CHINESE LITERATURE

Monthly

February 2 1960

Front Cover: Woodcut by Yao Chen-hsien

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No. 2, 1960

CHINESE LITERATURE
monthly

EDITOR: Mao Tun
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Published by Foreign Languages Press
Pai Wan Chuang, Peking (37), China
Printed in the People's Republic of China

Writings of the Last Generation

WEN YI-TO

Poems

Red Candle

In tears of wax the candle melts
— Li Shang-yin (813-858)

Red candle!
So red a candle!
Ah, poet,
Pour out your heart
And let us see which is brighter.

Red candle,
Who made your wax – gave you form?
Who lit the fire – kindled the soul?
Why must your wax burn away
Before you can give light?
Here is some mistake;
Some contradiction, strife!

Red candle,
There is no mistake;
Your light must come from "burning,"
This is Nature's way.

Red candle,
Being made, burn!
Burn on and on
Till men's dreams are destroyed by your flame,
Till men's blood seethes in your flame;
And save their souls,
Break down their prison walls!

Red candle,
The day that your heart's fire gives light
Your tears start flowing.

Red candle,
The craftsman who made you
Made you for burning.
Now that you are burning,
Why shed bitter tears?
Ah, I can guess,
The cruel wind has meddled with your light,
When your flame wavers
You shed tears of anguish.

Red candle,
Weep! Weep on!
Let your wealth of wax
Flow, unstinted, out to men,
To grow flowers of comfort,
To bear fruit of joy.

Red candle,
With each tear shed you lose heart,
Disheartenment and tears are your fruit,
The creation of life your cause.

Red candle,
Never mind the harvest – till the soil!

The Stagnant Ditch

This is a ditch of hopeless, stagnant water
No breeze can ruffle;
Better throw in more junk and scrap,
Pour in slops and garbage.

Brass may take on an emerald patina,
Tin cans may rust in a pattern of peach petals;
Let scum weave a gauzy veil over the whole
And bacteria generate evening clouds.

Let the stagnant water ferment, become green wine,
Flecked with white foam like pearls;
The sniggering of small pearls makes large pearls
To be bitten and broken by bibulous mosquitoes.

Thus such a ditch of hopeless, stagnant water
May boast a certain novelty;
And if lonely frogs break the silence,
To all intents the stagnant water is singing.

This is a ditch of hopeless, stagnant water;
This, beyond doubt, is no abode of Beauty;
Better let the Demon of Ugliness plough it up
And see what he can make of it.

The Laundryman's Song

The most common trade for Chinese in the United States is laundering, hence Chinese students there are often asked: "Is your father a laundryman?"

(One piece, two pieces, three,)
Mind you wash them white!
(Four, five, that's six in all,)
Mind you iron them right!

I wash clean all your handkerchiefs sodden with grief,
I wash white all your shirts black with crime;
All the grease of your greed, the grey ashes of lust,
All your family's filth, all its grime –
Give me to wash, give me to wash!

Oh, the money it reeks and the blood it smells rank.
Till your clothes are too filthy to wear.
All too soon the clean laundry is dirtied again,
But long-suffering Chinks – they don't care!
Bring me your wash! Bring me your wash!

If you say that a laundryman's job is low-class,
Are the low folk all Chinamen, pray?
Jesus Christ, so I've heard, was a carpenter's son,
At least that's what your ministers say.
D'you think it's true? D'you think it's true?

With clean water and soap you can't make such a splash
As those launching a warship will do;
And I can't see much sense in a job where I sweat
Just to wash sweaty garments for you.
Would *you* take it on? Would *you* take it on?

At New Year he may weep a bit, thinking of home,
But at midnight he's ironing a shirt;
Never mind if the job isn't fit for a dog,
If there's one crease, one small speck of dirt –
Bawl out that Chink! Bawl out that Chink!

I wash clean all your handkerchiefs sodden with grief,
I wash white all your shirts black with crime;
All the grease of your greed, the grey ashes of lust,
All your family's filth, all its grime –
Give me to wash, give me to wash!

(One piece, two pieces, three,)
Mind you wash them white!
(Four, five, that's six in all,)
Mind you iron them right!

This Name

To name this name means retribution dire,
To name this name may set the world on fire;
Five thousand years tabooed, a name of dread,
Sleeps the volcano still, or is it dead?
Some day its demon may awake anew
To roar – a bolt of lightning from the blue –
"Our China!"

Who dares to name this name at such an hour?
What fool can hope the Iron Tree will flower?
Think what you will, but heed my warning, friends:
When the volcano's sleep of ages ends,
In vain you'll tremble, rage or seek to fly
As, like a lightning bolt from a clear sky,
Thunders the cry:
"Our China!"

Translated by Gladys Yang

TSANG KE-CHIA

The Poetry of Wen Yi-to

Wen Yi-to is well known in China as a patriotic poet. A sincere and deep love for his country runs through all his poems. This love developed till he became a national hero who shed his own blood to complete the masterpiece of his life.*

There was an agonizing conflict in Wen Yi-to's approach to reality. He loved nature, beauty, China's ancient civilization, and longed to escape from the ugliness around him by standing proudly aloof in the palace of art. On the other hand he could not close his eyes to the iniquities and bloodshed all about him.

Of course, Wen Yi-to's ideas changed and developed in accordance with the changes and development in the general situation and in his own life. His early collection of poems, *Red Candle* was obviously written by a young aesthete with strong romantic leanings, who was dissatisfied with life as he found it. In one poem of two hundred lines he described the death of Li Po, the drunken poet who loved the moon and flowers, using this means to "depict the personality and character of the poet." To my mind, Wen Yi-to took this legend to give free rein to beautiful fancies, as a protest against the ugliness of life. In this poem he curses "wily foxes and cruel wolves," portraying society as a "dark cavern of pain." To do away with this pain he proposed to seek beauty and passionately invoked "beauty, aloof and serene"! In the poems in his collection *Red Candle,* we hear echoes of Keats, that loyal liegeman of Art. Wen Yi-to also shows us another world, a paradise remote from this earth of ours.

With the exception of "The Lonely Swan" and "The Red Bean" which were written abroad, all the other poems in *Red Candle* were written when Wen Yi-to was studying in Tsinghua University, Peking. The first poem "The Western Shore" dates from 1920 when he was just twenty-two. These early poems reveal the young poet's discontent, his hatred of the warlords with their endless fighting, his longing for a bright future, and his eagerness to sacrifice himself. Even more evident is his praise of love. In his eyes reality was "a great river . . . sleeping like the dead," shrouded in a "bitter mist." It contained "no truth, no beauty, no goodness. Where then can one find brightness?" He describes "war in its dark robes" as "a poisonous dragon belching forth fire and smoke." He dubs the warlords "brigands." Yearning for a better life, he says: "The darkness on the eastern shore is but the shadow of the brightness on the western shore." From the present he discerned the future, descrying in snow "the white flag signalling the surrender of winter." In that dark, stifling environment, throughout years of painful groping, he sought for happiness. "Let us create all the happiness that we can to fill our time." *(The Lesson of Time)* On the road of life, his wish was:

> Go! May this fresh blood, red as coral,
> Stain some nameless wild flower;

Tsang Ke-chia, a well-known poet, is at present editor of the monthly *Poetry,* Peking.

*Wen Yi-to was born in 1899. During the May the Fourth Movement of 1919 he studied in Tsinghua University, Peking and took part in the students' movement. In 1921 he went to study in the United States; after he returned to China in 1925 he taught literature in Tsinghua University. During the War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression he taught in the Southwest Associated University, Kunming and felt very strongly against the iniquities of the Kuomintang government. On December 1, 1945 the students in Kunming protested against the civil war launched by Chiang Kai-shek against the people's anti-Japanese forces and many were killed and injured by the Kuomintang reactionaries, but this incident made him more determined to carry on the fight for democracy. Then on July 15, 1946 he was assassinated by Kuomintang agents in the streets of Kunming.

May its heat turn into fragrance
To steal kindly into the hearts of passers-by.
– *My Ambition*

These poems were produced in stirring times during the period of the May the Fourth Movement. Though Wen Yi-to took part in the great struggle for democracy and freedom, he did not reveal his burning patriotism in his writings. He was brought up in a comparatively well-to-do feudal family, and the upper-class atmosphere of Tsinghua University meant that he moved in a relatively small circle. Although he accepted certain new ideas, his life was a most restricted one. This was his great contradiction, a contradiction already revealed in *Red Candle* but much more seriously apparent in his later collection *The Stagnant Ditch*. A careful study of his poems discloses that some of the imagery and phrases in *Red Candle* reappear in *The Stagnant Ditch* more finely fashioned. Thus the poem "The Stagnant Ditch" reminds us of certain images in "The Western Shore." The patriotism which is the key-note of Wen Yi-to's poetry and which first found expression in *Red Candle* comes out more strongly and movingly in *The Sun* and *The Chrysanthemum* to fire the hearts of readers.

Ah, sun chariot, driven by six dragons,
Spare us this long-drawn-out torture day by day,
Let five years pass as one day!

Ah, sun, swift golden bird,
Let me ride with you to circle the earth each day,
That once each day I may see my native land.

Ah, sun, rising over the house-tops,
Comes from our Orient,
Say – is all well with our land?

Ah, sun, these are not the hills and streams of home,
The wind-swept clouds here have a different hue,
The songs of birds are infinitely sad.
–*The Sun*

In *The Chrysanthemum* he uses colourful and beautiful language to paint this flower so common in China and to pay tribute to his homeland lovelier than a flower.

Wen Yi-to's experiences in America only strengthened his patriotism. The contempt shown to Chinese working in the United States brought tears of shame and anger to his eyes. To him America was:

. . . land of the eagle,
Hard with machines of iron,
Drenched with the blood of the weak,
Belching smoke as black as sin.
– *The Lonely Swan*

Loathing for American imperialism, a deep concern for China and a longing for home, became the chief themes of his poems. As he said at this time: "I shall take this chance to write of my love for China and my yearning for home. If these poems show true feeling, they will have lasting value." I believe this was well said, for a poet who feels deeply can move readers deeply.

Three years as a student in the United States left him bitterly resentful over the humiliating treatment of coloured people by the American imperialists. In one letter he burst out: "We have a country of our own. We have five thousand years of history and civilization. In what way are we inferior to the Americans? Does our failure to manufacture lethal weapons make us less civilized? I tell you, their contempt for us defies description." He returned to China in June 1925, with keen feeling against the imperialist America and a desire to see China grow strong. But he reached home just after the May the Thirtieth Incident,* when warlords were fighting together and foreign imperialists were encroaching on China. The country was in a most critical

* In May 1925, Chinese workers of a Japanese mill in Shanghai started a strike, and the Japanese imperialists fired on the strikers and killed and injured many; then on the thirtieth when Shanghai students made public speeches denouncing the imperialists' atrocities, more than a hundred of them were arrested. The masses demanded that the students be released, and the police of the British imperialists in the International Settlement fired on the people and killed and injured several dozen people. This movement brought about an anti-imperialist high tide in all parts of China.

state, the people were suffering bitter hardships; but under the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party the anti-imperialist and anti-feudal struggle for independence, democracy and freedom was heroically carried on. Deeply distressed to find China so different from his dreams, he cried out in dismay:

All that I see is a nightmare,
This cannot be my land;
This is terror, a nightmare hanging over a cliff,
This is not the China I love.

– *Discovery*

While he was being humiliated on the other side of the Pacific he had heard China calling and he had returned. But he was disillusioned. "This is not the China I knew!" The agony of his disappointment made him "shed tears of blood." But he kept the land he loved within his heart and cherished in his heart a word which would "set the world on fire." Today this beautiful illusion appears a great and powerful prophecy.

Like a lightening bolt from a clear sky,
Thunders the cry:
"Our China!"

– *This Name*

So a significant change took place as the innocent outbursts of a romantic individualist gave way to a more realistic expression of reality. In his essay *Literature and Patriotism,* written to commemorate the March the Eighteenth Incident,* Wen Yi-to said: "May the blood of those who love freedom, justice and ideals flow not only at Tien An Men and Iron Lion Lane but also from our pens." He saw the death of the martyrs on March 18

* After the May the Thirtieth Incident the foreign imperialists acted jointly in an attempt to suppress the revolutionary movement of the Chinese people. In March 1926 Japanese gunboats sailed into Chinese harbour at Taku and opened fire; then on the 16th eight countries headed by Britain and the United States sent an ultimatum; these acts aroused the anger of Peking citizens. On the 18th several thousand people held a public meeting at Tien An Men and made a demonstration before the government house in Iron Lion Lane; then the traitor Tuan Chi-jui who was acting president gave order to fire on the demonstrators, and more than two hundred people were killed and injured.

as a sublime poem. He felt that words alone were not enough, a man must also express himself in deeds. He noted that some friends had "sensed the fire in *The Stagnant Ditch.*" To me, poems like "This Name," "Discovery," "The Prayer" and "An Idea" are flames of patriotism burning in the heart of the poet. And he himself "died a hero's death," so that his end was his greatest poem.

There are two main themes in Wen Yi-to's work: condemnation of American imperialism and pride in the ancient civilization of a powerful and prosperous China. The first aspect, expressed so strongly and vividly in "The Laundryman's Song," was based on his personal experience. The second is represented in poems like "The Prayer," in which he enumerates various features of ancient China, or in "An Idea," where he compares the memories of five thousand years to a bright rainbow and proudly declares:

Let me hold you close,
You so savage and so beautiful.

In my view, however, Wen Yi-to's patriotism lacked one most important element – awareness of the heroic fight of the people against imperialism and feudalism. Because his patriotism was not linked with the people's struggle, it was very limited. Thus to many it seemed that he was against the United States ruled by capital simply because he had suffered there and seen the sufferings of other Chinese, not because he had an anti-imperialist stand. Again, the fact that his patriotism was divorced from the real struggle of the people meant that he enumerates all the wonders of the past five thousand years, writing only about ancient times and hankering after the old Chinese civilization. Indeed he wanted to write a long poem called "The Dirge at the Foot of the Great Wall" to embody his passionate lament for China's glorious past. This limitation in his outlook probably arose because he spent all his time among books and mixed very little with the people. Not till late in life did he realize this and lament: "My American-style education did me great harm. It cut me off from the people and nearly spoiled my whole life." But eventually he took action to rectify this.

While in the United States, his serious concern for the people of China who were suffering from famines, wars and starvation

made him think of the revolutions in the United States, in France and Russia. Upon his return to China, when he saw for himself the people's struggle and suffering, his writing came to have a wider range. Then he wrote poems like "Tien An Men" and "The Deserted Village," which reflected reality. He also started depicting the labouring people in poems like "The Rickshawman" and "The Old Man Selling Cherries." He felt a deep sympathy for the common people who led such a miserable life through no fault of their own. Such poems are not to be found in his earlier collection *Red Candle*. Compared with the highly romantic early poems, those in *The Stagnant Ditch* are strongly realistic. He turned from naive flights of fancy to life itself. But still there were conflicts in his mind. In fact, his old ideological conflict became more acute once he was in touch with real life. He could not decide whether to shut himself up in his own small circle as a poet aloof from the world, or take an active part in life and share the lot of the people. "Silent Night" is a bright spark struck from this clash in his ideas. Within four walls, white in the lamplight–

> Is still, mysterious night, unbroken peace,
> And in my throat a song of thankfulness.

But outside his four walls

> Are the trembling shadows of the widowed and orphaned,
> Wretches writhing in trenches, lunatics gnawing their beds.

Finally the poet cries out:

> Happiness, I can no longer be tempted by you,
> My world is not bounded now by these four walls.

Wen Yi-to did not really emerge from his small world, however. Bitter reality had spoiled his beautiful dreams. The tragedies he saw "under the millstones of life" made his heart "beat wildly," but he lacked the courage to fight. He simply withdrew to

> Let the Demon of Ugliness plough it up
> And see what he can make of it.
> –*The Stagnant Ditch*

But:

> With my pipe between my teeth, I smile,
> It is not in my power to change the order of things.
> –*Mr. Wen Yi-to's Desk*

This discontent with reality but sense of powerlessness to change it is clear evidence of his mental conflict and an obvious result of his separation from the real struggle. His ideas were self-contradictory. In the field of art he could not repudiate art for art's sake and believed in "gentleness and forbearance," while regarding "political principles" as "a form of prejudice" and "rationalized prejudices" as "fatal to art." Thus even when dealing with a theme like the student demonstration at Tien An Men in March 1926, he only hinted at the struggle.

Wen Yi-to was not only a poet but a critic of modern poetry and a keen student of the theory of poetry. As early as 1920 he wrote an essay entitled "A Study of the Cadence of Poetry." Later his famous *The Forms of Poetry* caused considerable controversy. Some of the proposals in this were based on his own experience and guided his own writing.

In this essay he has expressed many valid ideas. For instance, he believed that the forms of modern poetry must evolve unceasingly, the form of modern poetry arises out of the content, the poet is free to fashion his own form. I think he was quite correct in his views regarding form and content and his emphasis on variety of form. He wanted poetry to combine the beauty of music (rhythm), the beauty of painting (imagery), and the beauty of architecture (regularity and symmetry).

Wen Yi-to's poems, especially those in *The Stagnant Ditch*, do combine the beauty of music, painting and architecture. The regularity of his phrases and parallelism, the harmony of his cadences and the colourful imagery make up a distinctive style. But he emphasized form the better to express his ideas and feelings, and denied that he was an expert on prosody. He said: "I am like a volcano which has not erupted. The fire is burning in me, but I lack the power (technique) to burst through the earth over me and emit light and heat." Though he was dissatisfied with his achievements, his work, especially the poems in *The Stagnant Ditch*, are brilliantly written. These poems are concise,

delicate and evocative, so that we are drawn to read them again and again. He exercised a salutary influence on those who thought that to write poetry is easy and that anyone can toss off modern poems. From *The Stagnant Ditch* we can see his serious approach to writing. He always tried to find the appropriate word to express his exact shade of meaning. With a few words he reached the height of truth and pathos.

Wen Yi-to's rich imagination is magnificently evident in his poems. He tried to avoid hackneyed images and to create original word-pictures. His poems are full of fresh and dramatic similes and metaphors. He compares longing to "a mosquito no longer buzzing," homesickness to "a thief who has stolen my heart," and people strolling after dinner to "bees saturated with honey." We are often struck by lines like:

> Your footsteps are oars moving in the breeze,
> Your heart is a fly beating foolishly at the window.
> *– I Want to Come Back*

Wen Yi-to always sought the most suitable and forceful phrases, paying attention to every adjective and adverb. He describes the song of the cuckoo as "plump," heartbeats as "a coral necklace." He writes of "a handful of tenderness, a few petals of kisses, some scintillating smiles."

Wen Yi-to had an expert knowledge of classical Chinese poetry, especially the *Book of Songs*, the poems of the kingdom of Chu and the Tang poems. Before he started writing modern poetry he had written classical verse. He inherited some of the good traditions of classical poetry, and often used classical phrases and allusions, ancient legends and myths, or phrases with an antiquated flavour. But this was during a transitional stage. By the time he wrote *The Stagnant Ditch* most of his poems were more colloquial, and of course we find that the more realistic the theme the more colloquial the language he uses. This is borne out by poems like "The Deserted Village," "The Sin," "Tien An Men," "The Rickshawman" and "The Laundryman's Song." Wen Yi-to also enjoyed Western poetry and made a deep study of it. Just as he loved Chu Yuan, Li Po and Tu Fu, he loved the English romantic poets and Tennyson and Browning. The romantic feeling in his early works and the classical tendency in his slightly later poems owed much to the influence of Chinese and Western classical poets. In his essay *Local Colour in "The Goddesses"** he said: "To my mind, our modern poetry should be modern, not only more modern than classical Chinese poetry but more modern than classical Western poetry. In other words, it must not be strictly local but must retain local colour. It must not be strictly Westernized but should try to absorb the best in Western poetry."

His experiments in poetic form are inseparable from his study of traditional poetry.

Wen Yi-to had his definite limitations. Most of his poems describe scenery, love or personal emotions, while not many reflect the struggles of that great age and the life of the working people. After 1943, he made great progress in his thinking and took part in the revolutionary struggle. His heroic death makes us prize his poetry more and was itself a magnificent poem written in blood.

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* A well-known collection of poems by Kuo Mo-jo.

CHOU LI-PO

The Family on the Other Side of the Mountain

Treading on the shadows of the trees cast on the slope by the moon, we were on our way to a wedding on the other side of the mountain.

Why should we go to a wedding? If anyone should ask, this is our answer: Sometimes people like to go to weddings to watch the happiness of others and to increase one's own joy.

A group of girls were walking in front of us. Once girls gather in groups, they laugh all the time. These now laughed without cease. One of them even had to halt by the roadside to rub her aching sides. She scolded the one who provoked such laughter while she kept on laughing. Why were they laughing? I had no idea. Generally, I do not understand much about girls. But I have consulted an expert who has a profound understanding of girls. What he said was "they laugh because they want to laugh." I thought that was very clever. But someone else told me that "although you can't tell exactly what makes them laugh, generally speaking, youth, health, the carefree life in the co-op, the fertile green fields where they labour, being paid on the same basis as the men, the misty moonlight, the light fragrance of flowers, a

Chou Li-po is one of our best-known contemporary writers. Excerpts from his novels *Hurricane* and *Great Changes in the Mountain Village* have appeared in earlier issues of *Chinese Literature*.

vague or real feeling of love . . . all these are sources of their joy."

I thought there was a lot of sense in what he said too.

When we had climbed over the mountain we could see the home of the bridegroom – two little rooms in a big brick house. A little ancient red lantern was hung at the door. The girls rushed inside like a swarm of bees. According to local tradition, they have this privilege when families celebrate this happy event. In the past, unmarried girls used to eavesdrop the first night of a friend's marriage under the window or outside the bridal chamber. When they heard such questions as "Uh . . . are you sleepy?" they would run away and laugh heartily. They would laugh again and again the next day too. But there were times when they could hear nothing. Experienced eavesdroppers would keep entirely silent on their own first night of bliss and make the girls outside the window walk away in disappointment.

The group of girls ahead of us had crowded into the door. Had they come to eavesdrop too?

I had picked several camellias to present to the bride and groom. When I reached the door I saw it was flanked with a pair of couplets written on red paper. By the light of a red lantern one could make out the squarely written words:

Songs wing through the streets,
Joy fills the room.

As we entered, a young man who was all smiles walked up to welcome us. He was the bridegroom, Tsou Mai-chiu, the storekeeper of the co-op. He was short and sturdy with nice features. Some said he was a simple, honest man but others insisted he wasn't so simple, because he found himself a beautiful bride. It is said that beautiful girls do not love simple men. Who knows? Let's take a look at the bride first.

After presenting the camellias to the bridegroom, we walked towards the bridal chamber. The wooden lattice of the window was pasted with fresh paper and decorated in the centre with the character "happiness," cut out of red paper. In the four corners were charming paper-cuts of carps, orchids and two beautiful vases with two fat pigs at the side.

We walked into the room. The girls were there already, giggling softly and whispering. When we were seated they left the room in a flock. Laughter rang outside the door.

Then we scrutinized the room. Many people were seated there. The bride and her matron, who was her sister-in-law, sat on the edge of the bed. The sister-in-law had brought her three-year-old boy along and was teaching him to sing:

In his red baby shoes a child of three,
Toddles off to school just like his big brother.
Don't spank me, teacher, right back I shall be
After going home for a swig of milk from mother.

I stole a glance at the bride, Po Tsui-lien. She was not strikingly beautiful, but she wasn't bad looking either. Her features and figure were quite all right. So we reached the conclusion that the bridegroom was a simple and yet not too simple man. Though everyone in the room had his eyes on the bride, she remained composed and was not a bit shy. She took her nephew over from her sister-in-law, tickled him to make him laugh and

then took him out to play for a while in the courtyard. As she walked past, she trailed behind a light fragrance.

A kerosene lamp was lit. Its yellowish flame lit up the things in the room. The bed was an old one, the mosquito-net was not new either and its embroidered red brocade fringes were only half new. The only thing new were the two pillows.

On the red lacquer desk by the window were two pewter candlestands and two small rectangular mirrors. Then there were china bowls and a teapot decorated with "happiness" cut out of red paper. Most outstanding of all the bric-a-brac presents were two half-naked porcelain monks, with enormous pot bellies, laughing heartily. Why did they laugh? Since they were monks they should have considered such merry-making as frivolous and empty. Why had they come to the wedding then? And they looked so happy too. They must have learned to take a more enlightened view of life, I suppose.

Among the people chatting and laughing were the township head, the chairman of the co-op, the veterinarian and his wife. The township head was a serious man. He never laughed at the jokes others cracked. Even when he joked himself, he kept a straight face. He was a busy man. He hadn't intended to come to the wedding. But since Tsou was on the co-op's administrative staff and also his neighbour, he had to show up. As soon as he stepped into the door, the bridegroom's mother came up to him and said:

"You have come just at the right moment. We need a responsible person to see to things." She meant that she wanted him to officiate.

So he had to stay. He smoked and chatted, waiting for the ceremony to begin.

The head of the co-op was a busy person too. He usually had to attend at least two meetings a day and give not less than three serious talks. He also had to work in the fields. He was often scolded by his wife for coming home too late at night. He was hard working and never complained. Indeed he was a busy man, but he had to come to congratulate the union of these two young people however busy he was. Tsou Mai-chiu was one of his best assistants. He had come to express his goodwill and to offer his help.

Of all the guests, the veterinarian talked the most. Talking on all subjects, he finally came to the marriage system.

"There are some merits to arranged marriages too. You don't have to take all the trouble of looking for a wife yourself," said he, for he had obtained his beautiful wife through an old-fashioned arbitrarily arranged marriage, and he was extremely satisfied. With his drink-mottled pock-marked face, he would never have been able to get such a beautiful wife by himself.

"I advocate free choice in marriage," said the chairman. His wife, who married him also in the old-fashioned way, often scolded him, and this made him detest the arbitrary marriage system.

"I agree with you." The township head sided with the co-op chairman. "There is a folk song about the sorrows caused by the old marriage system."

"Recite it to us," urged the co-op chairman.

"The old marriage system promises no freedom.

"The woman cries and the man grieves.

"She cries till the Yangtse River overflows,

"And he grieves till the green mountain is crested with white."

"Is it as bad as that?" laughed the co-op chairman.

"We neither cry nor grieve," said the veterinarian proudly, looking at his wife.

"You are just a blind dog who happened on a good meal by accident," said the township head. "Talking about crying reminds me of the custom in Tsinshih." He paused to light his pipe.

"What kind of custom?" asked the chairman.

"The family who is marrying off a daughter must hire many people to cry. Rich families sometimes hire several dozen."

"What if the people they hire don't know how to cry?" asked the veterinarian.

"The purpose is to hire those who do. There are people in Tsinshih who are professional criers and specialists in this trade. Their crying is as rhythmic as singing, very pleasing to the ear."

Peals of laughter burst forth outside the window. The girls, who had been away for some time, evidently were practising eavesdropping already. All the people in the bridal chamber,

including the bride, laughed with them. The only persons who did not laugh were the township head and the veterinarian's beautiful wife who knitted her brows.

"Anything wrong with you?" the veterinarian asked softly.

"I feel a little dizzy and there's a sick feeling in my stomach."

"Perhaps you're pregnant?" suggested the township head.

"Have you seen a doctor?" the bride's sister-in-law asked.

"She's in bed with a doctor every night! She doesn't have to look for one," laughed the chairman.

"How can you say such things at your age!" said the veterinarian's beautiful wife. "And you a chairman of the co-op!"

"Everything is ready," someone called. "Come to the hall please." All crowded into the hall. With her little boy in her arms the bride's sister-in-law followed behind the bride. The girls also came in. They leaned against the wall, shoulder to shoulder and holding hands. They looked at the bride, whispered into each other's ears and giggled again.

On one side of the hall were barrows, baskets and bamboo mats which belonged to the co-op. On the table in the centre, two red candles were lit, shining on two vases of camellias.

The ceremony began. The township head took his place. He read the marriage lines, talked a little and withdrew to sit beside the co-op chairman. The girl who acted as the conductor of ceremonies announced that the next speaker was to be one of the guests. Whoever arranged the programme had put the most interesting item, the bride's turn to speak, at the very end. So everyone waited eagerly for the guests to finish their chatter.

The first one called upon was the co-op chairman. But he said:

"Let the bride speak. I have been married for more then twenty years and have quite forgotten what it is like to be a newly-wed. What can I say?"

All laughed and clapped. However the person who walked up to speak was not the bride but the veterinarian with his drink-mottled pock-marked face. He spoke slowly, like an actor. Starting from the situation in our country before and after liberation and using a lot of special terms, he went on to the international situation.

"I have an appointment. I must leave early," said the township head softly to the co-op chairman. "You stay to officiate."

"I should be leaving too."

"No, you can't. We shouldn't both leave," said the township head. He nodded to the bridegroom's mother apologetically and left. The co-op chairman had to stay. Bored by the talk, he said to the person sitting beside him:

"What on earth is the relation between the wedding and the situation at home and abroad?"

"This is his usual routine. He has only touched on two points, so far. There are still a lot yet."

"We should invent some kind of device that makes empty talkers itch all over so that they have to scratch and cannot go on speaking," said the chairman.

After half an hour or so, the guests clapped hands again. The veterinarian had ended his speech at last. This time the bride took the floor. Her plaits tied up with red wool, she was blushing crimson in spite of her poise. She said:

"Comrades and fellow villagers, I am very happy this evening, very, very happy."

The girls giggled. But the bride who was saying that she was very, very happy didn't even smile. On the contrary, she was very nervous. She continued:

"We were married a year ago."

The guests were shocked, and then they laughed. After a while it came home to them that she had said married instead of engaged because she was too nervous.

"We are being married today. I'm very happy." She paused and glanced at the guests before continuing. "Please don't misunderstand me when I say I'm happy. That doesn't mean I shall enjoy my happiness by sitting idly at home. I do not intend to be a mere dependent on my husband. I shall do my share of work. I'll do my work well in the co-op and compete with him."

"Hurrah! And beat Tsou down too." A young man applauded.

"That's all I have to say." The bride, blushing scarlet, escaped from the floor.

"Is that all?" Someone wanted to hear more.

"She has spoken too little." Another was not satisfied.

"The bride's relative's turn now," said the girl conductor of ceremony.

Holding her boy of three the bride's sister-in-law stood up.

"I have not studied and I don't know how to talk." She sat down blushing scarlet too.

"Let the bridegroom say whether he accepts the bride's challenge," someone suggested.

"Where is the bridegroom?"

"He's not here," someone discovered.

"He's run away!" another decided.

"Run away? Why?"

"Where has he run to?"

"This is terrible. What kind of a bridegroom is he!"

"He must be frightened by the bride's challenge to compete."

"Look for him immediately. It's unbelievable! The bride's relative is still here," said the co-op chairman.

With torches and flashlights people hurried out. They looked for him in the mountains, by the brooks and pools and everywhere. The co-op chairman and several men, about to join in the hunt, noticed a light in the sweet potato cellar.

"So you are here. You are the limit, you. . . ." A young man felt like cursing him.

"Why have you run away? Are you afraid of the challenge?" asked the chairman.

Tsou Mai-chiu climbed out of the cellar with a lantern. Brushing the dust from his clothes he raised his eyebrows and said calmly in a low voice:

"Rather than sit there listening to the veterinarian's empty talk, I thought I might as well come to see whether our sweet potatoes are in good condition."

"You are a good storekeeper, but certainly a poor bridegroom. Aren't you afraid your bride'll be offended?" said the chairman half reproachfully and half encouragingly.

After escorting the bridegroom back, we took our leave. Again treading on the tree shadows cast by the moonlight, which by now was slanting in the west, we went home. The group of girls who had come with us remained behind.

In the early winter night the breeze, fragrant with the scent of camellia, brought to our ears the peals of happy open laughter of the girls. They must have begun their eavesdropping. Had they heard something interesting already?

Translated by Yu Fan-chin
Illustrations by Lo Feng

Such Great Beauty Like This in All Our Landscape (5.5 × 9 metres) →
by Fu Pao-shih and Kuan Shan-yueh

Fu Pao-shih and Kuan Shan-yueh are well-known landscape painters in the traditional style. Fu Pao-shih, fifty-five years old, is from Hsinyu County, Kiangsi Province and is now the president of the Kiangsu Studio of Traditional Painting. Kuan Shan-yueh, forty-seven years old, is from Yangchiang County, Kwangtung Province and is vice-president of the Canton Institute of Fine Arts.

The title of this landscape is a line from the poem *Snow* written by Chairman Mao Tse-tung.

MA FENG

The Sun Has Risen

Secretary Kao of the county Party committee is my younger brother. In our family I'm Number One, he's Number Two. But he's always ranked above me. When he was district secretary I was chairman of a small, first-stage co-op; when he became county secretary I was chairman of a big, advanced co-op; and now that he's first county secretary I'm vice-chairman of a commune. Not only is he my chief, he was my sponsor when I joined the Party.

The two of us have always hit it off well. I've done my best for him, so has he for me. But when it comes to work he doesn't let me off lightly: in fact, he sometimes comes down extra heavily on me.

The winter of 1957 was the time of the Big Leap in agriculture when there was a big drive everywhere to improve irrigation. We organized a well-sinking team and after two months' hard work we'd sunk nine wells. Each boring went swimmingly: water just welled up. The co-op's morale soared, I felt I was walking on air. But that's when we hit a snag: we'd ordered fifteen donkey-engines from a state company, but all we'd got was four – they just wouldn't give us the others. Now spring ploughing was due any day, yet we couldn't use the water in most of our wells. We were frantic! Our co-op branch Party secretary, Kuo Cheng-ming, made two trips to town to try to solve this

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Ma Feng is a well-known writer of short stories.

problem, but each time he came back empty-handed. I decided to tackle it myself. I'd been a village cadre for over ten years, I had friends in every office in the county, and Number Two was county secretary – he could hardly refuse to help. Besides, there were three donkey-engines in the state company's warehouse which they wouldn't let us have because they were earmarked for East Chao. Now East Chao is a village only seven *li* from us, and I know all that goes on there. They'd sunk five wells but not one was any good; they had no use for donkey-engines for the time being whereas we were in crying need. We'd put in our order first, too. No, it wasn't right to hold out on us. If they still refused me, I'd go to the county committee to see Number Two. Agriculture was part of his job, and a word from him would settle everything. But unluckily Number Two was out of town. They told me in his office that he'd rung them up the evening before from Chang Family Village and after midnight he'd called up again from Gourd Reservoir, but where he was now they couldn't say. It was no use hunting for him: I went back empty-handed.

It was mid-afternoon by the time I got home, and just outside the village I ran into Kuo Cheng-ming.

"How about it?" he demanded. "Did you get them?"

"Not yet. But there's still hope." I described what had happened.

Kuo clapped his hands and cried: "What a bit of luck! The postman just told me your Number Two and Township Party Secretary Li are over at East Chao inspecting the work."

"Fine!" said I. "I'll go and find him."

"Why not have a rest first? You've walked over a hundred *li* today, and he's sure to come home tonight to see his family, isn't he?"

"I wouldn't count on it." I know Number Two. If there's work to be done, he won't think of anything else. A couple of weeks before he had passed our village without dropping in to see us. If by any chance he didn't come home today, we'd be seriously held up. So I hurried straight off.

I covered the seven *li* to East Chao as fast as I could, for fear of missing him. While still about a *li* away, I saw a crowd round the rig over a well, with a number of bicycles parked nearby. I

spotted Number Two there with Secretary Li, Young Ho the messenger, and the East Chao Co-op cadres. Old Tien, their deputy chairman, was pulling a long face. I learned from him that this well was a failure too. I felt sorry for them, but pleased at the same time. I know we shouldn't gloat over our neighbours' troubles, but this made it more likely that we'd get those three donkey-engines.

The first thing Number Two said to me was: "I hear our village has sunk nine wells – what are they like? Is there plenty of water?"

"No end of water," I told him. "Why don't you all come and have a look?"

"We mean to," said Secretary Li.

That cheered me up. Once they saw those wells and I brought up the question of donkey-engines, we should be all right.

Number Two asked Old Tien: "What do you mean to do?"

"We're going to have another try south of the village. We won't call off our troops till we've found water!"

"That's the spirit!" said Number Two. After talking over a few more problems with Old Tien, he and the others from the county came back to our village.

At the co-op office gate we saw Number Two's wife, Winter Plum, at the head of some other women carting dung.

"Winter Plum, see who's here!" The other women started teasing. "Go on home, quick!" Two girls snatched her shovel away. Though Winter Plum is over thirty, with a little girl already seven, she behaves like a newly-wed. She's not one for talking much at the best of times, she works hard and she blushes easily, so now her whole face flushed crimson. Just then Small Plum, my niece, came running out of school and rushed up to Number Two.

"Why do you never come home, daddy?" She pouted.

"Aren't I here now?" He grinned.

She put her head on one side to look at him. "Are you going away again or not?"

"Not today."

At that the women teased Winter Plum more than ever, till she didn't know which way to look.

"Go on home and get supper, Winter Plum," I advised her. "We'll have other visitors, see."

Number Two asked her to take his bicycle home.

"Where are you going, daddy?" asked Small Plum.

"To have a look at those new wells."

"Never mind," said I. "Tomorrow will do."

Secretary Li also advised him to have a rest.

"If you don't want to go, I'll go alone," said Number Two. He handed his bicycle over to his wife.

I protested: "Even frogs don't hop non-stop. Have a drink first in the co-op. The wells won't run away."

Number Two agreed to that, and in we went. But as soon as I'd found lodgings for Secretary Li and Young Ho, Number Two urged us to get started. So off we went together to see the wells.

All our new wells are north of the village. As soon as we got outside the village we could see three tall rigs with a red flag on each. The four donkey-engines we'd set up by the wells were belching black smoke as they chugged away. The place was milling with people sinking wells, building irrigation ditches, watering the fields.... At the sight of these new arrivals from the county they started working harder than ever.

"Well, this looks like a Big Leap all right," said Secretary Li.

Number Two grinned with pleasure too, and kept greeting different villagers and asking questions.

I took them first to our ninth well, finished only two days before. Though a ten horse-power donkey-engine with a six-inch pipe had been pumping steadily for two days and two nights, the water was still rising all the time. It shot bubbling and foaming out of the pipe a foot into the air. Number Two kept peering down the well as he bombarded the operator with questions. While he was busy talking, Kuo Cheng-ming hurried up and asked softly: "Well? Has Secretary Kao agreed?"

"I haven't brought it up yet." I know Number Two. He makes quick decisions and he sticks to them. Once he's refused, there's no talking him round. My tactics were to show him the set-up first, to let him see for himself that pumps were absolutely necessary. I took him to all the new wells, and at the five without donkey-engines I made a point of telling him how much water

each had, for we had measured the flow of each. The best produced a hundred tons an hour, the smallest forty tons. When all fifteen wells were finished, if we reckoned on an average of fifty tons from each, in one day we could irrigate over a hundred *mou*. All our land could be watered once a month.

When Number Two had seen the last well he asked: "Why did you sink them all north of the village?"

"There's no water anywhere else," Kuo Cheng-ming answered. "We tried some years ago to the east, but failed."

"There's a regular underground sea here," I told him. "Dig down fifty to sixty feet anywhere and you strike water."

He thought that over for a bit. "Judging by those figures of yours, all your land can be irrigated," he said. "But the southern fields are a good five *li* from here, and if you dig such long ditches the water will all drain away. Have you considered that?"

"We've found a way round that," I said. "We shall lead the water from all our wells into one channel. And we've invented a channel that doesn't lose water."

"What's that? A channel that doesn't lose water? Where is it?"

"At the ninth well. We've built a trial section there."

"Come on, then! Let's see it! Why didn't you show me earlier?"

I had been so taken up with showing him the wells without donkey-engines that I hadn't given a thought to this question of our channel. I didn't know why he was so worked up over it either. He led the way hastily back to the ninth well.

By now the sun was sinking, dusk was falling and the folk in the fields were packing up for the day. The new stretch of channel was not far from the well, and water was flowing along it with a cheerful gurgle. We'd made the bed of clay, gravel and lime. It had taken four of us, myself and three masons, two whole days and two whole nights to work out how to line a big ditch so that water wouldn't leak through. I'd used a whole cartload of lime I'd got to mend my house on the experiment.

Number Two walked up and down inspecting that channel, prodding it to see how strong it was. He asked a whole string of questions: How much material was needed for ten feet? How many workdays? How much money? How was it made? How effective was it? . . . When I had answered all his questions, I

told him that we meant to go ahead in a big way – we'd already sent five men to Black Stone Gully to burn limestone. Number Two was so pleased to hear this that he called me Elder Brother – normally he calls me Number One, using Elder Brother only when he's commending me or dressing me down.

"Elder Brother, you're doing a fine thing here!" he said. "It's most important to stop the water draining away from the ditches. It's hard enough getting water up from below without having it all disappear in the ditches." He turned to Secretary Li: "You must help them sum up their experience in this village, Old Li, for the whole county to use." After a pause he went on: "There's another thing that needs to be summarized too: In places with a rich underground water supply, a number of wells can be sunk close together and the water pumped out to flow in one channel some distance away. That means those districts with no wells of their own can still be irrigated." He asked me abruptly: "How many wells will you sink?"

"Fifteen," I told him.

"Why no more than fifteen?"

I saw my chance and seized it. "We can't even cope with fifteen. We've only got nine so far, see, but five of them are idle."

"You mean there's no power for pumping, eh?" He commented with feeling: "This Big Leap in agriculture means we need more and more equipment."

To avoid being side-tracked I hastily put in: "If there aren't enough donkey-engines to go round, we must make the best use of those we have. Use the steel on the blade of the knife."

Number Two had looked up and was listening carefully. I went on: "The county's promised three to East Chao, but why not let us have them first? Our wells are idle here, their machines are idle there. They have no wells at present, and if they do strike water two hundred feet down – there isn't any piping that length!" To make my case stronger, I added: "Give us three more donkey-engines and every day we can water at least fifty *mou*."

Secretary Li seemed won over. He said: "This is well worth considering."

Number Two had not said a word. He was sitting by the channel, his head bent in thought. My heart was on fire for fear he might refuse. Of course it was a difficult position for him. This was his village and I was his elder brother – he didn't want to be accused of favouring his own home.

It was quite dark now and Number Two sat there smoking. As his cigarette tip gleamed in the dark, I could see he was frowning. No one else opened his mouth. After a long silence Number Two said: "All right. It's a good idea. We'll give you the three from East Chao and another two from West Chao."

"What?" I could hardly believe my ears.

"I don't think West Chao needs those donkey-engines either," said Number Two. "After less than three hours of pumping their wells are dry. We must think of the whole picture."

This was far better than I had dreamed. I was speechless. Number Two went on: "We'll bring the well rigs from East Chao and West Chao here too. Three villages can join forces to sink wells here. Not fifteen but fifty. We'll make this into a well-water irrigation station to water the land of all three villages."

That dashed all my hopes to the ground. I thought: "A fine brother you are! So that's why you promised us the donkey-engines! Not to give us power but to use our wells to water East and West Chao. Not on your life!"

But Secretary Li said with a grin: "That's a grand idea, Secretary Kao. I was wondering how those two villages were going to manage. This will water all the land of three villages and produce a lot more grain." The next second he turned to me. "What do you say, Number One?"

I said: "It's too far. Some of their fields are ten *li* from here. Who ever heard of channels that length?"

"That's no problem," said Number Two. "You've already found a way to stop the water draining off, haven't you? We'll make the whole channel by your method. All we need do is start a few lime kilns."

Heavens above! It seemed I'd laid a trap for myself! All I could say was: "I'm afraid our folk here won't agree to it."

"Educate them!" said Number Two. "Socialist co-operation. Besides, this is in their own interest."

In our own interest, was it? Apart from using our water, the other villages would use part of our land for their channels. However you looked at it, we would lose out. The more I thought about it, the less I liked it.

"Forget it, Number Two," I said. "We won't ask for those engines."

"That won't do, Elder Brother," said Number Two. "Don't just think of the square foot of ground beneath your feet." He started talking about principles, but his lecture went in at one ear and out at the other. How sorry I was that I'd asked for those three donkey-engines. Just see what had come of it!

Number Two talked for some time, but I wouldn't agree. At last he lost patience and said: "Number One, I never thought you could be so selfish."

I saw red. Without a word I stood up and stalked off. Though Secretary Li shouted after me, I paid no attention. I'd have taken any other criticism from Number Two. I'd not have minded so much if he'd sworn at me. But "selfish" – that was too much.

Why, when we started agricultural co-operatives, I was the one to organize five poor households into a small co-op. And so it went on till the whole village set up an advanced co-op. Of course, I don't claim any special credit, but all those years I'd got up at dawn and gone to bed at midnight trying to make a success of the co-op. I hadn't tried to make one cent out of it myself. Because I did all sorts of jobs, there was no way to tot up my workdays. Each year the others gave me the highest rate, but I took the lowest. How could anyone accuse me of selfishness? . . .

The more I brooded over it, the worse I felt. I wouldn't have cared so much if it had been anyone else, but this was my own brother. Not only my brother but our county Party secretary. In other words, this was the Party's estimate of me! I'd worked night and day to get the co-op going, yet this was what the Party thought of me. A lump came into my throat.

It was too black to see your hand before you. I stumbled along without knowing where I was going, mulling this business over in my mind. On the ridge between two fields I slipped and would have fallen if someone hadn't caught me from behind.

"Did you bump into something?" he asked.

It was Number Two. He must have been following me.

I said: "A selfish, greedy fellow like me – what does it matter if I kill myself?"

To my surprise, Number Two didn't flare up. "There's no need to talk like that," he said peaceably. "Even if I criticized you wrongly, you don't have to fly into a rage."

"You're county secretary," I retorted. "I'm only a little cadre. You're the one who gives orders. If you say the word, East and West Chao will not only come here to sink wells, they can take all our land too. I can't stop you."

"I simply made a suggestion. You don't have to agree to it. Stop being so angry. Come on, sit down and have a cigarette. Then you must go home and turn in."

Finding him so reasonable, I felt better. I sat down on the ridge and he sat beside me. He got out some cigarettes and gave me one. When he'd lit his own and started smoking, he said: "Elder Brother, I know your whole heart is set on running the co-op well so that all the villagers can have a better life. . . ."

"So long as you know, that's good!" I cut in. Though I still sounded resentful, I felt all right again. Number Two said no more just then, just smoked in silence. I didn't say anything either. We sat like that, smoking, and neither of us said a word.

After some time, Number Two started talking about the old days, and we harked back to the time from our father's death till our village set up a co-op. When our father was hounded to death by the landlord thirty years before, Number Two was less than six. Our mother was ill most of the time, my wife was a child-bride of sixteen and I – as a hired hand – was the sole provider for the family. We lived on husks and wild vegetables, often going hungry. The next year my mother died, and after that my wife and I gave all our care to Number Two. He was all the family I had left and I meant to bring him up properly. By saving on food and clothes, I managed to send him to school for three years. But then there was a drought, and because we got in no harvest the landlord only paid us half our wages. When Number Two knew this, he gave up all thought of more schooling and ran away to Chang Family Village to find work. With tears in my eyes, I begged him to come home, but he wouldn't listen. Even as a child Number Two had a good head on his

shoulders, and he didn't want to be a burden to me. Two years later, when the Japanese invaders fought their way over, he went away with the Eighth Route Army. I knew that fighting the Japs was good, but I couldn't help worrying about Number Two.

Not for eight years did he come home again. Not till the winter of 1947, when we started land reform in our district and he came back for two months. By then he'd left the army and was district Party secretary in charge of the land reform in our part of the world. Because I took the lead in land reform, I was elected chairman of the Peasants' Association. After land reform, I gave my whole heart to farming. I skimped on food and clothing so as to get the family into good shape. Not for myself, mind you, but for Number Two. After half a life-time of hardship, I didn't mind having it hard to the end; but I wanted Number Two to settle down in comfort. In fact, this was nearly the cause of a big quarrel. As a result of land reform our household got nine *mou* of land. I wanted to go ahead, and for that we needed more land. To purchase some I saved all the money I could. My chance came in 1950, when Liu Cheng-kuei's father died and he wanted to sell half his land to settle his debts. The price was fair: two and a half bushels of wheat for five *mou*. I decided to buy it. But before the agreement was signed Number Two got wind of it, and that same night he hurried back from the district to see me. He was in a temper and called me some ugly names.

He said: "Number One, you're chairman of the Peasants' Association, how can you do such a thing? You've been exploited all your life, but now you want to join the exploiting class."

Imagine how angry I was! I wasn't doing this for myself. He misunderstood me completely. I was so furious that, dark as it was in the middle of the night, I rushed to our old folks' tomb and sobbed for rage. Then Number Two came along. Just like today, the two of us sat side by side on the ground for some time. At last he said: "Your wife told me you wanted to buy that land for me. You've had a hard time of it all these years, not a single day of comfort. You've sacrificed yourself for others, I know that. But what's the point of doing this for me – a single individual – or for just our family? Communists ought to work for the good of all, so that everyone can live well." He reminded

me that Liu Cheng-kuei was a poor peasant too, one of our class brothers, and instead of taking advantage of his misfortunes we ought to help his family to turn the corner. He explained many things to me: how individual peasants couldn't stand up to natural disasters, and the only safe path for poor peasants was that of co-operation. . . . He convinced me completely. The next morning I took the grain I'd got ready to buy the land and lent it to Liu. The spring after that we organized a co-op of five households. . . .

This evening, after the two of us had talked about how our co-op was set up, Number Two said: "You've been putting your whole heart into running the co-op well so that all the villagers can live better. I understand this perfectly, and so do the township and county Party committees." After a pause he asked suddenly: "Number One, do you remember how you joined the Party?"

"How could I ever forget that?"

"Do you remember that part of your oath: Fight to the end for the cause of communism?"

"Of course I do. Why do you ask?"

"That's good," he said. "The cause of communism is the cause of the whole working class and the whole people, not just the cause of one village. Of course, it's right for the cadres of one co-op to have the welfare of that co-op at heart. But if living conditions in one village improve, that's not communism."

Gradually I realized what he was driving at. All this time he'd been leading up to our clash today. He was still trying to convince me that I was wrong. And as I listened, I wondered: "Well, what's wrong with co-operating with East Chao and West Chao to sink wells? If they harvest more grain, won't that help build socialism?" I was an old numbskull, some devil had run off with my wits so that I couldn't see this was a step forward. But that word "selfish" still rankled.

I said: "Suppose I did look at it the wrong way, you'd no right to call me selfish."

Number Two laughed. "That's easy. If the cap doesn't fit, you can change it for another."

"At the most you can say I put my group's interests first."

"Fine. But that isn't communist thinking. Why do you suppose people put group interests first? Because they belong to that group."

All this made such good sense that I was won round completely. In fact, now that we'd talked it out my heart felt much lighter. I'd climbed a step higher and could see that much further. As we walked back I said: "When can we call a meeting to talk this over with the cadres of East and West Chao?"

"This evening," said Number Two.

"Is there time?" I asked.

"I've already sent to fetch them." Obviously Number Two had known that he could make me see sense. I felt even better.

We went back to the co-op but had barely sat down before we heard bicycles in the yard and a group of people came in: Young Ho followed by the co-op chairmen, Party secretaries and water conservancy officers of East and West Chao. Old Tien of East Chao rushed straight up to me and gripped my hand hard in both his.

"Number One!" he cried – almost pleadingly. "If we use your village land for wells and a channel, we'll make it up to you! We won't let you lose by it! If you'll just agree to this, it'll solve a big problem for us."

The other cadres of both villages were watching me like hawks. I heard Young Ho whisper anxiously to Number Two: "How about it, Secretary Kao? Did you manage to talk Number One round?"

Number Two just smiled and said nothing. Young Ho had let the cat out of the bag. I grinned and said: "Young Ho, have you been telling tales?" I turned to the others. "Friends, everyone may be slow in the uptake some time or other. . . . You don't have to worry about me. I tell you what we'll do: join forces to sink wells!"

A cheer went up and there was such a din you could hardly hear yourself think. "Friends!" I shouted. "Don't count your chickens before they're hatched! There's still a tricky move ahead. It's not enough for me to see reason on this. . . ."

Old Tien chipped in: "Yes! We've got to convince the cadres and co-op members."

"The cadres are easy," said I. "I can't vouch for the masses."

"Don't under-rate the masses," said Number Two.

Just then footsteps sounded in the yard and the door opened to admit Secretary Li and Kuo Cheng-ming. At their heels were our production team-leaders and co-op officers.

"It's all right," said Li to Number Two as he walked in. "They're all for it!"

"See, Elder Brother!" Number Two chuckled. "You needn't have worried about the level of the masses."

At first I didn't understand what he meant. Then I learned that Secretary Li and Kuo had gone straight from the fields to the night school to talk it over with our people. Some of our officers and team-leaders had actually been afraid that I might not see reason!

"How about it, Number One?" asked Kuo Cheng-ming.

"What do you think?" I grinned. "You've brought this mob here to talk me round, have you?" They laughed heartily at that.

Number Two said: "Well, that's enough joking! It's time for business. Let's see what problems there are."

I said: "Number Two, you and Secretary Li had better go home for a meal. What are you waiting for?"

"So that's it," said Number Two. "No wonder my belly aches: it's hunger. Run home and fetch some food, will you, Young Ho? Bring all there is. Quite a few of us can't have eaten."

Soon Young Ho was back with a great pile of pancakes and a dish of scrambled eggs.

"Go ahead and help yourselves," invited Number Two.

As we ate, we discussed the business of the wells and channels.

We decided to sink another twenty wells before the spring ploughing, and to make an effort to get the channels finished. Such a large number of wells and such a long channel meant plenty of problems. The first was where to get all the necessary bricks and lime. We decided to start a brick kiln and a lime kiln. Old Tien volunteered to supply the bricks, because they had men in East Chao who knew how to make them. The preparation of lime fell to us and West Chao. We also drew up a plan for the surveying and organization of manpower to make the channel.

Then I said: "Number Two, all this work on the wells is easily handled, but pumps are still a big problem. Our three villages have only nine donkey-engines between us."

Number Two frowned thoughtfully. "What about this?" he suggested presently. "I'll take all your donkey-engines back to give other villages and let you have that 100-kilowatt electric generator in our county storehouse. That will not only supply power to pump out water for you: it will mill your wheat and give you electric light."

The whole room buzzed again with excitement.

"Secretary Kao!" cried Old Tien. "This year in our Big Leap we guarantee to reap an extra 200 catties a *mou* – that makes 500 catties per *mou!*"

Old Tuan, Party secretary of West Chao, said: "five hundred catties is our target too. What about you, Number One?"

I said: "What's all this about 'you' and 'us'? Seems to me we'd better combine into one big co-op and have done with it. Otherwise we'll have no end of trouble when it comes to allotting funds and manpower."

They all agreed with me.

Old Tien remarked: "It takes our Number One, after all, to think of the best move forward. Trust him to see a step ahead!"

In fact, it wasn't too long before our three villages did combine into one. But that's another story.

The longer we talked that evening, the more confident we felt. We decided to fetch the well rigs from their villages to ours that same night. Secretary Li and the Party secretaries and chairmen of the other two villages went back to see to this, while Kuo

Cheng-ming and I agreed to take their water conservancy officers to look at our wells, so that as soon as the rigs arrived they could go up.

"You've been on the move all day, Number One," said Kuo. "Buzz off now and get some sleep. I can handle this."

"I've more experience in this than you." I replied. "And once you get to my age you don't need much sleep. I'm not a bit tired." I wasn't being polite. It was a fact. My heart was warm, I felt something urging me on.

Just before we left I said to Number Two: "Hurry up and go home. You need some sleep."

He was writing something and looked up vaguely to say: "All right. Presently."

Then Kuo and I lit lanterns and took the other men out to the fields.

In the fields we ran this way and that for quite a while till we had fixed tentatively on over a dozen places for wells. When the other men had left, Kuo and I hurried back to the village. It would soon be dawn. My gate was closed and, pushing it open, I saw a light in Number Two's window. Hearing the gate, Winter Plum hurried out and asked: "Why are you so late?"

"Aren't you in bed yet?" I answered.

"Oh," said she. "It's Elder Brother."

It sounded as if her husband wasn't back. "Where is Number Two?" I asked.

"He's not home yet. Your wife's in here."

I went in with her and found Small Plum sound asleep. Side by side on the *kang* lay two neat, spotless quilts. My wife, sitting by the stove, was sewing a shoe-sole. At the sight of me she scolded: "You old devil! You haven't the sense of a three-year-old. Number Two so seldom comes home, yet you keep him tied up with your work in the office."

"Well, well, well!" I was thinking. "Is this fair? Did I stop him?" But since it was no use trying to explain, all I said was: "Are you dead? Can't you go to the co-op and call him?"

"That's right! Shift the blame on to me!" retorted my wife. "I've been nearly run off my legs rushing to and fro. He just says: 'I'll come in a minute,' but he doesn't come. You and your brother are a pair – I don't know which is worse."

"I'll go and get him," said I.

I turned and went back to the co-op office.

Young Ho was asleep on the *kang* and Number Two was at the telephone. Not caring to whom he might be talking, I burst in and shouted: "Do you want to kill yourself? Is this the way to work?"

Number Two signed to me to be quiet, saying: "Shut up! Don't interrupt." He went on talking into the telephone about our three villages' plan to sink wells together. After some time I realized he was reporting back to the regional Party committee. Finally he said: ". . . I've talked this over already with the county committee. Our preliminary estimate is that at least six places in this county can do the same. What's that?. . . Yes. We've decided tomorrow. . . ." He looked towards the window and saw that dawn had broken. "No, this morning, we shall call an enlarged meeting of the county committee, asking all the township secretaries to come to draw up a comprehensive plan. . . ."

I had to wait patiently till he had finished. At last Number Two put down the receiver and stretched. "Elder Brother," he said to me, "do you realize what a tremendous thing you've done? Sink wells where there's plenty of water underground, and lead that water over several *li* by settling the problem of its draining away in the ditches – thanks to all this we can push production forward to a new stage in many districts!"

I felt pretty small, I can tell you, when he said that. I didn't deserve any credit, Heaven knows. No wonder Number Two was county secretary: he could see the importance of quite ordinary things. As I was thinking this, he shook Young Ho. "Get up!" he said. "We're going back to town."

I was furious. "Number Two!" I cried. "Have you no heart at all? You hardly ever come back – aren't you going home for a look?"

"Oh!" he said. "Yes, I suppose this is rather too bad. Come on, I'll go home and see how they are."

On his way out he said to Young Ho: "Get your things together and ride straight to East Chao to tell Secretary Li we're going back to the county committee. I'll be right along."

So we went home. There my wife called him by his childhood name and scolded half seriously, half jokingly: "Second Treasure, have you disowned your family? Now that you're such a high official, I suppose you're too good for us. What are you doing here now?" She said to her sister-in-law: "Take a broom, Winter Plum, and sweep the two of them out!"

Winter Plum smiled and said nothing.

"There's no need to sweep us out," said Number Two. "I'm going right away."

"Well, I never!" cried my wife. "Going right away?"

"Yes," said Number Two. "There's work waiting. When I'm free, I'll come home and spend a few days with you all." He leaned over the *kang* and kissed his sleeping daughter.

"I might have known!" cried my wife. "You're the sort who makes promises but never keeps them." She started out, turning back to snap at me: "Old devil! Have you taken root? What are you waiting for?"

I went back with my wife to our room. Before long I heard a bicycle in the yard. I looked out and saw Number Two pushing his bicycle, with the bedding roll on it untouched. Winter Plum saw him to the gate. I ran after him into the lane and then to the end of the village – quite why, I can't say. By the time I reached the end of the village the sun had just risen, but Number Two was already well on his way.

Translated by Gladys Yang
Illustrations by Yao Yu-to

CHIAO WEI-SHEN
and *YEH FENG*

The Path on the Steppe

Many long years
This path led to the temple gate;
Who has steered it now into this tent
And stamped it so deep with small footprints?

See that flock, that troop of children,
Children in lama robes, hung with rosaries;
Shaking off the dust of the temple at the gate,
Hand-in-hand they run to their new school – the tent.

The new school is airy and bright,
But brighter still the children's eyes;
The school bell is loud and clear,
But clearer still the children's voices as they read.

Fathers and mothers laugh as they pass by,
Filling the children's hearts with their happiness;
The teacher ruffles one young rascal's hair:
"How now, eaglet of the steppe?"

Only a tent,
Yet it is training new masters for the steppe;
Only a path,
Yet it leads all the way to Peking.

Many long years this path led to the temple gate;
But today the awakened herdsmen on the steppe
Have steered it into this tent
And stamped it deep with small footprints.

Translated by Gladys Yang

CHANG SHU-CHIH

Forty Days on the Banks of Tungting Lake

One day at noon early in November 1930, my guerrilla detachment of the Hunghu Soviet Area, Hupeh Province clashed with the reactionary Kuomintang's Security Corps of Huajung County, Hunan Province. We waged a fierce battle with them on Running Horse Ridge, east of the countyseat. After two hours of struggle, the enemy broke through our defences and cut our detachment in two. The bulk of our forces withdrew, fighting, to the north. The rest of us had no choice but to retreat also. While doing so, we lost contact with the main body.

Four of us ran into a forest on Peach Blossom Mountain. There we met three more of our comrades.

Peach Blossom Mountain is high and its woods are dense. It's a good place for concealment and observing what's happening down below. We could see our detachment heading north towards the Yangtse River. Just as we were about to go after them, we discovered a column of enemy troops blocking our path. The column was hurrying in the direction of Running Horse Ridge. At the same time, we spotted another enemy unit advancing towards us from the southeast. Obviously, the enemy hoped to surround us and wipe us out.

Chang Shu-chih is now a major general of the People's Liberation Army.

We were all delighted that our detachment was moving to the north. Probably because they couldn't find us, the enemy were in a destructive rage. In the hamlets at the foot of the mountain they were slaughtering chickens, tearing doors off homes, setting fires. Flames crimsoned half the sky.

It infuriated us to have to stand by and watch while those bandits ruined our Soviet area. Several of the comrades pounded their rifles and stamped their feet. "We've got guns," they cried. "Why don't we have it out with them?"

"Having it out with them is easy enough, but we Red Army men shouldn't sacrifice our lives so lightly," said Chen. "Our job right now is to get back to our detachment." He pointed at the hamlets below. "Our homes are burning. We won't forget this. Later, we will take our revenge."

I counted. Of the seven or eight hamlets, nearly all were in flames.

Suddenly, we saw a man walking through the woods, shooting glances left and right. Thinking he was an enemy spy, we quickly took cover. When the man drew near us, Chen shouted in a rasping voice, "Halt! Put up your hands!"

The man jumped with fright, but when he saw how we were dressed, he cried hastily, "I'm chairman of the township Soviet. My name's Li."

Questioning revealed that he was indeed one of our own people, and that he had fled to the mountains to hide. On learning that we were part of the large guerrilla detachment, he said:

"Two more of your men are in the woods over there." He led us to them.

Now there were ten of us, including the chairman, with nine guns. We felt much better. What pleased us most was that we had met Chairman Li. Through him, we could make contact with the people.

We were in the middle of enemy-controlled territory. Our detachment had vanished. Where should we go? Chairman Li suggested that we seek out the Tungting Lake special district government.

"Which one of you is in charge?" he asked.

He was right. All nine of us were soldiers. Somebody had to be the leader. I nominated Chen. He was a few years older than the rest and had joined the Red Army earlier. Everyone agreed.

Night had already fallen. A chill wind moaned through the trees. Cold and hungry, we followed Chairman Li down the mountain. He brought us to an isolated farm-house. When the peasant who lived there heard that we were attached to the Red Army, he brought out his whole meager larder of eggs and pickled vegetables and forced them on us. After resting a while, we continued on our way.

The east was reddening by the time we reached the fording point. Here, the river was some twenty yards wide. On the other side was the special district government.

But the lone shack at the fording point was empty, there was no sign of a boat or a boatman, and the sky was growing lighter every minute. It was enough to drive you frantic!

We put one man out as a roving sentry. The rest of us split up to look for a boat. At last we found a little one. It was only about two feet wide and five feet long, but we were overjoyed to get it.

Two comrades jumped in – and promptly overturned the narrow little craft. The boat floated bottom side up, pinning the two men underneath. Chen shoved his rifle into my hands. Without pausing to remove his clothes, he dived into the water like a cormorant.

It was a ticklish situation. Day was already breaking. The enemy was so close we could hear their voices. But two of our men had fallen into the river – whether they were dead or alive we didn't know – and our boat had capsized. What's more we were sweating with anxiety over Comrade Chen.

Luckily, in less time than it takes to drink half a bowl of tea, Chen bobbed up with both men in tow. Dragging them ashore, he panted, "These two have drunk too much water; they're still dazed. Let's get them across first, quickly!"

"How?" someone asked. "If we turn that boat over a few more times, we'll really be in a fix!"

by Ku Ping-hsin

Chen thought a moment, then he ordered, "Everyone undo his leg wrappings. Tie them together into two ropes and attach one to each end of the boat. We'll haul it back and forth."

Everyone thought this was a good idea, and we tried it. First one man, using his rifle butt for a paddle, cautiously crossed to the other side. We pulled the boat back by the "rope" tied to the stern, while he remained on the opposite bank holding the "rope" tied to the prow. Then he pulled the next passenger over. All ten of us were across before sunrise.

We soon found a comrade from the special district government. He gave us a bit to eat, and sent a man disguised as a fisherman out with a grappling pole to pick up the two rifles that had dropped into the river when our boat had capsized. The comrade's advice was that we should hide out along the lake. He said he would first take us to the district government.

Tungting Lake is about two hundred and eighty-five miles in circumference, and the shore is fringed by a belt of reeds several miles deep. The special district government operated from a boat hidden among them.

We plunged into the forest of reeds. At first we walked along a sandy shore, but gradually the path changed to mud that came up to our thighs. Pulling one leg at a time out of the mire, we finally reached the district government boat. The government gave us two craft, each about ten yards long and equipped with mat canopies. These were to be our temporary homes.

I will never forget our life among the reeds.

Every day we cut fuel and fished, and took turns at sentry duty.

Our method of fishing was very interesting. In the morning, sheat-fish rose to the surface of the shallows, opening and closing their big mouths as if they were breathing. We would lie prone on our drifting boats, thrust our hands in the water and grab them. We could catch dozens in less time than it takes to burn half a stick of incense.

Cooking was troublesome. We couldn't let the smoke rise because that would reveal our position. We had to be very careful whenever we lit a fire. Sticks were always added one at a time. How we would sweat when our kindling was damp! We would blow and fan the fire with our clothing like mad, the smoke making our eyes run and blackening our faces till we were as sooty as the Kitchen God.

It was then the last month of the lunar year. Although the icy water seemed to eat into our bones, every day we had to wade in the shallows. Mud clinging to our legs, we would climb back into our boats and wipe the mud off with reed leaves. We could remove the large chunks, but the muddy moisture that remained made our skin chap badly in the chill wind. In less than a week, our legs were networks of bleeding cracks.

Still, we constantly had to get down into the water, and the cold mire ate into our wounds like little saws. The stabs of agony seemed to go directly to our hearts. But we would grit our teeth, and after the first few minutes the pain would turn to numbness. It was only after we got back in the boats that sensation and pain gradually returned.

The most unpleasant task was doing sentry duty. Atop a white poplar that was as thick as a rice bowl, we built a platform. This was our sentry tower. Every day, we had to take turns climbing the tree with our muddy legs. Although winters aren't too bad south of the Yangtse, they can still put a coating of ice on the lakes and marshes. We had only two sets of summer uniforms each – not even a cotton-padded jacket. It was cold enough on the ground, but when you got up in that tree and the chill wind came moaning across the lake, it blew away whatever little warmth you may have had. At first, we used to wipe the mud from our

legs with leaves from the reeds. But then we discovered that a coating of mud helped ward off the frigid gale, and we left it on.

In spite of the hardship, we never relaxed our vigilance. We kept a careful watch on the lake and the lake shore. Not even the stirring of a blade of grass ever escaped our eyes.

Besides sentry duty, cutting fuel, catching fish and cooking, our main occupations were cleaning our guns and talking. We had seven home-made rifles and two Mauser automatics. The guns were a bit rusty when we first began life on the boats, but in a few days we polished them dazzlingly bright.

We loved to chat about our experiences in the Red Army guerrilla detachment and life in the Hunghu Soviet Area. Some stories were told dozens of times, but we never tired of them, for they seemed to bring us back again to our companions in battle.

More than a month passed. The situation was tenser than ever. Enemy steamboats patrolled Tungting Lake. Kuomintang soldiers, in groups of four or five, snooped along the shore. We were cut off from all outside contacts, and our rice supply was very low. The only solution was to eat meals of half rice and half fish. A few days later, our rice was gone completely. From then on, we ate nothing but fish.

Fish ordinarily is considered a first-class food, and perhaps some might envy us being able to eat it every day. But we prepared it without a drop of cooking oil or a dash of salt, to say nothing of onions or other flavouring. Plain boiled lake fish day in and day out – it got so, the very smell of it sickened us. But we had to force it down, somehow, if we didn't want to starve to death.

In this time of our greatest stress, one day, a stranger about thirty arrived on the special district government boat. Tall and thin, with a small beard, he was dressed in tatters. When Chen questioned him, he revealed that he had been sent by the provincial Party committee of west Hupeh and Hunan to make contact with the special district government of Tungting Lake. He told us that our guerrilla detachment had crossed the Yangtse and was living in a village near Chienli County.

At this news, we all danced for joy, and we pleaded with him to lead us back to our unit.

Two nights later, we set forth. We hated to leave the comrades of the special district government and Chairman Li of the township Soviet. For over a month, their friendship had seen us through thick and thin. Not only had they protected us, but they had shared their last rice with us, until they too were reduced to eating nothing but boiled lake fish.

Now we were leaving, but they had to remain behind. To tell the truth, I felt worse parting with them than when I left home to join the army. I shook the hand of each of them with a tight clasp. There were hundreds of things I wanted to say, but I didn't know where to start. All I could do was mutter, "Thank you, comrades. We'll meet again."

The provincial committee comrade looked like a simple peasant, but he knew plenty. On the road, he told us all about national and international affairs. We were very interested; most of it was new to us. His speech was soft and polished, the exact opposite of his appearance. We had a lot of respect for him. No one knew his name. We addressed him as "Comrade Contact."

Travelling at night and hiding during the day, we arrived at the Yangtse after midnight of the second day.

"The enemy keeps a tight blockade here," said Comrade Contact. "We must be especially careful."

Just as we reached the dyke, an enemy patrol approached. Comrade Contact signalled us to drop beside the water at the foot of the dyke. After the patrol passed, a paddle-wheeler advanced up the river, playing powerful searchlights on both banks.

"Don't lose your heads," Comrade Contact cautioned in a low voice. "If they shine the beam on us, don't move. The enemy won't see us if we lie still."

Several times the beam swept across us, and we all felt rather tense. But we observed how calm and relaxed Comrade Contact was. His expression never changed. Only his eyes gleamed a bit brighter.

Then the paddle-wheeler was gone, and darkness again descended on the river. But how were we going to get across

without a boat? We all looked at Comrade Contact. Unflurried as ever, he sent two comrades upstream along the shore to search.

After a while they came back, empty-handed. We were beginning to get worried. "Come with me!" Comrade Contact whispered decisively. We followed him downstream along the river bank for several dozen yards. Sure enough, a wooden boat was waiting at the shore.

A young man came forward to meet him. They exchanged a few words. Then, at Comrade Contact's signal, we clambered aboard.

The waves were as high as a house, and the little craft tossed and pitched. Straining our eyes for a sight of the north shore, we helped paddle with our rifle butts. Actually, we weren't of much help.

It wasn't until the east was reddening that we finally completed our crossing and returned to the bosom of the Soviet area.

TENG HUNG

An Adventure in the Mountains

In April 1934 Chiang Kai-shek's reactionary Kuomintang army, outnumbering us several fold, encircled and attacked our Hunan-Hupeh-Kiangsi Soviet Area. The Soviet Area Government decided to move our bases from Tzuchuang in Tungku county to the Lungmen Mountains where the borders of Hsiushui, Tungku, Yifeng and Fenghsin counties met. From there we could push on to the Yunshan Mountains of Yunghsiu county, establish a North Kiangsi Soviet Area, and make contact with the Northeast Kiangsi Soviet Government led by Comrades Fang Chih-min and Shao Shih-ping.

But after we reached the Lungmen Mountains, the enemy attacked with increasing fury, enforcing a tight blockade and cutting off our grain supply. Not only couldn't we go on to the Yunshan Mountains, it was even difficult for us to hold out in Lungmen. And so, in June, we decided to return to Golden Cave, Pingchiang county, which was in the midst of tortuous mountains and would be easier to defend. It had the further advantage of having been part of a Soviet area for several years. The local people supported us strongly. What's more, before leaving Tzuchuang, we had made Golden Cave a Soviet sub-area, and had left some administrators and armed forces there.

We had departed for Lungmen with a regiment. Torn by repeated enemy assaults for over a month, it had been virtually

Teng Hung is vice-governor of Kiangsi Province.

wiped out. A unit of local militia, which had gone to Lungmen by another route, had about one hundred and eighty men left out of more than two hundred. On the return trip to Golden Cave, we divided into two columns. The militia unit and the members of the militia bureau, under my command, was to go by way of Santu, in Tungku county. At that time I was chief of the militia bureau. The others – administrative personnel and what was left of the regiment – led by Comrade Ho Cheng-wu, chairman of the provincial Soviet, would take the route through Meitung, also in Tungku. Comrade Chen Shou-chang, secretary of the Communist Party provincial committee, was unable to walk; both his feet were too badly lacerated. We had to leave him in the Lungmen Mountains until they could heal. Two comrades were selected from the militia to remain with him as guards.

The Hunan-Hupeh-Kiangsi Soviet Government was in financial straits. Grain was hard to buy, and we had no money to buy it with anyway. In the month we spent in Lungmen, we Red Army men had to subsist on wild herbs and the bark of trees. If by some stroke of luck we happened to buy a little grain, we had to divide among us like pastry – each man received only a tiny portion. The day we started back, I took our last six silver dollars and bought a bit of grain. Mixing it with wild herbs, we cooked up several pots of gruel and everyone had a meal. I had a bowlful also, but only one, and that was all I had to eat that day.

That afternoon we left the Lungmen Mountains. It was very hot. Removing my military tunic, I wore only an ordinary shirt. To make marching easier, I carried the militia bureau's official seal and some secret documents in my money belt – nothing else. They were important. I had to carry them personally. In addition, I wore at my waist an empty holster. The pistol? I gave it to Liao, the leader of our advance scout platoon. A rifle would have been too cumbersome for his type of work. So I gave him the pistol and kept the empty holster.

After marching all night, my column arrived in Santu the following morning, according to plan. Santu was in a narrow valley. The high mountains on both sides were guarded by regular enemy troops and local armed forces, which had built a number of fortifications. To get from the mountains on this side to the mountains on the other, we had to push through Santu.

All sound was locked in the valley. Suddenly, men shouted, rifles cracked, and the whole valley rang with echoes. The enemy had attacked.

During the battle, the chief of the militia bureau's radio section was killed, and Comrade Cheng Hsing, chief of the bureau's executive department, was captured by the enemy. I got across, but was separated from the rest of the column, which had also broken through successfully. Our losses were exceedingly small, but the enemy suffered heavy casualties. I learned this much later, after I eventually rejoined our unit.

This part of Tungku county was not a liberated area although our guerrillas used to operate there, and the local people had little understanding of the revolution. Moreover, the Kuomintang had organized all families into groups of ten and made them serve as mutual guarantors. If one family was caught co-operating with us, all ten families were punished. For this reason, the enemy was able to make use of the local people. Separated from my unit in a place like this, I was in a dangerous spot.

When I dropped behind my men in the break-through at Santu, enemy soldiers came after me. I waved my empty pistol holster at them. They fell back a few steps, and I ran up the slope.

I was alone, but my men were gone. Quick, after them! But they were already far away. Enemy troops were in the valley and on the heights. Although guns were firing on all sides, I had no weapon. I couldn't shoot my way out. I hid myself in some dense brush.

After a while, the firing ended, the shouting ceased. I could hear enemy soldiers jabbering something. I knew our unit had got across and I was glad. But recalling where I was, I began to worry. What was I going to do? I couldn't remain lying in this brush indefinitely. If I only had a gun and even just a few bullets, instead of hiding I could march right out of the blasted place!

The enemy began to comb the mountain for me. Carrying rifles and spears, the bastards sniffed among the boulders and clumps of tall brush, poking and throwing stones, at the same time shouting: "Come out, bandit! Come out or we'll shoot!"

Some enemy soldiers advanced towards my hiding place. Closer and closer they came, until they were only a few paces

away. Every vein in my body grew tense. I softly placed both hands on the ground. When they came near enough I would spring out and grab one of their guns. I thought: I can't live anyhow. If I kill a few of the enemy first, I won't have died in vain. I certainly wasn't going to let them take me alive. But then they turned and went in another direction, and I relaxed.

At the foot of the mountain was a house. Ever since the firing stopped, noise and shouts had been coming from that building. I could hear a man yelling in pain and other voices crying: "Talk! Talk! Be quick!" The man angrily retorted: "I'm a Red Army officer! Go ahead and kill me!"

It was the voice of Comrade Cheng Hsing, the executive officer of our militia bureau! Each agonized cry was like a blow of the whip on my own heart. I couldn't bear to listen. Seeing that there were no longer any enemy on the mountain, I got up and ran. The shouts and tortured screams followed me all the way into a mountain gully.

A single path ran through the gully. Far behind, I saw a man, stripped to the waist, a brightly patterned tunic thrown over one arm, walking fast, obviously pursuing me. When I got out of sight around a bend, I went up the mountain. He didn't see me, and continued along in the gully.

I can't hide here, I thought. The enemy is sure to search. But I had to leave those secret documents somewhere. I didn't want the enemy to get them if I should happen to be caught. I found a suitable location and buried the documents, the seal and the empty holster. Besides noting the mountain itself carefully, I also decided to place a branch as a marker. Just as I was snapping one off a tree, I was spotted by a child sentry.

The moment he saw me he beat with a stick on a bamboo segment, making a terrific racket. Instantly the signal was taken up and passed on by other watchers in the hills. That was bad! I fled along the ridge. On either side of it were steep slopes, about forty metres high, and covered with weeds and brambles.

Roll down! I said to myself. I'm a goner if the enemy gets me anyway, and they'll insult and torture me first. It's much better to fall to your death. Besides, the fall may not kill me.... At this, the slopes didn't seem so high. I jumped over and rolled.

My clothing was ripped, my skin was scratched. But I felt nothing.

At the foot of the slope were paddy fields, planted with late rice. As I dashed across them, my sandals were sucked off by the oozy mud. I ran barefoot into a mountain hollow. Above, from every side, people were closing in, soldiers, men in plain clothes – all yelling "bandit!" I rushed deeper into the hollow. No use! It was a dead end backed by sheer cliffs. Between me and the cliffs was a slight dip filled with grass that was knee-high. Go in there? Wouldn't I be falling into a trap?

Fight it out! I thought. But then I remembered – I had no weapon! Ah, what I wouldn't have given for a gun! What should I do? Surely I wasn't going to let the enemy capture me.... I looked around. In the centre of the dip was an old muddy pond fringed with reeds. Pushing my head through the reeds, I discovered that one of the banks was about six feet long and half a foot high. Over the years, the water had washed away part of the underside so that the bank formed a kind of shelf.

There was no alternative. I would hide under the bank. Gingerly, I crept in, taking care not to disturb the water of the pond. There was just enough room for me in the niche. Lying flat, I kept my head above the few inches of water by propping my chin on the palm of my right hand.

The pounding of rapid footsteps and the babel of shouts drew closer. Through the reeds I could see the opposite bank of the pond. The enemy were beating the deep grass with spears, sticks and rifle butts. Some jabbed their spears into the water. As they neared where I was hiding, spears plunged down only a few inches away.

"Where's he gone? Where is that demon? Has he turned spirit and flown up into the sky?" the bastards cried, very surprised.

"There are men like that in the Red Army," someone said. "They really can fly."

"Let's search the pond," another suggested. "If he can swim, maybe he's hiding underwater."

Finished, I thought. If they come down into the pond, they'll see me immediately.

But then another man said: "If he were in the pond, it would be full of stirred mud. Watch...." A spear was pushed into the pond bottom and a murky cloud bubbled to the surface.

"We're a fine lot," someone said sorrowfully. "We let him get away!"

"Impossible," cried a rough booming voice. "He couldn't have escaped. Let's search again."

The grass beating and pond stabbing resumed. This is the end, I thought. If I was able to locate this ledge under the bank, why won't they?... I was sorry I had hidden there. It was too narrow and cramped. I wouldn't be able to put up a fight. Needless to say, I was quite tense.

But I wasn't afraid. I knew that the worst that could happen was death. And I had prepared to die long ago. In 1927, the year I joined the Communist Party, Chiang Kai-shek had sold out the revolution and was slaughtering revolutionaries. I dedicated my life to the organization then. The vow new members took contained these words: "My head may be severed, my blood may be spilled, but I'll never betray the Party!" In the seven or eight years that followed, I had been through danger scores of times. What was there to fear?

The enemy searched for over an hour. Practically all the grass in the dip was pounded flat. But they didn't find me. At noon, men were demanding that they be allowed to go home to lunch. The coarse booming voice shouted:

"Headman, put someone on guard here. Keep a watch for three days and three nights. If he doesn't come out by then, he'll starve to death!"

"Right! Right!" a number of men cried. Someone's name was called, and he was told to take the first watch. The others all noisily departed.

A hush descended on the hollow. If it weren't for an occasional breeze rustling the reeds, you might have imagined that the very atmosphere had stultified. I couldn't see the man on guard, nor did I know what he was like.

Not two feet from my nose, a rock protruded from the water. After some time, a big frog appeared on that rock, I don't know when. His round eyes stared at me unblinkingly. His throat swelling and contracting, he uttered occasional croaks. Suddenly,

he drew up his legs, opened his mouth wide, and leaped straight at my eyes. Seeing them move, he must have thought they were something edible. I could only shut them quickly, but I couldn't fend him off. For if I moved my hand it would have made the pond water gurgle. The frog swam back to the rock. Soon he attacked me again. Although he jumped at me several times, I was powerless to drive him away!

After several hours in the water, my body felt bloated and numb. The hand supporting my chin was virtually paralysed, but I couldn't change my position for fear of disturbing the water. It was agony!

But what made me most uncomfortable of all was my hunger! I had eaten only one bowl of gruel the previous morning, then marched all night. My stomach was so empty it couldn't even rumble, but every once in a while it contracted with such sharpness that my head span.

At long last it was mid-afternoon. I heard voices on the bank. Someone had arrived to relieve the guard. "Don't go," the newcomer said. "I'm afraid to stay here alone. The bandit may jump out and kill me."

"What are you scared of?" the other fellow demanded. "You've got a scythe in your hand."

Now I knew there was just one guard, and that he had no gun. There was nothing to fear. After dark, I would come out. I realized I had better move my arms and legs. Otherwise they would be numb, and I would be unable to overpower the guard. I had long since noticed a sluice pipe nearby, and now I quietly crawled into it.

The pipe was quite large. I could sit up inside. I stretched my arms and flexed my legs, and rubbed my body all over to restore circulation. As soon as it was dark I could go into battle. But how long would I have to wait? The sun seemed pasted against the sky. It never moved! I fixed my eyes on the shadow of a blade of grass. I was confident that every fraction the shadow crept brought me that much closer to victory.

Finally the moon appeared. It was very bright. I washed the mud from my body and got ready to emerge. There wasn't a sound on the bank. I poked my head out. Not far from the sluice pipe, a man was sitting beneath a big tree. Good. Now! I leaped upon the bank.

Flustered, the enemy sentry scrambled to his feet, yelling: "Help! Help! The bandit! The bandit!" He swung wildly at my head with the scythe.

I was very weak, but I was prepared. Dodging his blow, I put all my weight behind a straight punch to his jaw. He went down in a heap. As I raced through the pass I could still hear the lout bawling for help.

I cut across some paddy fields, entered a ravine and paused at the foot of a rocky hill. To avoid meeting anyone, and to shake off any possible pursuers, I decided to go up. The hill was very high and very steep, and it had no paths. Ordinarily, if I saw anybody climbing that hill, I would have trembled for him. Now I had to scale it myself. I was tired and hungry. The effort made beads of sweat as big as soya beans drip from my forehead.

On the summit were stunted pines. A thick carpet of pine needles covered the ground. Exhausted, weak in the legs, I was badly in need of rest. I hung my wet clothes on a tree to dry, swept some pine needles together in a pile and lay down. It was

chilly on that hill-top at night, and I had just perspired. I shivered from head to foot, my teeth chattering.

Although I was very tired, I couldn't fall asleep, perhaps because of the cold. Moonlight flooded the sky, which was sprinkled here and there with a few stars. Except for the soughing of the pines, it was very quiet. Lying there in the darkness, I thought of our detachment. Had it reached Golden Cave? Maybe it would arrive tomorrow. Had we had many casualties at Santu? Had all the wounded been able to get away? Maybe, like me, there were others who had lost contact with the unit during the break through. I wondered where they might be.

And what about Comrade Ho Cheng-wu's column? Had it also been attacked by the enemy? Did it get through? It would be good if everyone could get back to Golden Cave. If we worked hard, we could quickly restore Golden Cave into a Soviet area. The people were with us there, and we had an armaments plant, a clothing factory and a hospital. It was a good base. Although many difficulties lay ahead of the revolution, I was sure we would win.

I wondered also about Comrade Chen Shou-chang. He was still in the Lungmen Mountains. Had the enemy discovered him? If only his feet would heal quickly! . . . All kinds of thoughts tumbled through my brain. I forgot the cold. It wasn't until I heard the roar of a tiger that I remembered where I was.

To hear a tiger in the silence of the night while alone on a coverless summit – it would make any man's hair stand on end! I sat up and peered around. Suddenly, at the foot of the hill, I saw a pair of flashing green lanterns. The tiger! Automatically, I reached for my pistol. But my hand touched only my icy cold waist. My clothes were still drying on the tree!

What was I going to do if the tiger should attack? Here was nothing but pine needles. There wasn't even a stone with which to defend myself. The enemy hadn't been able to kill me, but now I might be eaten by a tiger. How ironic! Still, I thought, I can't just docilely provide him with a meal. I'll have to put up a fight. Quietly I flexed my arms, and gathered my strength.

The tiger roared once, bounded a few paces, then turned and stalked up another hill.

As soon as there was a little light in the east I rose and put on my clothes. I was terribly hungry, but I could only tighten my belt. Stars were dancing in a pool at the foot of the hill. If I couldn't eat, at least I could drink. I was thirsty. The east was brighter as I walked down the slope. Finishing my drink, I hurried through the ravine and climbed to a ridge.

Then I realized that I had no idea where I was going. I slowed my pace. To reach Golden Cave I had to pass Hsihsiang, I knew that. But was Hsihsiang to the north or to the south? The sky was bright now, and I was afraid that I might run into someone. I thought I'd better find a place to hide.

Halfway down a rocky slope I saw a small grove. It had no path leading to it and the slope was very steep. Obviously people seldom went there. I let myself down carefully. Behind the trees I found a stone cave about two feet high and six feet deep. A man could lie in it. Good. This would be my hiding place. It was a difficult spot to reach, but if enemy forces should come, I could certainly kill a few of them with stones. There were many stones around. I picked a few medium-sized ones and piled them up at the mouth of the cave.

It was morning. A kindly looking old man came to the foot of the slope to pick beans. He seemed to be well over sixty. His hair was completely white. The old man moved extremely slowly.

After a while he was joined by a score or so of young peasants, all carrying sticks and spears. No doubt about it, they were searching for me. "Hey, old uncle," they called. "Have you seen any strangers?"

"No. Who would come here so early in the morning?" The old man again bent over his bean patch, obviously not interested.

The young fellows began to wrangle. "Of course," said one. "He's had all night. He must be miles away by now. You don't think he'd sit around waiting for us to nab him!"

"Never mind about that," said another. "They want us to search, so we'll search. If we can't find him, that's not our business. Let them find him themselves, if they think they're so smart."

The young peasants trouped up the hill. Soon they flung a hail of stones down on the deep grass growing in the ravine. The old man raised his head.

"Idiots! Take care or you'll kill all the ants!" he said sarcastically.

Filling his basket with beans, he departed. Not long after, he returned with a sickle and a carrying pole and began to cut brush for fuel. His movements were slow and dragging. There seemed to be minutes between each sweep of his knife.

The cave faced east and the sun roasted me sorely. Hungry and thirsty, I now knew there were worse discomforts than lying in water for hours as I had done the day before. I was tempted to call to the old man and ask for his help, or at least for directions to Hsihsiang. But I couldn't figure him out, and I was afraid that someone else might see me. Though I opened my mouth several times, I didn't dare shout.

When it was nearly noon, the old man tied two small bundles of brushwood to the ends of his carrying pole and headed for home, muttering as he walked, "What weather! So dry!" Some distance away, he halted, put down his load and scooped up a drink. Aha, that place had water.

I waited until the shadows had shrunk to the foot of the trees. By now, I estimated, everyone must have gone home for the midday meal; they weren't likely to come out again right away. I went down and drank my fill, then found a cool place to hide in the deep grass.

I wasn't so thirsty any more, nor so hot, but the problem of my stomach still hadn't been solved. I simply had to find something to eat. Otherwise, how would I be able to travel that night? I dug up some grass, wiped the earth off and chewed on the roots. They were only gritty old grass roots, but to me they tasted delicious!

In the afternoon, the old man returned to cut more brush. "What a world!" he grumbled. "Fighting, fighting, all the time. If it's not the Red Army then it's the Whites. What are we coming to!" At dusk, he again shouldered his carrying pole and started for home.

This was my chance, I thought. With darkness falling, no one was likely to come into the hills. Walking up softly behind the old man, I took hold of his carrying pole. "Cutting brush, old neighbour?" I said.

He turned his head and looked at me. Dropping his load in fright, he stammered, "You – you. . . ."

"I'm a Red Army man," I said. "The Red Army is the poor people's army. Don't be afraid. I won't harm you. I only want you to tell me the way to Hsihsiang. We're helping the poor people to revolt. You're a poor man too. If you help me, you'll be helping the poor people's revolution."

The old man looked me over for a minute, then raised his load to his shoulder, peered around and said, "Come with me. I'll set you on your path." Abruptly abandoning his slowness, he set off at a brisk pace. But the faster he went, the more unsteadily he walked and the more bent over his back became, until it looked as if at any moment the two little bundles of brushwood on the ends of his carrying pole would snap his spine. Ordinarily, I would have relieved him of his burden, but under the circumstances I couldn't make myself conspicuous.

I ought to take this chance to educate him, I thought. Political education, especially in this district, was very important. But the moment I opened my mouth, the old man cut me short.

"Don't talk. If they hear, they'll come after you."

Sure enough, lower down the slope, a voice called: "Old uncle, who's that you're talking to?"

The old man was stunned for an instant. But he replied in an even tone: "No one. I was talking to myself."

After we had travelled for more than a *li*, we came to a fork in the path. The old man gave me detailed instructions on how to proceed. He made me promise that I would tell no one that he had escorted me. He urged me several times to be careful.

What a fine old man, I thought as we parted. The people are good everywhere. The only question is whether we win them over and lead them properly. I determined that when I got back to Golden Cave I would do my best to start our work in this region immediately.

Following the directions the old man had given me, I hastened on, walking at night and hiding during the day. After two days of weariness and hunger, I was growing steadily weaker. By the third day, I could barely drag myself along. I had to pause after almost every step, and rest for longer and longer periods.

I found two sticks which I used as canes to keep myself from falling.

But by the fourth day, I couldn't even hold the canes firmly. I stumbled and fell frequently. My eyes would go black and my head would whirl. It would be some time before I could stagger to my feet. Often I couldn't get up, and I would pull myself forward with my arms. Whenever that happened I would remind myself that I was a Communist and that I bore a heavy responsibility. I remembered the vow I had made to the Party. These things gave me strength.

Sometimes I would pretend that the tree or rock ahead of me was an enemy, and I would say to myself, "Wipe him out! Wipe him out!" But what an effort it required each time I crawled five or ten feet to get at another "enemy"!

On the evening of the sixth day, I saw a small house at the foot of a mountain. Both of its double doors were open wide. The room inside was flooded with moonlight. But not even the shadow of a living person was to be seen. Then something in the house caught my eye. A rice steamer – a genuine rice steamer! My heart began to pound. If there was any rice left in it – one bowlful . . . half a bowl . . . even a spoonful – to me it would be the most precious of treasures!

A small house like that, I thought, it couldn't have many people; they wouldn't dare attempt to kill me. Besides, this wasn't far from the old Soviet area. Maybe the people here knew something of the revolution; they might sympathize with me. I decided to risk going in.

I entered the house. No one was home. I reached for the wooden cover of the steamer. It felt as heavy as stone. There wasn't a bit of strength in my hands. I raised the cover. A rank odour struck my nostrils. The mould in the steamer was half an inch long. Plainly it hadn't been used for at least a month.

Coming out again, in the doorway I found a vat filled with dirty water. I put my hand in and groped around. Bitter herbs were soaking on the bottom. There are plenty of them in the mountains. They have to be soaked and boiled before they can be eaten.

I grabbed a handful. It didn't matter that the water wasn't clean, or that the herbs smelled bad. Anyhow they were better than grass roots.

Walking on, I passed a field in which peppers, spinach and one stalk of corn were growing. The corn was already ripe, and its red tassels danced in the breeze. My heart beat fast. Why not eat the corn! I entered the field, sat down beneath the corn stalk and sighed. When would I get to Pingchiang? I reached for an ear of corn and wrenched it angrily, as if retaliating for all the suffering I had been through.

Just at that moment, the image of a child flashed into my mind. A pale skinny little boy, gazing hungrily at a lone corn stalk in a field of sweet potatoes. Every day he came to that stalk and pleaded: "Grow faster, please! I can't wait much longer!"

The child was me. Recalling that scene, my heart softened. Maybe some little tyke came here every day and gazed at this corn in the same way. Maybe he was counting on this stalk to get him through the last days of the summer famine. He might even be coming tomorrow morning to pick this very ear! Could I snatch it from him? No, of course not!

I released the ear of corn. Although the stem was snapped, the ear still dangled on the stalk.

Seeing two men approaching in the distance, I quickly lay down among the peppers. One hung very close to my mouth, and I ate it. But the memory that the corn had evoked stubbornly refused to leave me. I couldn't bring myself to take another pepper.

The following evening, I dug up and consumed twelve tuber roots, ordinarily used only for feeding pigs. Those twelve roots gave me enough sustenance to walk from the Tungku county line to the Pingchiang county line that night. Two months before, Pingchiang had been part of a Soviet area.

At daybreak, I heard someone calling at the foot of the mountain: "Laiku, let's get the hoeing done before the sun becomes too hot!" I looked. Below, outside the door of a house, an old man stood shouting. Two children emerged, rubbing their eyes. One was a boy about twelve, the other a girl about nine. All three went to a sweet potato patch not far off and began to hoe.

This is a former Soviet area, I thought. These people understand the revolution. Go out and speak to them freely.... But the Kuomintang has already occupied Pingchiang county for two months, I recalled. They've set up their mutual family guarantee system. It's better not to take any risks.

I remained under cover and waited. An old lady appeared at the door. "Laiku," she called. "Breakfast! Let's eat!"

"We're coming," the older child replied, and he grumbled, "Eat – what have we got to eat? Old sweet potato slices, every day!"

"After breakfast there's still sentry duty," called the old lady.

"They can take that sentry job and shove it!" the boy retorted. "We can't even get a decent meal since they came!"

It was plain to me that they were a poor family, and that the sentry duty was forced upon them. But I still didn't want to take any chances. I waited until the old man, spear in hand, had gone off to stand guard, and the children had departed for the hills with carrying poles to cut brush. Then I softly crept down the mountain and entered the house.

The old lady was splicing a rope when I came in. She looked up, startled.

"Don't be afraid, old mama," I said quickly. "I'm a Red Army man. I've fallen behind my unit."

She stared at me. "*Aiya*, comrade! How did you ever get into such a state? You can hardly walk! You must be starving!"

I nodded. "If you have food in the house, give me a little."

Hastily assuring me that they had, the old lady pulled forward a stool for me, rushed into the kitchen and came out with a steaming bowl of sliced sweet potato. It was exactly seven and a half days since I had seen cooked food. Only a man who has gone hungry as long as I can appreciate how delicious it tasted – in spite of the fact that it was only, as the little boy said, some "old sweet potato slices"!

Shaking her head and sighing, the old lady watched every rapid move of my chopsticks. I was deeply touched. How the people in the Soviet areas loved their Red Army! She urged me to eat my fill and not worry about a thing. The soil in this valley was poor. There were few inhabitants. The dirty Whites had no posts here. Once in a while they came through on patrol, stealing poultry and livestock. They had already driven off all the sheep. Fortunately there were no local gentry or rascals in the neighbourhood. No one carried tales of what happened here to the outside. For this reason both the secretary of the Communist Party branch and the branch secretary of the Young Communists were able to remain in the valley. In a little while she would take me to them.

I breathed a long sigh of relief. The organization was still operating.

When I finished the sweet potato the old mama asked: "Enough? Do you want any more?" I nodded. She said: "We have no rice, but I can cook you some spinach." In a few minutes she appeared with three bowls of it. "I put some salt in," she said.

"We kept that bit of salt for a long time. It's hard to get around here."

To be able to eat something actually flavoured with precious salt – that was even better than sweet potato. Though it burned my mouth to eat so quickly, I downed the three bowls in a flash.

But eating so much and so rapidly gave me a bellyache. The pain twisted my guts.

"Don't groan so loud, comrade," the old mama urged me uneasily. "If the White dogs hear you, they'll kill you!" She hurried to the door and looked anxiously around. At the same time she scooped up an armful of rice straw and spread it in the sheep pen behind the house. Helping me to the pen, she told me to lie down.

"Don't make any noise," she said. "I'll keep a look-out up front. If I see anyone coming, I'll hide you."

Not being able to groan seemed to make the pain worse. Holding my stomach, I rolled around the pen in agony. After a while, the old lady came in to see me.

"Any better?" she asked. When she saw that I was speechless with suffering, her hands agitatedly clutched her bosom. Plainly, torments were spearing her heart.

After two or three hours, the pain subsided a bit. I managed to struggle to my feet. I was longing to meet the Party secretary. The old mama led me up the slope and pointed out a cluster of houses around the bend. She told me which was the Party secretary's and which belonged to the secretary of the Young Communists. Following her directions, I soon was able to find the secretary of the local Party branch.

It's not difficult to imagine how glad I was to see one of our own comrades again after my adventure in the mountains. And the branch Party secretary was of course overjoyed to meet one of his superiors two months after the fall of the Soviet area. I lived with him for two days. We held a meeting of the local Communists and outlined a work plan.

The Party secretary's family was very poor. They didn't even have sweet potato slices, only soya beans. As a special courtesy to me, he ground the beans into a paste and boiled it together

with pumpkin vines and potato leaves. This was considered a banquet delicacy.

Golden Cave was still a good distance away, but in this locality one could travel openly in daylight. The Party secretary warned me, however, to be careful of wandering Kuomintang army patrols.

Some time later, walking through a ravine, I heard the clink of the enamelled eating bowl that every soldier carries on his belt. Kuomintang troops! I thought, and hastily took cover in the deep grass. So near to Golden Cave, I can't let the enemy catch me after all I've been through!

The clinking came nearer. Suddenly I heard a familiar voice. I don't know where I got the energy, but I leaped up and shouted: "Platoon Leader Liao!"

When Liao saw me, he ran towards me for all he was worth, the men of his platoon hot on his heels. In an instant they were crowded happily around me.

"We thought you were dead, bureau chief!"

"How thin you've become!"

I felt my hands. They were just skin and bones. But when Liao told me that the militia bureau and Comrade Ho Cheng-wu and the administrative personnel comrades had all reached Golden Cave safely, I completely forgot about my hardships of the past few days.

A month later, Comrade Chen Shou-chang and his two guards returned to Golden Cave. I reported to him all that had happened to me since we parted. I proposed that we send people to Tungku county to begin underground activities. Comrade Chen agreed. Less than half a month later, several communications centres were set up along the very line I had travelled. Our comrades were soon able to come and go via that route without much concealment.

Illustrations by Ku Ping-hsin

Travel Notes

PI YEH

A Thousand Li Across Southern Sinkiang

Sinkiang is a vast area in the northwest corner of China. It used to be sparsely settled, with little in the way of transport facilities, but today it is developing rapidly. I made a tour there recently after an absence of three years and found some remarkable changes.

Going south from Urumchi via Davanchin into the Tienshan Mountains, I heard a valley suddenly rumble with a sound like spring thunder. Workers were boring a tunnel for the Lanchow-Sinkiang Railway. These mountain-shaking explosions are indeed spring thunder on earth, for they are blasting a path through stubborn rock millions of years old, turning impenetrable craggy heights into a smooth and level road.

Trees in the deep valley pour their green into the White Poplar River, flowing rapidly at the bottom. Once all was silent here, except for the wind soughing through the trees and the gurgling of the waters. Now the valley rings with the shouts of men.

The winding White Poplar River is lonely no more. Cabins and tents line its banks. Pack horses, cooks drawing water,

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women washing clothes – all cast their reflections on the shimmering surface of the stream. This is where the railway construction workers live.

Through the pall of dynamite smoke that hangs over the entire length of the narrow valley we already can visualize bright steel rails advancing, locomotives pulling long lines of cars into the tunnels; we can almost hear the shrill cry of the engine whistle thrown boldly against the heights. Instead of the cabins and tents, fine new buildings rise beside the river: a handsome railway station, a quiet and beautiful sanitorium, pretty little villas for vacations from the summer's heat. . . .

Hearty laughter woke me from my day-dream. Men carrying pneumatic drills appeared from around the bend and strode towards me, heads high, their faces ruddy. Though grimed by dynamite smoke, they were in gay spirits. They paused, smiling, by the roadside to wave a friendly greeting. Gazing at these strong and purposeful men I was confident that before long my dream would be fulfilled.

After leaving the White Poplar River Valley, I passed through Toksun – where they raise those wonderful peanuts – then again entered the Tienshan range and proceeded south towards the Kumush Mountains. Huge piles of pure gypsum glittered in the sun like white jade on either side of the highway, as neat as if they had been cut by a knife. Carved from the hills by mine prospectors, they were waiting to be shipped.

Prospectors are the scouts for our nation's industry. They rove all over the Tienshan range. In the Kumush Mountains alone, there are thousands of prospectors seeking precious minerals for the state. A ravine far from the highway, formerly known only to mountain goats, today is filled with an archaeological team's tents. From a distance, they look like so many gleaming mushrooms after rain.

A series of charges placed by a prospecting team blew the top off a mountain. As the earth trembled, columns of black smoke billowed into the blue sky, while boulders that had been flung heavenward rained down upon the slopes.

In a tent where dynamite cases were being used as tables and chairs, the leader of a prospecting team placed before us a large

tray. The tray was laden not with food but something much more attractive – flashing samples of ore.

"All national treasures," he said with a proud smile. "This piece like purple clouds is mica. That bit like square jade is Iceland spar. That translucent mass of ice particles is crystal. This bundle of silver threads is asbestos. . . ."

"Is there much of this stuff around?" I asked, surprised and pleased.

"Plenty! My team alone found over a hundred tons in just one day!"

We were very thirsty after our long walk. The team-leader had sent someone for boiled drinking water, but the man still hadn't returned.

"Is water a problem in these parts?" I asked.

"A bit. It has to be transported several dozen kilometres over the mountains," the team-leader replied with a wry smile.

"Then you prospectors must often be thirsty."

"It's not so bad here in camp. But when we go up into the hills, we only have one canteen each, which has to last for several days. . . ."

I could imagine what it was like. In my mind's eye I could see a man climbing to the top of some cliff in the blazing sun. His clothes were torn by brambles, his eyes were bloodshot, his lips parched and cracked. But in his hand he held a piece of quartz of rainbow hue. . . .

The Kaitu River carries the icy water draining from the snows of the Tienshan range, crosses the Payinkuoleng Plain and empties into the vast lake known as Baghrash Kul. From there, after discharging its sediment, it emerges clear and limpid as the beautiful Peacock (Karakum) River.

Emerald green in colour, the Peacock flows through the Kuruk Tagh, a spur of the Tienshan range. The river rushes down a narrow defile flanked by steep cliffs, flinging up curtains of spray. Along the bank is a single path, dangerous and twisting. This is Iron Gate Pass.

Through this pass, the Peacock River boils day and night. In the past there was nothing here but a hydrology station, a couple of trading posts and a few grist mills. Today, the pass has

changed. Rows of steel-ribbed tents line the river bank; young men and women from south of the Yangtse fill the air with their songs. Tall chimneys of an iron and steel plant cast their reflection on the water. The glow of blast furnaces crimsons the river and the mountains. . . .

Anchors for a dam and hydro-electric station have already been sunk on both banks of the Peacock. A canal several dozen kilometres in length is being built from the Kaitu River so that it will flow into the Peacock River directly instead of following its present route through Baghrash Kul. In the future, the region from the Kaitu to Iron Gate Pass will contain a network of twelve large power stations, generating a total of 1,700,000 kilowatts. Part of this huge power will go to Urumchi, capital of the Sinkiang Uighur Autonomous Region in the north, some will go to the famed oil city Karamai, and some will supply Aksu in the southern part of the region. The current flowing from this power centre will provide illumination for thousands of kilometres around and will make machinery throb from the Tarim to the Dzungarian Basin.

Not only will Iron Gate Pass become a new industrial city, it will also be a bustling land and water traffic centre. The railway from Urumchi to southern Sinkiang will cross the Peacock River at Iron Gate Pass and continue over the Kuruk Tagh to Korla where it will divide into two routes: one will cross the Tarim Basin to Jochiang and Chiehmo at the foot of the Kunlun range, and then on to Tunhuang in Kansu; the other will go southwest in a crescent around the rim of the Basin to Kashgar, Socho and Yutien (Kerija).

River traffic will also radiate from Iron Gate Pass. The upper reaches of the Peacock will link up with the Kaitu River via a canal; its lower reaches, a branch of which flows into the Tarim River, will carry cargo to the southern part of the province. Motor ships and sailing craft will appear for the first time on the great southern plains and in the foothills of the Kunlun Mountains, traversing a thousand *li* of silver waves, adding colour to the lofty heights and fertile wilds.

Then, whether you go through Iron Gate Pass on a train or in a boat, you will be impressed by its grandeur and its activity. Travelling through at night, as you cross a large bridge, you will

see a thriving industrial city spread along the banks and up the slopes, its lights reflecting like gleaming pillars in the winding silvery Peacock River. It will no longer be a crude outpost far beyond the Great Wall, but a city as handsome and impressive as any south of the Yangtse.

If you arrive in Iron Gate Pass during the day you will be able to take a boat upstream to the mouth of Peacock where it empties into the Baghrash Kul. In the old days no one dared to explore these places. Both were a mystery. Recently, a flow measuring team went by boat from the Kaitu River into the Baghrash Kul and then out into the Peacock and down to Iron Gate Pass. They had never dreamed their work could be so satisfying. How wonderful to be able to solve a problem that had been puzzling people for centuries.

Although the waters of the Peacock are white and frothy as they pour through Iron Gate Pass, at its mouth they are placid. Even at the river's deepest, the measuring instruments register virtually no flow. The scenery here is entrancing. Reedy inlets lead to innumerable little lakes, each a few score *li* in circumference, and all linked together and shimmering like pearls. Lotus flowers float upon the water, wild roses fringe many of the banks. The light breeze carries an intoxicating scent. Unable to discover what this place was called in ancient times, the team of explorers has suggested the names of Wild Lotus and Wild Rose Lakes.

At the mouth of the Peacock, the explorers' team found not only beautiful lakes but also some excellent people. They were living in a nameless hamlet that had been concealed among the reeds for scores of years. A family of Uighur serfs had run away from their master and gone into hiding in the wilderness at the mouth of the Peacock River. There, they ploughed the virgin soil and made their home. Children and, later, grandchildren were born. They were frightened when the explorer team first arrived, but when they heard how the world had changed, they were overjoyed. Remembering their miserable past and thinking what the new present would mean to them, the older folk wept tears of happiness.

Today the government and Communist Party are lavishing every assistance on the nameless hamlet. The descendants of a

family of serfs, after decades of helpless poverty, have been taken into the warm embrace of the fortunate new society.

If you visit the mouth of the Peacock River today, not only will you see the beauty of the lotus and wild rose lakes, you will enjoy the hearty hospitality of the residents of the nameless hamlet. They ply you with rich milk and fragrant grain, fresh melons and sweet fruit.

At Korla, the Peacock irrigates with clean clear water the evenly patterned fields outside the city and an onion-green shelter belt of trees. On reaching Korla, the traveller who has trekked across the Gobi Desert is struck by the beauty of the place; the air seems especially fresh.

Korla means marsh. In ancient times it was a huge deserted swampland. Then waves of immigrants came from distant Kashgar and Merket, people who had been reviled in their home towns as "fools" and "barbarians." It was the painstaking labour of generations of these "barbarians" that turned Korla from a dismal marsh into the flowering oasis it is today. The narrow twisting lanes have become wide spacious streets, as straight as an arrow.

The first thing that hits your eye is the many tall chimneys and the row upon row of new factory buildings. From the green shelter belt on the west to the clear bright Peacock River on the east, you find neat lines of pottery works, iron and steel mills, cement factories, machinery works, flour mills, thermal and hydro-electric station. . . .

I understand that a few years ago Korla had only one cotton fluffing machine. Today, big chimneys pour thick smoke into the heavens and new factories gleam in the sunlight. What a sight to gladden the eyes! In the past, even iron nails had to be brought in from the outside; now Korla produces several dozen tons of iron and steel daily. Before, only a small quantity of corn meal could be ground; now the daily output of the new mills is over one hundred thousand catties of wheat flour. The Uighur peasants, who formerly ate from wooden bowls and dishes, today use gaily patterned crockery. Before, lamps burning cotton seed oil, or torches, were the only kinds of illumination

people had in their homes; now electric bulbs shed brightness all hours of the night. . . .

These changes in Korla have all taken place within the past few years. How proud we can be of the flying progress of our new society!

Whenever the name Korla is mentioned, one naturally thinks of the famous Korla pears. But if that's all it reminds you of today, you're not doing Korla nearly enough justice. In addition to a remarkable industrial development, Korla also deserves credit for producing a wide variety of delicious fruit. Except for citrus fruits and bananas, you can find here almost every kind of fruit imaginable. Notable are the fat figs sweet as honey, and white and purple mulberries. The white variety is light and sweet; the purple is a blood tonic. Korla is now building a large distillery to make mulberry wine, which they say is more fragrant than grape wine, and much more nourishing.

Before liberation, many poor Uighur peasants came to Korla from nearby towns to spend the summer and early autumn and eat the famous fruit. On the trees that ring Korla, after the mulberries fall, the apricots redden, then the peaches split with ripeness, followed finally by the ripening of the grapes and the fragrant pears.

Since liberation, Korla's fruit has become more delicious, more abundant, and has many new varieties.

Did you ever hear of winter peaches? They grow them in Korla. The peaches are still hard in late autumn. It is only in winter that they become ripe and juicy.

In Korla you can eat fresh fruit all the year round. To the people living in this rugged border region, Korla is a place of strong attraction. The city is being beautified by the planting of peach and pear trees along the streets. In spring the delicate scent of their blossoms will greet every passer-by, on wheel or on foot. In autumn, ripe heavy fruit will await only the outstretched hand. Can you imagine how lovely Korla will look!

Korla, city of flowering fruit, hive of industry, is becoming a railway centre as well. From here four lines will extend. The first will go from the southern foothills of the Tienshan range to Urumchi. The second will cross Tienshan and a thousand *li* of grasslands to Ili at our country's border. The third will swing

southwest aronnd the rim of the Tarim Basin to Kashgar on the Pamir Plateau. The fourth will cut across the Tarim Desert to Jochiang in the foothills of the Kunlun range. These four lines will add to Korla's attractiveness and prosperity.

To keep pace with its rapid development, Korla is enlarging its area. Even near the Gobi, which is quite some distance away, the ground is being irrigated and trees are being planted in preparation for the spread of the residential section. In the surrounding wilds, pastures and thousands of *mou* of farmland are being opened up. More grain, melons and vegetables have been planted. The number of cows and sheep is being increased to meet the growing demand for milk and meat. . . .

In another few years, Korla will be one of the main transport centres of southern Sinkiang. As a city, it will rank with Urumchi, Kashgar and Ili.

From Korla, together with the regional Party secretary, I went to visit a people's commune in the outskirts. It was called Kalayukung, meaning dark tamarisk – a kind of desert shrub. The name was associated with poverty and hardship.

"The commune is indeed a poor one," the Party secretary told me. "On this dry desert land there hasn't been much planting or stock raising."

As we neared the commune, we saw a wide canal cutting straight through the wilderness. On the southern side, among the red tamarisk bushes, the wild hemp and the *chichi* grass, thousands of Uighur peasants were opening up virgin land. Coming closer, we saw huge piles of licorice grass that had been pulled up by the roots.

"Can this be the place?"

Noting my pleased surprise, the Party secretary laughed. "Everything changed after the commune was formed," he said. "The big canal was dug last winter. Now 'Dark Tamarisk' is irrigating the wilds and planting late corn."

"They ought to change the name of the commune," I smiled.

"I don't agree," the Party secretary retorted. He was quite serious. "Let future generations know what a hard time their forefathers had creating this place."

An hour later, we reached the commune office. The chairman invited us to be seated on a patterned rug spread in the shade

of a mulberry tree. Dandelions bloomed along the banks of a newly-cut irrigation ditch not far off, and ducklings that had been hatched only the previous spring floated by in stately pairs.

The Party secretary sat cross-legged on one end of the rug, quietly listening to the reports of the commune's administrators regarding the opening up of new land.

"What makes you think you can give your members an average income of seventeen hundred catties of grain this year?" he suddenly asked.

"We've got irrigation this year," the commune chairman replied. "Every inch of new ground we plough will produce an extra catty!"

"Fine. If you fulfil this year's quota, the state will present you with a new tractor." The Party secretary hadn't forgotten that Dark Tamarisk was still relatively poor.

Everyone laughed delightedly.

"Do you have enough to eat now?" the Party secretary asked.

As if in answer to his question, women cooks served tea with thick milk and hot fragrant corn muffins. The Party secretary sipped his tea, then raised his head and gazed around.

"Korla is a fruit producing region," he said. "Why don't you have any fruit trees here? . . . Is Imin's orchard far?"

Crossing a plain of thorns and weeds, we arrived at Imin's orchard. It belonged to the commune and was tended by an old Uighur named Imin. The old fellow had a greying beard and his face was thin and blackened by the sun, but as he hastened forward to greet us, his voice was strongly resonant. Obviously he was full of confidence about his new job, just as he was full of love for the new society.

He led us into the orchard he had planted himself, apologizing that he had no fruit to offer us because the trees were still too young. We were very impressed to see how diligently he went about his work. Three hundred *mou* in area, every spadeful of earth had been turned by the old man personally. He had also built a horseshoe-shaped road through the orchard. Following it, we were able to view the whole place.

He had arranged the trees with neat symmetry. A shelter belt of white wax trees protected all four sides. The orchard was divided into plots of grape, pear, apple, fig, peach and apricot.

All were thriving, whether he had planted them by seed or sapling, or grafted them to original stocks.

"Let me show you something new!" The old man cheerily led us to a level piece of ground.

"Here is a Ten Varieties Tree!" he said happily, his eyes squinting against the sun's glare.

We saw a tree with many branches, but the leaves of each branch were different.

I stared. "What are the ten varieties?"

"Dairen apples from the Northeast, Laiyang pears from Shantung, jade dates from Honan, Sanyuan pomegranates from Shensi –" he recited with an ecstatic smile.

"You've got all the best fruit that grow within the Great Wall!" I interrupted, grasping his hand.

"We never had fruit in Kalayukung. I want to produce something really delicious that can be enjoyed by our sons and grandchildren!" The old man smiled, his face suffused with pleasure.

"Not only our sons and grandchildren, but you yourself and all the people of Kalayukung will enjoy fine fruit!" The Party secretary, who had been deep in thought, also smiled, his eyes dancing.

Karakum, which means peacock, is about one hundred *li* south of Korla. Thoroughfares lined by old willows, the Peacock River flowing by on the south, ancient elegant buildings, quiet streets – Karakum is a handsome little city.

I went to visit the old folks home of the Hsingping Commune, twenty or thirty *li* away.

Walking west on a broad level highway, from time to time I could see pink flowered Lop Nor hemp plants that grew among the jade-green plane trees shading both sides of the road. The charm of the rustic scene added verve to my step.

Except for the occasional tapping of a white winged woodpecker, or the liquid notes of a golden oriole, it was very quiet. I became aware of the faint sound of footsteps up ahead, and I hastened my stride, hoping to find a companion for my walk.

As I rounded the bend, I caught up with an Uighur man carrying a large bundle. The weight of it made him tread heavily. He was a healthy, bearded fellow.

We started to chat. He asked where I was going. I said to the commune's old folks home.

He looked at me rather surprised, as if unable to understand why I should make a special trip just for that. "We've plenty of old folks in Karakum," he said, "some of them over a hundred. . . . Oh well, I'm heading in that direction myself. I'll show you where it is."

"Where are you going?"

"I'm bringing my wife some bedding."

It was my turn to be surprised. Men in these parts used to limit the activities of their wives strictly. They never let them out of the house, to say nothing of bringing them bedding.

"How come?" I asked.

"Her production brigade is planting corn. It's a rush job, and they're sleeping out in the fields at night," he replied with a smile.

An hour or so later, he led me to a quiet grove. Towering green poplars, flaming red apricots, fragrant date trees with golden blossoms, surrounded a neat adobe building of pale yellow. Some elderly people were sitting beneath a grape arbour before the house. They were dappled green by the shade of the leaves.

This was the old folks home of the Hsingping Commune.

I walked up to the arbour and greeted an old greybeard.

He enthusiastically took my hand and pulled me to sit down beside him on the rug that was spread there. Then taking a small cloth pouch from his garter, he opened it and handed me a slip of paper.

It read: "Wuchiuke, 119 years of age. . . ." Plainly, the old fellow was afraid that his accent might not be understood by visitors from other parts of the country and had this slip written specially.

A young woman wearing a beaded Sinkiang skull cap brought the old folks their lunch on a large tray. She was their special cook.

"I hear you have several people over one hundred in Karakum," I said.

She laughed. "We have several right here in our commune." She pointed. "That man, and that, and that woman are all more than a hundred years old!"

One of the old men she indicated had a silver beard down to his chest; the other was blind. The old lady had white hair like frost.

I watched them eat their lunch – bowls of soft noodles with finely sliced mutton, garnished with chopped scallion. Old Wuchiuke wasn't satisfied with one bowl. The young woman handed him another.

"They have excellent appetites!" I cried delightedly.

The hearing of the blind old man was very acute. He put down his bowl and chopsticks, wiped his white mustache and said in a moved voice, "If it weren't for the Communist Party we old folks would never enjoy the blessings of socialism!"

"Those are true words. When we were young, we had nothing to eat but the roots of the wild grass that grew by the Peacock River." Old Wuchiuke spoke with the authority of the eldest man present.

"But in spite of your age, you old grandpas haven't forgotten to paint golden flowers and embroider jade leaves to embellish our happy days," the young woman said softly.

"What do you mean?" I asked, puzzled.

"Old Grandpa Wuchiuke refuses to remain idle. He planted all those onions in the back of the house." The young woman smiled, but there were tears in her eyes. Pointing at the blind man, she told me, "This old grandpa last winter insisted on carrying ice to the kitchen and fertilizer to the fields. . . ."

"But he can't see," I exclaimed.

"That's what the commune Party secretary said when he urged the old man not to exert himself. The old grandpa said there's only one road to socialism; if he couldn't see it with his eyes, he could see it with his heart. . . ."

"My eyes are dark but my heart is bright!" The blind old man suddenly rose emotionally and extended a trembling hand to grasp my arm. "Come, I'll show you around the house." I hastened to support him. With tottering steps he led me to the adobe building. In spite of his blindness, he followed the path unfailingly.

First I saw a large cheery room with windows on three sides. Sunlight was streaming in. On a brick platform bed a brightly coloured rug was spread. One end of the bed was piled high

with clean quilts. On the wall was a big tapestry of flowers and birds; evenly spaced rams' horns served as hooks for the old folks' fine cloth coats.

"You see? Sleeping in such a pretty room, we have good dreams every night!" The old man's blind eyes seemed to take in everything.

"In the old days, people like us could only curl up among the reeds," a hoarse voice behind me suddenly said.

I looked. A number of other old people had come into the room.

The blind man climbed upon the platform bed and took a brand new *tumbra* – a two stringed guitar – down from one of the ram horn hooks. He caressed its brightly polished head, then strummed it lightly.

"This kind of guitar was invented by a prisoner in the jail, years ago. They say that then it was only a stick and two copper wires. Its tone was low and mournful."

I sighed. "How did it assume its present form?"

"You might say the *tumbra* is like our lives – from low and mournful it has become clear and gay." Lines of a smile formed in the corners of his mouth.

My mood also changed. I laughed. "Was this *tumbra* bought recently?"

"This spring. The commune gave it to me as a present for my hundredth birthday." The old man patted the guitar. Tears rolled from his sightless eyes.

"Play. Play a song for our guest from afar!" another old man urged quietly.

Obviously an old folk minstrel, the blind man strummed with shaking fingers. To the accompaniment of the throbbing strings, in a deep old voice he sang a song of the Uighur people. . . .

It wasn't until mid-afternoon, when the golden rays of the sun were slanting in the west behind the towering poplars that, with much emotion, I left the verdant fragrance of the old folks home.

The following morning I departed from Karakum in an automobile. We crossed the Peacock River Bridge and sped towards Tikenlik, three hundred *li* inside the Tarim Desert. Tikenlik, which means "bounteous fields and pastures," is a lovely green

by Huang Chou

pearl amid the desert sands. Situated on the lower reaches of the Tarim River, it is not far from the famed lake, Lop Nor.

It is something of a miracle to find so beautiful a city deep in the desert. I couldn't help marvelling at the way the Uighur ancestors of the present inhabitants had made this place fertile, planted it with crops and fruit trees, multiplied their flocks. . . .

As our car rolled across the burning desert, I gazed at the dead parched trees, the bare alkaline land, the sand dunes that marched with the fierce gales. But in the new Tikenlik, we were greeted by an atmosphere that was cool and moist.

The city's water comes from the Tarim River, which also irrigates the wide fields and pastures and flows in channels past every door. Trees before each house cast their reflections in the clear little streams. The yellow sands of the desert are unable to obscure the greenness of Tikenlik. Here wheat grows higher than a man and cotton bolls burst in abundance.

Thundering tractors tell us that another busy planting season has begun. Combines are being readied, indicating that in other fields the time for harvest is near at hand.

Tikenlik is the richest place in Karakum county. In addition to wheat and cotton, fat cows and sheep, sweet melons and fruit are also raised, and on the breeze comes the pleasant aroma of sesame.

The local peasants cherish the benefits they enjoy today. Before liberation, the Kuomintang stretched its long paw into this desert city, and tyrant landlords sucked the people's blood. Even in the period immediately after liberation, spies and bandits still met secretly in Tikenlik.

Today, the city is keeping pace with the rest of the country's forward strides. Here too we find people's communes, seas of wheat, fruit galore, thriving flocks. . . . "Bounteous fields and pastures" Tikenlik today is finally worthy of its name.

As the people of our nation's border areas steadily advance, a wonderful life unfolds before them. Huge Sinkiang has a limitless future. My thousand *li* journey covered only a small part of it.

Peasant Artist Kuo Chung-min →

by Wang Hung

Wang Hung, born in Hopei Province in 1923, joined the anti-Japanese guerrilla forces of the Taihang district in 1938. Later, he served in the army. It was not until 1955 that he went to study traditional painting at the Central Institute of Fine Arts. He is at present in charge of the Art Section in the Peking *Gungren Ribao* (Worker's Daily).

The Kuo Chung-min depicted in the picture is an outstanding contemporary peasant artist.

LI JO-PING

Sketches from the Tsaidam

The Sun-and-Moon Mountain and Lake Chinghai

I knew the Tsaidam Basin to be an immensely rich region and had long wanted to visit China's great Northwest Plateau. And here I was at last in Chinghai, staying for a few days in Sining, the seat of the provincial government. I could hardly wait to shoulder my bedding-roll and set off for the Tsaidam Basin.

We started in the darkest hour just before dawn; but though the interior of our lorry was black, the bright street lamps were a cheerful sight.

Our headlights picked out a silver highway. We could see the road ahead and hear the whispering of aspens.

In the darkness before dawn, listening to the whispering of the aspens, my heart was full. At last my old dream of treading the Tsaidam Basin was to come true. I had some idea of the

Li Jo-ping, a young prose writer, has worked for a time in the Tsaidam area.

beauty and fascination of this highway illumined by our headlights, as well as of the courage that had gone into its building. And I must confess that my eyes were moist as the sun rose over the horizon of the steppe. Dawn was so breathtakingly lovely on this superb plateau.

Dawn greeted the keen wind of the plateau.

Dawn galloped down the Chinghai-Tibet Highway. Clad in beams of early sunlight, bounding swiftly along, it awoke the eagles and the lesser birds, awoke the mountain tops, the mighty earth. Everything on the plateau looked up and came to life.

By August, the wheat on the tableland is yellow, the rape is in flower, barley sways in the morning breeze. In the early sunlight, the steppe all the way to the distant mountains was a realm of gold.

Our lorry rolled on through the morning wind.

The fresh morning raised the spirits of our tightly-packed party, and we fell into cheerful conversation. We were a very mixed group. Among us were Tibetans in purple fur-lined gowns fringed with tiger-skin, and Huis in white caps and long black gowns. There were a couple of sturdy peasants bound for the Tsagan Usu State Farm, and some powerfully-built carpenters on their way to Chaka. There were salt miners, charcoal-burners, road-builders and herdsmen travelling to Golmo, the Great Tsaidan, Mangyai and the Kunlun Mountains. . . . You could see at a glance that, with the exception of four Tibetans on their way back to Lhasa, the rest were going to different tasks in the Tsaidam Basin. It was a very friendly crowd.

The sun came out. The day grew warm.

We drove past Huangyuan County to the gateway of the Tibetan autonomous *chou* in Chinghai — the Sun-and-Moon Mountain.

This is a steep, sheer mountain. The ascent is difficult and dangerous. Half way up, our lorry seemed to be standing on end; the engine roared and strained as we inched forward. It takes roughly an hour to reach the top by car.

By the roadside at the top stands a rectangular stone tablet inscribed in red with the magnificent name: Sun-and-Moon Mountain. Here the azure sky seems so close it might touch your head, while the white clouds wreathing the summit are like silver

brooks or snow-white flowers you could stretch out a hand to reach. This rugged, fabulous mountain lives up to its name.

The Sun-and-Moon Mountain is the gateway to the Tibetan autonomous *chou* in Chinghai, the watershed of the farm and pastureland. To its east lie farm-houses, the Huang River, fields of wheat, barley and rape. To the west are soaring mountain ranges and the boundless steppe like a sea of emerald. In August this tableland presents a remarkable picture from a distance — on one side a world of gold, on the other a world of green. For centuries the minority peoples on the Chinghai-Tibet Plateau have come and gone over the Sun-and-Moon Mountain and pursued their different occupations on its sides. Tilling the land, hunting or herding, they have created riches and worked miracles in their battle against the elements. For centuries, too, countless pious pilgrims, lamas and living Buddhas have crossed the Sun-and-Moon Mountain, as well as men and women skilled in singing and dancing. There is no end to the beautiful lengends and tales of heroes handed down here.

Tradition links Princess Wen Cheng of the Tang dynasty with the Sun-and-Moon Mountain. When she was betrothed to Prince Sron-tsan Gambo of Tibet she set out in a sedan-chair from Changan, the capital, and travelled west for thousands of *li* till she reached this mountain. To her, from its steep, inhospitable heights, the sun and moon no longer looked the same as from Changan, and she started grieving. Her father, Emperor Tai Tsung, learning of her distress, had a golden sun and golden moon made and sent to this mountain. . . .

By now our lorry had crossed the summit and started down. When I looked back, the mountain seemed to be raising its head to confer with the blue sky; a few minutes later it appeared to be floating in space on banks of white clouds. The unearthly scene makes those who view it draw a comparison between these peaks and the familiar hills of home. Awe and wonder tempt one to weave legends round such a mountain.

I lost count of the number of bends in the long, winding road down the mountainside.

At the foot of the mountain runs a stream called Backward Flowing. Most rivers in China flow east, but this flows west. Legend has it that when Princess Wen Cheng reached the foot

of the mountain she left her sedan-chair and continued west on horseback. The wild mountains, rugged country and steppe stretching endlessly ahead filled her with such foreboding and desolation that she wept in her longing for home. Her tears moved the rain in the sky and called forth an answer from the stream which began to flow backward, to follow the westward path of the princess. . . .

The road Princess Wen Cheng travelled in the Tang dynasty to Tibet must certainly have been both hard and forbidding, and we can understand her shedding tears. But today a broad, safe highway crosses the mountains and steppe so that lorry after lorry, convoy after convoy, are bringing true the dreams of happiness embodied by past travellers in countless legends. New legends are also being told today about the heroes who built the road over the Sun-and-Moon Mountain, and the first town of the steppe has sprung up on the banks of Backward Flowing Stream. Here are hostels, canteens and shops. Tibetan herdsmen can pasture their yaks here and rest. Prospectors on their way to the Tsaidam Basin stop here for a hot meal.

The stream is still flowing backwards. But life in its normal course is surging west with boundless splendour.

After a short rest at Backward Flowing Stream, we continued our journey.

Before us as far as eye could see stretched the vast, enchanting grassland.

From one side of that vast sea of waving green a herd of shaggy yaks approached us. A ruddy-faced old man on one of the yaks was jolting leisurely towards us. On our other side was a herd of grey and roan colts watched over by a dashing young herdsman in a felt hat, who shouted from time to time or galloped in among the herd. Further on we came to a huge flock of sheep and skipping, frisking lambs. A rosy, sunburnt shepherdess with long, thick plaits, wearing a long gown with a coloured border, cracked her whip at the sheep with a smile. Then she burst into song – the sound carried far away.

The grasslands stretched before us, the shepherdess' song floated through the air. The enchanting steppe cast a spell over us.

A drive over the steppe has indescribable charm.

Suddenly, to the northwest, an arched belt of brilliant colour flashed into view.

The other passengers cried: "Lake Chinghai!"

A young Tibetan with a golden dagger at his belt snatched off his black trilby and waved it. Then he surprised us by bursting into loud song – his greeting to the Chinghai!

Lake Chinghai (Koko Nor) lies across the steppe, sparkling like a great emerald. Rippling and twinkling, she reminded me of an emerald lute, her ruffled waves of the lute strings. The breeze seemed to carry her haunting music towards us.

All too slowly the lorry carried us to her shore.

When the lorry at last drew up by Great Lama River, with one accord we jumped down and ran to the lakeside.

I ran across turf overgrown with wild flowers.

I ran to the edge of the lake.

Seen from the distant hills, the Chinghai had been serene, gentle and lovely. From the shore, however, she revealed her pride and strength. Great emerald waves leaped into the air and beat against the shore to make mighty music, as with infinite passion she pounded the steppe and hurled a challenge to the sky.

Some wild ducks flew over, flapping their wings. They sported with the waves, skimmed the surface and rose to wheel in the air. Eagles with coldly gleaming eyes and cruel hooked beaks were sternly ranged upon the crags around. When we walked along the shore they spread their great wings and flew over our heads to circle the lake like sentries. These eagles stand guard over Lake Chinghai.

The Chinghai is one of the greatest lakes on China's Northwest Plateau. For centuries men have marvelled at this inland sea which personifies their dreams of joy and beauty. According to an old local history, *New Records of Sining Prefecture*, the Chinghai was known as The Fairy Sea. "In extent it measures over seven hundred *li*. Into it many rivers pour, so that on every side of this sea are streams and springs, lush grass well fit for cattle. . . ." Mid-sea Hill in the centre of the lake is also named Dragon Colt Island. According to the same old record: "Each winter when the sea freezes over the best mares are driven to this hill, and when taken back in spring they are in foal. Their foals are known as 'dragon colts,' and most of

them grow into splendid steeds. . . ." Again we read: "There is a creature in this sea with the body of an ox and the head of a panther. It has white fur with black markings, and also red and green hair. It leaps over the waves as swiftly as a startled falcon. When it sees men near the shore, it plunges into the water. No one knows what creature this may be. . . ." Many are the mysterious legends about the Chinghai.

This is the region that produces the celebrated "ice fish" of Chinghai. After the great lake freezes over each winter, the fishermen make holes in the ice. They go out on the lake by moonlight or with lanterns and light bonfires. Then the fish swim up in shoals and leap out through the openings in the ice to be caught in hundreds. These "ice fish" sell widely all over the Northwest Plateau and the Tsaidam Basin.

Lake Chinghai seems to tumble for joy on the steppe. For centuries countless generations, countless heroes, have grown up under her wing. The grass here springs green and lush, the cattle thrive and are strong, and the vast lake is a kindly mother to them all.

In fancy, I conjured up the rolling grassland. I saw two yaks playfully butt each other, a lamb suck milk from its dam. The young herdsman in the felt hat, bent forward in his saddle, was galloping in hot pursuit of his colts. The shepherdess with thick plaits flourished her whip and broke into song once more at the top of her voice, as if she could sing for ever. Was it a love song or ditty in praise of the steppe? As she sang, the young herdsman reined in his horse, the white clouds leaned down to listen, the grassland smiled.

Who would not sing when life is so splendid and glorious?

Reluctantly I left Lake Chinghai. Even more magnificent scenes were waiting for me.

The Charhan Salt Bridge

While crossing the Gobi Desert on my way to the Tsaidam Basin I visited Golmo, the new town which has sprung up from the road-builders' headquarters. From Golmo I headed north again to Tsaidam, travelling with General Mu Sheng-chung, head of the Chinghai-Tibet Highway Bureau.

Soon our jeep left the Kunlun Mountains and Golmo far behind.

Yet I could not tear my thoughts away from the road-builders at the foot of the Kunlun Mountains. At high altitudes, in bitter cold, these brave men had crossed towering peaks and braved countless perils and hardships to make a road across the Chinghai-Tibet Plateau. And while building a highway, they had founded a city in the Gobi – Golmo.

The sun climbed high in the sky, a welcome breeze blew. We drove along the road they had made from Golmo to Tunhuang.

A pea-soupy mist hung over the Gobi Desert. As far as eye could see stretched a desolate, lonely waste of wind and sand. But the thought of the heroes who had passed this way and were still toiling here to build up our country seemed to charge the very air with vitality and made my pulses quicken.

Moreover, looking down I saw short wild flax sway in the wind on either side of the highway. Covered with dust, it was not particularly impressive, but at least it grew sturdy and green. White brambles had thrust up from between the pebbles to put forth branches and flowers, and despite the blinding sandstorms of the Gobi they were laden with berries. Then there was the desert willow with its red trunk and branches festooned with green tendrils, which stopped as if to whisper to passers-by. I could not but marvel at the freshness and charm of this tree in the waterless desert.

General Mu kept his eyes on the landscape outside. Though past middle age and grizzled, he had bold designs on the Gobi. Pointing to the desert, he told me: "This place is a treasure-trove. See that wild flax? They say it makes first-rate linen. If we give it fertilizer, it will grow big and tall and multiply. That's another side line for us."

He chuckled reflectively. It seems the men living in the Tsaidam Basin prize every single thing there. Wild flax makes first-rate linen. The red and black berries of the white bramble can be eaten – they are said to be a rare variety of lycium. And the desert willow is a favourite with prospectors, who use its branches to build those distinctive huts and shelters which dot the mountains, gorges and desert hereabout.

After this stretch of the Gobi, a completely new scene met our eyes.

There was no wild flax here, not a weed; nothing but a marshy expanse of red-black soil which glistened as if newly turned up by hundreds of tractors. So vast that you could see no end, it was a magnificently impressive sight.

This was Charhan Salt Lake, long known to me by name and one of the places I most wanted to visit. It was not what I had expected. The oozy immensity was sparkling with countless points of light, as if sown with silver seeds. The scene had an unearthly beauty all its own. And under our feet was an inexhaustible supply of salt.

I looked round for the bridge which I had heard spanned the lake.

The jeep was making good time. A white speck appeared ahead and as we drew nearer revealed itself as a signboard.

"Salt Bridge!" General Mu called back over his shoulder and smiled significantly.

The jeep put on speed. It flashed past the signboard, then rolled so softly and swiftly that I felt we were skimming through the air. There was no rumbling or shaking: our progress was steady, easy and comfortable. The bridge was as black and glossy as asphalt. Smooth, broad and hard it streaked like a long straight river into the distance. There were no pillars or piles sunk into the ground, no carved stone balustrades. Nothing but a roadway bridging the salt lake – a joy to look at and a treat to drive over.

This bridge, one of the wonders of socialist construction, was the work of those men at the foot of the Kunlun Mountains who built the Chinghai-Tibet Highway. General Mu, whose jeep I was sharing, had been in charge of its construction and was now

viewing it in comfort. It had cost some hard thinking and hard work at the time, though.

In March 1954, a team set out with five hundred camels to survey the course of the Golmo-Tunhuang Highway. It set out from Tunhuang in the province of Kansu. In those days the Tsaidam Basin was so deserted that prospecting was hard. As the general put it, his men just went off with a compass and "slogged away." When, having crossed mountain ranges, they doggedly made their way to this boundless salt lake, their faces fell and they stared round in dismay.

The men put their heads together. A detour was out of the question – the lake was too huge and too much work would be involved. That meant the highway would have to pass over the lake, yet they knew of no parallel case in the whole of history. Since this road was needed, however, to open up the Tsaidam Basin, they studied the salt lake, devised ways and means and exercised all their ingenuity. Then, boldly sweeping precedent aside, they set to work to build a road over the lake.

All materials had to be obtained locally – from the salt lake itself. Now though salt incrustations look sticky, moist and soft, they are as hard as iron to the touch. By dint of great effort you may rip up a piece the size of an egg, but your fingers will ache – possibly bleed – for days. Still, that strength might be turned to good account for a bridge; and however hard the crust of salt, it could hardly stand up to steel drills and hand-grenades. So day and night the workmen drilled and blasted. And having paved the road with salt slabs, they discovered that pumping up liquid salt and pouring this over the bridge reinforced the surface and made it smooth as a mirror. So the Golmo-Tunhuang Highway was built at virtually no expense. And this bridge over a salt lake is one of the wonders of the modern world.

Perhaps you are wondering, friends, what would happen to the bridge in case of rain or snow? Wouldn't the whole structure crumble and topple into the lake? But no, there's no danger of collapse. Oddly enough, the whole vast arid Tsaidam Basin is peculiarly short of rain and snow, while the salt lake almost never experiences either. Lack of rainfall is not a good thing,

but it had its advantages here since it made possible this bridge of salt. I fancy this is the only such bridge in the world.

The general told me with a twinkle: "When we finished the bridge we put up a wooden signboard: Salt Bridge. Length 31 kilometres. Maximum speed 80 kilometres." That is amusing, if you like. The signboards on most bridges set a speed limit. But though the average car does not do much more than 50 kilometres an hour, at Charhan Salt Bridge you are told not to exceed 80. Drivers are usually so tickled by this that they go all out.

While the jeep flew over the bridge, the general disclosed some interesting facts about salt. I knew that many sections of the roads by which we had come – the Chinghai-Tibet Highway, the Golmo-Tunhuang Highway, the Chaka-Mengyai Highway and the other roads leading to farmlands, pasturelands and oil-fields – had been paved with local salt. On the southeast border of the Tsaidam Basin, I had visited Chaka Salt Well which produces a delicious black salt known far and wide. The manager told me that its salt reserves total 500 million tons, enough to last China's six hundred million for one hundred and sixty years. But that was simply one small pocket of salt in this region. Six or seven wells have been discovered, like those at Koko and Kuntali, which are believed to be larger than Chaka.

In any case, what of this lake beneath our feet?

General Mu told me: "According to preliminary estimates, the thinnest incrustations go down for about 20 metres, the thickest for 40, and the area is over 1,500 square kilometres. This lake alone contains over 100,000,000,000 tons of salt. They say the salt of the Tsaidam Basin would last the whole world for a good 30,000 years."

Here, then, is a tremendous supply of raw material for China's developing chemical industry and for her other branches of industry and agriculture.

"The salt mined here is fit for consumption without being refined," the general went on. "We've over a hundred men mining it now to the east. Next year they plan to produce 100,000 tons."

But for the Charhan Salt Lake this is merely a drop in an ocean.

Smoothly and swiftly our jeep flew over the silver sparkling bridge, and my spirits soared.

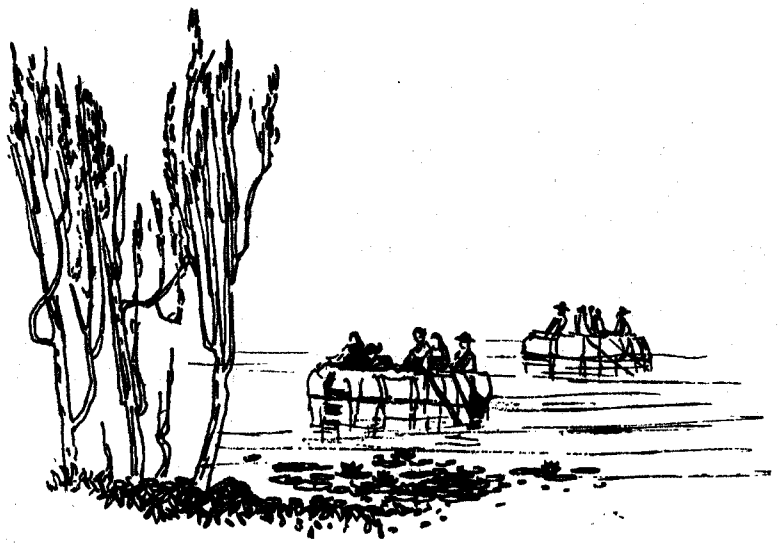
Soon we reached the north end of the bridge and stopped at a row of caves. The general jumped out and I followed him into a cave. Its occupants were out at work. I looked up and noticed a strange glitter in the roof, where cracks in the rock brine were flashing. This cave was made of salt.

Apparently salt can be put to any use. Tsaidam has a salt lake, salt hills, salt roads, a salt bridge and salt caves too. The Tsaidam Basin, which has been called a sea of oil, might equally well be called a sea of salt.

Well, we had crossed the Charhan Salt Bridge.

I looked back across the great lake at the traffic shuttling over the bridge. Convoys heading north seemed to be part of a mirage, for they changed into black specks which slowly climbed higher and higher towards the clouds. The southward-bound traffic glittered like stars which had alighted on the bridge to throw off countless dazzling beams of light; but when they drew near we saw that these rays were reflected from the radiant rock brine by their glass. That is one of the sights of the salt lake.

Staring long and intently at Charhan Salt Bridge, I felt an urge to sing. Well, friends, let us first sing of the men who built the bridge, for they are the ones who are working miracles.



YUNG MEI

The Yak-hide Coracle

The yak-hide coracle is skimming over,
White pearls of foam are leaping from each oar;
Row faster, yak-hide ferry,
To reach the further shore!

Within a garden on the further shore
The fairest blooms on all the earth are blowing,
And by the blooms sits Janchen,
Her skirts so sweetly flowing.

Then wait awhile, my Janchen, till I come,
Be patient yet awhile – the stream is wide;
No longer need I gaze afar,
Kept from my Janchen's side.

Though I have not a cent to bless my name,
Though I am but a serf, low-born and poor,

This coracle will carry me
Across to Janchen's shore.

At last its wicked owner has bowed low;
Now we poor serfs can ferry to and fro!

Raise Your Heads

What is that you say, man?
When a noble sits,
You must look no higher than his knees?
When a noble stands,
You must look no higher than his belt?
You must bow before him
And show your tongue in respect?

Serfs of yesterday,
Raise your heads!
Straighten your sturdy backs,
Stride on your way!
We are the masters of these snowy heights,
Not those traitors in foreign pay.

Translated by Gladys Yang

Notes on Literature and Art

SUNG SHUANG

Modern Chinese Short Stories

Several dozen literary magazines are being published in different parts of China today, and these are filled largely with short stories. We cannot but be struck by two encouraging signs. One is that, following China's rapid advance, the ranks of short story writers are growing apace. All over the country writers old and new, as well as spare-time writers engaged in agriculture or industry, are rallying round the local literary magazines and constitute a redoubtable force. By embodying in literature what is newest and most beautiful in our swiftly changing life, they give richness and vitality to our magazines and fill in certain gaps in the garden of socialist literature with stories of considerable merit. The other encouraging sign is the growing variety in subject matter and style. Our modern short stories give a varied and graphic picture of every period of the revolution, dealing with many widely different themes in different ways.

Village life is the theme that preponderates in our short stories. The fate and struggle of the peasants have always been very close to the heart of our writers. Since liberation the Party has led five hundred million peasants in the great socialist revolution and socialist construction, which have brought about profound changes in the villages. As a result of land reform, agricultural co-operation

Sung Shuang is a young literary critic.

and the establishment of people's communes, China's peasants are little by little shaking off the chains of the age-old rural economy with its private ownership of land. With determination and absolute confidence, they are treading the broad, bright highway of socialism. Stories written about village life in the last ten years have presented different aspects of this epoch-making process, including the struggle in the villages between the capitalist and the socialist road, the clash between old and new, the peasants' renunciation of land tenure, the growth of a socialist outlook and morality, as well as many colourful features of socialist construction in rural life.

Chao Shu-li's distinctive works on village life are profound in significance and wide in range. In addition to his novel *Sanliwan Village,* which gives an exciting picture of the clash between the new and the old, he has written many widely popular stories since liberation. Of these *Registration* is an outstanding example with its central figure, Lovely Moth, typical of so many women of her generation. Bitter humiliations in the old society have sealed her mind with feudal views on marriage. But she herself had no freedom in marriage, she understands the wretched lot of women. Years later, when her daughter falls in love, she too is persecuted and abused by feudal-minded villagers. But times have changed. The Party's policy of emancipating women has stirred Lovely Moth so deeply that she breaks the fetters of feudal convention and takes her stand beside her daughter to fight for a new happiness. This story has been adapted by so many local opera companies that Lovely Moth is a household word in China. Chao Shu-li's *Steeling,* published in August 1958, quickly won an equal popularity. This story shows us the contradictions among the peasants arising out of changes in village life. With inimitable humour it ridicules those two representatives of conservatism — Sore Legs and Always Hungry — and makes kindly thrusts at the rightist conservative ideas of the co-operative chairman, who needs to be thoroughly "steeled."

Li Chun's *Not That Road* was one of the first stories to give a good picture of the struggle between the spontaneous forces of capitalism in the countryside and the peasants determined to take the socialist road. A new middle peasant, Sung Lao-ting, wants to buy land from a poor peasant who is in difficulties; but his own

son – a Party member – opposes this. By enlisting the help of others, the son enables the poor peasant to solve his problems and in the process educates his own father. The sharp exposure of the dangerous trend to capitalism in the countryside brings vividly before us a serious problem which affects the fate of five hundred million peasants, while the change of heart of a new middle peasant proclaims the victory of the socialist outlook over capitalist trends. This excellent story is deservedly popular.

Ma Feng's *I Knew All Along*, Wang Wen-shih's *The Shrewd Vegetable Vendor* and *By the Well* all deal with the behaviour of middle peasants and rich middle peasants after joining co-operatives. The central characters in these stories may differ in their degree of selfish individualism after they join the co-operative, but one thing they have in common – each of them undergoes tremendous changes in the new society, and this indicates the strength of Party leadership which is rapidly transforming the outlook of villagers of every sort. Another common feature of these stories is that all three brim over with life and humour.

Another group of stories which paint a vivid picture of the struggle between socialism and capitalism in the countryside is represented by Sun Chien's *Tale of a Scar*, told by a demobilized soldier. Many years before this, when his family lived in dire poverty, his elder brother Hsiu-teh saw him off to join the revolution. Now, wounded in battle, he comes back to his village to farm. But Hsiu-teh, who became a middle peasant after land reform, has married a grasping wife and their sole aim in life is to grow rich. They adopt a hostile attitude to the ex-soldier. We are not shown the reform of Hsiu-teh, who represents the spontaneous trend to capitalism, after he wounded his brother who insists on taking the socialist road. This tale serves as a timely warning that men like Hsiu-teh cannot alter their illusions about capitalism overnight, and we must remain constantly alert to the complex struggle between two ways of life in the countryside. This is the main message of this story.

Lo Pin-chi's *New Year Holiday* presents two warmly human characters, District Party Secretary Ting and the messenger Young Chang. Like other works by this author, it is written in an eminently readable style. It presents the new socialist characters

and the fine qualities which have developed in Chinese villages today, reflecting something of the spirit of our age.

Chou Li-po's *A Visitor from Peking* and *The Family on the Other Side of the Mountain* also deal with China's new socialist villages. With irrepressible verve, the author conveys the new atmosphere in the countryside. Many of the stories in Chien Hsien-ai's collection *New Shoots* also rejoice the hearts of readers by their accounts of dramatic new developments in the countryside.

The new types of peasant described in these stories are unforgettable figures. They have cast off the fetters of the small peasant economy, the hankering after private ownership of land, the illusions about capitalism. With socialist enthusiasm and determination, they are beginning to show completely new qualities and becoming progressive men and women with a socialist outlook. Aunt Shen in Sha Ting's *Storm* is typical of the forward-looking village women past middle age. Her sufferings in the old society and her experience after liberation make her instinctively love and trust the Party and the new society; thus when tendencies to capitalism crop up in her village she is quick to sense and oppose this threat to the Party and the new society. Ordinary, forward-looking men and women like her are the pillars of socialist construction in the villages. Another story by Sha Ting, *Lu Chia-hsiu*, mirrors the high tide of socialist revolution in the countryside during the first half of 1955. Lu Chia-hsiu is a poor peasant girl whose whole family is determined to join the co-operative, but she is refused several times by those in charge. The determination she shows, despite such rebuffs, to take the socialist road is both touching and impressive. These two stories use a wealth of graphic detail to show villages seething with the clash of two forces and convey to readers a sense of great vistas opening up. Liu Ching's *Unyielding as Iron* in quiet simple language builds up an authentic figure of a peasant, poor, backward, ignorant, who through years of suffering develops the ability to fight stubbornly for his class interests. When the other villagers are confused by the tussle between socialism and capitalism in the countryside, he remains as firm as a rock. Even when he stands alone, misunderstood by the other peasants, he represents their true interests. The creation of this old peasant, so utterly loyal to the Party and the cause of socialism, is one of the most notable achievements in our modern short stories.

Kang Cho is known as a writer about young people in the countryside. *My Two Landlords* and *Spring Sowing, Autumn Harvest* both have romantic themes. The first describes a young couple who win happiness by brushing aside feudal conventions and defeating the forces of feudalism, while the second shows how the young peasants in the course of labour raise their political consciousness and find happiness. Chou Chang-lin, in the second story, is the very embodiment of strength and vigour; he helps us to appreciate the joy and nobility of labour and indicates the speed with which the young peasants are maturing. The character of the carpenter in Wang Wen-shih's *The Master Carpenter* is brought out by richly humorous incidents. Often forgetting food and sleep, seeking no personal glory or profit and ignoring the taunts of others, the carpenter devotes his whole energy to improving farm tools. His selfless labour for the common good bears witness to his splendid socialist outlook.

Kuo Tsai-hsien in Su Wei's *The Old Hired Hand* is another vividly presented old man whose loyalty to his own class is unshakable. He cannot control his hatred for Old Ginger, the ex-landlord for whom he worked for twenty years who is deliberately sabotaging their work. But in the struggle that follows, this honest old man keeps himself well in hand and shows great shrewdness in the way he carries out the Party's policy for dealing with enemies.

Uncle Chao in Ma Feng's *Uncle Chao, the Stockman* is another peasant filled with revolutionary optimism and the Communist willingness to work without reward for the next generation. His shrewdness and humour give us an insight into the cheerful round of village life, and he personifies the peasants' proud determination to take the socialist road.

Old Meng Kuang-tai in Li Chun's story by that title is another striking example of the new man, who reveals his sterling qualities by the high political acumen and initiative with which he protects the interests of the co-operative. This story is superbly written, having the authentic flavour of the country. The hero Wu Sung-ming of Liu Chi's *A Village Elder* is a true-hearted upright old peasant, who looks upon the co-operative as his home and puts it first in all he does. Through this central figure the author

not only epitomizes the dynamic life of the country but the cheerfulness with which the older peasants take the socialist road.

Hao Jan has also given us several stories dealing with village life today. In *Shih Shan-po,* he sketches the far-reaching changes brought about in a mountain district by Shih Shan-po, a vividly delineated Communist. Shih's craving for culture and scientific knowledge, his initiative, keenness and hard-earned achievements transform the poverty-stricken and backward region. This is a true picture of a village Communist, working tirelessly, shouldering heavy responsibilities, and pressing ceaselessly forward to build happiness for his fellow men.

During the last few years completely new types of Chinese womanhood have appeared in our stories. They join in socialist construction and in every kind of social activity as enthusiastically as men, and by their admirable showing and fine moral qualities change their status in society. No longer fettered by the old family system or by a feudal mentality, they identify themselves with the collective. In *New Friends,* Wang Wen-shih has given us two women team-leaders, La-yueh and Shu-lan. They are totally different in temperament. La-yueh has a sharp tongue and plenty of courage, while Shu-lan is gentle and quiet; but both are activated by the same spirit and radiant with the ideals of Communism. The competition between their two teams for a red flag, their mutual helpfulness, friendliness and lack of jealousy, their relations with their husbands and mothers-in-law, all bear witness to the fact that they have become responsible citizens in the age of socialism.

Hsi Jung's *Trouble,* Chi Hsueh-pei's *Storm over a Little White Flag,* Tuan Chuan-fa's *Ling Hung-tieh* and other stories of this type give us women drawn to the life. Nearly all of them, by outstanding work and high moral qualities revealed in the course of different struggles, overcome the feudal prejudice against women, thereby changing their own social position and fate. The Youth Leaguer Tien Yen in Lin Chin-lan's *Spring Thunder* is an endearing figure. By a skilful description of the girl's quarrel and reconciliation with her father, the author conjures up for us the drama of life in the countryside and the swift development of the elder as well as the younger generation. Tien Yen, in

particular, most clearly reveals the characteristics of this age: she breaks boldly through all obstacles to speed forward along the socialist road.

Yu-chun in Liu Chen's *Sister Chun* is a girl with a will of her own and all the vitality of youth. Her character is revealed little by little in the process of lovers' quarrels and a battle with feudal conventions. Her victory on the question of her marriage reflects how the new social revolution in the villages has destroyed the old customs and traditional outlook, blazing a splendid trail to happiness for young men and women of the new type. Hu Cheng's *Two Clever Wives* describes how the new way of life in the villages bridges gaps and breaks down prejudices left by the old society. The growth of friendship between Wan-hua and Chih-chen brings home to us in a moving way the completely new human relationships, the mutual help and mutual consideration, which take shape during the struggle to realize a common ideal.

Li Chun's *The Letter* and Ju Chih-chuan's *A Wish Come True* are excellent stories. After Chih-lan in *The Letter* receives the news that her husband has fallen in Korea, she and her mother-in-law go through an agonizing period. But true to the finest traditions of working women, they bear their grievous loss without giving way because their future is still bright and full of sunshine. *A Wish Come True* discloses in evocative language the new joy in the heart of Mother Ho. Both the theme and the tone of this story are fresh and moving. This elderly woman who is working in the new society gives her grown-up son an apple bought with money she has earned herself, to keep a promise made twenty-five years earlier. This tale might be called a poem in praise of mother love or more exactly, our age.

Since China has been a predominantly agricultural country, although we made steady progress towards industrialization during the first years after liberation our writers knew little about industrial life. This accounts for the lack of works dealing with industrial construction and the life of the working class. The last few years, however, have seen better stories on these subjects, both by established writers and new writers from the working class.

The veteran writer Ai Wu, after plunging enthusiastically into factory life, has used his mastery of the short story form to describe many aspects of working-class life. In addition to his novel *Tempered Steel,* he has written not a few good stories such as *Returning at Night, The New Home* and *Rain.* Here we see his skill in hearing the voice of the age in episodes in the home life of workers, in new human relationships, in subtle changes in men's thoughts and feelings. With a fine command of language and an original approach he weaves these strands into a faithful representation of China's glorious socialist construction and the growth of new moral standards in the working class.

Tu Peng-cheng's *Yenan People* has aroused considerable attention. Here in a few short pages he has created a hero of flesh and blood, Hei Cheng-wei. Years of harsh revolutionary struggle have steeled this ordinary peasant into one of the vanguard of the working class, with an advanced outlook and splendid moral character. Over many bitter years his whole family, forgetful of their own safety, have shown unparalleled courage in working for the revolution. After liberation they go to a construction site where, again with no thought of personal fame or profit, they do their bit for China by dogged hard work. Men and women of this calibre, who link their fate so closely with that of the country, express the spirit of the age.

Hu Wan-chun, in his collection of stories *Men Who Work Miracles,* has shown us the working class battling for steel and old workers imbued with the finest qualities of the proletariat. Old Pu Kao in *What Pu Kao Thought* is a splendid Communist. In the meeting at which his apprentice Yang Hsiao-niu challenges him with his twenty years of experience to a contest, he thinks: "Good for him! The young devil has pluck." But when Yang boasts that he will do without all help in future, Pu Kao senses that something is wrong and shakes his head. Come what may, he is determined to help the young fellow and never let him fall behind. Similarly, Chuan Keng, the old steel worker with a strong sense of justice in *The Incident in the Steel Mill,* criticizes and helps his son who is a technician. Other characters drawn by this author, like Old Eight Tons or Ah-san, also exemplify the best qualities of old workers. Their strong sense of responsibility to the working-class cause, their ungrudging efforts to train the younger genera-

tion to take over and build socialism, their boundless energy in driving forward, their inherent nobility revealed in many phases of life, their selfless devotion to the cause of socialist construction . . . all these are deeply inspiring. Since the author is a steel worker himself with a deep understanding of his work-mates, the scenes he depicts with such feeling express the heroism of the working class battling day and night on the steel front.

Lu Chun-chao, a seaman, has written about the life of seamen. *The S. S. International Friendship* and *A Long Voyage Through Stormy Seas* introduce us to this new aspect of working-class life. He has also drawn several representative figures of the international proletariat: the old Polish captain of the S. S. International Friendship and the Greek sailor Eurek, or Commissar Majur in *A Long Voyage Through Stormy Seas*. These men have the noble spirit of internationalism and the hatred for imperialism which is common to the workers of all lands. These tales are stirringly told.

Liu Pai-yu is indefatigable in writing of army life and of our soldiers. His stories are distinguished by their strong contemporary feeling, their fighting spirit and their poetic quality. His collection *Joy of Battle* contains many stories about the war to resist American aggression and aid Korea, which gives us a deeper insight into the minds of our soldiers. For example, in *A Letter from Afar* a mother in a small French town sends a photograph of her son to the Chinese People's Volunteers. This woman's two eldest sons were killed while fighting the fascists, but she sends this photograph of her third boy with her blessing to the defenders of peace on the Korean front, and her letter inspires all the Chinese Volunteers. An army postmistress explains this moving episode as follows: "Do you understand our men? . . . It was only by very slow degrees that I came to understand them. Everyone knows that our soldiers of the revolution have hearts of steel – it is true, they do, as strong and well-tempered as steel, as fierce as flame. But not everyone knows what loving hearts our fighters have, as loving as a mother. . . . They would give their own lives sooner than see a child shed a drop of blood. . . ." Here Liu Pai-yu describes one salient characteristic of our soldiers:

to them children stand for the future, for their splendid and lofty vision of years to come.

The veteran writer Pa Chin also lived for some time with the fighters on the Korean front and has written a number of stories expressing his deep admiration for the Volunteers. Of these *Comrade Huang Wen-yuan* gives the best picture of our new fighting men and is a story that we value. Ho Ku-yen's *Maple Leaves*, Fu Tse's *The Little Sisters* and Li Ta-wao's *A Knot* deal with many phases of war-time life and the authors write with a passionate conviction which pulls at your heart-strings and forces you to think deeply. Ning Chu, the woman doctor in Lu Fei's *Radiance of Youth*, is another stirring figure who forgets her own safety as she tends the wounded in Korea. She reflects the revolutionary humanitarianism and nobility of our medical workers at the front.

Wang Kung-pu's *Green Depth* describes how frontier guards in wild country carry out an arduous and courageous struggle against enemy agents who have sneaked across the border. Shih Chao's *Capture of the Bandits*, packed with suspense and dramatic incident, depicts the astuteness and valour which overcome a crafty enemy. Yang Shang-wu's *In Pursuit of Bandits* shows us three soldiers who have lost contact with the main force on the desolate Gobi Desert. Thanks to dogged determination and the class solidarity which is stronger than death, these men vanquish fearful weariness and thirst and finally wipe out the enemy leader. Though the plot of this story is a simple one, the author's skill in characterization and his depth of feeling make us love and respect these three men. The hero of Chi Shui-yuan's *No Empty Boast* is a demobbed soldier with the revolutionary fearlessness and high sense of responsibility typical of the army veterans who turn to national construction. This story brims over with life and vitality.

In a postscript to his collection of stories *Posterity*, Wang Yuan-chien says: "... I am conscious that the road to happiness which we are treading today was made by earlier revolutionaries at the cost of their life-blood. Their noble qualities have come down to our generation as a precious spiritual heritage." Many authors have attempted to probe and express this "precious spiritual heritage" of our revolutionary forbears in order to educate the younger generation.

Chun Ching has taken as his theme the stirring struggle between the revolutionary people of his old home in East Shantung and the Kuomintang army. In passionate, heroic tones he pays tribute to his beautiful and hard-pressed home, to the many ordinary folk who proved themselves heroes, to the cruel struggle which steeled the people of those parts. Young Chen in *Dawn on the River* "if not for the war might have stayed at home as a spoilt lad." But this boy who cannot hold back tears when criticized by his comrades shows himself a true revolutionary, staunch and fearless, in face of the enemy. Young Chen's death in the end and the tragic scene in which his whole family give their lives to protect cadres crossing enemy-occupied territory impress us with the beauty of lives dedicated to the revolution and the revolutionary spirit which outmatches the cruelty of the enemy. *Mashih Mountain* describes a squad of the Eighth Route Army who fall to the last man to enable some local peasants to break through the enemy blockade. The fine spirit of these revolutionaries is deeply inspiring. They sell their lives dearly, using their last moments to launch a heroic attack on the enemy. This is the most precious quality of our revolutionary fighters.

Wang Yuan-chien in his two collections of stories *The Party Dues* and *Posterity* has provided us with an education in revolutionary traditions. *The Party Dues, Seven Matches* and *Mother* are first-rate stories. With a clear, concise style, he gives a truthful and moving picture of the life of the people in the revolutionary bases during the revolutionary civil war period, and the resolute fight waged by guerrillas and underground workers. His heroes

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Spring Outing by Chao Chieh→

Chao Chieh, Emperor Hui Tsung of the Sung dynasty, was among the best painters of his time. The Academy of Painting established by him played an important role in the development of the art of painting during the Sung dynasty. For more information on this artist see *Sung Dynasty Paintings* on p. 120 of this issue.

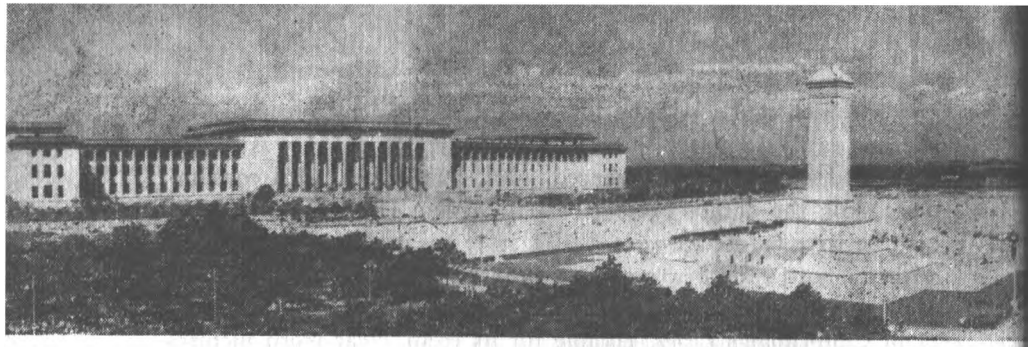
and heroines, and especially his account of their gallant struggles, are not easily forgotten. Teng Hung's *On the Road* was highly acclaimed as soon as it appeared. In a few pages, with consummate skill, the author presents the hero, Pan Hu, as convincingly as if he were before our eyes. This story has profound significance with its portrayal of a peasant's progress from the position of a rebel to that of a conscious revolutionary during the thirties.

Ju Chih-chuan's *Lilies*, notable for its fresh, clear word pictures and original approach, describes the rapid development of a shy young bride who, amid the flames of war, develops a deep and genuine feeling for the army of the revolution. This tale is sensitively written.

Sun Li's *Lotus Creek* is a collection of fifty-four stories, some of them written during the last ten years. A purist in his use of language, with a graphic and lyrical style, the author has given us a number of excellent stories about the brave men and women of Central Hopei and their glorious exploits during the War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression.

I have touched on a fraction only of the short stories written in the last ten years, choosing those which I consider the most representative. A merit of the short story form is that it is quick to reflect social changes and rich in fighting spirit. Lu Hsun astutely evaluated the place of short stories in literature as follows: "In addition to magnificent, huge and monumental works, short stories also have every right to exist. This is not simply because the small is needed to complement the great. It is also like going into a large monastery where, in addition to the whole splendid, dazzling and inspiring scene, by looking closely you can see carved balustrades and frescoes. Though these are small, the impression made on you is particularly sharp, so that you receive a more intimate idea of the whole." (Preface to *Modern Short Stories of the World.*)

The many short stories written during the last ten years bear out this view expressed by Lu Hsun. This wealth of stories rich in content and varied in style, which enable readers "from one aspect to glimpse the whole," are complementing novels to enrich our garden of literature and have won wide recognition and popularity.



LIANG SZU-CHENG

Tien An Men Square

Ten years ago from Peking's ancient Tien An Men – the Gate of Heavenly Peace – came the majestic voice of Chairman Mao Tse-tung, great leader of the multi-national Chinese people, proclaiming to the whole world the birth of the People's Republic of China. Thousands of red flags fluttered in the square in front, turning it into a red sea, and a mighty cheer reverberated through the clouds. Since that hour six hundred million hearts, beating as one, have always turned with love to Tien An Men which has been adopted as the motif of our national emblem.

Tien An Men has a history of seven hundred years. Its construction follows the principles and traditions of Chinese city planning which can be traced back two thousand years. The *Book of Ceremony* edited by Confucius states, "To build the capital of a state, the craftsmen make a square nine *li* in length with gates on three sides. The capital has nine roads running crosswise and nine running lengthwise, wide enough for nine chariots to travel abreast. On the left side is the ancestral temple

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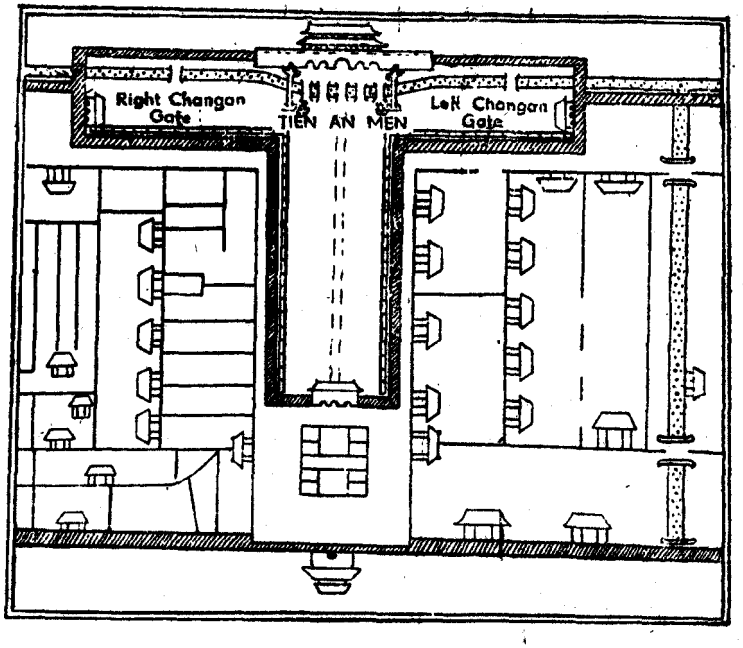
Liang Szu-cheng is a well-known architect and professor of Tsinghua University, Peking. He himself took part in the planning of the new Tien An Men Square.

and on the right the altar for the earth, which faces south, having the city behind it. . . ." In the year 1267 Kublai Khan, first emperor of the Yuan dynasty, built Tatu – the Big Capital – to the northeast of the old Kin capital. The city of Tatu was very nearly square. The emperor's palaces were set along the city's north-south axis, in the centre of the southern part of the capital. On the left side of the palaces stood the imperial ancestral temple and on their right the altar where the emperor worshipped heaven and earth; behind the palaces, to their north, the people lived and went about their business. The Peking of today developed from this Tatu built by Kublai Khan and Tien An Men stands in approximately the same position as Li Cheng Men, the central gate in the southern wall of the city.

In 1368 a peasant army led by Chu Yuan-chang broke into Tatu and drove away the Mongol rulers. On assuming the title of emperor, Chu Yuan-chang moved his capital to Nanking and Tatu was renamed Peiping, which means Northern Peace. In 1404 Emperor Yung Lo changed the name Peiping to Peking or Northern Capital. Three years later, work started on the building and repair of the imperial palaces and preparations were made to move the capital back. Finally the extension of the south city wall by one kilometre in 1420 completed this programme of construction. Peking again became the capital of China and assumed the shape of a nearly square city. Li Cheng Men, now an entrance to the imperial palaces, was renamed Cheng Tien Men and its name was finally changed to Tien An Men in 1651 during the Ching dynasty.

Tien An Men is a high, massive masonry terrace with a timber structure on top and five small archways below. In rebuilding the palaces, a T-shaped forecourt enclosed by red walls topped

with yellow tiles and colonnaded corridors was made. The cross of the T was 380 metres long and 175 metres wide while the trunk of the T measured from the gatehouse was 850 metres long and 100 metres wide. Along both sides of the trunk and extending down to the southern side of the cross were built, inside the enclosing walls, long rows of houses with colonnades in front. These rows were 600 metres long and the colonnades were called "Corridors of a Thousand Steps." They flanked Tien An Men like a line of guards with only about 80 metres between them. This and the endless lines of pillars impressed those who looked down the trunk of the T from the south side with a strong sense of grandeur and solemnity. On each arm of the T was built a gateway penetrated by three archways. So we see that the Tien An Men "Square" of old was not really a square but merely a narrow, enclosed forecourt formed out of roads leading to Tien An Men from the east, west and south. The architectural treatment served merely to lengthen the central axis so as to impress



Tien An Men Square in the Ching dynasty

the people with the emperor's dignity, power and mystery. In 1553, an outer city was built on the south side of the square city so that Tien An Men forecourt became the focal point of Peking and this heightened its importance.

In those days there were stone tablets in front of the gateways on the three arms of the T engraved with these words, "Officials and officers dismount here." For five long centuries, this forecourt cut Peking into two and to pass from east to west a detour had to be made. After the monarchy was overthrown in the bourgeois democratic revolution of 1911, the left and right Changan gates at each end of the cross were thrown open to traffic, finally linking the east and west parts of the city. It is obvious that the architectural treatment of five hundred years ago which was designed to enhance the emperor's prestige must interfere with the normal life of the city.

A new political life began for the Square on May 4, 1919 when thousands of patriotic students gathered here and the May the Fourth Movement so well known in the history of the Chinese revolution was launched. To oppose the reactionary warlord government which at Versailles was signing away to the Japanese imperialists the "rights" formerly wrested from China by the German imperialists in the Shantung Peninsula, the citizens of Peking set afoot this anti-imperialist and anti-feudal revolutionary movement. In the thirty years that ensued, most of the political movements in Peking, large or small, took place at Tien An Men which became inseparably linked with progressive revolutionary forces.

Tien An Men finally returned to the possession of the people in February 1949 when Peking was liberated. On September 30 of the same year following the closing session of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference Chairman Mao Tse-tung, together with all the delegates to the Conference, came to Tien An Men Square where a solemn ceremony was held to dig the first spadeful of earth and lay the foundation stone of the Monument to the People's Heroes. That marked the beginning of fresh changes in the old Square. On May 1958 the Monument was completed and now stands erect in the centre of the Square.

On October 1, 1949 Chairman Mao and all the delegates to the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference reviewed the National Day procession, representing the strength and will of the Chinese people, and the birth of the People's Republic of China was proclaimed. Thereafter, Tien An Men ceased to be an imposing entrance of the imperial palaces, forbidden to the people, but became a heart-stirring symbol of our prosperous and mighty socialist motherland. On every May 1 and October 1, thousands came here to celebrate Labour Day and National Day, and these occasions exposed the irreconcilable contradiction between the requirements of modern political life in a city of several millions and Tien An Men's architectural disposition made over five hundred years ago. First of all, the thick massive frame of the east and west Changan gateways stood in the path of processions. These gateways had three rather small archways only, some distance from each other, and these became bottle-necks during every parade. In spite of repeated endeavours, our architects and city planners were unable to solve this problem by means of planning. The daily increasing volume of traffic flow also caused congestion at these points. After two years of heated debates, the citizens of Peking agreed that these gateways were a serious obstacle to the development of the capital and they were pulled down in August 1952.

On May Day and National Day, Tien An Men Square encircled by tall red walls was always filled at night by dancing, rejoicing crowds who had hardly room to turn around. Yet hundreds of thousands considered their holiday incomplete unless they reached Tien An Men. Finally in 1958, the encircling walls were forced out of existence, virtually "crushed" by the millions of dancers celebrating in their own Square.

New China celebrated its tenth anniversary last year. At Tien An Men Square, people saw the anniversary gift of Chinese architects, engineers and building workers — a new Square covering more than forty hectares. A huge building with a total built-up area of 171,800 square metres, the Great Hall of the People, has appeared on the west side of the Square. The main part of the building is the auditorium with ten thousand seats; to its north is a banquet hall for five thousand people and on the south side are offices of the Standing Committee of the National Peo-

ple's Congress. Facing it on the other side of the Square at a distance of 500 metres is a gigantic new museum — combining the Museum of the Chinese Revolution and the Museum of Chinese History. These two cream coloured buildings, flanking the Square, make the whole a mighty centre of political activities and a testimony to the energy and spirit of the six hundred million Chinese people's big leap forward. Tien An Men today shows our country's achievements in the past ten years. The Monument to the People's Heroes stands majestically in the centre of the Square with a big green area on its south side.

The two monumental buildings and the new Square, designed and built in eleven months under the leadership of the Party, are the fruit of concerted efforts of architects and building workers throughout the country. To complete in such a short time buildings of such magnitude with complex mechanical devices for heating, ventilation, illumination, acoustics, communications, broadcasting, television and other services marks indeed an unprecedented advance in Chinese building. This is a "monument" testifying to the victory of the Party's general line for socialist construction.

These buildings have a distinctive architectural style. They are neither foreign nor an exact reproduction of traditional Chinese buildings. A number of traditional Chinese features were adopted, notably an extensive use of colonnades. Traditional Chinese glazed tiles were also used as cornice decorations. The final form achieved suits the requirements and taste of the people of socialist China. We have made use of the technique and materials now at our command to carry forward our traditional architecture and introduce innovations.

The large dimension of these buildings and the Square called for a new sense of scale. On the one hand these buildings should be in good proportion with the human height of an average 1.80 metres and on the other hand the fact that they must serve as meeting places for five thousand, ten thousand and even a million people could not be ignored. There was also the scale of Tien An Men itself to be considered. The architects and city planners, in drawing up their designs, saw that the Square had to be enlarged and must be flanked by new buildings big enough to house thousands. Yet the buildings should not be so massive

as to make Tien An Men appear small and insignificant. How large should the Square be made? Big enough for a procession of a million but not so large as to dwarf Tien An Men, the Monument to the People's Heroes and the two new buildings. A correct ratio must be found between the size of the Square, the height of the new buildings and Tien An Men and the Monument already standing. Furthermore, it was essential that the buildings should fulfil their functional requirements and the Square should not become a vast empty ground. Even more, of course, we had to avoid the impression of cramped confinement so often created by medieval squares. In addition, there was the relative proportion between walls, eaves, colonnades and windows. The proportion of a large building must be on the correct scale and it should not appear merely a large replica of a small building. Immense as were the contradictions between different phases of the work, a bold experiment was made in which many traditional views were swept aside.

On ordinary days, the new Square serves as a traffic square, being the junction of Peking's main east-west and north-south trunk-lines. On holidays, it is where meetings or parades are held. The green space makes a fine park for Peking citizens in their hours of leisure. The city planners have succeeded fairly well in satisfying diverse functional needs. Though the Square is large, the architects' handling of the scale was good. So far only half of the complete Tien An Men Square has been built. In the years to come, two new buildings comparable to the two now flanking the Square will appear on either side at the southern end.

The completed Square will have on the north end of its axis Tien An Men, on top of which glitters the national emblem. About 100 metres in front of Tien An Men stands the principal flagpole of China with the beloved five-starred red flag. In the middle of the Square, the quiet, granite monolith of the Monument to the People's Heroes is a good ground for the inscription, "The People's Heroes Are Immortal!" in Chairman Mao's handwriting and the epitaph to the people's heroes written by Premier Chou En-lai. Eight scenes in sculptured relief round the base of the monolith depict, in vivid form, eight significant historical events in the period between the Opium War of 1840 and the liberation

of the whole of the Chinese mainland in 1949. The moat on the southern side of the Square will be widened to 80 metres and spanned by twin bridges leading to another traffic square. When new tall buildings along this moat are completed they will form the southern side of the Square 1,400 metres from Tien An Men. Of course this is merely in the planning stage and further changes may still be made. Already, the majolica eaves, cream walls and wide colonnades of the two buildings completed last year bring out to advantage the delicate timber structures raised on massive masonry terraces, the red walls and columns, the painted decorations in blue and green, accentuated with specks of gold, and the yellow and green tiled roof of ancient Tien An Men. This Square of the future, when completed, will be spacious, majestic and beautiful, a true reflection of the heroic spirit and strength of socialist China's six hundred million.

History has shown that Tien An Men and its Square have from the very beginning been a purely political, architectural ensemble. It was originally designed to express the emperor's might by impeding the movements of the common people. Although an outstanding model of architectural art, it was also an example of the high-handed way in which the feudal ruling class solved the contradictions between itself and the people as a whole. In the early days of our People's Republic, though Chinese architects understood the original function of the "Square" many of them still thought that Peking's political and social life today should be adapted to fit the existing Square. This would mean "cutting your feet to fit the shoes," as an old Chinese proverb says. However, the past ten years have proved that the imperial forecourt of five hundred years ago was incapable of satisfying the demands made on the most important square of the capital of the People's Republic of China. The Square has finally been remodelled. This is an inevitable outcome of historical development and a vivid example of how new city planning and building serve political needs. The new Tien An Men Square has been designed to serve the needs of socialism and communism.

CHENG CHEN-TO

Sung Dynasty Paintings

The art of painting in China dates back to pre-historic times. More than five thousand years ago in the neolithic age painted pottery was made over a large area. The potters used black lines on red earthenware, and the infinite variety of their designs, most of which were geometric, reveal rich imagination. Some of the designs were human or animal forms, as in the case of the painted pottery excavated at Panpo in the east suburb of Sian, which showed human faces, shoals of fish or bounding deer. These are the earliest examples of pictorial art in China.

According to historical records, there was painting in the time of the sage king Shun (c. 2200 B.C.). The earliest paintings in our possession today, however, are one of legendary figures discovered in Changsha in a tomb of the kingdom of Chu, and another of a slender girl, a dragon and a phoenix. Painted on silk in about 300 B.C., these are valuable both for their antiquity and their artistic quality. In the Han dynasty (206 B.C. – A.D. 220) painting was frequently put to decorative uses. Wall-paintings of a very high standard were fairly common, and the Han tombs discovered in Liaoyang and Wangtu give a good idea of the achievements of this period. There were also decorative paintings on screens. Chang Yen-yuan, the well-known art historian of

Cheng Chen-to, late writer and literary historian, was Vice-minister of Culture and the director of the Institute of Literature of the Chinese Academy of Sciences before his death in 1958. He also wrote a great deal on Chinese art.

the ninth century, records in his *Great Paintings Through the Ages* that when Sun Chuan (222-252) of the kingdom of Wu ordered Tsao Pu-hsing to paint a screen, the artist made an ink-spot by mistake which he painted into a fly; and the king, thinking it a real insect, tried to brush it away.

There were many hand-scroll paintings too. In 639 Pei Hsiao-yuan in his *Paintings in Public and Private Hands in the Chen Kuan Period* mentions two hundred and ninety-eight scrolls and forty-seven wall-paintings from previous dynasties. Judging by the titles of these scrolls, there was a rich variety of subject matter which included portraits of famous men, illustrations of history and legend or of the classics – some were based on poems from the *Book of Songs*, for instance. Other motifs were mountains, rivers and famous cities, as in *The Course of the Yellow River* and the *Two Capitals*, or foreign people and things, as in *The Man and Horse from Samarkand* and *A Hun Presents a Strange Beast*. Country life was another theme, as well as imperial hunts, gatherings of scholars, birds, beasts, pavilions and mansions. There were paintings of nature as well, but the scenery was generally made a background for people and objects, hence the comment: "The men are bigger than the mountains, and the water is too shallow to float a boat." Some hand-scrolls were as much as thirty feet long. The works of Ku Kai-chih, including *The Nymph of the Lo River* and *Illustrations of Eminent Women*, are very well known, but only copies are left to us today. Of the pre-Tang wall-paintings, those preserved in the Tunhuang caves are the most important.

Some Tang dynasty (618-907) works still exist today, notably the horse painting by Han Kan and the paintings of ladies by Chou Fang. Many Buddhist paintings on paper or silk have also been discovered in the Tunhuang caves. The magnificent Tang wall-paintings discovered in Sinkiang and in the Tunhuang caves are the most important relics of this period.

Though the Five Dynasties period (907-960) was an age of confusion and wars and lasted a bare half century, in painting it saw extremely high achievements and many great artists appeared. In the lower Yangtse Valley there were Hsu Hsi, Chao Kan, Wang Chi-han, Chou Wen-chu, Wei Hsien, Ku Hung-chung and Tung Yuan; in Szechuan there were Kuan Hsiu, Huang Chuan, Huang

Chu-pao and Huang Chu-tsai; in the Yellow River Plain there were Ching Hao, Kuan Tung, Li Cheng and others. When the first emperor of the Sung dynasty united China in 960, famous artists from different parts gathered in Kaifeng, then the capital, to work for the new court. So the first part of the Sung dynasty (960-1279) was a glorious age for pictorial art owing to the concentration of many artists from all parts of the country, who exercised a great influence on their own and on later dynasties.

Quite a number of Sung paintings have come down to us, and from them we can see the fine traditions of Chinese painting. They deal with almost all subjects under the sun, from magnificent natural scenery to a tiny wild flower or blade of grass, a dragon-fly or a beetle, all drawn with astounding skill and sensitivity. Then there are pictures of city and country life, portraits, some satiric or ironic, which served as models for later ages. This is why the Sung dynasty is considered the great age of Chinese painting, comparable to Athenian art in the days of Pericles or Renaissance art in the time of Michelangelo. Time and again during these three hundred and twenty years, new schools appeared which had a great influence on later art, some of this influence being evident even today.

Sung dynasty painting can be divided into four periods. The first is the early part of the Northern Sung dynasty (960-1100) when the artists from the lower Yangtse Valley, Szechuan, and the Yellow River Plain were still active. Among them were landscape-painters like Kuan Tung, Li Cheng and Tung Yuan, flower and bird-painters like Hsu Hsi and Huang Chuan, and portrait figure painters like Wang Chi-han and Chou Wen-chu. After these masters died, more new artists took their place. Among the landscape-painters were Fan Kuan, Chu Jan, Yen Wen-kuei, Kao Keh-ming, Kuo Hsi and Hsu Tao-ning; the best painters of flowers and birds were Chao Chang and Tsui Po, while other brilliant artists were Yi Yuan-chi, Wu Tung-ching and Liu Tsung-ku. Much has been written about these men, who hold a high place in the history of Chinese art. They gradually broke with the conventions of the Tang dynasty and Five Dynasties period to create new styles of their own. Landscape-painting was their major achievement. Northern painters reproduced the scenery of Northwest and North China, creating an atmosphere of spacious

grandeur, while southerners like Tung Yuan and Chu Jan excelled in evoking an air of mystery, and formed a new school which specialized in scenes of mist and rain. The distinctive features of two schools of flower and bird-painting headed by Hsu Hsi and Huang Chuan were their great skill and meticulous attention to detail, their thorough knowledge of the movements and form of the subject, and their selection of salient features to convey the spirit of the whole.

The second period and heyday of Sung painting was the reign of Hui Tsung (1101-1125). This emperor was a failure as a ruler, and was captured with his son by the Golden Tartars from the north in 1127. But he was an amateur of medicine and archaeology, as well as a good painter, a great patron of the arts and a discriminating critic. It is recorded by Teng Chun, a Sung dynasty art critic that after ascending the throne he told his ministers that his chief pleasure was painting, and he had a larger collection of ancient paintings than anyone before him. He selected one thousand five hundred works from the third to the tenth century, and divided them into a hundred volumes which are grouped in fourteen categories according to subjects. When he had a Taoist temple built, he gathered several hundred artists from all over the empire to make pictures of it. He encouraged the study of art and set tests for painters. For instance, he once set as a subject this quotation from an ancient poem: "No man crosses the wild water, and the solitary boat lies idle all day." Most of the candidates painted an empty boat by the shore on which a water bird or crow had alighted, but the first prize went to the artist who painted a ferryman lying in his skiff playing a flute, implying that the ferry had no customers that day. Another subject the emperor set was "An ancient monastery hidden in the mountains," and the first prize was awarded to the man who painted a mountain scene with a pennant pole in the valley to indicate the presence of a monastery, not to those who drew a pagoda, the roof of a building or even the courtyard and hall, for their monasteries were not completely hidden. On another occasion the quotation set was generally thought impossible to express. This was: "After treading the fallen blossoms, the horse's hooves are fragrant." But one well-known artist painted butterflies following the horse to convey this idea.

Hui Tsung's Academy of Painters produced many masters, for there artists could study ancient models. According to Teng Chun, the art critic, after the fall of the Northern Sung dynasty several academy artists who went to Szechuan described how while in the capital they had studied ancient paintings and how every ten days the emperor had chosen two cases of scrolls to show them. They had naturally done their best to imitate and excel these models in order to please their royal patron. Stories were also told about the emperor's discriminating taste and keen observation. Once he was enjoying the sight of a lichee tree laden with fruit before the palace when a peacock approached the tree, and he summoned his artists at once to make a picture. They produced a magnificent painting of the peacock with its right foot poised to step on a flower-bed; but to their surprise the emperor shook his head over it. A few days later when he asked if they had discovered their mistake, they had no answer ready. Then Hui Tsung told them: "A peacock always raises its left foot first to climb."

Another anecdote relates that after the Lungteh Palace was built he ordered the court artists to paint screens. All the best painters set to work, but the emperor had not a word of praise for anyone till he came to a painting of a monthly rose, the work of a young artist whom he rewarded handsomely. The astonished palace officials asked the reason.

"This type of rose is hard to paint," Hui Tsung told them. "Its flowers and leaves vary from season to season and at every hour of the day. This is an extremely accurate reproduction of a monthly rose in spring at noon. That is why I rewarded the artist."

With such a discerning patron, it is small wonder that the paintings of that time reached a pinnacle of excellence.

Well-known artists in the Academy of Painting included Ma Fen, Huang Tsung-tao, Liu Tsung-ku, Li Tang, Su Han-chen, Chu Jui, Yen Chung, Li An-chung and Chang Tse-tuan. As for masters like Li Kung-lin, Wang Hsien, Chao Ling-jang and Mi Fei, although they also painted for the court they were not members of the academy. Wang Hsi-meng was a court artist who died at the age of twenty, yet his long scroll *A Thousand Li of Rivers and Mountains,* which is still in existence today, is most impressive in its scope and shows the high level reached by the academy. Chang Tse-tuan's *Springtime by the River* gives a wonderful picture of life in old Kaifeng. Li Tang's paintings of old legends, like *Duke Wen of Tsin Returning to His Country, The Virtuous Brothers Po Yi and Shu Chi in the Wilderness Picking Herbs,* show superb technique as well as mental depth. Su Han-chen, Liu Tsung-ku, Chu Jui, Yen Chung, Li An-chung and other academy artists founded their own schools of painting when they fled from the Tartars from Kaifeng to Hangchow. Many of Hui Tsung's own works are still extant, and from his little painting *Loquats, Bird and Butterfly* we can see his high attainments.

The third period of Sung painting is the earlier part of the Southern Sung dynasty (1127-1194). At that time northern China was conquered by the Golden Tartars, and Emperor Kao Tsung ascended the throne at Nanking. Many of the older artists were still alive but many new talents also appeared. Though the style of art were not greatly changed, there was an increase in subtlety, profundity and refinement; for while painters of this time remained loyal to tradition, their experience of life was deepened by the hard times they had seen. After the capital moved south to Hangchow in 1138, in addition to the artists already mentioned who came from the north, there were others like Mi Yu-jen, Hsiao Chao, Wu Ping, Ma Ho-chih, Chao Po-chu, Chao Po-su, Chia Shih-ku, Ma Hsing-tsu and his sons Ma Kung-hsien and Ma Shih-jung. Emperor Kao Tsung was also a lover of the arts, who had a fine collection of paintings and saved many works from destruction during the war and confusion. He treated the court painters well and often wrote inscriptions for their work, as in the case of Ma Ho-chih and Li Tang. The emperors Hsiao Tsung and Kuang Tsung who succeeded him proved good patrons too, so the imperial academy of painting continued to flourish. Among the masters of this period were Mao Yi, Lin Chun, Yen Tzu-ping, Yen Tzu-yu, Liu Sung-nien, Li Sung and Chang Mao,

The fourth period is the later part of the Southern Sung dynasty (1195-1279). There had been peace in South China for many years, and the Sung dynasty was nearing its decline. The two outstanding artists of this time were Ma Yuan and Hsia Kuei. Ma Yuan excelled in landscape, genre and flower-painting. He won fame by his paintings of nature, for by depicting one corner of a scene

he could convey the spirit of the whole. Hsia Kuei made splendid ink-paintings of plunging torrents. With these two artists, painting underwent a transformation and their influence can hardly be exaggerated. Their contemporary Liang Kai was famous for the distinctive style of his sketches, and had many followers. His painting, influenced by the Zen sect of Buddhism, had numerous admirers in Japan as well as in China. Ma Yuan's son Ma Lin, Li Ti, Li Sung, Lu Tsung-kuei, Chen Tsung-hsun, Chen Ching-po, Chen Ko-chiu and Chu Shao-tsung, all of whom produced immortal works during this period, each had his own special field. Li Ti painted animals, Chen Ko-chiu fish, and Chen Tsung-hsun children. But all the Southern Sung painters shared one common characteristic: no matter how trivial the subject – one tiny flower, one blade of grass, one bird, fish or chick, one small garden or one stream – their execution was sensitive and meticulous. All the Sung painters were close observers of nature: this was their fine tradition. This accounted for their vivid portrayal of all phenomena of nature, and made this the greatest age of Chinese painting.

We can divide these four periods into an earlier and a later phase. The early Sung artists observed the conventions of the Tang dynasty and Five Dynasties period, while those during the reign of Hui Tsung preserved the best of the old and made innovations, and those of the Southern Sung dynasty during the reigns of Kao Tsung, Hsiao Tsung and Kuang Tsung followed in their predecessors' footsteps. These three periods, therefore, may be considered as the first phase of Sung painting. But after the three great masters Ma Yuan, Hsia Kuei and Liang Kai appeared, a totally new tradition was introduced. Men of genius, they probably exercised a more potent influence on those after them than any other artists in China. We may therefore call this the second phase.

The Sung dynasty paintings now kept in the Peking Palace Museum are mostly small ones, originally made for fans. Though all these paintings are small, much skill went into their making. All were executed with the same care as larger works – in fact they look much bigger than they are. Like well-constructed short stories, which cuts or additions can only make less effective, they are just right as they are. Some of these "miniature" paintings

give a sense of spaciousness, as in the case of Yang Wei's *Peasants at Work.* This shows more than seventy peasants cutting rice stalks, drawing water, threshing, pounding husks, carrying rice to the barn or making haystacks. The landlords watch at ease while the peasants labour. While some are harvesting, others are already ploughing and irrigating the fields for the next crop of rice. In Chen Chu-chung's *Tending Horses by the Willow Stream,* again, though the men and horses are minute, their postures are completely lifelike. Some horses are galloping, some looking behind them, some swimming with evident enjoyment. All is excellently depicted, down to the tiniest detail of the ripples made in the water. Then there is Chang Hsun-li's *A Fishing Boat in Spring.* The tender green of the hills and the red peach blossom evoke the charm of the well-watered Yangtse Valley with its air of lush fertility. A peasant in a boat on the lake is dredging up mud for fertilizer while another man by some thatched huts beside the lake is gazing at the water. Another exquisite painting is Ma Yuan's *A Plum Tree and Wild Ducks.* Plum trees in blossom on the river shore and the hillside are reflected in the water, where a dozen or so wild ducks are chasing each other, spreading ripples all around them. Two ducks which have fallen behind are flapping their wings to catch up with the others.

These small paintings treat all manner of subjects: legends, social life, flowers and birds, even chicks scratching for food and spiders spinning their webs. All are vividly depicted in different styles. In the realm of painting no other period in Chinese history can compare with the Sung dynasty, whose artists dealt with so many different themes and reached such a peak of perfection.

Chronicle

"History of Chinese Literature" Revised

During the Big Leap of 1958 a *History of Chinese Literature*, systematically tracing the development of Chinese literature from the earliest period to modern times, was compiled by students of the Chinese Literature Department of Peking University with the help of their professors. This work aroused much interest among academic circles.

In the spring of 1959, the Chinese Writers' Union, the Institute of Literature, Peking Normal University and Peking University sponsored a number of discussions on this history during which criticisms and suggestions were raised. With the help and guidance of their teachers, the authors worked for nearly five months to revise this work, making use of the research done in the past year by scholars and students of Chinese literature all over China. The new four-volume edition will be double the size of the old.

Research on National Minorities' Music

Teachers and students of the Central Conservatory of Music went with a research team organized by the Nationalities Affairs Commission and the Nationalities Research Institute of the Academy of Sciences to Inner Mongolia, Sinkiang, Chinghai, Kwangsi, Yunnan, Heilungkiang, Hainan Island and four other provinces and autonomous regions to make a thorough survey of the music of sixteen minority peoples, including the Uighurs, Mongolians, Tibetans, Chuangs, Miaos, Tungs and Yaos. During its more than ten months' tour, the team collected 2,850 folk songs, recorded more songs on ninety-three reels of tape, took down reference material amounting to 2,980,000 words and collected more than five hundred musical instruments and other items of interest. Besides drawing up reports on their findings they wrote a number of monographs on the basis of their research. This study of the musical heritage of our minority peoples is giving us a deeper understanding of their music. For instance, in the past, some musicians maintained that the East had no polyphonic music. But in the course of their

research, the team discovered that our Tungs, Yaos, Chuangs, Yis, Miaos and several other minority peoples have long had their own distinctive form of chorus singing in parts, which can be traced back a thousand years. The team also acquired some most valuable material, such as the Tibetan music collected in Chinghai which is, so far as we know, an example of one of the oldest Tibetan methods of recording music and excellent material for anyone studying the development of Tibetan music.

The Centennial of Sholom Aleichem Commemorated

Cultural circles in Peking commemorated the centennial of Sholom Aleichem at a meeting presided over by Mao Tun, member of the Standing Committee of the World Peace Council and chairman of the Chinese Writers' Union. Tsao Ching-hua, a council member of the Chinese Writers' Union introduced the life and works of the Jewish writer, and members of the China Youth Art Theatre recited excerpts from his well-known work, *Motel*. As early as 1925, Aleichem's works were introduced to China. Recently new translations of his *From the Fair* and *Chimera and Other Stories* have been published in Shanghai and Peking. The Peking Library arranged a special exhibition of Aleichem's works.

Cultural Workers Celebrated Albania's National Day

Peking literary and art circles gathered on November 27, 1959 — the eve of the Albanian National Day — to celebrate the fifteenth anniversary of the People's Republic of Albania. The Ministry of Culture, the Commission for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries and the China-Albania Friendship Association jointly sponsored a gathering at which the Albanian feature film *Storm* was shown. Chinese Minister of Culture Shen Yen-ping and Albanian Ambassador Mihal Prifti both spoke at the gathering.

On the same evening, the China-Albania Friendship Association, the Union of Chinese Writers and the Union of Chinese Musicians organized a soirée to introduce Albanian music and literature. Lu Chi, chairman of the Union of Chinese Musicians and council member of the China-Albania Friendship Association, spoke of the long history and tradition of Albanian literature and art and the Albanian people's great achievements in music, literature and art. The Al-

banian poet A. Çaçi gave a report on the development of Albania's literature and art, laying stress on the great advances in the fifteen years since Albania's liberation. Albanian folk songs and poems were performed and recited, and the Albanian film *Tana* was shown.

The Peking People's Literature Publishing House has put out Chinese translations of outstanding Albanian literary works. These include: *Poems and Prose* by Migjeni, the Albanian revolutionary poet, *Selected Poems* by F. Gjata, *Selected Poems* by A. Çaçi, S. Spasse's novel *They Are Not Alone*, F. Gjata's novel *Tana*, S. Xhai's novel *Five Letters* and K. Jakova's drama *Halili and Hajrija*.

Ulan Bator-Peking

Ulan Bator-Peking is the first documentary made jointly by the Central Newsreel and Documentary Film Studio of China and the Mongolian Film Studio. It records the friendship and mutual assistance between the two countries since the establishment of the People's Republic of China. The film shows the vast grasslands, newly-built factories, fertile and beautiful mountains and rivers of the Mongolian People's Republic and the industrious Mongolian people advancing along the socialist road to prosperity under the leadership of the Mongolian government and the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party. With Sino-Mongolian friendship as its main theme, the film also shows many scenes of great historical interest.

Schiller's Bicentennial Commemorated

Mao Tun, Ting Hsi-lin, Lao Sheh and many other well-known writers and artists in Peking gathered on November 20, 1959 to commemorate the bicentennial of Johann Schiller. Tien Han, chairman of the Union of Chinese Dramatists, gave a talk on "Schiller, Fighter for Democracy and National Freedom." After the meeting, Schiller's play *Cabal and Love* was performed by the China Youth Art Theatre. This was its first appearance on the Chinese stage.

A Visit from the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra

The Czech Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra has made a tour of China. On its opening night in Peking it performed the overture from *The Bartered Bride* by Smetana, Dvorak's *New World Symphony* and two short items, *Festival* and *Semdjudma* by the Chinese composer Ho Lu-ting. Li Teh-lun, conductor of the Central Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra of China expressed the view of Peking audiences when he said that the visitors' interpretation of the *New World Symphony* was the best he had ever heard.

Argentine Osvaldo Pugliese Orchestra

The Argentine Osvaldo Pugliese Orchestra which came to China recently gave its debut in Peking. It introduced to Chinese audiences typical Argentine dances and dance music, giving them a glimpse through rich programmes of the music enjoyed by the people of Argentina. The well-known Argentine artist and leader of the orchestra Osvaldo Pugliese was at the piano. Vice-premier Hsi Chung-hsun, Chang Hsi-jo, chairman of the Commission for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries, and Chu Tu-nan, president of the Chinese People's Association for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries, were in the audience and chatted with the Argentine artists during the interval.

Shantung Liutzu Opera Performed in Peking

The *liutzu* opera of Shantung is a well-known form of old opera in China dating back over three hundred years. Our local operas are said to have sprung from four main schools: The *kunchu* of the south, the *yiyang* of the north, the *liutzu* of the east and the *pangtzu* of the west. *Liutzu* was still popular sixty years ago when it was widely performed in the thirty-odd counties on the borders of the provinces of Shantung, Honan and Kiangsu. But in the last few decades, this dramatic form gradually declined until by the eve of the liberation not a single professional company was left. In 1950 the government assembled a number of unemployed old artists in Yunchen and helped them to set up the Yunchen Peasants and Workers' Opera Group which expanded and drew in new forces year by year. In 1959 the Shantung *Liutzu* Opera Company was founded on the basis of the Yunchen group. This time the

company not only performed *liutzu* opera in Peking but presented also the *liuchiang* and *liangchiahsien*, amusing and lively folk skits popular in eastern and southwestern Shantung. This rejuvenation of the Shantung *liutzu* opera is an important event for the Chinese traditional theatre.

Ancient Cities Excavated in Hantan

Hantan in Hopei Province is an ancient city which was the capital of the kingdom of Chao during the Warring States period some two thousand years ago. After the liberation, government teams carried out several large-scale survey and excavation work here and it was discovered that besides being the site of the capital of Chao, Hantan stands over two other ancient cities. One of these, adjacent to the site of the Chao capital, covers an area of about six square *li*. The other, to the northeast of the Chao city, covers an area of thirty square *li* and must have been a large prosperous city. To the northwest of Hantan, on the north bank of the Chin River, a burial ground with thousands of tombs all dating from the Warring States period has also been discovered. Archaeologists of the Hopei Provincial Cultural Bureau will soon begin systematic excavation work in this region.

Home of the Writer Pu Sung-ling Repaired

Pu Sung-ling (1640-1715), well-known Ching dynasty writer and author of *Tales from Liao-chai*, was born in Pu Family Village, Tzuchuan, Shantung Province. For some time, no attention was paid to the mementoes and relics of this famous writer, which were scattered in different places, and his old home was neglected. After the liberation, the government sent men to look over the old house and in 1954 repairs were made while Pu Sung-ling's manuscripts were collected and edited. This work was completed in August 1959. Now, his study, bed-room and sitting room have been restored to look as they did during his lifetime. Fresh flagstones have been laid in his favourite haunt, "Willow Spring," and a pavilion has been erected over his tombstone to protect it against the elements. Eighteen different editions of his *Tales from Liao-chai* as well as original manuscripts of his ballads, poems and miscellaneous writings have been collected. Displayed in his house are also a portrait of Pu Sung-ling and his old inkstand and bedstead.

Collections of Folk Songs Published

More than twenty collections of Chinese folk songs of various localities compiled and edited by the Chinese Folk Literature Research Institute are now being published successively by the Peking People's Literature Publishing House. These anthologies of folk songs collected from different provinces, municipalities and autonomous regions, give a fairly comprehensive idea of the large number of brilliant songs that appeared during our Big Leap in 1958. In addition, traditional folk songs rediscovered in this period have been compiled and included. Each collection contains folk songs of varying themes and forms, displaying strikingly different local colour. The *Tibetan Folk Songs* and the *Fukien Folk Songs* are already off the press. Folk songs of Anhwei, Szechuan, Liaoning and Kwangtung will be the next to appear in print.

英文《中国文学》月刊1960年第2期
本刊代号2—916