



CHINESE LITERATURE

May-June

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Kao Yun-lan—Annals of a Provincial Town

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CHINESE LITERATURE

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MAO TSE-TUNG

EIGHTEEN POEMS

The following eighteen poems by Mao Tse-tung were written between 1928 and 1956, and published in the first number of the monthly Poetry in January 1957. Sixteen of these poems are in the tzu style. Only "The Long March" and "To Mr. Liu Ya-tzu" are lu-shih. For information on these two poetic forms readers may turn to the article Classical Chinese Prosody on page 141 of this number. Naturally in translation it is impossible to preserve the distinctive rhythm and rhyme scheme of the original. All notes but those designated as the author's were added by the editors.

The above photograph of the poet was taken on a train during a tour of the country.

Changsha¹

— to the melody *Shen Yuan Chun* (沁园春)

Alone I stand in the autumn cold
And watch the river northward flowing
Past the Orange Island shore,
And I see a myriad hills all tinged with red,
Tier upon tier of crimsoned woods.
On the broad stream, intensely blue,
A hundred jostling barges float;
Eagles strike at the lofty air,
Fish hover among the shallows;
A million creatures under this freezing sky are striving
for freedom.
In this immensity, heavy at heart,
I ask the great earth and the boundless blue
Who are the masters of all nature?

I have been here in days past with a throng of companions;
During those crowded months and years of endeavour,
All of us students together and all of us young,
Our bearing was proud, our bodies strong,
Our ideals true to a scholar's spirit;
Just and upright, fearless and frank,
We pointed the finger at our land,
We praised and condemned the written word.
And in those days we counted honours and high position
no more than dust.
But don't you remember
How, when we reached mid-stream, we struck the waters,
How the waves stopped our boat in its speeding?

¹Capital of the poet's native province, Hunan. He studied at the First Normal School in Changsha from 1913 to 1918.

Yellow Crane Tower¹

— to the melody *Pu Sa Man* (菩萨蛮)

Wide, wide through the midst of the land flows the Great
River,²
Deep, deeply scored is the line from north to south.³
Blurred in the blue haze of the mist and the rain
The Snake and Tortoise hills stand over the water.

The yellow crane has departed, who knows whither?
Only this travellers' resting-place remains.
With wine I drink a pledge to the surging torrent;
The tide of my heart rises high as its waves!

Chingkang Mountains⁴

— to the melody *Hsi Chiang Yueh* (西江月)

Below the hills were our flags and banners,
To the hill-top sounded our bugles and drums.
The foe surrounded us thousands strong,
But we were steadfast and never moved.

Our defence was strong as a wall already,
Now did our wills unite like a fortress.
From Huangyangchieh⁵ came the thunder of guns,
— And the enemy army had fled in the night!

¹This stands on Snake Hill in Wuchang, overlooking the Yangtse and Hankow on the further side. The name comes from a legend about a saint who rode past here on a yellow crane.

²The Yangtse.

³The Peking-Hankow railway line.

⁴These mountains, on the Hunan-Kiangsi border, have a circumference of about 500 li. In September 1927, the poet arrived here at the head of the Red Army and established the first revolutionary base.

⁵A strategic point near the Chingkang Mountains.

New Year's Day

— to the melody *Ju Meng Ling* (如夢令)

Ninghwa! Chingliu! Kweihwa!¹
The narrow path, the deep woods, the slippery moss!
And where are we bound today?
Straight to the foot of Wuyi Mountain.
At the Mountain, the foot of the Mountain,
The wind will unfurl like a scroll our scarlet banner.

Hweichang²

— to the melody *Ching Ping Lo* (清平乐)

Soon the dawn will break in the east,
But do not say we are marching early;
Though we've travelled all over these green hills we are
not old yet,
And the landscape here is beyond compare.

Straight from the walls of Hweichang lofty peaks,
Range after range extend to the eastern ocean.
Our soldiers, pointing, gaze towards Kwangtung,
So green, so blue, away in the distance.

¹Three counties in the province of Fukien. In 1929 the poet and General Chu Teh led the Red Army to western Fukien and southern Kiangsi, where they established new revolutionary bases.

²A county in Kiangsi, bordering on Fukien in the east and Kwangtung in the south. In January 1929, the poet came here with the Red Army and established the south Kiangsi revolutionary base.

Tapoti¹

— to the melody *Pu Sa Man* (菩薩蠻)

Red, orange, yellow, green,
Blue, indigo, violet;
Who in the sky is dancing, waving this ribbon of colour?
After the rain the setting sun has returned,
And, line after line, the hills and the pass are blue.

Once there raged a desperate battle here;
Bullet-holes have scored the village walls;
They are a decoration, and the hills
Today seem still more fair.

Loushan Pass²

— to the melody *Yi Chin-o* (忆秦娥)

Cold is the west wind;
Far in the frosty air the wild geese call in the morning
moonlight.

In the morning moonlight
The clatter of horses' hooves rings sharp,
And the bugle's note is muted.

Do not say that the strong pass is guarded with iron.
— This very day in one step we shall pass its summit,
We shall pass its summit!
And then the blue hills will be like the sea,
And the dying sun will be like blood.

¹A place near Juikin, in the Kiangsi revolutionary base. From the end of 1930 to February 1933, Chiang Kai-shek launched four large-scale offensives against this base, but each time was defeated by the Red Army.

²A strategic point in the Loushan Mountains in Tsunyi County, Kweichow. The Red Army occupied Tsunyi in January 1935, during the course of the famous Long March, and shortly afterwards entered this pass.

Three Short Poems

— to the melody *Sixteen Characters* (十六字令)

Mountains!

Faster I whip my speeding horse, never leaving the saddle;

I start as I turn my head,

For the sky is three foot three above me!¹

*

Mountains!

Like surging, heaving seas with your billows rolling,

Like a myriad horses

Rearing and plunging away in the thick of the battle.

*

Mountains!

Piercing the blue of the heaven, your barbs unblunted!

The sky would fall

But for your strength supporting.

¹A folk song runs:

Skull Mountain's up above,

Treasure Mountain down below;

The sky is only three foot three away;

If you cross on foot you must bend your head,

If you ride a horse you must dismount.

— the Author

The Long March

The Red Army fears not the trials of a distant march;

To them a thousand mountains, ten thousand rivers are
nothing;

To them the Five Peaks ripple like little waves,

And they slide over great Wumeng as a ball down a slope.

Warm are the cloud-topped cliffs washed by the River of
Golden Sand,

Cold are the iron chains that span the Tatu River.

The myriad snows of Minshan only make them happier,

And when the Army has crossed, each face will be smiling.

Mount Liupan¹

— to the melody *Ching Ping Lo* (清平乐)

The sky is high, the clouds are pale,

We watch the wild geese flying south till they vanish;

We count the myriad leagues we have come already;

If we reach not the Great Wall, we are no true men!

High on the crest of Liupan Mountain

Our banners idly wave in the west wind.

Today we hold the long cord in our hands;

When shall we bind fast the Dragon?²

¹In southern Kansu. In September 1935, the Red Army broke the enemy's blockade at Mount Liupan, and the next month reached north Shensi, thus concluding the Long March.

²This refers to the invading Japanese army.

Kunlun

— to the melody *Nien Nu Chiao* (念奴嬌)

Rising straight in the air above this earth,
Great Kunlun, you have witnessed all that was fairest in
the world of men.

Your three million white jade dragons in their flight¹
Freeze the sky with penetrating cold;
In summer days your melting torrents
Fill the streams and rivers over the brim,
Changing men into fish and turtles.
What man can pass judgement
On all the good and evil you have done these thousand
autumns?

But now today I say to you, Kunlun,
You don't need this height, don't need all this snow!
If I could lean on the sky, I would draw my sword
And with it cut you into three pieces.
One I would send to Europe,
One to America,
One we would keep in China here,
So should a great peace reign in the world,
For all the world would share in your warmth and cold.

¹The men of old used to say: "When the three million white jade dragons are fighting, their tattered scales flying fill the air." Thus they described the flying snow. Here I have borrowed the image to describe the snow mountain. In summer, when you climb Minshan, you look out onto a crowd of mountains, sweeping away as if in a dance, and all white. Among the common people there was a saying that years ago, when Monkey King passed by here, these were all Mountains of Flaming Fire; but Monkey borrowed the Palm Leaf Fan and put out the flames, and that was how they froze and turned white.

— the Author

Snow

— to the melody *Shen Yuan Chun* (沁園春)

This is the scene in this northern land;
A hundred leagues are sealed with ice,
A thousand leagues of whirling snow.
On either side of the Great Wall
One vastness is all you see.
From end to end of the great river
The rushing torrent is frozen and lost.
The mountains dance like silver snakes,
The highlands¹ roll like waxen elephants,
As if they sought to vie with Heaven in their height;
And on a sunny day
You will see a red dress thrown over the white,
Enchantingly lovely!

Such great beauty like this in all our landscape
Has caused unnumbered heroes to bow in homage.
But alas these heroes! — Chin Shih Huang and the Emperor
Wu
Were rather lacking in brilliance;
Rather lacking in grace
Were the Emperors Tang Tai Tsung and Sung Tai Tsu;
And Jenghiz Khan,
Beloved Son of Heaven for a day,
Only knew how to bend his bow at the golden eagle.
But they are all past and gone!
To find the noble spirits, the men of genius,
We must look here in the present.

¹The highlands are those of Shensi and Shansi.

— the Author

北國風光，千里冰封，萬里雪飄。
 大河上下，頓失滔滔。
 須晴日，看紅裝素裹，分外妖嬈。
 江山如此多嬌，引無數英雄競折腰。
 惜秦皇漢武，略輸文采；唐宗宋祖，稍遜風騷。
 一代天驕，成吉思汗，只識彎弓射大雕。
 風流人物，正看今朝。
 毛澤東

The original manuscript of "Snow"

To Mr. Liu Ya-tzu

I cannot forget how at Canton we were drinking tea together,

And at Chungking exchanging verses just when the leaves were yellow.

Thirty-one years have passed, we are back in the old capital;
At the season of falling flowers I am reading your beautiful lines.

Take care not to break your heart with too much sorrow;
We should ever take far-sighted views of the ways of the world.

Do not say that the waters of Kunming Lake¹ are too shallow;

For watching fish they are better than Fuchun River.

Reply to Mr. Liu Ya-tzu

While we were watching performances during the national celebration of 1950, Mr. Liu Ya-tzu composed an impromptu poem to the melody Wan Hsi Sha (浣溪沙), and I replied with some verses to the same rhymes.

Long was the night and slow the crimson dawn to spread in this land;

For hundreds of years have demons and monsters swept in a swirling dance,

And the five hundred million people were disunited.

But now that the cock has crowed and all under heaven is bright,

Here comes music played from a thousand places,

And from Khotan strains that inspire the poet as never before.

¹The lake in the Summer Palace, Peking.

*Peitaiho*¹

— to the melody *Lang Tao Sha* (浪淘沙)

A rain-storm falls on this northern land,
White breakers leap to the sky.
Of the fishing-boats from Chinwangtao
There is not one to be seen on all the ocean.
Where have they gone?

More than a thousand years in the past
The Emperor Wu of Wei, wielding his whip,
“Eastwards journeyed” hither; his poem remains.
“The sad autumn wind is sighing” still today —
The world has changed!

¹A well-known summer resort south of the island Chinwangtao in Po Hai.



A Moment in Early Autumn By Chen Chiu-tsao

Swimming

— to the melody *Shui Tiao Ko Tou* (水調歌頭)

I have just drunk the waters of Changsha,
And eaten the fish of Wuchang;
Now I am crossing the thousand-mile long river,¹
Looking afar to the open sky of Chu.
I care not that the wind blows and the waves beat;
It is better than idly strolling in a courtyard.
Today I am free!
It was on a river that the Master² said:
“Thus is the whole of Nature flowing!”

Masts move in the swell;
Tortoise and Snake are still.
Great plans are being made;
A bridge³ will fly to join the north and south,
A deep chasm become a thoroughfare;
Walls of stone will stand upstream to the west
To hold back Wushan's clouds and rain,
And the narrow gorge will rise to a level lake.
The Mountain Goddess, if she still is there,
Will be startled to find her world so changed.

¹In May 1956, the poet swam across the Yangtse from Wuchang to Hankow.

²Confucius.

³This bridge across the Yangtse was open to traffic on October 15, 1957.

Translated by Andrew Boyd

KAO YUN-LAN

ANNALS OF A PROVINCIAL TOWN

This is a portion of the novel Annals of a Provincial Town. The time is 1936, one year before the start of the War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression. The place is Amoy, on the coast of Fukien Province. The reactionary Kuomintang government is arresting Communists and other progressives who insist on fighting against the increasing Japanese encroachment and oppose Chiang Kai-shek's policy of non-resistance. This section of the book deals with the jail-break of the imprisoned patriots.

The novel itself begins in 1924 and traces the development of the story's principal characters and the background to the jail-break: As children, Li Yueh the compositor and school teacher Ho Chien-ping are enemies because of the murderous feud between their families; yet they grow up to be comrades in the common cause of saving their country. Newspaper editor Wu Chien finds that his struggle against Japanese racketeers and smugglers becomes effective only after he joins the Communist Party and fights in an organized way. There is also middle school teacher Chen Szu-min, one of the key figures in the Amoy Association, a cultural organization that advocates resistance to Japanese aggression; the stalwart fisherman Wu Chi who maintains a very close relationship with the Party. . . .

These are all representative of the vast majority of the people of Amoy in their determination to uphold China's integrity. For this reason they are a thorn in the side of Chao Hsiung, head of the Kuomintang Political Security Bureau in Amoy, and a threat to the city's Japanese racketeers, its spies and smugglers.

The battle between these two forces is the main theme of the novel.

*The author Kao Yun-lan was born in Amoy in 1910. His father was a salesclerk, earning from eight to twelve dollars a month. At home they were always hungry. Thanks to the assistance and encouragement of a teacher like Chen Szu-min in this novel, Kao Yun-lan was able to receive an education and learn to be a writer. His first work *The Night Before*, a short novel, was published in 1930. When the jail-break described in the story took place, the author was living in Amoy. Very stirred, for a long time he wanted to incorporate the heroic event into a novel; eventually he began to write. In 1937, he went to Singapore. When the Japanese invaded Malaya, his unfinished manuscript was destroyed in the flames of war. Not until the Japanese invaders were finally defeated and the author returned to New China, was he able to resume writing. He started the novel again in 1953 and was putting the finishing touches to it when he died of cancer in 1956 at the age of forty-six. "I'll devote my life to writing this glorious page in the Party's history," he once said in a letter to a friend. He kept his promise.*

The police van rolled to a stop in front of the Political Security Bureau. Ho Chien-ping was led out and locked in the detention room. An hour later, a detective escorted him to another room for questioning. There, waiting, was Chao Hsiung, Chief of Bureau.

The last time Chien-ping had seen him was six years before, when Chao Hsiung was playing the male lead in a revolutionary drama. Now he was sleek and suave. Nothing remained of his former patriotic fervour. A knife scar, slanting down towards one eyebrow, had been added to his forehead. Although he was still big and hand-

some, his eyes had become hard. Even when he smiled or feigned kindness, there was an indefinable something about him, something not quite human.

Chao Hsiung courteously invited Chien-ping to be seated beside his desk. Both his eyes and the scar on his brow seemed to glow as he looked Chien-ping over. Frowning, he pressed a buzzer, and a guard entered. Chao Hsiung upbraided him for having manacled Chien-ping's hands.

The guard stammered a few words and left in confusion. Chao Hsiung personally unlocked the handcuffs.

"We've met before. Remember?" he asked in a casual voice. "Wu Chien used to speak of you often. You were teaching at the Pishan Primary School, weren't you?"

"That's right," Chien-ping replied. He saw no reason to conceal this.

Chao Hsiung's eyes again examined him.

"Where in the world did you get those clothes?"

"I bought them from a brushwood cutter."

"A brushwood cutter? Where from?"

"I met him on the mountain."

"No, I mean where does he live?"

"I have no idea," said Chien-ping coolly. "I only wanted to buy his clothes. I wasn't interested in his address."

"You're really clever," Chao Hsiung nodded. "We turned out a tremendous force to catch you — surrounded the whole mountain. You couldn't have got away even if you sprouted wings. . . . I gave them strict orders not to fire. You can thank Wu Chien for that. Because you're his friend, I took special care of you. . . . Good old Wu Chien. Been in touch with him lately?"

"No."

Chao Hsiung sighed. "Strange, isn't it? Your leader Wu Chien is my dearest friend. We went to school together. I dare say no one understands him better than I. That man is truly noble! We've taken different paths, but our goal is the same. Both of us want our country to flourish. . . . If Wu Chien should be arrested today, I would release him unconditionally, no matter what punishment I might receive. . . ."

Chien-ping could feel Chao Hsiung's eyes searching his face, as if to see whether he had been moved by this speech.

"Are you wounded?" asked Chao Hsiung, changing the subject.

"No," replied Chien-ping, "but an innocent bystander, a child, was shot. For that I suppose I should thank you. No doubt the gun would have aimed straighter, were it not for the 'special care' you were taking of me. . . ."

"You can't blame my men. They never would have fired if you hadn't resisted," Chao Hsiung explained. He took a pack of cigarettes from the drawer. "Smoke?"

Chien-ping shook his head. Chao Hsiung lit one for himself.

"I hope we can settle this thing like friends, for Wu Chien's sake," Chao Hsiung said with a pleasant smile. "Let's be frank. Naturally you know what to do if you want things to go easily. If you tell us everything, you can leave — immediately. You'll be able to keep your teaching job. . . ."

"You have no reason to arrest me."

"The law required me to arrest you. Now tell me, what kind of organization is this Amoy Association of yours?"

"We're duly registered, in accordance with law. You know that."

"In accordance with law? Don't give me that," Chao Hsiung laughed coldly. He adopted an official air. "You Reds certainly know how to worm your way in. Let's have the truth. Who is actually running things behind the scenes?"

"All the people of China."

"Rot. The Amoy Association is a communist front. I've known it for a long time."

"You can say what you like. According to your crowd, anyone doing patriotic work is a Communist."

"It's illegal activities we're opposing, mister. You people have gone too far."

"Is it illegal to be patriotic? You've forgotten the Amoy Theatrical Society you yourself organized, and that play you acted in, where you shouted, 'Down with the traitors who are selling us out to the foreign imperialists' . . ."

"That was different, mister. We were purely a people's organization. Your Amoy Association is a propaganda mouthpiece for the Communist Party. Now tell me. How many of your association members are in the Party? How many of them belong to the Communist Youth League? Who are your leaders? Who's writing those radical newspaper articles under the pen name of Teng Lu? Who is Yang Ting? Where is your printing press? . . ."

"You really are forgetful, Mr. Chao," Chien-ping interrupted.

"Forgetful?"

"Yes. You've forgotten that play again, how that official behaved towards you when you were arrested. When he questioned you, he adopted exactly the same line you're using now."

Chao Hsiung's face reddened, then turned pale. There was a knock at the door, and Chao Hsiung wrenched his head around.

"Come in."

It was Crocodile, with a bundle under his arm which Chien-ping recognized as his own. That meant his house had been searched.

Crocodile beckoned Chao Hsiung into the next room, where they talked in low tones. When Chao Hsiung returned, he was carrying a few pamphlets and a metal slab used as a base for cutting mimeograph stencils. He said to Chien-ping:

"We've already investigated. You printed these pamphlets. See, they used your print." Without giving Chien-ping a chance to argue, he demanded, "Where did you get this slab?"

"It's mine."

"You're lying. Did Li Yueh give it to you?"

"No."

"How did you meet him?"

"We're neighbours."

"What else?"

"Just neighbours."

"You're both Reds. We know. You run an underground printing press together."

Chao Hsiung looked at Chien-ping with probing eyes.

Chien-ping met his gaze. "No. I used the slab at school. I cut stencils on it for my lecture notes."

Behind Chien-ping's back, Crocodile signalled to Chao Hsiung, and the two again went into the next room.

Crocodile wanted Chao Hsiung's permission to use torture. Chao Hsiung shook his head.

"Torture is no good on that type," he said. "He's not Chou Shen. . . . Let's try to persuade him first. If we win him over, through him we can find others. . . ."

Chao Hsiung came back and ordered the guard to take Chien-ping away.

*

Chien-ping was locked in a small dark cell like an animal's cage, with low walls, and wooden bars at one end. It was dark as a cellar. The walls were moist and slimy; their base was overgrown with fungus and crawling with ants. The animal stink of the place, combined with the strong odour of urine and mildew, made Chien-ping dizzy.

In this cell you never saw the light of day. Swarms of mosquitoes buzzed about your head; innumerable fleas nipped your legs.

But all of Chien-ping's thoughts were centred on one question: How could he warn Li Yueh?

The situation obviously was very bad. Li Yueh was sure to be watched. Could Chou Shen have betrayed him too? Chou Shen

didn't know Li Yueh. . . . But why had Chao Hsiung asked about the metal slab and the secret printing press? . . .

With a scrape, the bolt of the barred cell door slid open. A pock-marked keeper entered with food. Before leaving, he searched Chien-ping's pockets and wanted to take his belt. Chien-ping refused to give it up.

"It's a rule," the keeper insisted, grinning evilly. "You can't hang yourself without a belt!"

Chien-ping couldn't eat a thing that evening. His stomach felt as if there was a big rock in it.

Night must have fallen. After the guard and keeper were relieved by the next shift, a small light in the corridor was turned on. Its pale yellow glow cast shadows of the wooden bars across the straw mat on the floor of the cell.

Chien-ping didn't close his eyes all night. Although he was physically exhausted, his mind was working feverishly. Slowly, minute by minute, the night crept away. The electric light was turned out. Again the cell was pitch dark. Dawn was probably breaking.

Footsteps began to sound in the corridor. Keepers passing by . . . guards passing by . . . prisoners passing by. . . . Suddenly, a figure with sloping shoulders flickered past the wooden bars of the cell. Chien-ping's heart started to pound rapidly, and he took another careful look. By Heaven, it was Li Yueh! . . .

He nearly shouted the name aloud.

Li Yueh cast a brief glance at Chien-ping. His eyebrows moved slightly. Then he walked on.

Chien-ping sank down on the straw mat, his heart was beating so hard he thought it would leap from his chest. It seemed to him he had never suffered such uncontrollable pain. . . . He didn't know how he ever got through that day. Only when the electric light was lit did he realize that night had come again.

A thin little hump-backed keeper paced slowly back and forth outside the bars of Chien-ping's cell.

Suddenly he approached the bars and asked in a low voice, "Are you Ho Chien-ping?"

"Yes."

"Li Yueh has been arrested."

Chien-ping looked at the man's dark face and his cold, sombre eyes. He didn't quite trust him.

"Here's a note for you," the hunchback said. He quickly slipped Chien-ping a small ball of paper and a box of matches. "When you've finished reading it, burn it. My name is Yao Mu."

He walked away.

The note was in Li Yueh's handwriting. It read:

Arrested last night. In same cell with Szu-min. Home was searched but they found nothing. Questioned this morning for the first time. Shown mimeograph slab which I gave you; told you have already admitted this. Naturally they couldn't fool me. Man delivering this note, Yao Mu, is one of us. He can tell you what I said when questioned. Please also let me know what statements you made as soon as possible.

Chien-ping burned the note. After a while, Yao Mu returned, and again paced the corridor outside the cell. Now Chien-ping could see that he was a pale anaemic-looking young man, with the honest countenance of the very poor. None of his efforts to appear the typical bullying keeper could conceal his essential goodness.

Leaning in a dark corner beside the bars, Chien-ping listened to Yao Mu's recital of how Li Yueh had been arrested.

The previous afternoon, Crocodile, after delivering Chien-ping to the Political Security Bureau, went alone to the home of the uncle and aunt with whom Chien-ping had been living. The old man, Uncle Tien, was out; the old lady didn't know yet that Chien-ping had been arrested. She frowned when she saw Crocodile enter. Aunt Tien had nothing but contempt for this neighbourhood tough.

Twenty-five years before, when Crocodile was still a snout-nosed kid in short pants, his mother had asked Tien and his wife to consider him their godson. The couple were childless, and they loved the little boy with all their heart.

But he grew up to be a worthless lout with sticky fingers; he even stole from his godmother. Aunt Tien began to dislike him. When he joined the gang of a local racketeer and started throwing his weight around, she thought even less of him. And now the dog was some kind of captain or other. . . .

Crocodile searched through the trunks and cupboards. He found many of Chien-ping's books and a metal mimeograph slab. As he wrapped them up, the old lady protested. Pulling his arm, she said:

"Those books belong to my nephew. You can't take them. And that slab is Li Yueh's. How will I be able to repay him for it?"

"Oh, so it's Li Yueh's? Never mind. We're old neighbours." Crocodile grinned. "To tell you the truth, Ma, Chien-ping has been 'invited' down by our chief for questioning. After the chief looks these things over, I'll bring them back. Nothing will happen to them."

At the mention of the word "invited," the old lady was stunned. Crocodile swaggered out.

About six o'clock that evening, Old Tien returned. As soon as his wife told him about Chien-ping, he rushed over to Li Yueh's. Li Yueh wasn't at home. The old man then hurried to the newspaper office where Li Yueh worked as a compositor, but he wasn't there either. He hastened back to Li Yueh's house; this time he found him in.

On hearing the old man's report, Li Yueh immediately sensed there was "something rotten." He comforted Old Tien, saying he definitely would find a way to rescue Chien-ping. He urged that if Crocodile should ask about the slab again, the old lady should change her story and say that Chien-ping used it at school, that she had said it belonged to someone else so that Crocodile wouldn't take it. . . .

Li Yueh put on his hat and went out of the door. Before he had gone ten steps, he saw Crocodile and several detectives coming towards him. He wanted to make a run for it, but it was too late. . . .

*

Chien-ping awoke about midnight.

Silvery beams of moonlight, slanting into the corridor, brightly illuminated the stone flagging. The night was very still. The opening and closing of cell locks, the clank of manacles, all were sharply audible.

Yao Mu's hunched form appeared outside the bars of Chien-ping's cell.

"Are you awake?" the keeper whispered. "Li Yueh is going into the torture room. Watch. They're taking him now."

He walked away.

Chien-ping jumped up from his straw pallet and grasped the wooden bars. The moonlight shone on several passing shadowy figures. Li Yueh seemed to be in their midst. Then they were gone.

In the stillness, Chien-ping could hear his own harsh breathing. He waited tensely, as if it were he, not Li Yueh, who was about to be tortured. Suddenly there was a heart-rending cry. Li Yueh! The wild animals had torn the sound from his anguished flesh. Chien-ping's nerves felt ready to snap. He could see horrible pictures in the darkness. . . .

"If only I could take his place! . . ."

Chien-ping gnawed his lips. The cries grew hoarser, then gradually faded away altogether.

*

Chen Szu-min had first met Chou Shen in November of 1933. That was when the generals of the Nineteenth Route Army, wanting to fight the Japanese who had already begun to invade China, set up a people's government in Fukien Province and adopted the policy of

uniting with the Communists and opposing Chiang Kai-shek. All political prisoners in the province were released, Chou Shen among them.

As soon as he got out of jail, he became a very active political figure. He attended meetings every day and gave interviews to the press on opposing Chiang and fighting the Japanese. His photo appeared frequently in various newspapers and magazines. Chou Shen became a man of affairs. If a meeting was held he had to be there; if he was there he had to speak; if he spoke it had to be with oratorical flourishes. When the audience applauded, his face glowed with satisfaction. The heat of political life had replaced the damp chill of jail. He could already see himself as a "thundering statesman."

At that time Szu-min and Li Yueh were quietly and unobtrusively going on with their work in the communist underground. Szu-min was responsible for maintaining contact with Chou Shen, also a Party member, and passing on to him the organization's directives.

Szu-min had a lot of respect for Chou Shen's ability. He seemed enthusiastic and able to handle himself in complicated situations.

Li Yueh, oddly enough, would frown whenever Chou Shen's name was mentioned. He considered Chou Shen boastful, a show-off, too proud of himself as a "veteran" Party member. He wanted Szu-min to keep him in line with frequent and straightforward criticism.

Szu-min was rather inclined to stick up for Chou Shen. He said Chou Shen had to behave the way he did in order to escape detection in the mixed social circles in which he operated.

Once Szu-min asked Li Yueh whether he wanted to meet Chou Shen. Li Yueh refused.

"That fellow's too flighty. I'd better not." And he added, "I don't want you to even let him know my name. Remember."

It seemed to Szu-min that Li Yueh was being too cautious.

In January 1934, Chiang Kai-shek attacked Fukien with his army, navy and air force, taking Foochow and Chuanchow. Then, with the help of Chinese traitors and the dregs of the local Japanese community, he occupied Amoy. The new government had collapsed after a reign of only two months.

All comrades on the reactionaries' black list fled from Amoy. Chou Shen remained. "I'll die if I must, but I'll never desert the battlefield," he cried sternly.

When this remark was reported to Li Yueh, he was very annoyed. "That faker!" he said scornfully. He bought a steamship ticket and instructed Szu-min to give it to Chou Shen. "Tell him he must obey orders. He's to get on this boat and go to Shanghai. A comrade is

waiting for him there. . . . A real revolutionary works for the cause no matter where he's stationed."

That afternoon, Chou Shen took the boat for Shanghai.

Two years later, in March of 1936, without first having obtained permission from the Party, Chou Shen secretly returned to Amoy. For a while, he remained under cover in the home of a relative. But then he couldn't stand the loneliness, and began seeing some of his friends. Finally, convinced that all was peaceful, he started to show himself in public.

He had become very fond of drinking, and mixed with all sorts of peculiar companions. Alcohol made him talkative; in his cups, he would boast of his glorious exploits. Once, in a befuddled state, he sang the *Internationale*. His frightened friends cleared out in a hurry. Chou Shen laughed uproariously.

Next, he began making the rounds of the town's low dives — bars, dance halls, gambling houses. He was drunk all day, belligerent, always looking for a fight. When he sobered up, he would apologize and curse himself for his rudeness. But the next day, the man who had forgiven him would again get a taste of his fists.

Party comrades privately criticized him, but he wouldn't admit he was wrong. Pulling a long face he would say:

"Don't be such damn schoolmasters. We underground workers have to behave like playboys so that we won't be suspected. . . ."

He told Szu-min that he wanted to work in the Amoy Association. When Szu-min took it up with Li Yueh, Li Yueh thought Chou Shen would do more harm than good, and told Szu-min to talk him out of it. Chou Shen was very displeased. He complained to everyone he met that the association was a "pack of bureaucrats . . . cultural dictators!"

"Chou Shen is beginning to go bad," Li Yueh warned Szu-min. "If we can't save him quickly, I'm afraid he's finished."

Szu-min too felt the problem was serious.

He invited Chou Shen to his room for a talk and criticized him strongly. Chou Shen hung his head in silence. After a long time, he broke out abruptly, in a stricken voice:

"I've been wrong, no question about it. I've been corrupted by bourgeois life! How shameful! How disgraceful! I'll never forgive myself!" He quickly wiped away the tears rolling from his eyes, as if wanting to conceal them.

"Curse me, Szu-min, have no mercy! . . . Whoever excuses me, that man is my enemy!" Fresh tears filled his eyes. "You understand me, Szu-min. Help me, please! I can change. I must. If I don't, I'm through. . . ." He continued to berate himself, criticizing himself again and again. His manner was very sincere.

Moved, Szu-min encouraged him, concluding with:

"Become a new man. What the future brings is entirely up to you. Just talk is no use. It's your action that counts. The Party helps and cherishes every comrade who is really anxious to correct his mistakes. . . ."

Chou Shen was happy. Later, he said he wanted to make a study of the errors of Feuerbach's mechanical materialism. Szu-min lent him a few books on the subject.

Two days later, Chou Shen again visited Szu-min. He seemed extremely upset. In response to Szu-min's questioning, he stammered that his seven-year-old brother had just gone to the hospital, but they were unable to pay the doctor's bill. Szu-min lent him some money.

That evening, Chou Shen and some of his friends went to a brothel where they roistered all night, spending every cent of Szu-min's money. Two days later, Chou Shen's little brother died. Chou Shen cried himself hoarse, then forged a hospital bill and went to see Szu-min. At the sight of Chou Shen's red and swollen eyes Szu-min's heart was touched. He gave him more money to pay the bill.

This money too ended in the hands of a brothel keeper.

From then on, Chou Shen boasted everywhere that he and Szu-min were old friends who had gone through thick and thin together. "We have one purse. What's his is mine, what's mine is his . . ." he would cry, sputtering with emotion.

One day, at the wedding celebration of one of his drinking companions, a section chief in the municipal government, Chou Shen got drunk. He babbled out the fact that he was a Communist, and revealed considerable confidential information about the Party. . . . Then he threw up, passed out, and had to be carried home.

When Szu-min learned of this, he was shocked. He immediately went to see Li Yueh.

"I know why you've come. I was just going out to look for you," Li Yueh said. "I heard all about Chou Shen. We've got to do something. You're too naive. You don't know when you're being fooled."

"I, being fooled?" Szu-min's eyes became round with surprise. "I don't understand. We always treated that fellow with the utmost decency and kindness. . . ."

"Decency and kindness are wasted on a man like that!" Li Yueh retorted, his face darkening. "He's likely to be arrested, if he keeps blowing his mouth off like that. Then he'll probably sell us out. . . ."

"Sell us out?" Szu-min was startled. "Could he do a thing like that?"

"What makes you think he couldn't? That sort of man has no backbone. When things are going well, he's a hero. The minute he runs into trouble, his knees buckle."

"As bad as that! I would never have believed it. . . . Well, what should we do? We have to be careful."

"I've talked it over with the Party authorities. We've decided to send him inland. Maybe hard work in the country will straighten him out. . . ."

"Good. I'll tell him."

"Tell him, but watch your step. Don't be taken in by his tears and protestations. We want to see whether he really goes to the country, whether he does a good job there."

When Szu-min spoke to Chou Shen again, sure enough, he cried and beat his breast and acknowledged that he was wrong. He pleaded for a chance to reform. Szu-min was a bit bewildered. He couldn't see even a trace of falseness on that tear-stained face. Were it not for Li-Yueh's warning, he certainly would have gone soft again.

"Go inland and work hard," he urged Chou Shen earnestly. "That's the only way you can correct yourself."

"I'll do what you say, Szu-min," Chou Shen cried, in a voice charged with gratitude. "You're my benefactor, my most understanding friend. Whatever you want me to do, just say the word. . . . I'll leave for the country tomorrow."

The next morning Szu-min saw him off at the bus station. Only after Chou Shen's bus was out of sight, did Szu-min finally relax.

But Chou Shen did not go inland. He got off at the first stop, twenty minutes outside the city, and went to call on his aunt. He intended to remain with her a few days, then go on to Shanghai.

"It's better to die in the city than live in the country," he said to himself.

In the suburbs, he drank and played around, as usual. Of course, no good could come of it. In less than a week, Crocodile showed up. As Chou Shen was staggering home one night past some deserted fields, suddenly a low voice behind him ordered:

"Don't move; you're under arrest. Come quietly. . . ."

Thus Chou Shen was caught and spirited away.

Never in his wildest dreams would Szu-min have imagined that the man he had seen off on a trip to the interior of Fukien Province would suddenly appear to greet him on an Amoy street corner. Even less would he have believed that Chou Shen, whose penitent tears had moved him on several occasions, had arranged this effusive greeting as a Judas signal to identify him to his enemies. . . .

*

Chien-ping was questioned every day for five days.

Gradually Chao Hsiung came to feel that it was not going to be so easy to trick this proud and stubborn youth. Although he had not

entirely given up hope, by the sixth time he was beginning to be annoyed.

When hard words failed, he tried soft. But the more Chao Hsiung spoke, the less Chien-ping had to say. Finally, Chien-ping stopped talking altogether.

"Don't be so obstinate," Chao Hsiung urged, rather helplessly. "Young people are easily fooled. Sometimes they take the wrong path. That can be forgiven. I've saved I don't know how many young fellows like you. When I was in Foochow I had a lot of communist friends. Whenever any of them were arrested I was always the one who put up the personal guarantee that got them out. — We are not the same as you; we have our code of honour. — But if you're not honest with me, I won't be able to save you even if I want to. . . ."

Chien-ping remained mute. His cold eyes were fixed on the documents of his case lying on Chao Hsiung's desk.

"Are you going to talk or not?" Chao Hsiung asked, after a long silence, a smouldering anger in his voice. "I might as well tell you. We've got all the evidence we need. Denials won't do you any good. So don't be silly. You only have two choices: Either you tell the truth, and I let you go; or you don't talk, you keep on being stubborn, and we convict you, we sentence you to ten or twenty years. . . ."

The whole thing seemed rather ludicrous to Chien-ping. He gazed at Chao Hsiung with contemptuous eyes.

"What are you looking at me for? Are you going to talk or not?" Chao Hsiung yelled.

"Sentence me," said Chien-ping indifferently. Again he lapsed into silence.

Chao Hsiung, enraged, clenched his fists. If he hadn't remembered his pose as the benevolent official, he would have punched Chien-ping in the face.

Rising, he walked over to the window and signalled to someone in the courtyard.

A few minutes later, a head appeared timidly in the doorway, then a tall, thin young man entered. Chou Shen! Chien-ping's blood rushed to his head.

"You recognize him, of course?" Chao Hsiung said to Chien-ping tauntingly.

Chou Shen nodded hesitantly at Chien-ping, then quickly dropped his eyes. A lock of hair fell forward, covering his forehead.

"You two talk things over," said Chao Hsiung. He laughed. "You can speak freely. I won't eavesdrop." He left the room.

Chien-ping stared at Chou Shen. He was even thinner than before. His cheeks were sunken; there were dark circles under his lacklustre eyes. He looked exhausted, utterly dejected. His clothes

were wrinkled and stained with sweat. When a man becomes a dog, everything about him degenerates!

"Have you been here long?" Chou Shen asked after he uneasily took a seat. He didn't dare to offer Chien-ping his hand. "You haven't been tortured? That's lucky. As soon as I got here, they beat me. It was awful! The whip . . . I fainted twice. See —" He lifted his shirt to show the welts on his back. Chien-ping turned his face away. "I wanted to die. They wouldn't let me. . . . Don't be afraid to talk to me, Chien-ping. I only pretended to surrender, I swear. . . ."

Trembling with rage, Chien-ping hissed through clenched teeth, "Traitor! Friend-seller!"

Chou Shen paused, frightened. He saw the murderous rage in Chien-ping's eyes, and his legs began to tremble.

"You misunderstand . . ." he stammered. "It's so hard to do the right thing. . . . A man ought to face the facts. . . . We're finished. . . . You have to change with the times. . . ."

Chien-ping laughed coldly. He walked over, looked at that shameful sickly-yellow face, then suddenly drew back his fist and struck. Chou Shen and his chair fell crashing backward to the floor.

"Scum! Dog! . . ."

Possessed by an uncontrollable fury, Chien-ping seized Chou Shen by the throat and pounded his head on the ground. He wanted to dash his filthy brains out, strangle him, pulverize him. . . .

The terrified Chou Shen threshed wildly, trying to break that iron grip, but panic sapped his strength. He cried out hoarsely.

Two guards rushed into the room. With a great effort, they pried Chien-ping's hands loose.

Chou Shen scrambled to his feet and fled.

Chien-ping stood, panting harshly, his face the colour of dark iron, his body shaking with rage. . . .

Chao Hsiung and Crocodile hurried in. Chao Hsiung was furious. His face was so diffused with angry blood that the scar on his forehead turned purple.

"Bring Chou Shen back here!" he barked to Crocodile.

Before long, Crocodile returned with Chou Shen in tow. The turncoat's flat face was bruised and swollen. Intense fear made him forget his pain. He hid behind Crocodile, rubbing his left cheek, his eyes wide and distended.

"Step out!" Chao Hsiung ordered, gazing at Chou Shen scornfully. "Hit him! Are you afraid of him? What are you looking at me for? Hit him! . . . Are you a man, or what? Let me see you hit him! . . . Well, what are you waiting for? . . ."

Chou Shen stood dazed. He could feel eyes on him all around: the contemptuous eyes of the guards . . . the sadistic eyes of Crocodile . . . the man-eating eyes of Chao Hsiung . . . Chien-ping's eyes like frigid steel knives, stabbing at him. . . . Chou Shen began to tremble. It was unbearable. He turned and ran.

"Of all the useless, weak-kneed worms!" Chao Hsiung fumed to himself. "If he weren't still useful to us, I'd kill the bastard — with one shot!"

Chao Hsiung couldn't reveal his pain at this loss of face. Outwardly he remained calm. To Crocodile he said icily:

"Take him out. You can 'operate'. . . ."

Chien-ping was dragged to a dark room. Two brutal-looking men stripped him, tied his hands and threw him to the ground. Then they beat him savagely with thick bamboo staves. It went on and on while Chao Hsiung watched. Chien-ping never uttered a sound. Finally, he passed out. When a bucket of cold water brought him to again, Chao Hsiung was gone. The rope was untied. Hands started to help Chien-ping to his feet. He waved them away and got up himself. . . .

Two hours later, the light in the corridor went on. Yao Mu was standing at the bars of Chien-ping's cell. His eyes went moist at the sight of Chien-ping's mutilated back. He handed a paper packet through the bars.

"There's salve in here. It will cure your wounds in a couple of days." Then he asked: "Have you any instructions?"

Chien-ping said, "Get word to my uncle. Tell him I'm all right. Don't tell him I was tortured. . . ."

Yao Mu slowly walked away.

*

In the next ten days, Chien-ping was tortured four times. To the rage of his tormentors, he never uttered a single cry. At times, as he was sinking into unconsciousness, he wished he would never awake. When a dash of cold water brought him to again, and he found that he was still alive, he was almost disappointed. But then the words would come to him:

"If it's harder to live than to die, then choose the hard way."

This was in a note Li Yueh had written to him a few days before, and it gave him strength.

Each time he was dragged back to his cell from the torture room, he looked forward avidly to a note from the others. Even if there were only a few words, he cherished them as something precious. Both Li Yueh and Szu-min were tortured, but they still sent him encouraging notes.

Yao Mu brought him news whenever he was on duty. Chien-ping learned a lot about what was going on, both inside the jail and out.

In the past few days, Yao Mu told him, the Political Security Bureau had arrested many people. The jail was packed full.

Sun Chung-chien had also been caught. They nabbed him one night when he was a little careless. He had already been sent to the First Municipal Jail.

Li Yueh had adopted the role of an ordinary citizen who minded his own business. He never said anything that could incriminate him. Chao Hsiung lost his temper every time he questioned Yi Yueh. It was reported that the manager of the paper Li Yueh worked for had laughed at Chao Hsiung and said, "If you think dull clods like Li Yueh are Reds, you'll have to go out and arrest every citizen in Amoy!"

Szu-min firmly denied that he was the radical columnist Teng Lu. He had been beaten twice and his wounds were in bad shape. But his morale was high. Every day, in their tiny dark cell, he practised Chinese boxing with Li Yueh.

Comrade Cheng Yu was now in charge of leading the Amoy Association from behind the scenes. Three groups of members had already gone inland to "tour the countryside." People who were known to be on the black list were sent first. . . .

A month passed.

One night Chien-ping was pulled from his sleep by two guards. It was very hot. He could dimly see Yao Mu standing behind Crocodile.

"Hey, get up!" bawled Crocodile. "You're 'going over'!"

"'Going over'? . . ." Chien-ping slowly rose to his feet.

"Don't you get it?" Crocodile twisted his face into a grin. "You're going to be shot, young fellow, and it's your own fault. You didn't have to be, originally. . . . If you've got anything to send to your family, I'll take care of it for you."

Chien-ping was fully awake now. He felt a twinge of sorrow as he thought of his family, and his eyes smarted. "This is no time for tears!" he said angrily to himself. Lifting his chin, he turned to the guards.

"Let's go." He followed Crocodile out of the cell. . . .

In spite of the lateness of the hour, Chao Hsiung was still working in his office.

Chien-ping was led in. The glare of the desk lamp struck his eyes.

"You're going to be executed," Chao Hsiung said coldly, his face hidden behind the lamp. "I'm giving you a last chance to talk and

save yourself. You have five minutes. Think it over. It is now eleven thirty. At eleven thirty-five. . . ."

"I don't need to think anything over," Chien-ping cut him short. His face gleamed proud in the lamplight. "I am innocent. You can do whatever you like. . . ."

"Don't you admit your guilt?"

"No."

"You've plotted to overthrow the government."

"I admit I'm against the Japanese invaders, I oppose the traitors who are selling our country, I'm for our nation's freedom and happiness —"

"Never mind the speeches," Chao Hsiung stopped him with a wave of the hand. "Let me remind you, man's most precious possession is his life. You're only twenty-two or three. Surely you're not ready to die just because you made the mistake of getting mixed up with the Reds?"

"I may die, but thousands will live on after me. . . ."

"They're all going to die! We're rounding them up right now. We're going to kill them all, whether they be one thousand or ten thousand! . . ."

"It can't be done. Never in history have all the people of a nation been wiped out."

"I didn't bring you in here to argue," Chao Hsiung snapped. "Don't change the subject. There's only one thing I want to hear from you: Do you want to live or die? Choose!"

Chien-ping laughed mockingly. "You're forgetting the time. It's already past eleven thirty-five."

Chao Hsiung's face drained of colour. He glared at Chien-ping venomously, then turned to Crocodile.

"Take him out!"

The guards tied Chien-ping's hands behind his back and led him away.

As they emerged from the silent corridor and walked across a gravelled courtyard, the night breeze ruffled Chien-ping's hair and cooled his heated body. It was the first time in over a month that he was out in the open air. Beneath his feet, the shadows of trees were like sketches in Chinese ink. Chien-ping threw out his chest and marched forward, more like going into battle than to the execution grounds. He could hear the hobnailed boots of the guards crunching across the gravel. He could smell the fragrance of flowers borne in from somewhere in the night.

Far off, the gong of a dumpling soup vendor sounded softly. It must have been nearly midnight. Chien-ping recalled a song he had learned from Szu-min not long before:

*Give me the red flag in your hands, comrade,
Just as yesterday another passed it on to you. . . .*

They halted before a plane tree. A man was tied to it, his face obscured by the shadows, his bald head hanging forward. Chien-ping heard one of the guards say the man was a kidnapper. They tied Chien-ping to another tree nearby.

A full moon shone on the barbed wire atop the courtyard wall. Beyond, undulating hills slept in the silvery moonlight. On the lower half of a dark blue slope, a light glowed like embers in a pipe. A grass fire, probably. . . .

Chien-ping was surprised that he could enjoy the scenery at a time like this.

"I am dying beneath a sky with a moon and stars . . ." he mused. "I must die bravely, with dignity. I am giving my life for my country and my creed. I can be proud of myself. . . ."

Before him in the dark, he heard the click of rifles being cocked. Chien-ping faced his executioners. "Chiang Kai-shek, you're killing me today. Tomorrow, your turn is coming," he said to himself. "You and your whole gang. Victory belongs to the Communist Party. . . ."

The two guards levelled their rifles. He could see the black holes of the muzzles. He scorned those rifles and the ridiculous morons who held them!

One second, two seconds, three. The rifles barked, echoing against the distant mountains. In the dark grove, frightened ravens took flight, soaring over the tomb-like jail building, cawing raucously until they disappeared in the moonlight.

Crack! Again the rifles spoke.

Chien-ping could feel that his head was still held high. They had missed him. "The stupid apes!"

Crack! Crack!

He was still standing. Turning his head, he saw that the bald man had buckled to the ground. A guard walked over and examined the body. Chien-ping at last understood. Chao Hsiung had sent him here to terrify him.

From the shadows a squat panting figure sidled up to him. It was Crocodile. He whispered confidentially in Chien-ping's ear:

"I pleaded for you with the bureau chief. I said you were very young. He agreed to let you live a few more days. . . ."

The next morning, Yao Mu brought Chien-ping a note from Li Yueh and Szu-min. It read:

We were very shocked last night when we learned you were going to be executed. When we heard the shots, we sang the

Internationale in our hearts. Then, half an hour later, you returned! Seeing you stride boldly by, we were convinced once again that the communist spirit is invincible.

*Your behaviour is an inspiration to all our comrades.
We embrace you, dear brother.*

*

At dusk the corridor light went on, and a guard threw another prisoner into Chien-ping's cell. The man had been cruelly tortured; he was groaning in agony.

"Is there anything I can do to help you?" Chien-ping asked, after the guard had left. "Let me give you some of this salve."

But the man turned away as if he were being offered poison, and continued to groan.

During the night Chien-ping awakened. The man was in a dark corner of the cell. He seemed to be ripping strips from his trouser leg and twisting them on his knee.

"What are you doing?" Chien-ping asked.

"None of your business. Go to sleep."

Chien-ping rolled over. He soon dozed off again.

When he awoke the next morning, he discovered that the man had twisted a rope from the strips of cloth and hanged himself. . . .

The head keeper arrived about nine o'clock. Muttering something about the cell not being "clean" because prisoners were always hanging themselves in it, he transferred Chien-ping to Cell Eleven.

It was a bit larger and brighter than his old cell, and it had another occupant — a scrawny, peppery old man, whose nose, mouth and neck were all twisted to one side. Bushy whiskers adorned the lower part of his face, practically concealing his mouth. He had high narrow shoulders, and a shiny bald little head.

"What are you in for, old Uncle?" Chien-ping asked him when they were alone.

"What's it to you?" the wry-necked old man retorted, glowering darkly. Under his breath he muttered what sounded like ". . . the devil take you . . . son of a bitch. . . ."

Chien-ping felt rather dejected.

All morning the twisted old man paced around the small cell. He had a rotten temper. He couldn't say two words without glaring. To Chien-ping, he snarled belligerently:

"I'm the boss in here. Don't you forget it or I'll give you a taste of this!" He shook his pitifully skinny fist in Chien-ping's face.

At times he was taken by a paroxysm of coughing that left him choking and breathless. He was so thin, you could almost count his ribs, and his arms were like pipestems. Every time Chien-ping

glanced his way, he couldn't help being reminded of Don Quixote's bony nag. Why should a puny old man like that want to roll up his sleeves and fight at the least provocation?

Chien-ping had no desire to quarrel with him. He was sure the old man was one of "the meek and humiliated of the earth." In any event, he certainly was a good person.

Mistaking Chien-ping's restraint for fear, the twisted old man became more and more pugnacious.

"Get out! The boss says get out!" he ordered in a lordly manner. "Did you hear me? Get out at once, I say!"

"But why?"

"What! You dare talk back to the boss? You dirty. . . ."

Suddenly his hand flew forward and slapped Chien-ping hard across the face. Chien-ping stepped back. Needless to say, with one blow of his fist he could have knocked the old man head over heels. Nevertheless he moved back.

"Don't use your hands. Let's talk things over." Chien-ping kept his voice down, though it trembled a bit with the effort.

"Get out. Go to the devil!" The veins stood out on the old man's small head. "The boss likes it here alone. Do you hear? . . ."

"Don't get sore," said Chien-ping evenly. "Fix it up with the keeper and I'll move right now."

"You think I don't dare speak to him, eh? I'll show you who's boss. I'll have you thrown out. . . ."

Just then Yao Mu happened to be coming down the corridor. The old man immediately clutched Chien-ping's arm and hissed in his ear:

"Not a word to him about this, do you hear? One word and I'll slug you! The boss wants to live two in a cell. . . . You hear me? . . ."

Chien-ping was mystified.

That night Chien-ping slept fitfully. A rat bit him and he leaped up with pain. He saw the old man crouched like a monkey in the corner of the cell, staring at him with terrified eyes, his cheeks twitching. Chien-ping wondered whether he was also intending to hang himself. But then the old man came rushing over, a chisel in his hand. In a low voice he warned:

"Not a sound, or I'll kill you!" Panting, he clamped a hand over his mouth to stifle a cough.

It was then that Chien-ping saw the pile of earth and bricks in the corner. The old man was trying to dig his way out. . . .

"Don't worry. I won't tell anyone," Chien-ping said in a friendly tone. "We're both in the same boat. . . ."

"You mean. . . ?"

"We'll escape together, what do you say?"

"You mean it?"

"Of course."

"I'm only risking it because I'm under death sentence. . . ."

"So am I."

"You are? Good . . . good. . . ." Tears suddenly rolled down the old man's twisted nose into his beard. He wiped them with his grimy hand and cackled a weird laugh. "We're all in the same boat. . . . We'll die one way or the other. . . . Got to make a break. . . . If we succeed, good. If we don't, we're dead. It doesn't matter. . . . I'm nearly finished anyhow. Last night I started spitting blood."

"How did you get in here?"

The old man gnawed his beard with yellowed teeth. He spat angrily.

"I'm a knife-sharpener. Been at it thirty years. Got a cousin who's a scamp, great pal of Crocodile. That cousin tricked me. Like a fool I gave him the fifty dollars it took me thirty years to save. He said he was going to buy some young pigs we could raise and make a big profit on. Who knew the money would end up in his own pocket? . . . That's nothing. He got hold of my grown daughter and sold her to a pander. Drove my old woman out of her head. Ate opium and killed herself. . . . I couldn't stand it! . . . I went to his house, picked up an axe and let him have it. . . ."

Chien-ping thought he'd better change the subject.

"Where did you get the chisel?"

The old man turned pale. "Why do you ask?" he stammered, eyeing Chien-ping suspiciously.

"Never mind," said Chien-ping hastily. "I'll help you dig. You rest a while."

He took the chisel from the old man and began to scrape.

The twisted old man said he had been digging for six nights. The skin on his hands was all torn. . . . As he talked, the old man stood in the dark beside the bars, fearfully watching the corridor. At the least sound, he pulled Chien-ping to the floor, and they pretended to sleep. After several false alarms, Chien-ping grew impatient and paid no more attention to him. Again the old man gripped his arm tensely.

"You hear? Someone's coming! Don't you want to live?" he grated.

"It's only the man in the next cell talking in his sleep."

"No. Listen. Boom, boom, boom. . . ."

"Frogs croaking."

"Someone's coming. Those are footsteps!"

"It's nothing. Your ears are playing tricks on you."

"Playing tricks, eh? I've been digging here six nights and you've just come along, but you act as if you knew more than me . . . humph! . . ."

The old man snatched the chisel. "Lie down, do you hear? Lie down or I'll stab you!" He pushed Chien-ping to the ground and lay there beside him, holding his breath.

Chien-ping was at a loss. What should he do with this blustering, timid old man? Under the circumstances he couldn't very well quarrel with him.

At long last the frogs stopped croaking and the old man released him. By the time Chien-ping reached the outermost layer of bricks, dawn was nearly upon them. They quickly replaced the broken brick and loose earth, and again concealed the hole with the newspaper that had been originally pasted on the wall, then covered the whole thing with their straw matting. One more night of digging and they probably could get through.

The sky was quite bright now. People walked to and fro in the corridor. The door of Chien-ping's cell scraped open and a pock-marked keeper entered.

"Get your things together," he said to the old man roughly. "Your case has been turned over to the Municipal Police Department."

The old man stared at him dumbly. His face went green.

"I'm not going," he stammered. "I want to stay here. It's good here. I'm not leaving. . . ."

They wrangled for several minutes till Pock-mark lost his temper and began pulling. The old man threw himself to the ground and refused to budge. Chien-ping became very worried. Pock-mark stalked out angrily. Bounding to his feet, the old man shook his finger at Chien-ping.

"Traitor! He was trying to take me away and you didn't say a word! . . ."

"What could I say? I'm the same as you."

"I dig the well and you drink the water. Very nice!"

The old man lapsed into a reverie, then, abruptly plunged his hand behind the matting and pulled out the chisel. He concealed it in his pants.

"It's not safe there," said Chien-ping.

"Mind your business!"

"It's not that I want to interfere, but they'll find it when they search you. They'll charge you with an additional crime."

The old man realized Chien-ping was right. He didn't know where to hide the chisel. Finally, he tossed it to Chien-ping.

"Take it," he said grudgingly. "You were born lucky. But if you tell anyone I gave it to you, you're a son of a bitch. And if I say anything about that hole then . . . then I'm a son of a bitch too!"

Pock-mark came back with Crocodile. Yao Mu stood in the background.

"Are you going or not?" Crocodile asked the old man darkly.

"It's all right here. I . . . I . . ."

"Coffin carrion! I'm telling you to get out!"

"No . . . no . . ."

Crocodile walked up to the old man and with one slap knocked him staggering. Another slap! The old man stumbled back again.

Chien-ping clenched his fists. Yao Mu looked at him warningly.

The old man's mouth was bleeding. He spat out a few teeth.

"Get going," said Crocodile with a leisurely flick of the hand.

His head tilted to one side, muttering, the old man followed Pock-mark out. As they turned down the corridor, he looked around at Chien-ping as if to say, "Don't worry. I won't say a word."

Chien-ping waved goodbye. His eyes were damp in spite of himself.

*

When Yao Mu came in to inspect the cell, Chien-ping quickly told him about the hole.

"Be careful." Yao Mu seemed the more tense of the two. "That old man is a little batty. He's liable to spill the whole thing when he gets to the Police Department."

"I don't think so. He swore he wouldn't."

"How can you believe him? He's not reliable. How far have you dug?"

"I'm almost through. I can finish whatever night I want to make the break."

"If you're going to do it, the quicker the better. What about tonight?"

"Tonight? All right. Tonight then."

"I've got to make some preparations. Let me talk to Li Yueh first."

"Yao Mu," said Chien-ping excitedly, "couldn't you transfer Li Yueh and Szu-min in here with me? Tonight, the three of us can escape together. It's a wonderful chance."

"It's a good chance, all right. But I'm afraid the head keeper won't permit it. Wait a while. I'll see what I can do. . . ."

Yao Mu left quickly. When he returned, some time later, his face was gloomy.

"Nothing doing, Chien-ping."

"What's wrong?"

"The two of them are being transferred to the First Municipal Jail this afternoon."

"Can't it be put off a day?"

"It's out of my hands," Yao Mu replied despondently.

"Then . . . then . . . what shall we do?" Chien-ping was ready to burst with impatience. "It's the chance of a lifetime. We've got to grab it, somehow! I guarantee — by eleven o'clock this morning I'll dig the hole through. Can't you get them over here to me? We can be gone before noon. By then, you can get away too . . . you won't be involved. . . ."

"Impossible. During the day people come and go all the time. . . ."

"Nothing's impossible, Yao Mu. Believe me, I can handle it!"

"What if something goes wrong?"

"You can't just look at the dark side. If only I can save them, I'm willing to pay any price!" Chien-ping clutched the bars. "Time is precious. We've got to act before they're transferred. If you're afraid, just get them over here to me and then take off. I'll take care of everything. If you can get me a pistol, that would be perfect. If not, even a knife will do. I'll hack my way out! . . ."

"It's too dangerous!"

"This is no time to be worrying about danger! What hope have we got in here? If we make a break, at least we've got a fighting chance!"

"No. I won't let you do it," Yao Mu said coldly. "You'd never succeed."

Chien-ping trembled. He wanted to grab Yao Mu and shout into his expressionless face, force him to agree.

Yao Mu turned and walked away. Half an hour later he returned and silently passed Chien-ping a slip of paper. It was a note from Li Yueh and Szu-min:

We'll never forget your friendship in times of adversity. But we cannot go with you. Yao Mu is right. Three men would be doomed to failure. It's better that you do it alone.

We are moved by your enthusiasm, but your rashness worries us.

Be cautious, no matter what you do. Talk every detail over with Yao Mu. By all means keep the risk down to a minimum.

Chien-ping was nearly frantic. He took up his pencil and dashed off this message:

Better to risk a break than sit here waiting to be killed. Time is short, must make quick decision. Talk it over with Yao.

Everything depends on this. Guarantee to dig through by eleven a.m. If we are discovered I will take blame for everything. If not, you two can break out first while I cover the rear. Can succeed if determined. It's a rare chance. Please rush reply!

After giving the note to Yao Mu, Chien-ping paced the floor of his cell. He grasped the chisel in his pocket, as if ready to start digging at a moment's notice.

Yao Mu returned after what seemed ages.

"They don't agree," he said.

"Don't agree? How can they not agree?" Chien-ping exploded, as if someone were trying to fool him.

Yao Mu silently handed him a note, then walked off without a word. It was in Szu-min's handwriting:

Digging in daylight is out of the question. Don't do anything foolish. Why stake everything on one throw? Comrades on the outside are working to save us. There is a chance that Li Yueh will be released. As to your own break tonight, be sure and consult with Yao Mu. Nothing must be done to implicate him because he must remain here. We are confident you can escape. Your success will be our success!

Chien-ping stood dazed. Without Li Yueh and Szu-min going with him, the whole idea seemed flat. He practically lost interest in the tunnel that might lead him to freedom.

At two in the afternoon, Yao Mu came again.

"They've been sent to the First Municipal Jail."

"Oh," Chien-ping dropped his eyes.

"We have to work out our plans for tonight."

"Mm."

"What's wrong with you?"

"Go ahead, I'm listening." Chien-ping forced himself to concentrate.

"My idea is this," said Yao Mu. "I come on duty again at two in the morning, but that's not a very good time. The best time would be about one. There are only two guards at the main gate then. Only Pock-mark will be on duty in here; everyone else will be asleep. I'll cut the wire to this building. When you see the light go out, crawl through. . . ."

"That Pock-mark is a damn nuisance. If he's on duty, he'll be snooping around all night. . . ."

"It's all right, I'll get him drunk. That fellow loves his bottle. And once he gets a load on he sleeps like the dead."

"But suppose he doesn't sleep. You'd better let me know."

"Of course, I'll let you know. Another thing — Outside the wall is a ditch. Be careful you don't fall into it. If you hurt your leg you won't be able to run."

"Don't worry. I've seen that spot. I know it well."

"Have you got any friend or relative outside you can go to?"

"Yes, a relative."

"Where?"

"Colt's Saddle."

"Is he reliable?"

"He's reliable."

Chien-ping was going to say that the man was Wu Chi, but then he decided it wasn't necessary. Since Chien-ping didn't volunteer the information, Yao Mu supposed it must be secret and didn't press the matter.

"Colt's Saddle isn't far from here," said Yao Mu. "Hide out there for a few days and then find a way to leave Amoy. That ought to do the trick."

He told Chien-ping what route to follow, through side streets and back alleys. He advised him to stay off the main roads.

"The last few days," Yao Mu said, "ever since Chou Shen turned traitor, all the comrades have been moving house. Their new addresses are secret; it would be very difficult to find them. Since you've got a relative to go to, that will be better. . . . Now, then, is there anything else I can do for you?"

"Not a thing."

"Think carefully. We don't want to forget anything."

"Suppose you could cut the lights an hour earlier, wouldn't that be better?"

"An hour earlier?" Yao Mu thought a moment. "That wouldn't be so good. They wouldn't be sleeping yet; there'd still be guards in the corridor. You'd be discovered more easily. It's better to be careful. I'll come and see you again before I cut the wire; wait for me. How much more time will you need to finish tunnelling through the wall?"

"Probably an hour and a half."

"Right. I'll come as early as I can."

Yao Mu didn't dare remain any longer. He walked quickly away.

*

Night came at last, and the jail was still. In the gate house, a couple of guards were muzzily singing a romantic air. They sounded half drunk. An occasional automobile swept by along the road outside, like a gust of wind in the night.

After a long time, Pock-mark came staggering back to the jail house.

"Not asleep yet? Eh? . . ." he asked Chien-ping. Standing beside the bars, he hiccuped. His breath reeked of liquor.

"I was just turning in." Chien-ping stretched out on the grass mat and closed his eyes.

Shortly after Pock-mark had gone, Yao Mu appeared. "Pock-mark's asleep," he whispered. He looked at his watch. "Better get started. It's eleven ten." He took out an awl and handed it to Chien-ping.

"You can use this for digging. It's very sharp. I'll come and see you again before I cut the light wire."

Chien-ping set to work as soon as Yao Mu left. The awl proved an excellent tool. In less than twenty minutes Chien-ping had already bored quite a number of small holes. He kicked hard a couple of times within the circle of holes; the masonry crumbled and dropped outside the wall. He had dug through!

Delighted, Chien-ping poked his head through the opening and looked around. Beneath a star-filled sky, a small dark path climbed an adjoining hill. Water gurgled in the ditch a short distance from the wall. He could smell its earthy mustiness.

Beyond the wall was freedom!

He waited restlessly for the lights to be extinguished. There was no sign of Yao Mu. Chien-ping fumed with impatience. . . .

Every minute seemed a year. Wasn't it twelve o'clock yet? That meant at least another hour before the wire would be cut. Another whole hour! . . . If he didn't have to wait for those damned lights, he could have been in Wu Chi's house by now. . . .

The singing guardsmen slept; there was no sound anywhere. This was the crucial hour, but where the devil was Yao Mu? Didn't he know that every minute was vital? Why was he so slow, so cautious? Chien-ping almost hated him.

He decided not to wait any longer. He couldn't sit like an idiot watching the time slip by. He'd act for himself!

Chien-ping climbed into the hole. Halfway through, he got stuck. The jagged brick scraped his back. He was bleeding. Straining, he gritted his teeth, his body drenched with sweat. . . . Suddenly he heard footsteps. Worried, he tried to back into the cell. But he was wedged firm. He couldn't move. The footsteps kept coming nearer. They seemed to be approaching his cell. "I'm finished!" he said to himself. . . .

But nothing happened. Listening carefully, he realized that the footsteps were on the hillpath outside; they were fading away. Chien-ping heaved a sigh of relief. Again he strained to move forward. Then something gave, and he was through. Happily dropping to the soil of freedom, he felt like a mother who had just given birth. . . .

He followed the back paths through the hills and soon reached Colt's Saddle. But after wandering through the dark lane of the hamlet for some time, he realized he had forgotten where Wu Chi lived. He had been there only once since Wu Chi moved, and he didn't remember the address. The more anxious he became, the more the houses all looked alike.

"This won't do," he warned himself. "Just blundering around won't solve anything. I'd better go home and get Uncle Tien. He's been to Wu Chi's place many times. . . ."

Twenty minutes later, he reached home.

He knocked lightly. Inside, someone coughed.

"It's me, Uncle."

The door opened.

"You . . . you . . ." Uncle Tien stammered.

Chien-ping shut the door.

"I've escaped. Take me to Wu Chi's house, Uncle. I can't find it. . . ."

The old lady woke up too. When she heard the word "escaped," she began to tremble.

Chien-ping changed into clean clothes.

Outside, a dog barked and there was a hubbub of voices.

Fists pounded against the gate.

The two old people turned pale. Chien-ping listened intently. Then he laughed.

"It's the house next door. . . . Let's go, Uncle."

The old man and Chien-ping left quickly. They walked in the shadows, dodging from street to street. At an intersection, they suddenly heard the urgent shrill of a policeman's whistle and the babel of many voices. Chien-ping and his uncle dashed behind a broken-down wall. A shadow leaped out, bumped against Chien-ping, then turned and fled. . . .

The old man's heart was beating wildly, but Chien-ping was unruffled.

Gradually the shouts subsided. A policeman walked by, surrounded by a crowd. He had nabbed a thief.

When the crowd had passed, Chien-ping helped his uncle up. As they started to go, a hoarse voice behind them called:

"So you got away. That's good luck! . . ."

Turning around, they saw a short young fellow, a tattered old cap tilted rakishly to one side of his head, with hunched skinny shoulders and sly slanting eyes. Plainly a scamp who lived by his wits.

"Don't be afraid. I'll protect you," said the scamp, pounding his chest.

"We don't need any protection; we're good people," retorted the old man. Chien-ping gave his uncle's coat a quick tug.

"Don't kid me," grinned the scamp. "Let me introduce myself. I'm called the Earthen Dragon. . . . At home I live off my ma and pa; outside I rely on my friends. Give me a couple of coppers, just to show that we're all pals. . . ."

Chien-ping scowled at him and led his uncle off rapidly without a word.

"Not so fast," panted the old man. "Give him some money. It doesn't matter. . . ."

"No. He's just trying to squeeze us."

"Let him squeeze. Otherwise we'll never get rid of him."

"Never mind about him. Keep moving. Faster. . . ."

The old man continued walking, but he kept looking back anxiously over his shoulder. He didn't see the young scamp who was skilfully trailing them.

"Bastards . . ." the scamp was muttering. "Don't you think I recognize Ho Chien-ping? Dare to get tough with me, eh? I'll show you. . . ."

He followed them all the way to Wu Chi's gate. Only after they had entered did he turn and leave. . . .

*

It was a great shock to Wu Chi to have Old Tien and Chien-ping come barging in on him in the middle of the night. This was the first he knew of Chien-ping's escape. . . .

"You've got nothing to worry about now," said Wu Chi. "You can hide here a year and no one will ever know anything about it."

"I'm thinking of going inland in a day or two," Chien-ping replied after a moment's silence.

"To join Wu Chien? All right, I'll get hold of a small motor boat and get you to the mainland."

Wu Chi asked about Li Yueh, and Chien-ping told him about the men in the jail. Old Tien sat listening, but he was very uneasy. Finally, he stood up.

"I've got to get back. If they come to search our house and I'm not there, it'll give the show away."

A squeal of brakes at the head of the lane cut his words short.

Wu Chi swiftly blew out the lamp, then peered out from beside the window.

"They're coming this way," he said. "Could they be from the Political Security Bureau?"

Chien-ping quickly joined him at the window. He said in a low voice:

"They're Political Security Bureau all right. That's Crocodile. . . ."

At the word "Crocodile," Old Tien was stupefied. He sat down heavily on the bed, unable to utter a sound.

Wu Chi hurried to the back gate of his compound and looked through a crack. There were men standing at the end of this lane too. . . .

He dashed back, grabbed Chien-ping and pulled him to a rear wing. Pointing to a darkened skylight, he urged:

"Through there, on to the roof. There's no other way."

"What about you?"

"Never mind about me!"

"No. It'll get you involved."

"I know how to deal with them. Don't worry. Now get up there!" He squatted down and patted his broad shoulder. "Put your foot here. Hurry!"

Chien-ping hesitated. He didn't want to get Wu Chi into trouble.

"What are you waiting for?" Wu Chi fumed. He roughly grabbed Chien-ping's legs. "Hurry up, dammit!"

Fists began to pound on the compound's front gate.

There was no time to spare. Chien-ping stepped on Wu Chi's shoulder, grasped the edges of the skylight and, nimble as a monkey, clambered on to the roof.

Wu Chi first unlatched the back gate, then calmly strolled to open the front one.

A dozen men came pouring in, Crocodile at their head, with Pock-mark bringing up the rear. All carried pistols. Their flashlights cast wild beams in every corner of the room. Wu Chi's wife was awakened by the noise, and the baby began to cry. Wu Chi's son, who had been peacefully sleeping out under the eaves, was pulled to his feet by a couple of detectives.

"Light the lamp. Be quick about it."

The boy struck a match and lit the lamp.

"Crocodile," Wu Chi demanded coldly, "what right have you to come and search my house in the middle of the night?"

"This has nothing to do with you." The stumpy Crocodile had to look up when he talked to tall, stalwart Wu Chi. "We're after an escaped criminal. Someone saw him come in here. Ah, Uncle Tien is here too. . . . We've got proof. . . ."

"It's true, Chien-ping did come here. But I sent him on his way again."

A detective came in and whispered in Crocodile's ear: "The back door is unlatched. He must have gone out that way. . . ."

Crocodile hurried to inspect the gate personally. Then he snapped:

"Seal off both ends of the lane; make a house to house search! Quick!"

In Wu Chi's room, a tall, skinny detective with a long neck topped by a small head shaped like an olive, strutted up to Wu Chi and said:

"You're harbouring a criminal. If you don't hand him over, you're going to be involved yourself."

Wu Chi had just been thinking of provoking a fight. If they had to arrest him and take him away, Chien-ping would have a chance to escape. Now Olive-head was giving Wu Chi his opportunity.

"What if I am involved?" he retorted challengingly. "And where does a bird-brain like you come off talking so big to the likes of me?"

Olive-head flushed purple.

"Don't get tough, Wu. You let him go, and now you're trying to laugh it off."

"Sorry, little man," Wu Chi mocked with a cold smile. "I don't know why it is, but that egg-head of yours gets my goat. I feel like punching you around a little — just for fun!"

Olive-head turned from purple to green. He trembled with rage.

"Stand still. I'm going to search you," he cried in his most official manner. "Behave, do you hear? Raise your hands."

"Certainly," replied Wu Chi with exaggerated courtesy. He spread his legs apart and slowly lifted his arms.

Torn between fear and hatred, Olive-head patted Wu Chi's waist. Wu Chi's middle contracted, then suddenly bulged big and hard as a millstone. Although he was afraid, Olive-head forced himself to search. When he reached Wu Chi's armpits, the big man swung his hands out lightly. The push sent Olive-head stumbling back against the wall; he hit it hard and fell to the ground.

Leaping to his feet like a wildcat, Olive-head yanked out his pistol and aimed it at Wu Chi.

"Hands up, or I'll shoot! . . ."

Wu Chi gazed whimsically into the gun's muzzle.

"Go ahead and shoot." He opened his shirt and pointed at his massive hairy chest. "Shoot — here. Why don't you shoot, you stinking whoreson!"

Olive-head shook so violently his hair came tumbling down over his forehead and his finger trembled on the trigger. . . .

Wu Chi burst into a booming laugh, a provocative laugh laden with scorn.

Two older detectives came hurrying in. When they saw what was happening, they turned pale. One grabbed Wu Chi, the other seized Olive-head and pulled him to one side, urging him to calm down.

Crocodile quickly made an appearance, full of protestations that they were "all old friends." Smirking amiably, he said, "If we've got any differences, we can talk them over. . . ." To Olive-head he said reproachfully, "What are you getting so tough about? Come on, come with me!" He led Olive-head away, whispered a few words in his ear, and told him to search the next room. Then Crocodile returned and craftily began to "chat" with Wu Chi.

"To tell you the truth, old man, we're in kind of an awkward spot," he said regretfully, wrinkling his meatball-like nose. "You let the prisoner get away . . . well . . . you see . . . what can I say to my superiors? . . ."

"What's on your mind? Out with it. Quit beating about the bush."

"Suppose you come along with us," Crocodile suggested tentatively. "You can talk things over with the chief. . . . I'm only a squad captain. . . . I can't decide this thing myself. . . ."

"Right!" said Wu Chi. "I'll go with you. Whatever I've done I'll be responsible for!"

"That's fine," cried Crocodile happily. "A true man stands by his deeds," he commended. "You're a real friend. . . . Anything for a pal, that's the spirit. . . . Besides, the chief knows you. It'll be easy to settle. . . ."

"All right, all right, let's go," said Wu Chi, twisting his shoulders impatiently. "If I've got to go to court, let's get it over with. Who cares whether he knows me or not! . . ."

Old Tien, watching Wu Chi stroll off with Crocodile, felt tears come to his eyes.

At the head of the lane, Wu Chi and Crocodile got into the police van, after which six more detectives piled in hastily.

"The others are still searching," said one.

"I'll go and get them," Crocodile said, hopping out of the vehicle. "You go back first. You don't have to wait for me."

He waved his hand to the driver, and the van rolled off.

Crocodile returned to Wu Chi's house. The remaining detectives had finished searching the neighbouring dwellings.

"We haven't looked on the rooftops yet, Captain," said Pockmark. "Look, there's a skylight here."

The ambitious Olive-head pushed forward. "I'll go up, Captain," he volunteered.

Crocodile consented, and handed him a flashlight.

Putting one table on top of another, Olive-head climbed up agilely and grasped the frame of the open skylight. Sweeping the flashlight over the roof, he turned his long neck from left to right. Suddenly he yelled:

"There's someone up here! . . . He's running! Running! . . ."

Crocodile dashed outside the door into the courtyard.

The flashlight beam illuminated a crouching figure rapidly skipping from one roof to a second, a third, a fourth, a fifth, a sixth. . . . Ping! Crocodile's pistol cracked and the figure fell to the tile roof. Grasping the pumpkin vines stretching over the tiles, he struggled to his feet, then fell again, blood streaming from his left leg.

Old Tien, sitting trembling on the edge of the bed, keeled over in a faint at the sound of the pistol.

When the police van came back, Chien-ping was tossed in. He heard Crocodile boasting to his underlings:

"The bastard! If we didn't have orders to bring him in alive, I'd have brought him down with one shot through his thick skull!"

*

Wu Chi was placed in solitary confinement in a dark cell. Putting him there was Crocodile's idea. Of course Wu Chi didn't know this. But he didn't care much either.

"What if I am in jail," he thought. "As long as Chien-ping could get away. . . ."

The cell was dark as a tomb. You couldn't see the sky, you couldn't see the floor, you couldn't even see yourself. Mice and lizards and insects scuttled over the walls and floor. Wu Chi feared neither wolves nor tigers. But the soft squirming mice made his hair stand on end. The little rodents seemed to be deliberately tormenting him. They leaped on his back, dashed across his shoulders, startling him and making him tremble. They nearly drove him to distraction.

Dawn came at long last. Pale light filtered through the bars of the iron cell door. Now Wu Chi could see the bats' nests on the ceiling, the mouse holes at the foot of the walls, the centipedes and spiders and roaches, the filthy floor littered with the droppings of mice and bats.

No one came near him. There was no sound. He was completely cut off from the outside world. What kind of an evil hell-hole was this anyhow!

All day he had not a morsel of food. They seemed to have forgotten his very existence.

The second day, Pock-mark handed him something to eat through the bars of the iron door.

"Damn near lost my job this time," the keeper said casually. "It's a lucky thing he didn't get away. . . ."

"What?"

"I'm talking about Ho Chien-ping. The fellow hiding on your roof. If our captain hadn't aimed straight, he might have escaped. . . ."

Wu Chi was staggered. He felt like he had been hit with a sledge hammer.

"I'm afraid you'll have to do time," said Pock-mark with feigned sympathy. "I'm sorry for you. . . . Ho Chien-ping is in Cell Eleven, only two buildings away. . . ."

Wu Chi stood dumbfounded after Pock-mark left. Then he seized the bars and shook them in a rage. He wanted to break out. He wanted to commit murder!

His powerful arms bent two of the bars, but they did not break. Nor was he able to smash the door open. He pounded his fists against the wall, bringing down large chunks of plaster. He roared curses till his throat was hoarse. Outside, there wasn't a sound.

Morosely, he sat down. "I've really put my neck in a noose . . ." he brooded, staring at the iron door.

At dusk, the bats and mice came to life again. Wu Chi's body seemed bound with a thousand cords. Irritated beyond endurance, he pummelled himself with his fists, as if to beat out the fire burning within him. He wanted to hurt himself, to make physical pain override his mental anguish. Perspiration streamed down his face. Exhausted, he flung himself to the ground and fell into a stupor-like sleep.

When he awoke again it was already dawn outside the iron door. Every bone in his body ached; he was bruised all over. He cursed himself in embarrassment:

"Stupid bastard. They haven't beaten you yet, so you do it for them!"

He thought of his friend—slim, scholarly Wu Chien. It was several years now since the young Communist had gone inland to work in the countryside. Of course he must be having a hard time, but had he ever breathed a word of complaint?

"You're bigger and stronger than he," Wu Chi thought, "but a fat lot of good that does! Would he go all to pieces after only three days in the clink? . . . Sure, punch yourself, beat yourself to death. Nothing would make *them* happier! . . ."

Around noon, Crocodile appeared at the iron door. He had put on his new flannel suit—which was much too big for him, and he was freshly shaved and his hair had been cut. The barbering somehow only emphasized the ape-like ridges of his eyebrows, and his lips protruded swollenly as if someone had punched him in the mouth. His nose, so broad and flat, looked more like a meat patty than a nose, and when he brought out a handkerchief and dabbed the patty delicately, the air became redolent with perfume.

"I hope you've slept well, old man," he said with derisive courtesy.

"Tell your Chao Hsiung I want to see him," Wu Chi said coldly, though he was burning inside. "I want to know by what law he's locked me up for three days without even questioning me."

"Can't take it, eh?" Crocodile flashed his dingy yellowish teeth in a grin. "Whose fault is it? Nobody asked you to look for trouble. You brought it on yourself."

"Don't feel too smug, Crocodile. I'll get even with you some day!"

Crocodile shrugged uneasily.

"Don't get sore, old man. Let's lay our cards on the table. It's not we who are making things hard for you. It's you who made us lose face. Nobody likes that. . . . All you have to do is apologize, and the whole thing will be forgotten. What do you say?"

"Go to hell!" If the iron door had not been between them, Wu Chi would have crushed Crocodile with a blow of his mighty fist. "When my bow shoots an arrow, it never comes back. If it's a feud you want, we'll feud to the end!"

Crocodile retreated a step. "I was only trying to give you a way out. But you don't appreciate it. You want to bury the pall-bearers with the coffin! If that's how you're going to act, we'll see. . . . Sorry, I'm busy, I've got to go."

With an airy wave of the hand, Crocodile swaggered off. He heard Wu Chi furiously shaking the iron bars and raging:

"Filthy dog! I defile your ancestors! Eighteen generations of them!"

Crocodile hastily shut the door of the building behind him, like a man who has just come out of a storm. He was a little scared.

Ten years before, Crocodile had been just a flunkey in the magistrate's yamen. Then, one day at the execution grounds, he cut off twenty heads in a morning, and he gained fame. All the scoundrels in the neighbourhood hailed him respectfully. He became a small gang leader. He began running gambling joints and brothels, extorting "protection" money from shopkeepers.

Now that he was "respectable," he tried to explain away his unsavoury beginnings. "The gods kill; officials execute," he would say, "not Crocodile. I was only following orders. I never personally harmed a good person in my life."

If a shopkeeper refused to accept his "protection," Crocodile had only to give the wink and his bully boys would turn the place into a shambles. But Crocodile himself never appeared in the picture.

He and his gang also worked closely with the local Japanese who were smuggling arms and ammunition through Fukien to China's many bandits and warlords.

Crocodile's circle was wide. He combined twenty-six small gangs into one. These gangs were made up of traitors, secret police, Japanese rascals and neighbourhood toughs. As the head of this riff-raff, Crocodile was able to throw his weight around. He could sit at the table of the leader of Amoy's Japanese community. When Chao Hsiung became head of the Political Security Bureau, he naturally had to come knocking at Crocodile's door to request him to be captain of the detective squad. "It takes a rotting nose to smell out a stinking pig's head," as the old saying goes. . . .

After leaving Wu Chi, Crocodile returned to his squad room. Several of the detectives were there, waiting for news of his talk with the big fisherman.

"How did it go?" Olive-head asked.

"A fizzle," Crocodile shrugged. "The son of a bitch talked real tough. Says he'll feud with us to the end. . . ."

"That dirty bastard!" Olive-head exploded. "Keep him locked up till he begs for mercy!"

"Captain, I've got to say something you probably won't like to hear, maybe," a detective with the sallow face and hoarse voice of an old opium addict interjected. "That Wu Chi is a big shot. He's got the three big clans behind him, one more powerful than the next, and they all stick together. Even the Municipal Police Department gives those fellows a wide berth. We'd better not rile him. . . . This morning when I crossed the strait an old boatman gave me a mean look. 'You birds are trying to take things out on our Wu Chi. You want to hurt our clan,' he said. 'Ask your captain whether sea water tastes sweet or salty. . . .'"

"What's that supposed to mean?" asked Olive-head contemptuously.

"You're still new at this game, young fellow," the old detective said with a cold laugh. "I guess you never heard the old saying around here, 'Get fresh with the three big clans and end up at the bottom of the sea.'"

"That's a lot of bilge!" Crocodile yelled, his face purple. "It might scare a three-year-old, but it doesn't worry me. I'll show you. Tomorrow I'll cross the strait. They won't dare lay a finger on me. . . ."

Just then, Pock-mark came rushing in.

"Captain, Wu Chi's son is here. He insists on seeing his father!"

"Throw him out!"

"He refuses to go. . . ."

"Slap his face!" cried Crocodile, waving his hands.

Olive-head nodded approvingly.

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That night, Crocodile and a couple of his gang had a big feast at a fancy restaurant. The wine flowed freely and Crocodile got pretty drunk.

"I'll see you home," offered Olive-head. "You've had too much."

"Who says so? I could drink another two bottles and it wouldn't make any difference." As they emerged from the restaurant door, Crocodile hiccuped and said, "Go on home. Nobody has to look after me. . . ."

Staggering, he wove his way down the street.

Of late, Crocodile had been spending his nights in a brothel, but tonight he decided to go home. As he walked along the waterfront, there were only a few scattered stars in the sky; the streets were dark and still. A salty breeze blowing in from the sea billowed and flapped his black silk shirt. Crocodile sang a romantic air. He was feeling very high.

Then he stumbled over something and fell sprawling on the road. "Can I be that drunk?" he muttered with a curse. As he started to get up, suddenly, many hands pinned him to the ground. He reached for his gun, but someone had already taken it.

"Let me up!" he said angrily. "I'm the captain of the security squad. You've made a mistake!"

"You're just the man we're looking for!"

Crocodile was heavily kicked from all sides. "Help! Help!" he yelled.

"One more peep and we'll murder you, you son of a bitch!"

A dozen fists pounded his back like a drum.

"I'll be quiet! Don't hit me, don't hit me . . ." Crocodile pleaded. His voice was eight degrees lower.

Where did all the hands come from? They pressed his neck, his backside, his legs. . . . He struggled to rise.

"If you want a taste of lead bullets, just try that again!" someone said, digging a pistol into his ribs.

Crocodile begged for mercy, but very quietly, so as not to increase the ire of his attackers. They rewarded his earnest pleas with only heavier blows of their fists. Then they trussed him hand and foot like a pig going to slaughter, and shoved him into a gunny sack. Cold sober now, he heard them arguing over his disposal.

"Smash his kneecaps!"

"First cut his ears off!"

"No, his nose first!"

"Toss him in the sea and be done with it. . . ."

Someone kicked him savagely. "Speak up, Crocodile! Is sea water sweet or salty?"

"Spare me, brothers," Crocodile throbbed in his most moving voice. "If I've done anything to offend you gentlemen, please forgive me. Dear brothers. . . ."

"We're not brothers to you, you stinking swine!"

"You're a dog, Crocodile, a dirty pig! Say it, let's hear you say it. . . ."

I can't curse myself, thought the squad captain. That would be losing too much face. . . .

"You won't say it, eh? . . . All right, into the sea with him, throw him into the sea . . ." several voices cried. Willing hands began dragging the sack along the ground.

"I'll say it, I'll say it!" Crocodile yelled hastily. "I'm a . . . dog, I'm a . . . dirty pig. . . ." To himself he mentally cursed them — May you rot with your ancestors!

"Again. Louder and clearer!"

"I'm a dog, a dirty pig."

There were bursts of suppressed laughter.

"Let me go," Crocodile begged. Tears rolled down his cheeks. Unfortunately nobody could see them. "I'll do whatever you say, brothers. Forgive me. We're all Chinese —"

"Bah! What kind of Chinese are you! How dare you lock Wu Chi up in a dark cell and not let anyone see him? Using your position to settle a private grudge! . . ."

"That wasn't my doing."

"You still deny it!" Another kick.

"I swear. . . ." Crocodile wanted to beat his breast to demonstrate his sincerity, but that was rather difficult in a sack, with both hands tied behind him. "May I die this minute of the black plague if I had anything to do with ordering his arrest! . . ."

"Quit squawking. There's only one question. Will you let him go or not?"

"It's not up to me!"

Another kick. "Don't kid us. We know all about you. . . ."

"I'll talk to the bureau chief. I'll ask him to release Wu Chi. . . ."

"He's got to be out tomorrow!"

"All right, tomorrow, tomorrow!" Crocodile agreed quickly. "Let me go. I'll fix it tomorrow for sure. . . . May I die childless if I don't! . . ."

"Don't believe him. He'd swear to anything now!"

"Let him go this time." The voice seemed to be that of an older man. "If he doesn't release Wu Chi tomorrow, we'll finish him off. . . . Come on, give him his gun. . . ."

There was the sound of a cartridge clip being removed from the pistol's chamber.

The sack was opened. Like a turtle, Crocodile timidly poked his head out and peered fearfully at the dark figures surrounding him. He was afraid "give him his gun" was a signal of some sort, and that at any moment they would shove him back in the sack and throw him into the sea.

When the pistol was pushed into his belt, he heaved a sigh of relief.

"Thank you . . . gentlemen. . . ." His voice trembled pitifully. ". . . Never forget . . . your kindness. . . ." But in his heart he was thinking—so you're still afraid of me. Didn't dare keep my pistol!

The dark shadows silently stole away.

Not long after, a passer-by untied his bonds. By the time Crocodile rose shakily to his feet, the man was gone.

He limped to the main road and hailed a rickshaw. He was sick to his stomach all the way home.

When he awoke the next morning, the events of the previous night returned to him with painful clarity. He cursed Wu Chi and his ancestors back eight generations; he cursed the three big clans, their sons and grandsons. Only after he had spewed out every foul word in his extensive vocabulary did he feel somewhat relieved.

What if I got knocked around a little, he comforted himself. I can take it. My turn will come. Just wait till I become chief of the city police. I'll give those bastards a working over they'll never forget. They'll all rot in jail. . . .

He crawled out of bed and had breakfast. After doctoring and plastering his damaged face, he painfully straightened his bruised and swollen back and walked to the Political Security Bureau. Olive-head saw him first.

"What happened to your face, Captain?" he queried, shocked.

"I had too much to drink. On the way home I fell flat. Of all the rotten luck!"

"I thought you looked kind of unsteady. But you wouldn't let me see you home."

"Really? I must have been pretty drunk. I can't remember a thing. . . ."

Crocodile walked into the office of the bureau chief, Chao Hsiung.

"You want to question Wu Chi today, Chief?" he asked.

Chao Hsiung hadn't been too keen on holding Wu Chi from the beginning. But when he saw how incensed the detectives were over Wu Chi's insulting treatment of Olive-head, he felt he couldn't very well ignore their craving to get back at the big fisherman. At the same time he knew Wu Chi had some very complicated forces behind him and that even the Municipal Police Department tried to

steer clear of him and his mates. What worried Chao Hsiung particularly was the fact that he frequently had to cross the strait late at night. If a couple of Wu Chi's boatmen friends should decide to grab him by the neck and give him a long drink of sea water, nothing could save him. . . .

"You know I don't question non-political prisoners," he said to Crocodile. "I've known that Wu Chi since I was a kid. He's a bull. But you fellows aren't bull-fighters. What do you want to start up with a bull for? Besides, we're a security bureau, not a police department. It's not worth our while to mess around with people like Wu Chi. His isn't a political case."

"Yes, yes, yes," Crocodile nodded rapidly. He said admiringly, "You sure are clever. I'd never have thought of that angle."

"I've told you before. I was trained by Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek personally. He's given me secret orders." Chao Hsiung lowered his voice. He often used such inventions to impress his subordinates. "This is confidential between you and me. Not a word to anyone! Our sole target is the Communist Party, not wild bulls like Wu Chi. You have to have vision. Keep your eye on the main objective."

"Right, certainly," Crocodile again nodded. "I've criticized the men in my squad. I said we shouldn't dirty our hands on the likes of Wu Chi! . . ."

Chao Hsiung smiled at Crocodile fondly. "Our only enemy is the Reds. With the others—the pro-Japanese clique, or the pro-Anglo-American crowd—we've got to keep our contacts. As to people like Wu Chi, if we can win them over, we win them over; if we can't, we keep our peace with them. Right now, we can't treat them as enemies. Do you understand? The situation in Amoy is very involved. You've got to know how to manoeuvre."

"Yes, of course," Crocodile bobbed his head. He felt the moment had come. "Then, Chief . . . suppose we release Wu Chi today? What do you say?"

Chao Hsiung was secretly pleased he had been so convincing. He feigned indifference.

"All right. We've recaptured Ho Chien-ping. There's no need to hold Wu Chi any longer. If you want to let him go, you can."

The weight fell from Crocodile's heart. He saluted sharply and left the office. Returning to the squad room, he pretended to be very disappointed.

"Orders from the chief. We're to release Wu Chi at once."

"Release him? Without convicting him?" Olive-head was really disappointed.

"That's right. The chief has his reasons."

"What reasons?" demanded Olive-head, unconvinced.

"It's a secret," Crocodile retorted smugly. "I'm the only one he's told, and I can't tell it to anyone else."

He quickly drew up the necessary release papers and took them personally to Wu Chi's cell.

"I've good news for you, old friend," he said, fairly oozing politeness. The palms of his hands were moist. "You're free. I've been after the chief for days about you, and today he's finally agreed. I feel awful that this had to happen, but what could I do? An officer has to do his duty. Believe me, I felt worse than you! Please forgive me. From now on, if anyone makes any trouble, just let me know! I'll show you what a friend I am. . . ."

Wu Chi gazed silently at the bats' nests on the ceiling. Crocodile couldn't tell what his reaction was. Finally, Yao Mu unlocked the door and Wu Chi strode from his cage like a lion. Suddenly he turned around and looked at Crocodile with icy eyes.

"You haven't heard the end of this."

Crocodile was taken aback. As he watched Wu Chi's retreating figure, he was somehow reminded of the huge and ferocious warrior idol guarding the temple door. Crocodile shivered in spite of himself.

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Chien-ping lay on the floor of the police van, staring at the wound in his left leg. The shame of having failed was ten times more painful than his injury.

Again he was locked in the cell where the prisoner had hanged himself. He was left strictly alone. He remembered what Szu-min had written to him: "Your success is our success," and it was as if an awl was stabbing into his heart. He seemed to see Li Yueh, Szu-min and Yao Mu rushing up to him and crying with surprise, "You, here? But why have you come back?"

He imagined he could hear the wild roaring of a pent-up beast. The roars were coming from Wu Chi.

About eleven the following morning the prison doctor finally got around to tending his wound. While the bullet was being removed, Chien-ping fainted from the pain.

He came to, drenched in perspiration. In the pale light beyond the bars, Yao Mu was standing, thin and stooped, his eyes dark from loss of sleep.

"Are you hungry?" Yao Mu asked softly. His voice was warm and friendly.

Chien-ping shook his head.

"Here are two pieces of cake. Take them."

"I don't feel like eating. How's Wu Chi?"

"He'll be all right. They'll let him go in a day or so. They've only arrested him because he made them so mad."

Chien-ping said nothing.

"Your uncle came early this morning with a present for the doctor," Yao Mu went on. "Your wound will be cured in a couple of days."

Chien-ping suddenly ground his teeth and wept, but he quickly wiped away his tears. Pouring out to Yao Mu the shame that was in his heart, he asked Yao to criticize him. "It isn't only myself I've hurt . . ." he said, and his tears began to flow again.

Yao Mu had seen him endure the cruellest tortures with never a sound. He knew what mental agonies Chien-ping must be suffering now to break down and weep.

"I'm at fault too, Chien-ping. I didn't help you enough to think the plan out from every angle," Yao Mu consoled him. "Never mind. Look after your wound. There'll be other chances—" Out of the side of his mouth he said softly, "Pock-mark's coming. See you later."

Pock-mark unlocked the door and came in. Even though Chien-ping's wound had become too painful for him even to move, the keeper put iron fetters on his legs.

A few days later, Yao Mu told Chien-ping how his escape had been discovered so quickly.

In order to avoid suspicion, Yao Mu had remained in his quarters that night, pretending to sleep. When he saw that the other keepers were all asleep, at twelve fifteen he got up and slipped out. He was afraid that Chien-ping hadn't been able to finish digging through the wall. To his surprise, when he reached the cell and looked in through the bars, Chien-ping was already gone. The hole had not been covered. Yao Mu hurriedly left, intending to cut the wire to the jail house so that the light would not shine through the opening. But just as he entered the courtyard, a guard went rushing by, shouting, "Number Seven has dug a hole in the wall and escaped! . . ."

Pock-mark was roused from his slumbers, scared sober. The guards and keepers were divided into four teams and sent out to give chase.

As Pock-mark told Yao Mu later, at a fork in the road outside Colt's Saddle he ran into the young scamp. "Give me the price of a drink and I'll tell you where the loot is buried!" the ragamuffin had cried, proudly beating his chest. Pock-mark handed him twenty cents and the scamp related his encounter with Chien-ping and how he had followed him to Wu Chi's house. Pock-mark immediately put in a telephone call to Crocodile. . . .

Chien-ping's wounded leg slowly improved. In half a month's time he could move around on it, although the fetters made walking difficult.

Then, one morning, Yao Mu told him that he, Yao, was being transferred to the First Municipal Jail. He was very pleased because there were many comrades there whom he could help.

Chien-ping didn't know how to react to this news. "Will you be able to come and see me sometimes?" he asked.

"I could, but it would attract attention."

"Then you'd better not."

"Is there anything you want me to tell Li Yueh?"

"Say it was my own fault that I failed; I deserve to be punished."

After Chien-ping's leg was completely healed, he too was transferred to the First Municipal Jail.

It was the biggest jail on the island of Amoy. Of its approximately 170 prisoners, more than half were being held on political charges. Chien-ping was the only one of the political prisoners with leg fetters. He was locked up in Cell Nine, with murderers and pirates for cell-mates. All of these also wore irons on their legs. Szu-min and Chung-chien were in Cell Three, Li Yueh in Cell Four; they were separated by only one wall. Yao Mu told Chien-ping there were two other Party comrades in Cell Three: Chu Pei-hsun and Hsu Yi-san.

A month or so later, Yao Mu managed to have Chien-ping moved into Cell Three.

Chien-ping was so delighted to be with his comrades, that he no longer gave any thought to whether he might be executed, even though that danger still remained. When Yao Mu led him in to Cell Three, and he hobbled over in his fetters to embrace Szu-min, Chien-ping was moved to tears. He felt he was the happiest man in the world.

With this change, both the tangible and intangible walls of the prison seemed to vanish. Indeed, if you could be among your own people, even a jail could be heaven; without them, heaven itself would be no better than a jail. How wonderful to hear Szu-min's warm voice and see his smiling face again!

That night, when the other comrades were asleep, Szu-min softly told him what he knew of political developments: The Shanghai National Salvation Society—which was led by the Communist Party—was calling for a united front and an end to the civil war; it expressed approval of the programme proposed by the Party for unity against the Japanese invaders.

The Amoy Association was continuing its activities in the guise of research societies in the various schools and institutes. Pin Hai Middle School was still taking the lead in anti-imperialist activities, and its principal, Hsieh Chia-shu, was, as usual, hard at work overcoming obstacles. Hsieh had told Comrade Cheng Yu that he was not afraid of Chao Hsiung and his Political Security Bureau; in fact he was sure Chao Hsiung wouldn't dare to touch him.

The work in the countryside was going very well. Peasant societies and rural schools were absorbing members of the Amoy Association wherever possible.

Although the Political Security Bureau was making many arrests, the youth of Amoy were not frightened. They continued to work for the principles set forth in the Party's call for an anti-imperialist united front.

It was rumoured that Chou Shen recently had been given a small job in the Political Security Bureau. At night he didn't dare to leave his house; he was terrified of being assassinated. . . .

"I'm the one who ought to be blamed for most of this trouble," Szu-min said miserably. "It was my stupid softness that brought it on. Looking back at things now I can see that Chou Shen's betrayal was not unexpected. . . ."

"Li Yueh suspected him from the start," said Chien-ping. "Nobody can put anything over on that comrade. . . ."

A guard patrol came by, and the two quickly pretended to sleep. After it had gone, Szu-min went on:

"There's going to be a major change in the situation. We'll be able to get out of here."

"As easy as that?" Chien-ping countered doubtfully.

"It's very possible. Don't you see? The whole country wants to unite to resist the Japanese. So do the more enlightened members of the Kuomintang. It's a trend, a trend that can't be stopped. I'm confident that the day is coming when the Kuomintang will be forced to take an anti-Japanese stand. It's either that or collapse!"

"I think you're being too optimistic, Szu-min."

"My optimism is perfectly justified. With so much pressure from people in every walk of life, our aim is bound to be achieved sooner or later. When that time comes, we'll drive out the Japanese, build up the country, and have a socialist society like in the Soviet Union. We'll have plenty to keep us busy. . . ."

There were footsteps in the corridor and again the two feigned sleep. Outside, the changing guard shouted the password. Beside them, stout Comrade Pei-hsun snored lustily.

Chien-ping had never met either Pei-hsun or Yi-san before being transferred to their cell.

Pei-hsun came from a suburb of Amoy. He joined the Party in Shanghai in 1926. He had been arrested twice before. On one occasion he had been given electric torture and nearly died. After getting out of jail the second time, he went to the Soviet Union and only returned this year. In July he was sent to Fukien to inspect the work of the Party's various units. He found quarters with a friend of the Party, a commercial photographer who had a shop in Amoy. Pei-hsun lived upstairs.

When Pei-hsun had been working in Shanghai he was known as the "Long-legged Deer" because he was so tall and thin. In the Soviet Union he went from 120 to 230 pounds. Big and fat, he looked something like that famous picture of Balzac. Hardly any of his old friends could recognize him. He changed his name and went around with an easel and box of paints. Everyone assumed he was an artist.

But he didn't dare risk going home to see his mother and sister, even though they lived only seven miles from the city proper.

Late one night, about a month before, he went into a small restaurant for a bowl of shrimp and noodles. He saw a cousin from his native district—a loafer and opium smoker—sitting at an opposite table. Pei-hsun concentrated on his food. But the man approached him.

"Aren't you Pei-hsun? . . . I'm Yao-fu, don't you remember me? . . ."

Pei-hsun gazed at him distantly, and in a thick Shanghai accent replied, "I'm afraid I don't know you. . . ."

"Oh, sorry. I beg your pardon," Yao-fu bowed and returned to his own table.

Pei-hsun paid his bill and left the restaurant. Stopping at a vendor's stand, pretending to buy cigarettes, he glanced casually over his shoulder. Yao-fu had not followed him. Relieved, he nevertheless wove through a maze of small lanes on his way back to the photographer's shop so as to shake off any possible pursuer.

As a matter of fact, he was already under the surveillance of a detective. The man had taken a seat near Yao-fu in the restaurant. After learning from Yao-fu why Pei-hsun had pretended not to recognize him, the detective hurried out and dogged Pei-hsun's footsteps.

Early the next morning, Political Security Bureau men mounted the stairs to the flat above the photographer's shop and put the handcuffs on Pei-hsun. . . .

Yi-san was a young fellow who worked in the food canning factory. Three years before, he had joined the Communist Youth League. Short and stocky, with a ruddy complexion, no one would believe to look at him that he had suffered from tuberculosis. Two

years ago, while moving a piece of heavy machinery, he had burst a blood vessel in his lung and was laid up for eleven months. By the time he recovered, his job was gone. The foreman had never liked his "fresh" ways, and had taken the opportunity to strike him from the pay roll.

His young wife was also a cannery worker, and she became their sole support. She had to provide for the parents of both of them as well. Needless to say, they all had a very hard time of it. She was a good girl, and though the foreman did everything he could to seduce her, he never succeeded. Finally, he threatened to have her fired. She was so frightened by the prospect of what this would mean to her dear ones, that she gave in to him.

That night she dragged herself home and, weeping, poured out the whole story to Yi-san. In a towering rage, Yi-san flew to the factory, took up an iron rod and brought it down on the terrified foreman. Yi-san was arrested on the spot.

The foreman was rushed to the hospital and was given a dozen stitches; he didn't die. When he could speak, he accused Yi-san of being a Communist. But he had no proof. Yi-san was tried as an ordinary criminal and sentenced to six months at hard labour. During his last month, he joined the political study group Szu-min and Chung-chien were secretly conducting.

When the time came for him to be released, he took reluctant leave of his cell-mates. "I've only had one month of study . . ." he complained, almost weeping. "You're my teachers, the finest men I've ever known. . . ."

At dusk of the day Yi-san departed, the guards delivered a new prisoner to Cell Three. A slim fellow in a very dusty jacket, he was almost femininely graceful, with fresh rosy cheeks and bright penetrating eyes. As soon as the guards left, Chien-ping leaped from his seat on the mat and grasped the new inmate's arms.

"Wu Chien!" he cried in a low, moved voice.

At the sound of that name, the others rose from their corners of one accord and stared at the newcomer in surprise. . . .

All that night, the five men lay side by side, talking softly. They still felt wide awake when a distant rooster hailed the dawn. They discussed world events and the changing local situation, they talked of themselves, of Chao Hsiung. . . .

Wu Chien told them how he had been captured.

He had gone to Tungan for a rendezvous with another comrade. As he approached the bridge where they were to meet, he saw the man strolling toward him from the distance, rubbing his neck—the signal that something had gone wrong. Wu Chien immediately turned and started to walk away, but he was nabbed by two detectives.

They took him to the county detention house. A guard told him that the other comrade had been arrested too, and had already been sent to the provincial prison in Foochow; Wu Chien would probably be sent there too, since that was where all political prisoners arrested outside the jurisdiction of the big cities were incarcerated.

Then, the evening of the eighth day, he was suddenly brought to the Amoy Municipal Jail.

"This must be Chao Hsiung's doing," Wu Chien concluded. "Political prisoners are never moved from county to city jails; they go only to the provincial prison. . . ."

*

The next morning Chao Hsiung sent a car with two guards and a neat, well-mannered detective to call for Wu Chien and bring him to the Political Security Bureau.

Chao Hsiung was waiting for him in a quiet, tastefully furnished reception room. He wore an old faded tunic, buttoned high at the neck, and had removed the two-carat diamond ring that usually adorned his finger. He knew how his "guest" hated gaudiness and ostentation.

When Wu Chien entered, Chao Hsiung hurried to him and warmly grasped his hand. His big hulking frame made a marked contrast with Wu Chien's slim cultured appearance. With an air of mingled joy and sorrow, Chao Hsiung asked many concerned questions. He led Wu Chien to an easy chair and gazed at his face, gripped his arms — in short, did his best to make Wu Chien feel that they were still the same close friends.

Chao Hsiung said he had been very worried when he learned that Wu Chien had been arrested; he had made repeated requests and at last persuaded the provincial authorities to transfer the case to the Amoy Political Security Bureau.

"With the matter in my hands," he concluded, "things are bound to go a lot better. . . ."

"Fine. When will I be released?" asked Wu Chien, feigning innocence.

"Not so fast. We've got to work this out gradually. You're an important man in your Party. Your case is different from the average. . . ."

"In what way?"

"You know what I mean."

"All I know is that I was locked up in the county detention house for eight days without even being questioned, and then transferred here."

"According to the county's report, you were organizing an armed insurrection in the countryside, making alliances with bandits, and planning to overthrow the government. . . ."

"Pure nonsense! Our Party's declaration puts it very clearly. We're willing to cease hostilities with all the armed forces in the country and form a united front against the Japanese. But you Kuomintang insists on pointing its guns at us instead of at the enemy! Today all the Chinese people want the same thing we are advocating. If what we Communists propose is a crime, you'll have to jail every citizen in the country!"

"Let's not talk about that right now," Chao Hsiung said with a conciliatory smile. "Although we may disagree politically, we're still old friends. Let's meet on that basis today."

"In that case the first thing you ought to do is let me go," Wu Chien countered, half in earnest, half in jest.

"Please forgive me, but that isn't something I can decide for myself," Chao Hsiung hastily explained. "Your case is too big. Only the provincial government can dispose of it. But I'll certainly do my best to help you. . . ."

Chao Hsiung poured Wu Chien a cup of tea, offered him a cigarette and gave him a light. His manner was affectionate and relaxed.

Wu Chien smoked in silence, gazing at the smoke curling up from his cigarette. His features were composed, almost serene.

In spite of himself, Chao Hsiung was impressed that Wu Chien should be so unruffled. Obviously, delicate, careful handling was required. A man like Wu Chien was bound to achieve political prominence. It wouldn't do to offend him.

"Do you remember," Chao Hsiung asked after the second cup of tea, "that day we went swimming in the sea? You saved my life. I nearly drowned, remember?"

"Yes."

"I've never forgotten," Chao Hsiung said emotionally, "and I never will. . . ."

I rescued a savage brute, Wu Chien thought to himself. Now, ten years later, he's drinking our comrades' blood!

Chao Hsiung went on with his reminiscences. He talked of Shu-yueh, the wife he had poisoned. He said losing her was the greatest blow he had ever suffered. Chao Hsiung lit a cigarette, then sighed sadly.

"All our old friends are scattered or dead. The past is gone, never to return. . . . In Amoy, only Shu-yin, Shu-yueh's sister, is left. She's my secretary. Would you like to see her?"

"No." Wu Chien tapped the ash from his cigarette. "Has she been with you long?"

"Nearly six months," said Chao Hsiung. Then he asked, "Would you like to see your mother?"

"She's dead."

"No! I saw her only two years ago. What a shame. . . ."

At the end of their talk, Chao Hsiung offered to turn his own apartment over to him. Wu Chien firmly refused. . . .

Every day, Chao Hsiung sent a car for Wu Chien, and always welcomed him warmly. "I'm very lonely at times," he confessed. "I know a lot of people, but not one of them really understands me!"

On several occasions, he had Wu Chien stay for dinner. He made no attempt to extract any information from him. "I respect virtue and character," he said. He indicated that he was sorry for Wu Chien; once in a while he let slip that he too was dissatisfied with present conditions. When he talked of the power the "Political Science Group"* held in Fukien Province, he practically ground his teeth.

One afternoon he took Wu Chien out for a ride in his car. Two pistol-bearing guards stood on the running boards. As they left the city and got into the country, Chao Hsiung kept interrupting himself to point out various familiar spots.

"Look, there's where our Amoy Theatrical Society used to be! . . . That's the Earth Temple opposite. Remember how I pulled the whiskers off the image of the old God of Earth? . . . And there's the beach; that's where you saved me from drowning. . . ."

Chao Hsiung seemed very happy recalling the old days. He talked incessantly. . . . On the way back, he launched into a long dissertation on friendship.

"Politics is politics, friendship is friendship," he proclaimed. "One has nothing to do with the other. So far as I'm concerned I could give up the Kuomintang tomorrow, but I could never give up a dear, close friend. Don't you feel the same about your Communist Party?"

"I'm exactly the opposite," Wu Chien replied slowly. "I could be ground to powder, but I'd never give up the Party."

"You're too stubborn, Wu Chien."

"You're right. On that subject I certainly am."

"Look there. What a lovely waterfall," cried Chao Hsiung, pointing. He plainly was trying to avoid an argument.

Each time he returned to the jail, Wu Chien gave his cell-mates a complete report.

*A clique within the Kuomintang Party.

To prove that his "friendship" wasn't just an empty word, Chao Hsiung accepted many of Wu Chien's suggestions for improving conditions in the jail. He got two new cooks and bought better quality food. He changed the rules so that now, every afternoon, prisoners could take turns walking in the courtyard, or bathing, or washing their clothes. Torturing confessions out of political prisoners was stopped, temporarily. The fetters were removed from Chien-ping's legs. . . .

Of course, Chao Hsiung had his reasons for acting so magnanimously. If he could soft-soap Wu Chien and win him over, that would be a big feather in his cap. He never dreamed that the main purpose of the requests was to enable the men to familiarize themselves with the layout in preparation for the day when they would make a mass jail-break. . . .

At five one afternoon, when the rain was streaming down outside the window, Chao Hsiung sat alone in his apartment, drinking heavily. As he grew more and more depressed, he was bedevilled with unpleasant memories. He gazed at the rain with bleary eyes, everything seemed blurred. In the foggy mist of rain and green plantain leaves, suddenly a figure took shape — Shu-yueh, the wife he had murdered! Trembling, he seized his pistol and fired. The window glass shattered, the mist dispelled, the figure vanished. . . .

A guard came rushing into the room. "Wasn't that a shot, Chief? . . ."

"It's nothing. I was only trying my pistol," said Chao Hsiung. He put the weapon back in its holster.

Twenty minutes later, a guard brought Wu Chien in. Chao Hsiung was now fairly drunk.

"Drinking alone is a dull pastime." Chao Hsiung poured out another glass, then said, more cheerfully, "Here's one for you."

Wu Chien drank very little and kept a close watch on his tongue. With cool eyes he observed Chao Hsiung — who was cursing first this and then that clique of the many scoundrels and intriguers scrambling for power within the Kuomintang.

"To put it bluntly," said Chao Hsiung, rising unsteadily to his feet, "I wouldn't give two cents for the whole lot of them!"

"Don't you respect any of them?" Wu Chien asked.

"Only two — Chiang Kai-shek and Wang Ching-wei."

"You certainly never forget your mentors," Wu Chien said sarcastically. He slowly struck a match and lit a cigarette.

Again Chao Hsiung reverted to the theme he had harped upon several years before — "An Independent Fukien." Fukienese were too honest, he sighed. The province was being milked by outsiders. " . . . They're like bed-bugs. They drink our blood and then walk

away!" Chao Hsiung waxed indignant. "The old crowd goes and the new one arrives. It's disgraceful! . . . We Fukienese ought to band together and fight for our own interests! . . . I feel terrible about you, Wu Chien. You're just wasting your talents! If only you'd co-operate with me, we could drive away the outsiders and take the power into our own hands! . . . What do you say?"

"That's not what's been worrying me."

"What has, then?"

"I was wondering how we could get rid of imperialism, how we could cleanse it from our land!"

"Excellent!" Chao Hsiung cried happily in a voice hoarse with drink. "It's only a question of what to do first. I say get rid of the outsiders and take over power. Once we do that, the imperialists won't dare to stay. Together, we can handle them easily! Wu Chien, only you and I are true heroes! Let's drink to us!"

Chao Hsiung drained his glass.

"The distance between us is very great," said Wu Chien, calm and unhurried. He had not touched his drink.

"What's the problem?" Chao Hsiung stared at him with blood-shot eyes. "Aren't you Communists calling for a united front? Haven't you and I been friends for twenty years? Why can't we work together?"

"If we unite it must be to save the country, not to ruin it."

"Of course! First save the province, then save the country; first settle the internal problems, then solve the external. It's all part of the same thing. The last few days I've been doing a lot of thinking. I'm trying to work out an application to the higher authorities for your release and complete exoneration."

"I've done nothing to be exonerated of. I haven't committed any crime."

"That's what you say. Now if we're to get you this release, the first thing you'll have to do is to sever your relation with the Communist Party."

"Then there's no use talking. Haven't I told you I'd never do that?"

"I really don't understand. What good do you get out of it? Why do you cling to a political party that has no future? Do you want to end up losing your head to the executioner's sword?"

"I can't betray my faith, even if I have to lose my head for it," Wu Chien said quietly.

"You're so stubborn! How can I save you? . . ." Chao Hsiung dropped his voice and feigned the utmost sincerity. "I feel very badly, Wu Chien. . . . I don't want to lose the friend who saved my life."

Wu Chien was surprised not only that Chao Hsiung could say such a thing, but that he could keep a straight face and a stricken expression while doing it. . . .

The following afternoon, Chao Hsiung again invited him to his apartment for a drink. They sat opposite one another and talked of the days when they were in the Amoy Theatrical Society.

"I must admit," Chao Hsiung said animatedly, "those plays we put on were very stirring. Whenever I played that scene where the revolutionary martyr was ready to die for the cause, the audience always burst into applause. It used to thrill me. . . ."

"You still play that scene," Wu Chien remarked negligently, "only now it's others who die for the cause, not you."

Chao Hsiung's drink-flushed face turned a deeper shade of red. He pretended not to have heard what Wu Chien said. Taking the bottle, he poured Wu Chien another drink.

"I ran into a friend the day before yesterday." Chao Hsiung downed his own drink. "He kidded me about those lines I spoke in that play cursing Tsao Ju-lin.* I had to laugh. You certainly do a lot of naive things when you're young."

"I remember," said Wu Chien. "That was the year you went to the Whampoa Military Academy. We gave you a farewell party and you made a speech. You said you wanted to 'clean out the traitors within and resist the aggression from without. . . .'"

"You have a good memory. You remember my exact words."

"More than ten years have passed since then, but the traitors still haven't been eradicated. Three years ago they made the Tangku Agreement,** last year it's the Ho-Umezu Agreement*** both complete and insulting sellouts. Our Communist Party has issued a call for a united front in the Declaration of August 1 —"

"I've seen it," Chao Hsiung interrupted, as if afraid to let Wu Chien continue. "Our views are somewhat different from yours."

*A minister in the regime of the northern clique of warlords at the time of May the Fourth, 1919. He consistently advocated a policy of selling out the country to the Japanese.

**Early in 1933 Japanese armed forces encroached upon north China after invading north-east China. Chiang Kai-shek issued an order not to resist this aggression and on May 31, the Kuomintang government and the Japanese aggressors signed the Tangku Agreement which literally acknowledged Japanese occupation of north-east China and part of north China.

***The agreement signed in June 1935 by Ho Ying-chin, the Kuomintang government's representative in north China, and Yoshijiro Umezu, commander of Japanese armed forces in north China. In this agreement the Kuomintang government accepted the demand presented by Japan in May, thereby substantially surrendering China's sovereign rights in the provinces of Hopei and Chahar.

We rely entirely on Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek for national policy. He's a noble, far-seeing statesman. We can't go wrong, listening to him. There's not a man in the country who understands Japan better than he. Let me show you one of my confidential documents. . . ."

Chao Hsiung brought out a pamphlet. "This is an address the Generalissimo gave at the Lushan School for Higher Officers." Following the lines with his finger, Chao Hsiung read, ". . . *Under the present circumstances, the Japanese have only to give the order and in three days' time they can occupy all of our nation's most vital centres and ruin China.* . . ."

"No wonder you're scared to death."

"It's no joking matter. There's nothing funny about a military juggernaut. . . ."

"Surely you don't believe that stuff?"

"Certainly I do. He's our highest leader. I can see now that our anti-Japanese movement was absolutely blind, a case of 'New-born calves don't fear the tiger'. . . ."

Wu Chien laughed.

"If you ever feel like going on the stage again and playing a stupid evil reactionary, you'll never have to worry about forgetting your lines. Make the same speech you did just now. It fits the part perfectly."

Chao Hsiung's face drained of colour.

"You haven't changed a bit," he said sullenly. "Still the same wisecracking bohemian."

Angrily he finished his glass.

*

One morning, Chao Hsiung sat in his office going over some documents. His secretary, Shu-yin, entered quietly.

"Did you send for me?" she asked.

"Yes. Sit down, sit down, I want to talk to you." Chao Hsiung rose, smiling courteously. He brought a chair forward for her.

Shu-yin sat down, neat and prim, rather like her own meticulous handwriting. But the faint smile on her face seemed to indicate that she was no longer the same severe, cold girl she had been before. It was also obvious that because of her warmth, Chao Hsiung had become fairly well-mannered. He was even careful not to open his mouth too wide when he laughed.

As if seeking her sympathetic understanding, he told of his recent meetings with Wu Chien. His voice was gentle, moving. Chao Hsiung was apparently the most benevolent of gentlemen, using the utmost patience to rescue an errant friend. He related how Wu

Chien had saved him from drowning. He had never forgotten. He had long cherished the wish to repay him. . . .

Shu-yin appeared convinced and touched. She said that as a little girl she had seen him and Wu Chien act together on the stage; people still talked of what a great team they made. All their friends in Amoy knew how close they had been. She said that Wu Chien had once been her teacher; she hated to see him destroyed. She realized that Chao Hsiung's feelings and motives were entirely those of a friend. . . .

"If Wu Chien should be killed," she concluded, "not only would it be a serious reflection on his close friends for not having prevented it, but public opinion would be sure to condemn —"

Chao Hsiung cut her short with a wave of his hand. He was afraid of "public opinion."

"I know, I know," he said hastily. "Some of those silly literati would like nothing better than something like this to embroider upon; they'd write all sorts of articles. But let's not talk about that now. . . ."

Then he asked whether Shu-yin would be willing to talk with Wu Chien on his behalf.

Shu-yin was stunned. Her heart beat wildly. Heavens! Will I really be able to see him? she wondered.

"What's wrong? Are you afraid to speak to him?" Chao Hsiung was amused. "Just look at you. Your face is absolutely white."

"Why should I speak to him? Is it really necessary?" Shu-yin countered, trying hard to conceal her tenseness.

"Every lock has its key. Perhaps you are the key who can open the lock that is Wu Chien."

"No. I don't know anything about this sort of thing."

"You'll be able to get closer to him than I. In the first place, you were his student; secondly, you're old friends; third, because you're so beautiful —"

"What are you talking about!"

"Why blush? I'm speaking quite seriously. No man could ever resist a lovely young girl. It's human nature; no one is an exception. . . ."

Holding her chin with one hand, Shu-yin lowered her head and thought for several minutes. Her mind was in a turmoil.

"All right," she said finally. Her voice was calm. "If it will be of any help to the office, I can try. But I'm very inexperienced. You'll have to tell me what to do."

"Naturally. He's a big shot in the Communist Party. He's no fool. You've got to have a plan before you talk to him. When necessary, a trick or two won't be amiss. . . ."

Lowering his voice and leaning close, Chao Hsiung outlined his strategy to Shu-yin. . . .

About three o'clock that afternoon, the car and guards again brought Wu Chien to the Political Security Bureau office. As he entered the room, Wu Chien saw a figure in a pale grey dress standing by the window with her back to him. At the sound of his footsteps she turned around quickly and looked directly at him with her deep, dark eyes. Wu Chien was speechless.

Shu-yin was dressed simply, almost severely, and she wore no make-up. It was three years since Wu Chien had seen her last. She still possessed that cool, sombre beauty.

Lovely—and deadly—like an opium poppy. . . . Wu Chien thought with instinctive revulsion.

"Surprised? . . ." Her voice was so low she seemed to be talking to herself.

Shu-yin's face was expressionless. When she observed Wu Chien's cold, contemptuous glance, she dropped her eyes. A chill ran up her spine.

"Where's Chao Hsiung?" Wu Chien queried, as he took a seat.

"He's gone across the strait. He'll be back soon." Shu-yin's voice trembled slightly. "I never thought I'd meet you today . . . and in a place like this. . . ."

"I knew that you were working here."

She looked out of the window a moment. She said she had been intending to quit, but that when she heard he had been arrested, she decided to stay on. . . . Shu-yin spoke rather breathlessly, as if under great pressure. Her pale slim fingers suddenly brought out a small folded paper from the hem of her dress. She handed it to Wu Chien, then quickly and apprehensively again looked out the window.

Wu Chien read the note. It was brief:

We are working to save you. Anxious to establish contact with underground. Please give necessary information to Shu-yin. Don't delay.

Hung San

Wu Chien returned it to her indifferently.

"I don't know the writer of this."

"You don't know her?" The note shook in Shu-yin's hand. "Look again. Miss Hung wrote it herself."

"I don't have to," he replied hostilely. "I told you. I don't know her."

"Didn't she shelter you when you went inland? You posed as her school's cook. . . ."

"Nonsense. I never even heard her name before."

Shu-yin turned pale. Her lips trembled. She couldn't speak. Abruptly she turned away, tears gushing from her eyes. But she dried them at once, and brushed from her cheeks a few tear-dampened strands of hair.

Wu Chien said nothing. Extracting a crumpled cigarette from his pocket, he lit it and slowly inhaled. Although his face was icy, his heart was burning like fire. He had no reason to trust a girl working in the Political Security Bureau, even though he had once been in love with her. The damndest part was that he couldn't tell whether that note was true or false; he didn't remember Hung San's handwriting very well. Miss Hung was a good friend of the Party, and she had indeed let him pose as her school's cook after he went inland. But suppose Shu-yin was only using this information to trick him? He'd injure Miss Hung, if he wasn't careful, and implicate other comrades too. . . .

"I know you don't trust me," Shu-yin said, lowering her moist eyelashes. Her tear-washed face was icy as winter moonlight. "You think I'm helping Chao Hsiung to trap you. What do you take me for? Even if you don't consider me fit to be your friend, you should at least remember that I was your student. . . ."

"You're forgetting, miss," Wu Chien said. "I'm not your teacher any more, I'm your boss' prisoner."

Shu-yin's pale cheeks flushed pink, then turned white again.

"It's easy enough for you to talk like that," she said with a bitter smile. "But did you ever think that in the three years you were away you never wrote me a single letter? If you had taken me with you, I wouldn't be in this place today! . . ."

"What's past is past. There's no use talking about it."

"I want to talk about it! I'm full of grievances. Who can I tell them to if not to you? After you left, you don't know how I waited for you!"

Tears again glistened on her eyelashes.

Chao Hsiung's puppet! Wu Chien cursed her mentally. You play your role well! . . . From his heart he hated those pleading reproachful eyes.

"Fortunately you didn't wait for me very long," he said. "Otherwise you wouldn't have got this fine job."

"Don't be sarcastic. Let's say I made a mistake. I ought to have a chance to make up for it. I was all ready to leave Amoy with Miss Hung. But I stayed, because of you. We want to save you!"

Wu Chien shivered.

"How fortunate I am," he said with a cold laugh. "So many people want to save me. There's your boss, who says I'm his saviour."

And there's you — my student and friend. I really don't know how to thank you all!"

"You're truly cruel. I never thought you'd repay my sincerity with ridicule."

"I'm speaking the truth, miss."

"Maybe I'm wrong, but as I remember, you weren't like this before," Shu-yin said miserably. "Why are you so different from that night on Malung Hill? Have you forgotten everything?"

"Let me remind you, Shu-yin. I'm a man whose head is liable to be cut from his shoulders at any moment. I hardly think it worthwhile to spend my last few days dreaming of Malung Hill! . . ."

He brought out another crushed cigarette and lit it. Through the haze of smoke he carefully observed Shu-yin's face.

"I may not have another chance to meet you like this," she said in an anguished voice. "Don't think I'm trying to fool you, I beg you. This may be our only chance. . . . If you don't want to tell me how to make contact, send someone you trust to see Miss Hung. She lives at the foot of Pichia Hill, Number 301. Please send someone right away, the quicker the better . . . remember, 301! . . ."

Wu Chien shrugged. "This has nothing to do with me."

In the next room there was the sound of someone opening a drawer. Shu-yin listened, cast another quick glance out of the window, then struck a match and burned the note in the ash tray.

"Whether you believe me or not, I must tell you," she said. "Don't they often call for you in a car and bring you here? That's our chance. We're planning to stop the car somewhere along the road and get you out. . . . Be prepared. We're looking for men to do the job right now. . . ."

It was all Wu Chien could do to keep from seizing her hand and shouting, "That's not the way to do it!" But he controlled himself. . . .

"Miss Hung says you have a relative called Wu Chi. She wants me to ask you — can we go to him directly?"

This upset Wu Chien even more. But just then footsteps were heard outside. Giving him a significant look, Shu-yin whispered:

"He's come back. Talk about something else." Raising her voice, she said, "Yes, it's a shame. Of all the girls graduating with me, only one was able to go on to the university — Hsiu-yun, do you remember her? That round-faced girl. . . ."

"Waiting long?" Chao Hsiung entered, smiling. He nodded to Wu Chien.

Shu-yin demurely rose to her feet. Pointing at her, Chao Hsiung said with the ease of an accomplished socialite:

"Remember her? When we acted together, she was our most loyal fan. Wore her hair in two short braids. She was just a little girl then. . . ."

Shu-yin glanced at Wu Chien, then at Chao Hsiung, and smiled embarrassedly. Wu Chien didn't know which one of them she was trying to fool.

"Yes. She used to come to the theatre with her older sister," Wu Chien said, to break the strained silence. "Time certainly flies. Ten years gone in the flash of an eye."

Shu-yin again smiled, and lowered her head. She evidently didn't like this kind of talk.

"I must be going," she said to Chao Hsiung. "I've got some work to do that must be finished by four thirty, and it's four already."

Chao Hsiung didn't detain her. As he watched her going through the door, a lascivious gleam suddenly came to his eye. . . .

Wu Chien caught the look, and to his mind it brought a new question, one to which he had no answer.

Returning to Cell Three, Wu Chien told his comrades what Shu-yin had said.

"What do you think of her?" asked Szu-min. "Can she be trusted?"

"What do you fellows think?"

"If you ask me," said Chien-ping, "it's a trap. No question about it."

"I think it probably is, too." Chung-chien looked at his cell-mates indecisively and pushed back the glasses which had slid down to the tip of his nose. "Maybe she's a plant. . . ."

"Why all the 'probablys' and 'maybes'? She is — for sure!" said Chien-ping.

Chung-chien blushed. Embarrassed, he again adjusted his glasses.

"She's a spy, all right," Pei-hsun interjected. "It's another one of Chao Hsiung's tricks. The beautiful woman angle is a favourite with that type of organization."

"I agree — one hundred per cent!" cried Chien-ping.

"Keep your voice down." Chung-chien peered apprehensively at the corridor beyond the bars. Then he turned to Szu-min. "Why don't you say anything?"

"I haven't quite made up my mind."

"Let's hear what you're thinking anyway."

"I look at it a little differently. I'm not so sure the girl's a plant. Judging by the way Chao Hsiung has been operating in the past, this doesn't seem to be his method. . . ."

"Don't be naive," said Pei-hsun. "He's not as stupid as you think."

"It's just because he's not stupid that I say he wouldn't pull anything so obvious as forging a note with Hung San's signature. . . ."

"You think he's clever, then?" Pei-hsun interrupted.

Wu Chien pulled at his sleeve. "Let Szu-min finish."

Szu-min continued. "In view of Shu-yin's former relationship with Wu Chien, what she told him today is not necessarily false. If she were trying to attract him, why should she weep? . . ."

"So you think she's on the level?" Pei-hsun exploded.

"Probably."

"*Ai-ya-ya-ya*," cried Pei-hsun impatiently. "You're relapsing again. Only a few tears and you go completely soft — just like you did with Chou Shen!"

Szu-min flushed slightly. But he only smiled and rubbed the month-old stubble on his chin.

"No matter what you say, I'm still convinced the note is genuine."

"It's positively a fake!" said Chien-ping. He plainly sided with Pei-hsun. "To say anything in the hands of a spy is genuine, is sheer illusion. Shu-yin couldn't have met Wu Chien without Chao Hsiung's permission. That alone proves they're plotting together."

"I agree with Chien-ping," said Pei-hsun.

"Me too," echoed Chung-chien.

Szu-min felt he was standing alone.

"I still can't see it your way," he said softly but stubbornly. "I agree that Wu Chien's action was correct. He acted with caution because he was suspicious. But that's not the same as what you're doing. You're insisting your suspicions are facts, without any proof. You're frightening yourselves with shadows of your own creation. That's not going to get us anywhere. If she's on the level, we're not only misjudging her, but we're hurting ourselves as well. . . ."

"Do people who are on the level work in the Political Security Bureau?" demanded Chien-ping, red in the face.

Pei-hsun, Chung-chien and Chien-ping all attacked Szu-min for his "softness," his "blindness." Szu-min didn't argue; his eyes were still crinkled up in a friendly smile. Finally he turned to Wu Chien.

"Why not give us your ideas? You're the one who's involved."

"I can't be too sure," replied Wu Chien. "My first worry is — what about Hung San? Is she still free, or has she been arrested? Is she or isn't she being watched? Is she still inland, or has she really come back to Amoy? I don't know the answer to any of these questions. I couldn't ask Shu-yin because I can't tell whether the note is genuine in the first place. I couldn't risk the safety of Hung San and other comrades. It seems to me we have to investigate; only then can we judge. This thing affects the fate of all of us. . . ."

That night, when Yao Mu dropped by Cell Three, Wu Chien told him what had happened. He instructed Yao Mu to check up immediately.

*

One evening, half a month before Wu Chien was transferred to the Amoy jail, Shu-yin had gone to call on her old teacher, Hung San. The older woman had just returned the day before from the interior of the province, where she was the principal of a primary school. Shu-yin was hoping Miss Hung would take her on as a teacher there, so that she could leave her job in the Political Security Bureau.

Hung San was about forty. She had taught school in Amoy for over ten years. Though married, she had no children, and Shu-yin was like a daughter to her. Hung San's husband — an old Kuomintang Party member — had been caught and buried alive by Kuomintang agents in 1927 because he opposed Chiang Kai-shek. It was a terrible blow to Hung San. She threw herself into her school work and educating children. . . .

Recently, in the interior, she had applied to join the Communist Party, but the application had not yet been approved. This was the summer vacation period, and she had come to Amoy to buy some books for the school.

Shu-yin hadn't seen her for five years. Miss Hung was older and thinner, but her spirits were high. She still wore her old-fashioned spectacles and spoke in the same loud voice. When she walked, the floor shook beneath her tread. She was the very picture of an "irritable old maid."

Shu-yin promptly told her all about her family misfortunes and how she had taken this job with the Political Security Bureau.

Before Shu-yin had even finished, the teacher, red to the ears, seethed:

"How could you sink so low! Don't you know that Bureau is a den of incendiaries and murderers? . . ."

"I didn't — when I first started there —"

"Don't lie to me! You're a high school graduate, not a three-year-old child!"

"Really, I didn't know. . . ." Shu-yin felt very sorry for herself. Tears ran from her eyes.

"Quit snivelling!" snapped Miss Hung. "Now listen here. I don't propose to help anyone who's an accomplice to those assassins!"

"I? An accomplice?" Shu-yin couldn't believe her ears.

"Of course!"

"But I never killed anyone; I never joined any of their organizations. How can you say I'm an accomplice? I'm absolutely clean!"

"Clean, eh? You don't get white cloth out of a dyeing vat!"

"Who do you think I am? I'm just a little thirty-dollar-a-month clerk. I only took the job to keep the family alive —"

"That's no excuse, miss. We may starve to death, but we never sell our souls!"

Miss Hung angrily paced the floor, her heels stamping sharply.

Shu-yin set her lips firm, wiped her tears and stood up.

"I never thought you'd be so mean, Miss Hung," she said hotly. "So you're going to abandon me to that pack of wolves! Very well, goodbye. . . ."

"Sit down," roared Miss Hung. She took off her glasses. "How dare you lose your temper? I've scolded you; so what? Don't you deserve it? Little nitwit! Can't take it, eh? Sit down. I'm not through with you yet. . . ."

The teacher strode fiercely to the door and locked it. Shu-yin waited, a bit frightened, for the storm. But Miss Hung, while continuing to berate her, showed a visible softening in attitude. Shu-yin stood with her head bowed, not daring to sit down. Behind the hard words of the "irritable old maid" she could sense the strong loves and hates of a direct, righteous woman. . . .

From then on, Shu-yin went to Miss Hung's every day after work. The two women often talked far into the night. Shu-yin told her teacher all that had happened to her in recent years, even her deepest secrets—including her feelings towards Wu Chien. Finally, she said if only she could get away from the Political Security Bureau she would be willing to put up with any hardships. . . .

"We've got all the teachers we need this term," said Miss Hung slowly. "The only thing open is a servant's job. . . ."

"I'll take it," cried Shu-yin, jumping up delightedly and seizing Miss Hung's hand.

"Now, now, miss, it's much too hard. You have to cook and wash clothes —"

"What's so hard about that?"

"— And sweep the dorms and clean the toilets. . . ."

"Easy! I can do it!"

"— And carry water from the stream for fifteen teachers, with no one to help you. . . ."

"Fifteen or double fifteen, I can do it!"

"Don't exaggerate, miss. Let me see your hands. . . . Humph, expect to do hard manual labour with those slim fingers? Forget it. It's out of the question!"

"Then what am I going to do? . . ." Shu-yin dropped her hands to her side. Her eyes grew damp.

Miss Hung had only been testing Shu-yin. Now she told her the truth—she could take her to the interior. As long as Shu-yin was not afraid of difficulties, she would do her best.

Overjoyed, Shu-yin threw her arms around the teacher and hugged her.

Miss Hung would finish buying her books in a few days. Then Shu-yin would ask the Bureau for a day off, and the two women would leave immediately for the interior together. Once there, Shu-yin would assume a new name to prevent Chao Hsiung from tracing her.

But before the day of departure arrived, Chao Hsiung told Shu-yin a bit of news that nearly frightened her out of her wits—Wu Chien had been arrested; he had just been transferred to the Amoy Municipal Jail.

"I arranged bringing him here," Chao Hsiung boasted to her. "Our old friend. I had to do something to try and save him. . . ."

Shu-yin shivered. She knew what Chao Hsiung meant by "save."

That night, she passed on the information to Miss Hung. The teacher was very upset. Only now she revealed that she knew Wu Chien; during the two years he had been operating in the interior she had often provided cover for him. Once they had fooled the local police by having Wu Chien pose as the school's cook.

"It's a very serious situation, Shu-yin," said Miss Hung gravely. "We can't just walk away from it. . . ."

"I know. That's exactly what I wanted to talk to you about. Isn't there some way —"

"We must rescue him. An important man like that. And he's our friend. From whatever angle you look at it, we cannot avoid our responsibility."

"I'll do whatever you say, Miss Hung. Just tell me what to do, and I'll do it. . . ."

They put off going to the interior. Shu-yin remained in the Political Security Bureau. All with the aim of saving Wu Chien.

Miss Hung went to the editor of the paper where Wu Chien had been working as literary editor. The man was a friend of hers of fifteen years' standing; he knew Wu Chien quite well too. Miss Hung urged him to write articles to arouse public sentiment in favour of Wu Chien being set free. But the editor didn't have the courage. He admitted that he was afraid the authorities would close his paper down.

She then called on a distant relative who was a cook in the jail. When she asked him whether he could bribe a few keepers to help

her rescue a friend, the old man nearly had a stroke. He begged her to keep her nose out of such affairs.

Next, Miss Hung and Shu-yin hit upon the plan of holding up the car that brought Wu Chien nearly every day to the Political Security Bureau. Where could they find people bold enough to do the job? Miss Hung immediately thought of the Party. She could see plainly that the thing was impossible without the aid of the Party and the masses. But how could she get in touch with the Party? The only Party member in Amoy she knew personally was Wu Chien, and he was in jail.

"For Wu Chien's sake," she advised Shu-yin, "you'd better be a little more friendly to Chao Hsiung. . . ."

Shu-yin complied. The result was that Chao Hsiung proposed that she "work on" Wu Chien. When the girl breathlessly reported this to Miss Hung, the teacher immediately seized upon it as a good chance to make contact with Wu Chien. But Miss Hung never dreamed that he would be unable to recognize her handwriting, and therefore not dare to accept the note.

That night, after Shu-yin left, Miss Hung sat alone, worried and perplexed. Suddenly the bell rang, and she opened the door. A thin, somewhat hunchbacked young man stood before her.

"Does Miss Hung live here?" he asked.

"I'm Miss Hung."

"Which Miss Hung, please?"

"My name is Hung San," said the teacher. She wondered whether the young man could be someone sent by Wu Chien. "What do you want to see me about?"

"Sorry, I'm afraid you're the wrong Miss Hung. I'm looking for Hung Yu-jen. Sorry to have disturbed you." The hunchback walked away.

Puzzled, Miss Hung went back into the house. A few minutes later, the bell rang again. When she opened the door this time, there wasn't a soul in sight. Something that had been stuck in the door fluttered to the ground. Miss Hung picked it up. It was a note. The teacher opened and read it:

Miss Hung,

Please come immediately to the foot of Jihkuang Cliff. I must talk with you.

Rain

"Rain"? Who could that be? Half suspicious, half hopeful, the teacher set out for the designated place. The road, which was near the seacoast, was very still. She had the feeling someone was following her, and her heart beat fast. She was just about to turn back,

when a slim figure came striding towards her, then halted beside a lamppost.

"Miss Hung?" he asked in a low voice.

Peering at him, she recognized him as a man she had met inland a few years before. He called himself Cheng Yu.

Another man hurried up from behind. It was the hunchback who had pretended to be looking for "Hung Yu-jen."

Cheng Yu introduced him as Yao Mu.

Mutual suspicions dispelled, they all returned to Miss Hung's house. She told them of the plan she and Shu-yin had to stop the Political Security Bureau car and rescue Wu Chien. She asked Cheng Yu whether he could introduce her to Wu Chi.

"Stopping that car wouldn't be so easy," said Cheng Yu slowly. "Let's ask Wu Chien whether he agrees first, then we can talk to Wu Chi. . . ."

The three discussed in detail their future co-operation. When they parted, the sun had already risen.

Yao Mu went back to the jail. Through the bars of Cell Three, he softly related what had happened at his meeting with Miss Hung. Chien-ping, Chung-chien and Pei-hsun were delighted, but also rather embarrassed. The night before they had all berated Szu-min for his "gullibility." Szu-min apparently had forgotten the previous night's debate. He only smiled and rubbed his bristly beard with his big, thick hand, while pondering this latest news. . . .

After talking it over, the inmates of Cell Three informed Yao Mu of their decision: First, Cheng Yu should immediately notify Miss Hung and Shu-yin to drop their plan to stop the car, which could save only one person, and start working on a general jail-break — which would bring freedom to all the imprisoned comrades.

Second, contact should be made with higher Party authorities, and they should be consulted regarding the manner in which the break was to be executed.

Third, Wu Chi was too impetuous. There was no need to inform him of the plan for the time being.

Fourth, in order to keep informed of the enemies' activities, Shu-yin should continue working in the Bureau. Because of her youth and inexperience, a comrade should be assigned to give her special guidance. . . .

"Also Miss Hung should tell Shu-yin to meet me as seldom as possible," added Wu Chien. "We don't want to arouse Chao Hsiung's suspicions. . . ."

At noon that day, Chao Hsiung again sent a car and guards for Wu Chien. As Wu Chien entered, Chao Hsiung greeted him gaily.

"Good news! I've got a reply on my application about you. Guess what it says."

"You tell me."

"It says you can go!"

Wu Chien looked at him steadily, not displaying any emotion.

"You're free! Released unconditionally! Have I got pull or haven't I?"

"Unconditionally?"

"Of course!"

"Really?"

"They want me to vouch for you personally. Naturally I can do that."

"Didn't you say there were no conditions?"

"A guarantee has to be given. Even ordinary cases require at least a bond from a reputable shopkeeper, and your case is a serious one. Anyhow I'll take care of all that. You don't have to worry about a thing. There's only one formality—write out a Pledge to Reform. Just a few words will be enough."

Wu Chien showed no surprise. He had been expecting something like this.

"Is that what you call unconditional?" he asked drily.

"A trifling formality. You could hardly say that was a condition. . . ."

"But I haven't committed any crime. Why should I write a Pledge to Reform?"

"You mean you won't?" Chao Hsiung sighed. "Here I'm doing my best to save you, but you won't even give an inch. What am I going to do with you! . . ."

There was an awkward pause. Chao Hsiung irritably paced the floor, the scar on his forehead dull and colourless. Wu Chien smoked in silence, as if he had already forgotten what they had just been discussing. As he watched the smoke rising from his mouth, his face was composed, dignified, completely serene.

*

Each cell in the prison had its own secret group; the over-all leader was Cell Three.

The prisoners read and held discussions, they analysed the imperialist invasion of China during the past hundred years, they exchanged their own impressions and opinions. Collective encouragement and friendship worked miracles on those who were depressed. You could practically see their heads come up; frowns would vanish from tightly knit brows; compressed lips would relax into smiles. Many men regained the courage to face the long and arduous days ahead.

According to Szu-min, in the two months he was in the First Municipal Jail, nine comrades were executed and twelve were sent to the provincial prison. These twelve were also killed not long after.

Everyone now knew whenever Crocodile came to the jail, that meant bad news for some people. He was the Messenger of Death. He would come stalking down the corridor, guards and keepers trailing behind him, with a list of "Sentenced to Be Executed" in his pocket. In a cold, quiet voice he would read out the names, and the men who went away with him never returned.

Still, no one got into a funk. Those who remained went on as usual. Those who liked to sing expressed the pride in their hearts with song. Those who liked to argue had hot discussions on points of theory. They seemed to have forgotten they were in jail. It was as if they felt that since they might die tomorrow they had better clear up the questions on their minds quickly.

Szu-min put it this way: "Chiang Kai-shek may have an army of millions, and we may die tomorrow, but so far as classes are concerned, the ones really going to their doom are they, not we."

He was a man who knew how to make the best of a bad situation. Every day, Szu-min read, did Chinese boxing, studied Russian—all earnestly and with genuine interest. Sometimes he played chess with Chien-ping, concentrating fully on every move. But even when he was deep in thought, his eyes never lost their kindly light, their silent smile.

Such men are like a pure bubbling mountain stream. No matter how rocky and dangerous the path they traverse, they still roll cheerfully on.

One day, as the setting sun hung on the barbed wire strung along the top of the prison wall, the comrades in the cell adjoining Number Three began to sing, low and softly. Wu Chien and Pei-hsun were seated back to back, smoking in the cell's deepening gloom. Chien-ping was struggling with a Russian text. Chung-chien sat cross-legged, reading a book.

"Szu-min," he said suddenly, raising his head as the thought struck him, "suppose Yao Mu should come along and tip us off that we were all going to be shot tomorrow? What do you think we would do? . . ."

Szu-min smiled. "Why worry about that? If such a day should ever come, I believe we'd still sing and do our exercises. We'd eat our last meal together and then, if Chien-ping were willing, I'd challenge him to a final game of chess. . . ."

Pei-hsun had smoked his cigarette almost down to the very end. He tossed it away just before it burned his fingers.

"I'd want to finish my Russian lesson," he said.

Chien-ping closed his Russian text and queried, "Chung-chien, did you ever read that poem by Nekrasov, where he says: *For the honour of our country, for our faith, for love . . . you plunged into the flames and gloriously sacrificed yourself. You gave your blood for the cause, a cause that will eternally remain. Although you have died, you will live for ever. . . .*"

"It's like a relay race, one passing the baton on to the next, lap after lap," said Szu-min. "No one knows who will reach the finish line. But one thing we're all sure of—whether we get there personally or not—our team is definitely going to win."

In the next cell, the song rose a bit in volume:

*Give me the red flag in your hand, comrade,
Just as yesterday another passed it on to you. . . .*

The men listened in silence. Wu Chien lit another cigarette. The odour of the cheap tobacco filled the cell. Smoke poured from his mouth, surrounding him in a swirling blue haze.

Chung-chien was a man of limited interests. He didn't play chess, he didn't like to sing. He buried himself in writing memoirs of his revolutionary activities. To look at this painfully thin old gentleman it was hard to believe that he was once one of the roaring tigers who led the student uprisings. Back in 1919 he had been at the head of the Peking student demonstrators who broke into the residence of the treacherous officials who were trying to betray China to the Japanese, and nearly beat one of them to death. Six years later in Shanghai on May 30, 1925 when British police fired on 10,000 students and people demonstrating against foreign interference in Chinese politics, he was among those hit, and nearly lost his life.

"I want to write it all down," he once said to Wu Chien. "It's eye-witness historical evidence. If I should be executed, it can serve as my last will and testament."

He wrote every day, as if racing against death. He had to be dragged out for exercise; at mealtime, unless someone took his pen away, he would forget to eat.

Crouched over the little stool that he used as a desk in the corner of the cell, the narrow-chested old man laboriously wrote without cease. He seemed to be pouring his heart's blood out on the paper. Dishevelled hair hung over his forehead, and sweat dripping from his face sometimes blurred the ink.

Although only seven or eight years older than Wu Chien, Chung-chien was grey at the temples. His eyes and cheeks were frightfully sunken; deep wrinkles grooved his forehead. When he opened his mouth to speak, his long pointed chin looked about to drop off. But

with his mouth shut, all of the goodness and suffering of mankind seemed concentrated in his ravaged old face.

Whenever Pei-hsun saw Chung-chien writing too long, he would insist that he move about, exercise, relax. Although Chung-chien would glower, he couldn't refuse.

Pei-hsun liked to invent funny stories to make the others laugh. But when his auditors were bent over with mirth, Pei-hsun never cracked a smile.

The day Yao Mu brought the news of his meeting with Miss Hung, the comrades in Cell Six were considering a hunger strike to protest the prohibition against members of their family coming to visit them. When Wu Chien heard of this, he asked Yao Mu to urge the comrades to be patient a little longer.

"Give them a hint that a really big change will take place soon!"

Wu Chien notified a number of key comrades of the proposed jail-break, and asked that they discuss it in their secret groups.

That night, the men in Cell Three began their discussion. As they lay on the floor pretending to sleep, they talked in whispers, with heads close together. Many ideas on the practical details were put forward and mulled over. Only Chung-chien had no comment.

Pei-hsun began by analysing the relative strength of the jailers and the prisoners, then talked about the time for the break. He felt that some time after midnight would probably be best.

"Most of the guards would be asleep then," he said. "There'd only be a few of them on duty. They are few; we are many. They don't know what's coming, we'll be prepared. Their morale is low; ours is high. We'll be able to seize the initiative. . . ."

Szu-min thought Pei-hsun was being unduly optimistic. He also disagreed on the hour for the break.

"Then what do you think would be the best time?" demanded Pei-hsun.

"About six-thirty in the evening."

"What!"

"Now listen to me. At that hour, most of the guards will be eating. Their arms will be left in the guard room. That will be our chance to grab weapons. With the guns in our hands instead of theirs, we'll have the initiative. At a time like that, whoever's got the guns, will win. . . ."

While Pei-hsun thought this over, Chien-ping excitedly asserted that he agreed with Szu-min.

"We can have Cheng Yu make contact with Wu Chi," he added. "He's got a strong force at his command. They can attack from the outside while we strike from within. . . ."

Wu Chien approved of the idea of a co-ordinated blow. But he wasn't too sure about Wu Chi.

"He's wild and undisciplined," Wu Chien explained. "Cheng Yu can't control him. The only one Wu Chi listens to is Li Yueh. But Li Yueh's locked up in here with the rest of us."

Chien-ping was pricked by a pang of conscience. He felt responsible for Li Yueh's arrest.

"Chung-chien, why haven't you said anything?" Szu-min asked.

Chung-chien hesitated, then stammered that he had some "reservations" about making a jail-break. He said after listening to them talk, it seemed to him they still had no feasible plan. Why not wait a while? he asked. Wasn't everyone agreed that the Kuo-mintang would probably be forced to stand up against the Japanese invasion?

"If that happens, the whole atmosphere will change," he said. "We'll be released. Why should we now risk—"

"You're dreaming! Coward! If we wait, we'll die!" Chien-ping sat up and angrily pressed towards Chung-chien.

"Let Chung-chien finish," said Szu-min, pulling Chien-ping back.

Chung-chien glared at Chien-ping. With laboured breathing, he demanded:

"What's the idea of calling me names! If you say something it must be right; anybody who doesn't agree is wrong — is that it? Don't be so subjective, young fellow. This is a matter of life and death for all of us. I have a right to disagree, or point out the weaknesses of the plan if I want to. For instance, most of us don't know anything about weapons. I've never held a gun in my life. If you gave me one, I wouldn't know what to do with it, and that's a fact! There must be a lot of men like me in this jail. Of course, Chien-ping and Szu-min are exceptions. But they're only two. Can they carry the whole show themselves? And another thing. This jail has a watch-tower, with a machine-gun and guards in it day and night. Have you thought about that? And another thing. Amoy is on a small island. If the enemy should blockade the routes to the mainland, how could we get away? When you're planning an advance, you should also map out a possible retreat. . . ."

"You're just an old wet blanket," Chien-ping said contemptuously.

Chung-chien sat up as if stung by a hornet. In the pale gleam of the corridor light, his sunken eyes looked like two black holes in his darkening face.

"Recognizing your own weaknesses isn't necessarily being a wet blanket," he retorted, his voice trembling with resentment. "Haven't you learned anything from your own failure? If we make a mistake

this time, there won't be another Wu Chi to come and take the rap for us!"

Chien-ping was about to give a hot reply, but when he saw the ravaged face where "all of the goodness and suffering of mankind seemed concentrated," his anger ebbed away.

"Everyone lie down," Szu-min ordered. "What are you quarrelling about? Let's talk this over sensibly. . . ."

Chung-chien and Chien-ping again stretched out on the floor. Szu-min tactfully indicated the flaws in Chung-chien's ideas, and Wu Chien and Pei-hsun both criticized him. For several minutes, Chung-chien didn't speak, then he mumbled the admission:

"Maybe I didn't see the whole picture. . . ."

"But the question of the watch-tower that Chung-chien raised is a very important one," Szu-min put in. "Unless we take that tower, we can forget about getting out. . . ."

Wu Chien reported what he had learned about the watch-tower. It had three iron doors, an alarm bell, an observation platform and a machine-gun. Day and night, six guards were on duty in shifts. It had been built after a jail-break twenty years before. None had ever been attempted since.

"There are a lot of other things we have to know too," said Szu-min. "How many buildings are there in the jail yard? How many guards? How many weapons do they have? . . ."

Chien-ping, Pei-hsun and Chung-chien were struck dumb. Then Chung-chien said, "That's right! How can we try a jail-break if we don't know all the details? . . ."

"Perhaps the information I've gathered will help," said Wu Chien. "There are forty-two guards in this jail, five keepers, one head keeper, one warden, one door man, three cooks, two masons, fifty-three rifles, nine pistols, two machine-guns. There are a total of 243 prisoners of whom 85 are political prisoners. All the buildings together have 41 rooms and there are 16 jail cells, big and small. Of the political prisoners, 5 are in Cell Three, 7 in Four, 39 in Six, 35 in Seven (plus 5 ordinary prisoners). The jail wall is 20 feet high, with electrically charged barbed wire on top. The watch-tower is in the corner of the yard on the left side. There is a telephone in the warden's office. The head keeper has a dog that barks but doesn't bite. . . ."

The men listened in amazed silence as Wu Chien, in a simple, matter-of-fact tone, poured out the figures. This was something they needed as desperately as a ship's captain needs navigation charts and astronomical instruments.

Now Chien-ping understood why Wu Chien had been asking Yao Mu so many questions the last few days, and why he had been strik-

ing up conversations with guards and keepers. Because Wu Chien was favoured by Chao Hsiung, those dogs were always very polite to him.

Cell Three's inmates continued their discussion. . . .

*

Shu-yin passed the word on to Cheng Yu: Chou Shen didn't know Li Yueh and couldn't identify him as a Communist. As a result Chao Hsiung's suspicions of Li Yueh were diminishing. A few days before, Chien-ping's aunt had been brought in for questioning, and the old lady corrected her original story. She now maintained she had told Crocodile the metal slab was Li Yueh's only because she thought he wouldn't take it if she said it belonged to a stranger.

After she left, Crocodile said to Chao Hsiung, "The old bitch must have thought I wanted to swipe it! . . ."

These words virtually untied Li Yueh's bonds. Of course the gift Li Yueh's wife had sent Crocodile a few days earlier hadn't done any harm in changing his attitude either. . . .

According to Shu-yin, there was now a good chance that Li Yueh would be released. Mrs. Li, on the advice of Miss Hung, also bought some presents for Chao Hsiung, which she had her friend the newspaper editor deliver to his home.

Sure enough, a few days later, Li Yueh was freed.

The day before, he and Wu Chien had a brief talk while washing their clothes at the faucet in the jail yard. Li Yueh said he had already roughed out a preliminary plan for the jail-break. The major problems that had to be solved were: first—men, second—weapons, third—transport. He said they would have to work fast because the situation was changing constantly. It could take a turn for the worse at any time.

Back in the cell, Wu Chien found Chien-ping and Chung-chien fiercely arguing in whispers over how long Li Yueh would need to arrange help from the outside. Chien-ping was putting it at a week from the time he got out. Chung-chien maintained Li Yueh would never do things so rashly.

"Li Yueh would want to make full preparations. He's the kind who makes haste slowly," the old man said.

"Never mind the textbook maxims, you old duffer! I'm asking you—How many days do you think he'll need to get ready?"

"Well, well, I'd say at least . . ." Chung-chien blinked as he groped for a figure, "at least a month. . . ."

Chien-ping turned away in disgust, as if the old man's words could actually delay the date. "Keep on waiting, then, old duffer," he said coldly. "In even half a month from now if they haven't cut your head from your shoulders, I'll be very much surprised! . . ."

Lips trembling, Chung-chien was speechless with fury. Wu Chien intervened.

"Don't overdo it, Chien-ping," he said sternly. "Other people are entitled to their opinions. And that's no tone to take with one of our own comrades. . . ."

Chien-ping hung his head.

"How many more days it will take to prepare isn't a matter for debate," Wu Chien went on. "We have to wait for Li Yueh to leave jail and size up the situation outside, then decide. There's no use getting all worked up. I'm confident that once Li Yueh starts moving, things will happen very quickly."

Pei-hsun made an ugly face at Chien-ping behind Wu Chien's back. Chien-ping grinned at Chung-chien rather abashedly, and the old man gave him an answering smile. . . .

An hour after Li Yueh returned home, he left to hide out in a relative's home in a small hamlet on the mountainside. The same day he consulted with higher Party authorities and made contact with Cheng Yu, Miss Hung and several other comrades. Lastly he sent a man for Wu Chi.

Wu Chi was delighted to find Li Yueh out of jail. Though he asked many questions about Chien-ping, he said nothing of Wu Chien, for he didn't know that he had been arrested. When Li Yueh told him, he was thunder-struck. Suddenly, he rose to his feet, a murderous light in his eyes.

"I'm going to see Chao Hsiung," he said coldly. "Goodbye!"

He turned and strode from the house. Li Yueh ran after him and tried to pull him back. But he couldn't hold him. Wu Chi was ploughing forward like a locomotive.

"Listen to me, Wu Chi," Li Yueh ordered sharply. "Come back. I've got something to discuss with you!"

That stopped him. Breathing hard, Wu Chi turned and went back with Li Yueh into the house. The weather was hot and his face was beaded with perspiration.

"Sit down. Acting this way won't do Wu Chien any good. Sit down." Li Yueh pushed him into a chair. "How can I talk to you if you don't cool off?"

After Wu Chi had calmed down a bit, Li Yueh told him of the jail-break they were planning. Before he was half finished, Wu Chi leaped to his feet.

"Give the job to me! I've got men—as many as you need! They do whatever I tell them! I'm not boasting. At one word from me, if they don't crack open the Amoy jail my name's not Wu!"

"That's not the way—"

"Why not? You want men — I've got 'em. You want guns — I've got 'em. We charge right in with forty or fifty men. Isn't that enough? There's nothing to it. You'll see. I'll get that Chao Hsiung and wring his neck. . . ."

"It's not so easy —"

"Who says it's easy! Do you think I'm a fool! Don't worry. I know you need strategy as well as force. I've had plenty of battle experience in my thirty-five years. . . ."

"We've got to do this differently. It has to be organized, according to plan —"

"Of course we need a plan. Don't I know that? Didn't I do street fighting with Wu Chien? I may be an amateur at giving out political handbills and marching in demonstrations, but if it's fighting you want, I'm your man! If I don't rescue Wu Chien and Chien-ping, you can cut my head off! . . ."

It was simply impossible to halt his flow of words. Li Yueh let him talk himself out, then he asked:

"Have you finished?"

"I'm finished," Wu Chi said, a trifle embarrassed.

"Good. Now it's my turn. I've one request. While I'm talking, don't interrupt. After I'm through you can have your say again."

In a calm, even tone, Li Yueh outlined the entire plan. On a piece of paper he sketched a plan of the jail and, pointing at it, indicated the physical set-up in and outside the yard, plus the relative strengths of the prisoners and jailers. Then he explained the proposed jail-break, step by step.

Wu Chi listened quietly, impressed and somewhat humbled by Li Yueh's intelligence and reasonableness.

"What does Wu Chien think of this plan?" he asked.

"We worked on it together."

Wu Chi smiled. He was very fond of Wu Chien.

"We've got to beat them with our brains. Our four ounces must beat their thousand pounds," said Li Yueh. "The idea is to rescue everybody without losing a single man. If we use our heads now, it will save the blood of our comrades when the time comes. Our plan mustn't have any loop-holes."

"Then you mean you can't use any of my men?" Wu Chi asked glumly. "They're all brave boys. . . ."

"Yes, but they're not politically educated, they have no discipline. One of them's liable to blab and the enemy will be tipped off. This is a job for Party men. They're steady, they have a strong sense of organization and, of course, they're very anxious to rescue their jailed comrades. . . ."

"Well, what do you want me for, then?"

"We want you to get hold of a motor boat that can carry about a hundred men. After the comrades break out, you will be responsible for getting them across to the mainland. We can work out the details tomorrow."

Wu Chi thought a moment. Then he said unhappily, "I'm at my best with a gun. Why don't you let me take part in charging the jail?"

"You can take your gun along. What if the enemy tries to stop you while you're at sea? Besides, none of our comrades know how to make the crossing. If you don't do it, who will?"

"All right. But I need a helper."

"Who do you want?"

"Old Huang Chung. He's a fine old fellow."

"No. He's too talkative."

"It's all right. I guarantee he'll keep quiet."

"Nothing doing. I know that old man. Two drinks and he spills everything he knows!"

"What about my son then?"

"He'll do. Bring him to see me tomorrow. When can you have the boat ready?"

"In three days."

"For sure?"

"For sure," Wu Chi said solemnly. "If I don't produce the boat in three days, dispose of me in accordance with military law!"

"Good," Li Yueh smiled. "There's another thing. Can you get us twenty pistols and ten hand-grenades?"

"So many? Those guards are a bunch of punks. Do we need that much force?"

"We want to take care of the watch-tower. We've got to knock that out first."

"Mm. . . ." Wu Chi pondered. "I can get you all the pistols you want, but grenades. . . . We've only got two at the moment."

"Two's not enough."

"I'll see what I can do."

"When can you let me know?"

"Tomorrow. I'll come tomorrow at noon."

"Right. I'll meet you here at twelve o'clock."

"Why not come to my place? We can eat and talk at the same time."

"No, I was let out of jail by mistake. They're liable to decide to pick me up again. I'd better stay out of sight. You come here."

Wu Chi burst into laughter. "You're too timid. The other day I met Crocodile and I cursed him and his ancestors back eight generations. He didn't dare do a thing."

"You and I are different."

Still laughing, Wu Chi walked to the door. As Li Yueh saw him out, he reminded him, "Be sure and bring me a reply tomorrow. . . ."

*

The afternoon of the third day after Li Yueh was released, Chao Hsiung got a telephone call from one of his superiors informing him that Li Yueh was a leader of the communist underground in Amoy. Fuming, Chao Hsiung immediately ordered Crocodile to re-arrest him. Crocodile rushed to Li Yueh's home. Mrs. Li gave him the answer that had been prepared for just this eventuality: "He took the boat for Shanghai."

On hearing this news, Chao Hsiung was ready to burst. Were it not for the presence of Shu-yin, he would have called Crocodile every dirty name under the sun.

The men in Cell Three were very worried about Li Yueh. But Wu Chien only smiled. He said Li Yueh was a man who could "predict the weather with one look at the sky!"

That night, through Yao Mu, Li Yueh transmitted his plan for the jail-break to Cell Three. He set the time at six forty p.m. on the eighteenth of October.

"The eighteenth! Good!" cried Chien-ping happily. "I told you once Li Yueh got out he'd work fast!"

"What do you mean?" Chung-chien grinned. "You said not over a week. Li Yueh left jail on the ninth. The eighteenth is two days more than a week."

"That's right, old man. But you said it would take a month — 'at least'." Chien-ping blinked his eyes in comic imitation of Chung-chien. Szu-min and Pei-hsun laughed.

The following day — the thirteenth — Yao Mu informed the political prisoners in Cells Four, Six and Seven of the plan, and told them to get ready.

But that night, just before the bell for bedtime rang, Yao Mu hurriedly brought some news to Cell Three that stunned the five inmates. Yao Mu had got the story from Shu-yin:

The day before, a secret order had come down from provincial headquarters in Foochow directing that Wu Chien, Szu-min, Chung-chien, Pei-hsun, and two other political prisoners in Cell Six, be transferred to the provincial penitentiary. There was a steamer leaving Amoy for the mainland on the eighteenth, and Chao Hsiung had decided to send them on that. Shu-yin gathered that Chao Hsiung would probably use the imminence of this transfer to press Wu Chien for the last time to "see reason."

The steamer would sail from Amoy the morning of the eighteenth, at nine. At six forty, the hour the jail-break was supposed to take place, the ship would be halfway to Foochow!

It was now 10 p.m., October thirteenth. From this moment to the morning of October eighteenth at nine o'clock, there were only 108 hours. Time was short, and Li Yueh was busy making all kinds of complicated arrangements outside. If they wanted to advance the date, could he change things in time?

"Does Li Yueh know?" Wu Chien asked Yao Mu in a low voice.

"Not yet. I went to his place as soon as I got the news. But he was out, so I came right back."

Wu Chien quickly penned a note and handed it to Yao Mu.

"Go there again and wait for him. Give him this note personally. We'll wait for your report!"

Yao Mu quickly left.

The five men kept their vigil until one in the morning. Then, like a shadow, Yao Mu slipped to the bars of their cell.

"The date's changed," he whispered.

"When?" Chung-chien asked softly.

"It's advanced one day. The seventeenth. Everything else is the same."

Yao Mu stole away and disappeared down the corridor.

All was still. From the street outside, the cry of a food vendor drifted through the quiet summer night.

*

October fifteenth.

At eleven in the morning, Yao Mu received a telephone call from Miss Hung, asking him to come to a previously arranged meeting place immediately. He hurried there, and found both Miss Hung and Shu-yin waiting for him. The girl's face was paler than usual. Without even pausing to greet him, she told him what she had discovered.

When she had gone to the office that morning, on Chao Hsiung's desk she saw an opened letter that had just arrived. Chao Hsiung was out. She picked up the letter and read it. It was from the provincial Security Department in Foochow. One sentence leaped out at her: *Execute Ho Chien-ping without delay.* Shu-yin nearly fainted.

A little later Chao Hsiung and Crocodile came in. Pretending to be busy writing, she listened to what they were saying. They decided to execute Chien-ping together with four pirates that night at eight forty-five. . . .

Yao Mu broke into a cold sweat. He rushed back to the jail, trying desperately to appear calm in spite of the wild beating of his

heart. In Cell Three, the men were eating their midday meal. When they heard Yao's news, they were dumbfounded. No one could swallow another morsel.

All eyes anxiously turned to Chien-ping. He was silent, but composed; in fact he was steadier than the others.

"Notify Li Yueh to change the date to today!" Wu Chien instructed Yao Mu.

"There's not enough time for that," said Chien-ping, grasping Wu Chien's arm. "Don't risk everyone's chances for my sake."

Wu Chien pressed his hand. "Let Li Yueh decide. If he changes the date, it will be because he's sure he can carry it off."

Szu-min gently pulled Chien-ping back. "Wu Chien is right. Yao Mu, get going. We'll wait for your answer."

Yao Mu hurried off.

Eighty-four men . . . all on account of me . . . Chien-ping thought. Suppose something goes wrong because of this last minute change? . . . It will be my fault. . . .

He saw that the others were looking at one another vacantly. Chien-ping took up his bowl and chopsticks.

"Let's eat," he urged them. "There's no use going hungry."

"That's right, eat," Szu-min agreed. "We'll have a lot to do soon. . . ."

"Why aren't you eating, then?" Chien-ping asked him with a smile. "Didn't you say when the fatal day came you'd still want to have your last meal? . . ."

Szu-min forced a laugh. For Chien-ping's sake, he picked up his chopsticks. The others followed his example and resumed eating.

"I'm sure Li Yueh will be able to change the date," Wu Chien asserted.

But the men ate with heavy hearts. They had no appetite. Even the voracious Pei-hsun soon gave up the attempt. Finally Chien-ping was the only one left eating. He stolidly finished one full bowl.

They sat around waiting for Yao Mu's return. Chien-ping idly turned through a book of verse written by the great poet Chu Yuan two thousand years ago. He read the line, *The virtuous in heart dies with no regrets* . . . and it gave him comfort.

Gazing at Chien-ping, Szu-min felt cold in spite of the muggy heat of the cell. He realized now how much he loved that boy! He didn't dare think what he would do if Yao Mu came back with a reply that the date could not be changed! He thought of the song: *Give me the red flag in your hand, comrade, just as yesterday another passed it on to you.* . . . Tears welled up in his eyes. How could he lose this dear comrade! . . .

It was nearly four in the afternoon by the time Yao Mu returned. Even before he spoke, everyone was eagerly scanning his face.

A smiling Yao Mu stood outside the bars. In a voice that trembled, he said:

"It's changed. To today."

"Today? Wonderful!" cried Wu Chien.

Tears flowed from Szu-min's eyes. He quickly lowered his head.

"The rest of the plan is the same," Yao Mu continued. "The break is still at six forty. But we could only get two grenades."

"Only two?" Chien-ping demanded tensely.

"That's right, two. If we could have waited till the seventeenth, Wu Chi might have got us ten, but now there's no time. We have the two already. Wu Chi brought them. . . ."

"Are two enough?" asked Chung-chien timidly.

"They're enough!" said Wu Chien decisively. "We can adjust our strategy to work with what we've got."

"That's right," Yao Mu nodded. "Li Yueh was also afraid they weren't enough, but we have to make the best of them. . . . Get ready, quickly. I'll notify the others. . . ."

As soon as Yao Mu left, the men of Cell Three gathered to discuss how to utilize the precious two grenades to knock out the watch-tower. . . .

In the cells, life appeared to be going on as usual. Men were playing chess, reading . . . the inmates seemed casual, relaxed. A few chatted with the guards, some yawned, some smiled to conceal the tension in their hearts.

At four o'clock, Yao Mu came on duty. Into each cell he slipped a few small bundles of weapons. Now, with the exception of Chung-chien, every man in Cell Three was armed with a pistol. Chien-ping and Szu-min each took a grenade. It was their job to dispose of the watch-tower.

All was ready.

Then Yao Mu, his face the colour of clay, came rushing to the door of Cell Three. "Chao Hsiung has sent a detective in a car for you!" he whispered to Wu Chien. "He's having a smoke in the guard room right now! What shall we do? . . ."

"Chao Hsiung's last try" . . . Wu Chien said to Szu-min.

Chien-ping pushed forward. "Don't go, Wu Chien!"

"Say you're sick. Ignore him," urged Szu-min.

"Ignore him? I'm afraid he won't ignore me," replied Wu Chien. He asked Yao Mu, "What time is it now?"

"Four twenty."

"Still more than two hours to go." Wu Chien frowned. "I'd better go and play him along. Otherwise he'll get suspicious."

"Let him! You can't go!" cried Chien-ping.

"No, we can't risk arousing his suspicions. He's a very smart bird. . . ."

"You mustn't go, Wu Chien," Chien-ping pleaded. "It's too dangerous for you. What if he doesn't let you come back in time?"

"I'm pretty sure I'll be able to manage it," said Wu Chien coolly. "But you all go ahead as planned. Don't hold things up just for me."

"He's coming . . ." whispered Yao Mu, and casually strolled away.

A neatly dressed detective was walking down the corridor, together with a guard carrying cell keys. To his comrades Wu Chien said quickly, in an undertone:

"If I don't get back, let Szu-min take over for me. Do everything according to schedule!"

Calmly as usual, he put on his shoes and went off with the detective. Chien-ping stared after him, misery in his bloodshot eyes. He might have made a grab for Wu Chien were it not for Szu-min's restraining hand.

"It's too risky, much too risky . . ." Chien-ping muttered.

"It's risky, all right," Szu-min admitted. "But I'm confident he'll come back."

"But what if he doesn't?" asked Chung-chien, his forehead knitted into a mass of wrinkles.

"He will. He knows how to manage."

The men waited, counting the minutes.

Five thirty, and no sign of Wu Chien. The men were growing worried.

Five fifty, five fifty-five, six o'clock! Still no Wu Chien. They looked at one another, their faces pale.

Six fifteen! Only twenty-five minutes left!

Although his visage was stony, expressionless, Yao Mu was plainly anxious as he paced the corridor. . . .

Chien-ping called to him softly. "Do our friends outside know that Wu Chien hasn't returned yet?"

"No."

"Tell them right away. Change the time to tomorrow!"

"Tomorrow?" Yao Mu looked at him in amazement.

"We must change it. We can't go without Wu Chien!"

"But they want to execute you at eight forty-five tonight!" Yao Mu was almost weeping. "Szu-min, shall we change the time or not? I've got to let the people outside know. . . ."

Chien-ping looked at Szu-min compellingly.

"Please order the change immediately. You must wait till tomorrow. You can't abandon Wu Chien. He's worth ten of me! . . ."

"No, tomorrow's too late," said Szu-min tensely. "Yao Mu, go out and tell them we'll start the minute Wu Chien comes back!"

"But if you wait much longer," said Yao Mu, "the guards will have finished eating and taken up their weapons again. You won't be able to seize their guns. . . ."

"Never mind. We'll fight them with our bare hands!"

"That upsets the whole plan," said Yao Mu, flurriedly looking around at the men. "And suppose eight forty-five comes and Wu Chien still hasn't returned? Then what? . . ."

*

Chao Hsiung was waiting for him when Wu Chien arrived at the reception room of the Political Security Bureau.

"I've got bad news," Chao Hsiung said sadly. "I'm awfully worried. This has come from the provincial Security Department in Foochow. . . ."

He showed Wu Chien a cable which read: *Transfer to the provincial authorities before the nineteenth Wu Chien, Chen Szu-min, Sun Chung-chien, Chu Pei-hsun, Ma Chi-cheng and Lo Tzu-chien. Do not delay. . . .*

"As long as you're here, I can look after you," said Chao Hsiung, watching Wu Chien's face. "But if you go up to Foochow, it's out of my hands. You know they wouldn't be sending for you if your case weren't serious. We don't have much time left! Only two roads are open. You have to make your choice immediately. Either you go to Foochow or you don't."

"Naturally I don't want to go to Foochow."

A sly smile stole across Chao Hsiung's face.

"Of course. You're making the only correct choice. Write out a Pledge to Reform. I can stand surety for your release. There's still time. . . ."

"About the Pledge — I'll give you an answer tomorrow. . . ."

"Tomorrow? Why not today?"

"Today's the fifteenth. That's still four days from the nineteenth. What's the hurry? But there's one thing I can tell you right now — I definitely won't be going to Foochow."

"That's splendid. I know once you say something, you stick to it. You won't change your mind?"

"No, I mean what I say."

"But I can't wait four days to answer this telegram. I've got to get a reply out, tomorrow at the latest."

"All right. I'll give you my answer tomorrow."

"What about the other five men? What do you think we should do about them?"

"You'll have to decide that yourself."

"If they're also willing to write Pledges to Reform, I can give them the same chance."

"I'm sure none of them want to go to Foochow. Let me go back and talk to them—"

"Chief, telephone call for you," called a guard from outside the door.

Chao Hsiung left the room.

A little later, a fat guard entered and said to Wu Chien, "The chief has to go out a while on urgent business. He says you should wait. . . ."

Wu Chien began to worry.

He told the guard he had a bad case of diarrhoea, that he had to return to the jail and take his medicine. The guard said:

"There's nothing I can do. I've got to carry out the chief's orders."

No matter how Wu Chien argued, the guard remained adamant.

Alone in the reception room, although outwardly calm, Wu Chien was burning to get back to his waiting comrades. The clock on the wall pointed to five forty-five.

Just then, through the window, he saw a girl in a pale grey dress passing along the covered walk on the opposite side of the small courtyard. He hurried to the window and, in a voice he strove to keep level, called:

"Shu-yin. . . ."

The girl turned around. At the sight of Wu Chien standing at the window, she gave a start. Then she hurried over and came into the room.

Before she could speak, Wu Chien indicated to her that there were guards just outside the door. Raising his voice for their benefit, he said:

"Shu-yin, would you please telephone your chief and tell him I've had an attack of diarrhoea. My medicine is in my cell. I've got to go back. . . ."

Wu Chien silently pointed at the clock on the wall. When Shu-yin saw that it was already five fifty, her face drained of colour.

"Please wait a moment, Mr. Wu."

Taking a grip on herself, Shu-yin went into Chao Hsiung's office and used the phone. Then she came out and said to the two guards standing at the door of the reception room:

"The chief says he'll be delayed. He wants you two to take Mr. Wu back to the jail."

"Right."

The guards led Wu Chien away. Shu-yin gave him a hasty glance that seemed to say: Goodbye. I have to escape too.

By the time Wu Chien returned to the jail, it was twenty minutes past six.

"He's come back!" Yao Mu announced excitedly. He was standing by the bars of Cell Three and had just seen Wu Chien enter through the small door at the far end of the corridor.

Chien-ping leaped up, peered through the bars, then hastily lay down on the straw mat. He was afraid the expression on his face would arouse the suspicions of the two guards escorting Wu Chien.

As soon as the guards had gone, everyone crowded around Wu Chien. The men were overjoyed. Szu-min and Chien-ping shed tears.

"What happened?" Chung-chien asked.

"It's a long story," replied Wu Chien. "Is everything ready?"

"Ready," said Szu-min. "We were just waiting for you. You nearly drove us crazy."

Wu Chien saw the moist eyes of the comrades surrounding him. He was very moved.

The hour had come for the men of Cell Three to take their walk in the prison yard. As Yao Mu calmly opened their cell door and let them out, he said in an undertone:

"Listen for the sound of the gong!"

Once in the yard, Chien-ping went off to the latrine, Pei-hsun and Szu-min busied themselves washing their clothes at the water spigot, Wu Chien and Chung-chien strolled about in the open air. . . .

*

Just at this time, on the opposite side of the street from the main gate of the jail, a young man who looked like a salesman for some big trading company walked up from the left to the stand of a cobbler. He pointed to his shoes.

"These need to be re-soled."

"All right," the cobbler nodded. He continued working on the shoe he was mending.

"I'm in a hurry," said the young man. He took out a handkerchief and mopped his perspiring forehead.

It was a muggy day. The sky was heavy with rain clouds and mist veiled the distant hills. Because the sun was obscured, a greyish dusk was falling early. Thunder rumbled from afar, but still no rain fell.

Now from the right, a "longshoreman" approached the shoe-repair stand.

"How much to put a patch on this upper?" he asked.

The cobbler looked up at his two customers and said, "Wait a minute. I have to deliver this shoe. I'll be right back."

He walked across the street and handed the shoe to one of the guards at the gate.

"Here, it's fixed," he said in a surly tone. "Take it."

The guard examined the shoe carefully. Then he jumped as if bitten by a scorpion and turned furiously on the cobbler.

"What kind of lousy repair job do you call this! You've cut a big chunk off the toe! And you've punched it full of holes! You dirty, no-good son of a bitch! . . ."

The other guard walked over and also inspected the shoe. Then he too heaped invective on the cobbler.

"Stupid bastard! Slug him! Take it out of his hide. . . ."

"Who are you going to slug?" demanded the cobbler, striking a fighting pose. "If you're too cheap to pay your bill, say so. I'll make you a present of the job. Use the money to buy yourself a coffin! . . ."

Somewhere nearby, a gong was struck several times.

The guards began to grapple with the cobbler. The "longshoreman" and the "salesman" hurried over as if to separate the combatants, each pulling one guard. Then, suddenly, in the middle of this tangle, automatics barked — once, twice! The guard on the left tottered backwards and collapsed. The guard on the right clutched his belly and started to run. Behind him an automatic spoke again. He sprawled face forward on the ground and lay still.

An automatic appeared in the cobbler's hand, too. A dozen men dressed as fishermen came up quickly from both sides of the street, all armed. With the cobbler, they swarmed in through the jail's gate.

When the gong sounded, the men in the jail yard also went into action.

Pei-hsun dropped the clothing he was washing at the spigot. Steady, unhurried, he walked up to the dining hall and quietly closed the big door with his still soapy hands. Next, he brought out a large lock and locked in the twenty-odd guards who were busily eating inside.

Yao Mu nimbly opened four cell doors. Silently, the men came pouring out; they surged forward at a run toward the guard house.

Chien-ping emerged from the latrine with a pistol. Hugging the wall on the left side of the jail yard, he advanced swiftly on the watch-tower.

Szu-min hastened toward the watch-tower along the wall on the right side of the yard. Just as he was passing through an archway into the outer compound, a voice behind him barked:

"Don't move! . . . Put your hands up!"

Szu-min turned around to see a fierce-looking guard levelling his rifle at him. In less time than it takes to tell, from the left came

a shot, and the guard, rifle and all, crumpled to the ground. It was Chien-ping who had fired. At the same time, two men on guard at the foot of the tower began shooting, their bullets whistling overhead. Szu-min ducked back into the archway and fired a shot in return. He didn't hit either of them, but Chien-ping dropped one with a shot from the left. The other guard scurried into the watch-tower like a rabbit and closed the big door behind him.

As previously arranged, the men who had seized weapons from the guard house divided into six groups. Group One supported Chien-ping and Szu-min in their attack on the watch-tower. Group Two surrounded the dining hall which Pei-hsun had locked. Group Three joined forces with the comrades who had come in from the outside to repel any possible counter-attack by the guards. Group Four moved in on the warden's office. Group Five cut the telephone wires. Group Six was the first-aid team; it picked up and treated comrades who were wounded. . . .

There were fifteen in Group One. With gun butts, rocks, clubs . . . they pounded on the tower door, at the same time maintaining a steady fire against the upper openings. The men intentionally set up a savage clamour; this frightened the guards who rang the alarm and rushed from floor to floor closing the windows' iron shutters. During the confusion, the comrades from the outside were all able to enter the jail yard.

In Group Two there were only five; these took up positions on the four sides of the beleaguered dining hall. The guards whom Pei-hsun had locked in howled and raged. Some grabbed benches to batter open the door; some picked up crockery and flung it through the windows. . . .

"We'll shoot any man who makes trouble!" warned Pei-hsun. He sent a shot through one of the windows to show that he meant business. The glass shattered with a crash. Immediately, the banging at the door ceased; the guards at the windows drew back like turtles. . . .

Together with the comrades from outside, the twenty men in Group Three hurried through the jail grounds, attacking the prison guards. They shot down four; six surrendered; the rest fled or concealed themselves. The "salesman" was the first to be wounded. Chung-chien, darting from cover to cover, was hit in the arm.

"Give up your guns and come out, and nothing will happen to you," the cobbler called to the guards in hiding. "Otherwise we'll shoot every one we catch!"

At this, three cooks, two masons and a door keeper emerged. Then, from every corner, keepers and guards also began to come out, hands raised, looking at one another sheepishly.

All of the captives were herded into Cell Six. The cobbler brought out a new lock and fastened it on the iron-barred door. . . .

Wu Chien blew a whistle — the signal to leave. The groups quickly gathered where Wu Chien was standing. Group One was still pounding away at the watch-tower door.

"That's the whistle," cried Chien-ping. "We've got to go pretty soon. We mustn't fall behind."

The fifteen comrades rushed off to the assembly point. Chien-ping and Szu-min remained near the tower, under cover, watching their comrades running towards the main gate. Their plan was that after the others were safely out, the two of them would then make a dash for it.

From a dark opening near the top of the tower, a machine-gun opened fire. The prisoners nearing the main gate put on speed. A few were wounded, and dragged along by their mates. . . . Men towards the rear were pinned down behind the inner compound gate.

Chien-ping's blood rushed to his head. From that dark opening, the machine-gun, like some evil beast, was spewing streams of flame. . . .

"We've got to stop that!" said Chien-ping, pulling a grenade from his belt.

"Let me take the first crack at it," Szu-min said, bringing out his own grenade.

"No, me," Chien-ping insisted.

Szu-min nodded.

Chien-ping took aim and threw. The grenade sailed into the emplacement opening. But it didn't explode! The two men were nearly frantic.

Again the machine-gun barked hoarsely.

There was only Szu-min's grenade left.

"My turn now," said Szu-min, looking up at the opening in the tower wall.

"Let me have another try. I throw very straight." Chien-ping's voice was full of confidence.

Szu-min turned his gaze on Chien-ping. He knew that this young fellow could throw more strongly and accurately than he. Without any hesitation, he handed him their last grenade.

Chien-ping again aimed carefully at that flame-spitting black hole, then flung his grenade. This time it went off. Shattered stone and timber flew heavenward. Dense smoke made Szu-min cough. The machine-gun was silenced.

Like water from an opened sluice gate, the comrades who had been bottled up behind the inner compound gate now surged towards the main entrance. At their head was Pei-hsun, followed by Wu Chien.

Two covered trucks were waiting for them just outside. At a signal to Wu Chien from one of the drivers, the men clambered into the backs of the vehicles, but without undue haste and in good order. The first to be helped in were four wounded comrades. A few of the first-aid men bandaged their wounds. . . .

A count was made. All were present except Chien-ping and Szu-min.

In the distance, the bell in the city district alarm tower began to clang. Its strident cry was charged with a half-menacing, half-urgent impetus. The men in the trucks grew tense.

"That's the alarm bell. Do they know about our break already?"

"They must have heard the alarm of the guards in the watch-tower here. . . ."

"The city district must know!"

"Of course they do. Just listen — that's more urgent than any fire alarm!"

"What'll we do? Szu-min and Chien-ping aren't here yet! . . ."

Wu Chien sat in the rear of the truck, anxiously watching the entrance to the jail. Time was fleeting, but there was still no sign of Chien-ping or Szu-min!

A bicycle came speeding towards the truck like an arrow. Comrade Tai, the cyclist, braked to a quick stop. Panting, his face drenched with sweat, he ran up to Wu Chien and said in a low voice:

"I just received a telephone call. The military police have left the garrison! Why are you still here?"

"We're behind schedule already," said the driver of Wu Chien's truck. "We can't wait any longer."

"They risked their lives for all of us," Chung-chien protested, a bandage trailing from his injured arm. He was deathly pale. "How can we leave them behind?"

"What are we going to do?" the driver demanded. "Sit here and wait for the police?"

Everyone joined in the argument. Opinion was divided.

Just then, one of the comrades who was disguised as a rickshaw puller came hurrying over. "You fellows go ahead," he urged. "Tai and I will wait here. I can carry Szu-min; Tai can let Chien-ping use his bike. We'll hide them in my house. . . ."

Nearly everyone agreed. Frowning and unhappy, Wu Chien at last leaned over to give the "rickshaw man" some instructions, then he ordered the drivers to start.

The two trucks set off rapidly down the road, leaving long trails of swirling dust behind them.

Already very crowded, the men squeezed as close to the inside as possible. The trucks flew along the city streets. Through a rent

in the canopy, Wu Chien could see that people were quite upset. Women were talking excitedly. Stall keepers were packing up their wares. Shops were hastily locking their doors. . . .

After making a number of turns, the trucks reached the main highway outside the city. The clamour of the alarm-tower bell was gradually left behind. It was dark now. Strong gusts of wind were followed by rain, the drops drumming on the canvas canopies. Soon everything was obscured by the driving storm.

At a lonely spot along the road, the trucks stopped and turned off their lights. In the darkness, the sound of the sea could be heard. They probably were near the shore.

Up ahead, a flashlight blinked. The driver of Wu Chien's truck replied with his own flash.

"Newborn?" queried a voice in the downpour.

Wu Chien gave the counter-sign. "Dawn!" He jumped down from the truck.

Walking towards him were Li Yueh, Wu Chi and Cheng Yu. He could hear Wu Chi's voice. In the glow of flashing lightning, they looked at one another silently for a moment, then Li Yueh announced that everything was ready.

Wu Chien reported briefly: Four men are wounded, but not seriously. Szu-min and Chien-ping were unable to reach the trucks. Two comrades have stayed behind to wait for them.

"We have to hurry back," Li Yueh said to Cheng Yu in a voice that trembled. "Save them. . . ."

The wind and the rain beat down savagely. Lightning split the sky, illuminating their drenched faces. Thunder boomed and rolled without cease.

Everyone came down from the trucks, the first-aid men assisting the wounded, and followed Wu Chi to board the motor boat.

It soon was putt-putt-putting away from the shore, heading out to the dark, tossing sea. The storm escorted them all the way. After crossing the strait, the boat turned towards the port of Paishuiying.

Li Yueh and the other comrades remaining got into the two trucks. Most of them went to various pre-arranged hiding places in the suburbs. Martial law had been imposed in Amoy. Cheng Yu and several others returned to the city, determined to find and rescue Szu-min and Chien-ping.

Translated by Sidney Shapiro



An Aged Traveller By Jen Po-nien (1840-1896)

WRITERS' FORUM

A GREAT DEBATE ON THE LITERARY FRONT

(Based on a speech delivered at an enlarged meeting of the Communist Party branch of the Chinese Writers' Union on September 16, 1957, re-written and supplemented after an exchange of views with a number of comrades in the literary and art circles)

Chou Yang

During the nation-wide counter-offensive against the bourgeois rightists, workers in the fields of literature and art have exposed and criticized the anti-Party clique headed by Ting Ling and Chen Chi-hsia, as well as other rightists, and scored a great victory.* This is a battle over fundamental issues in literature, a battle between the socialist line and the anti-socialist line in literature and art. It is a reflection in the realm of literature and art of the struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, between the socialist way and the capitalist way.

Literature and art are the barometer of opinion in any age. Any sudden change of situation in the class struggle is indicated by this barometer.

The duel between socialism and capitalism is a protracted one, which varies in intensity from time to time. During each period of hard fighting, the working class is thoroughly tested and steeled. And no matter how tortuous or difficult the way, in the end the revolution is bound to defeat the counter-revolution, new things and new ideas are bound to defeat the old. This is true of all social development, and literature and art are no exception. The tide of history cannot be turned back. The reactionaries are doomed. The socialist cause and socialist literature will inevitably triumph despite everything done by reaction to thwart it.

* See *Chinese Literature*, No. 1, 1958, p. 130.

I. THE TEST OF THESE STORMY TIMES

The last two years, at home as well as abroad, have witnessed a series of significant and remarkable events. In 1956, China completed the socialist transformation of the ownership of the means of production—the greatest revolution of our history. Changed productive relationships have liberated our productive forces and gratified the workers and peasants. But the bourgeoisie, because of its class nature, did not welcome this change. The wiser among them have tried to adapt themselves to the new situation, realizing that their only hope in the new society is in remoulding themselves. But the bourgeois rightists and their representatives among the intellectuals are not willing to do this: they refuse to give up the system of exploitation or the outlook of exploiters. They hate the new socialist system, hanker after the old capitalist system, and vainly hope for its restoration in China. They dislike all the new phenomena which have so gladdened the hearts of the broad masses of people. They find the present inferior to the past in every way. Like disgruntled old Nine-Pounder* in Lu Hsun's story, they believe each generation is worse than the last. The old economic base to which they are attached is disappearing, but they are unwilling to rely on the new; they despise workers and peasants, yet cannot but be aware of their strength. This is the basic reason for the unhappiness and uneasiness of certain bourgeois intellectuals, and explains why they make use of every opportunity to attack the people. In order to consolidate and develop our socialist system and to make its superstructure correspond to the base, a socialist revolution in the realm of politics and ideology is necessary and inevitable.

The reactionaries inside and outside China seize at every chance to strike a blow at socialism. Whenever the Communist Party corrects its mistakes and improves its style of work through open criticism and self-criticism, the reactionaries think their opportunity has come. The imperialists took advantage of the criticism made of Stalin at the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union to stage an anti-Soviet and anti-Communist campaign. This tide of reaction reached its height with the events in Hungary, and a man's attitude to these events was a good criterion of whether he was a true Communist and true revolutionary or not. In this crucial hour, the great majority of Communists throughout the world proved true to the international communist movement and weathered the storm. Quite a number, however, failed to pass the test. They became

*Nine-Pounder is a character in Lu Hsun's short story, *Storm in a Tea Cup*, who believed there was something wrong with the present-day world.

ideologically confused and wavered politically, while a few turned openly against the Party. Clear cases in point were certain "progressive" intellectuals in the West. The American writer, Howard Fast, was one of these despicable renegades. In his attack on the Party he said: "A life-long structure of belief lies shattered around me." This is the recantation renegades have made all through history. Clearly what was shattered was simply a veneer of Marxism that he had put on himself, not any true faith in socialism; for in his heart of hearts Fast was thoroughly under the pernicious sway of bourgeois liberalism. It is not a bad but a good thing that such a man has left the ranks of the working class.

On the Historical Experience of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat and More on the Historical Experience of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat, published by the Central Committee of our Party, analysed the new problems which had emerged in the international communist movement and pointed out that two different types of contradictions exist in socialist society, thus clarifying some confusion of ideas both inside and outside the Party. The call for correct handling of contradictions among the people, raised by the Central Committee of our Party and Comrade Mao Tse-tung, the policy of "letting a hundred flowers blossom, a hundred schools of thought contend," and the directives for the rectification movement in the Party issued immediately afterward, have all had an incalculable effect in consolidating and developing our socialist system.

Nevertheless anti-socialist individuals among our intellectuals drew encouragement from the international anti-Communist campaign. After the spring of 1956, and especially after the events in Hungary, they could no longer contain themselves. They twisted the correct policy of "letting a hundred flowers blossom, a hundred schools of thought contend" to suit themselves. In fact, the Party advocated free discussion and exchange of different views in the field of learning and free competition between different styles in the realm of art in order to develop socialist culture. For a long time to come we shall steadfastly carry out this policy. We believe that a monopoly position, without competition or comparison, cannot enrich science and art but can only cause them to decline. We believe that the working class is strong enough to overcome bourgeois culture through free competition and debate. The bourgeois rightists, however, interpreted this policy as a denial of Marxist ideology. They detest ideological remoulding. They asserted that a "thaw" had set in and that "spring" would soon be here. They did not want to start a debate in the field of learning or to compete in the realm of art, but tried to use this slogan to set afoot a political movement against socialism. Therefore when

our Party began to carry out its rectification campaign and called on the masses for their criticism, the rightists felt that they had an opportunity to remould the Party according to their ideas. The spearhead of their attack was first directed against the ideological and cultural fields. They were eager to capture these, and considered that here the line was comparatively weak and could more easily be broken through. Next they launched an all-out offensive against socialism as a whole. In a sense this was a good thing, for now the rightists have exposed their real selves and helped to educate the people by their destructive activities.

Which is better — the socialist way or the capitalist way? To be a revolutionary or a reactionary? This is the urgent choice before each Chinese. During the period of the democratic revolution anyone who opposed imperialism, feudalism and bureaucratic capitalism was a revolutionary. But today, during the socialist revolution, anyone who wants to be a revolutionary must oppose capitalism and go the socialist way. If you want to go the capitalist way you are a reactionary. The choice lies between the two: there is no middle way.

It is much harder for our intellectuals to pass the test of socialism than that of democratic revolution.

And indeed among intellectuals, writers and artists, many rightists have appeared, including a number of Party members who actively attacked the Party from within in co-ordination with the rightists outside. Chung Tien-fei's* *Gongs and Drums in the Film Industry* (in the *Wen Yi Pao* of December 1956) was one of the earliest outbursts and can be considered as the rightists' signal to attack. This article denied that the film industry had achieved anything since liberation, and wildly attacked the Party's leadership in literature and art, in an attempt to drag Chinese films back to the old capitalist line.

During this period revisionist thought cropped up among writers and artists. Rightists and revisionists alike were against the principle that literature and art should serve workers, peasants and soldiers and help to build socialism. They claimed that Comrade Mao Tse-tung's *Talks at the Yenan Forum on Art and Literature* was "out of date," that the principle of socialist realism should be modified or abandoned. Under such slogans as "write truthfully" or "intervene in life," they called for an exposure of "the seamy side of life," claiming that this alone was "the new path in realism." For a time it did indeed seem as if a great storm were rising: the wind was blowing towards the right in the field of literature and art. Thereupon some dogmatists of the "left" took fright and wanted to use crude, simple measures to allay

*A rightist film critic.

this ill wind. But of course repressive measures and dogmatism are powerless to defeat revisionism. The dogmatists were afraid to "let a hundred flowers blossom, a hundred schools of thought contend" because they had no confidence in the strength of the working class and the people nor in the strength of Marxism-Leninism either. Their "leftist" appearance actually reflected a "rightist" mentality. The Party resolutely allowed the rightists to speak out freely, for they were frantically demanding freedom to express themselves, hoping to devour the Communist Party. They lost all sense of proportion, betrayed socialism, flouted the Constitution, and went back on their own word. The Party has publicly stated that we are not afraid of poisonous weeds — we shall pull them up to provide fertilizer. We are not afraid of monsters and freaks — we shall use their vicious deeds to educate the people. We saw that there are poisonous weeds and let them grow; for weeds exist, and when they grow apace it simply means that the time has come for the working class to get out its hoes. It would show stupidity and a lack of understanding of the tactics of the class struggle, if we were to cover up weeds and not let them raise their heads, or try to crush them as soon as they come out. Such a method would certainly cause more trouble in the long run, and a greater effort would be needed to get rid of them later. The Party believes that the people are able to recognize poisonous weeds and to cope with them. The Party knows how to deal with class enemies. So the rightists among writers and artists, like those in other circles, exposed their real nature and seized this chance to go into action and form an opposition camp. Both sides were pleased, the rightists, i.e. the reactionaries, because they believed the Communists would soon be overthrown and capitalism would return, the revolutionaries because now that these monsters and freaks were coming out en masse into the open it would be easy to deal with them.

The rightists fondly hoped that the Hungarian events would be repeated in China. Just as the Hungarian reactionaries opposed the revolution with the names of Kossuth and Petofi on their lips, the Chinese rightists used the Party's rectification movement to oppose socialism in 1957 by calling for a "new May the Fourth Movement." These were the days when Ting Ling's eyes gleamed with joy, as the rightist Li Yu-jan has related. Feng Hsueh-feng, too, had never been so elated. "The flood has swept up to the gate!" he said, and urged all those who were dissatisfied with the Party and the people's government to "avenge all wrongs" and use "stormy . . . big democracy" to oppose the leadership of the Party and the government. Even Chen Yung,* usually so inactive, said, "The eve of a momentous

*A rightist critic.

change has come." Later Chung Tien-fei in his self-criticism confessed: "I re-enacted a Hungarian event in my mind." This was a true confession. It was very natural, then, that rightists inside and outside the Party should join forces to attack it. The anti-Party clique of Ting Ling and Chen Chi-hsia plotted with the rightists of the daily *Wen Wei Pao*, hoping that this newspaper would support them openly and help them to split the literary and art circles and overthrow the leadership of the Party. Ai Ching* acted as their go-between. Feng Hsueh-feng in the People's Literature Publishing House where he was the editor-in-chief became the patron of rightists. The anti-Party clique of Chiang Feng in the Central Institute of Fine Arts cooperated so closely with the rightists of the Democratic League there that they could say, "The Democratic League and the Party have merged." What were they if not renegades, these men who called themselves Communists yet joined forces with reaction to fight the Party from within instead of defending the interests of the working class when the cause of socialism was attacked?

The anti-Party activities of Ting Ling, Chen Chi-hsia, Feng Hsueh-feng and others like them are no recent development. They did the same thing fifteen years ago, when the revolution was undergoing its severest trials, when the fascists threatened to enslave the whole world, when Hitler's army occupied a large section of Soviet territory, when Yen-an was closely besieged by the Kuomintang reactionaries, when the people and the guerrillas behind the enemy's lines were carrying on a life and death struggle with the Japanese invaders.** That was the time Ting Ling, Chen Chi-hsia and their friends in Yen-an chose to stab the revolution in the back by allying themselves with bad characters like Wang Shih-wei and Hsiao Chun and publishing in the newspaper supplement which they edited a series of reactionary articles including *The Wild Lily* and *Some Thoughts on Women's Day*. These writings were very quickly acclaimed by the Kuomintang reactionaries. At the same time Feng Hsueh-feng, in Kuomintang-controlled territory, supported Hu Feng's clique and shot poisoned arrows at the Party and at Marxism. Although in different places, they chose the same moment to act in unison and strike a blow against the Party. This illustrates a law of history: When the class conflict sharpens and a turning-point is reached in the revolution, there will always be traitors in the Party who waver and act in the interests of other classes. Unable to withstand the test, they expose their real natures.

*A rightist poet.

**See *Re-examination* on p. 153 in this issue.

Fifteen years ago there was a turning-point in history. The battle of Stalingrad changed the international situation, and our Party's first rectification movement laid the foundation for the victory of the Chinese people's revolution. Today, fifteen years later, another turning-point has been reached in history. The anti-Soviet and anti-Communist campaign, which reached its climax with the events in Hungary, has been repulsed; the socialist countries and the Communist Parties in different lands are united and powerful as never before; the Soviet Union has taken the foremost lead in the world in the field of science and technology; our Party has initiated a second rectification movement and successfully defeated the attack of the rightists, thus guaranteeing decisive victory in the socialist revolution. It is no accident that during these two turning-points in history and the two rectification movements of our Party, Ting Ling and the others played an anti-Party role.

The fires started by the rightists in literary circles have blazed more fiercely than fifteen years ago, but today the strength of the revolution is also far greater than fifteen years ago. The incendiaries have burned themselves and Ting Ling and others ended by exposing themselves thoroughly.

This great anti-rightist debate has been a profound education for all of us, including myself. The vast majority of our writers and artists are more resolute now in their support of socialism, and their socialist enthusiasm has soared. The only way out for the rightists is to repent without reserve and make a fresh start: no other path is open to them. The Party and the people are willing to help them reform themselves, but this must depend mainly on their own efforts.

II. TWO IRRECONCILABLE WORLD VIEWS

The question may be asked: How could Ting Ling and Feng Hsueh-feng, who were old Party members and left-wing writers, turn into rightists? What lessons can we draw from their cases?

To answer this, we must look back at the road which intellectuals like ourselves have travelled. Among us many come from feudal landlord families in decline or from other exploiting classes, and in so far as our education and world outlook are concerned we were basically bourgeois intellectuals. The May the Fourth cultural movement brought us democracy, science, and the new ideas of socialism. We eagerly absorbed everything new from abroad, unable at the time to differentiate between anarchism and socialism, between individual-

ism and collectivism. Nietzsche, Kropotkin and Karl Marx attracted us almost equally. It was not till later that we came to see that Marxism-Leninism was the only truth and the weapon for the liberation of mankind. But though we dedicated ourselves to the cause of liberation, the working-class cause, no fundamental change took place in our bourgeois individualist outlook, emotions and habits. We believed in communism in the abstract, but our actions were often motivated by personal ambitions and the longing to prove ourselves heroes. We were not in close touch with the workers and peasants, and seldom even approached them. The democratic revolution was our immediate goal, the socialist revolution a distant ideal. Many of us were really petty-bourgeois revolutionary democrats rather than proletarian revolutionaries. For a long time we were strongly influenced by individualism. At first we associated it with such concepts as "the emancipation of the personality" or "independence of character," and it encouraged us in our fight against feudal oppression and for freedom. Many outstanding works of literature in nineteenth century Europe describe the conflict between the individual and society, the revolt against social conventions, the fight of the lonely anarchist; and these made a very deep impression on us. We revered Ibsen and cherished his famous dictum: "The strongest man in the world is he who stands most alone." Many of us took the revolutionary path after struggling as individualists, joining the revolution with our individualist outlook unimpaired.

Bourgeois individualism and proletarian collectivism are irreconcilable. Our aim is not only to carry through the bourgeois democratic revolution (which in China could succeed only under the leadership of the proletariat), but also the socialist revolution. This means that our bourgeois individualism has become the greatest obstacle in our path.

There are two basically different methods of dealing with bourgeois individualism. Some people by dint of a long period of revolutionary work, Party education, steeling in actual struggles and conscious self-remoulding, gradually become fighters for the collective. They determine to get rid of individualism, to remould their ideas and obey the interests of the proletarian collective. Their thoughts and feelings undergo a revolutionary change, and they pass from one class to another. To overcome individualism is not easy: often it is achieved only after a long process of stumbling and hard knocks. But once it is overcome, a man feels freed of a burden and light-hearted; he can then become one with the masses and with the Party, and so find infinite strength in the collective. Only when this happens does it seem natural, easy and right to subordinate individual interests to group interests. Men who have achieved this will be loyal to the

people's cause under any circumstances. Some other people are quite the opposite. They never overcome individualism, but always remain preoccupied with personal losses and gains, personal favours or grudges. Even after many hard knocks and much stumbling, they will not change their selfish outlook but go from bad to worse. Instead of remoulding themselves in the spirit of collectivism, they want to remould the Party and the revolution according to their individualist outlook. Self-centred and opposed to collective life, they are not one with the Party. The least achievement makes them conceited; but if criticized for any mistake, they are loud in their complaints. They cannot stand up to any serious test. When a crisis comes, they do not hesitate to betray the working class.

The majority of our Party members belong to the first type or are striving to join it; but quite a few belong to the second group, and Ting Ling and Feng Hsueh-feng are among their number. At an enlarged meeting of the Party branch of the Writers' Union in 1955, I said that the most important thing for a Communist was to be loyal to the Party. Ting Ling was rather offended by this statement, and during the first stage of the rectification movement in 1957 she indignantly demanded that I should explain why I had spoken of loyalty. Of course she knew the reason, for she had a guilty conscience and was afraid of this word. She is an extreme individualist, who has been consistently disloyal to the Party.

Frequent mention has been made of *Miss Sophie's Diary*. This first successful work by Ting Ling, written thirty years ago, will help us to understand her character and thought. The heroine in this story is a thoroughgoing nihilist and individualist. She lies, cheats and plays with men's affections, takes delight in the sufferings of others, and simply drifts through life. Though Miss Sophie is described as a rebel against the old morality and conventions, she is actually the personification of certain decadent tendencies in a class doomed to extinction. Of course a writer is entitled to depict all manner of social types; but everything depends on the author's attitude towards his or her characters. Obviously Ting Ling had great sympathy instead of condemnation for Miss Sophie. It may be contended that this story represents her earlier views, yet we find that many years after joining the Party, and even after living for several years in Yen-an, she continued to write such stories as *When I Was in Hsia Village* and *In the Hospital*. This shows that her extreme individualism, far from being cured, had developed into a sharp antagonism to the working class and the labouring people. *When I Was in Hsia Village* idealizes a woman who was taken by the Japanese army as a prostitute. It is significant that Feng Hsueh-feng, in his comment on the work of Ting Ling, described the "soul" of this character as "rich and splendidly great."

Apparently he and Ting Ling share the same tastes. In *the Hospital*, written in 1941, discloses her hatred for the working class and the labouring people even more sharply. This story is the epitome of Ting Ling's ultra individualist and reactionary world outlook. Here she describes Lu Ping, a young Party member with serious anti-Party feelings, as a heroine of the new society. Because she is given work which does not satisfy her impractical cravings, Ting Ling feels indignant on her account, and maliciously describes the needs of the Party and the revolution as an "iron yoke." In a situation like this, when her individual interests clash with those of the group, Lu Ping looks at everything in Yen-an with hostile eyes, and starts working against the Party in the hospital. The labouring people of the revolutionary base are presented as stupid and apathetic, Yen-an as a fearful and gloomy place, and all the revolutionary cadres from the highest to the lowest as beyond hope. Ting Ling makes her heroine fight "against everything," and writes, "Like one thirsting for revenge she looks everywhere for something to set upon. She criticizes everything. Each day she racks her brains to get the better of the others, always confident that truth is on her side." The "truth" Ting Ling advocates in this story is an anti-Party, anti-popular one, the "truth" of unrestrained bourgeois individualism. Many of Ting Ling's heroines from Miss Sophie onwards reflect the author's own character and experience. Admiring Miss Sophie as she did, it is no accident that she praised that vicious rightist Lin Hsi-ling.* She considers such women as strong and lovable characters. We can say that all these years she has had Miss Sophie's soul, but because she posed as a Communist her real nature was not easy to detect, and she was able to do great damage.

In the revolutionary struggle, a confirmed individualist breaks down before any serious test. As early as 1933, Ting Ling surrendered to the Kuomintang in Nanking. After being held as a prisoner by the Kuomintang secret service she became their friend, betraying the Communist Party and the working class. This shows the extent of such weakness. When later she went to Yen-an, she hid this episode in her history and deceived the Party. In 1942 she published *Some Thoughts on Women's Day*, and joined forces with Wang Shih-wei and Hsiao Chun to oppose the Party, attacking it stubbornly. This was a continuation and development of her anti-Party activities. The Party reasoned with her patiently, and when she declared herself willing to correct her mistakes the Party made every effort to rescue her and encouraged her to remould herself among the people. It was thanks

* A minor woman intellectual who launched a fierce attack on the Party among students during the early stage of the rectification movement in 1957.

to the help given her by the Party that she wrote *The Sun Shines over the Sangkan River*.

The liberation of China and the success of her novel brought Ting Ling fame and position. For a few years after liberation she did some work for the revolution, but then her individualism correspondingly developed until she forgot how the Party had criticized and educated her, and became insufferably arrogant. She used the authority entrusted to her by the Party and the people to build up a small clique, for it was her ambition to reign supreme in the literary world. In collusion with Chen Chi-hsia and Feng Hsueh-feng she made the *Wen Yi Pao*, which they were editing, into an independent kingdom. When the Party and workers in literature and art investigated the mistakes of the *Wen Yi Pao* in 1954, Ting Ling and her friends were outraged. They resented any interference with their "independent kingdom." From that time onwards their resentment rankled, and their anti-Party activities became more and more rampant. The counter-revolutionary, Hu Feng, considered them as potentially powerful allies. In 1955, the Party branch of the Writers' Union exposed the anti-Party activities of Ting Ling and Chen Chi-hsia and waged an uncompromising struggle against them. They made self-criticisms which they later admitted were not "from the heart." As Chen Chi-hsia said in his statement, their hearts were filled with "wild dreams of revenge." When the rightists started to attack, their anti-Party activities reached a climax.

Such was the behaviour of Ting Ling in Nanking, Yen-an and Peking, at important turning-points in history.

Now let us look at Feng Hsueh-feng's political and ideological development as it is evident in his history. Feng Hsueh-feng also did some work for the revolution, but his strong individualism and anarchist ideas were constantly in conflict with the collectivism of the working class and with the Party's organizational principles and discipline. In his self-criticism, Feng Hsueh-feng summed up his relationship to the Party in the following words: "When I was pleased with my position, I set myself above the Party. When I was depressed, I set myself outside the Party." In 1936, when he went from the revolutionary base in northern Shensi to Shanghai, he gave himself the airs of a special commissioner; yet he considered Hu Feng as his ally, and carried on the most despicable sectarian attacks against the underground Party organization in Shanghai, causing a split in the revolutionary literary front. This was a great achievement which "pleased" him. In 1937, because the Party failed to satisfy his personal craving for power he left it, becoming a deserter from the revolutionary camp. When the War of Resistance to Japanese Aggres-

sion started and all China was stirred to its depth, he stayed gloomily by himself. This was when his "depression" started.

In 1943, after he got out from the Shangjao concentration camp, instead of showing himself more resolute Feng Hsueh-feng grew even more gloomy and dejected. His essays in the collection *City and Country Fashions*, written that year, breathe emptiness, loneliness, pessimism and despair. People in his eyes appeared stupid and apathetic, existing in a "servile, low way of living for existence's sake." He had lost faith in the whole nation. The Japanese invaders had occupied large portions of our territory and were using propaganda and schools to enslave the population. Yet Feng Hsueh-feng chose this time to urge the "foreignization" of China, arguing that a national culture could be "foreignized," and "bear children through rape." (See his essay *Foreignization*.) In this book he also blatantly propagated individualist and idealist views, advocating the feudal idea that "A gentleman should die for the patron who recognizes his worth," and the philosophy of personal ambition. He said that "single-mindedness even in death" must serve "the man who recognizes your worth," and that "apart from showing loyalty to the power to which he is attached a man must also respect his own independent will." According to him, "This is a victory of our history." He also wrote that "the ambition of heroes is another manifestation of the sense of right which high-minded gentlemen cherish. At the same time, as soon as the heroes' ambition is linked with some practical cause, their virtue gains new life." (See *On a Gentleman's Character and on Chou Tso-jen*.) What gibberish was this? No wonder that after the liberation, Ting Ling, Chen Chi-hsia, Feng Hsueh-feng and the others gave unbridled rein to personal ambition and taught the young that "a gentleman should die for the man who recognizes his worth." Apparently they already had a reactionary philosophical basis for such arguments.

In his collection of essays *Forward Not Backward*, written in 1944 and 1945, Feng Hsueh-feng preached the subjective fighting spirit of individualism and praised the frenzied passions of the petty bourgeoisie. Much of what he said coincided exactly with the views of Hu Feng. We know that Hu Feng was in favour of frenzied outbursts. Like him Feng Hsueh-feng also said that our age and society "needs men madder than madmen, stronger than the strong. We need the struggle of the maddest and the revolt of the strongest." (See *Madness*.) When in 1945 the Soviet Red Army liberated Berlin, many parts of that city were set on fire by the Nazis and American agents; yet instead of condemning the enemies' atrocities, Feng Hsueh-feng praised this "epic" fire, this "epic" terror. He described the victory of the Soviet army which freed Germany from Hitler as "the scourge of real

terror," and liberated Berlin as "the city of terror." This dread of revolution and this frenzy have nothing in common with the sentiments of a Communist. In 1944 Feng Hsueh-feng published an essay entitled *On Friendship*. Though he had just left a Kuomintang concentration camp, instead of showing any hatred for the class enemy he emphasized his "abounding love for all men," affirming that this was the "basic demand" of all men. This is hard enough to understand, but even stranger is the special emphasis he placed on "love" and "loyalty" to friends. He claimed that if a friend wanted to turn renegade, "not to stop or argue with this friend or comrade, but simply to inform society or his organization may show loyalty to society or that organization, but is treachery to the friend or comrade — something rather vicious and terrifying." Obviously in his eyes personal friendship comes before the interests of the Party and the people. As a matter of fact, Feng Hsueh-feng's words and deeds on every occasion show that he had loyalty only for the bourgeoisie not for the proletariat: he had loyalty and love only for himself and good friends like Hu Feng and Ting Ling, but not for the Party and the people. I have quoted at some length from the essays Feng Hsueh-feng wrote between 1943 and 1945, to reveal the true thoughts and feelings of this "Communist" during the days when dark clouds covered the whole world.

In 1949 China was liberated, but instead of feeling elated Feng Hsueh-feng was downcast. In his own words, he felt "like a pebble kicked out of the way." This is not strange in the least. He took a gloomy view of the victory of the revolution just as he did of all new things. This gloom is characteristic of individualists like Feng Hsueh-feng. When our country entered upon the socialist revolution, Feng Hsueh-feng's antagonism and distaste for the socialist system and socialist culture increased. His spirits sank lower and lower, he grew more and more impatient. Thus when the rightists launched their attack, his long repressed antipathy for the Party flared up, and his anti-Party conspiracy in association with Ting Ling and others was completely exposed.

Though Ting Ling and Feng Hsueh-feng were Party members of more than twenty years' standing, judging by their world outlook and their behaviour over a long period, they were actually a bourgeois literary aristocracy inside the Party, ambitious, individualist adventurers. In face of the enemy they showed extreme weakness, but within the revolutionary ranks they often stirred up trouble. They refused to remould their ideas according to the needs of the Party and the revolution. Instead they wanted to remould the Party and our society, and our literature and art first of all, in accordance with their bourgeois individualist outlook.

Many people have rightly pointed out the error of Ting Ling's "one-book theory."* This was worth doing. Here we have a struggle between two world outlooks, two basically different attitudes towards literature. Should we consider writing as a part of socialist construction, or merely as a means to win fame and profit for the individual? Should we educate young writers with the first—the communist—view, or with the second, with bourgeois individualism?

We hope all writers will produce good books, and more than one of them. Without these there will be no literature. But this "one-book theory" is harmful to our literary work and prevents authors from writing well. Advocates of the "one-book theory" look on writing as a means to satisfy their personal ambitions, and imagine that after producing one successful book they can start making demands on society and remain above the masses. "With one good book your position is unassailable," they maintain. Not a few of our writers and artists hold this view. After writing one book, painting one picture, making one film or gaining a little fame they look down on everyone. The greater their individual fame, the less the Party and the people mean to them, and the more divorced they become in thought and feeling from the masses. They think the people are indebted to them and should show gratitude. They forget that their honour was given them by the people. A craving for fame and profit, as well as conceit, are at the root of the decadence of many writers and artists in their personal life and in their political outlook.

Writers with this outlook consider writing superior to everything else and believe that individual talent alone can create good works. They do not realize that no work of genius could come into being if divorced from the struggle of the people around, or from the accumulation of material and spiritual wealth created by the labouring people through the ages. Only the labouring people, who have made history with their toil, wisdom and lives, are truly immortal. A book is immortal only in so far as it gives a truthful picture of a small fraction of the great deeds of the labouring people, only in so far as it expresses their thoughts and feelings and voices what is in their hearts. The ancients recognized three kinds of achievements: in virtue, in deeds and in words. Achievements in virtue and in deeds come before those in words. Without the people's virtue and splendid deeds, what achievement can there be in "words"? Unless you are the spokesman of the people, what can you achieve in words? We have no right to feel the least proud in front of the people. If a writer's aim is merely

* According to this "theory," a writer needs only to write a successful book upon which to rest his or her laurels and with which bargain for power and fame.

to make money or become famous, and if after writing one or two small books he becomes complacent and arrogant, he is certainly pathetic and despicable. Such writers will never be needed by the people. As for those who use the few books they have written as capital with which to oppose the Party, their behaviour is even more intolerable. But in order to make young people their tools, these adventurers go so far as to utilize the weakness, ambition and lack of experience of young people and by encouraging their pride lead them towards the path of reaction. Ting Ling, Chen Chi-hsia and others used this method of corrupting our youth. We must bear this in mind as a warning.

It has been correctly pointed out many times that Feng Hsueh-feng's views on literature are basically the same as those of Hu Feng. Hu Feng is a counter-revolutionary who wormed his way into the ranks of the revolutionary writers. By skilfully hiding his reactionary past and winning public confidence by deceit, he was able to pose as a "left-wing" writer to sabotage revolutionary literature from within. Yet Feng Hsueh-feng always supported Hu Feng, and expressed the same views on literature and art. As far back as 1936, Feng Hsueh-feng opposed the idea that we should encourage writers to adopt the Marxist outlook. He felt that emphasis on the importance of an author's world outlook was "to harp on the same old mechanical materialism" in writing. Like Hu Feng he expressed contempt for the Party line in literature and art, and like him denied the principle that literature and art should serve the people. When they spoke of "popularization," they meant teaching readers their own bourgeois ideas. Instead of encouraging writers to identify themselves with the masses, they urged them to use their "subjective fighting spirit." They attempted to use their frenzied individualism to "grapple" with reality and "remould" the people. They showed a consistent contempt for national traditions and national forms of literature and art. Feng Hsueh-feng accused writers striving for "popularization" and "national forms" of petty-bourgeois "philistinism." In 1945 in Chungking when the Party criticized Hu Feng's reactionary views on literature and art, Feng Hsueh-feng defended him. He openly took Hu Feng's side and opposed the Party line. After liberation, the Party and the writers entrusted Feng Hsueh-feng with the important task of editing the *Wen Yi Pao*; but although he now paid lip-service to the principle that literature and art should serve the workers, peasants and soldiers, in actual fact he continued to oppose it. He tried to make the *Wen Yi Pao* a forum for the propagation of views of people like himself, and a means of increasing their personal prestige. In 1953 he drafted a report on literature for the Second All-China Congress of Writers

and Artists, and on the pretext of opposing "subjectivism" and "dogmatism" he voiced revisionist views and attempted to deny all the achievements in literature and art since liberation. His report was not adopted. At the same time, the Central Committee of the Party put forward the General Line for the period of the transition to socialism. The Party wanted literature and art to serve the needs of socialist transformation and construction, and to overcome and oppose bourgeois ideas, pointing out that active help must be given to the new forces in literature and art, that we must neither overestimate nor underestimate our achievements, but have confidence that great work would certainly be produced in this age. Though the judgement of the Party was entirely correct, Feng Hsueh-feng and his group would not listen to it, but clung to their own mistaken views. They did exactly as they pleased with the *Wen Yi Pao*, their "independent kingdom," surrendering to bourgeois idealist thought and suppressing or ignoring new young writers. The Party and literary circles had to intervene to correct the *Wen Yi Pao*'s mistakes and reorganize its editorial staff. This was the first clear break Feng Hsueh-feng made with the Party line in literature and art after liberation. Though at the time he made a public self-criticism, his clique never ceased to regard the reorganization of the *Wen Yi Pao* as an attack on them by the Party, and they harboured resentment. They would not rest content till they had changed the decision and could start again. During the first stage of the rectification movement, rightists like Tang Ying and Tang Chih in the editorial office of the *Wen Yi Pao* plotted to bring about a change in its policy, and at the same time planned secretly to start another journal for kindred spirits with Feng Hsueh-feng as the chief editor. Their avowed aim was to seize power in literature and turn the tables through their journal. Indeed, the rightists never abandoned their attempts to seize power through journals. Ting Ling, Chen Chi-hsia and Chiang Feng, vice-president of the Central Institute of Fine Arts, even schemed to cause an open split at the next congress of writers and artists which was to be held in October 1957. But the anti-rightist movement defeated their conspiracy utterly.

Today we can see clearly that it was no accident that Ting Ling, Feng Hsueh-feng and the others became rightists. This was the inevitable result of the protracted clash between their bourgeois individualist world view and the Party's communist outlook. It is not easy for a bourgeois individualist or one with serious individualist ideas to pass the test of socialism. It is hard enough for them to pass the test of the democratic revolution; but when it comes to socialism their individualism is irreconcilable with socialism. During the democratic revolution they were not one with the Party and the people either;

but as the main enemies at that time were imperialism, feudalism and bureaucratic capitalism, the contradiction between them and the Party was less sharp and could be concealed. When China entered upon the phase of socialist revolution, however, the bourgeoisie became the main target of the revolution, and bourgeois individualism, liberalism and other manifestations of bourgeois thought came under fire. Then they discovered that what the revolution opposed was just what characterized them to a marked degree, and unless they changed their stand they were bound to come into conflict with the socialist system. The further the socialist revolution advanced and the more consolidated the socialist system became, the less room there was for their individualism, until inevitably their relationship with the Party and the people reached breaking point. Wu Tsu-kuang* slandered socialism by alleging that the greater the strength of the organization, the less that of the individual. Actually a socialist society does not deny the individual strength, but the individual can find correct and full self-expression only when linked with the collective. The type of individuality required by socialism is one which can fit into the collective, not one which opposes it. Only in a socialist society can individual talents and wisdom be fully developed. But if we change the word "individual" in Wu's statement to "individualist," he is quite right. When the strength of socialism becomes greater, that of individualism will certainly have to become smaller. Individualism is the root of all evils in a socialist society.

In the world today there is opposition between the socialist and the capitalist systems, while within China we still have a bourgeoisie. Though the socialist countries have held unswervingly to the policy of peaceful co-existence among different social systems, struggles in the realm of ideas are inevitable. Capitalism and capitalist culture are declining and moribund, yet they still possess a considerable power of attraction with a certain number of people. Thus a thorough invalidation of bourgeois ideas will remain one of our most fundamental and important ideological tasks for many years to come.

III. THE REVISIONIST LINE IN LITERATURE AND ART

Owing to differences in class stand and world outlook, there is a fundamental difference between us and the bourgeois rightists in our views on literature and art. There are two lines. One is that literature

*A rightist playwright and stage director.

and art should serve the interests of the workers, peasants and all labouring people, give true expression to their life and struggles, and, in a way intelligible and pleasing to them, elevate their ideas and feelings, and increase their confidence in their power to build a new life. Literature and art of this kind accelerate social development and progress. This is the socialist line in literature and art which we advocate, and also the Marxist line. The other line is that literature and art should not serve the interests and needs of the broad masses, but only those of a few, simply expressing the personality of the writer or artist, satisfying his craving for fame or profit, and catering to the tastes of a minority. Instead of arousing the revolutionary enthusiasm of the masses, they sap their fighting spirit. Literature and art of this kind do not hasten the development of society but retard it. This is the bourgeois line in literature and art advocated by the rightists, the anti-Marxist or revisionist line.

The proletarian outlook on literature and art has always been diametrically opposed to that of the bourgeois reactionaries. Indeed it was in the struggle between these two that socialist literature grew. Socialist literature is a genuine literature of the labouring people, which attracts to its ranks all writers who are inspired by the great goal of socialism and are willing to serve the labouring people; at the same time it is constantly attacked, slandered and ridiculed by the aristocracy of bourgeois letters. For over twenty years, the proletarian literary movement in our country resisted the savage persecution of the reactionary rulers, and waged a sharp struggle against all kinds of literary spokesmen of the exploiting classes. We destroyed the feudal-comprador literature and fascist literature; we refuted and overthrew the false charges made by the Crescent Moon Society, the "Third Group"* and other bourgeois literary cliques. At that time, even as Lu Hsun said, the literary movement of the proletariat became the sole literary movement in China. Not a single reactionary literary coterie or clique could stand up to it. After liberation, we also criticized the reactionary tendencies in *The Life of Wu Hsun*, and the bourgeois views expressed in the study of the *Dream of the Red Chamber*;** we made a thorough exposure and criticism of Hu Feng's counter-revolutionary clique and their ideas on literature and art*** and a comprehensive criticism of the views of Hu Shih.

*The Crescent Moon Society was a literary group of the reactionary bourgeoisie in China during the thirties of this century. The "Third Group" was a literary group which was anti-Communist and against the people. It was formed out of renegades from the left-wing writers' camp at that time and later collaborated with the Kuomintang reactionaries.

**See *Chinese Literature*, No. 2, 1955, p. 169.

***See *Chinese Literature*, No. 3, 1955, p. 164.

The bourgeoisie will never abandon its attack on socialist literature and art. During the recent anti-Communist campaign abroad and in China, socialist literature and art have been subjected to a fresh attack. The revisionists have stepped out to cross swords with us. Most of them did not openly attack socialist literature and art, but used relatively subtle methods. They isolated and exaggerated certain faults in our literature and art, to smear socialist literature and art. Chinese rightists and revisionists aped reactionary bourgeois authors abroad in slandering socialist literature in the Soviet Union and our country. Feng Hsueh-feng asserted at the Conference of Editors of Literary Journals held in 1956 that the spirit of Soviet literature in its quest for socialism was not up to the humanism of the old Russian literature. Liu Shao-tang,* echoing his ideas, declared in a speech at the Peking propaganda conference in 1957 that Soviet literature in the last twenty years has fallen below the standard of the preceding twenty years, and that Chinese literature has also deteriorated in the fifteen years following the Yen'an forum on art and literature. Wu Tsu-kuang maintains that cultural work has been done worse since the liberation than at any earlier period. Feng Hsueh-feng, in his draft speech for the Second All-China Congress of Writers and Artists, asserted that the degree of "truthfulness" in our works of literature and art is extremely "low." To Wu Tsu-kuang our present literature, art and society are one gigantic sham. In *Talk Behind the Scenes* he wrote that in our literature and art he can see no "honest talk," no "talk from the heart." Why cannot writers say "what is in their minds," he asks. According to him this is because there is no "freedom for creative activity" in our society. Thus Chin Chao-yang says that because writers "have to peep right and left before each step, and feel uneasy... they dare not write..." They may "have the most stirring, important and controversial topics in mind," but all they can write about are "quite mundane" themes. (See *Table Talk*, published under a pseudonym.)

The chief arguments of the bourgeois rightists and revisionists against socialist literature and art are to deny or underestimate their achievements, to declare that they are not truthful, that there is no "freedom for creative activity." It is quite apparent, however, that this attack is not simply on literature and art, but on the socialist system as a whole.

How should we evaluate the achievements of socialist literature?

Socialist literature is a new type of writing unprecedented in history. No previous literature of any period can compare with it. Very few literary works in the past took as their main theme the

*A rightist writer.

labour and struggles of workers and peasants. The true toilers, who created the material and spiritual wealth of society, were not given the position they deserved in previous literature. Instead most writings dealt with landowners, nobles, merchants, the bourgeoisie and their spokesmen in the realm of politics and ideas. This was unjust. Socialist literature has brought about a fundamental change in this unreasonable state of affairs. The basic aim of socialist literature is to serve the labouring people. With unbounded enthusiasm it affirms and sings the heroic struggle of the working class. It describes the new human relationships in a socialist society, the new morality and customs, the new men who gradually shake off the influence of the old society, new characters and their fight with outmoded institutions and ideas. No previous literature has made such a powerful affirmation of life and reality as socialist literature, or shown such firm faith in mankind and its future, such faith in the people's boundless creative power. No literature before this has known such complete freedom of thought and feeling, or possessed such optimism, such heroism, and such lofty aspirations. As a positive method of moral education, our literature is most widely supported and loved. The circulation of a fairly good book runs into several hundreds of thousands, while a good film today is seen by tens of millions. There was nothing comparable to this in the past. Now that the people have become the masters of their culture, they take a keen interest in it and consider it an important and integral part of their own great programme of construction. Writers no longer stand above or outside the people, but among them, for they consider it their sacred duty to have intimate ties with the masses and to write their best for them. Can anyone deny that such a literature is more advanced and noble than any that has previously appeared?

The great achievements of socialist literature cannot be brushed aside by anyone. Some bourgeois writers in the West and some revisionists in the People's Democracies took advantage of the criticism of Stalin made at the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union to shout that Soviet literature had "come to a standstill." According to them, socialist realism proved that Soviet literature had "gone downhill," and socialist realism was a slogan "thought up" by a minority when in fact no such writing existed. Some of them not only opposed the socialist trend in literature, but, carried away by modernism and other decadent schools of thought in vogue today, completely denied realism and dubbed it "out of date." But their clamour cannot in any way detract from the glory of Soviet literature, and suffices merely to expose their reactionary bourgeois views and prejudices. Soviet literature and art teach and inspire readers

throughout the world by means of an advanced world outlook and revolutionary spirit; they have inspired countless thousands to advance towards revolution, and taught countless thousands how to build a new life. The development of the literature of the various nationalities in the Soviet Union is another phenomenon hitherto inconceivable. National minorities who had no written language before now have their own literature and writers. What other literature could make the same great contribution to mankind? What other literature could have such a wide mass basis? Who can gainsay its value? It is undeniable that Soviet literature is the great pioneer of world proletarian literature, while socialist realism marks a new chapter in the development of human culture.

Our own literature, under the leadership of the Party, has always taken socialist realism as the soundest principle of writing, and Soviet works as its models. Of course, in learning from the Soviet Union we should not imitate it in a dogmatic or mechanical way, but accept its experience in accordance with our actual situation, using independent judgement and careful analysis. As socialist literature can only grow and flower on its own native soil, it must carry forward with discrimination the national tradition and evolve a national style. We have always made efforts in this direction. Because our literature is linked with the most advanced class, ideas and social system, its development during a short period has been unprecedentedly great. The rightists allege that not much is being written today, that we have a dearth of plays, and that we are worse off in every way than before. It is true that the culture designed for landlords, aristocrats and bourgeois gentlemen has not only dwindled but is about to disappear completely. But the culture needed by the labouring people, far from diminishing, is greater than ever before. This is plain to all but those rightists who deliberately close their eyes to the facts. Our new literature and art are gradually penetrating to the factories, villages and army. The number of writers who come from working-class or peasant families or are engaged in productive work is continually increasing. Competent writers have also appeared among our national minorities. More and more writing is being done by workers and peasants in their spare time. There are hundreds of thousands of village repertory companies, and the peasants have produced tens of thousands of plays. Naturally the rightists despise works written by the masses, but from the unprecedented scope of popular cultural activities today we can see the future of Chinese literature and art. We have always emphasized the need to popularize literature and art, and encouraged the development of spare-time writing on a large scale by our workers and peasants. This mass line in literature and art guarantees that these fields will

show ever-increasing activity and that higher and higher standards will be attained. We have never been satisfied with our achievements in this respect, however, for they still fall far short of our people's wishes and needs. It is undeniable that today we still have too few good works, and few of our modern writers have been able to equal, let alone surpass our great predecessors. Many of our writers still lack the power to present the essential spirit of this society and age in a highly artistic form. But this is nothing strange. A considerable length of time is required before the literature of a new epoch can attain maturity.

Socialist literature is still relatively young. Barely fifty years have passed in the history of Soviet literature since Gorky published *Mother* in 1907. And as for the new literary movement in China, less than forty years have passed since the May the Fourth Movement; while strictly speaking it is only since the Yen-an forum on art and literature — little over fifteen years ago — that it has clearly and consciously taken the line of serving the workers and peasants and socialism. This is a very short period compared with the two thousand years of feudal literature in China and the four or five hundred years of bourgeois literature in Europe. How can we use the same yardstick to measure the achievements of centuries and those of a few decades? But when our writers gain a thorough understanding of the age in which we live and become genuinely integrated with the labouring people, when they fully master our fine literary heritage and when literature has a firm, new mass base, then socialist literature will rapidly reach and surpass the literature of all previous ages, not only as regards its content but also in respect to artistic form. We have always been confident of this, and every day we are creating the conditions needed to reach this goal.

Not until 1957 did we start a thoroughgoing and nation-wide socialist revolution on the ideological and political fronts. A mortal blow was struck at the reactionary ideas of the bourgeoisie, the potential strength of our writers and artists and of the new forces in these fields was liberated, the fetters the old society put on them were removed, the lowering clouds of reaction were swept away, and a broad prospective for proletarian literature and art was opened. Prior to this, the historical task of the revolution was not completed. This path-clearing work must be continued. The work of clearing away the old enemy strongholds is not something that can be completed in one year. But the way is basically open for large forces of proletarian writers and artists to advance quickly. We need to build an army and train soldiers in the sphere of culture too. A completely new army is now being formed for proletarian literature and art. This must coin-

cide with the building of an army of proletarian intellectuals, and we shall reap the benefits of both at approximately the same time. Only those who do not understand historical materialism can doubt this.

Socialist literature and art must take over all the finest traditions of past civilization, and our writers must learn from our forbears. But as our literature and art are socialist, their ideological basis must be the communist world outlook; hence, as pointed out in the *Communist Manifesto*, they must make "the most radical rupture with traditional ideas." Otherwise they will be like those "true socialist" poets criticized in the Manifesto who called their work "socialist" when in reality it was bourgeois. We respect tradition, but this does not mean, as Chung Tien-fei proposes, a retreat into the past. We must accept and carry forward our traditions on a new ideological basis. Our literature and art should educate the people with communist ideas, and not go on imparting feudal or bourgeois ideas. Feng Hsueh-feng urged the editors of *Poetry* magazine to make it a nineteenth century or twenty-first century publication — not a twentieth century one. By this he meant that he wanted our poets to cut themselves off from present-day realities and the struggles of the people. He wanted them to step into the shoes of the nineteenth century Western bourgeois writers, to spread bourgeois individualism, not the socialist ideas of the working class. Revisionists hate literature and art that express socialist ideas, and do their best to deny the basic differences between socialist realist literature and art and the realist literature and art of all previous periods. Thus Chin Chao-yang says: "From the content and characteristics of realist literature, it is difficult to draw an absolute dividing line between the new literature and the old." (*Realism — a Wide Path.*) No absolute dividing line exists in anything in the world; but by playing down differences we blur our understanding of things and deny their fundamental differences. Chin Chao-yang's statement in fact merely denies the class character of literature and art, and the revolutionary significance of socialist literature and art. In essence, he is trying to substitute bourgeois for socialist culture.

How should we approach the question of truthfulness in literature and art? Without doubt, they must be truthful, for otherwise they have no value and the people do not need them. The question is: What is truthfulness? From what standpoint should writers and artists describe the truth, and what should their aim be?

First of all it should be affirmed that socialist literature and art are the most truthful in the world, because the working class is the most advanced class and it has never been afraid to disclose the truth about life. Only the exploiting classes, who want to hoodwink the people, have to draw a veil over the truth. It is precisely socialist

literature and art that give truthful expression to the epic achievements of the masses who, by labour and struggle, change the world and themselves in the process, and describe the complex phenomena of the class struggle which impels society forward, and the struggle between the new and the old. This literature and art have moved the hearts of tens of millions in this new age. What other literature in the world can be as truthful as this?

As everyone knows, literature and art reflect life, and in actual life there are contradictions of various kinds. Marxism teaches us that the chief contradictions are those between man and nature and those between man and man. These two contradictions are expressed in the realm of production and in the class struggle; after classes are abolished, they express themselves as the struggle between the old and the new. Comrade Mao Tse-tung has stressed that when dealing with contradictions in human society, we must be very careful to distinguish between two different types: contradictions between the people and their enemy, and contradictions among the people themselves. Our literature and art have given us stirring epic pictures of the people's heroic struggle against their oppressors and exploiters. But an unprecedented task for our writers and artists today, involving a whole series of fresh problems, is that of describing how our people, after becoming the masters of their own fate, find a correct solution to contradictions among themselves, do away with the deep-rooted influence of the old society, determine the right relation of the individual to the collective, enable what is advanced to overcome what is backward, and carry backward individuals forward with them. The solution of these problems needs the help of socialist realist literature and art. And these are precisely the points on which the rightists and revisionists cross swords with us. When dogmatists fail or refuse to see that there exist contradictions among the people, they would inevitably step into the "no-conflict theory" in literature and art, and this, of course, is wrong. But the rightists and revisionists deliberately obscure or cover up the contradictions between the people and their enemies, while exaggerating those among the people. They consider the contradictions between the leaders and the led identical with those in the old society between the oppressed people and the reactionary rulers, misrepresenting points of dispute among the people as antagonistic contradictions. This is a much graver and more dangerous mistake. They hold that the main task of literature and art is to expose the defects of our society and the seamy side of life. In their eyes, only works exposing "the dark side of life" are "truthful," while those which "praise the bright side . . . only embellish the reality" and are therefore "false." What they refer to as truths are negative, backward, static, moribund things. They cannot or will not see the main

stream of socialist reality, which is vital, powerful, vigorous and advancing; they cannot or will not observe social reality from a revolutionary, dialectical view point, and they deny that revolutionary romanticism is an indispensable aspect of socialist realism. They want writers to use a naturalistic method and peer in every corner for shortcomings or abuses, and then to magnify these and display them one by one to dishearten our people and gladden our enemies, to disillusion readers and make them lose faith in the revolution and the socialist system. This is what they mean by "truthful writing." This is the real aim of the "bold intervention in life" which they advocate.

There is nothing new in the theory that writers and artists should expose the "seamy side" of life. Fifteen years ago in Yen-an, Wang Shih-wei came out with this argument on the pretext that "there are spots even on the sun," and was echoed by Hsiao Chun, Lo Feng and others. They pretended to have adopted "Lu Hsun's method," and urged writers to use Lu Hsun's essay form — the "daggers" and "javelins" with which he attacked the enemy in those days—to attack the working class and labouring people. Ting Ling acted on this proposal when writing *Some Thoughts on Women's Day* and *In the Hospital*. The *Talks at the Yen-an Forum on Art and Literature* sharply criticized these reactionary views. Yet during the last year or so, stimulated by the international spate of revisionism, this proposal to write about life's seamy side has been revived in China. Indeed for a time it almost became the fashion. It was under these conditions that Liu Pin-yen made his name. He and his like are true disciples of Wang Shih-wei. Quite obviously they are not genuinely concerned with the problems of depicting the contradictions among the people truthfully or the correct way to criticize backward phenomena in life; instead they take the opportunity to exaggerate the contradictions among the people, turn black into white and confuse friend with foe, in an attempt to lead literature and art down the path of reaction.

Are there shortcomings and a dark side in our society? Of course there are. Shortcomings and a dark side not only exist now but will always exist, for otherwise there would be no progress in history. History always advances through contradictions and struggles, by overcoming defects and the dark side. When old defects are overcome new ones emerge. In our country at present the system of exploitation has, in the main, been eliminated but the influence of old ideas and customs still persists stubbornly. The economic and cultural standards of the people have not yet been raised sufficiently. The people must still endure and overcome incredible hardships of every kind in order to build a new life for themselves. Bureaucracy, isolation from the masses and action against their interests on the part of some cadres still occur from time to time. Of course we need not cover up these

negative and dark features of life, but we must realize that it is the new, positive and progressive elements in life which are predominant and decisive in our society. Now that the six hundred million Chinese people are organized and have a socialist consciousness and a high sense of discipline they are a force strong enough to move mountains and drain seas and change the universe. The writer or artist who genuinely loves his country and people cannot but be inspired and moved by this. It is only those writers and artists who are still emotionally linked with decadent classes who refuse to recognize this great change in our life, and the vitality of the new. Confronted by the new reality in vigorous growth, they are conscious of nothing but darkness and shortcomings. Those with gloom in their hearts see everything in a sombre light: to them gloom is the only reality. They fear the light, and the dazzling brightness of socialism makes them extremely uncomfortable. This is the reaction of their class instinct. They always look backwards and yearn for the past. Viewing the people's life and mental make-up during the period of landlord and bourgeois rule as an unchangeable reality, they cannot or will not see the basic change in the characters and relationships of men in these new times. Literature should probe deep into the soul of men and not oversimplify their mental make-up. But now that times have changed, and with them human character and relationships, how can literature go on describing life in the same old way? We see people with collectivist ideas and a high sense of discipline in life, appearing one after another in our midst: they are the heroes of the new times. But the rightists and revisionists refuse to believe that in this new age it is possible not to have individualist ideas in one's heart of hearts, that there are heroes who do not flinch before ordeals, or waver in secret. They simply do not believe this. "If a man takes no thought for himself, the gods will destroy him," "Crows everywhere are the same shade of black" — these sayings embody their philosophy. They view the writings depicting the reality of the new life and new characters as unrealistic and "idealized." Though quite obviously many new phenomena exist all around them, they still fail to see them, for they are set on searching for the old. And anything new-fledged or green cannot, of course, hope to be noticed by them. We criticize formalistic and schematic writing mainly because it does not give a forceful and penetrating picture of the heroic reality of our age. It oversimplifies life. The rightists and revisionists, however, take an opposite view. They are dissatisfied because such writings do more or less reflect the new life of the workers and peasants, a life which they dislike. They complain that life is "formalistic and schematic" and that the masses are "dogmatic." Thus it is clear that it is not the trend

towards formalism and schematism that they oppose but the new life itself — the socialist system itself. Liu Shao-tang attacks socialist realism and claims that a writer should observe and portray reality not from a "dynamic" but a "static" point of view. This simply shows his reactionary bourgeois outlook which dreads socialist changes.

We disagree with the rightists and revisionists not only over their deliberate and inappropriate exaggeration of the shortcomings and dark side of our life but also over the fact that, speaking from a bourgeois individualist stand, they often represent what is positive and active in life as bad and what is negative and passive as good. To them, co-operation in agriculture is bad and should be opposed while the spontaneous trend towards capitalism of well-to-do middle peasants is good and deserves sympathy; ideological remoulding is bad while a stubborn adherence to bourgeois ideas is good; to subordinate individual interests to those of the collective is bad while developing individualism is good; and labour discipline is bad while liberalism is good. In their eyes those who work hard and loyally for the Party are "played out" or "lacking enterprise," but those who are arrogant and conceited and have no regard for the organization are "vigorous" and "talented." People with different stands have different perceptions and reactions too. Ting Ling's *In the Hospital* and Liu Pin-yen's *The Inside Story of a Newspaper* are two outstanding cases in point. From a standpoint totally opposed to the Party and the people, these writers distort our real life but sing the praises of the bourgeois individualists who are their heroes and heroines. We can see that though the rightists and revisionists advocate exposing the dark side, they specialize in exposing only the dark side of the working class and labouring people, not that of the landlords and capitalists. They jeer at and oppose the portrayal of new heroic figures, but this applies only to heroes with the new collective spirit. As for bourgeois individualist "heroes," they cannot praise them enough.

Our literature should expose abuses. Since there are a bright and a dark side in life, literature should acclaim the first, expose the second, and depict the struggle between the two. It should not give a one-sided picture of life. Every sign of backwardness and passiveness — such as bureaucracy — which might obstruct the progress of society should be criticized and exposed. Our literary works should be a weapon to combat all negative things, a weapon for criticism and self-criticism. We are against the theory of no conflicts. The question is what stand we take and what our aim is when we make exposures and criticisms. Our writers should take the correct stand, distinguish between right and wrong and differentiate clearly between the bright and the dark side. We should not try to include every-

thing indiscriminately, or take such a ghoulisn delight in disaster that we touch up or exaggerate the dark side and overlook the bright side, giving readers a distorted view of life and making them lose hope. Our writings should describe the contradictions and difficulties in life, the defects and mistakes, naturally we can depict failures and losses too, but in such a way as to increase people's courage and confidence in overcoming difficulties, not to make them defeatist or despondent. Because we have full confidence in reality our literature is always optimistic. This is the difference on the question of writing about the dark side of life between ourselves and the rightists and revisionists.

Both Howard Fast abroad and Feng Hsueh-feng in China set artistic truthfulness in opposition to political correctness, as if it is impossible to achieve truthfulness in art if a writer takes a correct political stand. After Fast turned against the Party he announced that in the future he could not "write in terms of 'correctness.'" He demands the right to make mistakes politically. Feng Hsueh-feng also advises writers not to consider, in the first place, whether they are right or wrong politically. Chin Chao-yang, who advocates a revision of the principle of socialist realism, puts it even more subtly. He says if we ask writers to keep in mind the spirit and aspirations of socialism, "it means that objective reality does not deserve absolute attention and that what is more important is a certain fixed, abstract 'socialist spirit' and the aspirations in the writer's head. When necessary we must subordinate the actual objective reality to this abstract, fixed subjective thing. The result will probably be a departure in literature from objective reality, or literature may become merely the mouthpiece of certain political concepts." (*Realism—a Wide Path.*) According to Chin Chao-yang, "objective reality" appears to be incompatible with a writer's "socialist spirit" and aspirations and the former should be emphasized "absolutely," the latter only "relatively." To him it is precisely this "socialist spirit" which leads to formalism and schematism and destroys truthfulness in literature. He hates and despises this spirit. How pleasant it would be to dispense with this "fixed, abstract, subjective thing!" Then writers could "speak from their hearts" and write about "the themes which move them most." Of course writers should and can write only about "the themes which move them most." But what are these? Why is it that so many new socialist happenings and phenomena among the people fail to arouse your interest in the slightest, whereas the experiences of an individualist intellectual in a revolutionary collective move you so deeply that you lose your sleep? A writer should be candid and sincere and express his thoughts in the clearest and most honest way. A writer who really takes his stand definitely with the people will not conceal his

views. But in the eyes of the rightists and revisionists, a writer who speaks in support of the Communist Party, the people and socialism is not "speaking from his heart." On the other hand, if he attacks the Communist Party, the people and socialism, he is speaking truthfully. They themselves dare not express what is "in their hearts," however. That is why all they can do is talk in vague terms and make each move "with uneasiness, after peering right and left." This is in truth a good sketch of those with evil in their hearts.

How should we regard the question of freedom in writing? In our country, literature, art and science enjoy full freedom. The policy of "letting a hundred flowers blossom, a hundred schools of thought contend" is an important guarantee of this freedom. Our country provides the most favourable conditions for the publication of literary and other books. According to our Constitution, the state restricts or prohibits only those writings which are against the people, the Communist Party and socialism, because these are detrimental to the basic interests of the people. But the rightists want freedom to publish just such works.

We want a socialist and not a bourgeois literature; we want literature to serve the mass of the labouring people and not a minority "upper class." This certainly restricts the freedom of bourgeois writers, rightists and revisionists. They cannot trumpet their bourgeois reactionary ideas or write freely against the Party, the people and socialism, because such works are condemned and opposed by the masses. But working-class writers and those willing to serve the labouring people find their freedom extended, not restricted. Their socialist outlook and noble devotion to the cause of socialism and the labouring people enable our writers to shake off the bonds of the bourgeois individualist world outlook and establish close ties with the people, whose lives and struggles provide them with an unlimited source of material for writing. This is true freedom in writing. A writer does not feel free when he is fettered by bourgeois individualism and unfamiliar with the life of the labouring people. He can write only about himself or the handful of individuals round him, and therefore his freedom is limited. Only when he is at one with his age and people will he achieve a genuine and abundant freedom.

The rightists and revisionists feel they are not free if literature has to serve politics and socialism. Feng Hsueh-feng blames us for not respecting the writer's "right and freedom to create," and for enforcing "ideological control" on writers. He says that when we ask for works on current revolutionary tasks we are creating "commandist literature." He forgets that the great Lu Hsun called his work "literature written to order" and considered it an honour to write ac-

cording to the instructions of the vanguard. We should not, however, interpret the subordination of literature to politics in the narrow sense that we want writers to publicize every individual policy, though it may have significance for the moment only or in certain aspects only, nor should we ask writers simply to follow the clauses of some policy. To do so would only harm our literature and would be wrong, for works written like that would not be read and people would say: "We might just as well read newspaper editorials as this stuff!" What readers want of literature is evidently something different. They want to find in it a broad and variegated canvas of socialist life, and to learn from it how to recognize and deal with the new life. They are not looking for answers to such problems as price control or epidemic prevention. But the "freedom of creative activity" demanded by the rightists and revisionists means in point of fact that literature should be cut off from socialism, from the current struggles of the people and the leadership of the Party. As they have set their hearts on adopting the bourgeois literary line, it is only natural that the Party's leadership makes them feel they are "not free." That is why they use every conceivable pretext and argument to attack the leadership of the Party in the realm of literature and art.

Some writers feel that they lack freedom because after the publication of their work they receive criticism of one kind or another, written and oral, from the general reading public and from the leadership. This exerts a great moral pressure on them. Pressure of any kind is unpleasant, but we should analyse it. Ill-considered and harsh criticism is damaging to creative writing and should be opposed. Then there is correct and appropriate criticism either from the leadership or the general public, but some writers feel this constitutes a pressure too. We should not oppose this type of pressure. Literature is a reflection of social reality in artistic forms, which exert an influence on society. It is bound to arouse public comment. Sometimes this comment, whether praise or condemnation, may be incorrect in some respects. We need a healthy public opinion, but writers must not be afraid of criticism. A writer or artist with a strong sense of responsibility towards the people should pay attention to their opinions and welcome criticism. At the national propaganda conference held in March 1957, Comrade Mao Tse-tung said, "A genuine materialist is afraid of nothing." We should all endeavour to be such materialists.

The writer should have complete freedom in the choice of his theme, form of presentation and artistic style. We advocate writing about workers, peasants and soldiers, but this does not mean writers may not write on other themes according to their own experience, special qualifications and interests. We hold that socialist realism is

the best method of writing, but we can only advocate it and encourage writers to improve their understanding of Marxism-Leninism and strengthen their links with the labouring people, so that socialist ideas become a living part of them. We cannot simply issue an order and enforce the use of socialist realism. Socialist realism can only find expression in the course of actual writing; it cannot be wished into being by the writers. As to artistic style, we encourage variety and originality.

So far I have outlined the main divergences between our literary line and that of the rightists and revisionists. This divergence is clearest and sharpest in the views on the relation between literature and politics. The revisionists strive to divorce literature from the political task of the revolution. The dogmatists oversimplify the matter and believe that as long as our politics are right our art will be good. They ignore the special characteristics of writing and the importance of artistic technique. Their formula, "politics equals art," in point of fact does away with art and is certainly wrong. The revisionists' formula, "art equals politics," subordinates politics to art and in practice subordinates revolutionary politics to counter-revolutionary politics under the cover of art. The dogmatists believe that Marxism not only embodies but can be substituted for methods of creative writing. By substituting the whole for a part they tend to lead writers away from the path of realism. The revisionists, on the other hand, believe that methods of creative writing can embody or even take the place of Marxism. They are in fact substituting a part for the whole in order to lure writers away from the correct political line. The right formulation is that made by Comrade Mao Tse-tung: "Marxism can only include but not take the place of realism in literary creation." Though the dogmatists' view is the opposite of that of the revisionists, their approach to the question is equally metaphysical and one-sided; alike they regard politics and art as one and the same or in opposition to each other. Marxists regard politics and art as the unity of opposites, and the target which they strive to reach in their writing is "the unity of politics and art, the unity of content and form, and the unity of revolutionary political content and the best artistic form." The correct thing is to judge all works by unified political and artistic criteria, but with the political criterion taking first place.

The struggle between the proletarian line and the bourgeois line in our literature and art can be traced back a long way. This is a struggle between two trends in literature. The proletarian literary line went through a period of immaturity, and dogmatic, sectarian and various other mistakes were committed. It was not until Comrade Mao Tse-tung's *Talks at the Yenan Forum on Art and Literature* in 1942 that

a solid theoretical basis was laid. Later developments fully testified to the correctness of this line. Dogmatic mistakes still need to be overcome, but at present greater danger lies in revisionism. Revisionism is a reflection of bourgeois trends within the ranks of the working class. The characteristic of revisionism is that under a Marxist banner it opposes Marxism and the leadership of the Party on the pretext of opposing "dogmatism and sectarianism." The main substance of the revisionist line is the denial of the noble purpose of literature and art, which is to serve the labouring people and the revolutionary political task; the denial of the class character of literature and art in a class society; the negation or distortion of the national cultural tradition; the denial of the need for the ideological remoulding of writers, and of the leading role of the Party in literary work. During the last two decades we have struggled with Hu Feng and Wang Shih-wei over this question, also with Feng Hsueh-feng. The views of Feng Hsueh-feng and Hu Feng spring from the same source: they represent the revisionist bourgeois line. (They claim to represent a so-called orthodox realism, when in point of fact they represent the anti-realist line.) If the revisionist trend were to gain ground, it would lead our literature and art towards capitalism and create a split in the ranks of our cultural workers. Therefore while continuing to overcome dogmatism we must pay special attention to opposing revisionism. Only so can our socialist literature advance and the ranks of our writers remain united. By exposing the anti-Party activities of Ting Ling, Chen Chih-shia, Feng Hsueh-feng and others we have swept away dangerous elements which threatened to cause a sectarian split in the field of literature and art, and ensured that our cultural ranks will march forward in close unity under the banner of socialism.

Victory in the struggle against bourgeois rightists in the fields of literature and art has cleared the path ahead for the smooth advance of our socialist literature and art. We must consolidate this victory. There is an upsurge now throughout the country in production and construction. We must try to take a great stride forward too in literature and art. Our people, inspired by the spirit that moves mountains and drains seas, are engaged in the great task of changing society and changing history. Their splendid enthusiasm for work and their revolutionary fervour are finding irresistible expression in every field of activity, and must of necessity be appropriately reflected in the special realms of ideas — literature and art. As the labouring people create material wealth they are also creating spiritual wealth. The urgent demand for culture on the part of millions of workers and peasants is unprecedented, and they are vigorously taking up various types of spare-time cultural activities. If we wish to forge ahead in our

literature and art, we must integrate them more closely with the masses on an ever-increasing scale. Both as regards volume and quality, our works of literature and art must be able to meet the requirements of the people.

Comrade Mao Tse-tung long ago told the writers that they "must for long periods of time, unreservedly and whole-heartedly go into the midst of the masses, the masses of workers, peasants and soldiers; they must go into fiery struggles. . . ." Now thousands of leading functionaries and intellectuals have gone to the villages or to the mountains to take part in physical labour or work in offices at the grass-roots levels. Writers and artists, too, are streaming towards the villages and factories to strike roots there and live with the labouring people for years to come. It has now become a fundamental principle of our literary life that writers should be one with the workers and peasants in their work and struggles for long periods of time.

The merging of writers and artists with the mass of workers and peasants is a good example of the combination of brain work with physical labour and of individual talent with the wisdom of the masses. Our society pays great respect to the individual talents of writers and artists, because only when individual ability is in full play will our literature and art show colour and variety. Nevertheless we have always held that individual talent is a synthesis of the wisdom of the masses, and a talented individual who withdraws himself from this wisdom will become a tree without roots, water cut off from its source, and certainly will not be able to go very far. Only when writers and artists are really at one with the mass of workers and peasants will they find that their talents never wither away, their inspiration never fails.

Working-class writers and artists should make great efforts to learn. The people expect solid achievements of them. We must be both revolutionary and professionally competent. We must master both the Marxist world outlook and a high degree of skill in our own craft. Only when our writers and artists have attained maturity politically, ideologically and technically will we have a really strong cultural army of the working class. To achieve this we must learn: there is no shortcut. We must study Marxism-Leninism, learn from the people and from the great heritage and fine traditions of China and the rest of the world. We must learn not only from books but mainly in struggle, in life itself, in friendly competition and debate. Our writers and artists must be bold in their creative work and in their thinking; they must have the courage to break rules and conventions, to create new things, to be innovators, to have imagination and to criticize. To produce works not unworthy of this great epoch is our duty, and a task we must not shirk. Let us see that we carry it out with flying colours.

NOTES ON LITERATURE AND ART

KUAN HAN-CHING, A GREAT THIRTEENTH CENTURY DRAMATIST

Cheng Chen-to

We have no plays left dating from before the middle of the thirteenth century, but in the century and a half which followed many great dramatists appeared and more than two hundred of their works are extant. An important period in the history of Chinese literature, this was the golden age of Chinese drama, which from the start witnessed great intellectual activity. And foremost among the hundred blossoms which bloomed together then was the brilliant and versatile playwright Kuan Han-ching.

There are historical reasons for this sudden flowering of Chinese drama and for the great number of playwrights during this time.

This was the Yuan dynasty or Mongol period in Chinese history. In 1234 the Mongols conquered the Nuchen Tartars in north China and virtually took over their more advanced civilization, including their drama. In 1279 Kublai Khan united the whole of China by overthrowing the Southern Sung empire, whereupon the Mongols fell heir to the magnificent culture of the Southern Sung dynasty.

During this period, the drama popular in south China used southern tunes and dialects, and most plays took more than one day to perform. But the plays of the north, known as *tsa chu*, were entirely different as they had grown out of the dramatic ballads called *chu kung tiao* of north and central China, which were partly spoken and partly sung. Although these early *tsa chu* were performed on a stage, the influence of the ballads was still evident. Because the *chu kung tiao* were sung by one person, who might be either a man or a woman, the Yuan plays also had only one primary role. When the chief performer was a man, the play was called *mo*; when a woman, it was called *tan*. Another feature reminiscent of the dramatic ballads was the tendency to narrate events in song; but as the hero or heroine was the only one to sing, the performance could not be too long and was usually confined to four acts, with the opening, the development of the action, the climax, and the conclusion. Sometimes an additional short scene was inserted to

cover minor episodes or serve as prologue. The supporting cast used dialogue and action to heighten the atmosphere of the play and unfold its plot.

Kuan Han-ching was the greatest writer of *tsa chu* in his day, as well as the first. Indeed, he is believed to have created this dramatic form, just as Aeschylus created Greek tragedy. A prolific genius who wrote sixty-six plays — almost twice as many as Shakespeare — he was not so fortunate as the supreme European dramatist, for today the titles alone of many of his works are left, and not more than eighteen, or a quarter, of the plays themselves. The extant eighteen plays are: *Snow in Midsummer*, *Rescued by a Coquette*,* *The Butterfly Dream*, *The Cunning Maid*, *The Prayer to the Moon*, *The Riverside Pavilion*, *Lord Kuan Goes Alone to the Feast*, *The King's Dream of Dead Warriors*, *The Wife Snatcher*, *The Gold-Thread Pond*, *The Courtesan Hsieh Tien-hsiang*, *The Jade Mirror Stand*, *Death of the Winged Tiger General*, *Pei Tu Returns the Jade Girdle*, *The Single Mace General*, *Madam Liu Gives a Feast*, *Instruction to the Son*, *Wang Jun-hsiang* and *Lin Ching-an*.

Kuan Han-ching was a native of Khanbalik, in the region of present-day Peking, although some accounts say that his home was in Wujen Village in Hopei. He was probably born in 1210 or thereabouts. As he was in his twenties when the Mongols conquered north China, he

has sometimes been considered as a writer of the Nuchen Tartar period; but he rose to fame during the Yuan dynasty. His name was almost a synonym for playwright. Kao Wen-hsiu, a dramatist who died young, was known as Han-ching the Junior; while Shen Ho-fu of Hangchow, who was famous early in the fourteenth century, was called the Southern Han-ching.

While the Yuan theatre owed its brilliance to Kuan Han-ching and the other playwrights who wrote for it, an even more important reason for its prosperity was the social conditions which made possible the spread of *tsa chu* throughout China. As the feudal ruling class which had so long been in control had collapsed after the Mongol invasion, the exploitation and sufferings of the peasants had decreased; and the fact that the place of the old landlords was not immediately taken by a new landlord class meant that for a short time life in the countryside improved. Moreover the Mongols restored the long-interrupted communications with the West, so that a considerable volume of Chinese handicrafts and agricultural products, notably silk, porcelain and tea, was exported by sea and by land. While raising the living standard of artisans in the cities, this also bettered the lot of the peasants. A ballad of that time, called *A Country Bumpkin at the Theatre*, describes a villager's first trip to town and his first visit to a playhouse. Hitherto a peasant would not have been able to go to the theatre, but now he could afford to, although a ticket cost two hundred cash; and townsfolk,

*Translations of *Snow in Midsummer* and *Rescued by a Coquette* were published in full in *Chinese Literature*, No. 1, 1957.

it goes without saying, were regular playgoers. So the theatre thrived, and there were many companies of players as well as a great demand for new plays. Kuan Han-ching and the other playwrights were in close touch with these troupes, who paid them quite handsomely; indeed it is thought that they sometimes wrote plays specially for well-known actors or actresses.

Another important point to bear in mind is the fact that at other periods in Chinese history, scholars had a chance to enter the ruling class by passing the imperial examinations for the selection of officials. During the Yuan dynasty, however, the civil service examinations were in abeyance, and the literati, debarred from officialdom, had a comparatively low social status and experienced considerable financial difficulty. Since their talents were not used by the government, they had to turn to the people; and this is why they wrote so many plays, stories and other forms of popular literature. This great change in the position of the Chinese literati during the Yuan dynasty explains why many of them were so closely associated with the theatre.

After 1279, large numbers of Mongols and other northerners went to south China, some as officials, some as merchants, many more as garrison troops. As they demanded entertainment they could understand, which used northern tunes and dialects, the *tsa chu* accompanied them to all parts of China till the southerners came to enjoy it too, and southern dramatists started writing in this style. Northern playwrights also continued

to travel south, and sometimes settled down to write for playhouses there. It is therefore no exaggeration to say that from its start the Chinese theatre had a hundred flowers blooming together.

Like other playwrights of his time, Kuan Han-ching acted himself and was thoroughly familiar with stagecraft. In his preface to a selection of Yuan dynasty plays, Tsang Chin-shu of the Ming dynasty relates that Kuan Han-ching "trode the stage himself, painted his face black and white, and considered this his profession, having no objection to the company of actors." Kuan Han-ching must have spent many years in the theatre. We know of no adventures or exciting incidents in his life, and he never held any high official post; according to a fourteenth century account he was an imperial physician, so apparently he was a doctor at some time. His intimate knowledge of the life of his day and his penetrating grasp of the nature of that society enabled him to write his immortal works. Though materially the peasants and artisans were rather better off for the time being, politically they were cruelly oppressed. The Mongol and Tartar officials often knew no Chinese and worked through assistants or interpreters, political life was thoroughly corrupt, and as a privileged class the Mongols could do very much as they pleased. Since playwrights took topical problems as their themes or well-known characters from history, their work reflected popular sentiment and they were in close rapport with their audiences. This is one reason for the remarkable popularity of the

Yuan dramatists, of whom Kuan Han-ching is the most outstanding representative.

Some of Kuan Han-ching's finest characters are women, and most of his plays have a heroine in the main role—perhaps because many of the leading players were actresses. He had left us a gallery of pictures of widely differing types of Chinese womanhood: the young widow unjustly slain, the young servant who fights passionately for her happiness, the old mother whose heart nearly breaks as she decides to sacrifice her own son, the singsong girl who uses all her ingenuity to rescue a friend in distress, the spoiled girl forced to marry against her will who finally comes to terms with her elderly husband—these are only a few of many figures, some tragic, some comic, but one and all superbly delineated and vibrant with life. Indeed Kuan Han-ching surpasses all other great writers in China in the skill with which he depicts women of every age and walk of life, with the most diverse characters and habits, each one authentic, yet each unlike the rest.

Of his tragedies, *Snow in Midsummer* is the most famous. The heroine of this is Tou Ngo, who is given to the Tsai family as a child bride because her father is in debt to Mrs. Tsai. Later Tou Ngo's husband dies and Mrs. Tsai marries an old man whose son, Donkey, wants to make Tou Ngo his wife. After she refuses indignantly, when Donkey attempts to poison Mrs. Tsai but kills his own father instead, he accuses Tou Ngo of murder. A thick-headed magistrate condemns her to death, and there is no one to whom she can appeal.

But when led out to die she protests her innocence, and prophesies that because injustice has been done her blood will stain a white streamer on the execution grounds, there will be snow in midsummer, and the district will suffer for three years from drought. Then Heaven is moved and her prophecies come true. Later her father, appointed a high official, avenges her wrong. Tou Ngo's courage and refusal to yield to the forces of darkness symbolize the spirit of the men of that age, just as her execution reveals the injustice of that period and the bitter sufferings of the people.

The Butterfly Dream is a tragic-comedy. After Mrs. Wang's husband is killed by a noble named Keh, her three sons avenge their father by killing his murderer. When Prefect Pao decrees that one of the sons must pay with his life, all three offer to die, and Mrs. Wang is told to make the choice. Because the two elder boys are the sons of the first wife while the youngest is her own, after a severe mental conflict she decides to sacrifice her own child; but when she goes to fetch his corpse she finds him alive and merry, for the prefect has pardoned him. This story expresses the widespread longing for just officials who would not be intimidated by the rich and mighty but would dare to protect the innocent. Plays about that honest judge, Prefect Pao, were popular during that period.

Two exquisitely constructed comedies, fresh as lotus flowers on the lake, are *The Cunning Maid* and *The Prayer to the Moon*. Here Kuan Han-ching creates two quite dissimilar heroines, both in love but

unable to be with the man they love. *The Cunning Maid* is the story of a young maid-servant, Yen-yen, her indignation when she learns that the son of the house whom she loves is betrothed to another girl, and her determined efforts to prevent their marriage. This is probably the only play in China which shows a maid fighting for her own happiness instead of for that of her mistress. Wang Jui-lan, the heroine of *The Prayer to the Moon*, is separated from her husband and longs to see him but has no one to confide in. She can only pour out her hopes to the moon at night. Here we have a deeply moving picture of the bashfulness of a young woman in feudal times. The well-contrived plot and sheer poetry of the language make it one of the finest Yuan dramas left to us.

In *The Riverside Pavilion* Lord Yang wants to take as his concubine a beautiful widow named Tan Chi-erh, who has married another husband. Lord Yang attempts to ruin this man, but Tan Chi-erh disguises herself and steals the gold tally and sword of authority with which the heartless official means to arrest and execute her husband. In this way she saves his life. This is typical of many plays about corrupt officials and innocent citizens unjustly accused.

Rescued by a Coquette is a comedy about another bully. Pan-erh is a singsong girl. Chou Sheh treats his wife cruelly and she begs Pan-erh to rescue her. Pan-erh pretends to be in love with Chou and eager to marry him; but as soon as he grants his wife a divorce both women run away. In feudal society men lorded it over women,

but this play exposed and challenged masculine cruelty, and finally the bad husband was outwitted. This was a bold attack on feudal conventions.

Kuan Han-ching's skill in characterization is not confined to women: he gives excellent portraits of brave soldiers too. *Lord Kuan Goes Alone to the Feast* is one of the few Yuan plays still performed on the modern stage, and in it Kuan Yu, loyal general and sworn brother of the king Liu Pei, of the Three Kingdoms period shows his magnificent courage and heroic stature, when he goes alone to a feast in the enemy's camp, but returns unscathed — having overawed all his foes. Another dramatic play on a stirring theme is *The King's Dream of Dead Warriors*. Kuan Yu and Chang Fei, another brave general, have been killed in battle, but their king, Liu Pei, has not yet heard of their death, and their spirits go to announce it to him. The poignant atmosphere is a blend of the ghostly and the intensely human. The heroic spirits are not free to do as they please, but as ghosts can only bow to Liu from a distance in the shadow of the lamp and must not draw near their dearly loved comrade-in-arms.

Another noteworthy play is *The Wife Snatcher*. Though this is not included in the list of Kuan Han-ching's plays compiled in the early fourteenth century, it is attributed to him in the Ming dynasty edition of Yuan dramas. It shows a bully named Lu Chai-lang, who defies the law and breaks up happy homes, until Prefect Pao reaches that district and rids the people of this pest. This play, with its strong

sense of justice, is very likely by this great dramatist who consistently expressed the will of the people.

This year we commemorate Kuan Han-ching who wrote those great plays 700 years ago. We pay tribute to him today not only as a great playwright and the father of

Chinese drama, but also as a writer who remained close to the people. He attacked the tyranny of his age and wrote for common folk. He shared the joys and sorrows of the ordinary Chinese of his day, and he has left us an immortal record of their loves, fears and aspirations.

CLASSICAL CHINESE PROSODY

Wu Hsiao-ju

Ancient Chinese literature, like that of any other country in the world, falls into the two main categories of verse and prose. Our chief forms of classical poetry are: *shih* 詩 *fu* 賦 *tz'u* 詞 and *chu* 曲.

China has produced much great poetry, and classical poetry takes pride of place in our literary heritage. The *Book of Songs* 詩經, China's earliest anthology, was compiled in the sixth century B.C. According to tradition, during the Chou dynasty there were officers responsible for collecting folk songs both in the Chou court and in the vassal states. Every year these officers would tour the countryside to collect songs which were then edited and set to music; the result was this anthology. There are three hundred and five poems in the *Book of Songs*, dating from the beginning of the Chou dynasty (11th century B.C.) to the middle of the Spring-and-Autumn period (7th century B.C.). A few of these

were written by nobles, but the greater part were folk songs edited by scholars.

The *Book of Songs* is divided into three sections: the *feng* 風, the *ya* 雅 and the *sung* 頌. The *feng* consists of folk songs from the different states which make up more than half of the whole collection. These short, simple yet highly significant poems are the best part of the anthology, for they shed light on the people's feelings and longings, their love, their work and the society in which they lived. In this way they laid an excellent foundation for later lyrical poetry. The *ya* is subdivided into the "great *ya*" and the "little *ya*." Most of the former are heroic poems of the Chou people, while the latter are ceremonial songs sung at banquets or satires on the government. The writers of these poems were mainly anonymous nobles, and these works are usually longer and more dignified than the folk songs.

The *sung* are hymns used in religious dances during sacrifices in the ancestral temples. They form a small part only of this collection, but were probably the earliest of all the poems.

The majority of these songs have four characters to a line, though there are also cases of lines with three, five, six, seven or nine characters. One characteristic of the *feng* is the repetition of the same idea or image in different stanzas, as in the case of "Thick Grows the Plantain," which is given below:

Thick grows the plantain;

采采芣苢
tsai tsai fu yi

Here we go plucking it.

薄言採之
po yen tsai chih

Thick grows the plantain;

采采芣苢
tsai tsai fu yi

Here we go gathering it.

薄言有之
po yen yu chih

Thick grows the plantain;

采采芣苢
tsai tsai fu yi

Here we hold it between the fingers.

薄言掇之
po yen to chih

Thick grows the plantain;

采采芣苢
tsai tsai fu yi

Here we are with handfuls of it.

薄言捋之
po yen luo chih

Thick grows the plantain;

采采芣苢
tsai tsai fu yi

Here we have our aprons full of it.

薄言桔之
po yen chieh chih

Thick grows the plantain;

采采芣苢
tsai tsai fu yi

Now apronfuls are tucked in at our belts.*

薄言擷之
po yen hsieh chih

This three-stanza song, sung by women at work, has every other line rhymed. Sometimes every line is rhymed, as in this poem from the "little *ya*" describing the feelings of soldiers on their way home:

Long ago, when we started,

昔我往矣
hsi wo wang yi

The willows spread their shade.

楊柳依依
yang liu yi yi

Now that we turn back

今我來思
chin wo lai si

The snowflakes fly.

雨雪霏霏
yu hsueh fi fi

The march before us is long,

行道遲遲
hsing tao chi chi

We are thirsty and hungry,

載渴載飢
tsai keh tsai chi

* From Arthur Waley's translation of the *Book of Songs*.

Our hearts are stricken with sorrow,

我心傷悲
wo hsin shang pi

But no one listens to our plaint.*

莫知我哀
mo chih wo yi**

Because the great philosopher Confucius used the *Book of Songs* as a textbook for his pupils, later scholars regarded it as a Confucian classic. During the Chin and Han dynasties (3rd century B.C. to 3rd century A.D.), some scholars analysed these songs and divided them into three types: *fu* 賦 (narration), *pi* 比 (comparison) and *hsing* 興 (association). The two poems quoted above are *fu*, for they mention the plantain and the willow in narration (instead of as images to be compared or associated with something else). There are many poems of the *pi* type. A poet may, for instance, compare a hare caught in a trap with the people suffering hardships, or a rat stealing grain with a grasping ruler, or the wailing of wild-geese with the laments of mourners. *Hsing* are sometimes confused with *pi*, indeed these two types are often mentioned together as *pi-hsing*.

"Fair, fair," cry the ospreys
On the island in the river.
Lovely is this noble lady,
Fit bride for our lord.

When the poet sees pairs of ospreys
on the island, by association he

* From Arthur Waley's translation of the *Book of Songs*.

** The modern phonetic transcription has been given except in the case of the rhymed characters.

thinks of a lovely lady, fit bride for his lord. Or again, in the first stanza of this poem:

Buxom is the peach tree;
How its flowers blaze!
Our lady going home
Brings good to family and house.

The poet who sees peach blossom thinks of a young bride. This method has been used for thousands of years in folk song, and can be found in the well-known modern folk song:

Red in the east
Rises the sun,
China has brought forth a Mao
Tse-tung.

The rising sun in the east by an apt association makes the poet think of the great leader of the Chinese people, Chairman Mao Tse-tung.

After the *Book of Songs*, in the Warring States period (4th century B.C.) there appeared in the state of Chu in southern China a new form of poetry called *chu tzu* 楚辭. The first to write in this form was the great patriot and poet Chu Yuan. As this new form of verse appeared at a time of intellectual ferment when great stress was laid on oratory, it has a somewhat rhetorical style with a more varied vocabulary and richer imagery than the earlier poetry, and more characters to each line. These *chu tzu* are representative of the poetry of that period, and Chu Yuan's rebellious spirit and his passionate search for truth have come to symbolize the aspirations of the Chinese people. The closely linked beauty and patriotism of his works set a noble example for all poets after him.

His most important poems are *Li Sao*, the *Odes* and the *Nine Elegies*. *Li Sao* is a long poem describing the poet's political aspirations and his love for his country. This is considered to be the first great poem in Chinese literature. The *Nine Elegies*, written at different times and put together by later scholars, are similar in style to the *Li Sao*. The eleven *Odes*, sacrificial songs which Chu Yuan revised, are filled with beautiful images and many allusions to mythology.

After Chu Yuan evolved this new form of poetry he had many followers, two of the best-known being Sung Yu, slightly junior to Chu Yuan, and Chia Yi, who lived at the beginning of the Han dynasty. At the end of the Early Han dynasty a scholar named Liu Hsiang compiled all poems of this type into one collection known as the *Chu Tzu* 楚辭. The name *chu tzu* has subsequently been used to refer either to the new form of poetry originated by Chu Yuan of the state of Chu, or to this collection of poems by Chu Yuan and others of his school.

The influence of *chu tzu* on Chinese classical poetry was very great. Both in form and content the Chu poems differ from the *Book of Songs*. They express more complex and passionate emotion, and show richer imagination, while the structure of the lines has advanced from that of the folk songs. In *Li Sao* and the *Nine Elegies* there are generally six characters to each line, and alternate lines rhyme; but since the unrhymed lines usually end with an extra exclamatory sound, these often have seven syllables. Here is a passage from *Li Sao* by way of example:

Without delay the sun and moon
sped fast,

日 月 忽 其 不 淹 兮
jih yueh hu chi pu yen hsi

In swift succession spring and
autumn passed;

春 與 秋 其 代 序
chun yu chiu chi tai hsu

The fallen flowers lay scattered on
the ground,

惟 草 木 之 零 落 兮
wei tsao mu chih ling lo hsi

The dusk might fall before my
dream was found.

恐 美 人 之 遲 暮
kung mei jen chih chih mu

Had I not loved my prime and
spurned the vile,

不 撫 狀 而 棄 穢 兮
pu fu chuang erh chi huei hsi

Why should I not have changed
my former style?

何 不 改 乎 此 度
ho pu kai hu tzu tu

My chariot drawn by steeds of race
divine

乘 騏 驎 以 馳 騁 兮
cheng chi chi yi chih cheng hsi

I urged; to guide the king my sole
design.

來 吾 導 夫 先 路
lai wu tao fu hsien lu

The odd lines all end in the exclamation *hsi*, while all the even lines rhyme. The odes show greater freedom, having mostly five, six, or seven characters to a line. From this we can see that verse forms were already developing towards the five-character and seven-character lines which were later adopted.

During the Han dynasty the literati carried on the rhetorical tradition of the Chu poems, using exaggerated descriptions and rich imagery to create a new type of narrative poem known as *han fu* 漢賦. Such *fu* can be recited but not sung. They are usually full of hyperbole and conceits, but lacking in genuine feeling, and most of the lines have four or six characters. Since these poems are rather long and dull, and most of them are eulogies on rulers, they have not much literary value.

During the reign of Emperor Wu of the Han dynasty a special conservatory was set up, in accordance with the ancient tradition, to choose folk songs and scholars' poems which could be set to music for use in court ceremonies, sacrifices or feasts. So folk songs from that time onwards were generally known as *yueh-fu* 樂府 (songs from the conservatory), although a number of them did not come from the imperial conservatory. The Han *yueh-fu* are quite clearly a development from the *chu tzu* and the *Book of Songs*. Many of them were popular songs and ballads, which give us a true picture of the life and thought of the time.

The songs of the Early Han dynasty do not have a regular metre, and the number of characters varies from line to line, from two to seven. Most of the Late Han *yueh-fu*, however, have five characters to one line. This new form of poetry obviously grew out of the earlier songs, but was more flexible and better fitted to convey ideas than the strict metre of four characters to a line. From the end of the Han dynasty onwards, this

five-character line became the basic metre of classical poetry. During the Three Kingdoms period (220-280) seven-character lines also began to appear, such verses being written, for instance, by Tsao Pi, Emperor Wen of Wei. This development from the *chu tzu* did not become popular till the Tang dynasty.

From the Three Kingdoms period to the end of the Sui dynasty (581-618) there appeared many poems of the *yueh-fu* type, and a number of talented scholars won fame by learning from folk poetry and carrying forward the earlier traditions. Tsao Chih, Yuan Chieh, Tso Szu, Tao Yuan-ming, Pao Chao, Hsieh Ling-yun, Hsieh Tiao and Yu Hsin wrote glorious pages in the history of Chinese literature. All these poets except Pao Chao, who used the seven-character line, wrote five-character lines. Of course by this time such poems were not strictly *yueh-fu*, for from the Three Kingdoms period onwards they gradually became independent of music and were known as *ku-shih* 古詩 (old-style poetry). There is no limit to the number of lines in *ku-shih*, which range from four lines onwards. The rhyming system is also rather free. Here is a poem of this type by the famous Tang poet Li Po, called "Drinking Alone by Midnight."

A cup of wine, under the flowering
trees;

花 間 一 壺 酒
hua chien yi hu chiu

I drink alone, for no friend is near.

獨 酌 無 相 親
to cho wu hsiang chin

Raising my cup I beckon the bright
moon,

舉杯邀明月
chu pei yao ming yueh

For he, with my shadow, will make
three men.

對影成三人
tui ying cheng san jen

The moon, alas, is no drinker of
wine;

月既不解飲
yueh chi pu chieh yin

Listless, my shadow creeps about
at my side.

影徒隨我身
ying tu sui wo shen

Yet with the moon as friend and
the shadow as slave,

暫伴月將影
chan pan yueh chiang ying

I must make merry before the
Spring is spent.

行樂須及春
hsing lo hsu chi chun

To the songs I sing the moon
flickers her beams;

我歌月徘徊
wo ko yueh pai hui

In the dance I weave my shadow
tangles and breaks.

我舞影凌亂
wo wu ying ling luan

While we were sober, three shared
the fun;

醒時同交歡
hsing shih tung chiao huan

Now we are drunk, each goes his
way.

醉後各分散
tsui hou ko fen san

May we long share our odd,
inanimate feast,

永結無情遊
yung chieh wu ching yiu

And meet at last on the Cloudy
River of the sky.*

相期邈雲漢
hsiang chi mao yun han

In this poem we find a change of
rhyme in the middle. In certain
ku-shih five-character lines are
followed by seven-character lines;
sometimes only the even lines
rhyme, while at others every line
is rhymed—the form is by no
means rigid.

From the *Book of Songs* and *chu
tzu* to the *yueh-fu* of the Han and
succeeding dynasties, classical poet-
ry went through many stages of
development until it reached its
golden age in the Tang dynasty.
Today we still possess more than
forty-eight thousand Tang poems
by more than two thousand three
hundred poets. The period be-
tween 713 and 766, when the Tang
civilization reached its zenith, was
an age of unmatched splendour for
Chinese poetry, when more and
better poems were produced than
in any other age. Innumerable
poets from all walks of life used
different forms to write on dif-
ferent themes; this was truly a
period when a hundred flowers
blossomed. Famous poets like
Wang Wei and Meng Hao-jan
wrote of wild scenery and country
life, Kao Shih and Chen Shen
wrote of frontier warfare; but the
pride of Chinese poetry are the two
great figures Li Po and Tu Fu. Li

* From Arthur Waley's *More Trans-
lations from the Chinese*.

Po's poems are romantic; with un-
bridled imagination and poetic ex-
aggeration he expresses his youth-
ful exuberance and ambition, but
also sings of men's hardships and
the corruption in the world; no
escapist, his noble spirit is closely
bound by ties of love to the people.
Tu Fu uses even more vivid im-
agery to paint scenes from real life;
he is a man of passionate feeling,
whose poems are filled with pro-
found humanity and realism. An-
other great poet of the early ninth
century, Pai Chu-yi, carried on Tu
Fu's tradition; he wrote many
poems expressing his sympathy for
the common people and his hatred
for those who ground them down.
Li Shang-yin was another poet of
genius at the end of the Tang
dynasty who wrote exquisite love
poems with beautiful images and
poems concealing political satire;
his poetry is like the setting sun,
which though sinking in the west
leaves a deep impression of beauty
and of splendour. This was the
end of the brilliant poetic tradition
of the Tang dynasty.

In the Tang dynasty, when Chi-
nese classical poetry reached its
zenith, prosody also developed and
attained maturity. Poetic forms
became more regular, and two new
forms appeared: the *lu-shih* 律詩
(strictly regulated poem) and the
chueh-chu 絕句 (cut-short lines).

Lu-shih observe very strict rules,
which arose out of the charac-
teristics of the Chinese language.
One distinctive feature of classical
Chinese is that it is monosyllabic;
another is that each sound has four
tones: *ping* 平, *shang* 上, *chu* 去
and *ju* 入 (or five tones if we divide
the *ping* into *yin* 陰 *ping* — femi-
nine — and *yang* 陽 *ping* — mas-

culine). In Chinese prosody, the
three tones *shang*, *chu* and *ju* are
often grouped together as the
cheh 仄 or deflected tone; while
the *ping* is the flat tone. *Lu-shih*
consist of eight lines with the same
number of characters in each line,
either five or seven. The even
lines are rhymed, preferably in the
flat tone. The unrhymed lines in
a quatrain must end on the op-
posite tone to that of the rhyme.
There is a tendency for antithetical
arrangement of tones in the two
lines of a couplet, and a tendency
for the tones to go in pairs rather
than in threes. In addition to this
antithetical arrangement of tones,
there is a fairly strict parallelism
in the second and third couplet (or
in lines 3, 4, 5 and 6 in an eight-
line poem). Here, for example,
are the two middle couplets of one
of Tu Fu's poems:

Moved by the times, the flowers
shed tears;

感時花濺淚
kan shih hua chien lei

Hating departure, the bird pours
out its heart.

恨別鳥驚心
hen pieh niao ching hsin

Beacon fires have blazed for three
whole months,

烽火連三月
feng huo lien san yueh

Letters from home are worth ten
thousand gold pieces.

家書抵萬金
chia shu ti wan chin

Here the nouns "flowers" and
"bird," "beacon fires" and "letters
from home" are contrasted, as are

the verbs "moved by" and "hat-ing," "shed" and "pours out."

Chueh-chu, or poems with cut-short lines, consist of four lines only and have a regular metre, each line containing five or seven characters. Parallelism is not required, but the rules for the use of tones are the same as in the *lu-shih*.

During the Tang dynasty, although the five and seven-character line verse forms were most common, another type of song with an irregular metre was popular with the people. This came to be known as *tzu* 詞. This type of poem, which could be sung and was closely connected with music, was a continuation of the early *yueh-fu* tradition. Since these songs were set to various musical airs, the length of each poem and of each line varies. So *tzu* were also known as "long-and-short lines." To write *tzu*, the poet had to fit his words to a definite musical pattern. Two of the eighteen poems by Mao Tse-tung published in this number are *lu-shih*, while sixteen are *tzu* written to eleven different melodies or musical patterns. Not only is the number of words to each line and the number of lines prescribed for each *tzu* by its melody, but the tone of each word is also fixed. In general these rules are very strictly observed.

Some *tzu* are short, some long. Those with not more than fifty-eight characters are generally called short *tzu*, those ranging from fifty-nine to ninety are middle-length *tzu*, and those exceeding ninety are long *tzu*. Short and middle-length *tzu* appeared as early as the Tang dynasty, while long *tzu* started towards the end of the Tang dynasty,

but only became generally used in the Northern Sung dynasty (960-1127).

From the middle of the Tang dynasty onwards, intellectuals gradually become interested in the *tzu* form. The great poet Pai Chuyi and his friend Liu Yu-hsi both wrote *tzu*. At the end of the dynasty Wen Ting-yun, whose fame rivalled that of Li Shang-yin, was an adept in this style. Good *tzu* were written during the Five Dynasties period (907-960) by many of the local princes and their ministers, including Li Ching and Li Yu, the second and last kings of the Southern Tang dynasty, and their minister Feng Yen-chi. They occupy an important position in the history of Chinese literature.

In the Sung dynasty the *tzu* form became as popular as the *shih* had been in the Tang dynasty. The early Sung poets Ouyang Hsiu, Yen Shu and Yen Chi-tao were famous for their short *tzu*; while Liu Yung, Chang Hsien, Chin Kuan, Ho Chu and Chou Pang-yen were expert at using the longer tunes. But their poetry dealt almost entirely with love and the carefree life of scholars of good family who spent their time enjoying flowers and drinking. Only the genius Su Tung-po wrote *tzu* on other themes: nature, country life or men's thoughts and ambitions. In the Southern Sung dynasty (1127-1278) the great patriot Hsin Chi-chi used this form to express his love for the people and his country. So the *tzu* began to cover as wide a range of subjects as the *shih* of the Tang dynasty.

Towards the end of the Sung dynasty, as *tzu* became divorced

from music, another type of popular song attracted the attention of poets. This was the new *chu* 曲, popular during the Yuan (1279-1368) and Ming (1369-1644) dynasties. There were two schools of *chu*, the northern and the southern. The former was popular in the Yuan dynasty and the latter in the Ming. *Chu* are like the early *tzu*: they must be written to set musical patterns. This new form of poetry was used either for songs in opera or as independent lyrics. The poetic passages in Yuan dynasty operas like Wang Shih-fu's *Western Chamber* and Kuan Han-ching's *Snow in Midsummer* were northern *chu*, while those in Ming dynasty dramas like Kao Tse-cheng's *The Tale of the Lute* and Tang Hsien-tsu's *Peony Pavilion* were southern *chu*. The *chu* lyrics could be either single short poems or a set of poems written in the same musical scale, some of which were nearly two thousand words long, as in the case of the *Eternal Sorrow* by Kuei Chuang of the late Ming dynasty.

Ever since the Tang and the Sung dynasties the basic forms of classical Chinese poetry have been *ku-shih*, *lu-shih* and *chueh-chu*. And every dynasty has had some outstanding poets: Su Tung-po and Lu Yu in the Sung dynasty; Yuan Hao-wen during the Golden

Tartar period; Yang Wei-chen in the Yuan dynasty; Kao Chi and Chen Tzu-lung in the Ming dynasty; Wu Wei-yeh, Wang Shih-cheng, Yuan Mei, Huang Ching-jen in the Ching dynasty; Huang Tsun-hsien and Chen San-li at the end of the Ching dynasty; and Lu Hsun and Ko Mo-jo in the modern period. All these had their individual style and made their distinctive contribution to Chinese literature. Since the May the Fourth Movement of 1919, however, poetry written in the vernacular has predominated while classical poetry has taken second place.

We have a splendid body of Chinese verse from the ancient folk songs of the *Book of Songs* to such modern folk poems as *Red in the East (Tung Fang Hung)*, from the works of Chu Yuan to the poems of Lu Hsun and Mao Tse-tung. This magnificent tradition is the pride and glory of Chinese civilization, and these immortal works have been models for later generations. Today the directive of the Chinese Communist Party is to "Let a hundred flowers blossom; let a hundred schools of thought contend." The glorious task of this generation of poets is to carry forward our ancient heritage by writing yet greater and more beautiful poems in honour of this age.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN GRAPHIC ART

Li Hua

The opening of the Third National Graphic Art Exhibition during the spring festival in Peking was a great achievement for graphic artists. Last year the Young Artists' Exhibition, and the Art Exhibition celebrating the thirtieth anniversary of the People's Liberation Army, opened our eyes to recent developments in this field. Though less than a year has passed since then, and there has been little time for preparation, this has not affected the quality or variety of the exhibits. The 325 works on

Catching the Boat by Chen Tien-jan



display have been chosen from more than 1,700 woodcuts, copperplate etchings and lithographs from all parts of China, and the general standard is reasonably high.

This exhibition has many encouraging features.

Some older engravers who have shown little or no work for some time are among the exhibitors. Ma Ta, Chen Yen-chiao, Shen Jou-chien, Huang Hsin-po, Wang Shuyi and Wu Shih have all sent in examples of their recent work. Many young artists, who first became known to the public through the Second National Graphic Art Exhibition of 1956, have made even better contributions this time. Most cheering of all is the appearance of new engravers. It is clear that in the realm of graphic art our veterans are speedily recovering lost ground, while the number of new recruits is steadily increasing. It is especially noteworthy that some exhibits are from the Inner Mongolian Autonomous Region and the Miao and Puyi Autonomous Chou, for the fact that graphic art is developing among our minority peoples is an additional guarantee of its future prosperity.

The range of subjects is wider than in the last exhibition, and more artists have taken life in China today as their theme. There is a corresponding improvement in the variety of forms and technique. There are more coloured woodcuts than in the previous exhibition, al-



Winnowing the Barley by Li Huan-min

though this traditional process is by no means easy to master. Many wood-engravers are no longer satisfied with the old methods, and are striving for greater technical perfection, while a marked improvement is also evident in copperplate etchings and coloured lithograph prints.

The young wood-engraver Chen Tien-jan uses three different forms of expression in his three works, and shows originality in his composition. In *Catching the Boat* the artist looks down from a height on the men hurrying along the rough road on a high river bank. Though the figures occupy little space, they conjure up a vivid picture of the south. By the use of various techniques he has created a very beautiful woodcut.

Li Huan-min's *Winnowing the Barley* is skilfully composed and his successful handling of the peasants in it makes this a popular exhibit. Hsiao Kang's *Doctors in the Grass-*

lands is a good picture of life in Tibet. Mo Cheh's *Hunter on the River* has the direct simplicity characteristic of wood engravings; and Chang Tsung-chun's *Evening on the River Chien* captures the spirit of south China. Other outstanding exhibits are Chung Tsai-pen's poetic *By the Stream*, Tsai Chih-cheng's powerful *Returning at Night*, Lu Shu-chung's charming *Early Spring*, Cheng Chen's ably executed *On the Futseling Reservoir*, Chu Chun-yi's magnificent *Eagle*, and Yang Cheng's delicate *Dawn*. The variety of styles makes this a memorable display.

Buhocholu, the talented wood-engraver of Inner Mongolia, is an artist whose works we should watch for in future. He excels in depicting animal life on the steppes, especially deer and dogs. His pictures have tremendous vitality. In *The North* and *Milking the Deer* he presents simple and truthful pictures of life in the grasslands in clear, bold strokes, and makes us

feel that we should be at home there.

The fine work of many of the older engravers also testifies to the progress made in Chinese graphic art during the past year.

However, this exhibition raises certain problems too, which are receiving close attention from artists and critics. Although a greater effort has been made to portray China today, the result still falls short of the reality. Many attempts have been made to reflect different aspects of our stupendous socialist construction, yet the essential spirit is seldom expressed sufficiently forcefully. It may be that some artists lack technical skill, but in most cases they fail to do justice to these great themes owing to their lack of first-hand experience of life.

A tendency towards naturalism is an obstacle to the development of socialist realist art, for an engraver satisfied to portray superficial phenomena cannot raise the level of his work. Photographic representations of different subjects are not art, for they lack emotional appeal. Construction sites are worthy subjects, but if an engraver contented himself with a naturalistic representation the main theme is obscured and the final result lacks strength. To raise the standard of our graphic art, we must overcome this tendency towards naturalism devoid of ideological content.

One important problem now being discussed is how to create engravings distinctively Chinese in style. Some say the Chinese woodcut already has a national form. The fact of the matter is we have not yet made a sufficiently careful

study of our traditions of engraving, or our forbears' use of lines, principles of composition and styles. This exhibition has brought home to our artists the need for a serious study of the woodcuts of the Ming and Ching dynasties, including the folk woodcuts, the stone reliefs of the Han dynasty, and the bronze and stone carvings of the Chin and Han dynasties. Even more of a conscious effort will be required to create a distinctively national form in copperplate etchings and lithograph prints which are forms of art still relatively new to us.

As works of realism deal chiefly with life, human activities occupy an important place in them, and the success or failure of an engraving often depends on the skill with which the figures are executed. The present treatment of figures is one obvious weakness in our graphic art. Owing to a defective training, some engravers actually restrict themselves to portraying scenery or still life; and if there are human figures in a landscape they are usually treated as unimportant or insignificant. These shortcomings reveal one central problem: that is, many artists have not made enough effort to come to grips with life. That is why they sometimes fail to represent the progress of our new society in a masterful and convincing manner. Of course technical perfection is also a factor; a profound understanding of life and a higher level of artistic training are both essential if we are to achieve a still higher standard in graphic art. But this exhibition shows that our engravers are beginning to advance in the right direction.



Dawn by Li Chun



RE-EXAMINATION

*An account of a protracted struggle in
contemporary Chinese literature*

Re-examination is the general title of the second number of the *Wen Yi Pao* (Literary Gazette) published this year in Peking. This special number includes critical reviews by Lin Mo-han, Wang Tzu-yeh, Chang Kuang-nien, Ma Tieh-ting, Yen Wen-ching and Feng Chih of Wang Shih-wei's *tsa wen* or short essay *The Wild Lily*, Ting Ling's *Some Thoughts on Women's Day* and her short story *In the Hospital*, Hsiao Chun's *On Comradely Love and Tolerance*, Lo Feng's *Tsa Wen Are Still Needed Today* and Ai Ching's *Understand and Respect Writers*. These works are also published as an appendix to the *Wen Yi Pao*. With the exception of *In the Hospital*, which appeared in 1941, all the others were published in the spring of 1942 in Yen-an, then the centre of the Chinese revolution, in the *Liberation Daily's* literary supplement edited by Ting Ling and Chen Chi-hsia. As they were so calumnious against the Party and people

they were criticized at the time by readers, writers and artists in Yen-an.

Since then fifteen years have passed. During this period these ambitious individualists have been exposed — their real character, their disloyalty to the people's cause and the secret motives which activated them. Wang Shih-wei proved to be a Trotskyite. In 1948 Hsiao Chun openly betrayed the revolution. Ting Ling, Chen Chi-hsia, Ai Ching and Lo Feng were Party members, yet they formed an anti-Party clique which came under fire in the second half of last year from Chinese writers and artists as it repeatedly attempted to frustrate the Party policy and leadership in literature and to split the solidarity of the Chinese literary and art circles. As reference was frequently made during this time to what they had written fifteen years ago, the *Wen Yi Pao* thought it advisable to re-

publish and re-examine this material. Its editorial comment says:

Together we enjoy these extraordinary writings

*And thresh out the meaning where we are in doubt.**

Many people have tried to get hold of this set of extraordinary writings. After collecting and re-reading them, we found them extraordinary indeed, for whereas their authors posed as revolutionaries what they wrote was counter-revolutionary. Discriminating readers detected this at once, but a number of others were taken in. . . . We should thank Ting Ling, Wang Shih-wei and the rest because the poisonous weeds they produced are now serving as a fertilizer and means of education. They have certainly helped us to understand how our enemies operate. Readers who lacked a clear judgement are growing more acute; the naive and inexperienced, whether young or old, are learning a great deal in a very short time.

Of these extraordinary writings, all but Ting Ling's short story *In the Hospital* are *tsa wen*. The *tsa wen* or short essay, characterized by its strong fighting spirit, was evolved by Lu Hsun and other patriotic writers during the thirties, when China was invaded by the Japanese imperialists yet Chiang Kai-shek was waging a savage and deeply unpopular civil war which threatened to plunge the country into ruin. The *tsa wen*

by progressive writers were at that time as sharp daggers striking at the reactionary ruling clique represented by the Kuomintang, and its conspiracy against the people.

But Wang Shih-wei, Ting Ling, Ai Ching and the others wrote *tsa wen* to attack the revolutionary leadership and the austere way of life in Yen-an, then the Mecca of the revolution. It was a dastardly trick which could only help the enemy. Yet this was precisely what these writers did. To show how low they sank, it is necessary to have some idea of the historical circumstances.

1942 was a most critical period for the Chinese revolution. Hitler's fierce attack on the Soviet Union had not yet been met by a counter-offensive, while our revolutionary bases were assailed by both the Japanese imperialists and Chiang Kai-shek. The Shensi-Kansu-Ningsia Border Region in which Yen-an was situated was cut off from the outside world by Kuomintang troops so that life was extremely hard for the revolutionaries. The Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party called on all the people there to become self-supporting and surmount difficulties, and they responded enthusiastically in a great movement to increase production. All loyal revolutionaries rallied around the Central Committee and steeled themselves by hard work on the land in addition to their normal duties. But this was precisely the time chosen by Wang Shih-wei, Ting Ling and the others to take advantage of the difficulties. Hand in glove with the reactionaries inside and outside

China, they started a counter-revolutionary offensive in the realm of ideas against the Party and the people.

They did this step by step according to a plan. All the *tsa wen* published by the *Wen Yi Pao* for re-examination appeared within a fortnight of March 9, 1942. The target of their concentrated attack was not one individual or event but the Party and the whole revolutionary camp. They described Yen-an as pitch dark, gloomy and oppressive as a backward feudal kingdom, hoping in this way to stir up dissatisfaction among the petty-bourgeois intellectuals in those arduous days, in order to cause a split and spread confusion in the revolutionary camp. They also took this opportunity to help the enemy with propaganda hostile to the revolutionary base. Indeed the Kuomintang secret service considered these writings by Ting Ling, Wang Shih-wei and Hsiao Chun as treasures. They had them reprinted and distributed throughout Kuomintang-controlled territory as anti-Communist propaganda.

Wang Shih-wei's slander of the revolutionary camp dealt with the relationship between the leaders and the rank and file. In *The Wild Lily* he accused Chinese revolutionaries of being contaminated with the "filth of old China," and of "spreading germs and infecting other people." He asserted that he was "determined to write *tsa wen*," as if there were no difference between Yen-an and the Kuomintang territory, and he must expose the abuses there. He tried to disrupt unity by claiming that the leaders had "no love" for their sub-

ordinates. By making out that the men in responsible positions were heartless hypocrites, Wang tried to stir up feeling among the "youngsters lower down." He said: "The great majority of them have come by devious ways and after painful struggles to Yen-an. In the past they knew very little 'love and warmth,' but plenty of 'hate and coldness. . . .' Because they come to Yen-an in search of warmth and beauty, they cannot help complaining when they see its ugliness and coldness. . . ." But according to him, although the young people complained the men in power were too stubborn to change. Instead he made them justify themselves by arguments actually made up by Wang Shih-wei: "As our camp exists in the old, dark society, there is bound to be darkness here too. This comes of necessity." He therefore concluded: "If we let such things go on of necessity, the revolution must necessarily fail." Since he looked forward to the failure of the revolution, he explained that it was inevitable because the leading personnel lived better than ordinary functionaries. He insisted that the revolution was doomed. This malicious statement was an out-and-out slander.

Of course there were petty-bourgeois and bourgeois intellectuals who faltered in the face of difficulties or demanded absolute equality and "warmth." That was why Wang Shih-wei posed as their champion to stir up feeling against the Party among the rank and file of revolutionary workers, and tried to turn young people into his tools. He argued that if certain older revolutionaries with heavy respon-

*From a poem by Tao Yuan-ming (365-427).

sibilities had slightly better living conditions than the average, this was undemocratic and they were a privileged class. One could see plainly that if the absolute equalitarianism typical of small landowners' ideology develops unchecked, a point will be reached when nobody is allowed to ride a horse and no casualty has a prior claim to a stretcher. If this goes far enough, the revolution is indeed doomed.

Similarly all Wang's talk of "love" and "warmth" was another trick to make petty-bourgeois and bourgeois intellectuals discontented and stir up hatred for the Party and Party leadership. In this way he hoped to drive a wedge through the revolutionary ranks.

Ting Ling, on the other hand, directed her attack against the entire social system of the liberated areas. In *Some Thoughts on Women's Day* she described all the women there, whether married or single, as objects of slander and ridicule to men, in other words as an oppressed class. She said that all the leaders in Yen-an were "dolts" from the ranks of the workers, peasants and soldiers. A woman must marry, but whom should she choose as husband? Of course it was not so good to marry an artist as a "dolt" on horseback, because only so could she avoid being tied to the house and becoming a laughing-stock. But even then married women would have babies, and as there were many babies in beleaguered Yen-an and not enough nurseries or facilities for birth control, the mothers had to stay at home to look after the children. Then the men considered

them as "backward," and "the pretext for a divorce is always the woman's backwardness." After that, "they begin to have wrinkles, their hair loses its luxuriance, and the hardships of life rob them of their last charms. This is women's natural fate; but whereas in the old society they might be pitied, today their troubles are laid at their own door."

This was Ting Ling's insidious attack on the new social system. She painted the revolutionary bases as inferior to Kuomintang territory and even worse than feudal society. All men were tyrants, the Party leaders in particular, and there was no one to whom oppressed women could appeal. With complete disregard for the facts, she described as tragedies the lives of the new women of the liberated area who fought side by side with the men at the front and reclaimed waste land in the rear. Ignoring the enemy guns and bombs, she commiserated with women because "they begin to have wrinkles, their hair loses its luxuriance, and the hardships of life rob them of their last charms." What sort of mentality did this reveal, and what was her objective? No wonder all the women feel outraged, particularly those who had lived in Yen-an during that period, because it is not only the Party that is slandered but the whole of Chinese womanhood who has won real freedom and equality with men under the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party. Apart from that, Ting Ling, like Wang Shihwei in *The Wild Lily*, deliberately set the men on horseback in opposition with those wearing straw

sandals and the "dolts" who held administrative posts with the artists, in order to turn the rank and file against the leadership and the new revolutionaries who were intellectuals against the old revolutionaries of worker and peasant origin. This was an attempt to sabotage the entire revolutionary cause.

In her short story, *In the Hospital*, Ting Ling slandered the entire life of the Party and the liberated areas. A Shanghai girl, a Party member who was fond of society and fun, went to Yen-an. "She was sure she would be an active political worker." But as "her chief interest was literature, she might have become a great writer." Owing to war-time needs, however, and the fact that she had been trained for a few years as a nurse, she was not made a political worker or a writer but persuaded to join a newly established hospital. According to Ting Ling "the Party's needs were clamped on her head like an iron ring—how could she disobey orders?" Therefore she expressed indignation on behalf of this girl, considering that the Party had wasted a genius. In her eyes, Yen-an was a place where talent was disregarded. Everything there was wrong. There was "desolation all around," and the place "stank." In the caves* where they lived "floated a sad, lonely glimmer," and outside "were heaps of dung and straw.... There was literally nowhere to stand." The

*In north Shensi, caves dug in the hillsides were common dwellings of the peasantry. Yen-an during the war was full of such caves built by revolutionaries for themselves.

people of Yen-an were even worse. The revolutionaries from peasant and worker families "knew nothing about medicine" or showed "a most childish enthusiasm." The nurses were "lazy and dirty," the patients had "no inkling of hygiene" and were "hidebound conservatives," while the village women had "pale faces like rag dolls" and "fishy features." Naturally the hospital was as backward as the rest of Yen-an. Thus the heroine of the story said, "You wonder why the director is no good, but do you know what he used to be? An illiterate dolt! The instructor was just a cowherd brought up by the army—what does he understand? I agree they are all no good and we need a change, but who is there to replace them? I tell you, those above are just the same." She was indignant and pessimistic. "What do these workers and peasants know about leading a revolution? All they can do is work their fingers to the bone—they don't know the first thing about medicine or nursing." To fight with these "backward aspects" of Yen-an, Ting Ling's heroine joined forces with one of the chief doctors, "a middle-aged man with a gentlemanly air" and "a surgeon who sometimes wrote short stories and plays." Ting Ling described her as a victim of bureaucracy because the leadership was reluctant to change the hospital administration. "Like one thirsting for revenge she looks everywhere for something to set upon. She criticizes everything. Each day she racks her brains to get the better of the others, always confident that truth is on her side." Such was the struggle Ting Ling wanted in

Yenan. She was not against specific individuals but "everyone." She did not disapprove of certain workers, peasants or soldiers, but all of them. She attacked not one hospital but Yen-an and the Party as a whole. To her "truth" meant destroying the revolution from within during its most critical period.

Hsiao Chun in his *tsa wen*, *On Comradely Love and Tolerance*, struck out at another fundamental point. "In recent years I have had more contact with revolutionaries," he wrote. "But I feel that the wine of 'comradely love' is being increasingly watered down. Although I know the reason, I cannot but feel sad." To understand what he meant by "the reason," one must see whom he designated as "comrades." He referred to those "who happened to weaken under conditions which strained their endurance to the utmost and made some small mistakes detrimental to the prestige of the revolution, but returned eventually to the revolutionary ranks to carry on the struggle. No matter what others may feel about such men, I still respect them. . . . Is not the return of the prodigal son a cause for rejoicing?" These "prodigal sons" whom he regarded as "comrades" were, in plain language, those who had turned their backs on the revolution and become renegades like Hsiao Chun himself. Yet he asked the Party to give them "love," and complained because in Yen-an they did not receive enough of the wine of "love." It was this that made him sad. And so he called on his "comrades" to have fortitude. They must be able

to withstand seventy-two trials like Tripitaka on his pilgrimage to the west, or as many temptations as Saint Antony. An adept at turning black into white, he depicted Yen-an as a dungeon full of devils and monsters, and these renegades as "saints." He went so far as to demand that the Party should be tolerant and "reason with, educate and understand" these traitors, leaving the door open for them and showing them every consideration. As a matter of fact the Party did understand them, and showed the utmost tolerance in reasoning with and educating them, waiting year after year for them to change. But they refused to reform, and remained stubborn enemies of the people.

Ai Ching in his *Understand and Respect Writers* tried to stir up hatred for the Party among literary workers. The title of his *tsa wen* implied that in Yen-an writers were neither understood nor respected, and therefore he demanded "freedom in writing." But when he wrote freely, which class did he represent? In reverent tones he cited the case of Paul Valery, observing that the publication of *Narcisse* was a more important event than the world war. Valery was a symbolist poet of the bourgeoisie in decline. In peace time he served as clerk in the French Ministry of National Defence, but during the war he made no protest when the Nazis rode roughshod over his motherland—how could his work be more important than the war? Ai Ching gave another example to support his argument, claiming that the English would "rather lose an India than

a Shakespeare." From whose standpoint did he make this statement, which presupposed the importance of India as a colony to the British Empire? The workers of Britain may well take pride in Shakespeare, but the clear-headed among them certainly did not approve of India's colonial status. These two examples showed which class Ai Ching represented, yet he demanded that the Party should understand him and respect his freedom. To save him and give him a chance to join the side of the people, the Party did show him respect. He was elected a deputy to the political council of the border regions and asked to edit *Poetry*, though the Kuomintang blockade meant that paper and types were in very short supply. But he objected to writing about the great achievements of the people in the war of resistance, maintaining that to describe all that was fine in Yen-an meant "mistaking scabs for blossoms and sores for buds." Such vicious slander shows the extent of Ai Ching's hatred for the Mecca of the revolution. Here he exposed himself and spoke out as an enemy of the people.

To run down the life of the revolutionary bases, slander the leadership of the revolution and stir up trouble between the people, especially the intellectuals, and the Party—these were the central tasks of this group of anti-Party writers who served the enemy in Yen-an. As Lo Feng revealed in *Tsa Wen Are Still Needed Today*, they went to Yen-an in search of "dark corners which were always dank and mouldering . . . such treasures as garbage and filth . . .

horrible darkness . . . festering and malignant sores." He wrote, "If there is a murky fog blinding your eyes you will certainly falter and feel you have lost your way. Those who have lived for any length of time in lonely mountain valleys should know that Chungking has no monopoly of such fogs—they frequently appear here too." In his eyes there was no difference between Yen-an and the Kuomintang capital, Chungking, still less difference between Yen-an and the old Shanghai. Of course, in Yen-an they did not deal too gently with anarchism, extreme individualism, absolute equalitarianism and other manifestations of a bourgeois or petty-bourgeois outlook. They were not polite either to saboteurs, secret agents, traitors, renegades and the like. That was, in fact, what Hsiao Chun meant by "horrible darkness" and "malignant sores." That was why he considered that Yen-an, beset by the invading Japanese and Kuomintang troops yet still fighting on, needed to be attacked by *tsa wen* writers. He called on other intellectuals to flay the Party and the revolutionary bases with the trenchant literary form Lu Hsun had used against the enemy under the dark rule of the Kuomintang. He urged Ting Ling and Chen Chi-hsia to publish articles of this type in the literary supplement of the *Liberation Daily*. He hoped they would make that supplement "a sharp dagger before which some will tremble and others rejoice," to stab at the heart of the Chinese revolution.

These reactionary writers had no respect or affection for the common working man or the revolutionary

cause. But because they chose the wrong time to attack and overestimated their strength, their coordinated offensive was immediately repulsed. The story and *tsa wen* from which this account has quoted aroused general indignation as soon as published. Cultural and literary circles in Yen-an severely and justly criticized these anti-Party and anti-popular views, thwarting the renegades' plan for an over-all attack.

Each of these writers had a disreputable past. Though Ting Ling, Chen Chi-hsia, Lo Feng and Ai Ching had succeeded in joining the Party, they consistently refused to abandon their bourgeois individualist stand, and from first to last set themselves up in opposition to the Party. It is therefore small wonder that in 1933 when Ting Ling was arrested by Kuomintang agents and taken to Nanking, then the Kuomintang capital, she betrayed the working class and Communist Party. Lo Feng and Ai Ching also turned renegade in enemy prisons. But they kept this from the Party, and concealed their history while waiting for a chance to strike. When the revolutionary people entered the most difficult period of their history and undertook the glorious task of liberating the whole nation, these turncoat writers did their best to help the enemy destroy the revolutionary fortress from within.

The Chinese Communist Party did not show itself lacking in patience. For fifteen years it kept these writers in the Party, hoping that in the revolutionary ranks they would recognize their mistakes, change their outlook on life and

become true revolutionary intellectuals. The Party had more than once criticized their errors and gave them every opportunity to serve the people during the war of liberation and after. Following the founding of the people's republic, Ting Ling became vice-chairman of the Chinese Writers' Union and was appointed editor of the *Wen Yi Pao*, with Chen Chi-hsia as her deputy. Lo Feng became deputy-director of the North-east Cultural Department. Ai Ching was associate editor-in-chief of *People's Literature*, the largest literary magazine in China. In the interests of the whole country, the Party never ceased to hope that they would genuinely join the ranks of the people and turn over a new leaf. The Party dealt with them with the utmost leniency, fairness and generosity. But blinded by ambition and individualism, they took this leniency for a sign of weakness, and banded together into an anti-Party clique headed by Ting Ling and Chen Chi-hsia. After the events in Hungary, when bourgeois rightists in China launched their attack on socialism, they attempted to sabotage the cultural work led by the Party and to stage a comeback for bourgeois ways and ideas. Last year, just as in Yen-an fifteen years ago, Chinese literary circles exposed their treachery, refuted their anti-socialist views and resolutely condemned their anti-Party activities. This was done to re-educate them, for the Party still hopes that they will recognize their mistakes and become new people.

Fifteen years is no short period in contemporary Chinese history. During this time, led by the Communist Party, the Chinese people

have advanced from a position of enslavement as a semi-feudal and semi-colonial country to control their own destiny. As masters of the country, they are now working tirelessly and triumphantly to build a new socialist society. Those bourgeois die-hards who still persist in their furtive attempts to undermine socialism appear only ridiculous and pitiable and utterly shameless.

Judging by what is happening today, their destructive activities of the past decade have been turned to good account, as the *Wen Yi Pao* points out. "They are serving as a means of education, and have certainly helped us to understand how our enemies operate." Herein lies the supreme significance of this re-examination of writings published fifteen years ago.



ARTISTS IN THIS NUMBER

Chen Chiu-tsao from Shanghai is fifty-three this year. A member of the council of the Union of Chinese Artists, he specializes in water-colour and crayon drawings. He is also well known for his sketches from nature in the traditional style. *A Moment in Early Autumn* is a landscape he painted during his travels in Chekiang Province in 1956. It was inspired by a scene at the mouth of the Tunglu River one morning in early autumn.

Jen Po-nien (1840-1896) is considered one of the best traditional Chinese painters in the last hundred years. His studies of flowers and birds have a distinctive style and

he is also famed for his portrait painting. *An Aged Traveller* printed in this number is a fine example of his portraiture. His picture *Swallows and Peach Blossoms* was printed in *Chinese Literature*, No. 1, 1957.

Li Chun is an executive member of the council of the Union of Chinese Artists and is now forty-five. He was one of the pioneers of China's revolutionary woodcut art. His favourite theme is life in the countryside and he excels in depicting it in bold lines and simple colours. *Dawn*, a recent work, catches the atmosphere of an early autumn morning in a village.

Love Under the Willows

(A Szechuan Opera)

During the fourth century A. D. there was a girl named Chu Ying-tai, who disguised herself as a boy to leave home and study in a school. She fell in love with her school-mate Liang Shan-po. But her parents, ignoring her wishes, forced her to marry another man. In the end, both Shan-po and Ying-tai died for their love.

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