No, it's out of the question! If I were to go with you I'd have to leave my rickety packing-case, and I can't do that. It's my bedroom, my bed, my stool and my chest of drawers. My lovely, rickety packing-case — how can I leave it?"

Wooden Man shed two more tears.

"Why do you keep crying?" Old Dough Man looked at him sternly.

"Not crying." Wooden Man wiped his eyes quickly.

"He did cry!" said Rubber Dog. "Those are real tears."

Old Dough Man frowned.

"He didn't. Wooden Man didn't cry. Come on then. Come with me! Goodbye, packing-case. I'm only taking them this once, never again. Goodbye!"

So Old Dough Man took them to find Tin Soldier's storehouse. They went up hill and down dale, up hill and down dale. And the old fellow walked so fast that the rest of them had to run to keep up with him.

Velvet Duck was staring at Old Dough Man as she panted along.

"Why have you got such a big beard?" she asked.

"Don't you even know that?" said Baby Bear. "All his hair's gone to his beard."

"That's right. That's why I'm called Old Dough Man."

"If your beard turned back into hair, you wouldn't be old any more, I suppose," said Hsi.

"No. Then I'd have to be called Young Dough Man."

After crossing a few more hills they came to Tin Soldier's storehouse. It was a delightful little two-storeyed building, a kind of tower.

17. The Tower with No Door or Staircase

THIS little tower looked as if it were made of big toy building-bricks, brightly painted in different colours. The roof was pointed, and there were small round and oblong pillars at the windows. The funny thing was that this handsome building had no doors or staircase, only upstairs windows. How did you get in, Hsi wondered?

"Climb up!" said Old Dough Man.

A thick rope dangled from one of the windows to the ground. Old Dough Man took hold of this and swarmed up without even using his legs. Halfway up he started swinging from side to side and making faces at them.

"This is fun!" he called down. "Come on up!"

Hsi could climb ropes too. He went straight up just as Old Dough Man had done, and of course Baby Bear, Rubber Dog and the rest followed suit. In no time at all they were inside the tower.

Hanging in the tower was a big, round copper bell. In fact the rope was fastened to this bell. But although the bell had never stopped swinging while they were climbing, not a sound had it made. What could be the reason for that?

Before they could ask, Old Dough Man pointed at the bell.

"That's another secret," he told them. "I'm sure you clever children would like to know why the bell didn't make any noise."

"I know, I know!" said Velvet Duck. "It's dumb."

Old Dough Man shook his head.

"It's ill," said Baby Bear.

Still the old man shook his head.

"Is it broken?" asked Rubber Dog.

"That's more like it," said Old Dough Man. "Somebody's broken it on purpose. Who do you suppose it was?"

"Not me!" said Hsi promptly. "All I broke was an alarm clock."

"Not you?" said Old Dough Man. "I never said it was. You broke the alarm clock. This was broken by Tin Soldier and White Porcelain Man. Do you know why?"

"I know!" squeaked Velvet Duck. "It's because they're afraid of bells, right?"

"I know too!" shouted Baby Bear. "Bells scare them. They're afraid of classes and have headaches as soon as the bell goes, right?"

"That's it!" Old Dough Man nodded. "Tin Soldier and that lot are such lazy devils that the sound of a bell terrifies them. When they hear a bell ring, they feel as if someone were spanking them. That's why they broke this one. As if that weren't enough, they moved it on the sly to this storehouse and hid it here, so that nobody could repair it. And as if that weren't enough, they made no door in this tower, because if there were a door people might come in. They made no stairway either, because if there were a stairway people might come up. How would they get in themselves? They hit on this idea of tying a thick rope to the bell and climbing through the window. . . ."

"Silly fools!" Rubber Dog laughed. "If they can use the rope, so can we. If I were them, I'd get rid of the rope too, and then no one could come in."

"That's it," agreed Baby Bear. "A good idea!"

"How would you get in yourself then?" asked Hsi.

When Rubber Dog was stumped for an answer, the others laughed.

"If you laugh, I shan't tell you!" he muttered crossly.

Then Wooden Man asked Old Dough Man:

"Can the bell be repaired?"

"Of course." Old Dough Man frowned. "That's a secret too, but one that Hsi knows."

"I don't!" Hsi was very surprised.

"Oh, yes, you do."

"Honestly, I don't!" Hsi felt very put out.

"Not now, but later you will. All right, let's have something to eat."

"Goody, goody!" Baby Bear clapped his paws. "I'm ever so hungry!"

"My tummy's been rumbling for hours." Rubber Dog licked his lips. "But what about Rag Doll?"

"What Rag Doll?" asked Old Dough Man. "Dear me, I'd forgotten her! You want to rescue her, don't you? Well, have something to eat first. If you don't, I'll be cross."

"Don't be cross," said Velvet Duck. "We'll eat."

This was a well-stocked storehouse Tin Soldier had, piled with good things to eat. Tinned food, biscuits, boxes of cakes, packets of sweets, bottles of orangeade — too many to count. They ate as much as they wanted. Soon Baby Bear felt he was ready to burst.

"Do you want to rescue Rag Doll?" asked Old Dough Man.

"Did you forget again?" asked Velvet Duck.

"Almost. If you want to save her, you must do as I say."

"We will," said Baby Bear, holding his stomach.

"All right then, first we'll rest. One, two, three, lie down!"

As they didn't want him to be cross, they all lay down. But presently Old Dough Man sat up again.

"Will you do as I say?" he asked. "All sit up now and listen to a story. If anyone doesn't listen, I shall be cross."

They all sat up immediately — not that they were afraid of his losing his temper this time.

18. The Story Bag's Story

"*A* story!" cried Velvet Duck. "Lovely! What are you going to tell us?"

"Who says I'm going to tell you anything? I'm too tired to tell stories!" Old Dough Man fished a small green bag out of his pocket. "This is a story bag. It will tell you a story, not me. It's a wonderfully clever bag. You just choose a subject — any subject you like — and it will tell you a story."

But what to choose? They looked at each other, and no one had any ideas. In the end it was Hsi who thought of a subject.

His eye fell on the flute in Old Dough Man's hand.

"A story about a flute," he said. "How about that?"

Before Old Dough Man could say anything, the little green bag started speaking.

"All right. Of course." It spoke very distinctly.

"It's all right." Old Dough Man stroked his beard proudly. "It's chock-full of stories. Stories about flutes, stories about trumpets, stories about fiddles — any story you care to ask for. Just let it think for a minute, and it'll tell you a story about a flute."

"I don't need to think, I'm ready!" said the story bag, sounding quite sure of itself. "Listen, everyone! The story's going to start. Imagine I'm a flute. Good, now I'm a flute, a flute that can sing pretty songs. . . ."

Here is the story.

I'm a flute, a flute painted black and glossy all over. But a long, long time ago, before I turned into a flute, I was just an ordinary, everyday bamboo stick. I and my brother — he was a bamboo too — grew up in a beautiful valley. For a long time we did nothing. But the sun gave us warm sunlight, the black clouds gave us rain when we were thirsty, and the earth gave us all sorts of rich nourishment. As they provided us with all these things, we hadn't a care in the world. We had food, drink and fun every day, and we grew higher and higher, stronger and stronger.

One day my brother felt ashamed.

"We're quite big now, but others are helping us and giving us things all the time," he said. "We haven't helped others or done anything for them. I do feel bad about it! I hope we'll be able to do something useful some day and help others for a change."

When he put it that way, I felt ashamed myself.

"Yes," I said. "I hope a day will come when we can help others and make them happy."

We discussed the best way to do this. But as we didn't see eye to eye, we started squabbling.

I said: "The best help is long-term, constant help. I want to become very clever and last for ever, so that I can make people happy all the time."

"The best help," retorted my brother, "is help in time of need, no matter what it costs you. Never mind if it doesn't last for ever. Don't let's worry about that. Our first job should be to consider what people need and how to make ourselves most useful."

"How can you know," I objected, "if you don't spend some time finding out their different needs? That's why I think the length of time is so important. What's wrong with helping people for ever, if you can?"

"I think you're too fussy," said my brother. "I don't agree."

Neither of us approved of the other's idea. We argued for hours and hours without convincing each other.

"Don't let's quarrel," said my brother at last. "Let's each do as he pleases. How about it?"

"Good!" I agreed. "Then we can see which of us gives the best help."

A chance to help others came later. It was a dark night, with no moon or stars, pitch black. We suddenly heard sighs and groans. A group of travellers had lost their way and strayed into our valley. We kept hearing them stumble and knock into things. Then someone called:

"Bamboos! Bamboos! Which of you will help us? Which of you will help us?"

"Do you want my help for ever or just this once?" I asked.

"Just this once."

"Nothing doing," I told him.

"Do you need help very badly?" asked my brother.

"That's it," said the voice. "We do."

"All right. I'll go." My brother didn't hesitate.

They cut him down for a torch.

The torch made a circle of light in the dark valley. Carrying the torch, the travellers found their path and were able to go slowly on.

The dark night passed. The travellers reached their journey's end, and the torch burnt out. That was the help my brother gave, help given only once but help that was desperately needed, just as he had wished.

Later my turn came.

That was long after my brother turned into ashes, when someone sawed me carefully off the tree. Very skilfully they made round holes in me, so that I could play all manner of beautiful tunes. I was painted a glossy black too. I was a flute.

I lived on and on, singing on and on.

I have been through so much that I have many memories, memories happy and sad, of success as well as of failure. Each of my holes stands for a different experience and the memory of some different emotion.

Whenever I start to sing, these emotions well up beyond my control and pour out one after the other. First I am happy, then sad. I laugh and cry by turns.

But even at my happiest, you can hear a note of sadness in my voice. That is because I can never forget my brother.

I must admit that he was right. The best help is that you give others in their hour of desperate need. To help others sincerely, you mustn't think of yourself. I sing all the time in memory of my brother. I sing whenever I am needed. When people are tired or depressed I try to encourage them, to make them love life and look ahead. When they are wildly happy or over-excited, I remind them of the past.

I never stop singing, but I have stopped worrying about how long I shall last. As I see it, no matter how well I sing I can't compare with my

brother. All my songs together are not worth that circle of brightness the torch shed on that dark night.

The story bag suddenly stopped. That was the end of its story about a flute.

After a short pause it said:

"I would like to hear a flute."

"Yes!" Wooden Man dabbed at his eyes. "Old Dough Man, won't you play to us?"

Old Dough Man had cocked his head as if he were listening.

"What's that?" he asked. "Play the flute? . . . Wait a bit! Listen, all of you! Now is the time to go and rescue Rag Doll!"

19. *Tin Soldier and His Cronies Sleep*

TIN Soldier and his cronies were snoring. They had most peculiar snores, like the chugging of engines just come into the station, which hiss "Shah! . . . Shah! . . . Shah! . . ." and then whistle "Toot! . . . Toot! . . . Toot! . . ."

"They're asleep," said Old Dough Man. "Off with you, quick!"

"Come on!" Rubber Dog bounced up. "Hurry up! Hurry up!"

Baby Bear and Velvet Duck were well brought up.

"Goodbye! Goodbye!" they called to Old Dough Man.

"Don't shout!" he said. "If you wake Tin Soldier with your noise, I won't be responsible."

"We won't make a noise. All right?" whispered Velvet Duck.

"Good!" said Old Dough Man. "That's more like it. Go ahead. I'm going to play the flute for the story bag. It's tired after telling that story. The two of us will have a little rest."

Rubber Dog was the first to climb out of the window and slide down the rope. He was followed by Hsi, Wooden Man, Baby Bear and Velvet Duck.

The white house was just in front. They started running.

Rubber Dog was so fast that he ran ahead. Velvet Duck, who was the slowest, fell behind.

"Wait for me! Wait for me!" she called anxiously.

Baby Bear turned back to scold her.

"What are you shouting for? Didn't Old Dough Man tell you not to make a noise?"

"Your own voice is pretty loud, Baby Bear," said Rubber Dog.

"Sshh!" said Hsi. "You're all making too much noise. The only good fellow is Wooden Man who hasn't made a sound. Isn't that right?"

"Yes . . . I keep . . . quiet," said Wooden Man.

So now Wooden Man was talking too. Not only that, his heart started thumping more loudly than anyone's voice — pu-tung, pu-tung, pu-tung! It's easy to understand why. He was wondering how to help Rag Doll open that window and escape when they got to the kitchen.

Presently Hsi's heart started thumping too. Quite natural. He was thinking:

"Suppose Tin Soldier wakes up? Suppose he draws his sword? Suppose. . . . This time I won't run away. I'm not afraid. I'll argue with him and give him a piece of my mind."

But as luck would have it, the three scallywags didn't wake. Their snores grew louder and louder, like rumbles of thunder.

Now Hsi and his friends were under the kitchen window. Rubber Dog wanted to be the first to climb up.

"I'm a good jumper," he said. "Watch me!"

He took a few steps back, crouched down like a professional sprinter, and bounded forward.

Crash! Bang! He hurtled down, the tip of his nose knocked crooked.

"Ai-yo! Ai-yo!" he groaned.

"Quiet!" said Hsi. "You can make all the noise you want once we've got Rag Doll out."

"All right." Rubber Dog kept quiet.

Velvet Duck was the next to try to get up. But her legs were so short that though she puffed and panted she couldn't reach the sill. Wooden Man and Baby Bear tried too, but in vain.

"Let me have a go," said Hsi. "Give me a leg up."

They lifted him up, and he crawled on to the ledge.

"Can you see her?" asked Velvet Duck. "Is she inside?"

"I can't see. Must you make so much noise?" said Hsi crossly.

Soon Baby Bear couldn't keep quiet any longer.

"What shall we play with Rag Doll when we get her out?" he whispered.

"No play," said Wooden Man. "We'll . . . run."

"Right!" burst out Rubber Dog. "We'll take a boat home."

"Do be quiet!" urged Hsi frantically. "You're making so much noise I can't see clearly."

He strained his eyes and this time he saw distinctly. Thin little Rag Doll was sitting alone in a dark corner of the kitchen. It was her all right! She was there!

"I can see her!" he called excitedly to the others.

This time it was their turn to scold him.

"Quiet!" said Velvet Duck.

"Quiet!" said Rubber Dog, Wooden Man and Baby Bear.

Then they all asked together:

"Hurry up and tell us what she's doing!"

20. *Rag Doll Talks to Herself*

RAG Doll was sitting there alone, talking softly to herself.

"Tears, tears!" she said. "Why must you keep flowing out? Do you want to escape? Do you want to water the flowers? Are you afraid the plants will dry up and wither? I'd like to go out too. I'd draw plenty of water. Don't you worry, I'd give the flowers all they need."

After a little while she went on:

"Tears, tears! Why do you keep flowing out? Do you think I'm dirty? Do you want to wash my face? Are you annoyed because I haven't washed for so long? I feel grubby too. As soon as I get out I'm going to draw water, lots and lots of water. Don't worry, I'll wash my face till it shines."

Hsi whistled outside the window, and called softly:

"Rag Doll!"

Rag Doll didn't hear him, but went on talking to herself.

"Tears, tears! Why do you keep flowing out? Why are you hot? Is it because you come from my heart? Why are you salty? Is it because your mother is the sea? Why do you keep trying to escape? Do you miss your mother? Your mother's a long way away, and so is mine. . . ."

Hsi had to rap on the window and call loudly:

"Rag Doll! Come out! Can you hear me?"

This time Rag Doll heard. She hastily wiped her eyes and ran to the window.

"Who are you?" she asked.

"I'm Hsi. Come on out."

"How? The window's closed."

"That's easy. Unbolt it, open the window, and get out."

Rag Doll unbolted the window and opened it. Then she thought for a little and asked:

"Shall I get out now?"

"Yes. Hurry up!"

"What will Tin Soldier and the others do if they find out?"

"Hurry up! Do hurry! They won't find out. They're asleep."

So Rag Doll climbed out of the window, and they helped her to the ground.

"How lovely it is outside!" she said happily. At once her cheeks became rosy.

"Have the flowers bloomed yet?" she asked.

Wooden Man hesitated a second, and then said:

"Not . . . yet."

When she heard that, her new colour faded a little.

"Have you seen my mother?" she asked.

"There aren't any mothers here," said Baby Bear.

Rag Doll's face became completely white again.

"I want my mother!" she said. "I want to find my mother!"

"Where is your mother?" asked Velvet Duck.

"At home. At home." Rag Doll started crying again.

Just then Straight Snake popped up stealthily behind them. Goodness knows where he had come from. He hadn't changed in the least. As soon as he saw them he greeted them politely.

"How are you, friends? What are you doing under Tin Soldier's window?"

"Nothing," said Baby Bear.

Straight Snake caught sight of Rag Doll.

"How are you, Rag Doll?" he asked. "How do you do? Why are you crying? Aha, you needn't tell me, I know. You've let Rag Doll out. Rag Doll, I'm your very best friend. I've been wanting to rescue you for ages — long before they thought of it. Will you tell me how you got out?"

"I opened the window and climbed out," she answered softly.

"What!" screamed Straight Snake. "That's terrible! Have you told Tin Soldier?"

Rag Doll shook her head.

"Ai!" Straight Snake gave a long sigh. "That's awful! Why didn't you tell Tin Soldier? He's sure to be very annoyed. It's not polite not to tell him. And it's very naughty to climb out of windows. Tin Soldier is going to be furious. And when he's furious there's no dealing with him."

"I'm not afraid of him!" said Velvet Duck. "Don't tell him! The horrid thing!"

"Never mind Straight Snake," said Rubber Dog. "Hurry up and get going!"

So they left the white house.

"Are you going?" Straight Snake tried to bar their way. "That won't do! That's too bad! Don't go! Don't go! Where are you going? Won't you tell me?"

"No!" Baby Bear turned back to shout.

"So you won't tell even me?" hissed Straight Snake behind them. "What bad manners! All right, all right. I won't lose my temper, I'm polite. If you must go, go! Goodbye, goodbye!"

21. *They Run to the Sea-Shore*

HSI and his friends went faster and faster till very soon they were running. Something seemed to be urging them to hurry. Without so much as a look behind they ran on till they reached the shore. The sea was so still that it looked asleep, without any wind or waves. The water had frozen like thick, blue-black glass and lay there motionless.

Rubber Dog bounded wildly up and down the beach.

"Hurry up and go aboard!" he shouted.

They dashed to the wharf. There were ever so many boats there. But the boats were just as they had been — a lot of the steamers had no smoke in their funnels, while a few wisps of smoke from some others hung still in the air. Most of the yachts were carrying no sail, or had their sails half furled.

They ran up to a small steam launch. On a paper stuck to its funnel they read: "Not Sailing Yet." They ran up to a big steamer. A wooden placard on one cabin door announced: "Will Not Sail Till Later." There was nothing for it but to rush to a black cargo boat, but chalked in big letters on its hold they read: "No Sailing Today." They ran desperately on to a neat little pleasure boat. On red silk hanging from its railing was embroidered in letters of gold: "So Sorry! Will Sail Next Time for Certain!" They rushed to and fro without finding one craft that was ready to leave. All carried notices: "No Sailing Today" or "Sailing Next Time," while some just said: "No Sailing." It was too bad. What on earth could they do?

At last they found a wooden boat with no notice on it. Though it had no funnel, no mast and no crew, at least it didn't say: "Sailing Next Time." Delighted with their find, they jumped aboard.

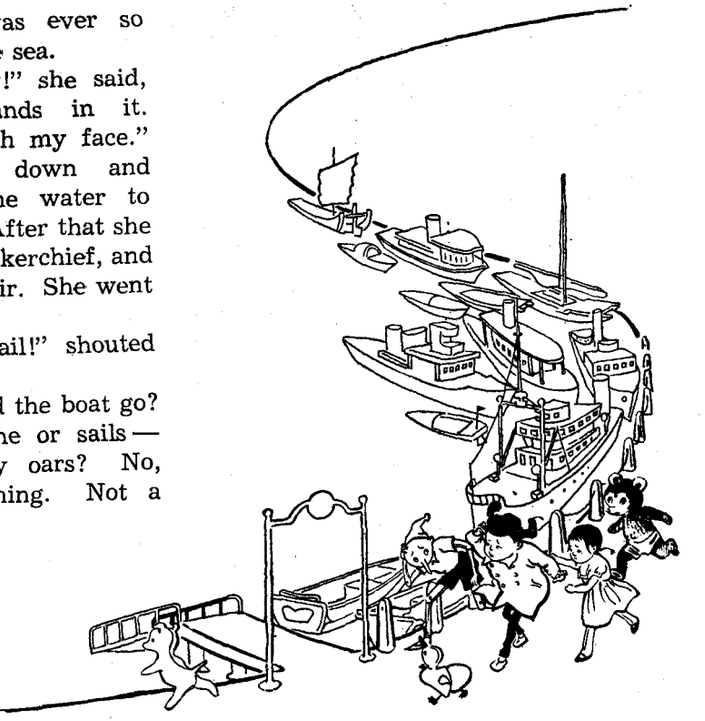
Rag Doll was ever so pleased to see the sea.

"How lovely!" she said, dipping her hands in it. "Now I can wash my face."

She leant down and scooped up some water to wash her face. After that she washed her handkerchief, and after that her hair. She went on and on.

"Time to sail!" shouted Rubber Dog.

But how did the boat go? It had no engine or sails — were there any oars? No, there was nothing. Not a single oar.



"Let's find some wood for oars," said Wooden Man.

But where could they find wood? There was none on the boat.

"Wait while I look on the beach," said Baby Bear.

"If you go ashore, please find me a comb," said Rag Doll. "I must comb my hair properly. . . ."

Before she had finished they heard a frightful bellow in the distance:

"Catch 'em! Catch 'em! Don't let them get away!"

The sound became louder and louder, nearer and nearer. Tin Soldier, White Porcelain Man and Grey Rat were after them!

Rag Doll began to shiver. "I seem to feel cold! What ever shall we do?"

Wooden Man started shivering too in sympathy.

"Never mind!" he said comfortingly. "Don't be . . . afraid . . . I'm not . . . afraid."

"Jump into the water!" said Velvet Duck. "They can't swim."

"It's very cold," said Rag Doll. "And what shall I do if I get my dress wet? Besides, I can't swim either."

"I'll teach you," said Velvet Duck.

"There's no time for that," said Hsi. "Let's go ashore and run for it."

"A good idea," said Rubber Dog. "Hurry up and land! Hurry! . . ."

One by one they jumped ashore again. As Rubber Dog was the fastest, he led the way. As soon as he found they were not keeping up he stopped to shout:

"This way! This way! Hurry! Hurry!"

But Velvet Duck just couldn't run fast, and Rag Doll was so weak that she wasn't much better. The others ran for a bit, and then had to stop to wait for them.

"Hurry!" Rubber Dog was frantic. "*Hurry up*!"

Tin Soldier and the rest heard him, and chased in their direction. The three dreadful creatures were brandishing long swords. They ran so fast they caught up with and surrounded Hsi's friends in no time.

"Hands up!" yelled Tin Soldier, waving his sword.

"Shan't!" growled Baby Bear.

Tin Soldier at once grabbed Baby Bear, and ordered White Porcelain Man and Grey Rat:

"Catch the lot of them, and shut them up in the cellar!"

So the three hoodlums caught Hsi and his friends and threw them into the cellar of the white house.

22. *Papier-Mâché Cock Is Caught Too*

KA-cha! The key grated in the lock, as the three ruffians shut our friends up in the cellar. "Hu — lu, hu — lu — lu!" They started triumphantly on their ugly song.

The cellar was horridly stuffy; clammy and dark as well. Rag Doll sat wretchedly on the cold, cold ground and didn't say a word. Afraid she would fall ill if she went on moping like this, the others tried to comfort her.

"Just sing a song, and you'll feel quite cheerful," said Rubber Dog.

Rag Doll shook her head.

"If you . . . won't sing . . . shall I . . . ?" asked Wooden Man.

Still Rag Doll shook her head.

"Tell you what," said Velvet Duck. "If you comb your hair and plait it, and put on two red bows, you'll feel ever so much better."

"I haven't any red ribbon," said Rag Doll.

Baby Bear immediately produced his penknife.

"Never mind about red ribbon," he said. "I'll give you my penknife. Look!"

"I don't want it, thank you." Rag Doll shook her head. "I might cut my finger."

"I know!" cried Velvet Duck after thinking hard. "I'll give you a big red apple."

"What!" said Baby Bear. "You haven't any apples."

"What! What!" protested Velvet Duck. "If I haven't any now, I shall have some later. Then I'll give Rag Doll a lovely apple, a big, sweet, juicy one."

"Look here," said Hsi to Rag Doll. "I can carve a flower with that knife."

Rag Doll shook her head again.

"No, thank you. I don't like carved flowers. I want a real flower."

Though Hsi thought hard, all he could do was say:

"All right. Later on I'll give you a real flower."

"That's right," said Velvet Duck. "Later on we'll give her all the nice things we've got, how about it?"

They all cried:

"Good!"

Still Rag Doll wasn't happy, and she was growing whiter every minute. They didn't know what to do. If someone could have told her a story that would have been good, because Rag Doll loved stories. But Old Dough Man and his story bag weren't here. What could be done? If Rag Doll went on like this she would fall ill, and then how bad they'd feel!

Just then — ka-cha! — the key grated in the lock again, and the cellar door was opened. Tin Soldier had caught Papier-Mâché Cock too.

Papier-Mâché Cock protested loudly outside:

"It's the truth! I'm not one of Hsi's gang. What's so wonderful about Hsi? What's so wonderful about Rag Doll? I wouldn't be on their side for anything."

Swinging Papier-Mâché Cock by his neck, White Porcelain Man threw him inside.

"Liar!" he shouted. "You make me sick! You think I don't know that long neck of yours is made for lying! I know everything, and I don't need any proof that you're one of Hsi's gang. You talked to them, and told them you were a hero. You wouldn't have said that if you didn't mean to rescue Rag Doll. You must think me an ignorant fool. Pah! We know everything — we always have!"

They beat Papier-Mâché Cock and knocked him over. Ka-cha! The key turned in the lock again.

Presently the cock got slowly to his feet, and looked round out of the corner of his eye.

"What's this place?" he muttered. "It's no good. Nothing like the chimney top. I don't want to stay here, and I won't."

"Go then!" Baby Bear laughed.

Papier-Mâché Cock glared at him.

"Mind your own business!" he squawked. "I'll go when it suits me. At present I don't care to go, so I won't. And if you order me to go, I'll insist on staying. I won't go, so there!"

Then, ignoring them all, he strutted up and down the cellar with his head in the air.

23. *They Talk Over the Past*

THEY didn't know how long they had been in the cellar, but it seemed a long, long time. They couldn't play — it really was awfully dull. Then Hsi thought of a game. It was sure to be fun, he said, if each of them described something in his past. They all agreed that this would be amusing and that they should take it in turn. The only one who stayed out was Papier-Mâché Cock, who pretended that he wasn't interested. As a matter of fact, though, he was straining his ears as he walked up and down, listening carefully to each word they said.

Baby Bear was the first to speak. But his memory wasn't too good. After thinking hard he said he had liked circuses, and somehow or other had joined a circus himself. What he disliked most was lessons. Oh, now he remembered, it was because he didn't like lessons that he had run away to the circus. He didn't realize that there they had lessons too. Not school lessons, but circus lessons. And learning how to perform in a circus wasn't such fun as watching, so later he ran away, and somehow or other he had ended up here.

The next to speak was Velvet Duck, whose memory was even worse. All she remembered was having lots and lots of good friends.

"My good friends — oh my! — they were so good to me! I can't tell you how good they were. What were their names? Oh, I've forgotten their names, but they were ever so good!"

"Can't you remember a single one?" Rubber Dog was growing impatient.

"I've thought of one," said Velvet Duck presently. "Her name was Mother. She was my mother. Oh, she was a sweet girl! . . ."

"Mothers aren't girls," put in Hsi. "You can't call her a girl."

"Why not?" Velvet Duck did not agree with him. "She was so good! She was better than any good girl, she was a good mother. Every

evening when she came home she always brought me something good to eat. She never once forgot."

Papier-Mâché Cock stood still.

"What did your mother give you to eat?" he asked.

"Ever so many things! . . . "

"Don't say!" said Baby Bear. "Don't tell him!"

"Don't tell me!" The cock pretended not to care. "I don't want to know."

He started strutting about on his own again.

Then Rubber Dog described some of his friends. Funnily enough, thinking back, the friend he remembered best was a bad-tempered cat. He didn't like that cat to begin with, because it was so lazy and did nothing but lie by the stove all day till its fur was singed. Worst of all, over nothing at all it would arch its back and spit at him, which was hardly clean or polite. But thinking back, that cat just liked a tiff — in its heart it didn't dislike Rubber Dog. There were times, in fact, when it liked him. For instance, it often tiptoed up behind him and softly pulled his tail. When he turned round and growled he saw it was all a joke — just a bit of fun between the two of them. So the more he thought of it, the less he disliked that cat. He actually missed the creature now.

After Rubber Dog it was Wooden Man's turn. He blushed and stuttered:

"I . . . I've . . . nothing . . . to say."

"Wooden Man's a good sort," said Rubber Dog. "But he's no public speaker. Listen to the way his heart is thumping again. He's got lots of friends, haven't you, old man?"

Wooden Man nodded.

Now it was Rag Doll's turn. But she was still so unhappy that when they asked her to speak she said not a word, just plucked wretchedly at her skirt.

"Say something!" begged Hsi. "What are you thinking of now?"

"Nothing. . . . Now I've thought of something — can I go home?"

Papier-Mâché Cock crowed with laughter.

"She wants to go! That's rich, that really is! She doesn't even know that the door is locked, silly little fool!"

"Why do you keep laughing at people?" growled Baby Bear.

"I'm laughing because she can't get out. The door's locked. Even I can't get out, much less her. Understand?"

"You may not be able to get out. But she can!"

Rag Doll started crying.

"Don't cry!" they begged her. "Don't listen to that cock. Someone is bound to let you out."

Papier-Mâché Cock seemed sorry to see her crying.

"If we can't go out, we can't," he said. "Why cry? Would you like me to sing to you? I've a beautiful voice, much better than Tin Soldier's."

"Don't!" said Velvet Duck. "You've a horrid voice. Your singing can't be good."

"Who says I've a horrid voice?" The cock was indignant. "Have you ever heard me sing?"

"No, and I don't want to."

Papier-Mâché Cock coughed several times and cleared his throat.

"How do you know my voice isn't good then?" he asked. "What nonsense you talk! If you don't want to hear, I'll make you hear. If you'd begged me, I wouldn't have sung, but now I'm going to sing! Listen! You too, Rag Doll! I bet this will stop you crying. Listen, all of you! . . ."

Papier-Mâché Cock craned his neck and was just going to start when — ka-cha! — the door opened again. Thinking Tin Soldier and the others were back, the cock drew in his neck in fright and kept quiet.

"Well, well, well! Hurry up! Hurry up and go! Are you going to stay here all day?"

It was Old Dough Man to their rescue! Without stopping for explanations, they tumbled out behind him and took to their heels.

"Wait a bit!" screamed the cock behind them. "Where are you going? Wait for me!"

"How can you come with us?" asked Hsi. "Aren't you terribly busy?"

"Never mind, never mind!" cried the cock as he flapped along. "I must get away from here. I hate Tin Soldier and those other bullies. And you haven't heard me sing yet. I must sing properly for you once so that Velvet Duck stops saying I have a horrid voice. And you'll find me very useful in all sorts of ways."

"Come along then," said Hsi.

So Papier-Mâché Cock joined Hsi's little band. They hadn't gone far when they met Straight Snake, who greeted them most politely again.

"Hullo, friends! Where are you going? Why didn't you stay in Tin Soldier's cellar?"

They were so disgusted with him that they went straight on without paying him any attention.

24. *The Secret of All Secrets*

WHERE could they go? None of them had any idea. Well, the best thing seemed to go back first to hide in Tin Soldier's storehouse while they thought of a plan. Very soon they reached the pretty little tower. Of course it still had no doors and no stairway, and they had to climb up the rope one by one. And of course the bell kept swinging without any sound.

How could they leave Next-Time Port? None of them had any idea. They were all most upset, all but Papier-Mâché Cock who was in high spirits. He rummaged right and left till he found a carton of biscuits which he ate greedily. Then he started scolding the others for not cleaning up the tower. But nobody answered back. They were too depressed to talk.

After a long, long time, Rag Doll said in a small voice to herself:

"I want to find my mother."

"To find your mother?" The cock caught her up at once. "That's easy. Just take a boat."

"But there are notices on all the boats saying they're not sailing," said Rubber Dog.

"How silly you are!" the cock said cockily. "Who says they're not sailing? All those notices say they'll sail next time. That means they *will* be sailing."

"Honestly?" Baby Bear cheered up again. "But when is 'next time'?"

"When? Don't ask me that! Not 'this time,' obviously. Later on, understand?"

This confused them all again, so that no one said anything for a time. Then Velvet Duck asked Old Dough Man:

"Can you think of a way to get us out of here?"

"No!" answered Papier-Mâché Cock for him.

"I wasn't asking *you*," said Velvet Duck.

"There is a way," said Old Dough Man. "But that's another secret. It's the secret of secrets."

"The secret of secrets!" Hsi cheered up. "Fine! Won't you give us a hint like last time?"

"All right," put in Papier-Mâché Cock again.

"It's all right with me. But I don't know the secret." Old Dough Man frowned at the cock. "You tell them."

"I don't know it either," blurted out the cock.

"Papier-Mâché Cock's telling the truth," said Old Dough Man with a smile. "The story bag knows it though, because this is a story. I'll have to ask the story bag to tell you."

"A story — goody!" cried Rag Doll, and her cheeks turned pink again.

Old Dough Man produced the small green bag once more.

"Story Bag, do you mind telling another story?" he said. "The title is *The Secret of Secrets,* and it tells them how to get away from here. Just tell them a bit of it, not the whole. If you tell the whole, it'll stop being secret, won't it?"

The story bag started speaking, pronouncing every syllable most distinctly.

"Very well. I shall just tell a bit, not the whole. You mustn't interrupt or ask questions while I'm speaking. If you interrupt. . . ."

"Don't worry," said Papier-Mâché Cock smugly. "I won't interrupt."

"Suppose we ask questions?" put in Velvet Duck.

"I won't answer them," said the story bag. "Or only very simply. I'm starting now. You're all to imagine that I'm Next-Time Port — right? I've changed into Next-Time Port."

Here is the story told by the story bag.

My name is Next-Time Port. There's no morning or evening here, no wind or waves, no boats putting in to port and no boats sailing.

But a long, long time ago I was quite different. In those days I had mornings and evenings like anywhere else. In the bright morning sunshine everybody was fresh and gay: the children went to school and the grown-ups set about their work.

(Baby Bear couldn't help asking: "Was playing allowed in those days?")

Of course playing was allowed! After school or work, playing is such good fun! When the shades of night fell in the evening, young and old closed their eyes and fell sound asleep.

In those days I had wind and waves here like anywhere else. When a breeze sprang up waves slapped softly against the shore, and during great gales huge breakers rose and fell. But the sailors were not afraid of the wind and waves. From dawn till dusk there were boats putting in and boats putting out to sea.

But then I changed. . . .

("Why?" asked Hsi.)

Why? It wasn't my fault! It was the fault of some lazy children. Those lazy children didn't like there to be any morning, because if there was a morning they had to get up and go to school. They didn't like evening either, because if there was an evening they had to go to bed and sleep. Once in bed they didn't like getting up again, and once up they didn't like going to bed. Lazy, eh? But they'd plenty of energy when it came to playing.

("I know, you mean me," said Hsi.)

Do I? Well, you think it over. Let me go on.

They kept forgetting morning and evening, till morning and evening stopped coming here.

("Even without morning and evening we've day-time," said Papier-Mâché Cock.)

Yes, there's day-time. And in the day-time you have to do lessons. They found a way out of that. They started saying: "I'll do it next time. I'll learn it next time. I can start next time."

Why do you suppose they kept talking about "next time"?

("So as not to do their lessons now!" They all answered at once.)

Yes! They used to say "this once" too. When there were lessons to be done they said "next time," but when they wanted to play it was always "this once." Gradually I started using "next time" too. If I had any serious work to do, I said "next time." Always "next time," "next time," till I became as lazy as those lazy children.

The weather here became lazy too, and there was no wind. The water went to sleep, and there were no waves. All the boats here learnt to say "next time" too, and stopped sailing. Even the flowers here picked up the habit, and stopped blossoming. That's why now I'm called Next-Time Port.

Then one day three of the laziest rascals came here. . . .

("Do you mean Tin Soldier and that lot?" asked Hsi.)

Yes! Tin Soldier, White Porcelain Man and Grey Rat. They were so lazy that they couldn't stay anywhere else, and so they sneaked in here. Later they became the masters here. They won't lift a finger, but make others wait on them. First they tried to get those lazy children to wait on them, but as the lazy children weren't any use, they made someone not quite so lazy wait on them. And what happened after that you know.

("But what's to be done?" asked Hsi. "We all want to go away. Can you make the boats here sail?")

I can. The boats here will start sailing once I become active again. I shall become active once I am strong again. And I shall be strong once the yellow orioles start to sing again.

("How can we get the yellow orioles to sing again?" asked Rubber Dog.)

There is a way. If Old Dough Man imitates the oriole's song on his flute, the real orioles will start singing. When the yellow orioles sing, I shall be strong. Only then. . . .

("Go on!" said Rag Doll. "What then?")

Only then, Old Dough Man will have no strength left. Because then he'll be old and weak. He may even die. . . .

The story bag stopped here.

At once Rag Doll turned pale again.

"How dreadful!" she said. "We mustn't let him die! We mustn't!"

"Don't you believe it!" said Old Dough Man. "If the yellow orioles sing again, I shall become stronger. That's another secret which I mustn't tell you. . . ."

Just then they heard a great bellow from outside:

"They're in the tower! They're in the tower! Catch 'em! Catch 'em! Hurry up and catch them!"

Tin Soldier and the others had found them again.

25. *Tin Soldier's Gang Attacks*

"SURRENDER! Give yourselves up! If you don't, we'll attack!" Standing in a row down below, the three rascals shouted up at them.

They were dressed up in a very odd way. Tin Soldier and White Porcelain Man had steel helmets on their heads, and had wrapped themselves round and round with string. Tin Soldier had a long sword, White Porcelain Man a long spear. As Grey Rat was so short, all he could carry was a small wooden club, and instead of a helmet he had an extraordinary hat made of a shield. Because he had no helmet, he was wearing this shield on his head.

Papier-Mâché Cock was frightened to see them dressed like this.

"Why are you angry?" he asked. "Why not talk things over quietly instead of shouting?"

Tin Soldier brandished his long sword.

"It suits me to be angry. It's no business of yours!" he yelled. "This is *my* tower, mine! You've no right to be there."

White Porcelain Man brandished his spear.

"Right!" he said. "This is Tin Soldier's storehouse. I'm bursting with rage, I tell you, because you've gone up there without his permission. You didn't ask my permission either. Another thing, you ran away without a word. It's too bad of you — I'm fairly bursting with rage. Another thing. . . ."

"Don't talk so much!" Tin Soldier nudged him. "Tell them to surrender and look sharp about it."

White Porcelain Man nodded politely.

"All right. Let's shout together."

Together the three of them shouted:

"Sur — ren — der!"

Hsi looked round at his friends.

"Let's tell them we're not going to. One, two. . . . "

From the tower they shouted back:

"We won't!"

"If you don't surrender, we'll attack!" Tin Soldier looked up. "We shan't be so polite this time!"

"Come on! We're not afraid," growled Baby Bear.

"Look at you!" whispered the cock to Baby Bear. "What would you do if they really attacked? Can we beat them?"

"Papier-Mâché Cock's afraid!" said Rubber Dog. "Papier-Mâché Cock's afraid!"

"What! What!" said Velvet Duck. "Let's shout again."

Once more they all shouted together:

"You . . . don't . . . dare . . . come . . . up!"

The three scoundrels talked it over down below, and made Grey Rat their spokesman.

"Give us some of the food in there, and we may not attack," he called.

"Never!" answered Old Dough Man.

"Not even a little?" asked Grey Rat. "Just a very little will do. We're rather hungry."

"No, no!" they shouted in chorus from the tower.

Tin Soldier was furious. He waved his sword and ordered his two henchmen:

"Fall in! Call the roll!"

White Porcelain Man and Grey Rat fell in at once.

"One!" shouted White Porcelain Man.

"Two!" shouted Grey Rat.

"Now attack the tower!" Tin Soldier ordered them.

White Porcelain Man and Grey Rat looked at each other, and neither dared go up.

"Go on!" said White Porcelain Man to Grey Rat after a pause. "You've a shield on your head to protect you. Go on up!"

"What about you?" asked Tin Soldier. "You've a steel helmet on your head."

White Porcelain Man gave a huge yawn, and drawled:

"I'm too fat. The doctors won't let me tire myself. Aiya! The doctors don't want me to talk too much either. You'd better go up with Grey Rat. I must ask to be excused."

"So you're too fat!" retorted Tin Soldier. "Haven't you noticed that I'm too thin? My doctor told me not to fight anyone. So Grey Rat had better go up."

"Yes," agreed White Porcelain Man at once. "Let Grey Rat go up alone."

"I can't." Grey Rat blinked. "I'm too small."

Tin Soldier waved his long sword angrily.

"Cowards!" he bellowed. "Watch me! I'll attack alone!"

With his chest thrown out he charged towards the tower, but it was too high for him to jump up. So he picked up a stone and threw it. Crash! He broke a window-pane.

"Missed us! Missed us!" howled Rubber Dog gleefully.

Papier-Mâché Cock hid under a table.

"Hurry up and shut the windows!" he squawked. "Once the windows are shut we'll be safe."

Tin Soldier threw a few more stones, without hitting anyone. When he kept this up, Baby Bear lost his temper and hurled down a couple of tins.

The three scallywags took to their heels. But when White Porcelain Man looked back and saw the tins, he turned and picked one up. Grey Rat, who had sharp eyes, snatched up the other.

When Tin Soldier saw what they had, he tried to grab the tins.

"That's mine!" he shouted.

"Mine!" shouted White Porcelain Man.

"Mine!" shouted Grey Rat.

"Mine! . . . Mine! . . . Mine! . . ." They bellowed together, and started fighting each other.

Hsi and his friends watched, laughing. Even Rag Doll laughed. When Papier-Mâché Cock heard them he crawled out from under the table. Then he started laughing too.

As the three hoodlums were still fighting, Rubber Dog threw down one of Tin Soldier's stones which hit Tin Soldier right smack on his back. Tin Soldier fell down with a bang. But he scrambled up to grab the stone, thinking it another tin.

"Help!" screamed Grey Rat. "They've got stones! Run for your lives!"

They turned and ran like the wind. And strangely enough fat White Porcelain Man was the fastest.

26. Hsi and Baby Bear Stand Sentry

HSI and his friends were so tickled when the scallywags ran away that they laughed and laughed till they couldn't laugh any more, however much they wanted to. They could not even make a noise like laughing.

"I must laugh once more . . . " said Baby Bear. He opened wide his mouth to get out a "Ho." But after a long, long time all that came out was a "Ya . . . ah . . . yoh!" Not a laugh but a yawn.

Funnily enough, after Baby Bear yawned, Rubber Dog, Wooden Man, Rag Doll, Papier-Mâché Cock and Old Dough Man yawned too.

"I'm not going to yawn again," said Baby Bear. "Ya . . . ah . . . yoh! Hey, what's the matter? My tongue's swollen. Ya . . . ho . . . yoh! Really. . . ."

He gave several more yawns. All of them yawned and yawned, all except Velvet Duck who was fast asleep already. They all seemed to be sleepy. Though there was no night here, people slept when they were tired. After Velvet Duck dropped quietly off, Rubber Dog fell asleep in the middle of a yawn, his mouth wide open.

"Time to sleep." Papier-Mâché Cock half closed his eyes. "I'll sing to you when I wake."

"Ummm . . . sleep." Baby Bear closed his eyes. "Ummm . . . sing."

"Here!" called Hsi. "What's going to happen if Tin Soldier comes back and finds us all asleep?"

"They're afraid." Papier-Mâché Cock opened one eye. "They won't dare come. Go to sleep."

Wooden Man's tongue had grown swollen too.

"If . . . they come . . . what . . . shall . . . we do?"

"Teach 'em a lesson," mumbled Baby Bear.

"Let's leave two people on guard," suggested Hsi. "The rest can sleep. What do you say?"

"Good," said Papier-Mâché Cock. "What? I didn't hear. I can't hear. I'm asleep."

He hastily closed his eyes and said no more.

"We two will do sentry duty," said Hsi to Baby Bear. "Let the others sleep."

"We're sentries." Baby Bear rubbed his eyes. "Let the others sleep. Let 'em sleep. Good."

So Hsi and Baby Bear mounted guard. Baby Bear held a stick over one shoulder like a real soldier. With this stick he marched up and down by the window. He kept his eyes wide open and stared outside.

Soon the rest were asleep. And Velvet Duck started gabbling in her dreams:

"I won't go to bed, so there! . . . Next time, next time. . . . The bell's broken. . . . Two apples. . . ."

Baby Bear yawned again. At once he gazed out of the window and said to Hsi:

"Sentries on night duty don't sleep. Look at me — I'm not asleep."

"They don't yawn either," said Hsi.

"No, they don't yawn either."

Baby Bear opened his eyes as wide as he could. But before long they started closing again.

"Why don't they come yet?" he asked.

"Yes, why not?" repeated Hsi.

"I'm not going to sleep, not me . . . aaah." Baby Bear's tongue seemed to have grown stiff again. He gave another yawn, and so did Hsi.

"A . . . a . . . ah," yawned Baby Bear presently. "Why don't they come? I'm sleepy."

"Let's start counting." Hsi had an idea. "That'll wake us up."

"Honestly? Count how much?"

"To a hundred."

"Suppose they still don't come after we've counted a hundred?"

"Then we can start again."

"We'll count lots and lots of hundreds." Baby Bear cheered up. "Then I shan't be sleepy all night, eh? Let me start."

"All right. To count up to a hundred is very easy, but you mustn't make any mistakes." Meaning to help Baby Bear, Hsi talked like an arithmetic teacher again.

"Suppose there are a hundred apples, all of them yours, and you count wrongly — you won't get your hundred, will you?"

"You mean I have so many apples?" Baby Bear was surprised and pleased. "Here goes then, 1,2,3,4. . . ."

When he had counted up to 32, his tongue started playing tricks again. This time Hsi was the first to give a tremendous yawn, and Baby Bear gave another.

These two yawns made Baby Bear forget how far he had gone.

"Where was I?" he asked.

"I don't know. Start again."

Baby Bear started once more from one. But after twenty he got muddled up again.

"21, ummm, 23, 32, 33 . . . umm . . . 30, 11, 12. . . ."

Hsi's tongue seemed swollen too.

"No," he mumbled. "18 . . . 10 . . . 16. . . . "

"17, 18," went on Baby Bear. "9, 90, 91, 62. . . ."

Just then Papier-Mâché Cock spoke in his sleep.

"I can sing. What's so wonderful about you?"

"What's so wonderful about *you*!" growled Baby Bear furiously. "I shan't give you any of my apples. 45, 6, 7, 8, 90, 91, 21, 31, 45. . . ."

No one knows exactly when Baby Bear closed his eyes. His stick had long since dropped to the bottom of the tower. And no one knows exactly when Hsi closed his eyes either. They both fell fast asleep. Baby Bear snored with his head on a tin of biscuits. Hsi used Baby Bear as his pillow, and found him a very comfortable pillow too.

27. *They Are Taken Prisoner*

"DON'T move! Hands up!"

Hsi was woken by this shout. Heavens! Tin Soldier, White Porcelain Man and Grey Rat had managed to climb up the tower. They were armed and pointing their weapons at our friends, who were still asleep.

"You are all prisoners now!" gloated Tin Soldier. "Do you know that — all my prisoners?"

"I don't know." Baby Bear was talking in his sleep. His eyes were still half closed, and he started counting: "26, 7, 6 . . . 1, 2, 3 . . . what? The three bad eggs!"

Grey Rat angrily hit Baby Bear over the head with his club.

"Silly fool of a bear, put up your hands!"

That woke Baby Bear completely. He wanted to stand up, but Tin Soldier flourished his glittering sword.

"Don't move!" he shouted.

By now they had all woken up.

The last to wake was Papier-Mâché Cock, who didn't see Tin Soldier and the other two. Stretching happily, he said to no one in particular:

"Oh, my! What a lovely sleep I've had — like eating a big apple! I had such a long and amusing dream. I dreamed I was standing on Tin Soldier's head, and I sang a song there. . . ."

Tin Soldier promptly kicked him.

"Who'd let you stand on my head? Who'd listen to your song?"

"You don't have to listen!" Papier-Mâché Cock was rather flustered. "I shan't be singing for you. Why should you kick me?"

"Because we feel like it!" retorted White Porcelain Man. "Because you're our prisoner. You're all our prisoners, and we can kick whichever of you we like. You think kicking's easy? It's not. You have to use strength, and that's extremely tiring. So you've no cause to complain when we kick you."

"Well! Who ever heard of such a thing . . . " grumbled Papier-Mâché Cock quietly.

The three scallywags were ravenous. They grabbed all the food they could, and squatted down to eat. They ate like cats, purring as they stuffed themselves.

Tin Soldier purred:

"Sugar's sweet, not like meat! It's not too late to put on weight! . . ."

White Porcelain Man purred:

"I wanna lose weight, just one more date. I wanna be thin, just one more tin! . . ."

Grey Rat purred:

"Sweet, sweet, sweet! What a treat! . . ."

They went on eating and eating for no one knows how long, until they had finished all the food in the tower, and were nearly bursting.

Tin Soldier lit a long cigarette and rubbed his belly.

"That's better!" he purred. "Now I'll divide the prisoners. I have first say. Rag Doll is mine. I want Baby Bear too. And . . . and. . . . "

"What about me?" put in White Porcelain Man. "Who are you giving me?"

"You can have Velvet Duck."

"I don't want her!" White Porcelain Man was cross. "She's so silly she can't do a thing. She can't even speak distinctly. I want Old Dough Man, because he's very clever and can do whatever you tell him."

"Is that true?" asked Tin Soldier. "In that case, I'll have Old Dough Man too. You can have Papier-Mâché Cock."

"Papier-Mâché Cock can sing," said Grey Rat. "It's a good idea to give him to White Porcelain Man."

"Have you forgotten I'm an invalid?" demanded White Porcelain Man peevishly. "I don't like listening to songs, they keep me awake, you know. Of course I like to hear that song Tin Soldier made, and to sing it too. But I can't bear any other songs. If you like Papier-Mâché Cock, you have him. I want Rubber Dog."

After a lengthy discussion they gave Rag Doll, Old Dough Man and Baby Bear to Tin Soldier, Rubber Dog and Velvet Duck to White Porcelain Man, Hsi and Papier-Mâché Cock to Grey Rat. That left only Wooden Man, whom none of them wanted.

"Wooden Man is no use at all!" said Tin Soldier. "He looks such a clown, and he says he has real tears!"

"Kill him!" said White Porcelain Man. "Then he won't have any tears!"

"That's it! Kill him! Kill him!" agreed Grey Rat.

"No, no, no!" Tin Soldier shook his head. "Don't be in such a hurry. Let's have a song first. After that we'll kill Wooden Man. Now, ready!"

Tin Soldier started singing at the top of his voice, and White Porcelain Man and Grey Rat joined in, with quavering voices. Tin Soldier was in such high spirits that he closed his eyes, rocked his head and started dancing.

Wooden Man started crying. So did Rag Doll. But the three scoundrels paid no attention. "Hu — lu . . . hu — lu — lu — lu, hu — lu — lu — lu! . . ." The din grew louder and louder, Tin Soldier danced faster and faster, and Grey Rat started screaming "Bravo!" White Porcelain Man was so carried away by the music that he grabbed an empty biscuit tin and started using it as a drum. Tum-tum-tum, tum-tum-tum, tum-tum-tum! . . .

28. *Time Comes Back*

SUDDENLY Tin Soldier jumped up and shrieked:

"Help! Help! Where's that bell? I heard a bell."

"What! A bell?" Grey Rat took fright too.

"Don't be afraid," said White Porcelain Man. "It's only me beating this biscuit tin."

"Oh, is it?" snarled Tin Soldier. "Well, don't do it. I forbid you to do that again! Biscuit tins may not be bells, but this sounded so like a bell that it gave me the creeps."

White Porcelain Man put down the biscuit tin and picked up a bottle. He threw back his head and swilled the wine greedily.

"Have a drink! Have a drink!" he shouted. "Don't be afraid, we shall never hear a bell again, because Time will never come back. We've won. Fetch me another bottle, Rubber Dog."

"Get me a bottle too," said Grey Rat to Papier-Mâché Cock. "Yes, we needn't be afraid. We've won. We can drink as much as we like. . . ."

"We can play as long as we like too," said Tin Soldier. "Marvellous! I still feel a little uneasy all the same. Rag Doll, bring me some wine."

"You'll feel better when you've had a drink," said White Porcelain Man. "Let's drink till we're tipsy and then go to sleep. We can sleep as long as we like, there's no one to stop us. Oh, but we mustn't forget to kill Wooden Man."

Wooden Man was crying, and his heart was thumping loudly — pu-tung, pu-tung! Rag Doll was crying too. So was Velvet Duck. And Hsi felt most upset. What could they do to save poor Wooden Man?

"After this bottle we'll polish him off," said Grey Rat.

"That's it!" said Tin Soldier. "In one minute!"

Hsi suddenly had an idea.

"They're going to kill Wooden Man," he whispered. "Don't be angry, Mr. Time! Please come back next time — no, now, I mean! Come right away! Hurry!"

What an extraordinary thing! Hsi had spoken so softly that no one else could hear him, but no sooner had he finished than Time came in through the window. Somehow or other he had heard.

Time was dressed just as before and was still on a bicycle. Hsi was the only one to notice him. Time moved very, very quietly. He smiled and waved at Hsi. Then in a flash he rode up the rope into the big bell. He had certainly kept his word. He had said he would come back only if Hsi wanted him, and now the moment Hsi called to him here he was without a sound. When he was inside the bell, it rocked very gently twice.

"Can the bell ring now?" wondered Hsi.

Time seemed to have heard him again, for he peeped out from under the bell and signed to Hsi to pull the rope.

Hsi tiptoed to the rope, and pushed it with one foot.

"Dong!" called the bell softly.

Tin Soldier leapt to his feet and hit White Porcelain Man hard.

"Why did you bang that tin again?" he shouted. "Didn't I tell you not to?"

White Porcelain Man hastily stopped his ears, quite bewildered.

"But I didn't! Really I didn't!" he protested. "That sounded like a bell. . . ."

In a great temper, Tin Soldier cut him short.

"No, no, no! That wasn't a bell! You're such a coward you thought it was a bell. Have you forgotten that the bell is dumb? All the alarm clocks, striking clocks and bells are dumb, so we shall never hear clocks or bells again. You're such a coward that you're raving."

White Porcelain Man hunched his shoulders.

"But it really sounded like a bell . . . " he insisted.

"No, no, no!" Tin Soldier shook his fist. "It wasn't a bell! It wasn't! Liar!"

"It pro-probably wasn't." Grey Rat was trembling. "But it did remind me of a bell, and of an alarm clock too. I felt as if someone were telling me to go and do something again."

White Porcelain Man picked up his bottle and gulped down some more wine.

"Pay no attention!" he said. "Have another drink. Drink makes a man brave."

But Tin Soldier was worried. He frowned as he produced a long cigarette.

"I must smoke. I must smoke. If I smoke I shan't be afraid. Was that really a bell just now? Are you sure you didn't bang the biscuit tin? Tell me the truth — was it really a bell? If it was, where did the sound come from? I must smoke. I must smoke! . . ."

Hsi seized the rope with both hands.

"Listen!" he shouted. "This is a real bell ringing, a beautiful, beautiful chime!"

He pulled with all his might. The bell swung once, and let out a glorious peal:

"Dong! Dong! . . ."

The three rascals fell over in fright.

"The bell's ringing again!" screamed Tin Soldier, scrambling up. "Run! Run for your lives!"

He was the first to jump out of the window.

White Porcelain Man and Grey Rat had fainted away. After some time they struggled to their feet and jumped out of the window too.

Hsi pulled hard on the rope again.

"Dong! Dong! . . ."

When the three rogues running away below the tower heard this, terror made them trip over again. They got up and stopped their ears. Then, bumping and jostling each other, they took to their heels once more. They rushed off without a look behind, and in a twinkling had disappeared completely.

29. *The Imitation Oriole and the True One*

WHEN the three rascals were frightened away by the bell, Hsi and his friends jumped for joy, and clapped and cheered. Papier-Mâché Cock suddenly craned his neck and crowed: "Cock-a-doodle-doo!" He did have a terrible voice: loud, but rough and cracked. They were all so happy, though, that this didn't bother them, and some of them even applauded. Then Baby Bear balanced a bottle on his head and started dancing.

"Bravo! Bravo!" cried Old Dough Man. He produced his flute and said to it: "Now it's your turn. Give us a good song!"

With his head a little on one side, Old Dough Man started playing. He played a tune that golden orioles love, his flute imitating the notes of an oriole. First there were some songs with rather simple melodies. The pure, clear notes of the flute repeated each song.

Then the flute played in an ecstasy, as if summer had come and an oriole hidden among green leaves was praising the fleecy clouds and the golden sunlight, praising fun, sport and life.

The notes trembled and the flute passed on to more varied melodies. Black clouds seemed to be racing across the sky, branches were thrashing wildly, huge raindrops were swirling down on to the ponds, and petals were whirling madly in the gale. But soon the downpour ended, and the sun came out again in a clear blue sky, so that each round raindrop on the leaves glittered and sparkled. A yellow oriole was advising its mate: "Be patient! Don't worry! Your wet feathers will soon be dry, and we can fly off again."

The flute played on and on, faster and faster. Now it was morning in the forest, and several orioles were trying to outsing each other, to see whose airs had most variety, whose notes were roundest, whose songs had most of love, whose voice was sweetest.

Old Dough Man swayed as he played. More wrinkles appeared on his forehead, his eyebrows pressed lower and lower, and his face turned whiter and whiter.

Hsi had his hands tightly clasped. Rag Doll was staring as if she were in a trance. Wooden Man had his head in his hands. Rubber Dog was beating the time softly with his tail. That conceited look had gone from Papier-Mâché Cock's face. And Velvet Duck was gaping. Each one of them was carried away by the music.

Old Dough Man sighed deeply, and his flute passed to a gay and beautiful tune, a song of perfect happiness. Yet joyous as this was it held a note of restlessness, as if a young oriole were searching passionately for its mate, soaring up and alighting again, flitting from tree to tree, then flying off to some distance. It flew on and on, singing as it went as if it did not know what weariness was.

"Listen!" whispered Hsi. "What's that sound in the distance?"

Yes, what was it? What was it, indeed?

Far, far away a real oriole had started to sing. The sound was faint, yet strong and clear. It was simple yet sweet, like a mountain brook, a silk girdle fluttering in the wind, or a dewdrop rolling on a lotus leaf.

Old Dough Man had heard the real oriole too. He winked at the others as he went on playing. He played on and on, his face growing whiter and whiter. He smiled, his eyes flashed, and two tears rolled down his cheeks.

The imitation oriole sang with all its might, while the true one followed it lightly and merrily. Each note of the flute was answered by the bird. Little by little the oriole drew near, and its voice became clearer and clearer.

Then a second oriole joined in, and a third, until many of them were singing.

The orioles seemed to be chanting: "The season of warmth is here, bright summer is here! Grow, children! Jump, run and fly! All that is best on earth is yours, and all that is best in the water and the air. All the best in existence is yours, as well as all that has not yet come into being. Time is with you, the future is with you, hope is with you. Don't frown and look sad! Don't sigh! Start now, at once, right away! Don't wait till 'next time'! Now that you know how careful you should be, Time will never leave you again. Here are warmth, happiness and fun — let us jump and shout and laugh!"

While the orioles were singing so joyfully, other birds joined in — magpies, swallows, cuckoos and other small feathered creatures. Presently the wind could be heard, the soughing of trees, flowing rivers and the breakers of the sea.

Little by little, the frozen clouds in the sky came to life and started moving. Great raindrops fell from the clouds. After this sudden shower a brilliant rainbow spanned the azure sky. A soft breeze blew into the tower, and golden sunbeams darted through the windows.

"The flowers! The flowers!" cried Rag Doll in delight. "The flowers have opened!"

It was true. Suddenly there were flowers of every kind blooming outside. Purple lilac, red flowering plum, brilliant peonies, morning glory over all the fences, lotus on all the ponds, and countless sturdy dahlias of every colour. No one knows when exactly the change came to Next-Time Port!

30. *Young Dough Man*

RAG Doll had good eyes. Through the window she could see all the boats in the port were moving.

"Look, look!" she cried. "Ever so many boats have put in, and ever so many more are setting sail!"

"What! Let me see!" But Rubber Dog couldn't see so far. Though he strained his eyes he couldn't see anything clearly. So he sniffed hard instead.

"Yes!" he said. "I can smell it. The boats are under way."

"Honestly?" Velvet Duck was thrilled. "I want to take a boat to find my mother. Come on quick to the port. I want lots and lots of boats."

"You don't need lots and lots — one will do," said Baby Bear. "We can all go home on one boat."

"That's right," agreed the others. "Let's go home. Come on!"

Just then Wooden Man broke in:

"Ter . . . rible . . . Old Dough Man . . . dead."

"What! Old Dough Man dead!"

It was true. Old Dough Man was dead. No one had noticed when he stopped playing his flute or when he had lain down quietly by himself. His eyes and mouth were closed, and he still had the flute in his hand. He had played his last tune. He would never make music for them again. They hung their heads and felt quite heart-broken.

"He was such a good fellow," said Hsi. "Good Old Dough Man."

"But he wasn't old at all," said Rubber Dog. "He oughtn't to have died!"

"He was a hero, a real hero!" said Papier-Mâché Cock. "We must always remember him."

"He was ever so kind," said Baby Bear.

"Maybe he isn't dead," said Velvet Duck. "Maybe he's only sleeping."

Wooden Man couldn't say anything, but his heart was thudding — pu-tung, pu-tung — again. He was rolling his eyes, a sure sign that the tears were coming.

Rag Doll went out and picked a flower, a beautiful, fragrant violet. She knelt by Old Dough Man and held it up in front of him.

"Look, look!" she whispered. "This is a real flower, a real flower. . . ."

But Old Dough Man didn't open his eyes or smell it.

Rag Doll put the flower in his buttonhole, and hung her head to cry. In fact, they all shed tears.

After a long, long time Papier-Mâché Cock said:

"We mustn't take this too much to heart. Let's go and bury Old Dough Man."

"What does 'bury' mean?" asked Velvet Duck.

"It means putting him in the ground, as if you were planting something," explained Hsi.

"Are we going to plant Old Dough Man in the ground?" asked Baby Bear.

"Oh, good!" said Rubber Dog. "Then maybe another Old Dough Man will grow."

"You don't understand," said Papier-Mâché Cock. "A whole lot of old dough men may grow."

"Goody, goody!" shouted Baby Bear. "I'll go with you."

"Me too!" cried Velvet Duck.

"And me!" said Rubber Dog.

"What? Where to? Take me too." Old Dough Man jumped up suddenly. "Why are you crying? What's the matter?"

Another extraordinary thing had happened. Old Dough Man had come to life again, and turned into a young dough man. He'd been nearly bald, with a long beard, but now somehow or other he had plenty of hair and no beard at all. So it wouldn't be right to go on calling him Old Dough Man — we had better change his name to Young Dough Man.

Young Dough Man looked round and greeted them all gaily:

"How are you? How are you? What are you crying about? Silly kids! Look, I'm as fresh as if I were newly made. I shall never frown or lose my temper again, and you're not to call me Old Dough Man any more."

"Right!" said Velvet Duck. "You're Young Dough Man. Your beard's all gone back to your head, hasn't it?"

"No!" protested Baby Bear. "People don't have beards on their heads. They have eyebrows."

"Hair," said Wooden Man.

Young Dough Man roared with laughter.

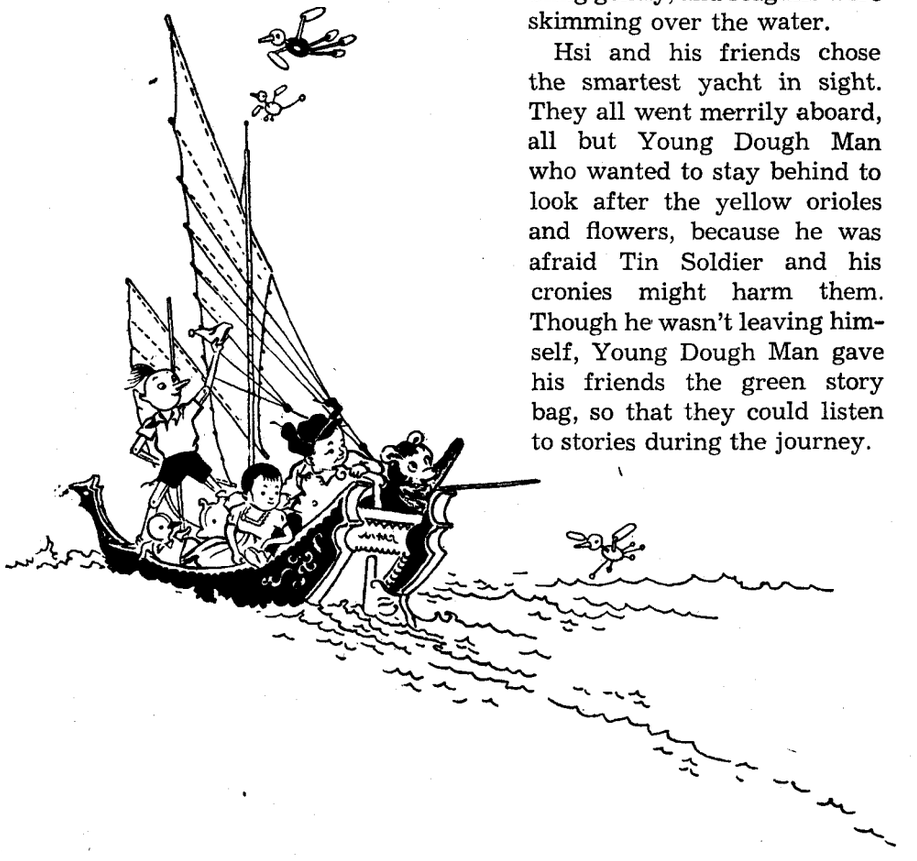
"Never mind whether it's a beard, eyebrows or hair," he said. "Now my strength has come back, I can play the flute, I can swim, I can skate. We can have a lot of fun together in future, don't you agree?"

"Oh, yes! How lovely!" they cried.

31. *The End*

NOW this story is nearing its end.

After Old Dough Man had turned into Young Dough Man, he and the others went straight to the wharf. The notices on all the boats had been changed to "Sailing at Once" or "Sailing Now." Naturally smoke was coming from all the funnels, and all the masts had been rigged. Sirens were hooting, bells ringing and gongs sounding. All was noise and bustle. The sea had changed colour too, and was now like sea anywhere else. Waves were tumbling gently, and seagulls were skimming over the water.



Hsi and his friends chose the smartest yacht in sight. They all went merrily aboard, all but Young Dough Man who wanted to stay behind to look after the yellow orioles and flowers, because he was afraid Tin Soldier and his cronies might harm them. Though he wasn't leaving himself, Young Dough Man gave his friends the green story bag, so that they could listen to stories during the journey.

Just before the boat left they suggested that Young Dough Man should find another name for Next-Time Port. As there would always be wind and waves, morning and evening here now, and all the boats could sail, it wouldn't be right to call it Next-Time Port any more. After talking it over they agreed to change its name to Story Port.

Of course the parting between our friends and Young Dough Man, who was going to stay in Story Port for ever, was a very sad one, they went on waving to each other and shouting "Goodbye!" till the yacht was some way out to sea.

And so Hsi went home. Because when children leave home, no matter how far they go, if they don't forget their mothers, their mothers won't forget them, and in the end they are sure to reach home again. As to whether Hsi finally did those sums, whether the alarm clock was really broken, and if so whether it was ever mended — I am not too clear on these points. All I know is that after this Hsi gradually understood certain things, such as the right way to treat lessons and play. Still, I can't talk about this because I haven't discussed it with Hsi yet.

Another thing — little by little Hsi grew another shadow of his own. Naturally this shadow wasn't a troublesome chatterbox. And Hsi will never lose this shadow again.

As to where Rag Doll, Baby Bear and the others went, what happened to them and what they did, I have even less intention of telling you that. Because that's another long story in itself, and for a story to go on and on, without ever coming to an end, is very bad indeed!

Translated by Gladys Yang
Illustrations by Ting Shen

POEMS

by Tao Yuan-ming

Thinking of the Past in My Cottage at the Beginning of Spring in the Year Kuei-Mao (A.D. 403)

The Teacher of old* had a lesson to give to the world:
He cared for his work and not for his poverty.
As I now gaze afar to the endless distance,
I will and resolve ever to work my hardest,
To cleave to my hoe and be content with my calling,
To smile and keep up the hearts of my fellow farmers.
The wind skims far across the level fields,
Where sturdy shoots are sprouting new leaves.
Although I cannot measure my year's produce,
Its present state shows many signs of hope.
There comes a time when I rest from ploughing and planting,
But still no Traveller comes to ask me questions!**
When the sun goes down we all go home together;
With soup and with wine I treat my nearest neighbours.
Loudly I sing as I shut my gate of brushwood,
I will remain a man of the fields and furrows!

See Prof. Wang Yao's article *Tao Yuan-ming, a Great Pastoral Poet,* on page 117 in this issue.

*Confucius.

**Confucius went out of his way in his travels to meet two hermit farmers, Chang Chu and Chieh Yi, and ask them questions about their philosophy.

Stopping at Chu O on the Way to My Appointment as Secretary to the General

In my youth I remained aloof from the world of affairs,
Music and books pervaded all my heart.
My clothes were rough, but I was content with myself.
Often my purse was empty, but yet was I happy.
Then came the day when carriages stopped in the lane —
They brought the appointment, the order to dress up and go.
For a time I am forced to part from my fields and garden.
My lonely boat sails farther and farther away,
My returning thoughts go winding and winding homewards.
Long, endlessly long, my journey seems,
Uphill and down, three hundred miles and more.
My eyes are tired with unknown roads and rivers,
My mind still full of thoughts of my mountain dwelling.
I look up at the clouds and the birds high-soaring there,
And down at the swimming fish in the water's depth,
Ashamed! For Nature once held sway in my heart.

But who shall say that I shall be bound by my body?
Though now I am forced to do what Fate has destined.
In the end, like the scholar Pan Ku,* I too shall return.

On Returning to Live in My Own Home in the Country

From youth I was never made for common life,
My nature was ever to love the hills and mountains.
By mischance I fell into the dusty world
And, being gone, stayed there for thirteen years.
A captive bird longs for the woods of old,
The fish in the pond dreams of its native river.
So I have returned to till this southern wild,

*A scholar of the later Han dynasty who expressed in a poem his longing to dwell in a hermit's hut.

To a simple life in my own fields and garden.
Two acres of land surround my home,
My thatched cottage has eight or nine bays,
Willow and elm shade the courtyard,
Peach and plum spread in front of the hall.
Dim, dim in the distance lies the village,
Faintly, faintly you see the smoke of its chimneys.
A dog barks deep in the long lane,
The cock crows on the top of a mulberry tree.
There is no dust and no confusion here,
In these empty rooms, but ample space and to spare.
So long have I lived inside a cage!
Now at last I can turn again to Nature.

*

Nothing much happens out here in the wild,
Our lonely lane has scarcely seen a carriage.
All the day, our rustic doors are closed,
Quiet rooms keep us from thoughts of the world.
But time and again in the lane that leads to the village,
Parting the grass on our way, we meet with each other;
And when we meet, there's no talk of frivolous matters,
We discuss the progress of our hemp and mulberry.

Every day our seedlings are growing taller,
And every day our lands seem ever broader,
We are often afraid that if frost and sleet should fall
All will be withered away like weeds and grass.

*

I have planted beans below the southern hill;
The weeds abound — the young bean shoots are few.
Early I rise in the morning to tend my rows,
When I return with my hoe I am wearing the moonlight.
The path is narrow, the flowers and grass are tall,
And my clothes are all drenched in the dews of nightfall.
Wet clothes are little enough to bear,
But let not my purpose be abandoned ever!

The Fire That I Suffered in the Sixth Month of the Year Wu-Shen (A.D. 408)

For my cottage of reeds and thatch in this poor lane
I was glad to say goodbye to my splendid carriage.
But this mid-summer a high wind blew without ceasing,
My humble dwelling burst into sudden flame.
In all the house not a rafter was left in the roof,
And now I live in a boat in front of the door.

Long, long is this early autumn evening,
High, so high is the moon, and almost full.
The fruits and plants of my garden are growing again,
But the frightened crows have not come back to their nests.
It is midnight, and here I stand, with my thoughts ranging,
And gaze all round and above at the depths of the sky.
Even in childhood I held my thoughts aloof,
And thus have I been for more than forty years.
My body follows the simple pattern of Nature,
My spirit ever remains alone and idle.
I have become so self-reliant and strong
That jade and stone are not so hard as I am.
I look up and think of Tung Hu's* times of old,
When the people threw the surplus grain in the fields.
And, eating their fill, they had no more cares in the world
Than to rise in the morning and in the evening sleep.

But now since the times are not in the least like those,
I had better begin to water my western garden!

---

*A legendary king.

Red as Blossoms in Spring (124.3 cm. × 51.2 cm.)
by Hsiao Chen (Ching dynasty, 1644-1911)

Moving Home

There's many a fine day here in spring and in autumn
When I love to climb the hill and compose new verses.
I never pass a gate but somebody greets me;
If a man has wine he shares it with all around.
When work in the fields is done, each one goes home;
And then at leisure I think again of friends.
I think of friends — and fling my cloak on my shoulder;
For never we tire of talk and laughter together.
So are not all these things good reasons enough
Why I should not depart from this place?
But food and clothes must needs be won for a living;
My strong hand on the plough will never fail me.

Harvesting Early Rice in the West Field in the Ninth Month of the Year Keng-Hsu (A.D. 410)

There are many sides indeed to human life,
Food and clothing are necessities.
It is not so easy to toil to obtain these
And yet to seek for peace within oneself.
With the spring my round of labour begins anew
And I can look ahead to my yearly harvest.
Out with the dawn, exerting all my strength,
Home at sundown bearing my plough on my shoulder.
In the hills there is either frost or there is dew,
The very air and the wind are colder here.
How can it not be hard, this farmer's life?
And the hardship is such that no one can avoid.
So tired is my whole body when I come home,
That I cannot even think of other troubles.
I bath, and then I rest beneath my eaves,
And a jar of wine scatters my cares away.
It is long, so long, since the time of Tzu and Ni,*
A thousand years part us, and yet we are one.
If only my life could always be like this!
I don't complain of dragging my own plough.

*Legendary hermit farmers.

Miscellaneous Poems

The sun has sunk in the depths of the western river,
The pure moon rises over the eastern hills.
In its thousand-league beams the vast scene
Far, far around me shimmers on the air.
A wind is rising and blows in at my windows,
And now at night the pillows and sheets are cold.
The change in the air tells me what season it is,
Sleepless, I know too well that the nights are long.
I want to talk, but there's no one for me to talk to,
I raise my cup and drink to my lonely shadow.

Oh, days and months — how they waste us all away!
I had ideals, and I have not fulfilled them!
This is the thought that obsesses me with its sadness
And all night long will rob me of my calm.

*

I remember that in my young days,
If I had no reason for joy, yet still was I happy.
My brave ambitions embraced the whole world,
My winged imagination soared far.
But suddenly the months and years have gone by,
And this heart of mine is partly spent already.
Though joy is within my grasp, yet it gives me no pleasure,
Anxiety and sadness are ever my mood.
Little by little my physical strength declines,
I begin to feel the times are not what they were.
My "boat in the cave" may soon be "stolen away."*
I am carried along on a stream, and I cannot stop.
How much more of my journey is left to go?
Where shall I anchor at last? I cannot tell.

The men of old treasured each moment of time,
But I, when I think on these things, I am afraid!

*

*In a fable of Chuang-tzu a man hid his boat in a deep cave and thought it was secure; but when night came a strong man found the boat and carried it away. The moral is that if your time has come, however careful of yourself you are, it is no use.

I never wished to receive an official's pay,
The fields and the mulberry trees are my profession.
I work myself, there's no one to take my place.
Sometimes in hunger and cold I have eaten chaff.
I do not hope to eat my bellyful,
All I desire is enough to assuage hunger.
In the winter I manage with rough cloth of cotton.
The coarsest hemp must do for the summer sun;
And even these I often cannot obtain.
Alas! What pain it is that of all mankind,
Who constantly strive to gain their heart's desire,
This foolish scholar should so fail in his!
But what's to be done? That is the way things are,
So let me drink a single cup and be happy.

Poems on Drinking Wine

I am not really happy living without work; moreover, the nights are growing long. So when I manage, as I occasionally do, to procure some famous wine, not a night passes without my drinking deep. Here I sit, alone with my shadow and emptying my glass; then, all of a sudden — I am drunk! After I have reached that point, I often start writing a few lines for fun. Though I consume much paper and ink, what I write has very little sense, but I have asked my old friend to copy out these poems in the hope that they may at least be amusing.

I have built my cottage amongst the throng of men,
And yet there is no noise of horse and of carriage.
You ask me, how can it be? and I reply:
When my heart is absent the place itself is absent;
For I pick chrysanthemums under the eastern hedge,
And far away to the south I can see the mountains,
And the mountain mists are lovely at morning and evening,
While birds keep flying across and back again.
In all these things there lies a profound meaning.
I was going to explain . . . but now I forget what it was.

*

Lovely is the colour of the autumn chrysanthemum,
When you gather its flowers that are all wet with dew!
Let the Reliever of Sorrows overflow,
And carry my feelings far away from the world.
Though I am alone and broach but a single jar,
When my cup is empty the wine-pot pours itself.
It is evening and all activity is ceasing,
The calling birds are returning home to the woods,
And I am at ease at a window facing the west.
Once more I attain to the full enjoyment of life.

*

My old friends come to see me to give me pleasure,
So, lifting the wine-jar, we set forth together.
We clear the brambles, sit beneath a pine,
Pour a few cupfuls — then we are drunk again,
The elders now are off in endless chatter,
And we have lost count of how many cups we have filled.
I cannot even be sure if this is myself.
How can I tell any more the Important Issues?
Far, far have I left the world behind.
Surely in wine there lies a joy profound!

*

Hsi and Nung* are far away in time;
Rare indeed today is truth like theirs.
The Old Man of Lu,** persistent, tireless,
Patched up the world and made it whole again,
And though the phoenix would not return to the land
Music and virtue were, for a time, renewed —
The rivers of Shu and Szu*** their whisper ceased;
Yet they flowed and floated on to the cruel Chin.****

*Legendary emperors. Fu Hsi was said to have introduced writing and Shen Nung agriculture.

**Confucius. He regretted that the phoenix was no more to be seen in the world, which he said was because the world was in chaos.

***Rivers on the banks of which Confucius once taught his students.

****The Emperor Chin Shih Huang Ti (221-210 B.C.), unifier of China and builder of the Great Wall, typified by the poet, and throughout Chinese literature, as the supreme tyrant, burnt the Confucian classics in his drive to found a new form of centralized state. Knowing the classics by heart a few old scholars fled into remote regions till the reign of Chin was over, when they returned to dictate the classics anew and so preserve them.

What crime had ever been done by the Classical Books
That they should be turned in a day to dust and ashes?
Those few old men, that tiny band of scholars,
Their action then was truly devoted and great —
Why has this greatness so died out in the world
That nobody cares any more for the Six Classics?
I could travel as far as a whole day's journey by coach
And not see a man who would ask me so much as a question.
Quick! Let me drink again, for if I don't
I shall feel I do not deserve my scholar's hat.
If my uncouth expressions cause you offence
I beg that you will forgive a drunken man.

Plaint, to the Melody of Chu: Written for Mr. Pang and Mr. Teng

Heaven is unfathomable, Heaven is distant.
Mysterious are the ways of gods and demons!

When I was young I dreamed of noble deeds,
But for fifty years all I have done is to labour.
I met with troubles since first I grew up.
So soon after I wed her I lost my beloved!
Fire has more than once burnt down my cottage,
Pests have ravaged through my fields at their pleasure,
Wind and rain have struck them from all directions.
My harvest is too little for one man,
Often I go hungry on summer days,
And on winter nights sleep without blankets;
In the early evening I think of cockcrow,
When morning comes I long for sundown.
It is my own fate — why blame Heaven?
Parting, hardship and sorrow confront me always.
And as for glory after I am gone,
Why, it is no more to me than drifting smoke!

To you, my friends, I am singing my sad song
To you who alone understand, like the sage Chung Tzu-chi.

Songs of a Poor Scholar

Cold and harsh comes in the evening of the year.
Wrapped in rough hemp I sun myself in the porch.
Nothing is growing now in the southern orchard,
In the northern garden the branches all are bare,
The last drop has been poured out from the wine-pot,
I look at my kitchen hearth and I see no smoke.
The books are pushed away in the side of the chair;
Midday is past, and I've still no heart to read them.
I have no work, unlike the Master at Chen,*
Privately, anxiously questioned in his distress.
What comfort can I find to strengthen my heart?
The fact that of old there was many a sage like this.

Peach-Blossom Springs

*In the Tai Yuan period** of the Tsin dynasty, there was a man of Wuling*** who was a fisherman by trade. One day he was fishing up a stream in his boat, and heedless of how far he had gone, when suddenly he came upon a forest of peach trees. On both banks for several hundred yards there were no other kinds of trees. The fragrant grass was delicious and beautiful to look at, all patterned with fallen blossom. The fisherman was extremely surprised and went on further, determined to get to the end of this wood.*

He found the end of the wood and the source of the stream together, at the foot of a cliff, and in this cliff there was a small cave in which there seemed to be a faint light. He left his boat and went in through the mouth of the cave. At first it was very narrow, only just wide enough for a man, but after forty or fifty yards he suddenly found himself in the open.

*Confucius and a disciple, when travelling through the State of Chen, could not obtain food and suffered acutely. The disciple's anxious question was: "Can a man of honour be conquered by hunger?" Confucius' answer was: "The man of honour can bear hunger, while the vulgar under the stress of hunger will do anything."

**A.D. 376-396.

***In Hunan Province.

The place he had come to was level and spacious. There were houses and cottages arranged in a planned order; there were fine fields and beautiful pools; there were mulberry trees, bamboo groves, and many other kinds of trees as well; there were raised pathways round the fields; and he heard the sound of chickens and of dogs. Going to and fro in all this, and busied in working and planting, were people, both men and women. Their dress was not unlike that of people outside, but all of them, whether old people with white hair or children with their hair tied in a knot, all were happy and content with themselves.

When they saw the fisherman they were greatly amazed and asked him where he had come from. He answered all their questions, and then they asked him back to their homes, where they put wine before him, killed chickens and prepared food in his honour. When the other people in the village heard about the visitor, they too all came to ask questions.

They themselves told him that their ancestors had escaped from the wars and confusion in the time of the Chin dynasty. Bringing their wives and children, all the people of their district had reached this inaccessible place, and never again had they left it. Thus they had lost all contact with the world outside. They asked what dynasty it was now. They had never even heard of the Han, let alone the Wei and the Tsin. Point by point the fisherman explained all he could of the world that he knew, and they all sighed in deep sorrow.*

Afterwards all the rest began again to ask him to their homes, and all feasted him with wine and food. He stayed there several days and then bade them goodbye; but before he departed these people said to him: "Never speak to anyone outside about this!"

So he went out, found his boat and went back by the same route as he had come; but all along the way he left marks; and when he got to the provincial town he called on the prefect and told him all about his experience. The prefect at once sent men to go with him and follow up the marks he had left. But they became completely confused over the marks and never succeeded in finding the way.

A scholar from Nanyang, a man of high reputation named Liu Tzu-chi, heard of the affair and enthusiastically offered to go out with the fisherman to try again. But this, too, came to nothing, for he fell ill and died. After that no one went any more to look for the stream.

* 221-207 B.C.

The Chin Emperor threw the world in confusion,
Good men fled from his times and his dominion.
Huang and his friends reached the Shang Mountain,
And these others fled away too and escaped;
All trace of their journey vanished for ever,
And the path they trod was covered with grass and deserted.

Their living they gain by tilling the soil and reaping;
When the sun goes down they go to rest together.
Bamboo and mulberry bend to give them shade,
Beans and rice follow at seasons due.
From the spring silkworm they gather long thread,
At the autumn harvest there is no imperial tax.
The only lanes are made by their coming and going,
Cocks are crowing and dogs are barking together.
The rites are all performed in the ancient manner,
And in their clothes there are no new fashions.
Children run and sing to their hearts' content,
The grey-haired happily go round visiting friends.
The flowering grass tells them what month it is,
They know the autumn wind by the bare branches;
For even without a calendar to show you
The four seasons still add up to a year.
At peace together, they live in abounding joy;
What need have they to cudgel their brains and scheme?

Five hundred years they had lain thus strangely hidden,
When there came a man to disclose this magic world;
But since good and evil spring from different sources,
When he had gone it returned to its mystery.
You men of the world, what can you know, may I ask,
Of things so far beyond your noise and your dust?
But for me, I long to rise on the gentle wind,
To be soaring high and searching for my friends.

Reading the *Classic of Seas and Mountains*

It is early summer, the flowers and plants are growing,
Around my house are spreading wide the trees
In which a host of birds find happy refuge;
And I as well, I love my thatched cottage.
I have done my ploughing and I have done my planting,
Now I have leisure again to read my books.
Our rustic lane is small for a grand carriage,
But my old friend's cart is always coming and going.
In a merry mood we pour out the spring wine,
And together we pick the vegetables in the garden.
A fine rain is coming in from the east,
And a sweet breeze is blowing along with it,
I glance at the *Tales of Immortal King of Chou*
And the illustrations to the *Classic of Seas and Mountains.*
Looking up and down, I survey the universe;
How can I not, yet once again, be happy?

Song to Ching Keh*

The Prince of Yen, generous patron of talent,
Burnt for revenge against the tyrant of Chin.
He gathered round him a hundred good men;
At the close of the year he enlisted noble Ching.
A man of honour is willing to die for his friend,
So, raising his sword, he left the Yen city,
And his white charger neighed on the broad road.
Chivalrously he bade them all farewell;
His tall hat bristled from his hero's hair,
And its tassel was streaming up in his fierce breath.
They drank farewell on the banks of the waters of Yi

*Ching Keh, on behalf of his patron the Prince of Yen, made an unsuccessful attempt to assassinate the Emperor Chin Shih Huang Ti in 227 B.C. He evaded the prohibition of weapons in the emperor's presence by concealing a sword in a rolled-up map.

At a feast where heroes crowded round every table,
Chien Li mournfully struck the lute,
While Sung Yi sang with ringing tones.
The sad wind's sighing died down,
The cold waves whispered, quietly breaking.
A solemn note took the place of tears,
A martial note alerted the strong men.
They knew in their hearts that he would never return,
But only his fame pass on to future ages.
He mounted his carriage and never turned his head;
Flying it vanished towards the palace of Chin.
Furiously he journeyed a myriad miles,
Winding his way he passed a thousand cities.
The thing should have happened when the map was unrolled to its end,
But the cruel lord was nervous and on his guard.
Oh! Pity it was that his skill should be just too little,
And therefore the great deed fail its fulfilment!

Although this man is already so long dead,
For a thousand years our love for him will endure.

Begging for Food

Famine came and drove me to leave home,
But after all, where was there to go?
On and on, till I came to this street.
I knocked on a door, but was too ashamed to speak.
The owner of the house understood it all.
He called me in, and I had not come in vain!
All the day and all that night we talked
And dined and drained our cups time after time.
We talked, we sang, we fell to exchanging poems,
Happy in celebrating our new friendship.

I feel you are kind as the washerwoman of old,*
Though I, alas, am no hero General Han.
Deeply touched, I can only give you thanks;
Repayment must be made elsewhere by Heaven.

*A washerwoman gave a bowl of rice to General Han Hsin (c. 200 B.C.) when he was poor and hungry. When he later became the Prince of Chu he remembered her and rewarded her with gold.

My Funeral Song

Lonely the vast expanse of withered grass,
Whispering, sighing, the white poplar* leaves!
There's bitter frost now in this autumn month,
When they've brought me here out of the town so far.
No one lives near this place,
Only the tall mounds stand up around —
A horse looks up at the sky and neighs,
The wind itself blows desolately.
When that dark room is once closed,
In a thousand years I'll never see out again,
In a thousand years, never see out again!
Virtue and wisdom are no avail whatever.
Those who have come here to see me off
Will soon return, each to his own home;
Relations perhaps will be sorry a little longer,
The others will merely finish the chant and go.
Dead and gone — there's nothing more to be said —
My body I now entrust to be mingled with the hills.

*Commonly grown on graveyards.

Translated by Andrew Boyd

Sketches of Life Today

BOOSARA, AN UIGHUR GIRL

Wen Chieh

I'll sing of you, Boosara, and of all Uighur girls like you!

As I take up my pen, I recall a clear day in the spring of 1952 when a former general in the People's Liberation Army who is now a leader in industrial construction took me from Urumchi, the capital of Sinkiang, to Shumukou. There the buildings had just gone up for the "July First" cotton mill and many women workers from Shanghai and Tsingtao were busy in the workshops at the machines as they were being installed.

After we had made the rounds, I asked: "How come there are no Uighurs among these workers?"

"There will be — there will be very soon!" my guide said, emphatically waving his right fist before his eyes in a habitual gesture. He spoke as confidently as if he were still issuing orders to his troops. His zeal was heartening, and I answered his confident smile.

This spring, I met you in Peihai Park in Peking, Boosara, do you remember? I shook your hand even more excitedly when I noticed the two shining medals on your black corduroy jacket — they were medals given to advanced workers only! How should we account for this first batch of textile workers among you Uighur women if the policy of our Communist Party towards China's national minorities were not so splendidly correct? You are lucky, Boosara! Only eighteen this year, and your name emblazoned on the list of our country's advanced workers. . . .

I've spoken to many women of your mother's generation in the oases north and south of the Tienshan Range. They told me what they had to suffer in the old society when women were not treated as human beings but as cattle, to be bought and sold. The only freedom they had was to shed bitter tears all their lives.

But you, Boosara, you are living in a different society. During the land reform your family was allotted land; last winter, they joined an agricultural co-op. That movement for socialist transformation taught your mother a lot who, in her love for you, did not want you to taste any of the bitterness she had gone through. Your brother, who was active in the land reform movement, joined the Party and is now a clerk in the township government; your younger sister has been a Young Pioneer for some years. You yourself are a member of the Youth League. Isn't it wonderful? And all over far-away Sinkiang with its oases and boundless grasslands there are many happy families like your own and many girls happy like yourself. . . .

You finished primary school in 1954. That very year workers were being recruited for the "July First" cotton mill in Kashgar. A new life, the life of an industrial worker, was beckoning to you. You applied and were admitted to the mill. Your mother was congratulated by all for having such a capable daughter. And the other members of your family felt as proud and happy as you did.

At the beginning of winter, when the leaves were falling from the trees, you rode to Urumchi with dozens of other girls of your age from the banks of the Kashgar River where you had grown up.

The night before your departure you snuggled close to your mother. She was stroking your hair and saying over again and again: "You must work hard, then mother can wear the cloth you've woven!" Feeling happy for your future was probably the reason why she could keep her tears back. Tearfully you smiled up at her, and early the next morning, your brother saw you off. "Listen always to what the Party has to teach you and work hard," was his parting wish to you. You must have understood how much meaning there was in this sentence.

On November 21 you arrived at Urumchi. The women workers of Han nationality, the majority nationality of China, welcomed you, helped you tidy up your rooms, build a fire and carry water. . . . "It seems I'm home again," you said. And you were quite right, Boosara, in feeling that way.

After a month's or so apprenticeship you were sent down to the workshops. An entirely new life unfolded before you. I know from your own words how you felt when you first walked into them.

"I clutched my skirt tightly with both hands and almost choked with wonder. I wanted to speak to my companions, but the noise of the machines drowned out my voice. How spacious the rooms were, with bright windows, and what a number of machines and workers at them! And, stranger still — in an instant the cotton was turned into thread by the machines, and the thread into a whole length of cloth!' What a machine

turned out in a day would have taken mother a year to weave by hand! It was a grand feeling to know I was going to work at these machines, but I was also afraid that I might not be capable of learning how to run them. . . ."

That night, the girls from Kashgar chatted excitedly in their hostel. Some said: "We'll be glad if we can handle these machines in six months' time." But others were more pessimistic. "Not even a year will be enough, you'll see!" But you, Boosara, reclined silently on your cot. You were only sixteen then, so it could not have been insomnia that kept you awake that night and some nights thereafter. An encouraging letter from your brother pulled you out of your worries. If we work hard, the Party and the Han girls will help us in everything, you thought. And you spoke to your companions as if you had suddenly had an inspiration: "We'll learn the necessary technique in no time! What's there to be afraid of?" Thus you built up your own courage and that of your work-mates. All of you agreed that whoever learnt to run the machines first, would teach the others.

You were apprenticed to a Han girl by the name of Yu Tsung-lien, who took great pains with you. She told you about all the machine parts and their function. She taught you what she knew herself, and you on your part were modest and attentive while learning. If there was anything you did not understand, you would ask again and again until you mastered it. Sometimes the language difficulty between teacher and apprentice made you converse through gestures. You followed Yu Tsung-lien around and imitated her every movement at the machine. You came to like her as an elder sister. But actually this Han girl from Tsingtao was only a couple or three years older than yourself and had just left home too.

Only nine days after you had started your apprenticeship you were looking after two hundred spindles. The first few days the spindles seemed to give you trouble on purpose. The thread snapped now on this one, now on another. There was no end to your running hither and thither, tying the broken threads together. You became worried. Yu Tsung-lien had gone through all these twists and turns herself, so she knew you needed a boost of your morale. "Keep your chin up!" she told you, not once but many times. "There's no difficulty you can't overcome! Keep it up and you'll be an Uighur Ho Chien-hsiu."* She also said you should be calm and concentrate on your work, and if the thread broke too easily, you should examine the machine.

That helped you to control your nervousness. When the threads snapped, you would tell yourself: "Be calm, Boosara, be calm," and tie them together one by one. And if the thread kept breaking on a certain machine, you would examine every part of it, wipe them all clean and oil them.

*Famous as a textile worker all over China, of Han nationality.

It took you a mere twenty-three days to be able to take care of 464 spindles. You have always had great interest in all new things. So whatever new methods were generally applied in the workshops, you were after their mastery despite all the difficulties. You progressed with the others, yet your progress was faster. The knots of the threads you tied together were very small, the average time you spent in replacing an empty bobbin with a full one was just twenty-two seconds, and your rate of waste cotton was 0.17 per cent below the minimum. Through hard work you made the greatest progress among the first batch of Uighur girls who had become textile workers. After a year, you could manage looking after 696 spindles. And every step forward you took was an encouragement to your mates as well, to catch you up quickly. Now both Jamila and Amina are able to look after nearly this many spindles too. Do you realize what you have done, Boosara, to raise the production of textiles?

You told me that you loved your loom and its rhythmical sound so much that you missed it if you were away for even one day. That probably accounts for the fact that you haven't been absent from work or late ever since you began working. You loved your machines with the same love your mother had for you. "I love cleanliness," you said. "And my machines like to be clean, too." I think, Boosara, you should rather say that you want the machines as prettily made up as you are yourself. That is why your work-mates liked to take over from you because you kept the machines spotlessly clean, in readiness for the next shift.

Besides learning what you could technically from the Han girls, you also learnt that one must help others. You have not forgotten the agreement you had made that whoever would be able to handle the machines first, should aid any others who needed it. Mykhtaram from Kuche was even younger than you, she had not been long in the mill, and she did not get used to the collective life of the factory easily. Being so young, she liked a bit of fun and didn't mind playing hookey, whenever the spirit moved her. You admonished her that she must not spoil the Uighur girls' good name in the first cotton mill they ever had. You found that her lack of interest was due to her ignorance of machines and working methods. So you took time off during the lunch period to teach her what you had learnt only so recently till you had made her love her work, too. Now she looks after four hundred spindles quite independently, and never fails to appear on time.

I asked you that day when we met in Peihai Park what made you work so hard. And with hardly a moment's hesitation, you said: "The Party — and all it stands for!"

You went on to tell me that you were applying for Party membership. And although you spoke softly, Boosara, your eyes and voice betrayed your excitement.

I asked what you intended to do further.

"I want to improve my skill so that I can look after eight hundred spindles or even more, and yet ensure quality."

"If the Party asked you what your preference was in work, what would you say?"

"I'd say let me stay at the mill," you answered laughingly.

When we parted there in Peihai Park under the lilacs in bloom, I said to you: "Life lies before you — you'll flourish like these lilacs under the spring sun!"

You didn't reply, but your bowed head and half-closed, shy eyes spoke amply of a young girl's dreams of happiness.

May 1956

Translated by Yu Fan-chin

SON-IN-LAW

Li Na

It was a Sunday. Aunt Chi got hold of her four-year-old grandson Shuan and made him sit down to breakfast. After that, she took him out to play in the neighbourhood, while she came back, swept the courtyard and got ready to cook lunch — the pork and vegetables she had gone out to buy at the peep of day.

Her daughter Hsiu was employed in a cotton mill quite some distance away. That was the reason why she came home at most once a week. And so Aunt Chi took care that she should have a hearty meal as well as a good rest whenever she was expected back.

Just thinking of this girl of hers nearly made the mother's heart burst. Aunt Chi had been a widow since her early twenties. From the day Hsiu was born, the girl was doomed to suffer with her mother. When she was only twelve years old, Aunt Chi had to send her to work in the cotton mill to earn her living, although her small hands barely reached up to the spindles. Thus the girl grew up in an atmosphere laden with cotton-fluff. As soon as she could, Aunt Chi arranged a marriage, hoping thereby to give her daughter security and happiness. But just a year ago, that husband had divorced her daughter who then brought the small boy, Shuan, to live with her mother.

To tell the truth, Aunt Chi was not so very upset about her daughter's divorce. For one thing, the son-in-law had turned out to be a regular good-for-nothing who hardly ever held down a job for any length of time. Yet he had always complained about her daughter for one reason or another! All in all, he had led her Hsiu a hellish life. But the immediate problem was how to go on living after the divorce. Although the daughter did not want to bring up the subject, the mother couldn't help worrying on her behalf. She certainly was much too young to just devote herself to her little boy for the remainder of her life. Find her another husband? Here she was, a deserted wife, with a growing child besides. Who would want to marry a woman like her? . . .

Some time ago, on a visit to her own folks, Aunt Chi had told her sister-in-law that she hoped to find her daughter another husband. But, as the saying goes, it takes a golden cup to pair with a jade glass, while an earthen vessel can be matched only with a crude bowl. Aunt Chi remembered this saying well, and so she did not entertain too great a hope about a prospective son-in-law, as she took stock of her daughter's situation. If only her sister-in-law could find someone acceptable — she wouldn't make too many demands of a man who'd marry her divorced daughter!

As a matter of fact, however, since Aunt Chi had had that talk with her sister-in-law, quite a few prospective choices had been presented to her, but none to her taste — one was too old, another too ugly, a third had too many children by a former wife. No wonder, then, that the matter weighed more heavily on her mind as time went on.

Poor thing! Hsiu-chieh was so sweet and had such a pretty face, and people praised her for her capability as a spinner in the cotton mill, too. What rotten luck she'd had! And to think that she might have to go on like this for the rest of her days — no, no, that mustn't be!

Little Shuan came back, hopping from one foot to the other. He ran up to Aunt Chi and threw his arms around her middle, asking: "Why isn't mommy back yet, Granny? I want her to buy me a big kite that looks like a bat. Why don't you go and get her? . . ." Aunt Chi was busy kneading the dough, her hands were covered with flour. So she spoke as soothingly as she could to her grandson, "Listen to granny now, my little precious! Go play like a good boy and I'll tell your mommy as soon as she comes to buy you a big bat-kite. But if you're naughty, maybe mommy will be angry and won't come back. . . ." Shuan immediately pulled himself together and promised solemnly to be good. Aunt Chi was moved at his quick response. Kissing the small face, she said with a sigh: "If only you could grow up more quickly and take care of your mommy! . . ."

Then, telling Shuan to go and play nicely, she put the steamed bread in the steamer. It was now high noon; still there was no sign of Hsiu-chieh. Aunt Chi unlatched the gate and went outside to look. A young

couple came by, both in their working clothes, walking close together. The woman looked perhaps a couple of years younger than her Hsiu-chieh. When the eyes of these young people met those of Aunt Chi, they moved apart a little and smiled at her somewhat embarrassedly. "How lucky they are, these people!" Aunt Chi thought to herself.

As she was standing there at the gate, where she could see as far as the village bridge, two figures loomed up in the distance. By the way of walking and height she recognized one of them as her daughter. But who was the other, striding along by her side, another girl in slacks, working in the same mill? Only after the two had crossed the bridge, Aunt Chi began to realize that Hsiu-chieh's companion was a man, not a woman. Her thoughts became confused at the sight, "Never before has my daughter brought a man home with her. Who's he? Could she have got herself a sweetheart? . . ." Not knowing whether something good or bad was in the offing, she turned on her heels and went into the house, to clean up the odds and ends left about.

She had just put away a broken bowl, when her daughter entered, with her friend in tow. Hardly across the threshold, Hsiu-chieh called out: "I've brought you a visitor, Mother! He's a technician from our shop, he also helps me with my arithmetic. . . ." Embarrassed by her own bold statement, she hung her head, but not before she had given her guest a smiling glance. The man was obviously also ill at ease, for he merely addressed her as "Aunt Chi" with a little bow, and said no more. Aunt Chi ran her eyes over him from top to toe. He must be twenty-six or seven years old. . . . He was very tall, had a broad face and a straight nose and there was a fresh glow on his cheeks, as if reddened by wind and sun. His appearance was quite pleasing, except for his snow-white teeth when he grinned. Somehow it disturbed her seeing him do it now. Nevertheless, she invited him to sit down on the *kang*, took two dishes of peanuts and melon-seeds from the cupboard and put them on a small table in the middle of this raised brick platform. "You two just go on chatting, I'll get the food ready meanwhile . . ." she excused herself, and with this went out and back to her cooking in the kitchen-shed. The steamed bread was done, so she took the loaves from the steamer. Then she tried to build up the fire high enough for frying the meat and vegetables quickly, but somehow she was too nervous to succeed. . . .

From the moment her daughter had come into the house with that stranger, Aunt Chi had understood everything with a mother's intuition. Her first impression was one of pleasant surprise and a feeling as though a heavy load had been lifted from her chest. Deep in her heart she rejoiced that Hsiu-chieh might have found new happiness. But when she remembered that her daughter was a divorced woman with the boy Shuan to think about, it seemed that suddenly a bank of heavy clouds blotted out

the sky, and that everything around her was again wrapped in a pall of darkness.

In the depth of this utter gloom, only that set of glittering white teeth seemed to linger before her eyes. . . . This threw Aunt Chi's troubled mind into such turmoil that she wasn't able to make out whether it all meant that fortune was smiling or frowning upon her daughter.

It's not difficult to hear in a peasant house what's going on in another part. So Aunt Chi bent an ear to what was being said on the other side of the wall. First she heard her daughter ask the stranger: "What do you think of my mother's place?" and his reply, "It's pretty nice!" A moment after came her daughter's voice again. "I like this place. I was raised in the country and I still like to live in the country, even today. The only trouble with this house is that the ceiling is too low and the windows are so small. I wanted to have the windows made a little wider, but mother didn't like the idea. . . ." The man rejoined, "One of these days when I am free, I'll widen the windows for you. If you grow flowers, say, sunflowers, in the courtyard, you'll have a pretty view. . . ."

These suggestions about changes in her own house annoyed Aunt Chi. "Barking orders around as if this were his place!" she muttered to herself. Her daughter's words had also upset her. Somehow the way Hsiu-chieh had spoken made her feel separate and alone. . . .

But now the conversation in the room seemed to be taking a personal turn. She heard Hsiu-chieh ask: "Tell me, what did I do really that made you notice me?" The man's reply was given in so low a tone and charged with feeling, that it was nearly inaudible.

But suddenly Aunt Chi heard her daughter laugh. It gave her such a start that the bowl she was holding slipped out of her hand and dropped on the stove with a loud crash. She quickly picked it up, and found not even a chip on it, fortunately. But her heart was fluttering.

Probably it was the noise of the falling bowl that brought Hsiu-chieh out to the kitchen-shed, saying: "You go and sit down now, Mother! I'll do the cooking." But Aunt Chi, still angry, said curtly, without even looking at her: "Don't bother! I need no help. If you have nothing better to do, go and get some water to wash the vegetables."

Hsiu-chieh went off with a pail, bringing it back half filled with water. Then she fetched a basin and started washing the vegetables at the kitchen door. Meanwhile the technician had also come out. He squatted down, offering to help Hsiu-chieh. But she shook her head. "There isn't enough room in this basin for four hands. If you want something to do, why not hang up that clothes-line for mother?" Obligingly the man took a big forked stick from the corner of the courtyard, put it upright in the ground in front of the kitchen-shed, tied one end of the rope he found there to the fork and the other to the window-frame. Seeing that Hsiu-chieh was still washing, he just stood there, watching her smilingly, now and then

tugging at the clothes-line. Aunt Chi noticed all this, neither pleased nor displeased. She was dying to have a talk with Hsiu-chieh alone, but the technician wasn't sensitive to the situation and didn't move an inch away from her daughter. What a nuisance, Aunt Chi thought, and wasn't he being rather silly?

Suddenly she heard little Shuan coming up to the gate. On the spur of the moment, she gently pushed him back before he could call her or be noticed by his mother, and said: "Darling, your mommy worked on the night shift yesterday and had no sleep. She is in bed now. You go out and play, don't disturb her!" Shuan tried to clamour for his bat-kite, so there was nothing for Aunt Chi but to promise to get him a big one in a few days. When Shuan still insisted, she took him in her arms and told him in a whisper: "Granny has cooked a big goose-egg for you and a horse-shaped dumpling. And there's also a *tanghulu* stick of candied fruit for you, if you stay here, and don't run after me! Just wait, and I'll bring them to you." At this, the child quieted down and waited till Aunt Chi had hurried indoors and returned with all the good things promised, filling his hands with them. Then she went across the street to her nephew's and asked him to take Shuan up the hill to play.

Aunt Chi somehow felt like crying, as she watched her grandchild gradually vanishing out of her sight into the pine woods. When she turned back into the house, she found that Hsiu-chieh had finished the cooking and set the small table on the *kang*. All Aunt Chi could do was serve the few simple dishes. The three of them sat down to their meal, cross-legged, on the *kang*. The technician picked up his chopsticks and without any urging helped himself to a large taro. Hsiu-chieh, seated next to him, was eating slowly. Aunt Chi was thinking over again what to make of the pair, and heaved an inward sigh. Somehow she couldn't bring herself to be really resentful against her daughter, and even now she was sorry she had been so curt with her a while ago. Now, to make up, she took a choice bit from Hsiu-chieh's favourite dish with her own chopsticks, put it in her daughter's ricebowl and said in a very gentle tone: "Here, Hsiu, eat it up quick before it gets cold!"

After lunch, the technician took his leave. Aunt Chi would have liked to keep her daughter home for a talk but, instead, she found herself saying: "Perhaps you'd better go back to the mill with him now, Hsiu, instead of tomorrow morning. In the rush you'd get so much more tired. . . ." But Hsiu-chieh thought she'd better stay home, after all, and do her laundry. . . . So, mother and daughter together showed the guest to the gate.

Back in the house again, Aunt Chi made Hsiu-chieh sit down beside her on the *kang* and asked her, full of anxiety: "How is it, Hsiu, that you seem to be so friendly with this man whom you brought to the house just now?"

Hsiu-chieh who had lowered her head while her mother was speaking now said, after a short silence: "He has been very nice to me during work, and he asked me to marry him, but I haven't promised yet . . . I've brought him over here for you to take a look at him, first." Then, with a sudden rush of feeling she asked: "Well, what is your opinion of him?"

Aunt Chi looked at her as she replied. "He looks like a nice person. Only . . . just what is a technician?"

"A technician?" said Hsiu-chieh. "Well, you don't know our factory, so it may be hard to understand. . . . You see, it means a person who knows how to take care of machines, to do repairs when anything breaks down, or to regulate the room temperature, which is also done by machines — actually, he never had much schooling before liberation. He used to be a workman then. But since liberation, he's worked very hard and been very keen about studying, and he has quite a good head on his shoulders. So he was sent to a technical school for a few years' training, and now he's what we call a person with education."

"What sort of family does he come from? How many people are there in his family?" Aunt Chi went on inquiring.

"His parents both are peasants. He has a kid brother at school. That's all. . . . But what does his family matter, if he and. . . ."

"What about his wife — did she die or did he divorce her?" Aunt Chi interrupted her daughter.

Hsiu-chieh broke into a laugh of protest. "There's no wife to him, Mother, he is still a bachelor!"

"Really?" said Aunt Chi, incredulously. "He must be around twenty-six or seven. How could it be that he isn't yet married?"

"Well," said Hsiu-chieh with a pout, "all the folks from his village and his schoolmates too say he's still single. If you don't believe it, you can go and find out for yourself if it's true!"

Aunt Chi thought for a while. Then she pressed her daughter's hand affectionately and sighed: "I wish you'd told me this earlier, Hsiu! Such a thing is not to be taken lightly; it isn't child's play. You are too easily taken in, and I don't want you to get fooled like this. . . ."

"I don't understand you, Mother," said Hsiu-chieh, staring at her in wide-eyed surprise.

"Of course you don't. But, child, all this time I have been praying, praying day and night, and my one wish is to find a good son-in-law. . . ."

"Don't you like this one?" asked Hsiu-chieh impetuously, without waiting to hear her out.

Aunt Chi said nothing for a long while, her eyes resting on Hsiu-chieh. Finally she said haltingly: "Hsiu, to tell you the truth, a man like this technician is a rare find. Of course, I like him. But there's one thing that's worrying me. He's a bachelor with an education. But you're no match for him, and you've little Shuan besides. . . ."

"And where's he? I haven't seen him at all today. . . ."

Aunt Chi reassured her daughter that he was in good hands, in order to be able to resume her interrogation about the technician as soon as possible.

"You ought to know your own place. Don't let him make a fool of you! I have an awful feeling that he is simply having fun with you and will regret it afterwards. . . . Hsiu, we mustn't expect such a piece of good luck on this earth. What if you make another mistake. . . ?"

Her mother's words stabbed Hsiu-chieh to the heart. Ever since her divorce from that hateful man she had seemed to feel ill and full of pain for no real reason. For a long time she hadn't been able to sleep, could hardly eat anything. She had thought over many things in her life, and worked harder than ever afterwards to get her mind off those thoughts. It was only recently, when she had fallen in love with the technician, that she had got over this depression and found new faith in people and things. Now, her mother's warning seemed to kill all this again in her heart. Unconsciously, she pulled away from her mother, and tears welled up in her eyes before any words came to her lips.

"Mother," she said unhappily, "I'd have never thought that you could have such a low opinion of me. Is a divorced woman necessarily beneath anybody else? Do you believe that a woman is nothing except a man's toy? I can tell you that other people think differently of me! In our factory, two or three men are interested in me, but I've never even given them a thought. As a matter of fact, not so long ago even that man, Shuan's father, tried by hook or crook to approach me again. . . . Of course, on the face of it, it looks as if he had got rid of me. But do you really know me, Mother, do you ever know how I feel?" She could not go on, choked with emotion as she was, and ran out.

Aunt Chi was struck dumb in her amazement. She knew her daughter had a mind of her own, but how could her own few remarks give rise to such an outburst? Listening to Hsiu's protest, though unable to understand all of it, she felt with real regret that she had hurt her daughter. Seeing Hsiu-chieh run away bowled her over to such an extent that she didn't even think of stopping her or calling her back. When she regained her presence of mind, she was alone. She hurried out into the street to look for Hsiu-chieh, but of course she was nowhere in sight.

Back in her house, Aunt Chi could neither stand nor sit still. Suddenly she caught sight of her daughter's satchel left on the *kang*. She opened the satchel, digging out nervously a notebook, a pencil and a factory pass. What if Hsiu-chieh had gone back to her quarters at the mill — would she be allowed in without the pass?

Aunt Chi's mind was made up. She went to see her nephew's wife across the street, asked her to take care of Shuan when he came back and to give him his lunch which was being kept hot on the stove. Then she

took the satchel, closed the gate behind her and went on her way after her daughter.

She walked into the village, across the bridge and onto the main road leading to the cotton mill. She looked as far as the eye could reach, but there was no trace of Hsiu-chieh anywhere. Suddenly she heard Shuan calling her from under the willows on the right. When she stopped to look in that direction, she saw Shuan perched on the technician's shoulder, happily waving sheets of red and green paper in his hands. Hsiu-chieh was walking by the man's side, as if it were the most natural place for her. When Shuan saw his grandmother turning towards them, he wriggled about with shouts of joy: "Granny. Uncle says he is going to make me a big bat-kite, as big as myself, as big as the sky. . . ." The technician chuckled at this, and Hsiu-chieh seemed to be amused, too. For the first time Aunt Chi noticed how beautiful her daughter was, with her slim waist-line and the way she carried herself. Suddenly she couldn't understand why, only a moment ago, she had thought her so pitiable, her future so gloomy and something to worry about. . . .

Aunt Chi's eyes were dim with tears, that made the surroundings blur into the shades of a dream.

Translated by Tsung Wei-hsien

THE WHITE GULLS OF THE YANGTSE

Chiang Po

It is night, but the Yangtse is a blaze of light.

For years our people longed for the day when there would be a bridge over the Yangtse, linking the north and south of China and turning this erstwhile natural barrier into a thoroughfare. But what labour and skill would be needed to bridge that torrent a hundred and twenty feet deep!

Today, however, a great bridge spans the river. A forest of soaring lampposts has sprung up. Workmen are fixing railings to the pavements, painters are giving the red bridge a silver coat, boats plying swiftly past salute the great bridge now nearing completion, and the song of the pneumatic riveters keeps ringing out — the last movement of a magnificent symphony.

But where do all those blue flames come from, which are making this landscape so brilliant and splendid? Some girls are standing on

the edge of the highway over the bridge, more than a hundred and twenty feet above the water, welding the rails of the pavements.

Last summer, graduating from a two-year course at the Welders' Technical School in North China, they were drafted to the Yangtse Bridge — the foremost sector of the industrial front! That was in late summer, the time when fledglings leave their nests.

While still at school, the girls had been impatient to start work. They pored over each item of news about the Yangtse Bridge, afraid there might be nothing left for them to do. When they heard that welders were needed, and that one foreman there was teaching seven apprentices, they were overjoyed. Now, they thought, we can go where the country needs us most.

They found it hot down in Hankow, and they were not used to the southern food. When they saw the welders there covered with oil and mud, working in mid-air, mid-stream or under the water, they realized that though they had done some practical work at school it had always been in a classroom protected from the elements, and to weld one small metal plate they had sat on stools. Though they sometimes wore overalls, they behaved all the time like students, spreading handkerchiefs under them if they ever sat on the ground. Now everything had changed overnight. The first evening they lay down to sleep in a matting shed open to the sky, overlooking the mighty river.

Eighteen-year-old Hsiu-ying, the youngest of the group, was nearly always singing, shouting or laughing; but she had been known to cry if things did not go too smoothly.

This was the first New Year she had spent away from home. When the others trooped gaily out to have a good time, Hsiu-ying lay on her bed. She wondered what her mother was doing now? What were her old friends doing? Every Sunday, when she was at school, her mother would wait for her at the end of the village. She could almost see her standing there, waving. Before she knew how it had happened, she was in tears.

The others, coming back, tried to comfort her. Jen, their immediate chief, who generally liked to tease her, came too.

"Silly kid! Homesick?" He took her small, tear-stained hand. "Look at the fellows in the revolutionary army — how long are they away from home? But they'd rather shed blood any day than tears!"

A fresh breeze seemed to have cleared Hsiu-ying's muddled head. She stared at Jen wide-eyed, ashamed of herself.

"I don't know what I was thinking of," she said. "Seems as if I was being missish again. Well, this is the last time."

In the days that followed, she and Jen welded steel girders on the pier by the river bank, which was over ninety feet high. When a strong wind howled round them, the steel girders rocked and the scaffolding

she was on shook. Then after welding one joint she might push back her visor to look at Jen, and smile mischievously as if to say: "Well, am I doing all right now, or not?"

In those utterly new surroundings, though the girls were like fledglings with wings not fully grown, they would let no difficulty or bad weather stop them from flying. Like the white gulls of the Yangtse, they were eager to battle with the wind and waves.

It was at a crucial stage in the work on the bridge that they asked to be allowed to try their wings. About a month after their arrival, they had still done nothing but safe, easy jobs.

The steel joists from the Hanyang bank jutted over the first pier like a huge dragon heading for the centre of the river; but some piers had not yet emerged from under the water. Those that had were as busy as a market-place, with a constant coming and going: mud was dredged, water pumped, and a whole forest of cranes kept shifting gravel and mortar. Boats used for the bridge shuttled to and fro, the welders' flames criss-crossed, the power-boat roared like thunder, and the rhythmic ding-dong of the pneumatic riveters mingled with all this din to make stirring music. The work was going full steam ahead, and the girls longed to contribute their mite to the huge project, to fly out through the high wind over the big waves. But each time they made this request it was turned down.

"You're not strong enough!"

In order to get the framework of the bridge up in record time, the welders on the base of the fifth pier were allowed only fifty-six hours to finish their job, and the electric-welding unit in charge here chose a shock team of the best welders — but none of the girls' names were on the list. They rushed like creatures possessed to the works superintendent, the team leader and the secretary of the Youth League branch, begging them:

"Let us join the shock team!"

"Why can't we be in the team?"

"Girls haven't the stamina," said the superintendent.

"Don't we do the same work as the men on shore?"

"Those piers aren't like the shore!"

He started explaining the difficulties, but the girls refused to listen.

"Is it harder than fighting?" demanded Su-chen. "Others take part in battles, yet you won't even let us on the piers!"

Su-chen was a steady, rather quiet girl, a revolutionary romantic who made the strictest demands on herself. She took the lead in work, was very considerate in daily life, and though she was by no means the oldest in the group, they all looked up to her and followed her lead.

When the superintendent saw how determined the girls were, he knew he could not convince them.

"I'll speak to the team leader," he conceded.

But the team leader would not take them either. They took the matter right up to the Party secretary.

"Let them have a try!" he said.

The girls on the pier excited a good deal of comment.

One old foreman, Whiskers Kao, asked Jen: "Have you no men welders left? Why send these lasses on the river?"

This was the first time in all his years of bridge building that the old man had seen girls working over the water.

"You'd be surprised," said Jen. "They're as good as men."

Others watched them and remarked approvingly: "Well, girls coming to work over the water! Not simple!"

The girls scrambled down and down the muddy ladders, over a hundred feet to the river bed — quite a new experience! White smoke from the electric welders lay thick as mist, and the forest of steel girders flashed in the blue light. Workmen of every sort were hurrying up and down. The girls picked up their tools and started work, lighting up this most difficult construction site to which they had so long dreamed of coming. They did not stop even to wipe the sweat from their eyes. They stood up, squatted down, crawled in and out, welding girders till they were covered in mud. They worked like lightning to weld all those separate girders into one huge steel shell, the skeleton of the pier which was to support ten thousand tons of steel joists. Not till their work was done could the pier soar up towards the sky. They worked painstakingly on and on, excitement driving away fatigue, and at midnight they did not want to change shifts.

The girls left the pier by boat, carrying the shock team's banner and drinking in the sight of the river at night. The Yangtse flowed ceaselessly through the peaceful darkness, but in its waters twinkling islets and brilliantly lit peaks were rearing up, growing day and night. The clear, shrill song of the pneumatic riveters was calling good wishes to the cities here, to the men who worked through the night, and to the first group of girl welders on the Yangtse — seagulls unafraid of storms.

When they got back to their hostel, they flopped down on their beds and slept like logs. The next morning some of them complained of stiff legs, some of aching arms—they were all exhausted. One of them proposed that they make a pact:

"No complaints outside this hostel!"

Because if others found out their secret they would not be allowed to work on the pier foundations any more.

Jen kept a special eye on the girls once they started work on the river. He tried to give the hardest jobs to the men, and when the girls were tired

he made them go up to the top of the pier to rest. But the girls were not standing for this special treatment. To them this was an insult and a disgrace. When they just came, they were not even allowed on night shifts or Sunday work; but when they insisted, these restrictions were withdrawn. Now, in order not to fall behind the men, they worked for dear life and never complained, no matter how tired they were. Sometimes Jen had to resort to little stratagems.

After the young shock workers finished their welding on the foundation of the fifth pier ten hours ahead of schedule, work on the seventh pier was even more urgent, and they were asked to finish within ten hours. They rose splendidly to the occasion. Over a dozen of them crowded into the confined space inside the pier — just about ten metres square — and dazzling sparks flew in all directions. Their hands and arms became stiff and heavy, but no one wanted to rest even for a minute. Knowing how stubborn Su-chen was, Jen told her to go to the top to mind the electric-welding machine.

"Why?" she asked.

"It's faulty," he lied.

When Su-chen got to the top and found the machine running smoothly, she knew she had been sent up for a breath of air. Presently she was back in the thick of things again.

You may wonder what made these girls so devoted to their work, and how they came to choose such a profession. Here is the story of one of them.

In geography lessons at middle school, when Su-chen learned how many great rivers there are in China, she was sorry to find so many of them still unbridged, acting as barriers between different towns. And when she studied the mighty Yangtse which cuts China in two, she thought:

"I do wish I could be a bridge builder, and help make the first bridge over the Yangtse!"

That was how she decided on her career.

When in 1954 she passed the entrance examination to the Welders' Technical School, her mother imagined she was in some university. Old folk always want their children to take university degrees and become civil servants or engineers.

Knowing what was in her mother's mind, Su-chen found a photograph of an electric welder and took it home to show her. Her mother was horrified by this glimpse of her daughter's future — wear that protective visor and those stiff overalls!

"You won't look like a girl in that get-up!"

"But unless you wear it, mum, you burn your face."

"Gracious! That'll never do! That's no work for you. Go on studying instead."

"No, mum, I like it. Just think how lucky engine-drivers are. Welders can travel all over the country too, and help to bridge the Yangtse. . . ."

It was with such determination that these girls trained to be "mechanics."

Now the Yangtse Bridge is finished.

These girls' gay songs will be heard on every river throughout our land, and the blue flame of the welders will flash wherever bridges are built.

Translated by Gladys Yang

WRITERS' FORUM

NOTES ON LIFE

Lei Chia

I once talked with the director of a steel plant about the writers who go to factories to "familiarize" themselves with life.

"Now, comrade, why don't you writers really get to know our people instead of producing a notebook whenever you see me?" he asked. "Once an open-hearth furnace needed repair, because three of its bricks had caved in. As I climbed into the furnace another fell, nearly hitting me on the head. My clothes were wet inside with sweat and scorched outside. Yet as soon as I came out a writer asked me: 'What were your feelings in there, Director?' What was I to say? 'First, I hoped that falling brick wouldn't hit me.' I told him. 'Secondly, I wanted to replace the four bricks as quickly as possible. Thirdly, I wondered if the tools were ready at hand. Fourthly, I wanted to know exactly how soon the repair could be done. And fifthly. . . .' What more could I say to him? I walked away. I knew it was rude, but I would have burst if he had kept on at me like that. How could I do my work?"

This most revealing story often keeps me on the alert. And this way of experiencing life by asking questions has been criticized.

As this factory director pointed out, writers and artists should really mix with the people.

The workers in front of the open-hearth furnace might seem ignorant and rough to the above-mentioned writer, but the director's action would impress them and give them more confidence to repair the furnace themselves. Only if one of them became a writer and was depicting an unremoulded intellectual could he write such an unintelligent question.

Here we have two radically different sets of reactions.

If this writer had followed the director into the furnace, he would not have needed to ask such a question. On the contrary, he would have

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The author is a well-known novelist whose trilogy *Potentialities* has won wide acclaim.

understood the significance of labour enthusiasm when men repair a furnace in a high temperature. He would at least have understood workers.

To plunge into the thick of life and work on a farm or in a factory is of the greatest significance to us writers. It is only in practice, that is when we actually become one with the people, that the expression "mass line" ceases to be merely a term used in discussion meetings and becomes the basic principle which guides our actions.

When we had driven away the Japanese invaders in 1945, the Party gave me the task of taking over a factory in the Northeast. We had just set up our regime and were still living under war-time conditions. The Japanese had destroyed much of the plant. And the workers were controlled by a "committee" formed of all sorts of people including overseers, interpreters, and so on. I knew nothing of technique and factory management, but my orders were to start production as soon as possible, for this factory could play an important part in financing the war of liberation. I went there single-handed. To whom could I look for popular support? Where could I find men to take responsible posts? And how was I to solve the technical problems? I knew that I must rely on the People's Liberation Army and our democratic government; especially, I must abide by the policy and principles the Party had taught me. But standing in front of those machines I felt so small and insignificant that I was not at all sure I could make a success of this job which was certainly a tough one. I felt quite inadequate in front of the workers too! But the mighty working class seemed to be saying to me, "Rely on us. You can count absolutely on us!" This was the mass line which the Party had taught me. I realized that we must carry out a mass movement at the same time as we worked to start the factory operating again. Only so could I solve all those seemingly insoluble problems.

The expression "mass line," as I have said, had been an abstract term to me before. This time I had to put it into practice, and this was the first great experience of my life.

I still remember clearly how I appointed the first member of my staff. When I took over the factory I was cold-shouldered by the "committee." I called them to a meeting the next day, divided the work among them, and put forward to them a plan for starting production again. I could not organize another committee to replace this one immediately for I did not know the workers then; so I assigned the committee members important or unimportant posts according to their attitude and experience. The mass movement soon to be carried out would supervise them in their work and show up what type of people they really were. Half way through the meeting I noticed a middle-aged man squatting at the door with folded arms. He had a thin face, long beard and bloodshot eyes. He looked

On the Way Home By Chen Heng

undernourished and tired. He spoke very little, and was not on the "committee."

"Who are you?" I asked.

"Leader of the workers' guards."

"Which workshop are you in?"

"The paper shop."

"Had any schooling?"

"Primary."

"What job would you like to have?"

"Me? Hm. . . ." He did not answer.

But the little he had said was quite enough. Leading the workers' guards was not an easy job, and he stood for the interests of the workers! No doubt the committee members looked down on him but the workers supported him. And his last remark seemed to mean: "You have given *them* jobs — what do you need *me* for?" He didn't know that someone who held a critical view of that "committee" was just the man I needed. So I appointed him secretary. That was the only thing I could do when all the work was assigned.

Of course, that was only a beginning. I watched him pretty carefully after that and did what I could to help him. He stood up to every test, did all the jobs he was given, and was in the forefront of each struggle. He grew with the new events. He ceased to be a down-trodden worker when the men acknowledged him in their hearts as their leader. He became the master of the factory, embodying the policy of the Party and identifying himself with the hands.

He grew with the needs of the time. For with his social background his potentialities were unlimited. It would be difficult to understand him without bearing these facts of the case in mind.

I was not looking for a character for my novel in him. What I wanted of him was his help in starting production—the task assigned me by the Party — and later in preparing for evacuation when the Kuomintang army attacked the city.

He was a link between the Party and the people. As far as I am concerned I found him an indispensable help. Through him and other workers invested with responsibility I tried to run the factory in a democratic way, to give the workers a class education and enable them to feel themselves the masters while at the same time strengthening labour discipline. This is actually democratic centralism, just as the system of citations and reprimands is the embodiment of criticism and self-criticism. Model workers are the vanguard of the proletariat. In other words, all we did was to strengthen the leadership of the Communist Party.

The task of writers in a socialist society is not simply to describe all aspects of these working-class heroes. Before taking up their pens, our

writers must first prove themselves good mass workers, living and growing in mental stature with the workers.

As a matter of fact, the test to which I subjected the paper worker was also a test of myself. What I required of him I required of myself as well. I placed him under the supervision of the masses which I also needed myself. I should not have been able to convince him merely with words.

I relied on him. He and I relied on the masses. How far we succeeded in carrying out the mass line could be judged by the extent to which we enlisted the support of our workers, the number of them we promoted to positions of authority, the production rate, and the manner in which we prepared for evacuation when the reactionary Kuomintang troops attacked. We overfulfilled our target every month. We evacuated the machines, and kept most of our staff. Production stopped only the day before the evacuation. And the provincial government appointed the paper worker vice-director of the factory after his return from the upper reaches of the Yalu River, where he had been examining the preparations made for receiving our plant there. He was one of two vice-directors promoted from workers in that area.

Needless to say, all the members of the old committee proved worthless. Some were dealt with in the anti-overseers movement; some slacked on the job and wavered when the time came to evacuate; and some even surrendered to the enemy when the Kuomintang occupied the city later. One former gang-master, who had been allowed to work when he admitted his crimes, put his name down for evacuation. But the day before we were to go he came to me shedding crocodile tears — he could not go with the democratic government because he had such a large family. On this pretext he asked for an extra share of grain, and did in fact get twice as much as the others. But as soon as the Kuomintang entered the city, he became the leader of a search party and took from the workers who had stayed behind the grain our government had left them. Seven months later, we liberated the city for the second time. And this traitor, false tears streaming down his cheeks, said to me: "Why didn't you come back three months later, Director? By then the Kuomintang would have had the factory completely repaired."

I did not fully understand him at the time, though by welcoming us back with such a remark he revealed his real thoughts. What was wrong in wishing we could have taken over a factory already in production? Nevertheless what he said jarred on my ears, for he and I spoke different languages. When his crimes were revealed one after the other in the movement to suppress traitors, his essential meaning came home to me, and his criminal thoughts were exposed. What a true revelation of his character!

I could never forget this sentence. When I visited the workers' families and saw the suffering the Kuomintang had caused, it came to my mind. When the workers voiced their bitterness in mass meetings, I remembered it again. It aroused the workers' indignation, heightened our vigilance and gave us more faith in ourselves in our difficult task of starting operations in the factory for the second time.

During this period, I began to understand a little of the laws of mass movements, grasped some of the elements of factory management, and began to know the workers and life itself. A little knowledge is better than total ignorance. And we can advance step by step till at long last we have remoulded ourselves.

A working-class writer must receive the ideological training of communism. And a Communist, after studying Marxism-Leninism, must put it into practice.

The Party's call, "Let a hundred flowers blossom," was based on the actual situation, for our life today is as colourful and full of variety as a great garden.

The new social relations and working methods in China today provide very favourable conditions for writers if only we are willing to be working-class writers and plunge into the thick of actual life. Only those cumbered with individualism will be overcome, not those who deserve the proud title of working-class writer.

Life is a school, and one in which we are not allowed to cheat. We may be good writers or ones able only to ask: "What were your feelings, Comrade Director?" Even if you pretend to be very experienced with life by avoiding that question when the director steps out of the furnace shivering in clothes wet with sweat, you may still betray yourself by asking unconsciously, "Aren't you feeling well?" And that, you see, would be equally ridiculous.

REVISIONIST IDEAS IN LITERATURE

Yao Wen-yuan

The literature of a class expresses its inmost feelings and convictions. This is true not only of the proletariat but also of the bourgeoisie. Literary theory and writing invariably reflect different political and philosophical concepts with great sensitivity, and mirror the changes in class relationship and the trends of political thought of different classes. Whenever the bourgeoisie launches an attack against the working class, or struggles with it for political and ideological supremacy, this will find rapid expression in the realm of literature. The fact that the momentous clashes of ideas since China's liberation have often grown out of literary movements is a clear indication of the intense and protracted nature of the class struggle in literature. After the events in Hungary in 1956, revisionist thinking reared its head in China. Rightists among the bourgeoisie, which had already lost its economic basis, made use of every occasion on which we practised self-criticism, to attack the proletariat. When in 1957 the whole Communist Party started its rectification campaign, they thought their chance had come and launched a general offensive against socialism, until the workers, peasants and revolutionary intellectuals rose up to strike back and defeated them.

In literature, as was shown in the great debate on some fundamental literary principles which took place recently, revisionist ideas express themselves in many ways: in the denial that literature need be led by the Communist Party, in the repudiation of the fundamental principles of Marxist aesthetics, of the partisan nature of literature, of socialist realism, of the need for writers to be guided by a Marxist outlook, of the principle that literature is subservient to politics, and so on. Also, as we saw, such anti-Marxist views influenced the writings of this period, expressing themselves in a variety of ways.

Chairman Mao, in his speech *On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People,* pointed out emphatically: "The revisionists, or rightist opportunists, pay lip-service to Marxism and also attack 'doctrinairism.' But the real target of their attack is actually the most fundamental

elements of Marxism." When the class struggle during the socialist revolution is sharp, the bourgeois attacks on Marxism are concentrated on the most fundamental principles of socialism.

These fundamental principles mark the dividing line between the socialist and the bourgeois paths in literature. If we waver, abandon or "revise" these principles, we shall be removing the soul of Marxist literature and heading it down the bourgeois, anti-socialist path. This is why our criticism of revisionism in literature also centres round these basic issues.

Naturally, when we criticize revisionist ideas we should not exaggerate their influence or fail to bear in mind that Marxist ideas and good works of socialist realism are still the main current of our writing, and that we have achieved a great deal in literature while carrying out the principle to let a hundred flowers blossom and a hundred schools contend. This would be over-estimating the strength of the bourgeoisie and under-estimating that of the working class. At the same time, we must remember that things are liable to change. As Chairman Mao said: "Under specific conditions, a bad thing can lead to good results." We can learn by arguing with revisionism. Socialist literature cannot grow up in a hothouse. It will take a big step forward when we defeat the enemy in political and ideological struggles, refute the theories of the revisionists, and draw the necessary conclusions for our writing. For instance, the exposure of Ting Ling and Chen Chi-hsia's clique* did much to strengthen the solidarity of writers and artists and consolidate the leadership of the Communist Party.

Not long ago, starting with the stories and sketches of Liu Pin-yen, some of our writers began to advocate the "exposure of the seamy side of life." They put forward this theory from an anti-socialist standpoint, under the banner of "intervention in life," as if socialist society were something inimical to them, in which they must intervene as outsiders. They alleged that "there is a dark side to the socialist system, and the *main* task of literature is to expose it. Only so can we intervene in life. . . . To praise our achievements and our moral qualities is just covering up the truth." Then the rightists shouted even more recklessly: "Writers have always opposed the society of their time."

Here I will simply mention the cases of two well-known literary critics: Feng Hsueh-feng and Hsu Mao-yung. In the conference of the editors of literary magazines convened by the Chinese Writers' Union in December 1956, Feng in most insidious terms called upon writers to express "the suffering of the people," while Hsu urged them "not to be afraid of

*See *Chinese Literature* No. 1, 1958, p. 130.

darkness" but to struggle for "democracy," and attack "bureaucrats" as enemies until they were "eliminated."

If we speak of the "seamy side" of socialist society, this implies first and foremost the destructive activities of the hidden counter-revolutionaries, rightists, hooligans, thieves and saboteurs among our class enemies, who are hostile to socialism; also the bourgeois ideas which are still firmly entrenched in the minds of certain people — the sunlight of socialism has not penetrated to their inner hearts. Literature should help us to do away with this "seamy side" to our lives. It should do so by taking a definite, partisan stand to show up the enemies of socialism, describing their dark deeds and their inevitable doom as socialism advances, and criticizing the selfish outlook of bourgeois individualists. Of course we should criticize bureaucracy too. We have always been in favour of using self-criticism to expose the shortcomings in our work. We do not believe that there are no conflicts in a socialist society. But bureaucracy is not a product of the socialist system, nor does it occupy the main or predominant position here. Therefore we cannot treat all who are guilty of bureaucratism in one way or another as enemies of the people or describe bureaucracy as omnipotent, as if in our society we are too crushed by bureaucracy to breathe. Such distortions of the truth are just what the rightists want. In our young, socialist country, resurgent as the rising sun, there is no legitimate place for bureaucracy. However rampant it may be at a certain place and time, it cannot persist indefinitely, but as a remnant of the old outlook and style of work will always come under fire from the Party leadership and the people on their own initiative. The democratic centralism of the socialist system ensures that our people will be able to develop the maximum democracy and enterprise; we have, therefore, the social prerequisites for crushing bureaucracy. Even when certain bureaucrats in certain localities commit serious mistakes, these will be set right in the end. Anyone who has been willing to face the facts during the last eight years knows that bureaucracy in our country has been constantly attacked and overcome; and one of the chief targets in the rectification campaign led by the Party is bureaucracy. Yet those eager to "expose the seamy side" describe our society as if no democracy exists in it, saying: "If we want to enjoy democracy, we must wrest it from these bureaucrats." The fact is that their minds are filled with bourgeois conceptions of democracy. What they want is a sort of absolute democracy, devoid of centralism, with individualism as its core.

In support of such theories a certain amount of writing has appeared in the past year or so. It may be of use to examine a specimen here.

Let us take, for example, *The Inside Story of a Newspaper* by Liu Pin-yen, published in the June and October issues of *People's Literature* in 1956. The central message of this story is praise of individualism. From a collective, socialist point of view, this is clearly pernicious.

The whole newspaper office is wrapped in gloom. Bureaucracy and doctrinairism weigh heavily on everyone there. The chief editor, Chen, is a hidebound die-hard who reigns supreme in the office. He is a capricious autocrat who suppresses all rational constructive proposals. This caricature of an editor almost invariably vetoes two of the four pages edited by the section chief, Ma, and throws out three of his editorials for no good reason. However, this petty tyrant is described as devoted to his job, a man who carries out unswervingly the directives of the provincial Party committee.

The author implies that the fundamental reason for this killing of Ma's initiative, the "dogmatism" of the paper — all editorials and news items that have a partisan spirit or lay down the Party line are called "dogmatic" — Chen's ruthlessness, self-confidence and so forth, is the leadership of the provincial Party committee and Chen's acceptance of that leadership. This is, of course, a major distortion of political actuality. We cannot say that there are no autocrats like Chen in responsible positions in China today, or deny that such bureaucrats should be criticized. That would not be true. But to ascribe such men's failings to Party directives is equally false. For Chen's fault is not that he has carried out the Party's directives, but that he has no mass line. Our Party leaders do not consider men like Chen as good Communists. In fact, if Chen really carries out the instructions of the provincial Party committee and works for the Party, then — like many others whom we meet constantly — even though he is a bureaucrat in his style of work he must have another side, that is, loyalty to the Party. To give a truthful picture of such a man from the working-class standpoint, the author should also depict this aspect of him. This Liu Pin-yen does not do, however. His own anti-Party viewpoint colours his caricature of this character. As he hates men who carry out Party directives, he portrays Chen as a man without any good qualities. He tries to put across the formula: Carrying out Party directives=bureaucracy=autocracy=dogmatism and Party jargon. Like all other rightists, he is here attacking not bureaucracy but Party leadership. In all works which attack bureaucracy from a standpoint hostile to the Party or ascribe bureaucracy to the leadership of the Party and the socialist system, however lively the characters appear, they are bound to be distorted and falsified. The only genuine thing about such writing is the author's hatred for the Party.

If Chen in this story is supposed to stand for a sort of dominant social force, Ma is shown as its victim. The son of a clerk, an intellectual with a petty-bourgeois background, Ma joins the Party before liberation, and later works in a municipal Party committee office as section chief in the propaganda department. There he gradually loses the militancy he has

shown during the democratic revolution in former days, and all enthusiasm for his work.

There are such people in real life. They plunge into the democratic revolution with all the fervour of the petty bourgeoisie, but after it is won they backslide. As there are not a few cases like this, it would be well worth-while to observe, study and analyse their inmost thoughts from a correct viewpoint, and draw vivid pictures of them. Work in a Party committee is not plain sailing for such individuals. The tranquil daily life they desire is destroyed by the sharp class struggle, and they have to advance or fall back. This is the serious problem with which they are faced. And now their real outlook is exposed: they are still essentially individualist. The serious contradictions which exist between the individualist outlook and life in all its complexity manifest themselves in various forms, in work, friendship, love or marriage. . . . So these egoists gradually tire of Party principles and Party work. A writer can only give a truthful and typical picture of such characters if he describes their complex individualistic mental make-up and the clash between their individualism and a society which is advancing. But instead of doing this, Liu Pin-yen makes it appear as if life itself and Party work itself give Ma this feeling of disgust, as if the understanding of Party ideas and the laws of mass work make a man mechanical and listless. In order to attack the Party, in painting Ma's growing disillusionment he deliberately ignores the conflict between his individualism and revolutionary work, arbitrarily attributing Ma's pessimism to the Party's ideological work.

Liu Pin-yen stuffs Ma's head with his own "reformist" ideas. He feels that Ma should long for "a wider sphere," not in the heart of the struggle, with the people, fighting bureaucracy and becoming one with the masses, facing up to life in a positive way as one of the vanguard of the proletariat, but by seeking "freedom of individuality" and "freedom of thought," which completely abandons Marxism and all working-class ideas. In other words, whereas we of the left criticize the individualism and apathy of men like Ma from the standpoint of the working class, and want them to remould themselves by accepting the Party's education, Liu Pin-yen finds fault with Ma because his individualism is not positive enough. He criticizes him from the right, from the standpoint of thoroughgoing bourgeois individualism and liberalism. He hopes such men will lose their apathy, come out in active opposition to the Party, and discard Marxism completely. That is why he introduces into this story a "pioneer" like Chia-ying, who is superior to everyone else and to the Party. Single-handed she opposes all such men as Chen, and wages a "heroic" struggle.

Chia-ying is depicted as a heroine and an advanced character, the ideal fighter against bureaucracy. In actual fact, however, she is a glorified individualist who "opposes the society of her time." She has certain good

qualities, such as enthusiasm and a capacity for hard work; but she looks down on the newspaper administration, and during her three years as a reporter consistently opposes Party leadership. To her, obeying the leadership or writing according to Party directives is a "nuisance" and a "pain." She is critical of the literature written after liberation, because she is not satisfied with post-liberation life. In particular she dislikes the new stress on discipline; and strongly resents it when Chen corrects her copy to suit the Party policy, for it is this policy which makes her "unhappy." She believes this is the main reason for the paper's dullness, and that all "reforms" must start here.

Today, when we have gained a decisive victory against the rightists, there is no need to explain in detail why the Party leadership and the people's demands accord. For a Party newspaper to rid itself of Party leadership would mean going over to the bourgeoisie, cutting itself off from the working people, and surrendering to the rightists. What we want to point out here is that this girl, Chia-ying, is actually the personification of Liu Pin-yen's political ideas. Liu wants to see young intellectuals of this sort, individualists who have not accepted working-class ideas oppose the socialist system and Party leadership. Well aware of the deep contradictions between individualism and socialist ways of thinking, his tactics are to attack Chen, support Chia-ying, and encourage Ma to take Chia-ying's side. In other words, this story actually shows the basic tactics of the rightists against the Party.

Writing of this kind has two characteristics. It paints a very gloomy picture of our country by distorting our social and political life with its democratic centralism under the leadership of the Party, and exaggerates bureaucracy till it seems a dominant force which crushes all that is new and growing. It also depicts those who oppose Party leadership as brilliant, self-reliant, thoroughgoing individualists. Their individualism shows itself in their scornful rejection of the collective strength and wisdom of the people, their trust of themselves alone, their utter antagonism to all organizational discipline, and therefore their direct opposition to Party leadership. From a historical viewpoint, we see how in a socialist society individualism reveals its reactionary nature more and more clearly as the society progresses. The attempt to glorify individualists in literature and to set them up against the Party shows the habit of mind and tactics of bourgeois rightists, who make use of the contradictions between individualism and socialism to oppose socialism. That is why we think it so important to combat bourgeois individualism.

There are three noteworthy features in the revisionist trend of modern literature. One is that revisionists try to pass themselves off as Marxists while claiming that all the basic principles of Marxism are "dogma-

tism," and considering the Marxist world outlook and partisan spirit as the cause for formulism and schematism in some of our contemporary writing. They attempt to refute Marxism under the slogans "Fight dogmatism!" and "Down with formulism!" They attempt to revise Marxism, and to "criticize" and refute socialism and the Party leadership. They adopt these tactics in order to silence those who disagree with them, and to gain a legitimate base for themselves. They try to take advantage of our criticism of doctrinairism to hawk their own counterfeit goods.

Another characteristic of these revisionists is that they call themselves "reformers," "innovators," "seekers after truth," "explorers," "interventionists in life," "founders of new schools of art," and so on and so forth. They demand "freedom for writers," as if their aim were to produce some original work of art, and they are active supporters of the principle to let a hundred flowers blossom, a hundred schools of thought contend. Thus anyone who criticizes them can be accused of failing to carry out this principle and of interfering with their "freedom." Still this trick can fool nobody. Chairman Mao has said: "On the surface, these two slogans — let a hundred flowers blossom and a hundred schools of thought contend — have no class character: the proletariat can turn them to account, so can the bourgeoisie and other people." But we put forward this principle and are carrying it out from the stand of the proletariat. We want to develop a socialist literature, we insist on holding fast to Marxism-Leninism and a literature that serves the workers, peasants and soldiers. We must therefore wage a struggle in the realm of ideas against all anti-Marxist, anti-socialist tendencies, while allowing them to express themselves. Only by so doing can we truly let a hundred flowers blossom and a hundred schools contend. The revisionists, on the other hand, look at this principle from a bourgeois standpoint. They take "freedom for writers" to mean that bourgeois ideas may develop freely without being criticized; they demand freedom to attack and distort Marxism without being criticized for it, and to carry out the bourgeois line in literature. If they have such freedom, we shall not be free to develop our socialist literature, to hold fast to Marxism, or to keep to the policy that literature should be written for the workers, peasants and soldiers, as well as the socialist line. We can never tolerate the existence of this bourgeois freedom which runs counter to the basic interests of the working class and the country as a whole. When revisionists talk of "reforms and explorations," because they are against Marxism, they can only lead people backward instead of forward. Their explorations in art can only lead down a bourgeois, anti-socialist path. Once this point is clear, the fine phrases they use to fool others simply reveal their intrinsic baseness.

Yet another characteristic of the revisionists is the way in which they use all the tools at their disposal. From old tombs they dig up antiquated, rusty weapons, give them a modern veneer, and brandish them desperately

at Marxism. All these weapons with which they oppose the theory of class struggle — "freedom for writers," "exposure of the seamy side," "portrayal of the truth," "the human touch" or "human nature" — were thoroughly debunked in the thirties by Chairman Mao and Lu Hsun. Still the ghosts remain, and in this spate of revisionist ideas they have come back to life. Completely ignoring the fact that mankind has now reached the age of the socialist revolution of the proletariat, they hold up Western bourgeois literature as a model for socialist literature, demanding that our writers take the path of bourgeois realism. This is another tactic which many enemies of socialist realism have used. This harping on old tunes shows that as long as bourgeois ideas exist, those debunked — sometimes many times debunked — bourgeois theories will emerge again, given the necessary conditions. We think them antiquated, but to the revisionists they appear novelties.

This revisionist trend has social, class and historical roots. First, broadly speaking, as long as bourgeois ideas exist, it is theoretically possible to have revisionist thinking. Petty-bourgeois thought belongs to the sphere of bourgeois thought, which is reactionary and opposes the progress of socialism. "The bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie are bound to give expression to their ideologies. It is inevitable that they should stubbornly persist in expressing themselves in every way possible on political and ideological questions." (Mao Tse-tung.) After the socialist revolution in the economic field is basically completed, though bourgeois and petty-bourgeois thoughts have lost their basis they persist in expressing themselves, in challenging Marxism, in defending and fighting on theoretical questions for the economic base already lost. In literature this takes the form of a resistance to socialism and Marxist thought, scepticism about the socialist line in literature, indifference or dislike for the working class, and admiring envy of the bourgeois way of life.

Secondly, this revisionist trend was caused by the frantic attack of the rightists. As Chairman Mao has pointed out, in the struggle against socialism initiated by the rightists, the revisionists proved their best allies. In order to oppose the Communist Party and socialism, the rightists deliberately and systematically made up and spread revisionist ideas. They encouraged the development of revisionism, using it as their theoretical weapon in their reactionary activities. This speeded up the development of revisionist ideas. A high proportion of revisionist theories and pernicious literature was produced by rightists within or without the Party.

Thirdly, historically speaking, the revisionist line in literature represented by Hu Feng and Feng Hsueh-feng has had a certain amount of influence on revolutionary writers and won the sympathy of certain bourgeois individualists. As this bourgeois influence had not been completely wiped out, on this occasion it resumed the offensive. Many of our Chinese writers and artists come from the exploiting classes. They

have been influenced by Soviet literature, but also much influenced by bourgeois literature. During the democratic revolution this bourgeois literature had a positive role to play; but now that we are passing through the socialist revolution, if we still use progressive bourgeois literature as the criterion for socialist literature, this will take the form of revisionism and hold up our progress.

Fourthly, the events in Hungary, the clamour set up by the imperialists, and certain revisionist trends elsewhere directed against the Soviet Union, Marxism and socialist realism, also had some influence on our literature. Revisionist trends always have an international character, and easily win the sympathy of bourgeois intellectuals or others who lack a firm stand.

We now have a deeper understanding of the significance of Chairman Mao's statement that "Revisionism, or rightist opportunism, is a bourgeois trend of thought which is even more dangerous than doctrinairism." Both the history of Soviet literature and that of our modern literature prove this to be so. The exposure of the anti-Party clique of Ting Ling, Chen Chi-hsia and Feng Hsueh-feng and the intensification of the anti-rightist struggle among writers and artists also prove the truth of this. As the chief aim of the revisionists is to deny and weaken Party leadership, when we criticize revisionist ideas in literature we cannot but consider the supreme importance of this leadership.

One of the chief reasons for succumbing to the influence of revisionism is a wrong concept of Party leadership. When a writer lives and works in accordance with Party ideas, he advances along a correct path and achieves results in his work. But once he considers himself wiser than the Party and wants to detach himself from it, he falls into the quagmire of revisionism, achieves nothing worth-while, and may even backslide so far that he becomes a rightist. In the obscurity of bourgeois theories, Party leadership and the Party line are a never failing beacon light which illumines our path ahead. Individuals as such are insignificant. Whether a man is a Party member or not, he can only be a genuine writer of the people when he takes his stand with the Party which fully represents the interests of the proletariat, and hence of the great majority of the people; when he takes its thought as his guide, observes and depicts life from the Party standpoint, makes its revolutionary spirit his own, and dedicates his entire strength and life to its cause.

NOTES ON LITERATURE AND ART

TAO YUAN-MING, A GREAT PASTORAL POET

Tao Yuan-ming (365-427), also known as Tao Chien, is one of the greatest poets in Chinese literature.

Tao Yuan-ming was a native of Hsunyang in Kiangsi, who was born into an impoverished old family. Both his grandfather and father served as provincial governors, and his mother was the daughter of the famous scholar Meng Chia. As a boy, he received the Confucian education customary in noble families at the time, and therefore shared certain of the ideas held by ruling class intellectuals. He hoped for adventure as a youth, and longed to win glory for himself. But when he was about twenty there was a severe drought and famine in Kiangsi; and the cruel realities of the day, coupled with the abuses of contemporary politics, put an end to his youthful ambition.

Tao Yuan-ming
After a portrait by an artist of Sung dynasty (960-1279)

When twenty-nine, Tao Yuan-ming served for a short time as a minor official in Chiangchow. From the age of thirty-six to forty-one, he held various positions including those of army secretary and magistrate; but he accepted these appointments only because he was compelled to make a living. During his official career he was repeatedly humiliated and disillusioned, until he finally decided to resign and go back to the country. From that time till his death at sixty-three, he lived in retirement, working on his farm.

Tao Yuan-ming was open and straightforward, and had little patience with the conventions and elaborate ceremonial of his day. While magistrate of Pengtseh in present-day Kiangsi, he used all the public land allotted to him for growing grain to make wine, and only when his wife insisted did he agree to set aside a part for growing rice. At the end of the year his superior officer sent an assistant to his county, and his own subordinates asked him to put on

ceremonial dress to welcome this man. "I cannot bow to anyone just for the sake of five pecks of rice," he said. He immediately resigned, and wrote the long poem *I Had Better Return* to show his desire to live as a recluse. This story is well known, for it shows the poet's love of freedom. Later, when living quietly in the country, when friends visited him he would entertain them with wine, but as soon as he had drunk too much himself he would say frankly: "I am going to bed now. You had better go." There are many anecdotes to illustrate this side of his character.

The first record of his life is that written by Yen Yen-chih, a famous contemporary of his. In A.D. 487 Shen Yueh wrote a biography of Tao Yuan-ming in his *Sung History,* and Hsiao Tung of the Liang period wrote another in A.D. 527. These accounts, with Tao Yuan-ming's own writings, are all the material we have on his life.

He lived in great poverty when out of office. Though he received occasional help from friends, he was sometimes so poor that he had to beg for food. He had five sons and several nephews to support after the death of his cousin and sister. When he was about forty several of his family died, and he lost much property through a fire. As we know from his poems, he was hard put to it to keep his family.

Often I go hungry on summer days,
And on winter nights sleep without blankets.

Disgusted with contemporary politics and the luxury and licence of nobles and officials, Tao Yuan-ming made up his mind to go home to till his land and lead a simple, frugal life, satisfied if he could keep his family from cold and hunger. After living in the country for some time, he came to think differently from the scholars of noble families, and was able to "chat about the mulberry and flax" with the peasants. It is possible that his original intention in retiring to work on the land was mainly to escape from the troubles of political life and the officialdom he abhorred; but gradually he developed an interest in the value of labour itself. In his later years, during the seasons when "the old crops have been eaten but the new crops are not yet ripe," he often did not know where his next meal was coming from. Thus, as a poor man and a working man, he was able to a great extent to bridge the gulf between himself and the peasants, and his experience of country life changed his entire outlook. This is one of the chief reasons for the affinity to the people so evident in his poetry.

Since Tao Yuan-ming's poems are mainly on rural life, he has always been considered a pastoral poet. All his poems were written in the five-character-a-line metre current at that time. This verse form had no strict rules. Though the number of words in each line was fixed, a poem could be of any length, and this was a good medium for lyrical poetry. Some of his verses describe natural scenery:

The wind skims far across the level fields,
Where sturdy shoots are sprouting new leaves.

But we find expression of the poet's warm feelings, as well as praise of labour and the labouring people, in such lines as:

In the hills there is either frost or there is dew,
The very air and the wind are colder here.
How can it not be hard, this farmer's life?
And the hardship is such that no one can avoid.

or:

But food and clothes must needs be won for a living;
My strong hand on the plough will never fail me.

Such lines, we may claim, express the true sentiments of the peasantry. Because Tao Yuan-ming shared their labours, he had genuine feeling for the peasants. His new experience of life made his poetry different from that of his contemporaries, enabling him to produce something splendidly unique.

He lived at a time when the Eastern Tsin dynasty was declining. North China was occupied by alien tribesmen, and the political power of the Hans was limited to the Yangtse valley and areas further south. But the racial strife between the Hans and the northern tribesmen was only one of the many conflicts of the Eastern Tsin regime. In that period the empire was controlled by the nobility and certain great families, who seized land and oppressed the peasantry; hence the struggle between the nobility and the people was also acute. The former led lives of luxury while the latter often had no land of their own and lived on the verge of starvation. Furthermore, there were higher and lower grades among the chief families, and their interests did not always coincide; thus sharp clashes took place within the ruling class itself. These found expression, for instance, in 420 when Liu Yu, one of the chief ministers who controlled the army, forced Emperor Kung to abdicate and usurped the throne, overthrowing the Eastern Tsin dynasty.

The fact that the poet retired to the country does not mean that he had no mental struggles. He remained deeply concerned with the life of his day. From poems like *A Parable on Wine* and *Song to Ching Keh,* which touch upon the political situation, his ideals and attitude are clear. He was discontented with many things, and disgusted with the nobles and officials.

The talkers and we who are silent are different,
And well I know that we must go separate ways.

He kept clear of high officials. It is evident from his poems that he opposed and criticized many people and things in real life — chiefly those powerful men who actually controlled the government. Unwilling to side with them, he was not strong enough to resist them, and therefore he retired from public life.

To go passively into retirement, however, did not solve his mental conflicts. In fact he often recalled his adventurous youth, worried over the poverty of his family, felt depressed because his health was failing as he grew older, and was made uneasy by political changes. Though he wanted to "shake off anxiety" and escape from these conflicts which he could not resolve, he actually grew "sadder the more things changed," and became more and more discontented. We may indeed say that it was because he could not resolve these conflicts that he turned for comfort to wine and poetry.

Drinking is one of the chief themes of his poems, and this had a great influence on later poets. His intense concern over the state of the country caused him great unhappiness.

Tears I shed and all to myself I sigh,
Turning my head to listen for the cock.

However, he wrote:

What's to be done? That is the way things are,
So let me drink a single cup and be happy.

His retirement itself was, of course, a form of escapism, determined partly by personal inclination. Yet to a certain extent it was also caused by a sense of revolt against the ruling class and the positive elements in the traditional Chinese respect for righteousness and integrity. This is why former critics considered Tao Yuan-ming as the first of all hermit poets.

Dissatisfied with contemporary politics, Tao Yuan-ming expressed his longing for a better life in his poems. Although *Peach-Blossom Springs* was based on a legend of the time, in it he described his Utopia. Here was a place cut off from real society and free from all the troubles of actual life. All the inhabitants were peasants.

From the spring silkworm they gather long thread,
At autumn harvest there is no imperial tax.

All worked to support themselves, and there was no exploitation. And all had a nobility of mind similar to that of Tao Yuan-ming himself. In another poem he wrote:

I look up and think of Tung Hu's times of old,
When the people threw the surplus grain in the fields.
And, eating their fill, they had no more cares in the world
Than to rise in the morning and in the evening sleep.

He often referred in his poems to a primitive society in ancient times when all men were "happy and full of fun." This was his way of expressing disgust at the hypocrisy and greed of the ruling class, and sympathy with the poverty and distress of the common people.

The ideals expressed in *Peach-Blossom Springs*, while not unrelated to the Taoist philosophy then popular with the upper-class literati, also voiced the only realistic demands the peasants could make at that time, and accorded with the feelings and wishes of the people. As we have seen, though Tao Yuan-ming received the traditional education in his youth, his outlook was so coloured by his experience of country life that it differed in many respects from that of the nobility. For instance, he showed great concern for the people, believed that a man should work for his own living, opposed the prevalent Buddhist idea that the spirit was immortal, and stated:

Where there is life there must also be death,
And to die young is not to be cut off by fate.

Such ideas were advanced for his age, and account to a great extent for the brilliance of his poetry.

Most poets of Tao Yuan-ming's generation laid great stress on elegance, imagery and a choice vocabulary, admiring all that was spectacular

and novel, as well as parallelism and antithesis. There was thus a strong tendency towards formalism in literature as in the life of the gentry at that time. Since Tao Yuan-ming's style was the reverse of this, his poetry found little favour with his contemporaries. Living in simple, natural country surroundings, he was constantly absorbing new ideas; and as he laboured and grew closer to the common people, his thoughts and feelings underwent certain changes. Hence, though he also used the popular verse form with five characters to a line, his style was characterized by its simplicity, freshness and sincerity. Some of his poems were very close to colloquial speech, others were much influenced by folk poetry. All were essentially natural and genuine.

The culture of the Eastern Tsin dynasty, like its politics and economy, was dominated by the nobility, who considered country life a vulgar theme unfit for poetry. Tao Yuan-ming's poems did not begin to arouse much interest till the Liang period (502-557); but they have been loved and admired ever since that time. This shows the great difference between him and other scholars of his generation; and it is precisely in his dissimilarity — his affinity to the people — that his greatness lies.

Tao Yuan-ming ranks very high among Chinese poets. The only writers to be compared with him are men of the stature of Chu Yuan, Li Po or Tu Fu, all of whom have different styles and attributes. His work exercised a great influence on later poets. Almost every famous poet since his time has written on him, while in the Tang and Sung dynasties many writers imitated his style. Su Tung-po, the Sung dynasty poet, actually imitated every single one of his poems.

Owing to Tao Yuan-ming's class origin and his age, there are, of course, negative features in his poetry. His discontent with the actual realities was usually expressed in mild tones, and the complacent attitude he sometimes adopted made it seem as if he was satisfied with existing conditions. These negative elements, distorted and exaggerated by certain critics through the ages, exercised an undesirable influence. Thus some readers believed that tranquillity was the heart of his poetry, others that escapism was his essential spirit; and they praised Tao Yuan-ming for being an idealist completely withdrawn from real life. They based this estimate on a few lines removed from their context, actually misinterpreting his poetry.

Lu Hsun, however, wrote: "Tao Yuan-ming's greatness lies precisely in the fact that he was not at peace with himself." It is clear that the appraisal of Tao Yuan-ming made by many earlier writers is inadequate, and that only in a truly democratic age can classics possessing a marked affinity to the people be correctly interpreted and re-evaluated. Only today can a writer like Tao Yuan-ming receive the full measure of admiration and love which is his due.

—*WANG YAO*

THE CHINESE PUPPET THEATRE

Puppet-shows are common sights in China, whether in city streets or in small villages. This is one of the folk arts enjoyed by everyone, grown-ups — especially villagers — as well as children.

The Chinese puppet theatre has a very long history and ancient traditions. In early times puppets were called *kuei lei*, or "strong men." This was probably because wooden puppets were used to portray the heroes who tried to do away with evil and champion the people. According to old legends, as early as the tenth century B.C., a man called Yen Shih made puppets that could sing and dance.

At the end of the second and the beginning of the third century, towards the end of the Han dynasty, puppet-shows gradually became a common form of entertainment often put on during celebrations or banquets. Later on, owing to the influence of Indian sculpture, puppet-shows developed further. By the Tang and Sung dynasties (from the 7th to the 13th century) they were no longer confined to simple songs and dances, but had become performances of historical, legendary and folk drama. A great improvement was also made in the construction of the puppets, and more variety was introduced. Emperor Ming Huang (713-775) of the Tang dynasty wrote a poem about puppets in which he said:

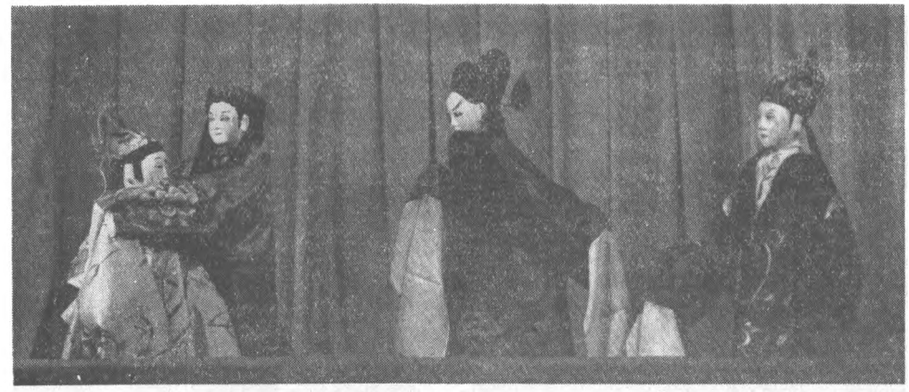
An old man carved in wood,
attached to strings,
Wrinkled and white-haired, like a
real person.

Obviously the puppets of the time were well made. Those referred to in this poem must have been marionettes.

There are different types of puppets in China. According to accounts written early in the twelfth century, most of the types we know today already existed then. And the names of famous performers in various puppet theatres were recorded, testifying to the popularity and high degree of development of this art in China at that time. The regional variations in our modern puppet-shows follow the traditions of the mid-seventeenth century, or date back in some cases to the Tang and Sung dynasties.

Nearly all kinds of local operas are performed as puppet-shows, and so is Peking opera. There are also shows without a singing accompaniment, like *The Fight Between Lion and Tiger* and *The Dragon Plays with the Pearl.* Chinese puppets are of three main types: glove puppets, marionettes, and rod puppets. In most districts all three types can be found.

Chinese puppetry originated earlier than Chinese drama, but it is closely linked with the Chinese classical theatre. Puppet-plays imitate the conventions of the local operas. They reproduce beautiful dancing movements and other gestures with uncanny skill, and sometimes create effects which cannot be achieved by the living theatre. Their repertoire of historical drama is a rich one. In fact, some of the newly rediscovered traditional operas were found in the puppet theatre, where the words, tunes and music have been preserved, as well as descriptions of different scenes and gestures.



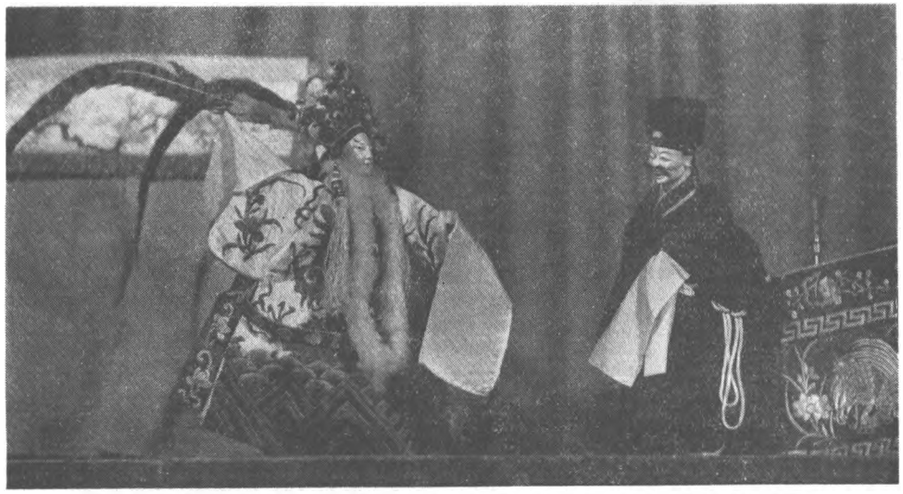
A scene from *The Sacrificed Son,* played by rod puppets

One-man puppet-shows are still very popular in China. The performer carries his property box from village to village. When he reaches a suitable spot, he takes out his cloth curtains and bamboo poles and sets up his stage. He sounds a gong, a crowd gathers, and the show begins. The stage is less than one square yard, about one and a half yards from the ground, and surrounded by cloth screens. The performer stays behind the screens, where he manipulates the puppets with his hands, sounds the gong and drum with his feet, and sings. In this way he can produce a lively classical drama. Performances like this are given frequently in the countryside, even in remote hilly regions, and as the plots and characters of these local operas are known to every one, they receive an enthusiastic welcome from old and young.

The puppet theatre can stage certain episodes which are beyond the power of opera companies. For instance, the latter cannot show a blazing fire burning the enemy forces, nor can Monkey leap up to heaven or down to the bottom of the sea with one somersault, as in the traditional romance. But in puppet-shows these scenes can easily be performed, and a realistic representation given of beautiful folk stories.

Puppet-making is a sculptural art, and Chinese puppets have distinctively oriental features. A famous contemporary puppet-maker, Chiang Chia-tsou, has devoted the whole of his life to this craft. His young heroes and heroines are strikingly handsome, and the women have elaborate coiffures, reminiscent of Tang dynasty paintings. To make a puppet's head a dozen processes are involved, from carving the wood to applying paint and varnish. The facial expressions show the puppet's age and temperament, and the costumes fit the different parts.

Chinese rod puppets are of three sizes. The small rod puppets in Szechuan are about 18 inches high, the medium size about 28 inches, the largest about the size of human beings. At the end of the Ching dynasty there were shows with large puppets and real children. The children



Chiang Kan and General Chou Yu in a glove-puppet adaptation of *The Romance of the Three Kingdoms*

stood on the shoulders of the manipulators and played the leading parts, while the puppets played minor parts.

The rod puppets of certain districts can move their eyes and are very clever with their hands, able to put on and take off clothes, and to button and unbutton them. Some characters like Pigsy in the romance of the Monkey King even have movable lips, ears and noses. And skilful manipulators can make them open doors, fan themselves, shoot arrows, play the flute, light candles, hold umbrellas, or even strum the lute.

The celebrated rod-puppet performer of Shansi, Wang Shao-yu, started learning this art when he was six, and by thirteen was already famous. He makes his puppets go through all the fine dancing movements of Shansi opera. During rehearsals he manipulates his puppets in front of a mirror, to ensure that the singing and dialogue are closely co-ordinated with the puppets' movements. For example, when a man in *The Sacrificed Son* hears that his two sons have accidentally killed the only child of a powerful official, he suddenly stands up and seizes their hands to question them. The expressions of the puppets here are so lifelike that spectators say he has brought them to life.

In recent years performers have shown great enthusiasm and ingenuity, and further improved their technique. The rod puppets can now leap on to a horse, smoke a cigarette, sweat or spit. They move more easily than other puppets, and can range freely about the stage.

Glove puppets are also most popular in China. The performer's index finger controls their head movements, his thumb and middle finger their two hands. A skilled performer can manipulate two puppets with entirely different characters and emotions at the same time. Glove puppets are particularly suited to acrobatic and fighting scenes.

Yang Sheng and Chen Nan-tien are veteran puppet artists from Fukien with more than thirty years' experience. In the east China drama festival held in 1951, they won the prize for virtuosity. During the last two years they have performed abroad and won high praise from connoisseurs and the general public. They present a scene from *The Romance of the Three Kingdoms* in which Tsao Tsao of the kingdom of Wei sends his officer, Chiang Kan, to a banquet given by the chief marshal of the kingdom of Wu, Chou Yu, and Chiang Kan steals a letter deliberately left in a book by Chou Yu. The audience sees Chou Yu pretending to be drunk, and Chiang Kan trying to look calm but wiping the sweat from his forehead. Their expressions are vividly portrayed to present this battle of wits realistically. In another fighting scene a hero uses his staff to throw his enemy's corpse into the air, and pants with fatigue as if really breathing hard.

Chinese marionettes are attached by strings to a rectangular control-board slightly smaller than a ping-pong bat. One puppet has usually at least eight or nine strings, sometimes as many as twenty-eight. The performer holds the control-board with his left hand,

A marionette performance based on the famous novel *Water Margin*, showing outlaws disguised as mummers

and pulls the strings with his right. He can make a marionette ride on horseback, soar on clouds, row boats, fan himself, wipe his tears, pour out wine, write, undress and so on. Very great skill and experience are required. The artists usually start their training at about ten, and have to practise in a small repertory and study under an expert for three years before they become real artists.

The Experimental Puppet Theatre of Chuanchow, which performed in the film *Puppet-Shows of Southern Fukien*, is famous throughout China. One episode from the story of the White Snake is particularly well-known. In this the monk Fa Hai beckons angels from the sky, and the sea monsters under the command of White Snake emerge from the water: the crab, the lobster, the conch, the

cyster, all true to life. The characters' natures are revealed through their actions — the monk's cruel stubbornness, Green Snake's courage and White Snake's gentleness. There is an acolyte in this scene guarding the gate for the monk. When Green Snake and White Snake first reach the gate, the young acolyte puts on airs; but the moment Green Snake unsheathes her sword he is frightened out of his wits.

In the old days the performers in puppet-shows had a very low social status. Oppressed by the reactionary ruling class, they were unable to develop their art. In April 1955, the first all-China puppet-show festival was held, and though only the artists of certain provinces and municipalities took part, this was something unprecedented in Chinese history. The puppet theatres of different places have distinctive characteristics and styles. In this festival the artists were able to exchange experiences, and received a great incentive to improve and develop Chinese puppet-shows.

As pointed out already, most Chinese puppet-plays are performances of classical dramas. In recent years, however, puppet-players have produced new programmes for young people and children, and modern dramas. This is a new departure in the Chinese puppet theatre, and a sign of its healthy growth. A triumphant future may be predicted for this time-honoured yet perennially vigorous folk art.

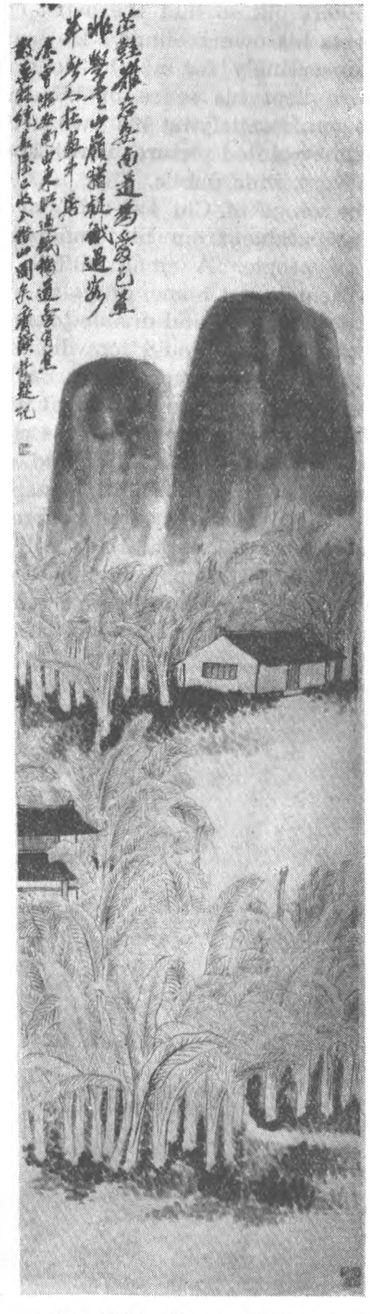
—*WU WEI-YUN*

AN APPRECIATION OF CHI PAI-SHIH'S PAINTINGS

An exhibition of the works of the late Chi Pai-shih opened on January 1 this year in Peking. All told, the exhibition contains over seven hundred works — paintings, scrolls of calligraphy, seals and manuscripts, including many poems in his own handwriting and sketches never shown before. The outstanding features common to all these exhibits, which differ enormously in form and style, are natural grace, simplicity and depth of feeling — precisely the qualities of the artist himself.

The earliest exhibit is *The Carp,* painted when Chi Pai-shih was about twenty. The simple style, devoid of all embellishment but painstaking to the highest degree, is characteristic of a serious wood-carver (his trade at this time was carpentry). The influence of folk art, clearly marked in the works of this period, remained with him all his life.

The series of landscapes, *Mountain Scenes,* were painted in his old home in Hunan when he was forty-seven and had travelled widely in China. Just as in another collection of landscapes, *Twenty-four Scenes in Shih-men,* the technique is not yet mature, but there is already evidence of an individual style. As the artist wrote in the preface to his poems during this period: "Although my vision had broadened, I was more keenly aware of the difficulties of writing." But because he endeavoured to sincerely express all he saw and felt, though his draughtsmanship was not without fault, the freshness of his work far surpassed that of more accomplished artists.



One of the *Mountain Scenes*

In about his fifty-seventh or fifty-eighth year, Chi Pai-shih attained maturity as a painter, with clean brushwork, purity of line, a wide range of subjects and many different modes of expression. Some of his compositions became very florid, a slight departure from his former simple taste. In flower paintings he made bold use of strong colours, combining these with Chinese ink. The search for formal beauty is closely linked with the characteristics of the subject. All his efforts were bound up with his determination to bring out the salient features of his subject, and therefore there is always something outstanding in his paintings, whether of landscapes, human figures, flowers or insects. As a mature painter, with rich experience behind him, he succeeded in bringing these distinctive characteristics into line with his artistic requirements. He set little store by attention to mere detail, but laid great stress on beauty of line, and required that this should be true to nature and life.

"Landscape painting calls for skill and simplicity. Skill makes for variety, simplicity for harmony and complete accord with Nature. Nothing that Nature has made can be light and flippant, or muddled and confused." (From the preface to his poems written in 1919.)

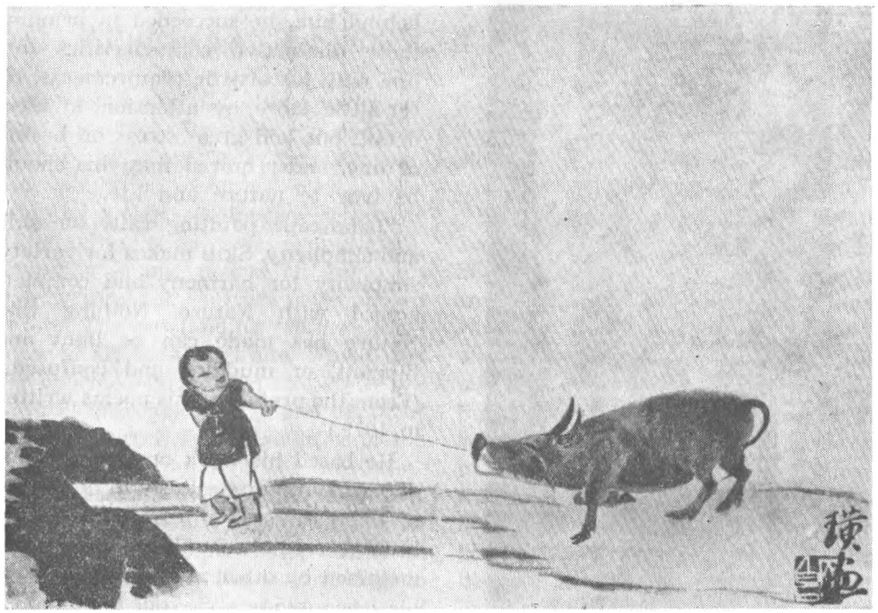
He based his work on reality while experimenting ceaselessly in new ways of expression, to integrate truth and beauty, create something as yet unimagined by other artists, and achieve his own unique style, one that should not be artificial.

He has painted many landscapes quite different from those of earlier masters, and strikingly fresh and natural: peach blossoms all along the river like a rosy cloud; a chilly mountain village in drizzle and mist; crows circling over a forest in winter, painted in a few strokes yet conveying a sense of noise and bustle; willows in the north, not stately but standing up bravely to the bitter wind; distant sailing boats on a river, floating as lightly as birds; buffaloes coming through a sparse peach orchard; a lonely islet in splendid isolation, standing proudly in midstream; "A house set deep in the woods, where no sparrow is ever disturbed. . . ."*

One senses that these were not merely painted for the appreciation of others but so that the artist could express his own feelings. He searched unceasingly for new visions, but always kept his sense of humanity; thus while satisfying his own artistic urge, he painted pictures which appeal to a very wide public.

The range of Chi Pai-shih's works is inseparable from his understanding of people. A small buffalo boy impatient to get home, dragging a big buffalo after him and unable to understand why it should dawdle so — a simple enough composition, but one that makes us aware with what depth of feeling the artist recalled his childhood. *Three Children Playing with Firewood* is another painting inspired by boyhood memories. Of course we who look at these paintings will not have had the same childhood ourselves, but they may evoke similar memories, and their close relevance to our life gives us a sense of intimacy. *Reading Late at Night* is another masterpiece of this period. The child dozing off at the desk, overcome with sleep, has a universal appeal.

* A line from *Chi Pai-shih's Poems*, Volume II.



Buffalo Boy

Chi Pai-shih painted the beauties of nature with such simplicity that even children like his work. A seven-year-old boy, who happened to see some photographs of the paintings in this exhibition, was fascinated by a group of paddy-birds on a sand bank, and stared at them intently. When I asked him why he liked this painting, at first he answered: "I don't know." But presently he cried approvingly: "They're playing!" He did not know what birds these were, what went to the composition of this picture, or how many years of work lay behind the ability to express these lifelike creatures in a few lines; and he certainly had no idea of the use of space, the application of ink, and the principles governing the position of the artist's signature and seals; yet without being able to explain these things, he instinctively shared the artist's delight in these birds.

It is not easy to produce images with such emotional appeal. Even a few simple lines are the result of very hard thinking. The many sketches in the exhibition testify not only to Chi Pai-shih's talent, but also to the difficulties of his art. On the back of an interesting sketch made in 1919 we see Chi Pai-shih's devotion to his work. With a few lines he drew a lifelike bird, adding a brief explanation of this drawing. On June 18 he was chatting in Fayuan Monastery in Peking with a student when he noticed the outline of a bird in muddy water on the brick floor. It had such a natural look about it that he drew it on the spot. Obviously this seeming accident was not entirely accidental. Not everyone would have seen a bird in the markings on the floor; but Chi Pai-shih saw it because he was concerned all the time with creating new images. So if we say the artist has a special sensitivity, there is nothing mysterious about this. It is bound up with his daily habits of acute observation and hard thinking.

Sketch of a Bird

To the very end of his life, Chi Pai-shih was never satisfied with his achievements, but always eager to create something new. In his later work, technical maturity and boldness of composition are often accompanied by conceptions so ingenious that they would have occurred to no one else. His much discussed *Frogs Croak for Ten Li down the Mountain Stream* surely refutes the contention that nothing original can be produced on a set subject. Then there is the painting which he did in 1952 with tadpoles chasing the reflections of lotus flowers, which oversteps the boundary

between pictorial art and poetry, and sets a courageous example to those who dare only depict life but not use their imagination. The reflections of the lotus can be seen by men, but can the tadpoles in the water see the flowers and their shadows? Surely this is unrealistic. But Chi Pai-shih did not let himself be restricted by fixed rules; he was not afraid to break the laws of nature, but depicted something half true and half imaginary to show his childlike sense of wonder and his love of beauty. This is not plain reporting, flat narrative or wordy explanation, but song filled with passionate emotion.

A note on a painting in his diary of 1920 shows his awareness of himself as an artist. "Someone asked why my painting of Kuanyin, the Goddess of Mercy, was so beautiful and dignified. I told him: 'You must know that this goddess is my state of mind.' " He did not consider this idol as an object of superstitious fear but as a human form embodying goodness and beauty; and in painting this subject he expressed his own feelings and ideals. Chi Pai-shih's works, although they do not directly portray important social events, can also be taken as a model to counteract the tendency towards photographic realism in art.

Boldness in creating new forms is one of the best characteristics of our people. In Chi Pai-shih's writings we find many attacks on the blind imitation of old masters. The inscription he made in 1921 for the rubbings of Chen Hung-shou's seal characters shows his artistic integrity and self-confidence.

> In seal cutting, the artists of the Chin and Han dynasties alone showed originality and natural grace. Because they were intelligent and dared to create new forms, they surpassed others and became models for future ages. When I cut seals I do not abide by the old rules, and so I am accused of unorthodoxy. But I pity this generation's stupidity, for they do not seem to realize that the Chin and Han artists were human and so are we, and we may have our unique qualities too. If the old masters could see our art, they would also find much to admire. The good thing about Mr. Chen's seals is that he did not stick to a slavish imitation of those faked bronze seals attributed to Chin and Han artists, but preferred to be guided by his own stupidity. (From his diary of 1921.)

In his diary of 1920 Chi Pai-shih expressed his respect for former artists and at the same time predicted that he himself would go far because he had the courage to create new forms.

> Such classical artists as Ching-teng, Hsueh-ko and Ta-ti-tzu dared to make bold strokes in their paintings, for which I admire them tremendously. My one regret is that I was not born three hundred years ago, for then I could have asked to grind ink or hold the paper for those gentlemen, and if they would not have me I should have starved outside their doors rather than move away. How wonderful that would have been! I suppose future generations will admire our present artists just as much as we admire these men of old. What a pity that I will not be there to see it!

Events since the liberation have proved the truth of Chi Pai-shih's prophecy, and indeed far surpassed his expectations. After China's liberation, during his lifetime, he was more highly honoured than any Chinese artist in the past.

Chi Pai-shih's achievements were based on the experience of earlier masters and on his own hard work. Like the late artists Huang Pin-hung and Hsu Pei-hung, some of whose works were also displayed at this exhibition, he laboured tirelessly all his life to leave this splendid heritage to posterity. The exhibition has done more than simply teach us how better to appreciate beauty.

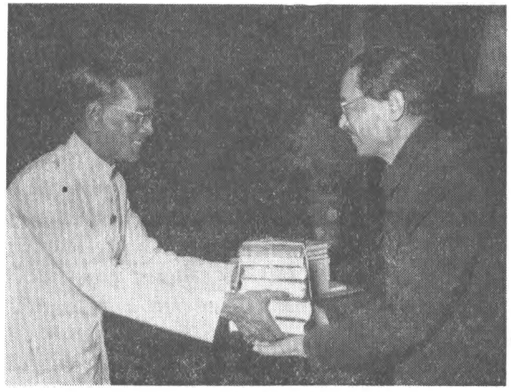
—WANG CHAO-WEN

Chronicle

Cultural Exchange Between China and Other Countries in 1957

In 1957 China had cultural contacts with 60 countries in all parts of the world. More than 2,000 people took part in this two-way traffic. Last year, for the first time since liberation, China sent a cultural delegation to Nepal which enjoyed a warm reception from both the Nepalese king and the people. For the first time, too, a company of Cambodian artists, including Princess Buppha Devi and Prince Chakrapong, performed in China. In return, and also for the first time, a Chinese delegation visited Cambodia. The Colombian Folk Song and Dance Group and Camille Aboussouan, the Lebanese art critic, visiting China last year, were the first cultural ambassadors from these two countries.

Altogether 150 writers from 46 countries visited China last year. For the first time China was host to writers from Lebanon, Turkey, Egypt, Syria, Jordan, Finland, Greece, Switzerland, Portugal, Venezuela and Scotland. Last year's guests also included the Soviet writers who came when the Sinkiang branch of the Chinese Writers' Union was formed, the Indonesian writers' delegation headed by the poet and painter Trisno Sumardjo, the Japanese writers' delegation headed by Kenkichi Yamamoto, Kochetov, editor-in-chief of *Literaturnaya Gazeta,* well-known to Chinese readers as the author of *The Zhurbins,* the famous Soviet poet Tank, the Rumanian poet Mihai Beniuc, the Czechoslovak writer Jan Drda, the Indian novelist and playwright Tarashankar Banerjee, the Indian poet Ram Dhari Singh Dinkar, the famous French writer Jean Laffitte, well-known for his work in the peace movement, the Italian writer Curzio Malaparte, the Swiss writer Henri de Ziegler, the veteran Greek writer Nikos Kazantzaki, the Norwegian writer Hans Heiberg, the Finnish writer Elvi Sinervo, an assiduous translator of Lu Hsun and Kuo Mo-jo, the Icelandic writer Halldor Kiljan Laxness, the Chilean poet Pablo Neruda and the Brazilian novelist Jorge Amado, and the Australian writer Leslie Haylen.



The poet Emi Siao, on behalf of the Chinese Writers' Union, accepts gifts from Mr. Banerjee, the Indian novelist and playwright

Mr. Etiemble, a member of the delegation of French sinologists, chats with the critic Wang Jen-shu

The enthusiastic peace-worker, Mrs. Johanna Andersen Nexö, wife of the late Danish writer Martin Andersen Nexö, visited China last year. When Martin Andersen Nexö was celebrating his eightieth birthday, Chairman Mao Tse-tung invited him to visit China. Unfortunately he died in 1954 before he could do so. Mrs. Nexö had come to fulfil her husband's unrealized wish, which naturally delighted literary circles in both China and Denmark.

All over the world, especially in Europe, there are many people with an expert knowledge of Chinese literature and art both classical and modern. They translated Chu Yuan, Tu Fu, Li Po, Kuan Han-ching, Tsao Hsueh-chin, Lu Hsun, Kuo Mo-jo and Chao Shu-li. Their studies covered such things as China's ancient inscriptions on bone and tortoise-shell, her bronzes, Sung dynasty paintings and Ming and Ching porcelain. Last year, the Chinese people were delighted to have as their guests 23 experts in the Chinese language and culture, who came from Czechoslovakia, Britain, France and Italy. Their tour in China not only gave them first-hand material for research, but also made them aware of the new face of socialist China's culture.

Writers who visited China last year were impressed by the energy of her work of construction and by her people's goodwill to and friendship for the people of other countries. Since his return from China, the Rumanian poet Beniuc has been writing about China. The Italian writer Malaparte spent several months in China last year. He was already at that time afflicted with cancer of the lung, and shortly after his return home he died. Despite his pain he constantly thought of New China and talked enthusiastically to the press about his impressions, expressing warm sympathy for the Chinese people. In his will he bequeathed his beautiful villa on the Isle of Capri to Chinese writers.

While in China many foreign writers made contact with our literary circles, which did much to facilitate co-operation between writers in China and the countries they came from. For example, in November 1957, the Japanese writers' delegation and the

Chinese Writers' Union signed a joint declaration in Peking which lays a good foundation for further cultural co-operation between the two countries.

The French writer Laffitte met and talked with his Chinese readers during his stay in China. It proved to be an exciting and memorable event for readers and the writer, too.

In 1957 Chinese writers visited seven countries. Kuo Mo-jo, Mao Tun, Yang Han-sheng and others went to Moscow for the celebration of the fortieth anniversary of the October Socialist Revolution and later visited many places in the Soviet Union. Our writers also visited Mongolia. Ko Pao-chuan, a well-known translator of Albanian literature, attended the Congress of Albanian Writers and Artists in May 1957, taking with him the warm congratulations of his Chinese confrères. The trip, he said, would be an enormous help to him in introducing Albanian literature to the Chinese people.

On May 2, 1957, at an international poetry recital in Peking some 400 Chinese and foreign poets and writers gathered together for the 200th and 150th anniversaries of Blake and Longfellow's births — the two poets among the world-famous figures commemorated in 1957. The meeting was presided over by the Chinese poet Emi Siao. Peking actors and actresses recited Blake's *Introduction to Songs of Innocence, The Tiger, The Chimney-Sweeper* and Longfellow's *A Psalm of Life, Children,* and *The Arrow and the Song.* Kuo Mo-jo, pioneer of modern Chinese poetry, recited two poems by Chairman Mao Tse-tung, *The Long March* and *Swimming.* The Scottish poet Christopher Murray Grieve, the Spanish poet Rafael Alberti and the Rumanian poet Beniuc recited five poems. Readings from Lu Hsun, Emi Siao, Tsang Keh-chia and others were also given.

Vice-ministers of Culture, Chien Chun-jui and Liu Chih-ming, congratulate the Bulgarian Art Delegation after one of their performances

Incomplete statistics show that during the first six months of 1957 China published more than 300 literary works from more than 30 countries in translation. Last year the Foreign Languages Press published 25 Chinese works of literature in English, Indonesian, French and German, with a total print of 227,000. Besides modern works, these included classics like *The Scholars, The White Snake,* and *The Dragon King's Daughter.* Last year, the monthly *Inostrannaya Literatura* (Foreign Literature), published by the Soviet Writers' Union, put out a 288-page special issue, giving a systematic introduction to China's classical and modern literature, drama and painting, and to her films and other arts. For this purpose, C. A. Dangulov, assistant editor-in-chief of the Soviet magazine, had made a special trip to China.

The Soviet violinist David Oistrakh (third from right) with Chinese artists

Two-way visits by groups of artists of different countries is a good method of cultural exchange which draws in a wide public. Last year 825 artists from 15 countries had played in Chinese cities, towns, villages and factories. They included 23 companies and many individual artists. These were, for instance, a Bulgarian art delegation, the Kurmagaz folk music group of Soviet Kazakhstan, the British Ballet Rambert, a Soviet ballet company from the Novosibirsk Opera and Ballet Theatre, the Hungarian Debrecen Folk Dance Ensemble, companies from the People's Republic of Mongolia, Vietnam, and Colombia, the Royal Art Company of Cambodia, the Maluku Art and Goodwill Delegation from Indonesia, the Mexican National Contemporary Ballet, the Uday Shankar Dance Company from India, the Mexican Salvador Trio, the Thai Art Company, a Czechoslovak musicians' delegation, the Yugoslav "Branko Krsmanovic" Song and Dance Ensemble, the Rumanian young artists' delegation, the Polish acrobatic troupe, famous Soviet artists like Sviatoslav Rikhter, the pianist, and David Oistrakh, the violinist, the classical Indian dancer Kamala Lakshman, the Mexican dancer Josesina Lavalle, and the Polish pianist Halina Czerny-Stefanska.... This was a wonderful flowering of art from various countries which brightened our garden of art. Especially during the latter half of the year, people in the big towns were able to enjoy a whole series of performances by foreign artists. Around National Day (October 1), no

less than 11 companies and many individual artists from nine countries were giving performances in Peking. It was indeed a magnificent international assembly of artists; and for three well-known schools of ballet — Russian, British and Mexican — to be performing simultaneously in one place, was assuredly something of an occasion.

Many delegations did not limit themselves to city theatres, but went to perform in the countryside, factories and schools. They performed not only in the big cities but also in towns like Taiyuan, Shihchiachuang and Liuchow. All this marked a further and deeper development of cultural exchange between China and other countries.

Artists coming to China from abroad not only promote mutual understanding and friendship but also give their Chinese colleagues a splendid chance of appreciating and learning from their art. Chinese artists accompanied many foreign art delegations on tour in China so that both could learn from each other. For instance, during the latter part of the Thai Art Company's stay in China, Chinese artists were dancing with their Thai colleagues and Thai artists were learning our Sinkiang songs and dances. Later, back in their own country, they gave a special performance of their newly-acquired art. During the celebrations of the fortieth anniversary of the October Socialist Revolution, four young Chinese ballet dancers formed part of the *corps de ballet* in the Novosibirsk Opera and Ballet Theatre's production of *Swan Lake*. Their orchestra and Chinese musicians together played much classical and modern music. That was a sort of progress report by our young Chinese ballet dancers and musicians on what they had learnt from their Soviet friends.

Last year, China sent 15 art delegations with 777 artists to 14 countries. They performed Peking opera, local operas, folk songs, dances and music, and gave circus, conjuring shows, variety shows and other shows.

In autumn last year a Chinese art delegation visited Egypt, Syria and Lebanon and was warmly received by the governments and peoples. Last year China's puppet-shows and shadow plays were introduced to the public and artists of Mongolia, France, Belgium and Switzerland. Chinese artists visiting the Soviet Union last year gave performances in the Soviet Far Eastern regions and Baltic republics where no Chinese artists had ever been before. Chinese musicians also participated in the Prague Spring international music festival last year. The Chinese pianist Li Ming-chiang won the third prize for playing Smetana.

Four hundred and ten young Chinese artists of 12 nationalities took part in the Sixth World Youth Festival in Moscow last year. They gave 69 performances, either on their own or with artists of other countries, to audiences of more than 233,000. Besides this, they performed 65 times at friendly meetings with young folks of other countries. They also took part in the contests and won 66 prizes, including 27 gold, 23 silver and 16 bronze medals. Actually, altogether the Chinese won 83 medals, because for some items more than one artist won medals. Young opera singers like Hung Hsien-nu, Tu Chin-fang and Kuan Su-shuang and the pianist, Ku Sheng-ying were warmly applauded. Sometimes they gave three

performances a day. For composition, young Chinese musicians won one first, three second and four third prizes.

Forty-eight Chinese exhibitions were held last year in more than 40 countries. Exhibits included modern Chinese paintings, modern graphic art, embroidery, cartoons, reproductions of the Tunhuang murals, handicrafts, children's drawings, scissor-cuts, Sung dynasty paintings, toys, calligraphy and various photographic and pictorial displays. Our handicrafts included cloisonné, lacquerware, pottery, porcelain, brocade and carved ivory, all of which had been exhibited previously in more than 20 Asian and European countries in large-scale exhibitions. Last year, a comprehensive exhibition of handicrafts was successively held in Egypt, Syria and Vietnam. In Cairo, 120,000 people saw it; in Damascus, 20,000 people flocked to it in the first four days. A three-week exhibition of Chinese handicrafts and allied articles in Ujjain (M. P.), India, on the occasion of the Simhasta Fair drew 700,000 people, and won a first prize for the best exhibits. In April last year, just after the first All-Soviet Artists' Congress ended, an exhibition of Chinese paintings took place in Moscow. The realistic draughtsmanship of Chinese painters won much praise from their Soviet colleagues, who discussed it at special meetings. The famous Soviet painter Merzhanov wrote an article on Chinese painting, in which he quoted the late Chi Pai-shih: "In depicting an object one should aim at something between complete likeness and no likeness at all; to aim at complete likeness would be pandering to vulgar taste; while to aim at no likeness at all would be a fraud."

In China itself 27 exhibitions from 15 countries were held last year, drawing crowds totalling 1,700,000. Some were exhibitions of art in general, others devoted to a single artist, such as the exhibitions of the German artists Menzel and Dürer and the famous Polish artist Piotre Mihawavski. The exhibitions of Czechoslovak glassware and of British graphic art first displayed in Peking in 1956, toured many other cities in 1957, and were each seen by more than 100,000 people. Works of eight famous Soviet artists and 63 original oil paintings by 45 Russian eighteenth and nineteenth century artists including Repin, Shishkin and Surikov were exhibited in China last year. These were really big events in artistic exchanges between China and the Soviet Union. Numerous Chinese artists and art lovers visited the exhibitions, and hundreds of artists made copies of the exhibits on the spot.

Besides the constant showing of foreign films, China last year sponsored special Soviet, Italian, Egyptian and Asian film weeks. The Asian film week was more ambitious than ever before, though China had already co-operated with Asian countries in film work in many ways.

China's films were once more systematically shown in the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, India, Egypt and Finland, all of which countries held Chinese film weeks last year. Chinese films were shown at five international film festivals. *New Year's Sacrifice* won a special prize at the Tenth Karlovy Vary Film Festival. *Woman Basket-ball Player No. 5* won a silver medal at the Sixth World Youth Festival. Chinese film workers are busily working with French colleagues on a feature film, *The Kite*, and with

Italian film workers on a documentary, *The Yellow River.*

In 1957 China commemorated the seven great figures in the world of culture chosen by the World Peace Council: the Russian composer Glinka, the American poet Longfellow, the British poet and artist Blake, the Swedish naturalist Carl von Linné, the Italian playwright Goldoni, the Czechoslovak educationist Komensky (Comenius), and the French philosopher Auguste Comte. Apart from memorial meetings, there were lectures on Longfellow, Blake and Goldoni, and public performances of the music of Glinka and Goldoni's plays, *Il Servitore di due Padroni* and *La Locandiera.* The works of all these men were published in Chinese translation along with biographical studies and music.

1957 was indeed a remarkable year in the field of cultural exchange between China and other countries. It shows that the Chinese people have made still greater efforts towards broader, closer cultural relations with the rest of the world.

Writers Go to the People

As early as 1942, in his *Talks at the Yenan Forum on Art and Literature,* Chairman Mao pointed out the need for revolutionary writers and artists to live indefinitely, unconditionally and whole-heartedly, among the workers, peasants and soldiers. Numerous works now loved by Chinese readers were written under such conditions. After liberation, many authors continued to follow the Party line in literature, and by living with the people indefinitely, unconditionally, produced good literature which helped to inspire our people in the socialist revolution and in socialist construction.

During the last few years, however, some writers have begun to concentrate in large cities, and by degrees, to varying extents, have drifted away from the revolutionary struggle and the life of the masses. This has narrowed their outlook and understanding. They did sometimes, it is true, go to the factories and countryside with the intention of enriching their experience and collecting material; yet such visits were too short for them to gain a deep understanding of the rich content of life and of the problems of the workers and peasants. That is why some recent works appear rather colourless, compared with the momentous changes and the rich variety of our life today, now that China is advancing towards socialism.

Many of our writers come from bourgeois or petty-bourgeois families. A number of them, in the course of revolutionary struggle, have changed their political stand, their way of thinking and feeling; but there are also quite a few who have not yet changed completely. If we are to build up a strong army of proletarian writers and enrich our socialist literature, it is essential that our writers live among the people, and by so doing change their class stand, their thoughts and feelings.

In various parts of the country well-known authors and young writers have responded to the call of the Party to live indefinitely among workers, peasants or soldiers, working with them and sharing their joys and hardships.

Liu Pai-yu, known for his short stories, has decided to live and work in the Heilungkiang countryside. Chou Li-po, author of *Hurricane,* has gone back to his native village in the province of Hunan to finish a new novel, and means to settle down there. Yang Shuo, author of *A Thousand Miles of Lovely Land,* has joined the army, and will work and write with the troops. Kang Cho, a writer of short stories, and Tien Chien, a poet, plan to work for a long period in the Hopei countryside. The poet Li Chi will spend some years in the new oil fields of Tsaidam, living with the workers and prospecting teams there. The poet Wen Chieh has settled down in the northwest province of Kansu. The novelist Lo Pin-chi has decided to work in a village in Heilungkiang. Wei Wei, Hu Ko and others will serve in garrison forces in frontier and coastal defence.

Many other writers and artists are also setting out now to different villages, factories and army units all over our vast country.

Japanese Writers Visit China

At the invitation of the Chinese People's Association for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries and the Chinese Writers' Union, a delegation of Japanese men of letters arrived in Peking in October 1957. The nine members of the delegation were: Kenkichi Yamamoto, head of the delegation, and Yasushi Inoue, executive members of the Association of Japanese Writers; the novelist Hirokazu Tada; the literary critic Hajime Togaeri; the writer Shigeharu Nakano; Yoshie Hotta of the Japanese PEN Club; the critic Shugo Honda; Shinichi Obata, vice-head of the secretariat of the Association of Japanese Writers; and Kikuo Kimura, a member of the general office of the Japanese Association for Cultural Relations with China. In November they went on a three weeks' tour, saw Shanghai, Chengtu, Chungking, Wuhan and Canton, and met many Chinese writers with whom they exchanged views and discussed how to strengthen the contacts between the writers of both countries and to exchange more of their works.

During their stay in Peking, some members of the delegation gave lectures in Peking University on Japan's classical, modern, post-war and proletarian literature. For centuries there was close contact between the civilizations of China and Japan; but in recent years, owing to man-made obstructions, a virtual stop has been put to this ancient, traditional relationship. These lectures helped to re-establish the old ties and to give Chinese intellectuals a better understanding of the classical and modern literature of Japan.

The lecture on classical literature was made by Mr. Kenkichi Yamamoto. Introducing two great Japanese poets, Hitomaro Kakinomoto of the Manyo period and Basho Matsuo of the Edo period, he gave an outline of classical

Members of the delegation of Japanese men of letters with Chou Yang, Vice-Chairman of the Union of Chinese Writers (first from left in the front row) and other Chinese writers

Japanese literature. Poetry, he said, was the heart of literature throughout the ages, and this was specially true of classical Japanese literature. From the highest peaks of poetry, it was not difficult to grasp the whole range of the Japanese classics.

Mr. Hajime Togaeri in his lecture on modern Japanese literature introduced the first of the moderns, Junichiro Tanizaki, author of the famous novel *Fine Snow*, and Hakucho Masamune, a literary celebrity for half a century, whose work so closely reflects the life of his time. The speaker described Shigeharu Nakano as the representative writer of democratic Japanese literature, and also introduced some important modern writers, including Tomoji Abe, Jun Takami, and Rinzo Shiina. Speaking of the post-war writers, he said that because many of them had no direct contact with society as a whole but shut themselves up like a snail in its shell, their work sometimes appeared colourless and insipid.

The lecture on Japan's post-war literature was given by Shugo Honda. The first post-war literature was written in 1946. In March of that year the magazine *Modern Literature* published Hiroshi Noma's *Dark Picture* describing the activities of left-wing students of Kyoto University in 1937. This book shows that despite the Japanese fascists' suppression of the proletarian movement and proletarian literature, progressive ideas still persisted in Japan. This work also reflects the confusion and vacillation of young left-wing intellectuals during that period.

Shigeharu Nakano, secretary-general of the Society of New Japanese Literature, gave a lecture on proletarian literature. A working-class literary movement came into being in Japan, he said, under the inspiration of the 1917 October Revolution. To his mind, the first Japanese proletarian writer was Takuboku Ishikawa, who made a sharp criticism of those naturalists who bragged that they were describing real life and yet who dared not touch upon the state authority. After the First World War the Japanese working class launched various revolutionary movements. Among the labouring people the important role of literature and art was affirmed, and there appeared a worker — Keishichi Hirasawa — who wrote stories and plays and performed on the stage. In 1923, when the Japanese government suppressed the workers' movement and arrested and massacred many fine young people, Keishichi Hirasawa was among the victims. The literary organization, The Sowers, in Tokyo published a special booklet to commemorate these martyrs, showing the close link between the proletarian literature of Japan and the workers' movements. The central figure of this organization was Omi Komaki, who with his comrades quickly took the direction of the international workers' movement. The direction of proletarian literature also became clear at this time, and between 1924 and 1928 such terms as "class" and "class struggle" appeared frequently in literary writings. The reactionary Japanese government did its best to check the growth of this proletarian literature, yet its repressive measures in 1928 impelled many literary groups to unite and form the Proletarian Literature League, which sent a delegation to the world conference of representatives of proletarian writers held in the Ukraine. In 1932 the Japanese government took even harsher action against working-class literature. The following year Takiji Kobayashi, author of *The Floating Crab Cannery* was arrested, beaten and murdered. The China League of Left-Wing Writers, headed by Lu Hsun, protested against the Kobayashi Incident, saying: "The untimely death of Comrade Kobayashi will be remembered for ever by revolutionary writers in Japan, whose answer to it will be to struggle even more fiercely. It will also be remembered for ever by revolutionary writers in China, who will make more stubborn efforts to win compensation for his death! The battle fronts of the oppressed classes in imperialist countries and colonial countries are united."

Progressive post-war literature in Japan is usually known as democratic literature. Shigeharu Nakano considered that it had not developed vigorously because it was not closely connected with the mass of the people and had failed to learn effectively from past lessons. He added that though Japanese proletarian literature has suffered numerous setbacks, it has also produced many fighters and martyrs, who gave their lives as Kobayashi did to the cause, and who will always remain an inspiration to Japanese writers to struggle for peace and democracy.

During the delegation's stay in Peking, it had discussions with the Chinese Writers' Union on the problem of cultural exchange between the two countries. Representing the Association of Japanese Writers, it issued the following joint declaration with the Chinese Writers' Union:

> We are very happy that literary workers of China and Japan have been able to meet and get to know each other on this occasion of the visit of the second delegatoin of Japanese writers to China, and that we have exchanged views on various cultural questions.
>
> Our two civilizations have had long historical ties, and their present prosperity is a product of our close relationship. The political situation today makes us more conscious than ever of the need to strengthen our cultural exchange.
>
> During the visit of the delegation of Japanese writers to China, men of letters in both countries have reached complete agreement on the fact that to speed up our cultural development we must further strengthen the contacts between writers and the exchange of books. We mean to do all in our power to bring this about.

The joint declaration was signed for the Chinese side by Chou Yang and Shao Chuan-lin, vice-chairmen of the Chinese Writers' Union, Liu Pai-yu,

Tsang Keh-chia, Wu Tsu-hsiang, Chen Pai-chen and Yen Wen-ching, members of the secretariat, and executive member Emi Siao.

The signatories on the Japanese side were: Kenkichi Yamamoto, Yasushi Inoue, Hajime Togaeri, Shigeharu Nakano, Yoshie Hotta, Shugo Honda, and Kenzo Nakashima, chairman of the Executive Committee of the Japanese Association for Cultural Relations with China and executive member of the Association of Japanese Writers.

After the signing of the declaration, Chou Yang and Kenkichi Yamamoto spoke, and the writers of both countries had a friendly conversation. Kenzo Nakashima announced that the Japanese Association for Cultural Relations with China had decided to invite some Chinese writers to visit Japan in the spring of 1958, and Chou Yang accepted this invitation with pleasure on behalf of Chinese writers.

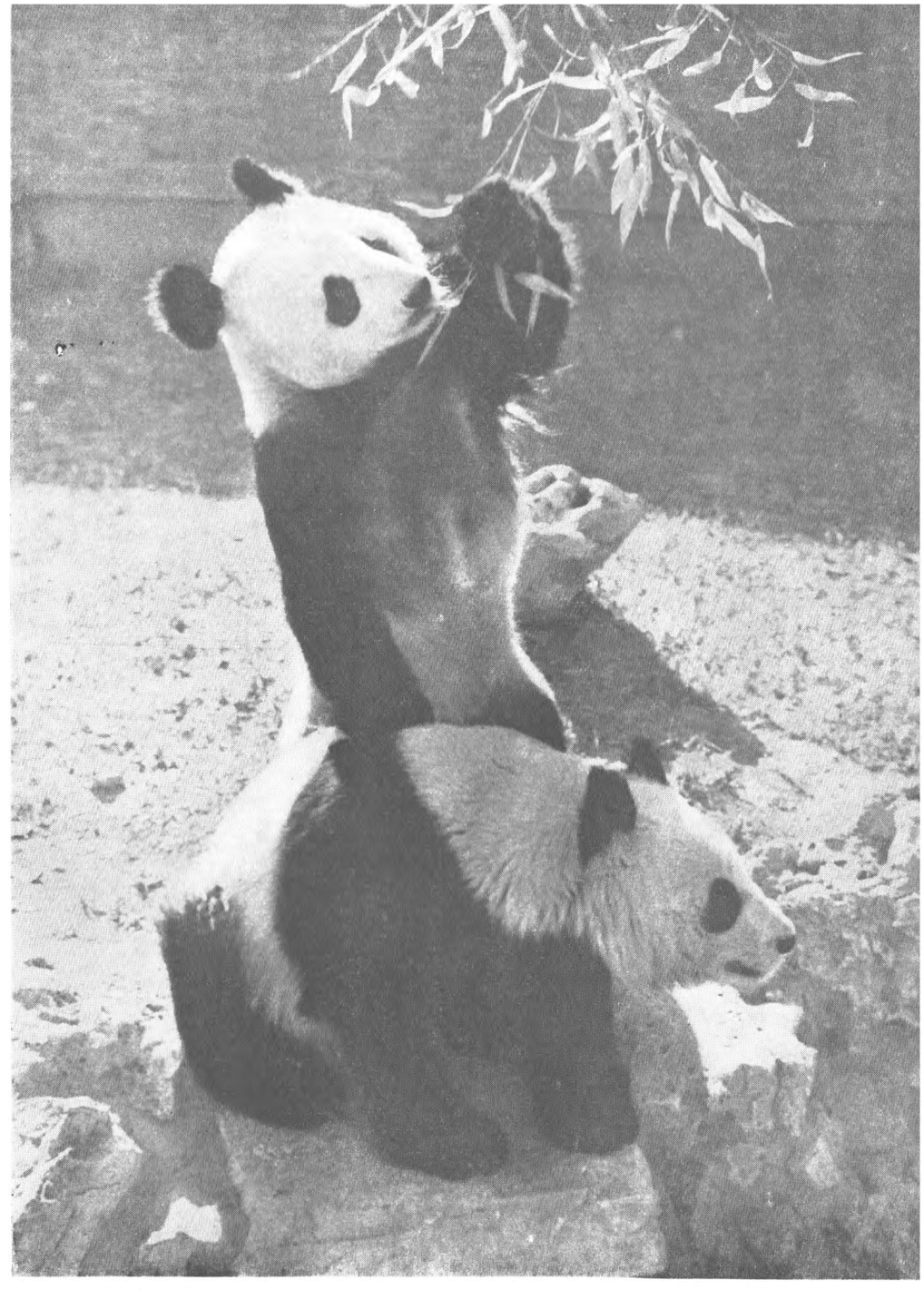
This visit to China of Japanese men of letters augurs well for more cultural exchange in future.

Writings of the Last Generation Reprinted

The great new literary movement which started on May 4, 1919 threw up many writers of real merit whose work marked a new epoch in the history of Chinese literature and deeply influenced the young writers of the present generation. Much of it, however, has been out of print or not easily accessible, so starting last year, the Peking People's Literature Publishing House is putting out collections and selections of these writers.

Four volumes of Chu Chiu-pai are already out. Lu Hsun's complete works are being published volume by volume. Already five volumes of Kuo Mo-jo are in print, and there are seven or nine more to follow. Two volumes of Mao Tun have gone to press, and ten more are in preparation. The first four volumes of Pa Chin are ready to be printed, with another ten to follow. Collections of Yu Ta-fu, Lao Sheh, Yeh Sheng-tao and Cheng Chen-to are being edited, and will start to appear this year. The *Collected Works of Chu Tse-ching* and the *Complete Works of Wen I-to,* originally published by the Kaiming Book Store, are being re-edited and reissued by the People's Literature Publishing House.

During the past few years, this House has put out many selections from various authors. Its 1957 list included Liu Pan-nung's poems, selections from Ying Hsiu-jen's and Pan Mo-hua's works, Wang Ching-chih's poems, Yang Chen-sheng's short novel *Yu-chun,* short stories by Fei Ming, Wang Tung-chao and Shen Tsung-wen, and Feng Tse-kai's *Notes from the Yuan-yuan Studio.* Forthcoming publications, some quite shortly, include selected works of Hsu Ti-shan and Hsiao Hung, short stories by Chang Tien-yi, poems by Hsu Chih-mo, and poetry and prose by Yang Sao.



Pandas by Fang Chien-ping

PHOTOGRAPHS FORM THE NATIONAL PHOTOGRAPHIC EXHIBITIO

over →

An Oasis by Ting Yi

The Folk Artist Chao Kuo-ming Making Dough Figurines by Liu Hsu-tsang

National Photographic Exhibition

The first national photographic exhibition was held in Peking from December 1, 1957 to January 5, 1958. A panel of eleven experts had selected 321 photographs out of 3,309 submitted by more than 800 photographers. They were striking evidence of the skill and imagination of China's photographers today.

The themes of the photographs covered a wide field, and the styles were extremely varied. They reflected China's great socialist construction, the happy life of our working people, and the beautiful scenery of our country. There were many studies of young folks, of flowers, vegetation, birds, beasts, fish and insects. The photographers had used all their skill to show, first of all, what a great nation our country is, how beautiful her mountains and rivers are, and how rich her natural resources. They had portrayed the people's love of work and of peace, and the constant progress of our national construction.

The 229 artists whose works were exhibited came from all over China and also included some accomplished Chinese photographers now living abroad as well as in Hongkong and Macao.

The exhibition is now on tour, going first to Canton, Shanghai and other big cities.

Hsiao Chang-hua's Seventy Years in Peking Opera

December 28, 1957, was the eightieth birthday of the veteran Peking opera artist Hsiao Chang-hua, vice-president of the China Drama School, who has devoted seventy years of his life to the theatre. A meeting to celebrate the occasion was held on this day in Peking, and attended by Liu Chih-ming, vice-minister of the Ministry of Culture; Tien Han, outstanding playwright and chairman of the Chinese Dramatists' Union; Mei Lan-fang, the celebrated exponent of Peking opera and chairman of the Chinese Opera Research Institute; Lao Sheh, well-known writer and chairman of the Peking Writers' and Artists' Association; and many of Hsiao Chang-hua's friends, colleagues and students. The last number of the *Drama Gazette* for 1957 also published a series of articles on his life and artistic achievements.

Hsiao Chang-hua comes from a family of actors. His father, Hsiao Chen-kuei, played the *chou* or clown role in Peking opera; his uncle, Hsiao Yung-shou, was a great exponent of the *kun tan* or women's roles in the *kunchu* opera style; his elder brother also played *tao ma tan* or acrobatic women's parts. From the age of eleven Hsiao Chang-hua was trained for the stage, and won fame as a *chou* who could interpret all types of this role equally well. During his stage career, for forty years he also trained many pupils in the noted Fu Lien Cheng Company which has produced so many distinguished actors.

Portrait of Hsiao Chang-hua
by Wu Tso-jen

He was an excellent teacher for actors of all roles. Between 1922 and 1937 he worked with his good friend Mei Lan-fang, and they remained colleagues until the Japanese invasion of China, when Mei Lan-fang left Peking to lead a secluded life in Shanghai. After the Japanese surrender in 1945, Hsiao resumed his partnership with Mei Lan-fang, only retiring from the stage two years ago on account of his great age.

Hsiao Chang-hua, as a teacher and an artist, made a careful study of the different roles, the relationship between them, and their reactions to different circumstances. He was strongly opposed to mere display of virtuosity. He laid great stress on artistic integrity, and insisted that every single role must be well rendered. Thanks to his creative interpretation, many *chou* parts have gained new life and vigour. Indeed, he raised this branch of dramatic art to new heights. He distinguished himself in many operas. In *Nu Chi Chieh* (The Courtesan on Trial), when he impersonated an old runner who is escorting a courtesan wrongly accused of murder to the capital for trial, he created a humorous old man with a strong sense of justice. Another of his most celebrated performances was in *Chun Ying Hui* (The Meeting of Gallant Men), based on a story of the Three Kingdoms period (A.D. 220-280). Chou Yu, commander of the naval forces of the kingdom of Wu, invited Chiang Kan, who was working for their enemy Tsao Tsao, to a feast in his camp. After the feast Chou Yu deliberately left a "secret" letter in a book on his desk, and when Chiang Kan was taken in and stole this, it made Tsao Tsao kill two of his own generals. In this opera Hsiao Chang-hua gave a brilliant rendering of Chiang Kan as a pedantic scholar with no political experience but a very high opinion of himself. These and many other of his characterizations made a strong impression on all playgoers.

At the celebration meeting in Peking, Vice-Minister Liu Chih-ming presented the veteran actor with an honorary award and congratulated him on behalf of the Ministry of Culture. He pointed out that Hsiao Chang-hua had all his life devoted his art to the people and never lost contact with them. Through his performances he had ruthlessly satirized the dark and ugly aspects of the old society, and both as an actor and a teacher he had never ceased to introduce innovations and reforms. His art had absorbed the fine qualities of many different schools, but he had created a style all his own. After the vice-minister's tribute, Tien Han, Mei Lan-fang and Lao Sheh also spoke.

Hsiao Chang-hua in his reply said that in his eighty years he had seen many different political regimes in China, but only in New China were actors accorded such respect and honour. He declared that he was completely confident that since the government had made such great efforts to build up the drama school—something unknown before—the classical Chinese theatre was assured of a brilliant future. He also urged young artists to set even greater store by moral integrity than by technical attainments, to keep to the right path, study hard to master their art, and serve the people whole-heartedly. He mentioned, too, that although he was eighty he did not feel old in China today, and he meant to learn more from others, study hard, and work for socialism to his last day.

That evening Mei Lan-fang, Chiang Miao-hsiang, Lei Hsi-fu, Hou Hsi-jui and other famous Peking opera artists who attended the meeting, performed in some of their most celebrated roles.

A scene from *The Courtesan on Trial* performed by Hsiao Chang-hua and Mei Lan-fang in 1936

ARTISTS IN THIS NUMBER

Hu Jo-ssu from Chinkiang in the province of Kiangsu is in his forties, and teaches traditional Chinese painting in a Shanghai college. His *Kweilin Landscape* was shown in the Exhibition of Traditional Chinese Painting in 1956.

Hsiao Chen was a native of Yangchow, who lived in the early Ching dynasty. A poet, painter and carpenter, he is best known for his figure paintings and landscapes, particularly for his snow scenes. During the reign of Kang Hsi (1662-1722) most painters used bold strokes to create a rough, simple style. Hsiao Chen, however, who modelled his work on that of certain Tang and Sung masters, has a style of his own, meticulous and brilliant. *Red as Blossoms in Spring,* executed in 1697, depicts an autumn scene in the Western Hills outside Peking, and is inspired by a couplet from a Tang poem:

I rest my carriage and watch the maples at dusk;
Their frosty leaves are red as blossoms in spring.

Chen Heng, from the county of Lufeng in Kwangtung, is twenty-seven this year. He has taught art in primary schools and worked in various cultural centres. Apart from illustrations for picture-story books, some of his best works are New Year paintings and posters. *On the Way Home* is a recent work.

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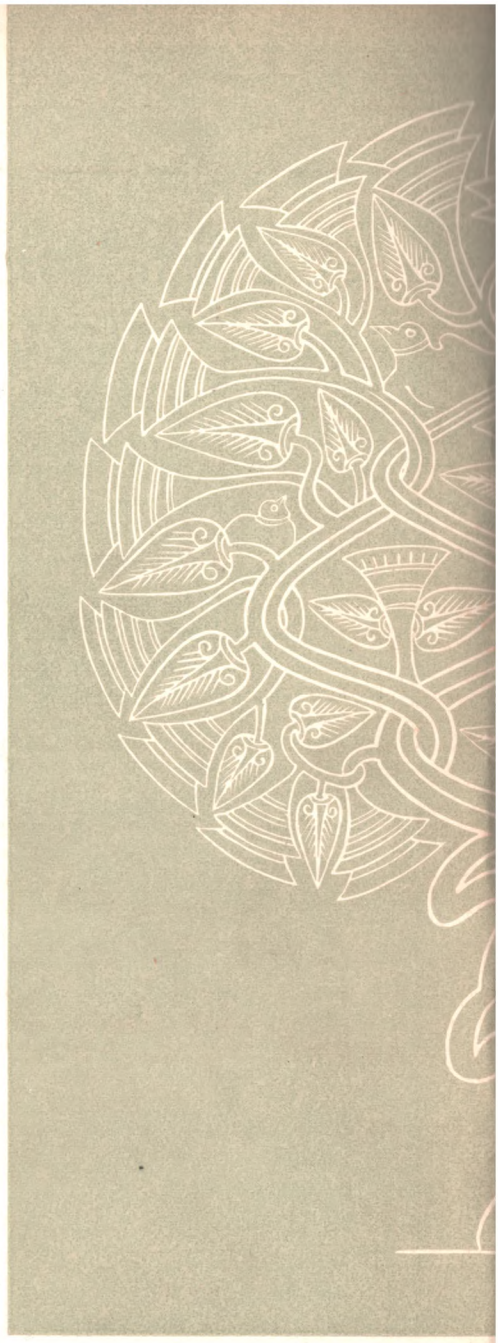

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