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Outlaws of the Marshes

The following is an extract consisting of four chapters from "Outlaws of the Marshes," one of China's great classical novels. An analytical article about this work by Li Hsi-fan appears on page 62. Lu Chih-shen, a rough fellow with a strong sense of justice, has become a monk to avoid detection and arrest for killing a bully in a street fight. He has just been placed in charge of his monastery's vegetable fields, outside the city. To provide a relatively complete development of plot we start here with the latter section of Chapter Six:

In the neighbourhood of the monastery's vegetable fields were twenty or thirty worthless vagabonds and gamblers. They made their living by selling the vegetables they stole from the monastery's fields. One day when a few of them went to raid the fields, they observed a notice posted on the gate of the overseer's compound. It read:

The monastery has appointed the monk Lu Chih-shen overseer of these vegetable fields. Starting tomorrow, he shall be in charge. Those having no business here are strictly forbidden to enter.

The vagabonds then called a conference of the entire gang. "The monastery has sent a monk called Lu Chih-shen to take charge of the vegetable fields," they said. "He's new to the job. This is a good chance to pick a quarrel and beat him up. Teach the lout to respect us!"

"I have an idea," one of them said. "He doesn't know us; how can we pick a quarrel? Let's lure him to the edge of the ordure pit instead, kneel down as if to congratulate him, then grab his legs and toss him head over heels into the pit. It will be a nice little joke."

"Good! Good!" approved the vagabonds. After making their plans, they set out to seek the monk.

As to Lu Chih-shen, on arriving at the overseer's compound, he put his pack and luggage in the house, leaned his staff in a corner and hung up his dagger. The lay brothers who worked in the fields all came to greet him and he was handed the keys. The two monks who had escorted him there and the monk he was succeeding as overseer bade him farewell and returned to the monastery.

Chih-shen then made a tour of the vegetable fields. He saw coming towards him twenty or thirty vagabonds bearing a platter of pastries and ceremonial wine.

"We neighbours have heard that you've been put in charge, master monk," they said, grinning broadly, "and we've come to congratulate you."

Not knowing it was a plot, Chih-shen walked forward until he reached the edge of the ordure pit. The vagabonds advanced together, one of them intending to seize his left leg, another his right, and toss him in.

The result was: A foot kicked out and a fierce mountain tiger was startled; a fist struck out and a dragon of the sea met a sorry plight. A peaceful garden was instantly changed into a minor battlefield.

What came of the vagabonds' scheme to upset Chih-shen? If you want to know, listen to our next episode.

CHAPTER 7

The Worldly Monk Uproots a Willow Tree
Lin Chung Enters White Tiger Council Hall by Mistake

As we were saying, among the twenty to thirty vagabonds who lived outside Sour Date Gate, two were leaders. One was "Rat Crossing the Street" Chang. The other was

"Snake in the Grass" Li. These two were in the lead as the gang advanced, Chih-shen naturally walked forward to meet them.

The gang halted at the edge of the ordure pit and chorused: "We've come to congratulate you on your new post."

"Since you're neighbours," said Chih-shen, "come into the compound and sit a while."

Chang and Li dropped to their knees respectfully. They hoped that the monk would approach to raise them courteously to their feet. Then they could go into action.

Noticing this, Chih-shen grew suspicious. "This gang is a queer-looking lot, and they're not willing to come forward. Can they be planning to dump me?" he wondered. "The louts think they can pluck the tiger's whiskers! Well, I'll go to them, and show them how I use my hands and feet!"

Chih-shen strode up to the gang. Still kneeling, Chang and Li cried, "We younger brothers have come especially to pay our respects," and each reached to grab one of the monk's legs. But before they could even lay a finger on him, Chih-shen lashed out with his right foot and kicked Li into the ordure pit; Chang rose to flee, but a quick thrust of the monk's left leg and the two rascals were floundering in the foul mess together.

Startled, the rest of the gang gaped, then turned to run.

"Whoever moves goes into the pit!" bellowed Chih-shen.

The vagabonds froze, not daring to take a step.

Chang and Li now raised their heads out of the ordure. The pit seemed bottomless, and they were covered with excrement. Maggots clung to their hair. Standing in the filth, they wailed. "Master, forgive us!"

"Help those two dogs out, you scoundrels," Chih-shen shouted to the gang, "and I'll forgive you all!"

The vagabonds quickly hauled their leaders from the pit and supported them over to a gourd arbour. The two stank to high heaven.

Chih-shen roared with laughter. "Fools! Go and wash off in the pond. Then I want to talk to all of you."

After the two gang leaders had cleansed themselves,

some of their men removed their own clothing to give them a change of garments.

"Come into the compound," Chih-shen ordered. "We're going to have a talk."

Sitting down in their midst, he pointed his finger at them and scoffed, "You ragamuffins! How could the likes of you ever hope to make sport of me?"

Chang, Li and the whole gang dropped to their knees. "Our families have lived here for generations," they said, "supporting themselves by gambling and begging and robbing these vegetable fields. The monastery paid people several times to drive us away, but no one could handle us. Where are you from, master monk? Such a terrific fellow! We've never seen you at the monastery before. From now on, we'll be happy to serve you."

"I'm from Yenan Prefecture, west of the Pass. I used to be a sergeant, under His Excellency the garrison commander. But because I killed many men, I took refuge in a monastery and became a monk. Before coming here, I was on Wutai Mountain. My family name is Lu. On entering the Buddhist order I was given the name Chih-shen. Even if surrounded by an army of thousands, I could hack my way out. What do you twenty or thirty amount to!"

Loudly and respectfully voicing their agreement with these sentiments, the vagabonds thanked the monk for his mercifulness and withdrew. Chih-shen went into the house, put his things in order, then went to bed.

The next day, after talking the matter over, the vagabonds scraped some money together and bought ten bottles of wine. Leading a live pig, they called on Chih-shen and invited him to join them in a feast. A table was laid in the overseer's compound. Chih-shen sat at the head of the table, with the twenty to thirty vagabonds lining both sides. Everyone drank.

"Why are you spending so much money?" the monk asked.

"We're lucky," they replied. "Now that you are here, you can be our master."

Chih-shen was very pleased. Wine flowed freely and the party grew gay. There was singing and talking and applause and laughter. Just as the merriment was at its height, crows were heard cawing outside the gate. Some of the men piously clacked their teeth and they intoned together: "Red lips rise to the sky, white tongue enters the earth."

"What are you making such a blasted racket about?" demanded Chih-shen.

The vagabonds replied: "When crows caw, it's a bad omen."

"Rot!" said the monk.

One of the lay brothers who tilled the monastery's fields laughed and said, "In the willow tree beside the wall there's a new crow's nest. The birds caw from dawn to dusk."

"Let's get a ladder and destroy the nest," said some.

"I'll do it," volunteered several of the others.

Feeling his wine, Chih-shen went out with the crowd to take a look. Sure enough, there was a crow's nest in the willow tree.

"Get a ladder and tear the nest down," said the men. "Then our ears can have a little peace and quiet."

"I'll climb up and do the job," boasted Li, "and I don't need any ladder."

Chih-shen looked the situation over, walked up to the tree and removed his tunic. Bending and grasping the lower part of the trunk with his right hand, while his left hand seized it higher up, he gave a tremendous wrench — and pulled the tree from the ground, roots and all!

The vagabonds dropped to their knees, crying: "The master is no ordinary mortal! He's truly one of the *Lohans*! If he didn't have ten million catties of strength, how could he have uprooted that tree?"

"It was nothing at all," said Chih-shen. "One of these days I'll show you how to handle weapons."

That night the vagabonds departed. But they came again the next day, and every day thereafter, bringing meat and wine to feast Chih-shen, for they positively worshipped him. They begged the monk to demonstrate his skill with weapons.

After several days of this, Chih-shen thought to himself: "These fellows have been treating me day after day. I ought to give them a banquet in return." He sent a few lay

brothers into the city to buy several platters of pastries and five or six buckets of wine, and he killed a pig and slaughtered a sheep. It was then the end of the third lunar month.

"The weather's getting warm," said Chih-shen. He had mats spread beneath the green ash tree and invited the vagabonds to sit around and feast outdoors.

Wine was served in large bowls and meat in big chunks. When everyone had eaten his fill, the pastries were brought out and more wine. Soon the feasters were thoroughly sated.

"The past few days you've demonstrated your hand-to-hand fighting, master," said the vagabonds, "but you still haven't shown us your skill with weapons. It would be fine if you could give us a performance."

"All right," said Chih-shen. He went into the house and brought out his solid iron Buddhist staff, five feet long from end to end and weighing sixty-two catties.

His audience was amazed. "Only a man with the strength of a water buffalo in his arms could handle such a weapon!" they cried.

Chih-shen took up the staff and flourished it effortlessly, making it whistle through the air. At the sight of this, the vagabonds cheered and applauded.

Just as the monk was warming up, a gentleman appeared at a gap in the compound wall. "Truly remarkable!" he commended. Chih-shen stopped his exercise and turned to see who had spoken.

The gentleman wore a black muslin cap with its two corners gathered together; a pair of interlinked circlets of white jade held the knot of hair at the back of his head. He was dressed in a green officer's robe of flowered silk, bound at the waist by a girdle made of double strips of beaver and fastened by a silver clasp shaped like a tortoise back. His feet were shod in square-toed black boots. In his hand he carried a folding Chengtu fan. About thirty-five years old, he had a head like a panther, round eyes, a chin sharp as a swallow's beak, whiskers like a tiger, and stood six feet tall.

"Indeed remarkable," he said. "What excellent skill!"

"If he approves, it certainly must be good," said the vagabonds.

Lu Chih-shen displays his skill Ming dynasty woodcut

"Who is that officer?" queried Chih-shen.

"An arms instructor of the Eight Hundred Thousand Imperial Guards. His name is Lin Chung."

"Invite him in. I'd like to meet him."

Hearing this, the arms instructor leaped in through the gap in the wall. The two men greeted each other and sat down beneath the ash tree.

"Where are you from, brother monk?" asked Lin. "What is your name?"

"I'm Lu Ta, from west of the Pass. Because I killed many men, I had to become a monk. In my youth, I spent some time in Kaifeng, the eastern capital. I know your honourable father, Sergeant Lin."

Lin Chung was very pleased, and adopted Chih-shen as his sworn brother on the spot.

"What brings you here today?" asked Chih-shen.

"My wife and I just arrived at the Yueh Temple next door to burn incense. Hearing the cheers of your audience, I looked over and was intrigued by your performance. I told my wife and her maidservant, Chin Erh, to burn the incense without me, that I would wait for them by the gap in the wall. I didn't think I would actually have the honour to meet you, brother."

"When I first came to Kaifeng I didn't know anybody," said Chih-shen. "Then I became acquainted with these brothers and we gather together every day. Today, you have thought well enough of me to make me your sworn brother. That makes me very happy." He ordered the lay brothers to bring more wine.

Just as they were finishing their third round, the maidservant Chin Erh, agitated and red in the face, rushed up to the gap in the wall and cried: "Hurry, master! Our lady is having trouble with a man in the temple!"

"Where?" Lin Chung demanded hastily.

"As we were coming down the stairs of the Five Peaks Pavilion, a low fellow suddenly blocked her way. He won't let her pass!"

Lin Chung quickly took his leave of Chih-shen. "I'll see you again, brother. Forgive me!" He leaped through the

gap in the wall and raced with Chin Erh back to the temple.

When he reached the Five Peaks Pavilion he saw several idlers carrying cross-bows, blow pipes and limed sticks gathered below the stair railing. They were watching a young man who was standing on the stairway with his back to them, blocking the path of Lin Chung's wife.

"Let's go upstairs," the young man was urging her. "I want to talk to you."

Blushing, the lady said, "What right do you have to make sport of a respectable woman in times of peace and order!"

Lin pushed forward, seized the young man by the shoulder and spun him around. "I'll teach you to insult a good man's wife," he shouted, raising his fist. Then he recognized Young Master Kao, adopted son of the Marshal in command of the entire military district.

When Marshal Kao Chiu had first risen to his high office he had no son to help him run his numerous affairs. And so he adopted the son of his younger brother. Since the boy was not only his nephew but now also his foster son, Marshal Kao loved him to excess.

The young scoundrel made full use of his foster father's influence in Kaifeng; his favourite pastime was despoiling other people's wives. Fearful of his powerful connections, none of the husbands dared speak out against him. He became known as the "King of Lovers."

After spinning him around, when Lin Chung saw that he was Young Master Kao, the strength left his arms.

"This has nothing to do with you, Lin Chung," said Kao. "Who asked you to interfere!" He didn't realize that the lady was Lin Chung's wife. Had he known, the thing would never have happened. Seeing Lin Chung's hesitancy, he spoke up boldly.

The commotion drew a crowd of idlers. "Don't be angry, arms instructor," one said. "The young master didn't recognize her. It was all a mistake."

Lin Chung's rage hadn't fully abated, and he glared at the rake with burning eyes. Some of the crowd soothed Lin Chung while others persuaded Kao to leave the temple grounds, get on his horse and depart.

Leading his wife and Chin Erh, the maidservant, Lin Chung was also turning to go when Chih-shen, iron staff in hand, came charging into the temple compound with huge strides, leading his twenty to thirty vagabonds.

"Where are you going, brother?" asked Lin Chung.

"I've come to help you fight!" said Chih-shen.

"The man turned out to be the son of our Marshal Kao. He hadn't recognized my wife and behaved discourteously. I was going to give the lout a good drubbing, but then I thought it would make the Marshal lose too much face," Lin Chung explained. "You know the old saying, 'Don't fear officialdom — but beware of the official who's over you.' After all, I'm on his payroll. I decided to let the young rascal off this time."

"You may be afraid of the Marshal of the district, but he doesn't scare me a bit!" shouted Chih-shen. "If I ever run into that young whelp of his I'll give him three hundred licks of my iron staff!"

Lin Chung saw that Chih-shen was drunk and he said placatingly, "You're quite right, of course, brother. It was only because everybody urged me that I let him go."

"The next time you have any trouble, just call me and I'll take care of it!"

The vagabonds supported the tipsy Chih-shen under the arms. "Let's go back, master," they said. "You can deal with young Kao later."

Raising his iron staff, Chih-shen said politely to Lin Chung's lady, "Your pardon, sister-in-law. Please don't laugh at me." And to Lin Chung he said, "Until tomorrow, brother." Then he and the vagabonds departed.

Lin Chung, his wife and Chin Erh returned home. The arms instructor was angry and depressed.

As for Young Master Kao, when he had drifted into the temple leading his band of idle cronies and met Lin Chung's wife, he had become sorely enamoured. After Lin Chung drove him off, he returned unhappily to the Marshal's Residence.

A few days later, his ne'er-do-well friends called. But they found him so fretful and irritable that they all went away again.

One of these idlers was an attendant named Fu An, better known as "Dried Pecker Head." Suspecting what was troubling Young Master Kao, he later went alone to the Residence. The young rake was sitting abstracted in the study. Fu An drew near and said:

"You've been rather pale lately, Young Master. You seldom smile. Something must be bothering you."

"How do you know?"

"I'm just guessing."

"Can you guess what it is?"

"Lin Chung's wife. How's that for a guess?"

The Young Master laughed. "Not bad. The problem is I don't know how to get her."

"Nothing to it! You're afraid to provoke Lin Chung because he's a big powerful fellow. But you needn't worry. He's under the Marshal's military command here. He has to behave courteously and watch his step. If he offends the Marshal, the least that can happen to him is exile; the worst is death. Now I've got a little scheme that will put his wife right into your hands."

"I've met many beautiful women. Why should I love only her? My heart is bewitched; I'm not happy. If you have a scheme that will work, I'll reward you generously."

"One of your trusted stewards, Lu Chien, is Lin Chung's best friend. Tomorrow, spread a feast in a quiet nook upstairs in Lu Chien's house. Then have Lu go to Lin and invite him out for some drinking; let Lu take him to a secluded room on the upper floor of the tavern. I'll go to Lin's wife and say, 'Your husband was drinking in Lu Chien's house when he was stricken by a sudden illness. He's collapsed. You'd better hurry and look after him!' Then I'll bring her over. Women are as changeable as water. When she sees what a handsome romantic sort you are, Young Master, and you deluge her with sweet words, she won't be able to resist. What do you think of my plan?"

"Excellent!" Kao applauded. "Have Lu Chien summoned here tonight."

It so happened that Lu Chien lived only one street away from the Kao Residence. He agreed to the scheme immediately; he felt he had no alternative. As long as it would please the Young Master, he was willing to forget about his friendship with the arms instructor.

To get back to Lin Chung. For several days he had been brooding at home. One morning he heard someone shouting at his front door, "Is the arms instructor in?"

Lin Chung went to the door, and there was Lu Chien.

"What brings you here, Brother Lu?" Lin asked quickly.

"I'm concerned about you. Why haven't I seen you on the streets these past few days, brother?"

"My mind is troubled. I don't feel like going out."

"Come and have a few cups with me and forget about your trouble."

"First sit a while and have some tea."

After the two finished their tea, they rose.

"Sister-in-law," Lu Chien called to Lin Chun's wife who was in the next room, "I'm taking Brother Lin over to my place for a few cups of wine."

The lady hurried to the door curtain. Pushing it aside, she admonished, "Don't let him drink too much, brother, and send him home early."

As the two men were strolling down the street, Lu Chien said, "Let's not go to my house, brother. We can have our drinks in the tavern."

And so they went to the public house. After selecting a small room, they ordered two bottles of good wine and some pastries to go with it. They chatted idly for a time. Lin Chung sighed.

"What's wrong, brother?" asked Lu Chien.

"You don't know what's happened! I have talents but they're not recognized by my superiors. I serve under little men from whom I have to take a lot of dirty nonsense!"

"There are several arms instructors in the Imperial Guards, but none can compare with you. The Marshal regards you very highly; who would dare to molest you?"

Lin Chung told Lu Chien about his encounter with Young Master Kao a few days before.

"The Young Master didn't realize she was your wife," Lu Chien said soothingly. "Forget it. Let's drink."

After downing eight or nine cups, Lin Chung had to relieve himself. Rising, he said, "I have to wash my hands." He went down the stairs, left the tavern, then attended to his business in a small lane to the east. Coming back out of the lane, he met Chin Erh.

"I've been looking all over for you, master!" said the maidservant. "So you're here!"

"What's up?" asked Lin Chung hastily.

"You had only been gone a little while when a man came rushing over to our house and said to the mistress, 'I'm a neighbour of Steward Lu. While drinking with Lu Chien, the arms instructor suddenly gasped for breath and fell to the floor! You'd better go and look after him.' Our lady begged Dame Wang next door to take care of our house, then she and I hastened with the man to a place one street past the Marshal's Residence. When we got upstairs we saw a table laden with food and drink, but there was no sign of you, master. As we turned to leave, that young fellow who pestered the mistress at the temple the other day came out and said, 'Stay a while, lady. I am your husband.' I flew down the stairs. Our mistress was screaming for help. But I couldn't find you anywhere. Finally I met Doctor Chang, the medicine vendor, and he told me, 'I just saw the arms instructor and another man going into the tavern.' So I hurried over here. Master, go quickly!"

Shocked, Lin Chung without waiting for Chin Erh, ran at triple speed to Lu Chien's house and raced up the stairs. The door was locked. He could hear his lady exclaiming, "In times of peace and order how dare you hold a good man's wife prisoner!" Young Master Kao was entreating, "Have pity on me, mistress! Even a woman of iron and stone shouldn't be so cold-hearted!"

"Wife, open the door!" thundered Lin Chung.

Hearing her husband's voice, Mistress Lin rushed to comply. The terrified Young Master Kao pushed open a window,

climbed out and fled along the top of a wall. He was gone before Lin Chung entered the room.

"Did that dog violate you?" demanded the arms instructor.

"No," replied his wife.

In a fury, Lin Chung smashed Lu Chien's furniture to bits, then led his wife down the stairs. As they came out of the house, frightened neighbours on both sides of the street hastily shut their doors tight. Chin Erh was waiting for them outside. The three of them went home together.

Then, arming himself with a long sharp knife, Lin Chung sped directly to the tavern, seeking Lu Chien. But his treacherous friend was gone. Lin Chung next went to Lu Chien's house. Although he waited outside the door all night, Lu Chien did not return. Finally the arms instructor went home.

"He didn't harm me. Don't do anything foolish," his wife urged.

"Who would have thought that Lu Chien is such a scoundrel!" fumed Lin Chung. "Calling me 'brother' while plotting against me all the time! And when I catch that Young Master I'll give him a dose of the same medicine I'm going to give Lu Chien!"

Pleading desperately, his wife tried to keep Lin Chung at home.

Meanwhile, Lu Chien hid in the Marshal's Residence, afraid to return to his own house. For three successive days, the arms instructor waited for him outside the Residence gate, but the traitor didn't dare show himself. Lin Chung's appearance was so menacing, no one had the courage to question him.

On the fourth day since they parted, Chih-shen came to Lin Chung's home. "Where have you been keeping yourself these past few days, arms instructor?" the monk asked.

"I've been too busy to call on you, brother," replied Lin Chung apologetically. "Since you've honoured me with a visit to my humble home, I ought to offer you a few cups of wine. But we don't have anything decent to drink in the house. Why not go out for a stroll together and have a cup or two in the market place?"

"Excellent," said Chih-shen.

They went out and drank together all day and arranged to meet again on the morrow. Thereafter, Lin drank with Chih-shen every day. In time, he gradually set the other matter aside.

As to Young Master Kao, after he received that fright in Lu Chien's house and had to flee over the wall, he became ill and took to his bed. He didn't dare say anything to the Marshal about what had happened. Lu Chien and Fu An called on the Young Master at the Residence. They found him pale and in low spirits.

"Why are you so unhappy, Young Master?" asked Lu Chien.

"I won't try to fool you two," Kao replied. "After failing in both attempts to get Lin's wife, and then having that awful scare in addition, I feel worse than ever. If I pass out of this world in three months or half a year, you needn't be surprised!"

"Be of good cheer," the sycophants urged. "Unless she suddenly dies, we guarantee to get you that woman, come what may."

At that moment the old chamberlain entered to see how the Young Master was faring. Lu Chien and Fu An withdrew and held a private consultation. "There's only one way, . . ." they agreed. After the chamberlain had concluded his call and emerged, they invited him to a quiet corner and said:

"There's only one way the Young Master can get well. We must let the Marshal know and have him order the death of Lin Chung. Then the Young Master will be able to get Lin's wife and he'll recover. Otherwise, he's sure to die."

"That's easy," replied the old chamberlain. "I'll inform the Marshal this evening."

"We already have a plan," said the two. "We only await word from you."

That night, the old chamberlain saw the Marshal. "I've discovered what's wrong with the Young Master," he said. "It's Lin Chung's wife."

"When did he ever see the woman?" asked the Marshal.

"On the twenty-eighth of last month, at Yueh Temple. Today is a little over a month," said the old chamberlain, and he told the Marshal what Lu Chien had in mind.

"H'mm, Lin Chung's wife, eh? The question is how to put Lin Chung out of the way, . . ." mused the Marshal. "Let me think. I can't let my son lose his life just for the sake of Lin Chung."

"Lu Chien and Fu An have a plan."

"So? Bring them in here and we'll talk it over."

The old chamberlain summoned Lu Chien and Fu An into the Marshal's hall. They hailed him respectfully.

"Do you two have a plan that can cure my son's illness? If so, I will raise you both in rank."

Lu Chien stepped forward. "Gracious lord, it can be done only thus and thus and thus. . . ."

"Very well," said the Marshal. "You may take action tomorrow."

Of this we need say no more.

To get back to Lin Chung. Drinking every day with Chih-shen, he finally forgot about the matter.

One day, as the two friends were nearing a lane, they saw a big fellow standing on the corner, a cap with gathered ends on his head and dressed in an old military robe. He was holding a fine sword in his hand, with a tuft of grass tied to it indicating that it was for sale.

"No one recognizes its value," he was muttering. "What a pity for my precious sword!"

Lin Chung paid no attention and continued walking and chatting with Chih-shen. The man trailed behind them, saying:

"A splendid sword. It's a shame that no one appreciates it!"

Lin Chung and Chih-shen were still engrossed in their conversation. Following them, the man cried:

"A big city like the eastern capital and not a single person knows the worth of military weapons!"

At this, Lin Chung looked around. The fellow whipped the sword out of its sheath. It gleamed dazzlingly in the sun. Lin Chung was fated for trouble. He said abruptly:

"Let me see it!"

The fellow handed him the sword. Lin Chung took the weapon and he and Chih-shen examined it. Astonished, the arms instructor exclaimed:

"An excellent blade! How much do you want for it?"

"The price is three thousand strings of cash, but I'll take two."

"It's well worth two thousand, but you won't find anyone who'll give that much. If you're willing to accept one thousand, I'll buy it from you."

"I need money quickly. If you really want the sword I'll knock off five hundred and let you have it for fifteen hundred."

"A thousand is the best I can do."

The fellow sighed. "It's selling gold at the price of iron. All right, all right, but not one copper less."

"Come home with me and I'll give you the money," said Lin Chung. Turning to Chih-shen, he proposed, "Wait for me in the tea-house, brother. I'll join you soon."

"No," said the monk, "I must go back. I'll see you tomorrow."

After taking leave of Chih-shen, Lin Chung brought the sword-seller to his home, counted out the purchase price in silver and gave it to him.

"Where did you get this blade?" the arms instructor asked.

"It was handed down to me from my ancestors. Because my family became impoverished I had no choice. I had to sell it."

"What's the name of your family?"

"If I were to tell you, I'd die of shame!"

Lin Chung asked no more. The fellow took the money and departed.

Turning the sword this way and that, Lin Chung exclaimed admiringly, "Truly a beautiful weapon! Marshal Kao is supposed to have a fine sword but he won't show it to anyone. Though I've asked to see it several times, he's never been willing to bring it out. Today I've bought a fine sword too. One of these days I'll compare blades with him."

The arms instructor didn't let the sword out of his hand all evening. Late that night he finally hung it on the wall,

but he was up before daybreak and took the blade down again to admire it.

Some time before noon two messengers came to his gate and cried, "Arms Instructor Lin, an order from the Marshal! He's heard that you've bought a fine sword and wants you to bring it to compare it with his. The Marshal is waiting for you in the Residence."

"Who is the big-mouthed gossip that reported the news so fast!" wondered Lin Chung.

The messengers waited while Lin Chung got dressed. Taking his sword, the arms instructor accompanied them. On the way he said to the messengers:

"I haven't seen you at the Residence before."

"We've only recently been transferred," they replied.

Soon they arrived at the Residence. In the reception room, Lin Chung halted.

"The Marshal is waiting in the rear hall," said the messengers.

Lin Chung went with them around a screen wall into the rear hall. But there was still no sign of the Marshal, and Lin Chung halted once more.

"The Marshal is awaiting the arms instructor in the rear-most court. He directed us to bring you there," said the messengers.

Lin followed them through two or three more doorways until they came to a courtyard lined on all sides by green railings. The messengers led him to the entrance of a large hall and said:

"Please wait out here, arms instructor, while we report to the Marshal. We won't be long."

Lin Chung stood before the eaves while the two messengers went inside. A time long enough to drink a cup of tea passed, but they did not return. Growing suspicious, the arms instructor pushed aside a hanging awning, poked his head in and looked. There, above the door, was a placard with four words written in green: "White Tiger Council Hall."

"This is where the highest military affairs are discussed," thought Lin Chung, startled. "How dare I go in there!"

As he was hastily turning, he heard the tread of boots behind him, the steps ringing sharply. Another man had entered the courtyard. The arms instructor recognized him. It was none other than Marshal Kao, commander of the district. Profferring his sword with both hands, Lin Chung greeted him respectfully.

"Lin Chung!" the Marshal barked. "I didn't summon you: how dare you force your way into the White Tiger Council Hall! Don't you know the law? And carrying a weapon! You must have come to kill me! People told me that you were seen waiting outside the Residence two or three days ago with a knife in your hand. Your intentions are surely evil!"

Bowing, Lin Chung replied, "Benevolent lord, two of your messengers brought me here saying you wanted to compare your sword with mine."

"Where are the messengers?" cried the Marshal.

"They just went into the hall, sir."

"Lies! Lies! No messenger would dare enter my official halls! Ho, guards! Seize this lout!"

Before the order had left the Marshal's mouth, from the buildings flanking the sides of the courtyard over thirty stalwarts came rushing out and knocked Lin Chung to the ground.

"As an arms instructor of the Imperial Guards, you must know the law," the Marshal raged. "Why else would you enter the Council Hall with a sharp sword in your hand if not to murder me?"

He ordered his men to take Lin Chung away. Could Lin Chung survive?

And because of this there was a great tumult on the Central Plains and a wild disturbance on the waters. Peasants had to wear army designations on their backs; military pennants fluttered on fishing boats.

If you want to know whether Lin Chung lived or died, then listen to our next episode.

CHAPTER 8

Arms Instructor Lin Is Tattooed and Exiled to Tsangchou
Lu Chih-shen Makes a Shambles of Wild Boar Forest

As we were saying, Marshal Kao shouted for his guards to take Lin Chung out and execute him. Lin Chung loudly exclaimed that he was innocent.

"Why did you enter the Council Hall with a sword in your hand?" demanded the Marshal. "Of course you wanted to kill me!"

"Would I dare go in if the Marshal hadn't summoned me?" countered Lin Chung. "I saw those two messengers enter the hall. They tricked me into coming here."

"Nonsense! What messengers are you talking about? This scoundrel refuses to admit his guilt!" said the Marshal. And he directed his guards, "Take him to the Kaifeng Prefecture; ask Prefect Teng to examine him and investigate the case. Get the truth out of him, then have him executed! Label the sword as an official exhibit and take it along!"

Bearing the Marshal's order, the guards escorted Lin Chung to the Kaifeng Prefecture. It happened that the prefect was still holding court, and Marshal Kao's emissary brought Lin Chung into the prefect's hall and knelt at the foot of the dais. The prefect's secretary relayed the emissary's message from Marshal Kao and placed the labelled sword down in front of Lin Chung.

"Lin Chung," said the prefect, "you're an arms instructor in the Imperial Guards. You must know the law. How could you enter the Council Hall holding a sword? That's an offence punishable by death!"

"Benevolent lord, you reflect the truth like a mirror. Lin Chung has been grievously wronged! Although I'm only a crude and stupid military man, I'm not exactly ignorant of the law. How would I presume to enter the Council Hall? The reason I went there was this: On the

twenty-eighth of last month I took my wife to Yueh Temple to burn incense. There I caught Marshal Kao's son trying to seduce her. I berated him and drove him away. Next, he had Steward Lu trick me into going out to drink and got Fu An to lure my wife to Steward Lu's home, where he tried to ravish her. This too I discovered and wrecked Lu Chien's furniture. Though Young Master Kao failed to despoil her, I have witnesses to both attempts.

"Yesterday, I bought this sword. Today, Marshal Kao sent two messengers to summon me; they said he wanted me to bring my sword to compare it with his. And so I went with them to the Council Hall. After they went inside, Marshal Kao suddenly entered the courtyard. It's all a plot to destroy me. Please help me, Your Honour!"

After hearing Lin Chung's story, the prefect ordered that a receipt-of-prisoner be issued, a wooden cangue locked around the arms instructor's neck, and that he be held in custody. Lin Chung's family sent food to him in gaol and gave tips to the keepers. His father-in-law, Arms Instructor Chang, also called at the prison. He spent quite a bit, bribing high and low.

It happened that in the prefecture there was a record clerk named Sun Ting. Because he was extremely just and kindly and always willing to help people, he was known as Sun the Buddha. Learning the facts of the case, he diplomatically informed the prefect what he had discovered.

"Lin Chung has been wronged," he said. "You must help him."

"But Marshal Kao has confirmed that he committed a crime. He insists that I convict Lin Chung for entering the Council Hall, sword in hand, with the intention of murdering him. What can I do?"

"The sovereign office of the Kaifeng Prefecture belongs not to the royal court but to the family of Marshal Kao!"

"Not at all!"

"Everyone knows Marshal Kao uses his position tyrannically. There's nothing he won't do. Whoever offends him, even in the slightest, he sends to the Kaifeng Pre-

fecture. If he wants a man killed, we kill him; if he wants him hacked, we hack him. We've become a mere subdivision of his family!"

"How can I make things easy for Lin Chung? What sort of sentence should I pass?"

"From Lin Chung's story, it's plain that he's innocent, although we haven't been able to find those two messengers. Why not have him confess to entering the Council Hall improperly wearing a sword at his waist, sentence him to twenty strokes of the bamboo, tattoo him and exile him to some distant military district?"

After considering this, Prefect Teng went to see Marshal Kao and urged him to agree to such a confession from Lin Chung. Knowing that reason was against him, and since the prefect seemed reluctant to co-operate, the Marshal was forced to consent.

The very same day, the prefect called court into session. He had Lin Chung summoned, the cangue removed and twenty blows of the bamboo administered. After directing the tattooer to place the mark of a criminal on Lin Chung's cheek, the prefect calculated the distance and decided upon Tsangchou as Lin's place of exile. In full court, a hinged wooden cangue of seven and a half catties was placed around the arms instructor's neck, and nailed fast, and prefectural seals were affixed. The prefect then issued a deportation order and designated two constables to escort the prisoner to his destination. Their names were Tung Chao and Hsueh Pa.

On receiving the order, together with Lin Chung, the constables left the prefectural compound. Outside the gate, many of Lin Chung's neighbours and his father-in-law, Arms Instructor Chang, were waiting. All repaired to a tavern at Chouchiao Bridge and took seats.

"Thanks to the assistance of Record Clerk Sun, my beating was not heavy and I'm still able to walk," said Lin Chung.

Arms Instructor Chang told the waiter to serve the two constables with wine and pastries. After they had drunk several cups, the old man presented them each with some silver.

Clasping hands respectfully, Lin Chung addressed his father-in-law.

"Bad times have befallen me, exalted father-in-law. I clashed with Young Master Kao and the court has condemned me wrongfully. Now I have something to say: In the three years since you generously gave me your daughter in marriage she has never done anything to displease me. Although she's borne no children, not once have we quarrelled or even grown red in the face. Today I've suffered this misfortune. I'm being exiled to Tsangchou and there's no telling whether I'll live or die. My lady will be left at home. I'm worried about her, I'm afraid Young Master Kao will try to force his suit.

"She's still young; I shouldn't tie her down. This is my own idea, it's entirely voluntary. In the presence of our honourable neighbours I want to write out an annulment of our marriage, consenting to her making a new match and promising not to contest it. Only in this way will I feel at ease, assured that Young Master Kao won't be able to harm her."

"What words are these, good son-in-law!" cried the old arms instructor. "You've been unlucky and this misfortune has happened. It's not of your own doing. Today you're going to Tsangchou for temporary refuge, but sooner or later Heaven will pity you and let you return, and husband and wife will be together again. I've got a bit of money; I'll have my daughter and Chin Erh move in with me. Come what may, I can support them for four or five years. I won't allow my daughter out on the streets. Young Master Kao won't be able to see her even if he wants to. Don't worry. I'll take care of everything. You go on to Tsangchou. From time to time I'll send you letters and clothing. Don't get any foolish ideas. Just go in peace."

"Thank you, father-in-law, for your good intentions. But I wouldn't feel right, tying her down. Have pity, father-in-law, let me have my way. Then, even if I die, I can close my eyes peacefully!"

But Arms Instructor Chang wouldn't hear of it. The neighbours also were opposed.

"Unless I am allowed to do this, even if I succeed in coming back I swear I'll never see her again!" said Lin Chung.

"Write out the annulment, if that's how you feel," said the old man. "In any event, I won't let my daughter marry another."

Lin Chung then sent for a scribe and purchased a sheet of paper. The scribe wrote as Lin Chung dictated:

> *Because he was convicted of a serious crime, Lin Chung, arms instructor of the Imperial Guards, eastern capital, has been sentenced to exile in Tsangchou. What will happen to him is difficult to foretell. His wife (maiden name Chang) is still young, and he therefore wishes to annul their marriage. He grants her permission to contract a new marriage and guarantees that he will never contest it. The annulment is truly voluntary and not issued under compulsion. In the event of any doubt, this document shall serve as proof.*
>
> *Year . . . Month . . . Day . . .*

When the document was completed, Lin Chung took the writing brush and signed his name below the date, then added his thumb print. Just as he was about to hand the annulment to his father-in-law, his wife, weeping and crying aloud, came hurrying to the tavern, followed by the maidservant, Chin Erh, who was carrying a bundle of clothing. Lin Chung rose and went forward to meet her.

"Wife," he said, "I have something to tell you. I've already spoken to father-in-law. Because I've fallen on bad times, I've had this misfortune. Today, I start for Tsangchou. It's hard to say whether I'll live or die. I don't want to hold you back in the flower of your youth, so I've had this document written. Please don't wait for me. If you meet a good man, marry again. Don't delay your happiness on my account."

"Husband!" she wept. "I've never wronged you in the slightest. How can you discard me?"

"I mean well, wife," said Lin Chung. "Otherwise, we'll only impede each other. You'll be harmed."

"Don't worry, my daughter," said Arms Instructor Chang. "Even though son-in-law recommends it, I'll never allow you to remarry. He can depart easy in his mind. If he doesn't return, I'll provide for you for the rest of your life, as long as you're willing to remain faithful to him."

The young woman uttered heart-rending sobs. Tears streaming down her cheeks, when she saw the annulment document she collapsed swooning to the floor. Lin Chung and his father-in-law hurried to raise her. It was some time before she revived. She wept uncontrollably as Lin Chung presented the document to her father. Women neighbours did their best to comfort her. Supporting the bereft woman under the arms, they escorted her home.

"Go, and try to come back soon," Arms Instructor Chang told Lin Chung. "Tomorrow, I shall move your wife over to my house. I'll take care of her until your return. You can depart without any worries. Be sure to write to us from time to time, if you find people who can deliver your letters."

Lin Chung rose and thanked his father-in-law and his neighbours, placed his bundle on his back, and went off with the constables. Arms Instructor Chang and the neighbours departed for home; of them we shall say no more.

We'll speak of the two constables and Lin Chung. After locking their prisoner in a guard house, Tung Chao and Hsueh Pa returned to their homes to pack some things for their journey. As Tung Chao was tying a bundle together, a waiter from the tavern at the head of the lane came and said:

"Sir, a gentleman wishes to speak with you in our tavern."

"Who is he?"

"I don't know him. He only told me to invite you over."

Tung Chao went with the waiter to a room in the tavern. He found a man wearing a hat decorated with Buddhist swastikas and dressed in a black silk tunic; on his feet were black boots and plain stockings. When Tung Chao entered, the man quickly rose and clasped hands in greeting.

"Please be seated, sir," he said.

"I have not had the privilege of meeting Your Honour before," said Tung Chao. "How can I serve you?"

"Please sit down. You'll know shortly."

Tung Chao took a chair on the opposite side of the table. The waiter brought wine cups and food and pastries and laid them out.

"Where does Constable Hsueh live?" the man asked.

"In that lane ahead," replied Tung Chao.

The man called the waiter and asked him for Hsueh's exact address. "Invite him here to meet me," he instructed.

In less time than it takes to drink a cup of tea, the waiter returned with Hsueh Pa.

"This gentleman has invited us here for a talk," Tung Chao explained.

"May I ask your name, sir?" queried Hsueh Pa.

"You'll know very soon," replied the man. "First let us drink."

The three took their seats and the waiter served the wine. After they had consumed several cups, the man drew from his sleeve ten ounces of gold and placed them on the table.

"Five ounces for each of you two constables," he said. "There is a small matter I want to trouble you about."

"But we don't know Your Honour. Why should you give us gold?" they asked.

"Aren't you going to Tsangchou?"

"We're taking Lin Chung there under orders of the Kaifeng prefect," said Tung Chao.

"It's precisely for that reason that I must bother you two. I am Marshal Kao's trusted steward Lu Chien."

Tung Chao and Hsueh Pa immediately greeted him with profound respect. "How can insignificant men like us presume to sit at the same table with Your Honour!" they cried.

"As you know, Lin Chung has incurred the Marshal's displeasure. The Marshal has ordered me to present you with these ten ounces of gold. He hopes you will promise to finish off Lin Chung in some secluded place along the road — it needn't be too far — and bring back a certification of his death from the local authorities. If the Kaifeng Prefecture causes any difficulty, the Marshal will take care of it personally; you needn't worry about that."

"I'm afraid it's not possible," said Tung Chao. "The official order of the Kaifeng Prefecture directs that we deliver Lin Chung alive, not that we kill him. He's not an old man; how could we explain his death? We'd surely get into trouble. I'm afraid it can't be done."

"Tung, old man," said Hsueh Pa, "listen to me. If Marshal Kao ordered us to die, we would have to obey, to say nothing of a case like this, when he sends this gentleman to give us gold. Say no more. I'll share it with you and that's that. If we do this little favour, we'll be looked after in the future. On the road to Tsangchou is a big pine forest, a wild evil place. Come what may, we'll finish him off there!"

Hsueh Pa took the gold and said, "You can rely on us, Your Honour. At the latest on the fifth stage of the journey, at the earliest the second, the thing will be done."

Very pleased, Lu Chien exclaimed, "Constable Hsueh is truly straightforward and to the point! When the deed is accomplished, bring back the golden print on Lin Chung's face as proof. I will then reward you both with another ten ounces of gold. I shall be waiting for good news. Be sure not to delay."

In Sung times, prisoners who were to be exiled were always tattooed on the face. To make it sound better, the mark was called "the golden print."

The three finished their wine, Lu Chien paid the bill, then all left the tavern and went their separate ways.

Tung Chao and Hsueh Pa, after dividing the gold, returned to their homes and finished packing. Then they took their constables' staves, called for Lin Chung at the guard house, and set out from the city. They travelled more than thirty *li* before calling a halt. In Sung days, constables escorting a prisoner did not have to pay for lodging in public inns. Hsueh and Tung brought Lin Chung to an inn, and they stayed the night.

At dawn the next morning, the constables lit a fire and made breakfast, then the three continued their journey to

Tsangchou. It was the height of summer and the weather was scorching. Lin Chung had not suffered much when he was beaten. But now a few days had passed, and the fiery heat irritated his wounds. He walked painfully, with dragging steps.

"Stupid clod!" Hsueh Pa said. "It's over two thousand *li* from here to Tsangchou. Who knows when we'll get there, at the rate you're going!"

"I was buffeted a bit in the Marshal's compound, and then, the other day, I was beaten with bamboos. My wounds are paining me in this awful heat," Lin Chung explained. "Please, sirs, don't be impatient."

"Just take your time," said Tung Chao. "Never mind his grumbling."

Hsueh Pa kept complaining and cursing all along the road. "It's our misfortune to have run into a wretched demon like you!" he berated Lin Chung.

As the day was drawing to a close, the three again put up in a village inn. Entering the door, the constables rested their staves and removed their packs. Lin Chung also dropped his luggage bundle. Before the constables could say anything, he took out some pieces of silver and told the attendant to bring wine and meat and hot rice, and set them on the table. Lin then invited the constables to dine with him.

Tung Chao and Hsueh Pa ordered still more wine, plying Lin Chung with it until he fell over on his side, wooden cangue and all. Hsueh Pa then boiled a large pot of water. When it was bubbling hot he brought it out and poured it into a basin.

"Wash your feet, Arms Instructor Lin," he said. "You'll sleep better."

Lin Chung struggled to a sitting position, but he couldn't lean forward because of the cangue.

"I'll wash them for you," Hsueh Pa offered.

"How could I impose upon you!" Lin Chung hastily refused.

"Men travelling together shouldn't be ceremonious over such details!" said Hsueh Pa.

Not realizing it was a plot, Lin Chung stretched out his legs. Hsueh Pa seized them and plunged his feet into the boiling water.

"Aiya!" exclaimed Lin Chung, hurriedly pulling them out. His feet had turned red and swollen. "You needn't trouble!" he cried.

"Plenty of prisoners have looked after constables, but how often do you see a constable serving a prisoner!" said Hsueh Pa. "With the best of intentions I wash his feet, but he has the nerve to complain — the water's too cold; the water's too hot! If this isn't 'returning bad for good' I don't know what is!"

He grumbled and swore half the night.

Not daring to reply, Lin Chung could only fall over and lie on his side.

The two constables poured out the boiling water, filled the basin afresh, then went to wash their feet outside.

They slept until the fourth watch, rising while the rest of the inn was still in bed. Hsueh Pa heated some water to wash with, and cooked breakfast. Lin Chung, dizzy, was unable to eat and barely able to walk. Hsueh Pa threatened him with his staff. Tung Chao untied from his belt a pair of new straw sandals with loops and bindings of woven hemp. He told Lin Chung to put them on. Lin Chung's scalded feet were covered with blisters. He wanted his worn soft sandals, but they were nowhere to be found. He had to put the new ones on.

After the waiter had added up the bill, the constables led Lin Chung from the inn. It was by now the fifth watch.

Before Lin Chung had gone more than two or three *li*, the blisters on his feet, broken by the new straw sandals, bled freely. He could hardly drag himself along and he groaned ceaselessly.

"Walk! Faster!" shouted Hsueh Pa. "Keep moving or I'll help you with this staff!"

"Have pity on me, good officer!" Lin Chung pleaded. "Would I dare to slow down deliberately and delay our

journey? It's because my feet are killing me. I can't walk!"

"You can lean on me," said Tung Chao. He supported Lin Chung and they struggled on another four or five *li*.

When it became obvious that Lin Chung really couldn't go much farther, they saw ahead of them a wild evil wood shrouded in mist. Known as Wild Boar Forest, it was the first dangerous place on the road from Kaifeng to Tsangchou. During the Sung dynasty, those who had grudges against prisoners being sent into exile often bribed their escorts to murder them. Who can say how many good men lost their lives in this wood?

Now, the two constables led Lin Chung straight into the forest.

"In five watches we can't even walk ten *li*," said Tung Chao. "We'll never reach Tsangchou at this rate!"

"I'm tired too," said Hsueh Pa. "Let's rest here in the woods."

After penetrating deeper into the forest, the three men removed their packs and placed them at the foot of a tree. Lin Chung groaned. With his back against a tree trunk he slid to the ground.

"Having to wait for you every time we take a step has worn us out," said the constables. "We'll sleep a while and then go on."

They rested their staves and lay down beside a tree. But no sooner had they closed their eyes than they leaped up with an exclamation.

"What's wrong, good officers?" asked Lin Chung.

"We were just about to sleep when we remembered that there are no doors and locks here. We're afraid you'll run off. We're worried, so we can't sleep in peace."

"I'm a respectable man. Since I've already been convicted, I'd never run away!"

"Who can believe that!" scoffed Hsueh Pa. "The only way we can really feel secure is to tie you up."

"If that's what you good officers want, how can I refuse?"

Hsueh Pa took a rope from his waist and bound Lin Chung hand and foot and tied him, together with the cangue, tightly to the tree. Then he and Tung Chao sprang up, whirled around, seized their staves and advanced on Lin Chung.

"Killing you isn't our idea," they said. "The other day Steward Lu informed us of the order of Marshal Kao: We're to finish you off here and return immediately with the golden print. Even if we travelled a few more days, it would still be your death march! Doing the job here, we can get back that much earlier. Don't blame us two brothers. We're only carrying out orders; we have no choice. You must know: A year from this day will be the first anniversary of your death! We've been given a time limit. We must return quickly with our report."

When Lin Chung heard this, his tears fell like rain. "Officers!" he cried. "There's never been any enmity between us. Spare me, and I'll never forget you in this world or the next!"

"Empty talk!" said Tung Chao. "You can't be saved!"

Hsueh Pa raised his constable's staff and swung it fiercely at Lin Chung's head.

What a pity for a hero to die thus with bound hands!

There are no inns on the long road to the nether regions. In whose home can a wandering spirit rest in the deep of night?

Did Lin Chung live or die? Listen to our next episode if you want to know.

CHAPTER 9

Chai Chin Keeps Open House for All Bold Men
Lin Chung Defeats Arms Instructor Hung in a Bout with Staves

As we were saying, Hsueh Pa raised his staff with both hands to bring it down on Lin Chung's head. But quicker than words can tell, from behind the pine tree came a thunderous roar as a solid iron rod shot forward, intercepted the staff and sent it flying into the sky. Then out leaped a big fat monk.

"I heard everything you said!" he yelled. Dressed in a black cassock, he was wearing a big knife and carried a Buddhist staff which he brandished at the two constables.

Lin Chung, who had just opend his eyes, recognized Lu Chih-shen, and he hastily cried: "Brother! Stay your hand! I have something to say!"

Chih-shen lowered his iron staff. The constables gaped at him, too frightened to move.

"It's not their doing," said Lin Chung. "Marshal Kao, through Lu Chien, gave them orders to destroy me. How could they refuse? It would be wrong to kill them!"

Whipping out his knife, Chih-shen cut the arms instructor's bonds and helped him to his feet.

"Brother," he said, "I've been worried about you ever since that day we parted, when you bought the sword. After you were convicted, I had no way to rescue you. I heard that you were being exiled to Tsangchou, and I sought you outside the Kaifeng Prefecture, but in vain. Someone said that you had been locked in a guard house. Then I learned that a waiter had gone to the two constables, saying, 'A gentleman wishes to speak to you in the tavern,' and I became suspicious. I was afraid these oafs would try to harm you along the road, so I followed.

"When these knaves brought you to the inn, I put up there too. I heard them plotting in whispers. When they tricked you and scalded your feet in the boiling water, I wanted to kill them on the spot. But there were too many

Rescue in Wild Boar Forest Ming dynasty woodcut

guests at the inn and I was afraid I couldn't carry it off. I knew the rogues were up to something dirty; I was very worried.

"You set out before dawn at the fifth watch. I hurried ahead to the forest and waited to kill the two wretches here. They came here to harm you, so now I ought to destroy them!"

"Since you've saved me, brother, there's no need to kill them," urged Lin Chung.

"Scurvy knaves!" bellowed Chih-shen. "If it weren't for my brother here, I'd pound you both into mincement! Only because he asks it, I'll spare your lives!" He put his knife away and shouted, "Support my brother, and be quick about it! Come with me!" Taking his staff, he set off.

How dared they refuse? Crying, "Save us, Instructor Lin!" the constables again shouldered their packs and grasped their staves. Supporting Lin Chung and carrying his bundle, they followed the monk out of the forest.

After walking three or four *li*, they saw a little tavern at the entrance to a village. All four went in and sat down. They ordered five or six catties of meat, two jugs of wine and some griddle cakes. The waiter laid the table and served the wine.

"May we presume to inquire," the constables said to Chih-shen, "in what monastery you reside, master?"

Chih-shen chuckled. "Why do you ask, scoundrels? So that you can tell Marshal Kao how to harm me? Others may fear him; I don't! If I meet that wretch I'll give him three hundred licks of my iron staff!"

The constables dared say no more.

The four finished the meat and wine, got their luggage in order, paid the bill and left the village.

"Where are you planning to go today, brother?" asked Lin Chung.

" 'To kill a man you must draw blood, to rescue a man you must see him to safety.' I still don't feel at ease about you, brother. I'm going to escort you all the way to Tsangchou."

Hearing this, the two constables secretly groaned, "Woe! That ruins our scheme! What will we say when we get back?" But they could only continue the journey, docilely obeying the monk's orders.

From then on, they marched when he wanted to march, and rested when he wanted to rest. How dared they oppose him? In a good mood, he merely cursed them; in a bad, he beat them. Neither of the constables dared say a word for fear of arousing the monk's ire.

After marching two more stages, they hired a cart. Lin Chung rested on the cart, while the other three walked behind it. The constables had guilty consciences and were anxious to preserve their lives, so they tagged along cautiously.

On the road, Chih-shen frequently bought wine and meat for Lin Chung, and the constables were permitted to join him. When the party came to an inn, they would retire early and rise late. Of course, the constables lit the fires and did the cooking. Who dared to disobey the monk?

They conferred worriedly in private. "We've become the prisoners and the monk the escort. When we get back, Marshal Kao will surely punish us!"

"I've heard that a newly arrived monk has been put in charge of the monastery vegetable fields," said Hsueh Pa. "He's called Lu Chih-shen. This must be the man. Let's tell the truth when we get back. We'll say that we wanted to finish Lin Chung off in Wild Boar Forest, but that the monk rescued him and went with us all the way to Tsangchou; that was why we couldn't do the job. We'll return the ten ounces of gold to Lu Chien. Let him settle accounts with the monk himself. All you and I want is to be clear of the whole thing."

"My feelings exactly," said Tung Chao.

Of their discussion we shall say no more.

To make a long story short, they marched for seventeen or eighteen days, with Chih-shen never relaxing his watch over the two constables. Soon they were only about seventy *li* from Tsangchou. It was a well-travelled road the rest of the way; there were no desolate stretches. After

inquiring to make sure of this, Chih-shen led the party into a grove to rest.

"Brother," he said to Lin Chung, "from here to Tsang-chou is not far. There are plenty of people on the road and no deserted places. I've already checked on it. I'll part with you here. Some day we'll meet again."

"Go back, brother. Let my father-in-law know that I'm all right," said Lin Chung. "If I live, I'll repay you for your gracious protection in full."

Chih-shen took out a score or more pieces of silver and gave them to Lin Chung, then handed two or three pieces to the constables.

"Scurvy knaves! Originally I was going to cut your heads off along the road. Out of courtesy to my brother I've spared your paltry lives! The journey is nearly over. Don't get any evil ideas!"

"Would we dare?" replied the two. "It was all Marshal Kao's doing!" They accepted the silver and divided it between them.

As they turned to leave, Chih-shen glared and shouted, "Wretches! Are your heads harder than this pine tree?"

"We humble servants have heads only of the flesh and skin our parents gave us, wrapped around a few bones. . . ."

Chih-shen raised his iron staff and struck the tree a mighty blow, making a gash two inches deep. The pine folded over neatly and fell.

"Scurvy knaves!" roared the monk. "If you get any wrong ideas, I'll clout your heads like I did this pine!"

Dragging his iron staff with one hand and swinging his other arm, Chih-shen walked off, calling, "Take care of yourself, brother!"

"Let's go, good officers," said Lin Chung.

"Terrific!" exclaimed the constables. "With one blow he snaps a tree in half!"

"That's nothing," said Lin Chung. "Back in the monastery, he pulled a tree up by the roots."

The two constables wagged their heads. This confirmed their guess about the monk's identity.

Leaving the grove, the three continued walking until noon. Down the highway they observed a tavern. They entered, and Lin Chung invited the constables to sit at the head of the table. Tung and Hsueh relaxed for the first time that day.

The tavern contained several tables, and the four or five waiters were kept very busy rushing from one to another serving food and wine. Lin Chung and the constables sat for a long time, but no one came to take their order.

Finally, Lin Chung pounded on the table and shouted impatiently, "Ho, tavern keeper, how dare you abuse a customer? You see that I'm a prisoner, so you ignore me! I can pay for what we eat! What's the meaning of this?"

"You don't understand," said the tavern keeper. "My intentions were good."

"You don't sell me wine or meat. What's good-intentioned about that?"

"You don't understand. In our village there's a big landholder called Chai Chin, known in these parts as Lord Chai. In the fraternity of bold men, all address him as Small Whirlwind. He's a descendant of the Chou* dynasty royal family. When the generals surrendered their claims to the throne at Chenchiao, the first Sung emperor bestowed on Chai's ancestors 'The Wrought Iron Pledge.' Since then, no one has dared to molest his family.

"Chai Chin makes a practice of welcoming all bold men. He's always supporting forty or fifty of them in his home. He's left instructions with us at the tavern: 'Tell any prisoner on route to exile to come to my manor. I will help him with money.' If I sold you meat and drink today and you ate until you were red in the face, he would say that you have money and don't need his help. My intentions were good."

Lin Chung turned to the constables. "When I was giving arms instruction to the soldiers in the eastern capital, I often heard military men speak of Lord Chai. So this is where he comes from. Why don't we pay him a call?"

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*The later Chou dynasty (951-960).

Hsueh Pa and Tung Chao thought it over, then said, "Since we're already here, what have we got to lose?" Collecting their luggage, they asked the tavern keeper, "Where is Lord Chai's manor? We want to visit him."

"Go straight ahead for about three *li* until you cross a big stone bridge. One or two turns, and you'll see a large estate. That's it."

Lin Chung and the constables thanked the tavern keeper and set out. After marching about three *li*, sure enough, they came to a big stone bridge. Crossing to the other side, they found a smooth broad road. In the distance, amid many green willows, they could see the outlines of a manor. A wide moat, flowing around the four sides of the manor, was fringed on both banks by large weeping willow trees. Through the trees, the white outer wall of the stronghold was faintly visible.

After a few more turns down the road, they neared the entrance to the estate. Four or five retainers were sitting on a plank bridge, enjoying the cool of the shade. Approaching the bridge, Lin Chung and the constables bowed to the retainers, and the arms instructor asked:

"Could I trouble you to report to Lord Chai that a prisoner named Lin, on his way to exile from the capital, requests to see him?"

"You're out of luck," said the retainers. "If His Lordship were at home, you'd receive wine and food and money. But he left this morning to go hunting."

"When will he return?"

"Hard to say. Probably he's resting at the eastern manor, but maybe not. We can't tell you for sure."

"Since I'm out of luck, I won't be able to meet him. Let's go back," said Lin Chung to the constables.

Taking leave of the retainers, the three men returned along the same road on which they had come. Lin Chung felt very depressed.

After they had walked more than half a *li*, far off they saw a column of horsemen dash out of a grove and come galloping in the direction of the estate. On a snow-white horse with a curly mane rode a noble-looking gentleman.

He had the brows of a dragon and eyes like a phoenix, with gleaming white teeth and ruby red lips. Drooping moustaches framed his lips; below them was a slim goatee. About thirty-five years of age, he wore a black flowered silk hat with curled up corners, and was dressed in a figured purple gown with designs embroidered on the chest. Around his waist was a handsome tasseled girdle inlaid with precious jade. On his feet were black boots with green stripes and filigreed gold thread. He carried a bow and a quiver of arrows.

Stretching out in a long line, the horsemen raced towards the stronghold.

"Can that be Lord Chai?" Lin Chung wondered. But he didn't dare to ask.

Then he saw the young nobleman turn his white horse out of the column and trot up to him.

"Who is this gentleman wearing the cangue?" the nobleman asked.

Lin quickly bowed and replied, "Your humble servant is called Lin Chung, formerly an arms instructor in the eastern capital's Imperial Guards. Because I offended Marshal Kao, he invented an excuse to send me to the Kaifeng Prefecture and have me sentenced to exile in Tsangchou. We were told at the village tavern that the gallant hero who lives here, Lord Chai, keeps open house for men of talent. But my luck was poor and I was unable to find him."

Leaping from his saddle, the gentleman rushed forward, crying, "I am Chai Chin! A thousand apologies for not being at home to welcome you!" He fell to his knees on the grass and kowtowed.

Lin Chung hastily returned the courtesy. Then the gentleman took him by the hand and led him towards the manor. When the retainers saw them coming, they pushed wide the stronghold gates. Chai Chin led Lin Chung directly to the ceremonial hall, and the two men again exchanged obeisances.

"I have long known of your fame," said Chai Chin. "Who would have thought that today you would come to our

humble place. This is one of the happiest events of my life!"

"Your Lordship's name is honoured everywhere. It is revered by all! I never thought that because I was convicted and was passing here on my way to exile I would have the joy of meeting you!"

After much insistence on the part of Chai Chin, Lin Chung took the chair of honour at the table. Hsueh Pa and Tung Chao also were seated. The men who had accompanied Chai Chin on the hunt led their horses into the rear compound and retired. Of them we shall say no more.

Chai Chin ordered his retainers to bring wine. Before long they came with a platter of meat and one of griddle cakes and a pot of warmed wine. Then came another platter heaped with cooked rice; on top of the rice were ten strings of cash.

"These rustics don't recognize a man of quality!" said Chai Chin. "How can they value the arms instructor so lightly? Ho! Take these things back! Bring fine pastries and wine; slaughter a sheep. Be quick!"

"Please, no more, Your Lordship," protested Lin Chung, rising politely. "This is quite enough."

"You mustn't say that! It's a rare privilege to have you here. We can't be remiss in courtesy!"

The retainers soon came rushing in with sweetmeats and wine. Chai Chin stood up and handed out three full goblets. Lin Chung thanked him and drained his cup. The two constables also drank.

"Excuse me a moment, arms instructor," said Chai Chin. Taking off his bow case and quiver of arrows, he went over to the constables and invited them to down a drink with him. Then he seated himself in the host's chair. Lin Chung occupied the chair of the guest of honour; the two constables sat beside him. All chatted idly for a time—of bold adventures and feats of arms.

Before they knew it, the sun had sunk in the west. Wine, food, pastries and delicacies from the sea were set out upon the table before the guests. Toasting each guest personally, Chai Chin drank three rounds. Then he resumed his seat and called: "Bring the soup!"

After the soup was consumed, and six or seven more goblets of wine, a retainer entered and announced: "The teacher has come."

"Good. Invite him to sit with us and meet our guests," said Chai Chin. "Quickly bring another setting."

The new arrival entered and Lin Chung rose to greet him. Cap tilted to one side, arms stiffly belligerent, he swaggered into the hall. "That retainer referred to him as teacher," thought Lin Chung. "He must be His Lordship's arms teacher." Hastily bowing, the arms instructor intoned: "Lin Chung tenders his respects!"

Completely ignoring him, the man did not return his salutation. Lin Chung dared not raise his head. Pointing at Lin Chung, Chai Chin said to the man, whom he called Arms Instructor Hung:

"This is Arms Instructor Lin who teaches the art of spears and staves in the eastern capital's Imperial Guards. You two should know each other."

Lin Chung immediately dropped to his knees and kowtowed.

Arms Instructor Hung said, "Don't kowtow. Get up." He himself didn't even bow.

Observing this, Chai Chin was annoyed. Lin Chung kowtowed twice, then rose and begged Hung to be seated first. Without even a pretence of any courtesy, the fellow promptly took the guest of honour's chair. Chai Chin was quite displeased. Lin Chung slipped into the next seat. The two constables sat down beside him.

"Why is Your Lordship so courteous to an exiled army man?" Arms Instructor Hung asked.

"This gentleman is not an ordinary person. He's an arms instructor in the Eight Hundred Thousand Imperial Guards. How can you regard him lightly, master?"

"Because Your Lordship is fond of feats of arms, these exiled military men are always coming to enjoy your bounty. Anyone who says, 'I'm an arms instructor in

spears and staves,' can call at the manor and get food and drink and money and rice. Your Lordship is too gullible!"

Lin Chung said nothing, but Chai Chin retorted, "It's difficult to tell from appearances. You shouldn't underestimate him."

Stung by this last remark, Hung leaped to his feet. "I don't believe him! If he dares to take me on in a bout with staves, then I'll admit he's a genuine arms instructor!"

Chai Chin laughed. "Not a bad idea. Arms Instructor Lin, what do you say?"

"Your humble servant couldn't presume to such a thing," said Lin Chung.

Hung thought to himself, "He doesn't know how to fight, that's sure. He's afraid." And so he was more insistent than ever that Lin Chung accept his challenge.

Chai Chin not only wanted to see an exhibition of Lin's skill, he wanted him to beat Hung and shut the oaf's mouth. "Bring wine," he called. "We'll drink first. The match can wait till the moon is high."

By the time they had consumed another six or seven rounds, the moon had risen and was shining in with such brilliance that the hall was as bright as day. Chai Chin stood up and said, "Arms instructors, please give us a bout."

Lin Chung thought to himself: "This Instructor Hung must be Chai Chin's arms teacher. If I beat him, His Lordship will lose face."

Observing Lin Chung's hesitation, Chai Chin said, "Instructor Hung has not been here long either; no one has taken him on. Please don't refuse, Master Lin. I am most eager to see the skill of you two instructors." Chai Chin said this to indicate that Lin need not have any fears about offending him, and that he should not hold back.

Lin Chung at last felt reassured.

"Come on, come on!" cried Hung, rising. "I'll give you a bout with staves!"

Everyone surged out of the hall into the courtyard. Retainers brought a bundle of wooden staves and laid them on the ground. Hung removed his outer robe and tied up his skirts. Selecting a staff, he struck a fighting pose.

"Come on, come on!" he urged.

"Instructor Lin," said Chai Chin, "please start the bout."

"Don't laugh at my clumsiness, Your Lordship," Lin Chung begged. Choosing a staff, he said to Hung, "Master, please teach me."

Hung glared at him as if wanting to swallow him down in one gulp. Lin Chung advanced holding the staff in both hands. Hung rapped his staff sharply on the ground and rushed at Lin.

After the two arms instructors had fought four or five rounds in the bright moonlight, Lin Chung leaped out of the combat circle. "Halt the bout!" he cried.

"Why won't you show us your skill, instructor?" queried Chai Chin.

"I've lost," said Lin.

"But you haven't fought to a conclusion. How can you say you've lost?"

"If I have to fight with this cangue around my neck, I may just as well consider myself defeated."

"How thoughtless of me," Chai Chin laughed. "That can be remedied easily enough."

He directed his retainers to fetch ten ounces of silver, and when the money was brought he said to the two constables, "May I trouble you to take Lin Chung's cangue off temporarily? If there's any question raised about this when you arrive at the Tsangchou Prison, I will bear all responsibility personally. Divide these ten ounces of silver between you."

Chai Chin looked so lofty and dignified that the constables didn't dare refuse him. Wanting to stay in Chai's good graces, and wanting the ten ounces as well, and since there was no danger of Lin Chung running away, Hsueh Pa removed the wooden collar from his neck.

"Now the two masters can continue their match," said Chai Chin joyfully.

Because Lin's tactics had been cautious, Hung regarded him with scorn. Raising his staff, he prepared to resume combat.

"Just a moment!" Chai Chin exclaimed. He ordered his retainers to bring an ingot of silver weighing twenty-five ounces. In no time at all, the ingot was produced.

"A match between you two instructors is no ordinary contest," said Chai Chin. "Whoever wins gets this silver as a prize." He was hoping in this way to encourage Lin Chung to display his skill. Deliberately, he tossed the ingot on the ground.

Hung was very annoyed that Lin Chung had come, and he coveted the big piece of silver. What's more, he was worried that a defeat would lower his prestige. Vigorously, he struck a fighting pose, then executed an opening flourish called "lifting the torch to sear the heavens."

"His Lordship wants me to defeat him," thought Lin Chung. First holding his staff level, he performed a flourish called "separating the grass to find the snake."

"Come on, come on!" yelled Hung.

He swung his staff downwards. Lin dodged back. Hung pressed forward another pace. Raising his staff, he again chopped down. Lin Chung saw that he was off balance and brought his staff sweeping upwards from the ground. Hung had no time to recover. He tried to twist out of the way, but Lin's staff cracked him hard on the shin bones. Hung dropped his staff and fell heavily.

Delighted, Chai Chin called for wine and presented Lin Chung with a congratulatory goblet. The watchers all laughed. Hung struggled but was unable to rise to his feet. Grinning retainers helped him up. Shame-faced, Hung limped away and left the manor.

Taking Lin Chung by the hand, Chai led him into the rear hall and feasted him with wine. He directed retainers to present Lin with the prize. Lin tried to refuse, but his host insisted, and finally he was compelled to accept.

Chai Chin kept Lin Chung at the manor for several days, entertaining him daily with excellent wines and delicious food. After another six or seven days, since the constables were pressing Lin to leave, Chai gave him a farewell banquet. He also wrote two letters which he handed to the arms instructor, saying:

"The prefect of Tsangchou is a good friend of mine. I'm also on intimate terms with the warden and head keeper of the prison. Give these letters to them and they'll be sure to treat you well."

He presented Lin Chung with another ingot of twenty-five ounces of silver, and bestowed five ounces on the two constables. Then they feasted all night.

Early the next morning, after they had breakfasted, Chai Chin directed a few retainers to go with them and carry their luggage. The cangue was again fastened around Lin Chung's neck. Chai Chin accompanied the party to the manor gate.

"I will send someone with winter clothing for you in a few days," he said to Lin Chung in parting.

"I don't know how to express my gratitude to Your Lordship!" said Lin Chung.

The constables also thanked Chai Chin, then the three departed for Tsangchou. They arrived about noon and sent the luggage bearers back. The constables then went directly to the prefecture and presented their order of exile to an official, who immediately brought Lin Chung before the prefect. Accepting custody of the arms instructor, the prefect issued a receipt of prisoner and wrote out an order committing Lin Chung to prison. The constables, on obtaining the receipt, bade farewell and departed for the eastern capital; of them we shall say no more.

We'll tell of Lin Chung after he was escorted to the prison. Taken into custody, he was placed in a room by himself and directed to wait to be registered. The other prisoners all came to see him.

"The warden and the head keeper here are very bad," they said. "They only want to extort money. If you can bribe them, they'll treat you well. If you have no money, they'll throw you in the dungeon where you'll pray to live and long for death, both in vain! If their palms are greased, you can avoid the hundred blows they give all new prisoners to beat discipline into them. You need only say you're ill and the matter will be postponed indefinitely. Otherwise,

it's a hundred strokes that will leave you more dead than alive."

"It's good of you brothers to advise me. If I were to give money, how much would be enough?"

"To do it properly, five ounces of silver for the warden and five for the head keeper would be just about right."

As they were talking, the head keeper came over and asked, "Which one of you is the military man who has been exiled here?"

Lin Chung stepped forward. "I am that humble person."

When the head keeper saw that the arms instructor failed to produce any money, his face darkened. Shaking his finger at Lin, he shouted:

"You bandit! How dare you not kowtow and hail me respectfully when I enter! I heard all about your carryings-on in Kaifeng! Where do you get the gall to behave so insolently in my presence! I can read from the lines on your face that you're destined for nothing but hunger; you'll never rise in the world! What you need is plenty of beatings, you stubborn gaol-bird! For better or worse, you're in my hands now, you felonious wretch! I'll pulverize your bones and pound your flesh to jelly soon enough!"

The keeper cursed vigorously while Lin Chung stood with bowed head. At this storm of invective, the other prisoners fled.

Lin Chung waited until the head keeper had blown off most of his steam, then took out five ounces of silver and handed them to him with a smile. "A trifling gift, brother. Please don't despise it."

"Is this for me and the warden both?"

"Just for you, brother. In addition, here's another ten ounces for the warden. I must trouble you to deliver them to him, brother."

The head keeper grinned broadly. "Arms Instructor Lin, I've heard of your good name before. You're truly a splendid fellow! Marshal Kao has framed you, no doubt about it. Although, for the time being, you're having to suffer this inconvenience, I'm sure you'll eventually make your mark. A man with your reputation and talents never

waits around idly for long; one of these days you'll be a big official!"

Lin Chung laughed. "I'm entirely dependant on your kindness."

"You can rest assured," said the head keeper.

Giving him Chai Chin's letters, Lin Chung said, "May I trouble you to deliver these?"

"Letters from Lord Chai? Then you've nothing to worry about. They're worth an ingot of gold each! I'll go and deliver them now. In a little while, the warden will send for you to be registered. When he orders the hundred blows, say that you were ill all during your journey and that you still haven't recovered. I'll speak up for you. We must make it look genuine."

"Many thanks!"

The head keeper took the silver and the letters and departed, leaving Lin Chung alone in the room. The arms instructor sighed.

" 'With money you can reach even the gods.' A bitter truth indeed!"

To the warden, the head keeper gave only the five ounces which Lin Chung had originally presented to him. "Lin Chung is an excellent man," he confided. "Here is a letter of introduction from Lord Chai. It seems that Marshal Kao had him exiled on a trumped-up charge. There's nothing much to the whole thing. . . ."

"Since Lord Chai has sent us this letter," said the warden, "we must look after him." He directed that Lin Chung be summoned.

To get back to Lin Chung. He was brooding alone in his room when a turnkey shouted: "The warden orders that new prisoner Lin Chung report to the warden's hall to be registered."

Lin Chung went directly to the hall.

"You are a new prisoner," said the warden. "The first emperor of Sung has bequeathed to us the ancient regulation, 'One hundred blows must be administered to every prisoner newly sent into exile.' Guards! Get him ready!"

"Your humble servant caught a bad cold during his journey here, and still hasn't recovered," said Lin Chung. "I request that the beating be postponed."

"He's not at all well," said the turnkey. "Please have pity on him."

"Since the symptoms of his illness are still evident, perhaps we can put this off for the time being," said the warden. "We can beat him when he regains his health."

"Today, the time is up of that prisoner who has been taking care of the prison temple. Why not let Lin Chung replace him," suggested the head keeper.

The warden promptly wrote out an order and the head keeper accompanied Lin Chung back to his room while he collected his belongings, then led him to the temple.

"I'm being very considerate to you, Arms Instructor Lin, getting you this job," said the head keeper. "It's the easiest work in the prison. All you have to do is burn incense and sweep the floor once in the morning and once again in the evening. You'll soon see that we don't let up on other prisoners from morning till night. As for those without money, we throw them into the dungeon where they pray to live and long for death, both in vain!"

"Thanks for your protection," said Lin Chung. He gave the head keeper another few ounces of silver. "There's one more matter I must trouble you about, brother. Could you have this cangue taken from my neck?"

"Just leave it to me," said the head keeper as he tucked the money away. He hurried to the warden and relayed the plea. The cangue was removed.

From then on, Lin Chung slept and ate in the temple. Every day, he did nothing except burn incense and sweep the floor. Before he knew it, forty or fifty days had gone by. The warden and the head keeper, having been bribed, were always very cordial. He was left free to come and go as he pleased, with no restrictions. Lord Chai sent a man with money and winter clothing for him. All the prisoners became recipients of Lin Chung's charity.

To make a long story short, one day around noon as winter

was drawing near, Lin Chung was strolling outside the prison gates. Suddenly, he heard someone behind him call:

"Arms Instructor Lin, what are you doing here?"

Lin Chung turned around and looked.

And as a result of seeing the man who hailed him: Fire and flames nearly put an end to his life; out in the wind and snow he narrowly escaped suffering mortal wounds.

Who was the man whom Lin Chung saw? If you want to know, listen to our next episode.

CHAPTER 10

Lin Chung Shelters from the Snowstorm in the Mountain Spirit Temple Lu Chien Sets Fire to the Fodder Depot

As we were saying, Lin Chung was strolling along, when someone behind him called his name. Turning around, he saw the tavern waiter Li Hsiao-erh. When they first became acquainted in Kaifeng, the eastern capital, Lin had helped him financially several times. Later, Hsiao-erh stole money from the tavern keeper and was arrested. He was going to be sent to the prefect but Lin Chung spoke up in his behalf, and he did not have to stand trial. Lin also paid back the money for him and he was released. Although Hsiao-erh could no longer find work in the capital, thanks to the travelling expenses which Lin gave him, he was able to leave Kaifeng and seek employment elsewhere. Today, unexpectedly, they met again in Tsangchou.

"What are you doing here, Brother Hsiao-erh?" asked Lin Chung.

Hsiao-erh kowtowed and replied, "After you saved me, benefactor, and gave me travelling money, I looked everywhere for a job, but in vain. Finally, I wandered into Tsangchou. Here, a tavern keeper named Wang took me on as his assistant. Because I was a hard worker, and could

make tasty dishes and sauces, the customers all praised me and business improved. The tavern keeper had a daughter, and he gave her to me in marriage. Now, both he and my mother-in-law are dead. Only my wife and I are left. We run a tavern in front of the prison. I was just passing by on my way to collect some bills. What are you doing here, benefactor?"

Lin pointed to the mark on his face. "Because I crossed the will of Marshal Kao, he conspired against me and had me convicted and exiled to this place. At present, I look after the prison temple. I don't know what they'll do with me in the future. I never expected to meet you here."

Hsiao-erh brought Lin Chung to his home, invited him to be seated, and called his wife in to kowtow. Both husband and wife said happily, "We have no close relatives. Your coming here today, benefactor, is like a gift from heaven."

"I'm a prisoner," said Lin. "Won't associating with me sully your name?"

"How can you talk like that!" said Hsiao-erh. "Everyone knows your excellent reputation! Be sure to bring all your washing and mending to my wife."

He entertained Lin Chung with food and drink, and that night saw him back to the prison temple. The following morning, he came again to invite Lin to his home.

From then on, Hsiao-erh and Lin called on each other frequently. Hsiao-erh often sent tea or soup to Lin in the prison. Moved by the couple's respect and devotion, Lin gave them money from time to time to use in their business.

To skip the idle chatter, time passed quickly. Winter came. All of Lin Chung's padded winter garments were stitched and mended by Hsiao-erh's wife. On day, while Hsiao-erh was cooking in the entry, a man slipped in and sat down inside at one of the tables. Then another fellow furtively entered. The first man was an army officer, by the looks of him. The second seemed more like an attendant. He also hurried in and sat down.

Hsiao-erh went up to them. "Wine?" he queried.

The officer handed Hsiao-erh an ounce of silver. "Take this on account. Bring us three or four jugs of good wine.

When our guests come, serve some food and tidbits. You choose the dishes. You needn't ask me."

"You've invited guests, sir?"

"I must trouble you to go to the prison and invite the warden and the head keeper here for a chat. If they question you, just say, 'A gentleman requests that you come and discuss certain matters. He is looking forward to your arrival.' "

Hsiao-erh assented and left. At the prison, he first relayed the request to the head keeper then, together, they extended the invitation to the warden, after which all three went to the tavern. The gentleman, the warden and the head keeper exchanged greetings.

"We haven't met before," said the warden. "May we ask your name, sir?"

"I have a letter of introduction here, which I will give you shortly," replied the man. "But first let's have some wine!"

Hsiao-erh quickly opened the jugs and served the food and pastries. The gentleman called for a ceremonial tray of wine goblets and, after filling and handing them out, invited his guests to be seated. Hsiao-erh dashed back and forth like a shuttle, serving without cease. The gentleman's attendant took care of the warming of the wine. After several score rounds had been drunk, more tidbits to go with the wine were ordered.

"My attendant will warm the wine," the gentleman said to Hsiao-erh. "You needn't come in for a while. We want to talk privately."

Hsiao-erh said, "Very well, sir," and left the room. Outside the door, he conferred with his wife.

"There's something fishy about those two."

"What do you mean?"

"They've both got Kaifeng accents and neither of them knows the warden. When I went in with those tidbits just now, I heard the head keeper murmur something about 'Marshal Kao.' Wasn't he the one who harmed Instructor Lin? I'll stay here at the door and keep an eye on them. You go and listen on the other side of the partition wall."

"Why not bring Instructor Lin here from the prison and see if he recognizes them?"

"You don't know what a terrible temper he has. He's liable to commit murder and burn the place down. If I called him and that gentleman turned out to be the Steward Lu he mentioned the other day, Lin would never let him escape alive. If anything happened here, you and I would be involved. You'd better go and listen. We'll decide what to do later."

"Very well," said the wife. She went and listened for a time. Then she returned and said:

"They're whispering with their heads together and I couldn't hear much. But I saw that fellow who looks like an officer take something wrapped in a white cloth from his attendant and give it to the warden and head keeper. Maybe there's money in it. I heard the head keeper say, 'Leave everything to us. We'll put an end to him, come what may.' "

Just then, from the inner room a voice shouted, "Bring the soup!" Hsiao-erh hastened to comply. As he entered, he saw that the warden had a letter in his hand. Hsiao-erh served the soup, then brought some more dishes of food.

The guests again feasted. After the bill was paid, the warden and head keeper first departed. The other two, heads stealthily lowered, then also left.

Shortly afterwards, Lin Chung entered the tavern. "Brother Hsiao-erh," he said, "I hope you're prospering!"

"Please sit down, benefactor," Hsiao-erh begged hastily. "I was just about to look for you. I must tell you something very important."

"What is it?" asked Lin Chung.

Hsiao-erh led him to the inner room, invited him to be seated, and said, "A little while ago a couple of fishy looking fellows from the eastern capital came to the tavern and invited the warden and the head keeper to join them. They ate and drank for a long time. I overheard the head keeper say something about 'Marshal Kao' and I got suspicious and told my wife to listen in on their conversation. They were

talking softly with their heads close together and she couldn't hear anything. She was about to give up when she heard the head keeper say, 'Leave everything to us. We'll finish him off, come what may!' The other two handed the warden and head keeper a package of money. They drank some more and then left. I don't know who these fellows are, but I don't trust them. I'm afraid they want to harm you, benefactor."

"What do they look like?" asked Lin.

"One is of average build, fair, clean shaven, about thirty or so. The other fellow isn't very tall either. He has a ruddy complexion."

Startled, Lin Chung cried, "That man of thirty must be Steward Lu. The filthy thief, how dare he come here to harm me! If I get hold of him I'll smash him to a jelly!"

"The main thing is to be on your guard," said Hsiao-erh. " 'Take care not to choke when you eat or trip when you walk,' as the old saying goes."

Lin Chung left Hsiao-erh's home in a towering rage. On the street, he bought a sharp dagger. Carrying it on his person, he made a search of all the streets and lanes. Hsiao-erh and his wife were in a cold sweat. But that night nothing happened.

At daybreak the following morning, Lin rose, washed his face and rinsed his mouth, then took up the dagger and again prowled through all the streets and lanes both in the city and on the outskirts. He patrolled all day, even searching the prison, but nothing was stirring. Returning to Hsiao-erh's place, he said:

"Nothing happened today either."

"Benefactor," said Hsiao-erh, "let's hope it stays that way. But remain on your guard."

Lin went back to the prison temple, where he spent the night. He walked the streets for four or five days, without success. His temper gradually began to cool.

On the sixth day, the warden summoned Lin Chung into his hall and said, "You've been here for some time now. For the sake of Lord Chai's prestige, we must improve your lot. Fifteen *li* outside the city's east gate is a large army

fodder depot. Every month you can collect some fees from the people delivering the fodder. An old army man is in charge there. I've decided to give you the job and have him replace you in the prison temple. Out at the depot, you'll be able to earn a little spending money. Go there with the head keeper and take over."

"I'll do that, sir," said Lin.

He first left the prison and went directly to Hsiao-erh's house. Lin told the couple the news.

"Today, the warden is sending me to take charge of the army fodder depot. What do you think?"

"It's a better job than the prison temple," replied Hsiao-erh. "You can earn some regular fees out there. Usually, no one gets that post without paying a bribe."

"Not only haven't they harmed me, but they've given me this good job instead. I don't know what to make of it. . . ."

"Why be suspicious, benefactor? As long as nothing happens, that's fine. The only trouble is you'll be living quite far from us. After a while, I'll come and see you, if I have time." Hsiao-erh pressed Lin Chung to join him in several rounds of drinks.

To make a long story short, the two separated and Lin Chung returned to the prison temple. He packed his belongings, put his dagger in his belt, took up a spear and set out with the head keeper for the fodder depot.

It was a bitterly cold winter day. The sky was overcast, and they walked in the teeth of a rising wind amid thickly swirling snowflakes. Since there was no place along the road to buy drinks, Lin and the keeper soon reached the depot.

Surrounded by an earthen wall, the depot had a gate with two doors. They pushed the doors open and entered the compound. They saw a thatched building of seven or eight sections, which was serving as a storehouse for fodder. All around were piles of hay. In the centre stood a small thatched shack. Inside, they found the old soldier huddle over a fire.

"This is Lin Chung," the head keeper said to him. "The warden has sent him to replace you. You are to go back

to take care of the prison temple. You can hand over your duties."

The old soldier gave Lin Chung the keys and said, "The stuff in the storehouse is under official seal. And those haystacks there are all numbered."

After he took Lin around and counted the stacks, the old soldier brought him back to the shack and gathered his belongings. As he was leaving, he said, "I'll give you my brazier, my pot, my bowl and my dish."

"I have such things in the temple too," said Lin. "You can have mine."

The old soldier pointed to a gourd bottle hanging on the wall. He said, "If you want to buy wine, there's a little market two or three *li* east down the road." Then he and the head keeper departed for the prison.

As to Lin Chung, he placed his bundle and bedding on the brick bed and lighted a fire in the stove underneath. There was some charcoal in the room, and Lin added a few sticks. Then he looked around the shack. Very dilapidated, it shook with every gust of wind.

"How can I pass the winter here?" thought Lin. "When the storm stops I must bring a mason out from the city to repair this place."

Although he hugged the fire, he still felt cold. "The old soldier said there was a little market two *li* from here," he recalled. "Why don't I go and buy some wine?"

He took some money from his bundle, tied the gourd bottle to the end of his spear, covered the stove opening, put on his broad-brimmed felt hat, took the keys and shut the door of the shack behind him. Coming through the compound gate, he closed and locked it. Then, carrying the keys, he headed east. The snow-covered ground was a mass of tiny white jade flakes. Lin Chung trudged forward with the north wind on his back. It was snowing very hard.

He had gone less than half a *li* when he observed an ancient temple. Pressing his palms together before his forehead and bowing, Lin Chung said, "May the gods protect

me. I must come here one of these days and burn some paper money in sacrifice."

Lin continued on his way. Ahead, he saw a cluster of houses. He halted, and peered through the storm. The buildings were enclosed by a fence. A clump of broom grass was hanging outside one of them. Knowing that this must be a tavern, Lin went inside.

"Where are you from, sir?" the tavern keeper asked.

"Do you recognize this gourd bottle?" Lin Chung countered.

The man looked at it and said, "It belongs to the old soldier at the fodder depot."

"That's right," said Lin.

"So you're the new custodian," said the man. "Please be seated, brother. It's a bitterly cold day. Let me treat you to a few goblets, by way of welcome."

The keeper served a platter of sliced beef, heated a pot of wine and invited Lin to help himself. Lin bought some more beef, drank a few cups, then had the gourd filled with wine. Wrapping up the two orders of beef, he left a few pieces of silver, tied the gourd bottle to the end of his spear and placed the beef inside his shirt.

"Thanks for your trouble," said Lin. He went out through the fence gate and started back against the wind. Now that night had come, the snow was falling harder than ever.

Plodding through the snow in the teeth of the north wind, Lin Chung hurried back to the fodder depot. When he unlocked the doors and entered the compound, he uttered a cry of dismay. Actually, the gods who see everything and protect the good and virtuous were saving Lin Chung's life with that snowstorm. The thatched shack had collapsed under the weight of the snow.

"What am I going to do?" Lin wondered.

He put his spear and gourd down in the snow. Worried that the embers in the brazier might set the place on fire, he pulled open a section of the wall of the fallen shack, pushed himself halfway in and felt around. But the embers had been extinguished by the melted snow. Groping with

his hand on the brick bed, Lin found his quilt and pulled it out, emerging again into the dark night.

"I've no place to build a fire," he pondered. "How am I going to manage?" Then he remembered the ancient temple, half a *li* down the road. "I can spend the night there," he thought. "When daylight comes, I'll decide what to do next."

He rolled up his quilt, shouldered his spear with the wine gourd dangling from one end, closed the compound doors once more, locked them, and proceeded to the temple. Entering, he shut the door and propped against it a big stone which he had noticed lying to one side. Walking further into the temple, he saw on a platform an idol of a mountain spirit with golden armour, flanked by a nether region judge and a small demon, one on each side. In a corner was a pile of paper. Lin Chung inspected the whole temple but could find neither neighbours nor anyone in charge.

Lin placed his spear and gourd bottle on the pile of paper and untied his quilt. He removed his broad-brimmed felt hat, shook the snow from his clothes and peeled off his white tunic which was half soaked, then put it together with his hat on the altar table. Covering himself to the waist with the quilt, he drank from the gourd bottle from time to time, helping the cold wine down with slices of the beef he had been carrying.

As he was eating, he heard a loud crackling outside. Leaping to his feet, he peered through a crack and saw that the fodder depot was in flames and burning fiercely. Lin grabbed his spear. He was about to open the door and dash to the fire when he heard men's voices. Leaning against the door, he listened. The footsteps of three men came directly to the temple.

The men pushed the temple door with their hands, but the big stone held the door fast and they couldn't open it. They stood under the eaves watching the fire. One of them said:

"Not a bad plan, eh?"

"We're much indebted to the warden and to you, head keeper," someone replied. "When I return to the capital and report to the Marshal, he undoubtedly will make you both big officials. Now Arms Instructor Chang has no excuse to refuse."

"We've taken care of Lin Chung properly this time!" said a third. "Young Master Kao is sure to recover!"

"We tried to arrange the match three or four times," said a voice. "We told that lout Chang, 'Your son-in-law is dead,' but he wouldn't believe it. Young Master Kao's ailment kept getting worse. And so the Marshal sent us specially to beg you two gentlemen to help. Today, we've succeeded at last!"

"I climbed over the wall and set a score of haystacks afire. I'd like to see him get away!"

"The depot is almost completely destroyed."

"Even if he escapes with his life, burning down a military fodder depot is a crime punishable by death!"

"Let's go back to the city."

"Wait a little longer. If we bring a couple of his bones with us to the capital, the Marshal and the Young Master will praise us for doing the job thoroughly."

Lin Chung recognized them by their voices. One was the head keeper, another was the steward Lu Chien, the third was Fu An. "Heaven took pity on me," thought Lin. "If that thatched shack hadn't collapsed, I'll have been roasted to death by these villains!"

Softly, he pulled the stone away from the door. Clutching his spear, Lin Chung pushed open the door with his left hand and roared:

"Where do you think you're going, knaves!"

The three, who had just been leaving, froze, too shocked to move.

Raising his hand, Lin speared the head keeper to the ground.

"Spare me!" cried Steward Lu, weak with terror.

Fu An had run only a score of paces when Lin Chung caught up. With one thrust, Lin plunged the spear into his back, and he also fell.

As Lin turned, he saw Steward Lu starting to flee. Before Lu had gone three paces, Lin Chung shouted, "Halt, treacherous thief!" He grabbed Lu by the front of his tunic and threw him flat on his back in the snow.

Lin jabbed his spear into the ground, put one foot on Lu's chest, whipped out his dagger and held it against the steward's face.

"Filthy wretch!" he grated. "I never wronged you; how can you have injured me so! Truly, 'Killing can be forgiven, but never betrayal!' "

"This wasn't my idea," Lu pleaded. "The Marshal ordered me to do it! I didn't dare refuse!"

"Treacherous knave!" cried Lin. "We were friends since childhood, yet today you come to destroy me! How can you excuse yourself! Have a taste of this knife!"

He ripped open Lu's clothes, stabbed the blade into his heart and twisted. As blood spurted everywhere, Lin tore out his heart and liver.

Turning his head, Lin saw the head keeper struggling to his feet to run. Lin seized him in a flash. "Now I know what an evil scoundrel you are!" he shouted. "Take that!" He cut off the keeper's head and tied it to the end of his spear.

Next, he went back to Fu An and Lu Chien and cut off their heads too. He put away his knife, tied the three heads together by the hair, carried them into the temple and placed them on the altar in front of the mountain spirit idol. Then he put on his white tunic, tied his waist sash, clapped the broad-brimmed felt hat on his head and finished off the cold wine in the gourd bottle.

Tossing his quilt and the bottle aside, Lin took up his spear, left the temple and started east. He had gone only four or five *li* when he saw people from a neighbouring village hastening with water buckets and pikes to put out the blaze.

"Hurry and save the place!" Lin Chung called to them. "I'm going to report the fire to the officials!"

Spear in hand, he walked on rapidly.

Translated by Sidney Shapiro

LI HSI-FAN

A Great Novel of Peasant Revolt

Under the long domination in China of the big landowners and feudal overlords there were peasant revolts in every dynasty to oppose economic exploitation and political oppression. In the two thousand years from the time of Chen Sheng and Wu Kuang, whose revolts overthrew the Chin dynasty, to the Taiping Revolution in the Ching dynasty, peasant revolts were virtually continuous and totalled several hundred in number. The frequency and scope of these revolts are hard to parallel in world history. Because of this, the popular lore of old China contains many stirring tales of peasant uprisings which have been preserved in ballads, *chante-fables,* long prose romances and various kinds of local opera to form a rich and colourful part of our cultural heritage. The long novel *Shui Hu* or *Outlaws of the Marshes* is the finest of these works.

This novel is based on tales about peasants who had lost their land and freedom in Shantung at the end of the Northern Sung dynasty (960-1127) and joined forces with other men of the lower social strata and made the Liangshan Marshes their base. Led by Sung Chiang, they inflicted repeated defeats on the government troops and the local landlord militias. Legends of their exploits were spread

Li Hsi-fan is a young literary critic.

by word of mouth from the Southern Sung dynasty onwards. As these legends spread they were improved upon and used by professional story-tellers as stock-in-trade. They became more polished and richer in content, still some educated men who were close to the story-tellers selected some of these accounts and rewrote them into one comprehensive novel. After this, of course, the story circulated even more widely. Eventually competent writers became interested in it and used their own knowledge, sentiments and technical skill to further improve it. Finally, thanks to the labours of so many, it became one of China's great literary classics. So we can fairly say that this novel was primarily a collective work. The earliest edition we possess today is an incomplete version printed in the reign of Chia Ching (1537-1566). There is another edition with a preface dated 1589. Both these editions state that *Outlaws of the Marshes* was written by Shih Nai-an and edited by Lo Kuan-chung.

The Sung dynasty, despite its centralized political authority, never knew real peace or settled conditions. By the time of Emperor Hui Tsung in the beginning of the twelfth century, the social conflicts had become exceedingly sharp. The bureaucracy of the feudal landowning class, represented by Tsai Ching, worked hand-in-glove with the decadent, luxury-loving imperial house to grind the people down. This was the time of the peasant uprising led by Sung Chiang. *Outlaws of the Marshes* reflects this peasant revolt by relating the adventures of many different characters, giving us a panorama of the whole society in all its complexity. The life-like portraits of widely differing men who were driven to become outlaws in Liangshan include many who were not peasants; for fishermen, vagabonds, the city poor, artisans, hunters, small shop-keepers, impoverished scholars, mendicant friars, wandering priests, low-ranking officials and military officers and even some minor landlords joined the outlaws. The novel presents us with many profoundly depicted, vivid and typical characters.

Lin Chung, who at first bows to authority and has no thought of revolt, is cruelly persecuted simply because his wife is a good-looking woman. Lin Chung belongs to the middle class and is a fairly high-ranking military officer. His family background and his social status both incline him to submit to authority. Though he sometimes regrets that he has no wise master to make use of his talents and must put up with humiliation at the hands of petty bureaucrats, since his family is well-to-do he submits, serving under corrupt officials and doing their bidding. But hard as he tries to conform, he finds no peace. The authorities makes things harder and harder for him till he is unjustly condemned and banished to a distant part of the country. Even so, they still attempt to murder him. In the end his family is destroyed and no other way is open to him but revolt.

Lin Chung is an officer forced to revolt, but among the Liangshan outlaws far more were driven to revolt through the loss of their means of livelihood, like the three Yuan brothers who are poor fishermen or the Hsieh brothers who are hunters.

Then there is that rough diamond Lu Chih-shen who joins the outlaws not because he himself is persecuted. He is a minor officer who turns monk and then becomes one of the leaders of the outlaws. He takes this course because his strong sense of justice makes him quick to help others in distress. When, as an officer in a border area, he learns that the local bully is ill-treating Old Chin and his daughter, he boldly saves them by beating the bully to death. After that he has to fly to escape arrest. He shaves his head and turns monk, but his character is unchanged. On his way to the eastern capital he meets men trying to kidnap Old Liu's daughter and comes to the rescue again, beating Chou Tung and forcing him to swear not to molest the girl. After reaching the monastery, he fights with the bullies there. In his encounter with Lin Chung, Lu Chih-shen's championship of the underdog is in striking contrast to Lin Chung's character. From the first Lu Chih-shen wants to kill Lord Kao who is bullying Lin Chung. "You may be afraid of the Marshal of the district, but he doesn't scare me a bit! If I ever run into that young whelp of his, I'll give him three hundred licks of my iron staff!"

Then when Lin Chung is about to be murdered in Wild Boar Forest by his escorts, Lu Chih-shen comes to his rescue once more; for he does not mind offending powerful officials and has no thought of his own safety: whenever he sees injustice done, he attempts to right it. Lu Chih-shen is a typical example of the rebels from the lower walks of life.

Wu Sung and Li Kuei belong to the same general category as Lu Chih-shen, but each has marked individual characteristics. It is clear that Wu Sung is depicted as an idealized hero of old. His story consists of a series of heroic deeds of epic grandeur: he kills a tiger, takes revenge on his sister-in-law, beats Chiang the Door God and distinguishes himself in other combats. All these stirring scenes show a hero of superhuman strength and courage. It was natural that in the middle ages the Chinese should dream of such a hero, for the people groaning under oppression and longing to revolt believed that they must rely on individual prowess and courage to defeat their enemies.

Li Kuei is presented as an even more uncompromising rebel. Blazing hatred characterizes his struggle against the enemy and the vengeance he wreaks on the feudal rulers; he gives no quarter. He burns with fury against the foe and is invariably eager to spring into action. He will not tolerate oppression and insult. Fearless and always in the forefront in battle, he is utterly loyal to the men of the marshes and to the peasants. There are dozens of heroes of his calibre in this novel.

Of course, if *Outlaws of the Marshes* were made up only of stories of different heroes, it would not be the masterpiece it is. These stories are used to show how men of different classes and different temperaments gathered at Liangshan and formed a mighty peasant force to wage a brave struggle against the rulers.

It has been said with truth that one of the good features of classical Chinese novels is that they tell dramatic stories, and that it is this which endears them to Chinese readers. But a really great work of any nation, one which lives for hundreds of years to move and influence generations of readers, does not achieve this entirely by the story but rather because the typical characters in the work are alive, alive on paper, on men's lips, in their hearts. When we say that a novel tells a good story, we actually mean that the story is alive thanks to the profound delineation of character. Among Chinese classics, the *Outlaws of the Marshes* is an outstanding example of this.

Lin Chung is one of the most successfully drawn characters in the novel. His dramatic adventures, his banishment to Tsangchou, his actions at the temple during the snowstorm, his fight with the brigand leaders in the stronghold at Liangshan and many other episodes all help to make this hero vividly alive.

The portrayal of Lin Chung's character — and this applies to the characterization throughout the novel — is done by depicting the man in action. In describing Lin Chung's mental conflict and how he joins the outlaws only when there is no other way out, the author does not tell us what this hero is thinking but, from the beginning when Lin Chung meets Lu Chih-shen in the monastery, he unfolds his character through action.

Of course it is most humiliating for Lin Chung to have his wife insulted, and he grows indignant. The author describes this scene as follows:

> Lin Chung quickly took his leave of Chih-shen. . . . He leaped through the gap in the wall and raced with Chin Erh back to the temple. . . . Lin pushed forward, seized the young man by the shoulder and spun him around. "I'll teach you to insult a good man's wife," he shouted, raising his fist. . . .

The reader at this point expects the young reprobate to receive a thorough beating, but: "After spinning him around, when Lin Chung saw that he was Young Master Kao, the strength left his arms."

This episode describing his indignation and his timidity bring out two salient facets of Lin Chung's character. Of course one incident is not enough to present a character, and the author's description of Lin Chung does not stop here. We see him ill-treated on his way to exile, begging Lu Chih-shen in the forest to spare his escorts' lives, settling down to serve his prison sentence in Tsangchou. All these incidents help us to visualize Lin Chung clearly. When we read of his hardships on the road we sympathize with him, but when we see how meekly he submits to his escorts and later to the gaoler we cannot help regretting his timidity. This could only be Lin Chung: Wu Sung or Li Kuei would never behave in this way.

When the writer describes what is passing in Lin Chung's mind, again it is done not by direct analysis but through action. One very fine, telling description occurs in the passage where Lin Chung bids farewell to his wife. Only the incident itself is related, with no dramatic comment. We are not told how Lin Chung looked or what he felt — nothing but this moving act. But what an insight that gives us into his mind! What mental anguish lies hidden in his simple words! He is about to part from his dearly loved wife. On her account he has been unjustly sentenced to a banishment in a remote, unfriendly region, and his life hangs by a thread. Yet his first concern is not to let his wife waste her youth for his sake — rather than this he will divorce her. Of course, he hopes to win through to a reunion. All his natural instincts encourage him to hope. But not until after he reaches Liangshan does he confide his heart's desire to Chao Kai: "Ever since I came up the mountain I've been wanting to fetch my wife here, but because Wang Lun was unreliable and things were uncertain, I hesitated and left her in the eastern capital. I don't know whether she is alive or dead!" Not till he hears of his wife's death does this hero at last shed tears, and long for her no more. But this intensifies his hatred for the rulers.

These passages in *Outlaws of the Marshes* describe true love between a man and a woman. This abiding, tragic love is not expressed by means of detailed descriptions but is implicit in Lin Chung's behaviour and this brings it out more powerfully. Hence the strong emotional impact of these scenes.

The *Outlaws of the Marshes* not only creates Lin Chung's character vividly but also gives a convincing picture of its development.

To achieve this, certain special devices are used.

First of all, the author clearly indicates Lin Chung's special family and class background and faithfully mirrors the contradictions in his character. The author does not idealize his character in an unrealistic way. He uses Lin Chung's actual behaviour in specific circumstances to express the submissiveness which characterizes him at the start. But this does not mean that he overlooks the rebellious streak in Lin Chung, for at the same time he indicates his standard of values and the sense of justice and mutiny always just below the surface. Lin Chung's complaints of "dirty treatment," his determination to avenge himself on Steward Lu makes it evident that this instructor who pockets an affront today will sooner or later come to the end of his tether. It is precisely these touches that make Lin Chung such a vivid, convincing figure and show that he is no obedient slave but a hero submitting for a time to humiliation.

The second thing to notice is that the development and changes in Lin Chung's character are closely linked with the direct influence of the environment. By environment we do not mean simply the mental climate in which each individual lives, but the most important setting for his actions — the historical and social background. Generally speaking, only an author with a deep understanding of and ability to describe the historical and social background can give profound pictures of men and truthfully reflect reality. It is only because *Outlaws of the Marshes* gives a faithful picture of the main features and social relations of feudal society in the Sung and Yuan dynasties that it

can create so many typical heroes from different classes and with different characters.

Although Marshal Kao, who represents the oppressors, appears only once in the plot against Lin Chung, his henchmen dog the latter's footsteps. Steward Lu and Fu An do the Marshal's bidding, while Tung Chao and Hsueh Pa in Wild Boar Forest and the warden and head keeper in the Tsangchou prison are simply executioners sent by him. This host of executioners large and small around him weighs heavily upon the law-abiding Lin Chung, while the tragedy of his banishment and separation from his wife shatter his dream of a comfortable life. Anyone reading of this bitter parting for life must hate the tyrants responsible. But desperate as is Lin Chung's plight, the author does not force him to rise at once in revolt. In accordance with the laws of actual life he lets this character formed in a special social environment continue to be tested by life itself. Lin Chung changes by degrees as a result of one happening after another. His situation grows steadily more insupportable on his way to banishment and in the Tsangchou prison where he is rudely treated by the head keeper, till the reader suffers vicariously and longs impatiently for him to change. In all these episodes, the author brings out clearly the effect of the environment on Lin Chung. But none of these things are enough to shatter his acquiescence to fate and bring about a decisive change in him. Not till Lin Chung is driven to the point where he must either perish or resist, do we get the chapter "Lin Chung in the Temple in a Snowstorm," in which the long-suffering Lin Chung takes the path of revolt. In this chapter the author links closely together the environment and the character, and achieves a high level of artistic synthesis by the way in which he conjures up the grim atmosphere. The howling north wind, the snow whirling down in great eddies, the blazing conflagration in the fodder depot are closely linked with the changes in Lin Chung and powerfully reflect his passionate desire for revenge and his courageous spirit. Amid these warring

elements Lin Chung slays his enemies — Steward Lu, Fu An and the head keeper.

This brilliant craftsmanship gives profound expression to the actions and truthfulness of the characters, holds the attention of readers and moves them deeply.

There is no more weakness in Lin Chung after this. From now on he is one of the bravest leaders of the heroes of the marshes, the firmest, the most daring in all battles against the tyrants.

These changes in Lin Chung conform completely to the rules of character development and leave the reader with a strong, unforgettably vivid impression. They deepen our understanding of how it was that a law-abiding arms instructor who had grown up in the feudal court could be driven by savage oppression to take the path of revolt.

The foregoing is, of course, not simply a question of the art of writing, but is inseparable from the deeply "popular" nature of *Outlaws of the Marshes*, from the deep knowledge and understanding of the heroes shown by the authors — both those who handed on the story orally and those who wrote it up. From our analysis of the creation of a character like Lin Chung we can see that the reason why his story moves us is not because it contains exciting adventures but because the author has given a truthful, specific historical account of the social environment of the

The Cowherd Mao Yi →

Mao Yi, a native of Kunshan in the Sung dynasty, belonged to the imperial academy of art. His father Mao Sung was celebrated for his paintings of flowers and birds, and Mao Yi further developed his technique. He excelled in painting birds and scenes of country life. This painting of the cowherd is a good example of his art.

time and of men's development according to objective laws in this specific environment. It should be said that this is the main feature of realist characterization, and it is the reason for the unsurpassed success of *Outlaws of the Marshes* among China's classical works.

Outlaws of the Marshes, with its magnificently drawn characters and tremendous artistic power, has moved and influenced countless generations in China. After it was written down it circulated very widely and has been used in many literary forms. These tales of heroes are today known to all, so that virtually everyone in China, whether old or young, can tell you about certain figures in this novel.

What is more significant is that these heroic figures served as examples and weapons in the peasants' struggle. China's millions throughout the centuries have drawn inspiration and strength from this book. The leaders of many later peasant revolts took the names of the Liangshan heroes or used slogans from the Liangshan revolt such as "Mete Out Justice for Heaven!" "Kill the Rich to Relieve the Poor!" "Loyalty and Justice!" These watchwords helped to organize the masses and deal severe blows at the feudal system and the feudal rulers.

The influence of this novel is inestimable. No other of our classics has exercised a comparable influence. We are therefore justified in saying that this is a great epic of peasant revolt, a splendid work of classical realist literature, and the most treasured part of our cultural heritage.

Stories

LI CHUN

Mother and Daughter

Chaohua People's Commune had held a conference of all its officers. Those from each administrative district and work brigade were putting their things together to go home when an announcement blared from the loud-speaker in the meeting-hall: "Calling Kao Hsiu-chen of Wenhsi! The commune Party committee wants you! Please stay behind!"

As this announcement was repeated, a woman froze to attention in one corner of the hall. She was a thin woman in her early forties, with a long, oval face and bright deep-set eyes. Two faint creases at the corners of her mouth gave her a motherly and dignified look.

This was Kao Hsiu-chen, woman chairman of the Wenhsi Administrative District, who had been on the point of leaving with her colleagues. Now she turned to her husband Yang Cheng-hsiang, leader of the Wenhsi Brigade, to say: "The rest of you go along. The Party committee may have some work for me." She handed the bundle on her arm to her husband, who asked with some concern: "What will you do tonight if you can't get back?"

"That's no problem. Chu-chu has beds and quilts at the Maternity Home."

In the commune Party office, the Party committee was still in a meeting. Hsiu-chen found a shady place under the eaves and sat down. She took out her notebook and painstakingly filled in the gaps she had left in her notes on the final report.

Li Chun is a young writer; his works include *Not That Road* and *When the Snow Melts* which appeared in *Chinese Literature* No. 1, 1957, and the film scenario *New Story of an Old Soldier.*

In a gust of laughter the Party meeting broke up. The first to come out cried: "Here's Kao Hsiu-chen! Tell her what she's wanted for." Secretary Hsu appeared and greeted her with a smile. "Kao Hsiu-chen! You've been drafted to another job again."

"What can an old woman like me do?" Hsiu-chen chuckled and her heart swelled. "What are you giving me this time?"

"You old?" retorted Hsu. "Not a bit of it! It takes a Mu Kuei-ying* to win this battle." He went on more seriously. "You know our commune's just started some factories including a distillery. The Party committee's decided to transfer you from your present post to manage the distillery."

Hsiu-chen's heart missed a beat. "For pity's sake!" she cried. "Why pick on me? You need know-how and a good bit of learning for a job like that. How can a woman handle it?"

"You're to lead the work, not distil the wine," said Hsu. "In any case, there's nothing you can't learn. You learned the new method of delivery fast enough, so don't let this frighten you. If we think you'll do, you'll do! From now on we'll be branching out in all directions. Who says a woman can't manage a factory?"

Now Tien Yung-yi, the commune head and an old model worker, chipped in: "Just go ahead. You'll do fine. After working ten years or more for the revolution, can't you run a factory? You'll find it as easy as winking. You've a sharp tongue in your head, a good memory, and you don't do anything by halves. Besides, with the distillery in your own village you'll be close to your old man: the two of you can keep an eye on each other. Go ahead and soon we'll be drinking the wine you've brewed."

*A woman general in the Sung dynasty whose feats were legendary.

As the others laughed, Hsiu-chen threw back with a smile: "That you won't! That wine will be public property — I won't let you drink it."

"Taste it was all I meant."

"Not taste it either. With this one tasting and that one tasting, in no time half a pint would be gone."

Tien Yung-yi threw up his hands and cried: "Hear that! It's a watchdog like this we need as a director!" Hsiu-chen flushed as the others grinned.

Secretary Hsu told her the plans for the distillery as well as its present position, and she gladly accepted the task. But she asked: "Who'll take over the women's work in Wenhsi when I've gone?"

"Who do you think?" Hsu chuckled.

Hsiu-chen saw it in a flash. She gave the secretary a playful slap. "So! You're giving folk another chance to laugh at us! This will be the fourth time I've handed over to Chu-chu. She's a caution, that child!"

"Does she still call you 'Comrade Mum?' " demanded Tien Yung-yi loudly.

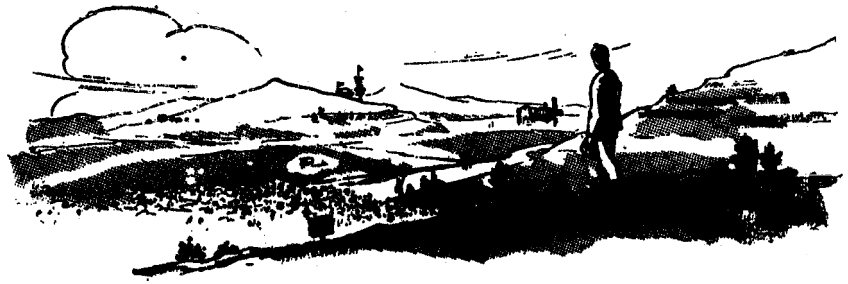
"Not now. But she says: 'Mum, the two of us will have to start criticizing each other more.' She gives me lessons in politics too."

Hsiu-chen walked off, followed by admiring laughter.

Leaving the commune Party committee building, Hsiu-chen made her way to the Maternity Home to see her daughter, who was in charge there. Chu-chu was out, however. Hsiu-chen chatted for a while with some of the midwives, but did not wait for her daughter. Time was getting on: she must start back to Wenhsi.

It was the third month by the lunar calendar. On every side stretched fields of luxuriant green wheat, already higher than chopsticks. The bright yellow flowers of the rape gave off a delicious scent. The sky was a limpid blue as if swept clean of everything but the fiery red sun, which was throwing off countless golden rays of light.

As she walked along, Hsiu-chen's heart beat fast with happiness. The wheat on each side of the road seemed to be nodding to her, the rape flowers seemed to be smiling.



Fish Bone Hill behind Wenhsi was trim with terraced fields. They had made those in the spring of the Big Leap and the white imprints of mattocks could still be seen on the ridges — well, this year they'd have wheat to show for their work! In the gullies glittered the emerald waves of the small reservoirs they had built. Below one reservoir red brick buildings were going up for the commune's distillery and paper mill.

Hsiu-chen thought over all the rapid changes she had seen, the still better times to come. For ten years now she had been travelling this road between Wenhsi and the town of Chaohua to report on her work, to buy the first donkey for the co-operative, to deliver babies, to celebrate Women's Day. . . . Yes, many times she had trodden this road, and each time with a lifting of her heart.

She smiled reminiscently over her first meeting in the township. It was in 1949, soon after liberation, when the district government had its seat in Chaohua and the villagers had just started settling scores with local tyrants. A woman called Chou Yai, who had been sent to help them, was putting up with Hsiu-chen and treated her like a sister, finally persuading her to take part in the village work. That was when her husband was so angry with her. He had heard a rumour that women who went to meetings always asked for a divorce. He dared not say anything to Chou Yai, but he fumed and glared at his wife and flew into a passion over nothing.

One day notice came of a rally of the most active poor peasants at Chaohua. There would be three days of meetings — and her name was on the list to go! For the first time in her life she would be sleeping away from home. Her husband made a big scene. He grabbed her bedding-roll and roared:

"You're running off! Tell the truth now!" Tears stood in his eyes.

"Why should I run off? I shall be back to have it out with the landlord. I've two children, haven't I? I'm just going to some meetings. Mercy! — how petty-minded can a man be?"

Her sister-in-law took Yang Cheng-hsiang's side.

"Going to a meeting, are you? Messing about with men, I call it! Who's going to cook for you, I'd like to know? Don't expect me to do it."

At that Hsiu-chen broke down and cried. But then Chu-chu ran up to her. She was a harum-scarum of twelve or so. But she said: "Mum, you go to your meeting. I'll cook for you for three days."

"Are you sure you can manage?" Her mother's heart warmed to her.

"I can make potato cakes and soup. What I can't manage is noodles." Looking into the child's wide black eyes, Hsiu-chen's own eyes were moist. "Come on then, Chu-chu. I'll show you." Taking the girl into the kitchen, she initiated her into noodle-making. That was the first time she handed over to Chu-chu.

So she went to town, but to begin with she couldn't help worrying about her family. Had the stove gone out? Were they getting three meals a day? Later on, though, she managed to set these worries aside. And on the fourth morning she went back to Wenhsi. From a distance she saw smoke rising from every chimney — their own chimney included! — and her heart lightened.

Stepping eagerly into the yard she found it deserted: they must all have gone to the fields. She tiptoed to the kitchen window and peeped in. There was Chu-chu in a short white apron standing on a stool in front of the stove. She had

noodles in one hand and was carefully lowering them into the pan.

Hsiu-chen laughed at the sight, but two tears rolled down her cheeks. She hurried in and hugged her daughter to her.

As she took over the noodles she asked Chu-chu:

"Has your dad said anything these days?"

"I'll say he has!" Chu-chu loved to tell a story. "The day before yesterday when I took his food to the fields, before eating a bite he told me: 'Your mum won't be coming back, Chu-chu. She's no use for you. She's no use for her old man. You'll be motherless from now on.'" Chu-chu hit her father off to the life, and Hsiu-chen chuckled. "What did you say?" she asked.

"I told him: 'Don't worry, dad. Mum will be back. She can't do without sis and me. She can't do without you.' Then dad asked: 'Did she tell you that?' I told him: 'Sure!' So I tricked him into eating several big bowls."

"You didn't trick him, silly. Aren't I here as large as life? Go and fetch your dad home to eat." Chu-chu skipped off, and once out of the gate started calling at the top of her voice.

When Yang Cheng-hsiang came back, he couldn't wipe the grin off his face. He never lost his temper with her again, but instead seemed fonder of her than before. When the Peasants' Union was set up he was one of the first to join.

During land reform Hsiu-chen was elected chairman of Wenhsi Women's Union and was busier than ever. But by then Chu-chu, nearly sixteen, could take a lot of the housework off her mother's shoulders. She notified the women of meetings, too, and delivered messages. That was the year when Hsiu-chen joined the Chinese Communist Party and Chu-chu joined the Youth League. In 1952, when land reform was completed and the county wanted to popularize modern methods of midwifery, Hsiu-chen was sent to the district to head the Maternity Home. Chu-chu was elected in her place as chairman of the Women's Union.

She could still remember the evening before she went to the county town to study. She was sitting in the village office with Chu-chu opposite.

"Chu-chu!" she said. "I'm going to the county to study and handing all this work over to you."

"I know, mum. You can go with an easy mind." Chu-chu spoke with all confidence.

"What does work with the women mean?" Hsiu-chen catechized her.

Chu-chu started counting on her fingers. "Calling them to meetings, keeping the place clean, going on with literacy classes, smoothing over family troubles, getting people inoculated against disease. We must see that women aren't put upon or beaten. We mustn't let the men bully them! . . ."

Her mother laughed as Chu-chu reeled off these items. "It'll take all night if you go on at that rate."

"Well, what would you say?"

"Look at you! All you can do is rush about in every direction. You fly around with messages fast enough. But

from now on as chairman of the Women's Union you'll have to use your head too. Work with the women means taking a real interest in them, taking an interest in each woman in each family. Help them to understand better. Organize them to work. When some big job comes along just rely on the Party. The Party will help you and you must do the work it gives you. . . ."

"I know!" Chu-chu put in. "And we mustn't let those two mutual-aid teams in our village break down either."

"That's right. It's not just a question of those two mutual-aid teams: you must explain to the women why mutual aid and co-operation are good. It's a question of which road we peasants are to take — that's not a small matter."

Though Chu-chu stuck her tongue out slyly at the time, later she worked with a will. Sometimes at meetings or when trying to talk women round, she imitated her mother's methods and mannerisms.

Hsiu-chen worked for three whole years in the Maternity Home. In 1955 the new methods of delivery were to be applied throughout the district. The Maternity Home had to train another set of midwives. From village to village Hsiu-chen went, explaining the new methods, urging that they should be adopted everywhere. And she assembled the women chairmen from each village to watch a delivery. Then Chu-chu started learning midwifery from her mother.

That spring the county had organized a training course in hygiene which included learning the new methods of delivery. Those joining the class had to reach the standard of primary school graduates, and Wenhsi sent Chu-chu to study there. She came back in the middle of the high tide of co-operation, when the six villages in Wenhsi combined into one big agricultural producers' co-operative. Wanting to appoint a strong woman co-operative head, the district transferred Hsiu-chen to the job. Chu-chu, just back from the training class, was given her mother's old position as director of the Maternity Home.

That was the second time she took over Hsiu-chen's work.

This time her mother had no qualms about it. In the training class Chu-chu had mastered all the new terms, had

learned to use a stethoscope and to give injections. In fact she knew more than her mother. And she always threw herself whole-heartedly into her work. One thing only worried Hsiu-chen. For an unmarried girl in her late teens it might not look too well to be a midwife. Chu-chu's fiancé, studying in middle school, would probably have no objection. But the old folk in his family mightn't like it. And sure enough, one day Chu-chu's future father-in-law came to Hsiu-chen and said: "Your girl's growing up. Why not find her something else to do?"

When Hsiu-chen went home and told Chu-chu, the girl lost her temper. "Is this work something to be ashamed of?" she demanded. "A lot of feudal nonsense! Let me go and see the old man!" Her bobbed hair flapped as she whisked off.

Her fiancé's family lived at the east end of the village. Chu-chu's mother gave chase, calling to her, but Chu-chu did not stop. As luck would have it she ran into her future father-in-law standing by his threshing-floor.

She went boldly up to him, crying: "Dad! You're at home! There's something I want to discuss with you."

The old man turned rather red to hear that this chit of a girl had something to "discuss" with him. He grunted, looked away and said: "Go on."

Hsiu-chen, too embarrassed to join them, kept out of sight round the corner.

"Dad!" she heard Chu-chu say. "This is something we must get clear. Because some day we'll be one family and we don't want any unpleasantness, do we?"

With another grunt, the old man said: "That's right."

"It's my job I'm talking about," Chu-chu continued. "No one can say being a midwife means losing face. We mustn't look at things the old way. All the nurses in the big hospital in town are girls and no one sees anything wrong in that. We all start life as babies. In the old days in these parts out of ten children born only five or six lived, but with the new method of delivery each one lives — mother and baby come through fit and strong. The mortality rate's down to four per cent. Do you know what that means?

Out of a hundred children born, only four die! This is a wonderful thing for everyone. What disgrace do you see in it, dad?"

During this clear and incisive speech by Chu-chu, her future father-in-law's cheeks burned and he kept nodding his head. When she had finished he tugged his beard and chuckled: "You're right there. . . . Well, I never minded anyway."

Hsiu-chen, just round the corner, had noted her daughter's confident tone, her sensible, tactful approach. She felt a sudden pang of envy. How lucky the girls nowadays were — they could go anywhere, say anything! She had been sold to the Yang family as a child-bride and worked there like a mute for thirteen years without daring to speak to Yang Cheng-hsiang. But Chu-chu's generation had been born at a happier time.

She heard Chu-chu conclude: "All right then, dad, I must be going. Drop in for some tea when you've time."

The old man nodded and grunted twice. Hsiu-chen could not smother a laugh.

When Chu-chu ran back and discovered her mother, she announced with a smile: "I told him, mum, and he says he doesn't mind."

Her mother frowned in mock severity. "You've got a nerve."

"Who — me? He's human, so am I. If the Party has a job for me, nobody's going to stop me doing it. I'm not afraid of him." She grinned mischievously at her mother.

For several years Hsiu-chen had been woman head of the co-operative. Last year, at the beginning of the Big Leap, Wenhsi district launched a big drive for water conservancy and afforestation. Led by the Party secretary, Hsiu-chen joined in this movement with all the able-bodied men and women in the co-op. By dint of working hard all winter and spring, they had made thirteen small reservoirs and opened up over seven hundred *mou* of terraced fields. When a commune was formed, Wenhsi became one of its administrative districts. This time they pooled all

their labour forces for half a month to plant saplings on Shaoshih Hill, bare for long years.

Now when Hsiu-chen travelled this road and saw closely-planted saplings covering the slope like an emerald sunshade, crops springing from the terraced fields, she felt a great warmth and sweetness in her heart. In the old days when they climbed to gather brambles for fuel, she had hated the hills because they were so high and ugly. Today, though, they put her in mind of a small girl's hair — you could braid it and comb it as you liked, and prettify it in any way you pleased!

Dusk was falling as Hsiu-chen got back to Wenhsi.

First she made the round of the canteens, to look at the dishes and the steamed bread. Then she turned into the nursery for a glimpse of the children. Their mothers, just back from the fields, were coming one by one to fetch the tots, and Hsiu-chen had a good gossip with several of them. She didn't reach home till the moon had sailed over the horizon.

Yang Cheng-hsiang, back from a meeting, asked with a smile:

"Well, mum, what job has the Party committee given you this time?"

"You may well ask. I've been transferred to something quite different."

"What is it? Eh?"

"Guess!"

"Now that we're a commune it might be anything; industry, agriculture, defence, education, commerce, I can't guess." He slapped his head.

Hsiu-chen crowed with laughter. "I'm a factory manager! They're drafting me to this distillery in our commune."

"Well! Can you handle that?" Her husband stared.

"One can always learn. If I keep running to the Party for advice, I'll manage."

Her husband grinned broadly. "You've really changed your job this time. I'm still at the same old farming. We'll have to grow some good sweet potatoes for your distillery." Both of them laughed.

Presently he asked: "Who'll be taking over the woman chairman's job in our district?"

"Who but our Chu-chu?"

"I thought so!" Yang laughed. "Trust her to follow where her mother leads!"

Hsiu-chen said softly: "And I just follow where the Party leads!"

Bright and early the next morning, Chu-chu swept home like a whirlwind from Chaohua. Flushed and breathless, her short fringe moist against her perspiring forehead, she bounded in through the gate.

"Mum!" she called. "Mum! Where's mum?" All the bamboo curtains rattled as she searched the house.

"You baggage!" scolded Hsiu-chen. "Must you shout as if you were summoning my spirit?* I'm here!"

As she stepped into the yard, Chu-chu gave way to a sudden fit of laughter and collapsed, shaking with merriment, to the ground.

"What are your instructions, chairman?" asked Hsiu-chen.

"Mum!" Chu-chu still shook with laughter. "You know who decided I should take over your work? I suggested it myself to Secretary Hsu! I had to ask several times before he'd agree."

"You little devil! You were doing nicely at the Maternity Home. Why should you ask to come back here?"

"Catch me staying out there! Last year when you had your Big Leap, building reservoirs and sowing high-yield crops, I nearly burst with envy. Now hand over! Look at my hands — how soft they've grown. I've been dying to get back to the land. I've been so bored at the Maternity Home."

"That's a fine way to talk! What did you tell your father-in-law, may I ask?"

"Things were different then. Now there are plenty of trained midwives at the Home."

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* In feudal China when someone died, relatives often went through the ceremony of calling back the spirit.

"All right. Don't waste my time. Come on! Take over the work."

Chu-chu produced her notebook. "That's what I've been waiting for!"

Mother and daughter sat in the yard, each with a notebook in her hand, to make over the work. Hsiu-chen told Chu-chu how many nurseries the district had, how many canteens, how many sewing machines, who headed the different women's work-teams, which of them were Party members, which Youth Leaguers, and just how the work was going. She went into great detail and Chu-chu noted it all carefully down. This took them until noon.

When the handing over was finished, Hsiu-chen told her daughter: "Chu-chu, this work isn't simple: it's not like in the co-op in the old days. You can't be too easy-going, you've a big responsibility. Keep in close touch with the Party and get all the help you can from it. Think of the size of this district with more than a dozen villages — you mustn't be afraid of leg work. The more trust folk have in us and in the Party, the more concern we ought to show for them. Women are a force to be reckoned with now in production. Then there are the canteens and nurseries — they're very important. Don't let things slide; mind you see they're well run!"

She spoke as if preparing her daughter for her wedding. With a solemn face and eyes fastened on her mother, Chu-chu nodded.

When business was over they started laughing and joking.

Chu-chu looked at the old-fashioned, cumbersome coil in which Hsiu-chen wore her hair. "Mum, you're going to be a factory manager! You can't go on wearing your hair in a bun. Here, let me cut it off for you."

As she flew for the scissors, Hsiu-chen jumped to her feet and laughed. "You little fiend! I shall wear it to suit myself. You can't expect a woman nearing fifty to go round with a bobtail like you. I do all right as I am."

"You don't have to wear it as short as we do, mum. I'll cut it just below your ears. A couple of days ago some visitors came from Peking to see our Maternity Home, and

the women your age had short hair — it looked ever so nice." She flourished the scissors.

"Get away with you!" Hsiu-chen warded her off. "Not for me."

"You're in industry now, remember. You're a factory manager."

"What if I am? I've talked to the special commissioner, I've talked to the provincial secretary — why should I cut my hair to run a factory?" She covered her hair with her hands.

"All right. All right." Chu-chu put down the scissors. "Have it your own way." She went off.

After lunch Hsiu-chen was roused from her nap by a sound of clipping near her ears. She sat up with a start — too late! Chu-chu had cut off her hair. Feeling her head, she scolded with a smile: "You little baggage, Chu-chu! You've really cut it! I'll give you a thrashing!"

Bent double with laughter, Chu-chu answered: "Have a look in the mirror, mum! It's ever so much prettier!"

"I'll teach you to prettify me!" Hsiu-chen gave chase, and with a scream of laughter Chu-chu rushed outside.

Yang Cheng-hsiang in the other room was woken by the noise. He called:

"What's all the excitement?"

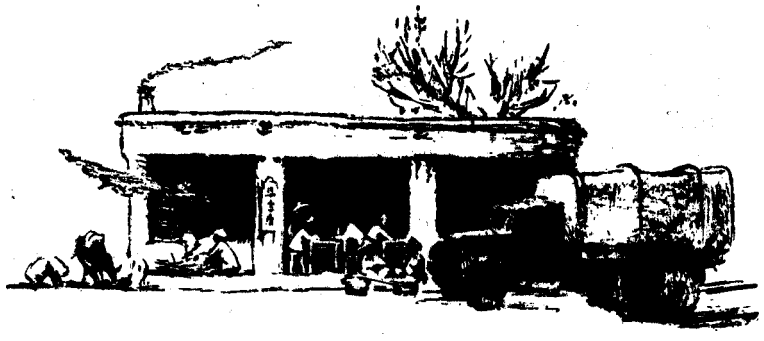
Hsiu-chen went laughing to the door. "Look! Your baggage of a daughter has gone and cut my hair."

Her husband stared, and a smile dawned on his face. "It suits you, mum! You look good — years younger!"

"Do I really look younger?" Hsiu-chen picked up a mirror. Yang stepped over and said:

"Just see for yourself. You look at least ten years younger!"

Translated by Gladys Yang
Illustrations by Ho Yun-lan



TIEN LENG

Mrs. Ma's Tea-house

People remember some places they pass in travels for their famous ancient relics or their outstanding historical or contemporary personalities. Other places are remembered for the tea they produce.

I know a place which has no ancient relics or distinguished people, still less famous native products, but people recall it whenever they take up a cup of tea to quench their thirst. This is Tea Town.

Tea Town does not produce tea. They say it got the name because Liu Pang, the first emperor of the Han dynasty, had drunk a cup of tea there.

Yet in the last few years, Tea Town has become known far and wide. If anyone on the bus says he's stopping at Tea Town, everyone knows that he's going to drink tea in Mrs. Ma's Tea-house.

Tien Leng is a young writer.

Mrs. Ma's Tea-house is situated on the left side of the highway which circles down from the mountain in the west. It has a large spacious room with tables and stools. The stove, standing on the left, burns merrily day and night. A big and a small kettle are always boiling and singing and tea is served as soon as customers appear. The tea is strong, the water steaming hot, and the price is low. It is a great convenience for travellers.

As a matter of fact the only tea served here is third grade Shanching. But people like the place for its kindly proprietor, the widow, Mrs. Ma.

It's been like a home to us, the drivers of the transport company.

Every day at noon, passenger buses and cargo trucks form a long line outside the door. Many people go in to drink a cup of tea or smoke a cigarette. Some fill their kettles with water and leave quickly. In the shade behind the door is a jar filled with cooled boiled water for those young men who are always in a hurry. Mrs. Ma always snatches the ladle away whenever she catches anyone drinking unboiled water and says, "Have you ever heard of germs? Don't you want to live?"

Mrs. Ma is over forty-five years old. But her appearance does not betray her age. Her hair is dark and smooth. She is very spirited. A few wrinkles show only when she laughs. She is neither too tall nor too short, only a little plump. Those who know her bitter past declare that Mrs. Ma has been getting younger these few years.

We drivers and our assistants always get into a debate when Mrs. Ma is mentioned and it often ends unhappily. Some praise her, while others say she is meddlesome. My assistant, Little Chin, who has an explosive temper, belongs to the first category. He won't let anyone call her meddlesome. He argues for her, his eyes glaring and his neck swelling like a pig's liver.

"Don't get so excited over trifles," I once tried to persuade him. "Don't quarrel with your comrades."

"It's not a trifle," he retorted.

"You attend to your driver's assistant job," said I, "let her attend to her tea-house. What does it matter if others praise or curse her?"

"It's a matter of principle. What do you think of her, Master Chang?"

He caught me unawares.

Mrs. Ma's Tea-house is not only a resting place, it's also our inspection station. Mrs. Ma is even more severe than a real inspector. Whenever anyone parks outside her door and walks in to sit at a table, she comes out with a fine porcelain teacup ready with tea leaves in her left hand and a kettle in her right. Putting the teacup down and filling it with boiling water she says:

"Check your truck first."

"I have checked it at the previous stop."

"It won't kill you to check it again."

If the driver refuses, he doesn't get the cup of tea.

Last winter such a thing happened. And for that my explosive-tempered assistant driver, Little Chin, received a reprimand.

The sky was overcast after a heavy snow. The wind was piercing. According to the weather report it was caused by a gust of cold air from Siberia. We started from Hanchung at four o'clock in the afternoon and arrived at Tea Town at one in the morning. I had not slept for two days and my eyes kept closing. I locked the truck and Little Chin drained the water from the radiator.

We went into the tea-house. A kettle stood on a brazier, its steam making the room warm and cosy. When Mrs. Ma heard us she came out from an inner room. In her hands was a padded shoe which she had been stitching.

"Staying for the night or going on?"

"If we go on we will be driving into the Hanshui River," said I.

"The radiator . . .?" she asked.

"It was emptied," Little Chin cut in. "Look if you don't believe me."

A truck pulled up outside the door with the hissing of air-drakes. Old Chou, driver of truck No. 1324, came in with his assistant Young Chu.

Mrs. Ma directed the same questions at them.

Young Chu, who always thought her meddlesome, said impatiently, "Don't you worry. What am I here for? Of course I know that the radiator should be drained. You're too nosy!"

When Young Chu said this, the face of my explosive Little Chin grew tight and his two eyes stared as big as eggs. A quarrel certainly would have erupted if I hadn't diverted them by asking Little Chin to pass me the teapot.

"If it was emptied, that's fine," said Mrs. Ma.

She cooked rice for Old Chou and me whom she knew were southerners. She fried eggs and salted pork and served wine. For Young Chu and Little Chin she made griddle cakes. All four of us were very satisfied and had a good night's sleep.

Early next morning, she called, "It's time to get up." When I opened my eyes, four basins of hot water were waiting for us. On the table was a pot of hot tea and four teacups.

Young Chu and Little Chin went out to clean the trucks. Old Chou and I were drinking tea when we heard Little Chin shout, "How come you let the radiator freeze?"

Mrs. Ma seemed more shocked than any of us. She dashed out as if the house was on fire. We followed her and saw that Young Chu was fussing under the truck while Little Chin was handing him firewood and complaining at the same time.

Mrs. Ma walked up to them. She stooped down and asked very concernedly, "Does it matter much? Does it matter much?"

Young Chu climbed out from under the truck, pretending that he heard nothing.

"Did you drain the radiator?" asked Mrs. Ma.

"He didn't," Little Chin answered for him.

Mrs. Ma grew angry. "A young person like you should be honest. . . ."

"It's none of your business whether it was drained or not. You're as meddlesome as a dog chasing mice. . . ."

Before Mrs. Ma could answer, my hot-tempered Little Chin jumped on Young Chu. Were it not for my interference they would certainly have had a good fight.

Little Chin thought that Mrs. Ma would be pleased that he had defended her and punished Young Chu. But to his surprise Mrs. Ma directed her anger at him. "Are you crazy? How can you do that? He was unhappy enough for freezing the radiator. If you attack him any more. . . ."

Then she turned to Chou and me. "Look at the assistants you have trained. It's a shame. . . ."

Her face was dark and her hands were trembling. It was the first time I had seen her so furious.

I spent a happy Spring Festival's eve at Mrs. Ma's Tea-house last year.

The cargo transported in the pre-Spring Festival period of 1958 was unprecedented. The key word was "speed." One day I had to deliver a truckload of pork to the Yangpingkuan station and from there transport cargo back to Ankang for the commerce department. I had to drive more than a thousand kilometres in twenty-four hours. I didn't take Little Chin with me that day. I let him go home for the Spring Festival. I started in the morning in good weather. But the weather changed by two in the afternoon. It broke into wind and snow. Before I reached Tea Town something went wrong with my brakes. It was with great difficulty that I finally managed to arrive.

In Tea Town, red lanterns burned at every door.

It was impossible to drive on without risking the truck and the cargo. So I decided to spend the eve of the Spring Festival in Mrs. Ma's Tea-house.

When I parked outside of her door, Mrs. Ma came out and asked, "Whose truck?"

"You've not gone to bed yet, sister-in-law?" I jumped down and locked the truck.

"It's Master Chang! Come in and warm yourself," said she, leading me into the room.

"The brakes don't work properly. I can't drive on. I'll have to spend the Spring Festival in your place." I walked into the inner room.

Red candles were burning. The room was flooded with a fragrant smell. Many plates and bowls stood on the table beside a stove on which something was cooking. On another little table were some dumplings and the stuffing and dough. Apparently Mrs. Ma had been making dumplings. By another table sat a girl. The way she wore her hair and the cut of her clothes showed that she was not a local mountain girl. Her hair was curled in at the neck. She wore a deep-red jacket and a pair of blue woolen trousers. But on her feet were a pair of cloth shoes like those worn by the mountain people.

As I entered the room she turned to me and said in perfect Peking dialect, "Sit down, please." Then she lowered her head again and went on writing.

As usual, Mrs. Ma left nothing to be desired. She had water and a pot of tea ready for me. I washed myself and sat down as usual.

I looked at the girl. I had met several women customers here before, but I have never seen this girl.

"She's had bad luck, too," I thought. "Having to spend the Spring Festival on the road."

I wanted to ask her whether she was unable to get on a bus. If she was going in the direction of Ankang, I could take her to the next stop and she could buy a bus ticket there. . . . Then I heard her say, "Mother, come and see if it is right." Mrs. Ma put down the dumpling in her hand and went over.

It was queer. I knew that Mrs. Ma had a son studying in a college in Peking. But I never knew that she had a daughter too. So I listened carefully to their conversation.

The girl pointed at the paper she had been writing on. "The cost of tea leaves for the year was 326 yuan and 50 fen; five tea sets cost 20 yuan and 20 fen; coal and firewood

were 60 yuan. So there is 450 yuan and 30 fen left. Is that right?"

"Right," said Mrs. Ma. "Make a clean copy. I'll ask someone to take it to the people's commune tomorrow."

"I have already done it. Shall I put it in an envelope?"

"All right, I'll get you a red one. . . ."

Their conversation and their expression were so intimate and warm. Such feelings are common only between mother and daughter.

"Shall I boil some dumplings for you?" Mrs. Ma asked me. "Oh, I nearly forget. I have two bottles of Hsifeng wine. I'll prepare some pastries for you."

"Where did you buy the wine? It's not easy to get these days."

"I didn't buy it. Young Chu gave it to me yesterday. That boy is really the limit. He insisted on giving it to me. When I refused he said, 'So you accept the senior driver's present but not mine. Do you look down on us assistants?' "

This reminded me of something. I took Little Chin's Big Leap bonus money from my pocket and gave it to Mrs. Ma. "Little Chin wanted me to buy some cakes for you in Hanchung. I was in too much of a hurry and forgot. So I'll give you the money now."

She refused to take it.

"You can't refuse. You know my explosive-tempered Little Chin. He'll blame me if you refuse."

"He won't blow his chief up no matter how explosive he is!"

"Nothing stops him when he is aroused. He'd even blow a hole through the sky!"

She still refused.

It was no use to insist. How careless of me to have forgotten to buy something. Of course she wouldn't take the money. I decided to put it in her drawer secretly.

She was cutting and chopping vegetables as we chatted. In the time it takes to smoke a cigarette, she had everything ready and set upon the table where the girl was sitting.

I went over. "Hui-chen, you drink with Master Chang," Mrs. Ma said to the girl. "I'll boil the dumplings."

The girl pulled at Mrs. Ma. "I don't drink wine, mother. You drink with him, I'll boil the dumplings."

"Let's all drink together." Mrs. Ma took the girl's hand and sat down.

"Is she your daughter?" I asked.

"No, her daughter-in-law." To my surprise, the girl introduced herself.

I glanced at her. She suddenly blushed, sensing that she might have been too bold before a stranger.

"They are not married yet," said Mrs. Ma and helped Hui-chen to a chicken leg.

"Are you still studying?"

"Yes, I'm studying in Peking Medical College."

"Where do you live? . . ."

"In Peking too."

As I was talking with Hui-chen, Mrs. Ma put a cup of wine in front of me.

I drank with her. Women in the mountains were mostly good drinkers. But she was an exception. After she had downed two cups, it began to show on her face.

"Don't drink too much, mother," Hui-chen said to her concernedly.

Perhaps because of the wine, Mrs. Ma became more talkative. ". . . Everyone says I am lucky. As a matter of fact, we are living in paradise now. My son will be soon graduating from the college. And I'll have a daughter-in-law too. She will be graduating in two or three years."

"Why hasn't your son come home?" I asked.

"He's gone to work in the countryside for a while," Hui-chen answered for her.

"It's just as good, since she's been able to come," said Mrs. Ma. "Son and daughter-in-law are equally the apple of a mother's eye. If only his father could have lived to see this day. . . . Ah, it's nearly twenty years."

She suddenly stopped. A sad expression, which I had never seen on her face before, appeared.

Even the strongest person is bound to think of her dear ones at festival time! To change the subject I joked with Hui-chen.

"This mother-in-law of yours is so good that a thousand praises could not tell all her merits. She has ability enough to be a hotel manager in a big city and a character so charming that she could be head of a children's nursery. If she came to our transport company she would be in charge of safety devices. And she surely could be the chief inspector of repairs. And if she keeps this tea-house a few years more she certainly will become a hero driver . . . ."

This made both of them laugh. "You are drunk although you didn't drink much," said Mrs. Ma. "Where did you get so many jokes?"

"This is no joke. I am telling the truth. If you don't believe me, Hui-chen, you can ask anybody in my team."

"One sometimes can't tell what guides one's conduct. Now I feel everything belongs to me. The tables, benches and tea sets are mine. So are the trucks and cargoes. Even the men and women, old and young, coming and going, are all my dear ones. . . ."

This May, I drove a passenger bus from Yangpingkuan to Ankang. When we were passing Hanchung, a passenger from Wuhan who was going to Ankang to buy some medicinal herbs asked, "Are we approaching Tea Town?"

It was our rule that drivers should not talk with passengers while driving. So I kept silent.

"No. There's still some distance," another passenger answered for me. "We have not passed Hsihsiang yet."

"Is Mrs. Ma's Tea-house still open?" the passenger from Wuhan asked again.

"It has flourished since the people's commune was set up," the man answered. "After it came under the commune it was expanded too. Mrs. Ma is its manager now."

Translated by Yu Fan-chin
Illustrations by Li Hung-jen

MALCHINHU

Lost

When Chiang Yen prepared to leave her native village in Szechuan and go to Paotow in the Inner Mongolian Autonomous Region she was already four months pregnant. "Wait a few months," her mother urged. "They'll be able to build the steel complex without you. First have the baby."

But Chiang Yen was determined, and she went on with her packing. "Let her go," her girl friends jokingly advised her mother. "She's nearly out of her mind with thinking of her dear Young Chu!"

Actually, the magnificent construction project drew her as strongly as longing for her husband, but she replied with a straight face, "Who doesn't think of her man when he's far away?"

She arrived in Paotow. Chiang Yen was a doctor, her husband was a surveyor. The two had little chance to be

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Malchinhu is a young Mongolian writer well-known for his novels *On the Kolchin Grasslands* and *On the Boundless Steppe.*

together. Only when she was almost ready to give birth did she begin her maternity leave and move in with him at the work site near the Kundulun River. Although the region was sparsely settled, the scenery was beautiful, and the quietness and fresh air, so restful and soothing to the nerves, was exactly what she needed.

One evening after dinner when her husband went to a meeting, Chiang Yen strolled out on the grassy plains. The endless sea of grass was gilded by the rays of the setting sun. It was very still. All along the road little red and white survey flags tugged at their strings.

"In this wilderness, we're going to build one of the world's best steel complexes." Chiang Yen couldn't help smiling when she recalled her husband's words. At the moment the place was nothing but rolling hills, little flags and string markers. It was not that she didn't believe her husband. On the contrary, she had come because she was motivated by the same ideal. But the ideal was a long way from realization! To build one of the world's best steel complexes on this vast plain was not going to be easy!

As she wandered through the trackless wilderness, the sunset clouds in the west gradually darkened. A lone eagle soared in the sky. A flock of sheep grazed on a distant hill — until now they were the "masters" of all this.

Chiang Yen followed along the Kundulun River. She could see its sandy bottom. A few field-mice gambolled not far off. She wanted to throw stones at them, but her big abdomen did not permit her to bend. She cried, "Whish, whish!" a few times, and they scampered away.

Dusk was short. Night's silent veils slowly descended. As Chiang Yen turned to go back, she discovered that she had walked too far. The dwellings of the surveyors were hidden by the hills. Only the line her steps had made through the tall grass indicated from what direction she had come.

If she could find the survey flag markers, she would get home all right. But as she gazed around, everything seemed a dark blur. The sky was cloudy. There wasn't even the Big Dipper to guide her. She continued walking. Her waist and legs were becoming painful, and she had to stop and rest. The ground here was marshy. But she hadn't crossed any such land on her way out!

For the first time the frightening word "lost" flashed through her mind!

She wanted to call out, but no light was visible in any direction. Who could hear her? It was better not to call. People said there were wolves in these parts. Her cries might even attract them! The thought of wolves frightened her. Only a few days before a wolf had carried off one of the sheep belonging to the survey team. "I can't stay here," she thought. "I must keep going!"

She walked on and got out of the marshy stretch. But there still was no sign of any lights. Chiang Yen was nearly ready to weep!

Exhausted, she struggled forward, her steps dragging. But she had to push on.... Suddenly, pain stabbed in her abdomen. Chiang Yen was getting frantic. She sank wearily to the ground. Where was the survey team? Where was her husband? Was their meeting ever going to end?

Then she heard the rhythmic patter of approaching hoof beats. Holding her breath, she stared in the direction of the fast-coming shadow. She wanted to call out, but she was a little afraid, and as she hesitated the horse raced directly towards her.

When the horse saw the dark object in its path, it shied violently. Its rider hastily reined in and shouted something in Mongolian. Chiang Yen couldn't understand him, but she could tell he was asking a question.

"I'm from the survey team," she cried.

"Are you a worker?" the rider asked in Chinese with a Mongol accent. "What are you doing sitting out here alone?"

"I'm lost."

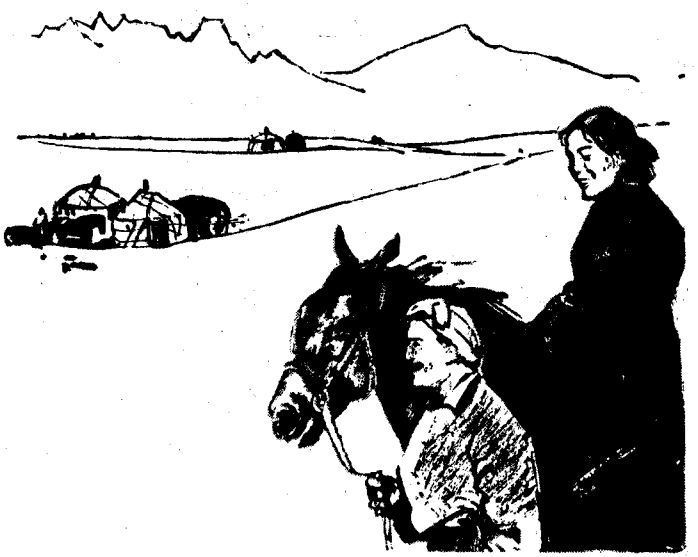
"Hah! You young people!"

Chiang Yen could see now that he was a Mongolian of some fifty-odd. His kindly face was covered with wrinkles. Suddenly he seemed very dear to her, and she thought, "I've been saved!"

His name was Khukh. Twenty years before he had herded sheep on these very grasslands; later he moved into the mountains. Today, carrying his hunting rifle, he had come out to look for some stray cattle.

On hearing Chiang Yen's story, Khukh first scolded her for wandering so far alone, then invited her to mount his horse, saying that he would take her home. She said she had never ridden; she was afraid she would fall. Khukh said he would lead the horse by the bridle. He guaranteed she would be all right. When she still embarrassedly refused, he strode over with impatient anxiety and lifted her into the saddle.

Carefully leading the horse, Khukh set out in a straight line. Before long, Chiang Yen could see lights in the distance.



"I don't know how to thank you—" she began. Again pain gripped her abdomen. But she did not reveal her suffering to him.

As they neared the camp, they heard a loud hubbub. Obviously, the meeting had ended and everyone had become upset when they discovered that Chiang Yen had disappeared. Her husband and several other young fellows were just about to set out with flashlights to look for her. When Chiang Yen dismounted, her abdomen hurt dreadfully. People led her to her tent.

The surveyors pleaded with Khukh to spend the night, but he said he had to catch those strays before they wandered too far. He bid them goodbye and departed.

*

For several years, Khukh did not come down again from the mountains. He received a letter from his son saying that the Paotow steel complex would soon be completed, that the plain at the foot of the mountains was covered with tall buildings. Khukh's son had been in the first batch of young Mongols to sign up for work in the steel mill. He had been taking a training course at the big Anshan plant in the Northeast for a long time and had only recently returned to Paotow.

The past few days, the boy had sent one letter after another pleading that his father come to the city to visit him.

So Khukh went to Paotow. Ho! The plain had changed completely; it was like entering another world. He gazed at the banks of the Kundulun and rubbed his eyes. "Can this be our old homeland?"

His son had a room in a new block of workers' apartments, on the third floor. But the boy went to the mill during the day, and his father got very bored sitting alone in the flat. He decided to go out for a walk. To make sure that he would recognize the place, he stuck his riding quirt in the apartment house's doorway.

It took him some time to find his way through the maze of buildings and reach the main street. Workers must

have been coming off shift for the streets were jammed with people and very noisy. Looking here and there and everywhere, Khukh strolled along. "This is just about where I found the woman doctor that year," he mused.

He walked and walked, passing block after block of new apartments, crossing street after street. Before he knew it, the sun was setting and the sky was growing dark. He realized that his son must be coming home from work, and he hurried to return to the flat.

But, old heaven, there was so many tall buildings! He went from one to another, but they all seemed the same colour and the same height, like lambs born on the same day. He couldn't tell which was which. By nightfall, when the street-lights were turned on, he still hadn't found an apartment building with a riding quirt in the doorway. He wanted to ask, but he didn't remember the address. How could he inquire?

"Lost!" he thought.

Weariness attacked him. His Mongol boots felt heavy as iron. He had to find a place to rest.

Khukh sat down at a building corner and tried to figure out where he was. A woman walking quickly by, tripped over his legs.

"I'm terribly sorry," she apologized. "I've just picked up my child at the nursery. I was hurrying to get home."

Khukh couldn't see her face clearly in the dark. "It's nothing at all," he said courteously, rising to his feet. "I've lost my way, comrade. I'm looking for a Mongol worker named Gonkit. Do you know where he lives?"

"Gonkit? A steel worker?"

"Yes! Yes!"

"We work in the same mill. His flat isn't far from mine. Come with me!"

Happily, Khukh followed her. They soon halted at the door of an apartment building. A riding quirt was stuck in the doorway.

"This is it. He's on the third floor. Goodbye!"

The woman started to walk away. Khukh hurried after her.

"I don't know how to thank you! Since you know Gonkit, and you've helped me as well, why not come up and sit a while? I'm Gonkit's father."

"I'll come tomorrow, uncle. The child's papa is waiting for us at home."

"No, don't go yet. I've brought some butter and cheese and koumiss from the grasslands. According to our Mongol custom, you must come in and have some. Have a bowl of buttered tea before you go."

As they were arguing, a young man came walking quickly from the east. He seemed in a great hurry. When he drew near, they saw that it was Gonkit.

"Papa, where have you been? I've been looking all over for you."

"I got lost. This comrade brought me home."

"Why, it's Dr. Chiang! Thank you very much."

When the guest entered the room, she invited the older man to be seated. Khukh politely declined.

"You must sit first," he said. "You're my benefactor."

The woman put her baby down on the bed, then turned and said with a laugh, "Don't be so courteous, uncle —" Abruptly, she stopped and stared. "Oh! It's you, Uncle Khukh! . . . What a coincidence!"

Gonkit gazed at them in stupefaction. Khukh was also confused.

"My name is Chiang Yen, uncle. Don't you remember —I was lost one night and you brought me back to the surveyors' team? I gave birth to this child that night!"

It all came back to Khukh now. He looked at the adorable child on the bed.

"How old is the baby?"

"He's three."

"Ah, those three years passed very quickly!" sighed Khukh. He walked over to the window and gazed outside. It was a world of lights and smoke.

The two young people joined him at the window. There were tears of joy in Khukh's eyes as he said:

"Children, I never thought I'd see the day when I'd lose my way on the plains where I herded sheep as a boy. But I was lost, wonderfully, beautifully lost!"

Translated by Sidney Shapiro
Illustrations by Liu Po-shu

Spring Dawn Woodcut by Liu Kuang→

The artist is from Szechuan Province, born in 1920. He studied in Yenan during the War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression in the Lu Hsun Art Academy. Now he is secretary of the Sian branch office of the Chinese Artists' Association.

TIEN CHIEN

My Country, I Sing Your Praise

Shadows of trees in the lake,
Chimes of bells in the orchard;
From an emerald pool in the hills
A red sun surges;
Our land driving red streamers of cloud
Is riding upon the East Wind,
My country, I sing your praise
On your glorious birthday.

Tien chien is a well-known poet and member of the Executive Committee of the Chinese Writers' Union; his works include *Wartime Poems, Jung Kuan-hsiu, Dragon Gate,* etc.

My country, to you Mao Tse-tung's name
Has become a sun, a bright star;
Forest belts have become a Great Wall,
Plain walls are transformed into murals,
Iron derricks make ladders to heaven,
Bridges across the Yangtse make new rainbows,
And we ride upon the wings of the East Wind
With lanterns the vivid red of crab-apples.

East Wind, guide now my steps,
Be my sole guide;
Of these ten years in our land
Let me sing aloud;
I fear no lack of fire
While from our furnaces the bright sparks fly,
Nor shall I lack inspiration
With these galaxies of red stars overhead.

Mighty Socialism,
You are the golden chariot
On golden wheels
Which skims the shores of the lake;
Where it has passed
Men and women rival each other in high endeavour;
And a poetry contest is held
Beside the commune's fountain.

The trees in the commune are green,
Far off the furnaces rise like a forest;
Smoke ascends from canteen chimneys,
New seedlings are planted in the nurseries;

For the Five Year Plan
We work and study here.
In the mighty advance of our land
We, too, are transformed.

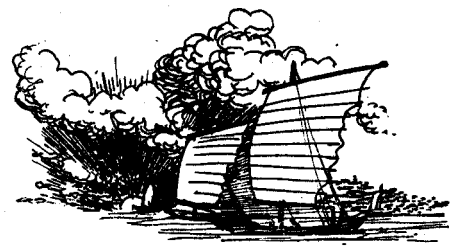
Before the gate of our commune
Stretches the lake unruffled;
The fishermen row their large boat
Over an ancient city reflected in the water;
The large craft greets the red sun,
The red sun shines on the boat;
The craft of socialism
Sweeps swiftly forward.

To right and left of the lake
Village after village has grown,
Houses built of good grey brick
With white-washed walls.
In red characters on the door
This couplet is written:
"Each fragment of time is a fragment of gold;
Don't slacken speed for a second!"

The red glow of orchard fruit light up the sky,
Starring it with sparks of joy,
Like a red banner in the forest
Casting a crimson glow upon hills and lake;
Thousands of flowers bloom together
In one great garden;
Red flowers are blossoming in our fair land,
Ripe fruit hangs in the commune.

Red sun, shine out! Great ship, sail on!
We shout for joy; our commune is paradise;
In our land each season is spring,
And men and women are happier than immortals;
I raise my bright pen
To celebrate New China's tenth anniversary.
The Great Leap, the people's communes
Will carry us up to the highest heaven!

Translated by Gladys Yang



CHAO SHU-LI

A New Canteen and Old Memories

My old home is on the west of the southern tip of the Taihang Mountains. I not only grew up and had my schooling there but worked in that mountainous region before liberation. So although I left home after liberation, I seize every chance that comes my way of going back there for a look.

As early as 1937 this district became a base in the War of Resistance to Japanese Aggression. Since liberation, naturally, like all the other old revolutionary bases, it has never lagged behind, even if we cannot boast of being in the vanguard all the time. Each visit home shows me something new. Most of my stories have been based on material collected there.

Chao Shu-li is a well-known story writer; he is a member of the Executive Committee of the Chinese Writers' Union; his works include *Hsiao Erh-hei's Marriage, Rhymes of Li Yu-tsai* and the novel *Sanliwan Village,* all of which had appeared in *Chinese Literature.*

When I went home in the winter of 1958, because it was the year of the Big Leap in socialist construction there were more new things than usual. The first I noticed was the canteen built after the organization of the commune. This is a building facing south with the kitchen on the west side and the dining hall on the east. Inside the kitchen is a well. The well is an old one, but it has been incorporated in the kitchen so that when the cooks need water they do not have to fetch it from outside. The stove flues and chutes for adding coal and removing ashes lead directly out through the wall, hence when the fire is lit there is no dust or smoke inside. The dining hall has two rows of square tables, each with four benches around it, while two braziers stand in the broad space between the two rows of tables. The children who can't reach food on the tables like to have their meals around these braziers.

When I had my first meal in this canteen, I gave some comments to the leader of the work brigade. The canteen struck me as extremely well built, but since the commune had only just been set up, wasn't it rather extravagant to put up a building which had — so I heard — needed the combined efforts of about seventy families? Before the brigade-leader could answer my question, all those at the nearby tables laughed. One of them suggested that I should guess how much they had spent on this canteen. While I was hesitating over an estimate, someone else assured me I need not worry about the cost. They had not only hired no masons and bought no materials, but had not used much of their regular working hours. The canteen was built by the commune members in their spare time. They contributed the material and did all the work themselves, yet it took no more than a fortnight. Some of the achievements of our working people really seem like miracles!

I was most impressed by this inexpensive, excellent canteen. Its location reminded me of many folk I knew in the old days.

This place used to be called the South Compound. In the front court lived three brothers named Chao, distant relatives of ours. They were about my father's age but belonged to my generation. The eldest brother, Hsi-kuei, had no land of his own and went to another county to farm hilly country, but died without ever having married. The third brother, Ming-lun, was a good farmhand as a young man; but unable to wrest a living from the poor soil he rebelled against his hard lot and turned thief. In the end he was beaten to death by his own clan. He had many points in common with Ah Q, the hero in one of Lu Hsun's stories, and I wanted to write about him but never did. These two brothers, who died through poverty, left no descendants.

To the east of the canteen there had been a courtyard called The Store where lived two brothers also about my father's age. The elder, Lu Shuan-cheng, I called Elder Uncle; the younger, Lu Sui-cheng, I called Younger Uncle. Their sole property was this house they lived in. Lu Shuan-cheng died of typhoid leaving two sons, the elder of whom starved to death during a famine. The younger son lived with an uncle and did not come home till after the land reform. He is now a team-leader. Lu Sui-cheng died without having married, like Hsi-kuei. He was poisoned by some bad beef.

To the south of the canteen lived two generations of a family named Feng, who owned not an inch of land. The son, Fu-kuei, whom I called Elder Brother, also starved to death after living as a beggar. Part of my short story *Fu-kuei* was based on his life.

Behind the house where Fu-kuei lived was the East Court, the home of the four Lu brothers, two of whom I addressed as Elder Uncle, two as Younger Uncle. They were carpenters with a few *mou* only of poor land. In our parts a man could not make a living as an artisan: a trade was no more than a side-line. Of these four brothers only the youngest married — and that not until his thirties. The three elder brothers could not afford to marry. They loved folk music and had several instruments; it was in their house that I learned to play the gong and drum. They are all dead now. The fourth brother, Liu-niu, died away from home during a famine and his son lives in another district.

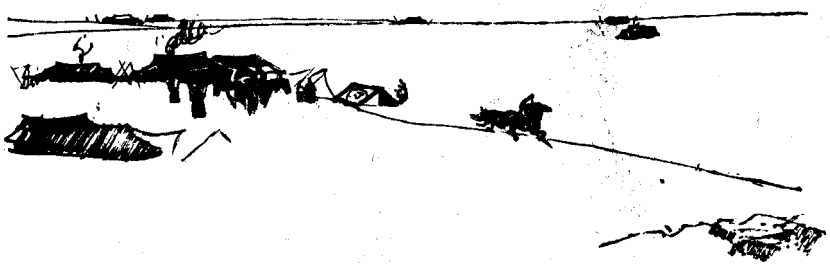
Northeast of East Court there grew a great walnut tree with two windowless stone huts under it. There lived quite a number of people who had fled from Honan during the floods. Most refugees stayed there when they first came to our village; in fact some of them, unable to find other lodgings, remained there for several years. My *Rhymes of Li Yu-tsai* describes two categories of villagers: the "Old" and the "Little." Most of those called "Old" were based on these refugees.

I can recollect about a hundred of those "Old" people — if I included those in neighbouring villages the number would come to several hundreds. Those familiar, kindly faces have long since disappeared: most of these old folk have died leaving no descendants. Had they not fallen victim to poverty and famine in the old society, many of them would now be leading officials or labour heroes, gathering cheerfully for their meal in this new canteen.

Busy recollecting these old friends, I dawdled over my meal till all the grown-ups had finished and gone back to work, leaving only a group of children under school age around the braziers. These children were not shy: when

they saw the grown-ups had left they clustered around me and asked where I was from. One of them knew who I was — perhaps his father or mother had pointed me out. I stroked their heads and asked their names. They answered quickly, "Little" this and "Little" that. I did not catch any names, nothing but "Little." I suppose they may count as "Little" people too, but they are infinitely luckier than those of the "Little" category in the *Rhymes of Li Yu-tsai.* These children will never know what it is to fly from famine.

Translated by Yang Hsien-yi
Illustrations by Ho Yun-lan



LIU KEH

In the Loka Area

LODROWA

Ding-dong, ding-dong, a horse bell was tinkling monotonously and exhaustedly. The horse was trodding slowly on the deserted grassland. . . .

On the horse seated a girl who had wild eyes and thin lips and was covered with dust. She was a Lodrowa.

Lodrowa is not a name of a person. It is a name of the people who live like gypsies in Tibet. Many, many years ago, the people living in Towadzong south of the mountains waged a movement against the Tibetan government because they were unable to endure any more the heavy

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Liu Keh is a young amateur writer; another story of his, *A Bridge for Galha Ford,* appeared in *Chinese Literature* No. 11 this year.

government service and taxes. This of course shocked the ruling classes. They drove these people out of their homes with whips and forbade them ever to return.

So generations of Lodrowas lived a homeless life. They drifted from place to place all over Tibet. And they tried various means to earn a living. Gradually, some learned to be professional butchers or blacksmiths. Some became gold and silversmiths, while others became carpenters, plasterers and handicraftsmen. A few got rich as traders, others turned out to be thieves and prostitutes. The Tibetan government said that these people were low, especially the blacksmiths and butchers. Their bones were black, it said. And when they died they could not be released from suffering in the next world.

Three years ago I met a Lodrowa girl who was working as a gardener on the Shigatse Farm. If anyone mentioned that her father was a butcher she would tremble all over and rush away as pale as death and hide where no one could see her. The leader and many others on the farm would have to look for her and bring her back. She would only recover after several days of rest and comforting.

She was a clever girl but she was very silent and seemed to feel herself inferior. Her eyes were always haunted by fear. The Party organization of the farm did its utmost to give her the warmth she needed to heal the wounds in her heart. After a long, long time, smiles at last began to appear on her beautiful face.

One night when she was learning to read and write, she wrote on a piece of paper, "I want to be a tractor driver. I want to plant vegetables which do not grow in Tibet now for father and mother and everybody to eat." I was deeply moved. I took her hand in mine, wanting to say many, many things. But what could I say? No words could describe my feelings. I could only ask her softly, "What is your name?"

"Dronma," she answered and wrote on the paper.

The paper was kept in my diary. Although it turned yellow now and the writing became blurred, the image of the girl remained imprinted on my heart. I wanted to

write it down in a poem although I was no poet. But this intention was changed by a Lodrowa blacksmith later on.

Every year, before the autumn harvest, a little white tent would appear by the crumbling village wall. From the sound of the bellows, people knew that the blacksmith Kalzang had come. They would take out their hoes, sickles and other iron implements to him for repair.

It was at such a time that I met Kalzang. Where did he come from every year? And after he had finished his work here where did he go? People knew very little about him, and no one was interested. Why should they when they were bending under their own daily toil? Anyway he came at the same time every year. He drifted in unconspicuously, then drifted away as quietly as he had come. He was a Lodrowa.

What surprised me was that the thirty-eight years old Kalzang looked like an old man. He had a wife and eight children. All his children were almost naked except the eldest girl who had a shabby dress. The only possession the family had was a little tent, several torn *pulos* (Tibetan rugs), and a few indispensable blacksmith tools. These they carried on their backs when they came and went.

"Is there a lot of work?" I asked him.

He raised his head and looked at me. Then he went on with his work. I sat beside him helping to work the bellows. I wanted to chat with him, but I didn't know how to start. Then I glanced at the tent and inquired:

"Kalzang, where's your home?"

"Home? Home!" He was so surprised that he repeated the word several times as if it was beyond his understanding; or perhaps my question had recalled to him some bitter memories.

Of course I was always ready to tell the story of Dronma to any Lodrowa I came across and I told it to Kalzang excitedly. He listened silently, showing neither joy nor sorrow. His face was wooden and quiet even after I had finished. It was as if he had not heard me, as if my words had been blown away by the wind. I was very disappointed.

"Don't you understand, Kalzang?" I was annoyed.

". . . Yes, but what's the use?" He smiled bitterly. "There was only one Dronma. . . ." Then he raised his hammer with all his might. The wrinkles on his face was squeezed together.

The hammer hit hard on the red iron as if hitting on my heart destroying all the happiness brought by Dronma. He was right. There was only one Dronma. How could there be many Dronmas under the existing government? Although Tibet had been peacefully liberated, local rule had remained in the hands of the big landlords and the reactionary nobility who retained most of the old laws and customs.

Then, in 1959, the rebellion in the Loka area started by these people was quelled.

A storm of democratic reformation swirled overhead and the people began to be really their own masters.

Ding-dong, ding-dong, the horse bell tinkled happily. A horse galloped on the desert. . . .

On the horse sat a girl. She had wild eyes and thin lips. She had a new colourful apron on. She was a Lodrowa.

"Hallo, lass, where are you going?"

"I'm going home. . . ."

The native place of the Lodrowas, Towadzong, was renamed Lodrodzong.

A YOUNG PIONEER WITHOUT A RED SCARF

Father and mother were very worried. Their boy had been away for a day and a night. The master said that the boy was lazy. He wouldn't be surprised if the boy was eaten by a tiger and he would not take the trouble to look for him.

Ngagwa had run away once before, when he had received a beating from the master. That was prior to the time the rebellion broke out in Tibet. The parents had been very worried. They had looked for him everywhere. Some people said that they had seen him going away with the mule

pack trains. Others said that the pilgrims to Lhasa had taken him along. Still others said that he was blown away by a gust of wind. The story became stranger and stranger until an old woman said she believed he was dead because she had seen a corpse of a boy drifting down the Yalutsangpo River. The sad parents wished to give their tiny store of *chingko* barley to the lama temple to save the boy's soul from suffering, for Ngagwa was their only son.

But, to their surprise, two months later a person coming back from Lhasa said that he had not died but had become a house painter's apprentice at a construction site of a big PLA hospital. The parents were surprised and doubtful. But the person had the name right and said that he had talked with Ngagwa. So there could be no mistake. The mother cried and laughed and fainted in her happiness. That same day, the couple started out for Lhasa.

On the construction site, a PLA man took them through the crowds of workers, through the trucks coming and going and the humming of the electric saw, and finally led them to a small painter on a high scaffold. He was dexteriously painting window frames. Dots of red and green paint stained his overalls. There were also some stains on his nose and cheeks. On his head was a faded PLA cap. Was this skilful little painter the shepherd Ngagwa? By heaven, he didn't look a bit like him! But from his lively dark eyes and stiff hair the mother recognized her son. He was her own dear Ngagwa.

Ngagwa rushed excitedly to his parents whose eyes were full of tears. . . .

After mother had said a lot, the first sentence father said was: "You must go home with us."

Ngagwa stood still and pouted. Go home? Why should he go home? Hadn't he had enough of shepherding for the cruel aristocratic master? The day when he climbed stealthily into the PLA truck and came to Lhasa he had decided not to go back. At first the PLA men had refused to take him on. But he pleaded with them and at last they agreed to introduce him to this construction site. Now he had learned the trade and in the evenings he was learning to

read and write. He might go east to study in the future. Who else had received such care? Had you, father? Had you, mother? No. You hadn't. All the aristocrats knew was to skin people alive and eat their flesh.

And what's more, he was building a hospital here which would treat the PLA men and the poor people too. Had you ever seen a hospital, father and mother? Do you know what a hospital is? No, you hadn't seen one and you don't know what it is. You had not even seen paint before. All you know is to work from early morning to late in the night with empty stomachs; to pray and ask for good fortune in the lama temples; and to borrow a little *chingko* barley from the master with bent backs. . . .

After arguing for some time the father was trembling with rage and the mother cried. Ngagwa sat staring at them. In the end the stubborn boy succeeded in convincing his father who sighed deeply. He fumbled in his pocket and produced two silver dollars which he put in Ngagwa's hand. The mother took him into her arms and said to him in a low voice:

"Ngagwa, is it that once you have anything to do with the PLA they never let you get away?"

The boy burst out laughing so heartily that the mother was dumb with surprise.

"Mother, it is I who will not let the PLA get away!"

Before they left, the father told the son again and again to look after himself and work well. The most important thing was to come home whenever he had time. Ngagwa promised readily and climbed up the scaffolding again.

When the couple reached home the mother found the two silver dollars in her pocket. But it was not just two. It was ten. The first wages Ngagwa had ever received in his life.

But the rebellion broke out before Ngagwa was happy for long. The rebels killed and set fire everywhere, and spread rumours that the Communist Party would be finished and driven out of Tibet soon. The family of anyone who had gone to the side of the Communist Party would be killed if that person did not come back. The father was so

frightened that he flew to Lhasa right away. He knew he couldn't persuade such a stubborn boy to come home, so he lied that the mother was seriously ill. Ngagwa would not be able to see her if he didn't go back immediately. In this way he took Ngagwa home. Ngagwa, who seldom shed tears, wept so bitterly when he discovered that he had been fooled that his mother really became ill. . . .

Soon after, the PLA Army advanced into the Loka area.

Ngagwa disappeared again. Where had he gone? With the PLA Army? Or was he killed by the rebels?

No, he had not gone with the PLA Army. He was not killed either. He was drawn away by a gun, a brand new blue gun, in the hands of a rebel.

A suspicious stranger on the road had caught the attention of Ngagwa who was tending sheep. The stranger had a gun hidden in his clothes. A gun! The PLA soldiers were wiping out the remnants of the rebellion at the time. Why was this man concealing a gun? He was certainly not a good man. Ngagwa decided to follow him. The person walked for about a dozen *li* and turned into a valley where another man who had a rotten nose was waiting. The gun was secretly transferred to that man. It was queer. Where did they intend to take the gun to? So he followed the man with the rotten nose. This time they walked for more than forty *li* at a stretch. It was beginning to get dark. Ngagwa was worried and tired. How long would he have to follow? Then they came to a fierce looking man who took the gun and went on the way. The gun went from hand to hand with Ngagwa following all the time. It was still travelling the next morning when they came across the PLA at last. . . .

"A gun, a gun, a gun," shouted Ngagwa. Then he collapsed to the ground and fell asleep immediately.

The gun was the distinctive mark of one of the rebellion heads. It had been hidden in the stomach of a Buddha before the leader fled to India, and was being displayed now as a secret signal calling the dispersed rebels together. But it was exposed by the boy. . . .

PLA scouts disguising themselves as rebels used the gun as bait and brought the rebels hiding in the mountains into the net like fish one by one.

Under the escort of the PLA men Ngagwa came back on horseback. The soldiers were treating him to a meal in their camp when his parents rushed in, glad to have found him. His father said to him good-humouredly:

"So you are with the Communists again."

"Why not? Why shouldn't I?" he said with a smile.

The father nodded and murmured to himself: "I understand." Then he turned to his son, adding: "Of course you should!"

Translated by Yu Fan-chin
Illustrations by Liu Po-shu

Notes on Literature and Art

SHAO CHUAN-LIN

The Writing of the Last Ten Years

I. Great Changes and Developments in Literature

Now that the whole country is joyfully celebrating the tenth anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China, let us look back at the developments in our literature during the last ten years. We rejoice to see that, nurtured by the Party and the people, our socialist literature is rapidly growing and gaining strength. And, although young, it is healthy and full of vitality and promise. This is the new literature of our labouring people in the age of socialism.

A LITERATURE CLOSELY LINKED WITH THE MASSES

Socialist literature, as Lenin has said, is a genuinely free literature having open ties with the proletariat, a literature that serves the millions of toilers. Our writing conforming to this Leninist principle, resolutely follows and implements Chairman Mao Tse-tung's directive to serve workers, peasants and soldiers. However much this slogan may disgust the bourgeois gentlemen who believe in art for art's

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sake, it has brought about closer links than ever before between our literature and the working people. Our writers give a truthful reflection of the life, thoughts, ideals and aspirations of the working people, and by so doing increase their political consciousness. Our labouring people — the masters of our land — are occupying a leading position and have become heroes in our liberation and that is why our literature is warmly welcomed by them and has become an indispensable part of their life. The working people have not only accepted literature but are writing it themselves. Thus apart from work done by professional authors, many people in other walks of life are writing in their spare time. Following the policy of combining popularization with an improvement in quality, a large-scale literary revolution is going ahead in full swing. Our writers are no longer literati and scholars who remain for long years in the seclusion of their studies, but warriors who, hand in hand with the masses, plunge into the thick of the fray. They have been tempered and virtually born anew by sharing the life of the people for long periods, by labour, struggles and study, which have greatly raised their level of understanding and broadened their vision of life. These ten years have witnessed a most far-reaching change in the relationship of intellectuals to the labouring people. Before liberation the great majority of intellectuals outside the liberated areas did not even have the freedom to establish contact with workers, peasants and soldiers. The extensive ties between literature and the labouring people, the intimate relation between writers and the labouring people, constitute the basic change and greatest achievement of the last ten years in literature. This is the key to the prosperity and progress of our writing.

In this period the number of new works has gone up 16.66 times, from 156 in 1950 to 2,600 in 1958; the number of copies printed has gone up 18.51 times, from 2,147,700 in 1950 to 39,364,094 in 1958. Over twelve thousand works have been published not including classics and writing by non-professionals published locally. The number of major literary magazines has increased nearly five times from

eighteen in 1949 to eighty-six in 1959, according to figures from the Chinese Writers' Union. The annual circulation of a good literary work, which used to be a few thousand copies before liberation, rose after 1949 to some tens of thousands and during the last year or so has run into hundreds of thousands or over a million. These figures illustrate the broader relationship between literature and the people. At the same time the decadent or reactionary works of feudalism, imperialism and the bourgeoisie which used to clutter up the bookshops before liberation have been discarded and their place taken by socialist, revolutionary works. This has resulted in a considerable growth in the literary ranks. In 1950 the All-China Writers' Union had no more than 401 members; but today there are 3,136 members in the central and local branches, the latter having increased from six in 1950 to twenty-three in 1959. There are now nine national literary research institutes as compared with one before. The improvement in quality has been equally striking. In the expanding literary ranks have appeared two great new forces: one consists of new writers recruited from intellectuals, workers and peasants, the majority of whom are young. There can be no doubt that these new recruits will go from strength to strength to take over from the veterans. The second force is drawn from old revolutionaries steeled on the political, economic or military fronts, whose rich experience of life and revolution and long schooling in political and cultural matters have given them the urge to write and resulted in numerous poems, essays and reminiscences about the revolution written in their spare time. Some of these works are of a fairly high artistic level. Moreover, in addition to these new forces, a reserve army of writers is rapidly growing. Literary societies and writers' groups have been formed in factories, villages and army units throughout the country as well as among university students and young intellectuals; and the members of these are eagerly trying their hands at writing. The tempering in the thick of life, ideological reform and improved political consciousness of the old writers, combined with the emergence of new

forces from the ranks of workers, peasants and intellectuals, has made possible the establishment in a relatively short time of a genuine, powerful literary army of the working class.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIALIST REALISM

Striking progress is evident in many works of the last ten years in the greater scope and profundity of the reflection of life and the spirit of the age, in characterization, language and style. Socialist realist literature is gradually attaining maturity in China.

There has been a considerable extension in the range of life reflected in literature. The stupendous changes in social relations and men's lives have naturally given rise to deep and complex changes in our people's outlook and feelings. These have been ten years of unprecedented development in production, ten years of unprecedented progress in men's ideas and political understanding. This has provided literature with the most rich and varied themes, expanding the fountain-head of creative writing. Our writing should not only give rapid reflection to every aspect of modern life — this is our main theme, which predominates quantitatively — but should also describe the heroic and arduous revolutionary struggle led by the Party during the years of the democratic revolution. Since it was virtually impossible for writers under the reactionary rule in Kuomintang-controlled territory to portray this struggle, it is up to us now to fill in these gaps in our literature.

But the general tone of the great majority of works, whether dealing with present-day life or the revolutionary struggles and other historical events of the past, is closely bounding up with the revolutionary spirit of today, permeated with revolutionary heroism. Revolutionary heroism sets the main tone of the writing of the last ten years, in striking contrast to that of the thirty preceding years which for the most part exposed, criticized and protested against

the oppression of reactionary rule. Most of the characters in the writing of that time are peasants, the city poor or intellectuals, who were persecuted and resisted persecution, or negative characters of the landlord class and bourgeoisie. But today the main place in our literature is occupied by splendid revolutionary heroes and other positive characters, who have been taken to the hearts of Chinese readers. Our people love such characters in novels about the War of Liberation as Chou Ta-yung and Tiger Wang in *Defend Yenan!* and Shen Chen-hsin in *Red Sun,* Chu Lao-chung in the historical novel *Keep the Red Flag Flying,* Li Yu-kuo in the play *The Long March,* Shih Yang and Lin Hsiang-chien in *Red Storm,* a play about the railway workers' strike in 1923. Heroic figures and successful portrayals of the revolutionary struggle have also been given in such short novels as Yang Shuo's *Farewell to Battle,* Liu Pai-yu's *Flames Ahead,* Ma Chia's *Unfading Blossoms,* as well as in Yeh Yuan's film scenario *Lin Tse-hsu.* The atmosphere of revolutionary heroism is even more marked in poems and essays. During recent years our poets have written stirring narrative poems about heroes and lyrics filled with revolutionary romanticism. Examples are such long narrative poems as Li Chi's *Story of Yang Kao,* Tien Chien's *The Carter* and Wen Chieh's *Tumultuous Years,* and the short poems by Kuo Mo-jo, Chen Yi, Tsang Ke-chia, Feng Chih, Emi Siao, Ho Ching-chih, Kuo Hsiao-chuan, Keh Pi-chou, Yuan Chang-chin, Wei Yang, Yuan Shui-pai and others.

This is natural enough, for we live in a heroic age which demands high, resounding tones and bright colours in literature and a strong spirit of revolutionary romanticism. This romanticism is no idle dream divorced from actual life, no empty clamour, but the lofty aspirations of the working class drawn from the heart of life itself and of the struggle. Some of our best works show us heroes not set on pedestals above the people, cut off from daily life, but closely linked with the masses, not abstract types but individuals with clearly marked personalities; and most of them are ordinary workers, soldiers or functionaries. In these works a heroic character is always revealed through the contradictions and

conflicts of life; it develops through action and is expressed through the medium of mental activities. The peasants in *Keep the Red Flag Flying* suffice to illustrate this. The author gives a profound picture of the fortitude, simplicity, honesty and kindliness of China's poor peasants by describing the bitter suffering in the Chinese countryside during the past few decades and the peasants' dogged revolutionary struggle. This revolt is first spontaneous, then conscious and planned, when the vanguard of the proletariat penetrates the villages and mingles with the peasants to lead the revolution in the countryside. These peasants show remarkable integrity and fortitude. By recounting how they suffer, rage and hate, how they fall down only to rise and battle on, the author discloses their indomitable spirit, their hopes, joys and dreams. He goes straight to the heart of each character. Each has his own clearly distinctive characteristics. Thus Chu Lao-chung starts as a brave fellow determined to avenge his father single-handed, but finally he takes the path of collective heroism and joins the Communist Party. Since his character develops in typical circumstances, he is to a high degree typical. This novel gives us a relatively comprehensive picture of the whole period of the democratic revolution and the life and struggle of Chinese peasants. Artistically, too, the book reaches a fairly high standard.

Some of our best writers have held fast to the principles of realism, recognizing and reflecting reality and creating typical characters through the development of contradictions in society. Chairman Mao Tse-tung's theory on the correct handling of contradictions among the people have given writers a better theoretical understanding. Thus how to create new heroes and express the contradictions among the people has today become a frequent subject of discussion. The clash of old and new ideas is particularly striking in certain works describing the changes in village life. This is only natural. China's more than five hundred million peasants have in ten years experienced land reform, mutual aid, co-operation and the general establishment of people's communes; they have advanced from a pre-

dominantly individual economy to a largely collective one, from liquidating remnants of feudalism to liquidating those of capitalism. These changes, which used to require centuries, have been compressed into a mere decade in China. This lightning speed is bound to find reflection in literature. We have read Chao Shu-li's *Sanliwan Village,* Liu Ching's *The Beginning* (Volume I), Chou Li-po's *Great Changes in the Mountain Village,* Wang Wen-shih's collection of short stories *A Stormy Night,* Ma Feng's *I Knew All Along,* Sha Ting's *The Crossing,* Sun Li's *The Blacksmith and the Carpenter,* Li Chun's *Not That Road,* and Liu Shu-teh's *Bridge.* These works mirror the desire of rich peasants and some rich middle peasants to take the capitalist road, of most poor and lower middle peasants to take the socialist road, the complex struggles of some wavering middle peasants, the development of relations between town and countryside, the alliance of workers and peasants, and the reflection of all these things in men's minds and hearts — the overcoming of old selfish ideas, the growth of a new morality, the rise of a generation of new peasants. This is, indeed, a rich, varied life we lead, and on its base writers have created positive and negative characters of every class, typical figures of the old generation and the new. Both as regards content and artistic form, these works are on the whole of a higher standard than those of ten years ago. This is true not only of stories about village life but of works on other aspects of life and other literary forms. Sharp social clashes, typical characters and moving incidents of every kind can be found in Ai Wu's novel *Steeled and Tempered,* Tu Peng-cheng's short novel *In Time of Peace,* Tsao Yu's play *Bright Day,* Lao Sheh's play *A Happy Reunion,* Yang Mo's novel *Song of Youth* and other works. These facts indicate the ever-increasing maturity of realist writing in China.

The richness and variety of actual life, the aspiring revolutionary spirit of the age, the close links between literature and the masses and the improvement in craftsmanship have helped our literature to develop in a healthier direction, to become more varied in style, more truly Chinese

and more popular. In 1957 the publication of Chairman Mao Tse-tung's nineteen poems with their incomparable scope and heroic revolutionary spirit set an outstanding example not for poets alone but for all writers. The outpouring of folk songs during the last year and more has also opened broad vistas for modern poetry. Our poets are eagerly groping and experimenting with new styles and new forms, and are engaged in lively debates in the spirit of "letting a hundred schools contend." The fresh, vivid style and strong national flavour of Kuo Mo-jo's *Tsai Wen-chi* made its production an outstanding event in the theatre this year, while Tien Han's *Kuan Han-ching* has also a distinctive national style. The most striking feature of these two plays is the powerful way in which each author's individuality is expressed. There is development, too, in the craftsmanship of the novels. Authors today are paying serious attention to the national tradition in literature, national forms, technical skill and individuality in writing. The bourgeois critics' claim that socialist literature has no respect for the individual is utter nonsense. The fact is that only by observing the Party principles of socialist literature and maintaining close links with the labouring people can revolutionary writers develop their individuality; and this is the freest literature with the greatest variety of styles, whereas those modernists, formalists and revisionists who cut themselves off from actual life and create false forms or use bizarre mannerisms while they clamour for "Freedom for writers!" are heading towards a decline in individual styles and the destruction of individuality.

Owing to the development of realism and the public demand for a reflection of the revolutionary spirit of the age, the question has been raised of the synthesis in literature of revolutionary realism and revolutionary romanticism. In the days of the Big Leap the labouring people not only want literature to express their life profoundly and truthfully, but also to express ideals and aspirations which will spur them on. In this age of ours the development of ideals is linked up with reality, for ideals are grounded in reality and lead it forward. Hence a revolutionary realist must

also be a revolutionary idealist. This question has been raised in literature in order to explore and define better the interrelation of realism and romanticism in socialist realism. It is undeniable that socialist realism is the basic method of socialist writing. It carries forward all the best traditions of classical literature with creative innovations. Hence it is also undeniable that revolutionary romanticism is an integral part of socialist realism. China's classical literature has an old, rich tradition of positive romanticism, which often correlates and complements realism. Our main task now in raising the standard of our writing is to carry forward these traditions of Chinese classical literature, learning from the experience of socialist literature in other countries so that our socialist realist works may have more distinctive national characteristics and better fulfil Chairman Mao Tse-tung's directive: "Life as reflected in artistic and literary works can and ought to be on a higher level and of greater power and better focussed, more typical, nearer the ideal and therefore more universal than actual everyday life." And our task today is to raise our artistic level. The style, forms, themes and methods of expression of socialist realism are many and varied, developing in co-ordination with the writing of different nationalities, but they must be firmly based on the aesthetics of Marxism-Leninism. So while raising this question we must guard against and oppose empty romanticism divorced from reality and vulgar naturalism devoid of ideals. These tendencies are counter to the principles of socialist realism.

A HIGH TIDE OF MASS LITERATURE

In the literary development of this decade the spare-time writing of the labouring people occupies an important position. At the First National Conference of Writers and Artists, Premier Chou En-lai told us: "We must pay serious attention to the growth and achievements, however small, of the new art and literature in the field of popularization." After ten years we are able to say that there have been

rapid growth and great achievements, especially since last year with its unprecedented high tide of folk poetry and writing throughout the country. As Gorky said: "There has blazed up a great conflagration, fierce and exhilarating." And the intense heat of this conflagration was the incomparable enthusiasm of people throughout the country in creative labour. Inspired by this enthusiasm, enjoying an ever-richer cultural life, the broad masses were bound to feel the urge to use their own language and ideas to express their irrepressible feelings. Although they cannot master literary techniques overnight, their true feelings and sentiments born of labour, their strong, fresh style and language, their intelligence and talent undoubtedly possess great artistic vigour. The popularization of literature and the upsurge of mass writing have laid a broad foundation for raising the standard of all literature and art. This is part of the socialist cultural revolution. In this sense we must fully recognize its great achievements, its present and future position in the development of our literature.

The upsurge of folk songs all over China during the last year has been a great event in the history of modern Chinese literature. Judging by incomplete figures from the Institute for Research into Folk Literature, municipal and provincial publishers printed nearly eight hundred anthologies of folk poetry; and even if we make a strict selection of these, the richness of the output is something unknown before. It is clearly evident from these new songs that China's unbroken, centuries-old tradition of folk songs and ballads has after ten years of effort undergone unprecedented development on a new base; bold reforms have been introduced and innovations in form and style. The distinguishing feature of these folk poems — fresh imagery, clarity, fine musical rhythm, bright colours, concise lively language — have greatly enriched our new poetry and formed part of the foundation for developing modern poetry. In addition to folk songs, workers, peasants and soldiers have written innumerable poems, short stories, plays and ballads. Indeed, not a few of the best new poems and stories of the last two years come from workers and peasants.

Many factories, people's communes and army units are writing their own history. This is a new venture: collective authorship by workers, peasants and soldiers in collaboration with intellectuals. Although a bare beginning has been made, good results can already be seen in such works as *The History of Anyuan Mine*; *The Ten Thousand* Li *Yangtse*, an account of a construction site; *Green Trees Make a Shade*, the story of the new people's commune in Hsinfan County, Szechuan; and *History of Maitien People's Commune*. Our labouring people are writing not poetry alone but also their own history.

PROSPERITY OF CHINA'S MULTI-NATIONAL LITERATURE

China is a multi-national country and many of our national minorities have their own literary tradition, but oppressed by reactionary rule and Han chauvinism in the past, the minorities were deprived of their political, economic and cultural rights, and had no equality in literature either. Some past histories of literature written by Han authors make no mention of the works of the national minorities. Since the establishment of the People's Republic of China, the age-old system of national oppression has been done away with for good, and our different nationalities have entered upon a new age of equality, unity and co-operation in one united socialist family. So for the first time we see our multi-national literature developing and prospering. Some national minorities which had no written language now have scripts of their own in which they publish their own books and newspapers; while those minorities with a long literary tradition — Mongolian, Tibetan, Hui, Uighur, Kazakh, Uzbek, Korean and the minorities of the southwest — have scored tremendous successes in preserving their literary heritage and in producing new works.

The Mongolians have edited anthologies of folk poetry and classical literature including *Gadamirin*, a well-known epic poem. More noteworthy still, they have discovered a manuscript copy of the last six books of the ancient epic

The Tale of Geser. There are thirteen books in all, of which the first seven were printed in Peking in Mongolian in 1716. This epic is a great contribution of the Mongolian people to Chinese and to world literature. In the field of new writing there are Sayntsogt's collection of poems *Our Valiant Cries*, his long poem *A Night of Wild Mirth* and his story *The Spring Sun Rises from Peking*, Malchinhu's novel *On the Boundless Steppe*, Ulanbagan's *Beacon on the Steppes*, Tsogtnarin's play *The Golden Eagle*, Punsek's novel *The Golden Khingan Mountains*, and a long poem by the well-known folk poet Mo-ohin.

The Uighurs have published poems and poetic dramas left by the revolutionary Lutpulla-Mutallep, a play *Happy Occasion* and a collection of short stories *Steeling* by the contemporary writer Zunun Kadyrov, and *Waves of Hope* by the poet Alkat Ahtam. The Kazakhs have edited and published a collection of poems written in prison called *The Nomad's Song* by their revolutionary leader Kalman Akit, *The Han Girl* and many other stories and poems by the modern writer Buhara. The Uzbeks have also produced a number of new works.

Tibetan works translated into the Han language include the old folk legend *Tsemakyid, Red Flowers on the Grassland* and *Gold Bridge, Jade Belt* by the modern poet Ngagwang-lozang, Rabgyaepamzang's *Mother* and many lyrics. Recently fine epics have been edited, including the Hui *Song of the Hero Bayanhu* and the Tibetan *King Geser*. Poems, novels and plays have been written by Korean writers of Yenpien like Li Hong Kiu, Li Wuk, Li Kyn Tsun and In Ho.

A fact worth noting is that the minority peoples of the Southwest, who had a relatively backward culture, have achieved remarkable results during this decade in collecting and editing their traditional works. The Shani people's *Ashma*, and the Chuang people's *Hundred Birds Coat* are fine poems admired by all, which are now being further edited. Other good works which have been re-edited include the Pai people's *The Cloud Maiden* and the Tai poem *Chaushutun and Namarona*. Outstanding new works are the Tai

singer Kang Lang-shuai's *See Peking from the Woods* and the Yi novelist Li Chiao's *The Joyful Golden Sand River.*

These ten years have seen notable achievements and exceedingly rapid developments in Chinese literature. This is a great victory of Marxism-Leninism on the ideological front in China, a great victory of the working people in the cultural revolution and in cultural construction. On the common basis of Marxism-Leninism our writers have attained unprecedented unity and are striving to achieve yet more, to contribute their skill and energy to socialist construction. This does not mean, of course, that we are satisfied with what we have done. We must never rest on our laurels. Compared with the past our achievements are tremendous. But from the viewpoint of national construction and the people's needs, neither in quality nor quantity do our works meet the demand. Many stirring events have not yet been adequately reflected in literature, much of the original writing and criticism in magazines and organizations is still crude and over-simplified; our theoretical criticism is not yet soundly established; our body of writers is still too small. We must not gloss over these shortcomings but face up to them and welcome well-meant criticism. Marxists never conceal their faults, but strive by every means to overcome them. Our urgent task at present is to raise the level of our writing, further extend popularization, strengthen our writers' political and cultural understanding, improve our craftsmanship and strive to write more and better works, to achieve a still greater leap forward. This is our urgent task today.

II. What Experience Have We Gained?

WITHOUT IDEOLOGICAL STRUGGLE LITERATURE CANNOT ADVANCE

During these ten years Chinese literature has gone through a series of sharp ideological struggles. These are the reflection in the realm of ideas of the class struggle in the period of socialist revolution in China. So long as the class struggle exists, ideological conflicts like this cannot be avoided. Some people are thoroughly tired of these struggles, the very word "struggle" scares them, they want to live in peace and quiet, and imagine this is the only way to write well. This is an idle dream of timid intellectuals, for revolutionary literature is no hot-house flower but is steeled and grows in wind and frost, in the tempest of revolutionary struggle. All the great periods of literature in history have been times of sharp battles of ideas. This is true of the past and the present, of China and of the rest of the world. Regardless of differences in the time, in the content and form of the struggle, this is a law of history. Those who say the Communist philosophy is a philosophy of struggle are quite right. For it scientifically reflects the laws of historical development.

The series of struggles in the Chinese world of letters during the last ten years can be summarized as a struggle between the bourgeois line and the proletarian line in literature. This runs like a red thread through the history of our socialist literature. These struggles include some antagonistic contradictions between the people and their enemies and some contradictions within the ranks of our people; but all are reflections of the class struggle in literature.

The criticism of the film *Wu Hsun* in 1951 was the first big ideological struggle after the establishment of the Republic. In essence it was a struggle between bourgeois reformism, bourgeois servility and the proletarian revolutionary attitude. The film presented a worthless Ching dynasty beggar who wanted to start a "free school" and

propagate feudal culture to win status for himself. Yet the author Sun Yu expressed the most fervid admiration for this servile character, contrasting him with the failure of the peasant revolts of that time. This work blatantly distorted historical reality. So the editorial in the *People's Daily* of May 20 that year criticized it sharply, pointing out: "To agree with or tolerate this praise is to agree with or tolerate the reactionary propaganda which slanders the peasants' revolutionary struggle, slanders Chinese history and the Chinese nation. It is to take reactionary propaganda as right." A question of principle was clearly involved — whom should literature serve? Unless this question was solved, socialist literature would lose its way. After the criticism of this film, writers and artists throughout China embarked on a study to rectify their style of work which clarified their stand and the relationship between a writer's outlook on life and his work.

Towards the end of 1954 another struggle was waged against the idealist views expressed in Yu Ping-pai's researches on the *Dream of the Red Chamber*. Although this may appear merely a question of evaluating a classical novel, in essence it was a battle between idealism and materialism. We know that just after liberation the idealist outlook appeared not merely in the field of classical studies but in other social sciences and in letters, coming to exert a considerable influence; and these ideas were related to those of Hu Shih, spokesman of Western imperialism and the Chinese bourgeoisie. This was the source of the mistaken views in Yu Ying-pai's studies on the *Dream of the Red Chamber*. So following the criticism of Yu Ping-pai, a comprehensive exposure of Hu Shih's views on philosophy, history, social science and literature was undertaken in scientific and cultural circles. As a result, Hu Shih's views, influential for several decades, were debunked; scientists and writers were helped to distinguish between right and wrong, a clear dividing line was drawn between idealism and materialism, and the leading role of Marxism-Leninism in science and literature was established.

Some may query the necessity for such a thoroughgoing criticism of the faults of a scenario writer and a research worker. But the explanation is simple. The mistaken ideas in *Wu Hsun* and the studies on the *Dream of the Red Chamber* were not confined to one man or a few individuals, but represented the thinking of a considerable body of intellectuals in the years shortly after liberation. They were representative, fairly generally held, and involved certain basic principles — they were not simple academic questions. The proletariat cannot compromise on questions of principle involving the interests of the people. It was absolutely necessary to launch this large-scale campaign. But our policy towards those who make mistakes can be summarized in the formula: Unity — Criticism — Unity. Our method is criticism and self-criticism. Thus after being criticized, these two intellectuals corrected their mistakes, cheerfully co-operated with others and have since done work of benefit to the people.

Hu Feng's counter-revolutionary clique, which had long lain concealed, took advantage of the criticism of the mistakes in the studies on the *Dream of the Red Chamber* to launch another attack against the Party. They produced a 300,000-word reactionary programme for literature and mobilized all their forces to sabotage the basic principles of socialist cultural construction, opposing the dictatorship of the proletariat. They were finally exposed, however, as a counter-revolutionary clique which had long concealed itself within the revolutionary ranks. The bitter anger of the whole people was aroused. Unlike the two previous struggles, in essence this was mainly a political struggle between revolution and counter-revolution, while in the field of literary theory it was a struggle between the socialist and the anti-socialist line, between Marxism and reactionary subjective idealism. Hu Feng's views on literature were based on the reactionary ideas of Berkeley, Bergson and the modern revisionist Lukacs. He denied the role of a revolutionary world outlook in writing, distorted the theory of class struggle, ran down China's cultural traditions, opposed the leadership of the Party and the directive that literature

should serve the workers, peasants and soldiers. He preached the expansion of the ego and the individualist philosophy of solipsism long since debunked, using these as weapons for counter-revolutionary activities. The victory of this struggle not only crushed a counter-revolutionary plot but dealt a mortal blow at the most reactionary trends in literature.

More recent still was the nation-wide anti-rightist campaign in literary and art circles in 1957 and the criticisms of revisionism in literature. In the course of this we exposed the anti-Party, anti-socialist activities and plot to sow dissension in literary and art circles of Ting Ling, Chen Chi-hsia and their rightist clique as well as other rightists among artists and writers. This was also essentially a political struggle, but in the realm of literature it was a battle between collectivism and extreme individualism, between Marxism and revisionism. This struggle defeated one of the biggest attacks of the bourgeoisie and a broad road opened for the big leap in literature of 1958.

The anti-rightist campaign dealt with contradictions between ourselves and the enemy. Even so, the Party's attitude towards all rightists except "those who are prepared to carry their stubborn granite heads into their graves" was first to give them thoroughgoing criticism to help them to reform and really recognize their mistakes, then to encourage them to return to the people and serve the people again.

During all these campaigns against reactionary bourgeois tendencies, we have also combated over-simplified, crude dogmatism. The Party has consistently kept up a struggle on two fronts in literature; but during this decade the main attention has been paid to reactionary bourgeois thought, since that constituted the chief danger. In 1953 and 1954 we criticized Chen Chi-hsia's harsh literary criticism. In essence this harsh criticism, which used "leftist" attitudes to atttain rightist aims, was still a manifestation of bourgeois ideas.

What have we learned from these struggles? They teach us that the class struggle in men's minds will outlast that on the economic front and will prove more stubborn and

tortuous. Even after the proletariat have seized political power and the economic system has changed, a considerable length of time is still required to determine which side will triumph in the realm of ideas. It is imperative that we grasp the length of time needed to combat bourgeois ideas and the stubbornness and complexity of this struggle; we must not underestimate the danger, or think that from now on we can rest secure. That would mean making ourselves defenceless. Art and literature are always the most sensitive class organs, the barometer of the age: that is why the ideological struggle in the field of art and literature during the last ten years has been sharper than in other cultural fields. We have seen that the root of our intellectuals' bourgeois ideas is their individualism. Moreover, they have long been influenced by the individualism of bourgeois literature. The struggle between individualism and collectivism in literature is one of the major problems of modern writing. Nor can we say that it has been solved completely: a fairly long struggle still lies ahead of us. It is only by dint of such struggles that Marxist literature can prove its validity, its correctness, can establish itself. Just as Chairman Mao Tse-tung has pointed out: "What is correct always develops in the course of struggle with what is wrong. The true, the good and the beautiful always exist in comparison with the false, the evil and the ugly, and grow in struggle with the latter. As mankind in general rejects an untruth and accepts a truth, a new truth will begin struggling with new erroneous ideas. Such struggles will never end. This is the law of development of truth and it is certainly also the law of development of Marxism." *(On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People)* The struggle in the world of letters during these ten years have proved to us this law of literary development: without struggle, literature cannot advance. After destruction new things are set up, and building is very hard, but without first destroying we cannot build: the construction can come only through destruction. This objective law is one basic part of our experience.

Some "kind-hearted" gentlemen fear that these fierce ideological struggles may hamper such a delicate activity as literature. They say debates cannot produce works of literature. True, no literature can be produced at the debating conference, but can we produce literature by avoiding these struggles? We should tell these gentlemen: You are rather like Chekhov's "man in the shell" who really could produce nothing. The facts are not as you imagine. After the criticism of *Wu Hsun,* the Party urged writers to plunge deep into life, with the result that after 1953 a new crop of writing appeared. After the criticism of Yu Ping-pai and the smashing of Hu Feng's counter-revolutionary clique, the Party put forward the directive: "Let a hundred flowers blossom, a hundred schools contend." This was followed by intense activity by writers and artists. After the anti-rightist and rectification campaigns, we had a big leap in art and literature. And if we look further back, the brilliant essays of Lu Hsun and Chu Chiu-pai were produced at a time of acute ideological struggle. Does this, then, impede the delicate activity of writing or assist it? How is it that after these struggles our authors are keener to write than ever before? How is it that there are so many new works? These facts are worth pondering well.

THE BASIS FOR SOCIALIST REALISM

One fact that emerges from the best works written during the last ten years is that the great majority of the authors have lived and worked for a long period with the people, acquiring a rich experience of life, and that during each ideological struggle they have stood firm. The same thing is true of the promising new writers who have appeared in the last ten years: their experience of life often outstrips their cultural level. On the other hand, most of those who commit mistakes and are backward politically, morally and artistically, or who have some little talent but never produce much good work are divorced from life and from the people. This contrast is clear enough. These

facts are strong proof of the correctness of the Party's policy that writers should live among the masses.

We emphasize this point because the first prerequisite in literary creation is a deep understanding and intimate knowledge of people. For us this means understanding and knowing the labouring people. Since we only have few writers of working-class origin, our proletarian literature has to rely in the main on writers from other classes who will serve as spokesmen for the working class; and it is much harder for them to do this than it was for bourgeois writers in the past to deal with the life of their own class. In addition to identifying themselves with the masses in thought and feeling, they must understand the people's life, character, psychology and language. It takes a writer a long time to pass from one class to another. And this involves personal thought-reform, accumulation of new experience and improved powers of observation, analysis and expression. His gifts can find full play only if he draws continuously from the spring of life. Living among the masses is, to my mind, the expression of Chairman Mao Tse-tung's mass line in literature. This is the foundation for the literature of socialist realism.

Naturally this does not mean that any writer who lives among the masses will automatically produce good works. That is an over-simplification. Writing is a complex mental activity which must include the phases of practice, cognition and expression. We must learn to observe, experience, analyse and study life and our fellow men, to share our thoughts with the masses, to master technique. A writer's political understanding, experience of life and technical skill are inseparable, and the basis of all three is practice and cognition. A writer must not only know and understand the phenomena of life and the people around him, but must be able to evaluate them correctly, must have noble ideals in life, must feel a true sense of responsibility towards the mass struggle; and to this end he must never cease to raise his ideological and moral level. Some writers live among the masses for the sole purpose of collecting material, as if going into the woods to gather mushrooms; some, though

they spend a long time with the masses, achieve very little because they lack the sense of responsibility towards mass struggles or are deficient in their understanding of life or judgement.

An important question in our literature is the unity of politics and art. The main key to this problem, to my mind, lies in the mingling of writers with the masses. Politics is no abstract concept but the concentrated expression of the ideas, sentiments, opinions and needs of the people. The task of art is to give concentrated, generalized expression to these through concrete images: only so can our works have a high political and truthful quality and be genuinely truthful writing. Those who criticize schematic and stereotyped writing often put forward the strange argument that these are caused by an excess of politics. This shows that these men do not understand what politics is. On the contrary they are caused by too little politics, too little understanding of how the people think and live or what they need. The main reason for stereotyped works and writing according to formulae is the author's lack of political understanding and knowledge of life, which forces him to add form to some abstract idea, taking politics as some abstract thing to be imposed upon his characters from without. In the early days of our Republic this tendency was relatively common, for writers had not yet had time to familiarize themselves with the new life and new people.

Of course life is the fountain-head, but to present it adequately we need the ability to sum up, the ability to express. It is very important to improve our technique, but this is done primarily on the basis of deep observation and knowledge of life, familiarity with the people's language and character. Without these, the greatest skill is useless. In the relationship between ideology and art, ideology always has the leading role.

Our literature should have one consistent political trend but vary in style, form, themes and modes of expression. Unity in the political trend reflects the unity in the revolutionary aims and will of the great majority of the people, while variety in style, form and themes reflects the variety

in our people's life and the free development of different tastes. This is a dialectical relationship of unity and variety. Only writers who keep close to the people can freely grasp this and achieve the highest degree of unity in their art.

There are many ways for a writer to penetrate deep into life, and he should make his own choice according to his individual needs. Each writer has his own plan of writing, his own experience of life, his own methods. A writer's wishes should be respected, and no cut-and-dried rules laid down. There can be no mechanical equalitarianism or standardization in writing. Some writers have asked whether they should confine themselves to one district or not — this should be left to them. But apparently writers need a permanent base, judging by the experience of many. Our literature must not merely reflect life but make a correct evaluation of it and adumbrate the future. Writers need high ideals and vision; but the extent of their understanding is determined in the first place by the extent to which they come to grips with life. The deeper a tree strikes roots, the wider the area from which it draws nourishment and the more luxuriant its growth.

The close ties between writers and the masses illustrate the relationship between writing and the source of creation — life. This is the historical materialist view, a law of literature, and one of the main lessons we have learned over the last ten years.

THE PATH FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIALIST LITERATURE

In *Party Organization and Party Literature,* Lenin pointed out that in literature we must definitely guarantee wide scope for individual creativeness and individual likes, wide scope for ideas and fancies, form and subject matter; but at the same time since literature is a part of Party work it must submit to Party leadership. From the bourgeois point of view this appears paradoxical, but from ours it is the unity of opposites. It is the dialectical relation of unity

and variety mentioned before. And this applies in all cases. Chairman Mao Tse-tung has called on a hundred flowers to bloom, a hundred schools to contend, and given us six criteria for distinguishing between flowers and weeds, explaining this relationship. Without criteria there might be anarchy and confusion between right and wrong; without the policy of a hundred flowers and a hundred schools we might fall into the error of dogmatism which hampers the free development of literature and art. These opposites must, therefore, be combined and unified. Precisely because of this, we have defined the fundamental difference between our policy of a hundred flowers and the spurious freedom of the bourgeoisie, which is in fact a monopoly. Our hundred flowers must bloom on a socialist soil. The style of socialist literature is varied and free, which means that we must guarantee free competition between writers, free development of individual style; but all these must serve the basic interests of socialism. This prerequisite is natural enough.

The policy of a hundred flowers and a hundred schools may be described as a law of development in the history of literature and art as a whole, and in China today it suits the requirements of socialist construction. Our literature must reach higher standards with greater speed, its basic path is the implementation of the directives to "let a hundred flowers blossom, a hundred schools contend" and "weed through the old to let the new emerge." We must have free competition in present-day writing as well as in the reforms and innovations introduced in traditional art. New works of art and literature must carry forward our national traditions and absorb the best experience from the world, improving and developing these and absorbing them and making them our own. This is an unalterable truth, and on the basis of Marxism-Leninism we can call all our creativeness into full play. Marxism-Leninism has discovered the laws of development in art and thus given the greatest freedom to artists. A good deal is talked about individuality and originality in art, but what is the best way to afford it a healthy development? I think it can only develop when

writers have the widest, most thorough understanding of objective reality, thanks to the scientific outlook of Marxism-Leninism, when they can break the chains of old outmoded theories, emancipate their minds and by drawing upon their wide experience of life, of tradition, of the best of world literature, gain true freedom of choice and call their creativeness into full play. Hence freedom for the individual is developed in a collective, originality springs from the mass base, from past tradition. This affords literature the greatest scope in form and content. The policy of a hundred flowers and a hundred schools, of weeding through the old to let the new emerge, is the path which will lead our literature and art to their goal. This year we have witnessed heated debates on literary theory, on poetic form, on the question of realism and romanticism, on the history of literature and the evaluation of certain classics. In these debates old authorities and young intellectuals met on an equal footing to state their views frankly and argue their case. This atmosphere is a healthy one. The Chinese people have never in their history shown such creative ability. It is amazing to see the number of poems written by the labouring people, the number of their scientific and technical inventions and improvements. And further implementation of the Party's policy will bring about more rapid development still. This is a new and most valuable part of the experience of the last ten years, which provides a key to future development in our writing.

III. We Advance Towards New Heights

These have been ten great years in China, and a greater future lies ahead. Communists never cease to forge ahead. Our socialist literature is still young, but it will rapidly gain strength and maturity. Our present level is not very high, but we are determined to press on to the heights of world literature. This is not easy, the most arduous effort

is required. In the past as a rule literature acquired great height only after a considerable period of preparation. Nowadays we no longer need so much time as before because we have a new economic basis, a new social system, and invincible Marxism-Leninism, the Chinese Communist Party and our great leader Chairman Mao Tse-tung to guide us. We are fully confident that we shall continue to advance, but we must not think this an easy matter or grow complacent and boastful. We must gird up our loins to press forward, learning from past experience, overcoming our past mistakes, continuing to struggle against all reactionary bourgeois ideas, to link ourselves closely with the labouring people, to carry out the Party's policy: "Let a hundred flowers blossom, a hundred schools contend. Weed through the old to let the new emerge." We must go ahead with popularization, work harder and study harder to raise the quality of our writing. The future of our socialist literature is illimitably bright.

Morning Mist by the River Li Ko-jan →

Li Ko-jan, born in 1907 in Kiangsu Province, is now professor of traditional painting in the Central Academy of Art. A well-known landscape painter, he has mastered the traditional techniques without being restricted by them. His compositions are simple and daring. This painting, done in 1956 when he was travelling down the Yangtse, shows Wanhsien in Szechuan at dawn before the morning mist has scattered.

Programmes from Abroad

JACK CHEN

The Bolshoi Ballet in China

The visit of the Bolshoi Theatre on the occasion of New China's tenth anniversary is an important event in the cultural life of the Chinese people. From the point of view of dancing it could not have come at a more opportune moment.

The Bolshoi Ballet has come at a time when a very large public in China is interested in ballet and keenly discussing its problems. The Bolshoi performances have set high standards which from now on will be the criteria against which all classical ballet dancing will be judged. Chinese ballet circles are already eagerly discussing the lessons to be learned from its brilliant example as a dance collective, in its approach to the cultural heritage and in advancing to the ballet treatment of contemporary themes.

The Bolshoi Ballet is no ordinary troupe. It brings together dancers and musicians, who have attained the highest standards in their art and welded them into a collective with a high level of socialist consciousness. The collective personality of the troupe is an essential part of the art of each of its members.

It offered Peking, the first city on its tour in China, a carefully thought-out programme. This opened with *Highlights,* introducing all the leading dancers in varied separate numbers, some specially composed as individual items, and *divertissements* from larger ballet works. These, together with

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Jack Chen is a well-known artist.

Ulanova in *Giselle*
by Li Ke-yu

the older ballets, *Swan Lake, Giselle,* and the newest ballets, *The Stone Flower* and *Path of Thunder,* clearly demonstrated the premier position of the troupe not only in the purely classical field but as a leading pioneer of modern expression in the classical ballet form.

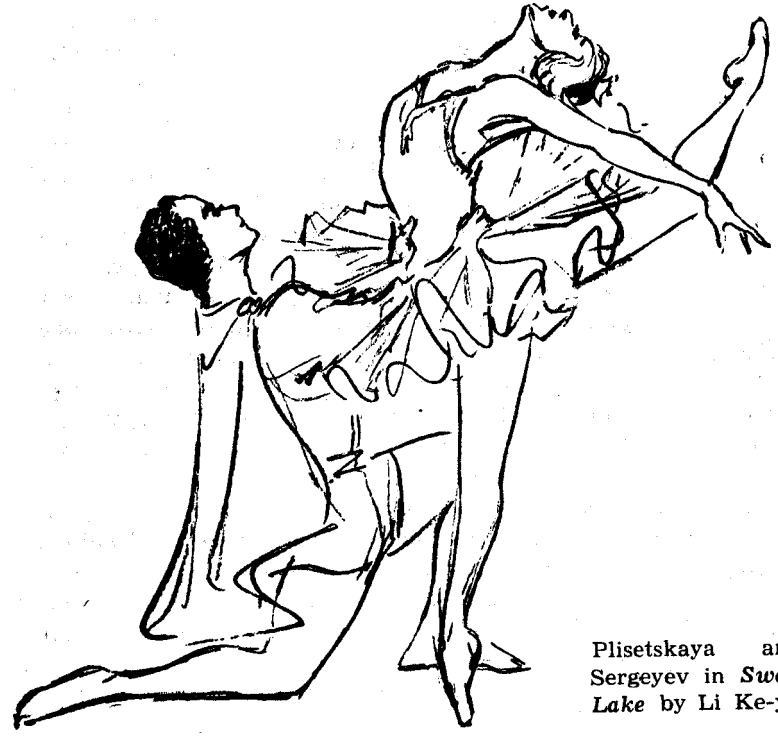
The Bolshoi Ballet is a great repository of ballet lore. Peking was thereby able to get the rare privilege of seeing *Les Sylphides,* in the original Fokine version.

Fokine's *Les Sylphides* remains a masterpiece of its time that fully interprets the lyrical romanticism of the Chopin music. The dancers, led by Ulanova and Samokhvalova, maintain the romantic atmosphere with complete discipline and faultless technique.

So Peking comes to know Ulanova. The great dancer is one whose body has become wholly an instrument of emotional expression. Galina Ulanova is such a dancer. She is utterly one of the troupe of dancers, yet she is distinguished by the fact that her every movement is an expression of dramatic emotion; feeling encompasses her whole being, her whole body expresses it, it suffuses her face. She commands such a level of classical ballet technique that no movement is forced; her unerring musical sensitivity enables her to translate every nuance of the Chopin music into expressive movement. Her

highly trained sense of body line has become an innate quality; she seems to fall unconsciously "into position."

Later she dances the *Dying Swan.* Peking was fortunate also to see Ulanova in *Giselle.* She writes of this role that she seeks in it to portray "love, hopeful and radiant in the first act, and tragic in the second, but in both acts so vital and powerful that it is able to conquer Myrta's evil will and even death itself. Therein lies the significance of *Giselle*: it is not merely a repetition of the old story of a simple maid's seduction by a wealthy noble." She continues: "In rehearsing *Giselle,* I tried to conjure up the image of a 'simple maid.' I sought instinctively as I had done in Maria (of the *Bakhchisarai Fountain)* and in all my roles since, for that something, that 'magic word,' if you like, to turn me into Giselle, to make me live her tragedy, and believe in it so utterly as to make the public believe in it too." Ably supported by the great collective of her fellow dancers and the whole *corps de*



Plisetskaya and Sergeyev in *Swan Lake* by Li Ke-yu

ballet that provides a flawless environment for her portrayal, one knows that she indeed found that "magic word" she sought.

The Bolshoi has lovingly restaged *Giselle*; it has cut out the trivial redundancies of the old version by Petipa, preserved the best of its traditional classical-romantic lines and stressed its inherent element of criticism of aristocratic social *mores.* The old, stiffly conventional and mannered pantomiming has been reformed in line with the realistic approach to acting Ulanova describes above. This same lovingly critical attitude to this classical heritage is shown again in the revised production of Tchaikovsky's *Swan Lake,* with Plisetskaya as Odette-Odile.

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The *Highlights* programme also gave an opportunity to get acquainted with many of the rising young ballerinas and dancers: Chestova and Nikonov, who danced a lively, acrobatic *adagio* from Tchaikovsky's *Nutcracker Suite,* Fadeyechev, Simachev and others, all of whom appeared in more extended roles in the later ballets.

Third in the *Highlights* programme was the *Walpurgis-Nacht* composed by Leonid Lavrovsky who is so well known now for his splendid staging of Prokofiev's *Romeo and Juliet.* Here he uses Gounod's *Faust* music for a wild dance of satyrs and sylphs, and a Bacchante (Plisetskaya). This is admirably suited to the more spectacular side of Maya Plisetskaya's talents and temperament. It is a dance of passionate physical abandon, of the sheer intoxication of movement, using the more acrobatic movements of the ballet. Plisetskaya is capable of every demand made on her. She leaps magnificently with lithe grace; her turns are astonishingly swift. Begak and his companions provide the graceful, manly support and strength, typical of the Bolshoi's male dancers, that is a perfect complement to the soft, flying movements of the girls. This is another strong point of the Bolshoi: its equal richness in male as well as female dancers.

Each *Highlights* item exhibits that propriety and perfect taste in costuming and production that is a Bolshoi hallmark, whether it is a boisterous Ukrainian *Gopak,* a *Sabre Dance* to Khatchaturian's music, a splendidly costumed *Krakoviac,* or a comedy puppet dance to music by Lyadov. Two other *Highlights* command special attention: Olga Lepeshinskaya supported by Sergeyev in the *pas de deux* from *Don Quixote* and Koren, who dances Mercutio so notably in *Romeo and Juliet* and here dances his own composition: a Spanish character solo.

Lepeshinskaya dances with the clean-cut technical brilliance that the Minkus music demands. It has little significance other than the sheer brilliance of technique in giddy *fouettes, pirouettes,* leaps and lifts and set positions, but Lepeshinskaya does them with expert competence and great authority. Later she more fully displayed her own warm and attractive personality in contemporary dance and in the role of Sarie in *Path of Thunder.*

The final *Highlights* introduced some of the modern dances that are now engaging the attention of several choreographers in the Soviet Union. In the Bolshoi Ballet the classical ballet technique is used throughout as the basis of the dancing. Other types of movement — the Russian, Gypsy or Spanish folk dance, the Polish *Krakoviac,* the movements of sport and so on, are adapted in varying degrees to this basic movement. As the ballet expands its range of theme and subject matter, the choreographers are reaching out for further means of expressive movement which are adapted to the classical form and which in turn transforms the classical form into something new.

The *Highlights* programme included three such new dances. Lepeshinskaya, very much herself in this item, and Begak, dressed in sports clothes, do a charming dance of youthful Soviet friendship to valse music by Moshkovsky. Chestova and a supporting group of four male dancers in blue, slightly nautical-looking practise clothes, dance to Shostakovich's very modern rhythms. This too is a dance of modern Soviet youth on holiday. In both cases the classical ballet is smoothly integrated with acrobatic and athletic movement. The final number is also a dance based on people of action, but this time with a deeply dramatic content. It is a memorial to the heroes of Stalingrad, to music by Potapov. It shows a group of five Soviet army men bearing aloft their red banner in a dance of battle, of setbacks, of sacrifice and final advance to victory. Here the rhythmic pantomime of struggle is effectively combined with the more vigorous type of ballet movement. These three items are composed by Vainonin, Varlamov and Varkovitsky respectively, members of the contemporary

group of Bolshoi Theatre choreographers who are building on the work of earlier pioneers such as Tikhomirov, Laschilin, Lavrovsky, in such ballets as the *Red Poppy* (an episode of the Chinese revolution), the *Flame of Paris* (on a French revolutionary theme), and other smaller works, such as the modern dances of the Moiseyev troupe.

In the two new ballets presented in Peking, *The Stone Flower* and *Path of Thunder,* these new trends are developed on a wider and deeper scale.

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The Bolshoi Ballet is a living organism, in a process of constant growth and renewal. Travelling abroad in large numbers than ever before, it has brought its own orchestra to Peking, under its veteran conductor, Yuri Faier, the first time it has accompanied the troupe on a foreign tour. The closest "family" relations exist within the troupe. It has a fine *esprit de corps* and devotion to the work and art of the ballet. It pays meticulous attention to its performances whether these are in the finest theatre in Peking or for a simple workers' club in its outskirts. Knowledge of all this is essential to an understanding of its art. It is an expression of its socialist outlook in art and life. Thus it is that one night the whole ensemble peoples the stage in a folk legend with the homely moral of the people that good will triumph over evil. The next night they dance with compelling sincerity and warmth every role in such a political ballet as *Path of Thunder* about the rising national liberation movement of the Negroes of South Africa.

Great interest attached to the Bolshoi's new version of *The Stone Flower,* improved for the third time since 1954 by Grigorovich, who is now ballet master at the Leningrad Ballet. Prokofiev took the libretto of this, his last work, from the folk tale retold by Bazhov, the Soviet writer in his collection of Ural stories, *The Malachite Casket.* Danilo, a skilled stone carver, is the centre of a struggle between the Mistress of the Copper Mountain who wants him to carve her precious stones; an evil merchant whom she destroys; and Katerina, whose pure love triumphs over the fairy, and brings Danilo back to work in the world of men.

Rindin provides striking sets based on the forms of the precious crystals of the Urals and their tangled forests. Prokofiev draws heavily on folk themes for a score that fully develops the dramatic content and atmosphere of the ballet. Grigorovich

takes full advantage of the scope which Prokofiev's score gives to the choreographer's invention. He combines Russian folk dance forms with the classical ballet. There are two especially spectacular scenes: One is the old Russian market where Katerina is searching for Danilo. Here Grigorovich introduces a lively stageful of peasants, merchants, hucksters, gypsies and *kulak* toughs who menace Katerina, a grand opportunity for some full-blooded Russian dances and comedy and drama. The other is the dance showing the underground treasures of the Copper Mountain. Here music and movements are as sharp as crystals and as irridescent in their swift changes of pattern.

Outstanding in their roles are Vasilyev who makes a handsome Danilo, Levashev who gives a rip-roaring characterization of the evil merchant coveting Danilo's handiwork and his bride. The role of Katerina is danced with great beauty and lyricism by eighteen-year-old Maximova. Quite exceptional is the performance of Maya Plisetskaya as the Mistress of the Copper Mountain. I can think of no other dancer who could equal this performance. She fits in perfectly with the characterization planned by the composer and choreographer but she brings to it a freedom of interpretation made possible only by her prodigious technique. Her appearance on the stage, in close fitting tights of spangled lizard green and black, is electric. She presents a complex being: a brooding, cold spirit with the imperiousness of one who wields supernatural powers, yet, when her charms fail to hold Danilo in the face of the pure appeal of Katerina, she is frantic, not so much with sorrow, but with womanly frustration.

This is a finely staged production in every way. It brings home again with great force that a perfect ballet, using the classical ballet as its foundation, must be a perfect synthesis of the arts; a combination of inspiring, evocative, dramatic music; effective, appropriate sets and costumes, using the ballet form of movement either alone or with a thoroughly absorbed tradition of movement (in this case mainly Russian folk dance) performed by dancers who are technically at home with their form and artistically attuned to the content of the ballet; the whole metamorphosed into a unity tightly welded to the dramatic action by an inventive ballet master and producer.

Path of Thunder — a very different piece, a relentlessly direct exposure of racial oppression in South Africa, is being shown

by Jack Chen

abroad for the first time. Its main idea and action is taken from the novel of the same name by Peter Abrahams, a Negro South African writer. Lanny, its hero, returns home from college to open a school for his people. Sarie the daughter of a white planter tends him after he has been beaten up by a couple of white planters. They fall in love. When they are discovered together, a fight ensues. Lanny's life is saved by his sister who kills the planter, but a white mob intervenes and Lanny and Sarie are lynched together. Mourning for them, and for the unity and brotherhood their love symbolizes, turns into a rising of the Negroes against their oppressors.

Sergeyev, the choreographer, is aided by a fine score by the talented young Azerbaijan composer, Kara Karayev, but it is clear that he has a much more difficult task than that of Grigorovich. The classical ballet here has to be integrated with a dance tradition — the South African, that is much less familiar to his dancers than the Russian folk dance. Inevitably then there were roughnesses that still have to be dealt with.

But the ballet has big achievements. Interest is sustained throughout its length, not alone because of its absorbing theme and content but by its many inventive passages, and the wealth of lively detail which brings the characterizations alive. Lepeshinskaya brings great appeal to the role of Sarie torn between her prejudices and her love. Sergeyev himself dances the part of Lanny with dignity and feeling. Madge Scott, the young Russian-Negro dancer of the troupe, gives a perfect preformance as Lanny's quick-witted, resolute sister. Tarasova is Lanny's mother, the tragic, heroic figure of the mothers of Africa who weep for so many of their brave sons.

In an article in the *People's Daily* Ouyang Yu-chien, the President of the Central Drama Academy, has noted that Chinese audiences like *Path of Thunder* because of its outspoken denunciation of fascist racialism in South Africa. They particularly appreciated the moving sincerity and infecting sympathy with which the Bolshoi dancers added their appeal to the mounting call for justice in the world. That sincerity was an essential ingredient to the ballet's success.

This outspoken, clearly expressed, realistic ballet showed vividly how far the Russian ballet under the impetus of the October Revolution has travelled from its pre-revolutionary predecessor. It rounded out the picture that Peking will carry for long in its memory of this outstanding company. Among the audience who attended the performances there were Chairman Liu Shao-chi of the People's Republic of China, Vice-Chairmen Soong Ching-ling and Tung Pi-wu, Premier Chou En-lai, Lin Piao, Vice-Chairman of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party, Teng Hsiao-ping, Secretary General of the Central Committee, Peng Chen and Chen Yi, members of the Political Bureau of the Party Central Committee, Wu Yu-chang, Vice-Chairman of the Sino-Soviet Friendship Association. People would remember for a long time this fraternally united troupe, dedicated to progressive socialist beliefs in life and in art, tirelessly seeking artistic perfection and passionately eager in their desire to give their best in art to their people and to all the peoples of the world.

The visit of the Bolshoi Ballet led by K. S. Danilo, the Vice-Minister of Culture of the Soviet Union, is an outstanding event in the cultural relations between China and the Soviet Union, that have already been so fruitful.

The Dresden Philharmonic Orchestra

CHAO FENG

Beethoven Interpreted by the Dresden Philharmonic Orchestra

The Dresden Philharmonic Orchestra of the German Democratic Republic came to Peking on October 5 and gave its first performance in China on the eighth. Its interpretation of classical German music, especially that of Beethoven, won the highest praise from Chinese audiences.

These musicians from Dresden brought us not only Beethoven's music but his thoughts and feelings as well. This was particularly evident in the *Fifth Piano Concerto* and the *Ninth Symphony*. Beethoven believed that music should strike sparks from the heart of men. His attitude to life was that the stings of a few gadflies could not hold back a galloping horse. In

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the German society of his day, among many mediocrities, Beethoven determined to live as a free man. In his youth he wrote a chorus with these words:

> Who calls himself a free man?
> Only he who makes rules for himself of his own free will
> And will not listen to the raving of tyrants
> Can call himself a free man.

A disunited Germany was impeded in its economic and cultural development. The only way for people to shake off the fetters of poverty and ignorance was through national unity and democratic revolution. All Beethoven's musical works were rooted in these convictions.

The first performance of Beethoven's *Fifth Piano Concerto* took place during a most unsettled period in European history. The performance was thoroughly successful, this concerto was acclaimed as the king of all concertos and given the name "The Emperor Concerto." Whether this was an appropriate title or not does not matter — it helps us to understand the nobility and power of this work.

This superb work was performed by the Dresden Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by Professor Heinz Bongartz, and with Liu Shih-kun, a young Chinese pianist, as soloist, who was awarded prizes at the Liszt International Contest and the Tschaikovsky International Contest.

First the entire orchestra played a tremendously powerful chord, followed by several similar chords; then the piano burst forcibly in with a series of bold introductory statements, and the orchestra developed the theme of the movement. The playing was so clearly defined and meticulous, the phrasing so neat, the technique so superb, that the whole movement had a quality of limpidity. Then followed the unusually splendid *cadenza* for the piano which the pianist interpreted with superb confidence and irresistible force. Here Liu Shih-kun showed remarkable virtuosity. The triumphant and glorious ending seemed something from a higher sphere, and the orchestra performed the *coda* magnificently. The slow movement was lyrical and thoughtful. The orchestra played the melodies enchantingly, while the piano enlarged splendidly upon these profound yet romantic and personal themes. The slow movement was followed immediately by a third in which all was brightness. The *rondo* was executed in a most lively manner, and the hunter's horn gave scope to the superb technique of the player. In the series of chords on the piano, Liu Shih-kun's exuberant strength and perfect insight once more proved his outstanding talent.

Another important part of the programme of the Dresden Philharmonic Orchestra, also played in co-operation with Chinese musicians, was Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony*. The chorus was drawn from the Chinese Central Philharmonic Orchestra Chorus, the Central Radio Chorus and the Central Conservatory of Music.

Here Beethoven the giant of music was no longer concerned with the ego and the individual superman. It was true that the stings of a few gadflies could not hold back a galloping horse. After many wanderings the aging Beethoven did not use as his themes the splendours of nature, outstanding heroes or restless passion, but again expressed in symphonic music the idea which had been central in his life: through pain towards joy. Man should not bow to fate, but must grapple with fate. Only when all mankind is united in one family, in one brotherhood, can we attain complete happiness.

The Dresden Philharmonic Orchestra interpreted this great masterpiece gloriously, their performance being fully worthy of the lofty theme of this work.

The first movement shows a fierce struggle, voices of wrath. Sometimes one hears a funeral march, at others despairing dirges; but in a flash strength of will conquers again, revealing hope and brightness for the future. Here is passionate struggle and restlessness before the fight.

In the second movement the music is as swift and stirring as a whirlwind. Here is anxious, restless suspense, then the contrast of the trio. There is a simple folk dance too, though the *scherzo* as a whole is stern and awe-inspiring. The orchestra interpreted the feeling of the whole movement so correctly that the audience was held spell-bound.

The third movement is pensive, but into its pensive mood of philosophical reflection sometimes creeps a note of tenderness, a lullaby.

Finally all are gone — the anxious waiting, the reminiscing, the restlessness, the pensiveness. "Enough of this, friends, let us sing joyfully!" Words cannot convey the strong emotional impact of the fourth movement. I can only say that the musicians of Germany and China found in this great masterpiece a common language to express their noble conviction that millions of men shall unite on the earth as one.

Tenth Anniversary Celebrations

On the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China, our artists and writers took an active part in the joyful celebrations of the entire nation. The following is a brief account of some of the activities during October in honour of this great occasion.

A scene in the Cantonese opera *Kuan Han-ching*

A Galaxy of Operas

Towards the end of September local opera companies from all parts of China began to perform their best programmes in Peking. Mei Lan-fang, the veteran of Peking opera, ably supported by the well-known actors Li Shao-chun and Yuan Shih-hai, played the title role in *Mu Kuei-ying Takes Command* and was adjudged by dramatic critics to have reached a new pinnacle in his art on the base of fifty years of stage experience. The noted Cantonese artists Ma Shih-tseng and Hung Hsien Nu played in *Kuan Han-ching,* an opera based on the life of the great Yuan dynasty dramatist, and in the traditional comedy *The Runaway Maid.* Yu Chen-fei and Yen Hui-chu, celebrated *kun-chu* actors from Shanghai, appeared in *Love Without Honour,* based on the Yuan dynasty comedy by Pai Pu. Since this lively opera about two young lovers in feudal society had not been staged for some three hundred years it received a warm welcome. The popular Szechuan Opera Troupe produced the traditional *Tale of the White Snake* and the hilarious comedy *Brides Galore.* Chen Po-hua, brilliant exponent of Hupeh opera from Wuhan, played in the tragedy *The Plum Tree Blossoms Again,* and in a drama dealing with the patriotic heroine Mu Kuei-ying. The gifted Honan opera exponent Chang Hsiang-yu played in *Hua Mu-lan.* The Shanghai Shaohsing Opera with Hsu Yu-lan and Wang Wen-chuan staged the *Dream of the Red Chamber* adapted from the famous classic, as well as *In Search of the Fish,* an opera adapted from a popular legend. The Hunan Opera Troupe presented *Drawing Lots for Life or Death.* The Shensi Opera Troupe produced the traditional *Visiting the West Lake* and *Three Drops of Blood.* The young actors in the Small Hundred Flowers Troupe of Hopei clapper opera contributed their best items, *The Broken Bridge* and *Meeting at the Inn. Pinchu* actors played *By the Golden Sand River,* an opera about the revolutionary war. *Chuchu* actors staged *Wild Fires and Spring Wind* based on the novel by Li Ying-ju.

A dancing scene in Szechuan opera

New Films

From September 25 to October 24, more than thirty new films had their premières. These included feature films, documentaries and art films, all in technicolour, which were given a warm reception. *Lin Tse-hsu* describes the special commissioner of Canton who over a century ago led the people to resist the British imperialists who were selling opium there. *The Long March* presents some of the heroic feats of the famous 25,000 *li* Long March so significant in the history of the Chinese revolution. *The Storm* describes the strike of the railway workers on the Peking-Hankow line on February 7, 1923, another well-known episode in recent Chinese history. *The Lin Family Shop* reflects the changes in the social economy under Kuomintang rule in the early thirties and the bankruptcy of the petty bourgeoisie and small businessmen. *Song of Youth* presents young intellectuals who joined the revolution in the same period. *Fighting Detachment of the Huis* relates the resistance of some Hui guerrillas to the Japanese invaders. *New Story of an Old Soldier* shows us a demobilized soldier after liberation leading the peasants to reclaim virgin soil. *Our Village Lads and Lasses* deals with young peasants during the Big Leap. *Joy in the Oases* presents the advance of the Uighur people of Sinkiang towards socialism. *Sisters on the Ice* is an entertaining film about enthusiasts for winter sports. *The Magic Lotus Lantern* is a beautiful film version of a ballet based on a popular legend.

The documentary and art films included a full-length documentary *Conquering the Great Northern Wastes* about demobilized soldiers who brought wasteland under cultivation. *Green Plains* describes the establishment of new farms by the River Ili in Sinkiang. Another full-length documentary, *The Tenth Spring,* indicates some of the achievements of the last ten years in China. Also noteworthy were *A Family of Clay Modellers, Curbing the Yellow River, The Path in the Forest,* and *The Peking Man. Adventures of a Small Carp* and *The Turnip's Return* are animated cartoons. *The Fisherboy* is a scissor-cut film. *The Carved Dragon* is a puppet film. All these films reached a fairly high standard both in content and in technique, showing that swift progress has been made during the past year in China's film industry.

New Plays

Twenty-five plays were staged in Peking. The China Youth Art Theatre produced *Taming the Dragons and Tigers* which describes how during the Big Leap the peasants in a mountainous area bridge some rapids to transport iron ore from new mines during the popular movement to produce steel and iron. Lao Sheh's new play *A Happy Reunion* shows a family torn apart in the old days but reunited after liberation. *Locust Tree Village* deals with the tremendous changes in the countryside during the last ten years. *Hearts Aflame* shows demobilized soldiers taking part in industrial construction. *Prelude to the Eastward March* and *On the Thirty-eighth Parallel* depict episodes in revolutionary history. Two plays dealing with the famous railway workers' strike on February 7, 1923, are *February the Seventh* and *The Red Storm. A Revolutionary Family* portrays the development of a family of revolutionaries. Kuo Mo-jo's historical play *Tsai Wen-chi* has as its theme the tragedy of a woman who lived towards the end of the Han dynasty. Old favourites staged again included Tsao Yu's *Thunderstorm* and the popular children's play *The Magic Aster.* Peking actors also staged the Soviet playwright Pogodin's *The Man with the Gun,* Ostrovsky's *The Tempest,* Shakespeare's *The Twelfth Night,* Ibsen's *The Doll's House* and Molière's *Tartuffe.*

A scene in Shakespeare's *The Twelfth Night*

Grand Variety Show

On October 3, two thousand five hundred musicians, dancers, actors and other artists gave a huge gala performance of music, dancing and opera in the auditorium of the Great Hall of the People. A choir comprising more than 540 singers sang *The East Is Red, The People's Communes, Song of the Motherland* and *In Defence of Peace,* all of them among China's most popular songs. An orchestra over three hundred strong played Li Huan-chih's *Spring Festival Prelude* and Beethoven's *Egmont Overture*. Two hundred eighty dancers performed scenes from *The Magic Lotus Lantern,* a distinctively Chinese dance-drama based on a folk legend, which embodies elements of Chinese folk and classical dancing as well as some expressive movements of Western ballet. Another item in this entertainment was extracts from the Peking opera *Uproar in the Dragon King's Palace* performed by over 380 actors including Li Shao-chun, Chang Mei-shuan and Chang Yun-hsi. This opera describes a fight under the sea between the monkey king of Chinese folk legend and the dragon king, at the end of which Monkey succeeds in carrying away the treasures of the sea. The brilliantly executed acrobatics in some of the mass scenes elicited enthusiastic applause. Another much applauded item was a great dance of national unity performed by more than three hundred dancers of over twenty nationalities against a background representing Tien An Men.

Scenes in *The Magic Lotus Lantern* by Li Ke-yu

Dances beloved by the various nationalities, each with its distinctive style, blended harmoniously to form one great whole symbolizing the friendship and unity between China's many nationalities. But the most popular item of the evening was the Generals' Chorus conducted by General Li Chih-min. Two hundred thirty high - ranking officers from the army, navy and air force took their stand before a row of red flags to sing several songs, powerful and clear. The young sopranos Kuo Su-chen and Kuo Lan-ying and the Peking opera artist Lou Chen-kuei contributed solo songs to this huge celebration.

New Concerts

Among the series of concerts given in October was the young Chinese composer Lo Chung-yung's new composition *First Symphony* in four movements inspired by the following poem by Chairman Mao Tse-tung:

> 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.

Other new items included Sitson Ma's *Voices of the Forest* in five movements, and *The Red Army Grand Chorus* by Chu Hsi-hsien and Chin Fan. Music lovers in the capital were also able to hear Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony*, Tchaikovsky's *Piano Concerto*, Shostakovich's *Eleventh Symphong* and Lalo's *Symphonic Espagnole*. Among the singers were the well-known sopranos Yu Yi-hsuan and Liang Mei-chen, Kuo Lan-ying who excels in folk songs, and the baritone Wei Chi-hsien.

New Writing

The many new works published by the People's Literature Publishing House, the Writers' Publishing House and the Chinese Youth Publishing House cover a wide range of themes and different genres. The novels include: Liu Ching's *The Beginning* about the socialist revolution in the Chinese countryside and the tremendous changes from mutual-aid teams to the first co-operatives, thence to the high tide of the co-operative movement. *In Time of Peace* by Tu Peng-cheng describes the heroism of the workers who built the Paochi-Chengtu Railway. *Riding on the Wind* by Tsao Ming portrays the ideological struggle of advanced workers in a large iron and steel combine. *The Sun Rises in the East* by Chen Hsiu-chang has as its subject the peasant movement in Kiangsi towards the end of the twenties. *Golden Hills* by Wu Yuan-chih deals with the life and struggle of the Kawa people in Yunnan, *Haste to the Changpai Mountain*, a short novel by Ma Yun-peng, reflects the resistance to Japanese aggression in the Northeast. *The Squall*, a short novel by Lu Chun-chao, depicts a mutiny in the Kuomintang navy.

Outstanding among the new volumes of poetry are Kuo Mo-jo's *The Tide*, Tien Chien's long narrative poem *The Carter*,

Ma Hsiao-hsiao's *Legend of the Stone Arch*, Ku Kung's *Songs in the Light of the Flames*, Liang Shang-chuan's *Red Cloud Cliff*, the Tai folk poem *The Gourd Letter*, and the Tibetan folk poem *Miserzhae*. *Songs of Praise*, edited by Chia Chih, comprises folk songs of the different nationalities in praise of the Communist Party and Chairman Mao, while *Songs of Our Homeland* contains poems hymning the great achievements of the past ten years.

Works of literary criticism include collections of articles by Wang Chao-wen, Wu Han and Li Hsi-fan. *The Morning Sun* is a collection of essays by Liu Pai-yu, *The Kiangsi-Kwangtung Border Area* contains reminiscences about the revolution by Yang Shang-kuei. *Green Trees Make a Shade* is the history of Hsinming People's Commune in Hsinfan County, Szechuan. *The Ten Thousand* Li *Yangtse* is an account of water conservancy work on the Yangtse River.

Art Museum

The Art Museum newly opened in the Peking Palace Museum preserves more than four thousand examples of Chinese painting, sculpture, calligraphy, inscriptions, bronzes, porcelain, embroidery and other objects of art, showing the development of Chinese art through the ages. In the section devoted to primitive society and slave society we can see the stone implements and painted and black pottery of 3,000 to 2,000 B.C. The exhibits of the Warring States and the Chin and Han dynasties (fourth to second century B. C.) reveal a great development in applied arts and more cultural interchange between different peoples. Among the Han dynasty exhibits are many stone sculptures and carvings in relief. A stone pillar excavated in Shantung has remarkably fine carvings of human figures and monsters.

The east wing houses exhibits from the third to the thirteenth century which show developments from the Wei and Tsin to the Sung dynasty. By the third century calligraphy and painting had become independent forms of art. Here are displayed an early copy of the illustrations by Ku Kai-chih (347-401) for the *Ode to the River Goddess*, a Tang copy of the Tsin calligrapher Wang Hsi-chih's essay *The Orchid Pavi-*

lion, and part of an original letter of the third century poet Lu Chi to a friend. The pale green porcelain of this period is also very fine. Sculpture was an outstanding feature of the art of the fourth, fifth and sixth centuries, but paintings depicting human figures and religious stories also reached a high standard. *Spring Outing* by Chan Tzu-chien of the sixth century is the oldest scroll painting of landscape preserved. Other treasures of this period are the handwriting of the Tang poet Tu Mu, the noted Tang white porcelain and three-coloured porcelain. Celebrated paintings of the Five Dynasties and the Sung dynasty include Ku Hung-chung's *Night Revelry*, Emperor Hui Tsung's *Listening to the Lyre* and Ma Yuan's *A Rustic Scene*. Here too are examples of the calligraphy of the Sung poets Su Tung-po and Huang Ting-chien and of the Sung artist Mi Fei.

In the hall housing exhibits of the Yuan, Ming and Ching dynasties we find representative works of the different schools of painting between the fourteenth and the nineteenth century, including works by such masters as Chao Meng-fu, Lu Chi, Tang Yin, Wen Cheng-ming, Tung Chi-chang and Pa Ta Shan Jen. Paintings of mountain scenery, orchids and bamboos occupy a dominant position. We can also see the various schools which developed in different localities after the fifteenth century. The handicrafts of this period are finer than in any preceding age. The Ming dynasty is famed for its ceramics, enamelware, jade carving and lacquerware. By the Ching dynasty we can see that handicraft articles were even more skilfully made. The porcelain, lacquerware, embroidery and ivory carving of Chien Lung's reign — the middle of the eighteenth century — are magnificent. There are fine specimens also of the handicrafts of the different national minorities. The last section of the museum shows objects of art of the last century, from the Opium War to the eve of the May the Fourth Movement. The last great artist of this period is Chi Pai-shih, who died not many years ago. Some of his best works are on exhibition here.

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