CHINESE LITERATURE

Monthly

March 3 *1960*

Front Cover: Woodcut by Sung Yen-sheng

CONTENTS

No. 3, 1960

CHINESE LITERATURE

monthly

EDITOR: Mao Tun

ASSISTANT EDITOR: Yeh Chun-chien

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

YANG MO

The Song of Youth

The Song of Youth **has as its main theme the patriotic movement of Peking students in the early thirties, when the Japanese imperialists seized China's northeastern provinces and started encroaching further on the country. This novel gives us an authentic picture of different types of young Chinese intellectuals and how they responded to this threat to their home land.**

Yang Mo, the author, comes from Hsiangyin in the province of Hunan. Born in 1915, she is at present a scenario writer of the Peking Film Studio, who has written a number of essays and short stories. *The Song of Youth*, her first novel, was published in 1958. *Chinese Literature* will publish a part of this novel in four instalments.

The heroine of *The Song of Youth*, Lin Tao-ching, is the daughter of the concubine of a big Peking landowner. When her stepmother tries to force her to marry a Kuomintang official, Director Hu, she abandons her studies and runs away to a village on the coast. But the head of the primary school there schemes to sell her to the county magistrate. This instalment begins when, driven to desperation, she decides to drown herself.

CHAPTER 5

The night was black. The sea was breaking angrily on the rocks with a fearful yet dismal roar. Tao-ching had fallen on the beach in the pouring rain. Just as she rose to throw herself into the sea, a pair of warm arms seized her and a low voice sounded in her ears:

"Don't! . . . You mustn't! Try to find some way out!" Her rescuer was shuddering too. The rain was pelting down as if it meant to wash them into the ocean, and he could barely support her.

To Tao-ching it was all a nightmare — why had she wanted to die? Who was this who had saved her? Utterly spent and unable to answer these questions, she drew away instinctively from the stranger's arms and fell exhausted on the sand.

"You'd better go back. It's pouring with rain, and cold. . . . Come on."

His young, eager voice came to her as if in a dream.

After a second she felt more herself again. During a flash of lightning she turned to look at the stranger and saw the dark, thin face and bright, anxious eyes of the young man who was so often on the beach. Earlier that evening he had spoken to her, quoting some lines of poetry.

Warmth slowly flooded Tao-ching's ice-cold limbs. His encouragement made all thought of death melt away like snow in the spring. She sat up slowly, while the rain beating down on her chilled her to the bone. Shivering uncontrollably, her teeth chattering, she struggled to her feet.

"It's too cold for you here," said the young man. "Let me see you back."

She could not utter a word in reply. Silently, in the slackening wind and rain, she walked back beside him to the school in the old temple.

They went together to the wing where Tao-ching was staying. By the way the young man fetched a paraffin lamp from another room she could see that he knew his way about. He carefully stood the lamp on the table and hesitated for a moment, looking at her.

"You must change your clothes," he whispered. "I'll be back presently."

The strange thing was that Tao-ching had become as tractable as a child. She changed quickly into dry clothes. By the time she had drunk a little water he was back. Though still wearing the khaki student's uniform which was wet through after their adventure on the beach, his smiling face was radiant. He paused at the door to nod formally and introduce himself:

"You don't know me, but I've known who you were ever since you arrived. You're Lin Tao-ching, aren't you? My name is Yu Yung-tse. I was born in this village. Yu Ching-tang, the head of the primary school, is my cousin. I'm studying now in Peking University. . . . That was a narrow thing today, Lin. . . ." Having reeled this off as if reciting a part in a play, he sat down in the arm-chair beside the table.

Tao-ching sat by the table too with lowered head, as exhausted as if she had just been through a serious illness. After a little while she looked up shyly at Yu Yung-tse and whispered:

"Thank you! If not for you. . . . But I've nothing to live for. . . ." She hung her head and said no more.

Yung-tse stood up and stepped to her side. After a few moments of silence he asked:

"Won't you tell me what's troubling you? If I can be of any help, I shall be only too glad."

The rain had dwindled now to a mere drizzle. In the cool damp night air the lamp shed a pallid light. Tao-ching roused herself with a laugh to reply:

"Of course I'll tell you. I can see you're quite different from your cousin Yu Ching-tang."

In time of trouble and danger to meet someone sympathetic, especially someone who has saved your life, is like coming upon an old friend in distant parts. She told him her whole story frankly, pouring out her heart without reserve.

It was a tragic story. Her father, a landlord, had taken her mother, a farm hand's daughter, as concubine against her will. A year after Tao-ching's birth her mother was driven out of the house and drowned herself in the river. Tao-ching grew up under the cold harsh rule of her stepmother, her father's legal wife, yet thrived in spite of hardships. Two months previously

her father had gone bankrupt and left home. Then her stepmother, looking upon the young girl as a source of income, recalled her from school and tried to force her to marry a certain Director Hu. Tao-ching ran away from home, stayed for a few days with an old school friend, Wang Hsiao-yen, and then went to find a cousin in Peitaiho, hoping that he would help her get a job. It turned out that her cousin had left the primary school where he had been teaching, but the head Yu Ching-tang asked her to stay there. She was so pretty that he was plotting to sell her to the local County Magistrate Pao as his third concubine.

When she reached the end of her story, her big melancholy eyes burned with a hard, bright flame, astonishing in one so quiet and self-contained.

"I hate them! I hate everything! I hate this society, my home and myself. . . . I don't want to fritter my life away — but there's no way out for me."

"I see. Even before you told me, I had a good idea what your troubles might be." Yung-tse nodded and looked into her eyes with an understanding smile. "Ever since you came to our village I could see from your expression and manner, and from the fact that you spent all day down on the beach, that something tragic had happened to you. We had no chance to speak to each other though." He glanced at her uncertainly and paused for a moment. "I don't know if you noticed or not, but I was so worried about you that I often followed you at a distance. This evening, when I saw you run out of the village administrative office looking so desperate, I couldn't set my mind at rest. So I came here to stay in the room opposite." His eyes flashed as he stopped and laughed.

This was a revelation to Tao-ching. Ever since coming to Peitaiho she had been conscious of a shadowy figure hovering near her. So he had been watching over her deliberately! . . . She stole a look at him and blushed.

"Lin. . . ." He paused, wondering what to call her, but finding no appropriate form of address went on: "What are you planning to do? You must know how I . . . sympathize. . . ."

"Since Yu Ching-tang is so vile, I shall have to leave."

"Where will you go?"

Looking him straight in the eyes, she answered seriously yet innocently:

"I don't know! I may wander from place to place. The whole world's my home now."

"You can't do that!" Yung-tse sat down in the chair opposite, shaking his head vigorously. "Crows are black the world over. It may be dark and squalid here, but other places are no better. A young girl like you mustn't run such risks."

"What do you think I should do, then?" Tao-ching felt a great respect for this young man who had so suddenly entered her life and won her trust like the champion of some old romance.

"Lin . . . let's not stand on ceremony. We're like old friends already. Yu Ching-tang will be no problem because my father is a power in this village — after serving outside as a district magistrate he's come home now to retire. Ching-tang will listen to him. My father knows Magistrate Pao too. I can speak to my father and to Ching-tang as well. They won't make any trouble for you. As for that scheme of Ching-tang's, you can rest easy — that was just wild talk. Your cousin's departure has left the school short-handed. Why don't you stay on and teach here? Wouldn't that be better?"

Tao-ching had listened quietly with bent head. It struck her that this university student was not only kind and warm-hearted but capable too. But she frowned and shook her head.

"No!" she cried impulsively. "I don't want anything to do with such a despicable character as Yu Ching-tang. I would rather starve than bow low for five *tou* of rice."*

"You can't call this bowing low. Ching-tang is a man of some education too." Yung-tse smiled persuasively.

But Tao-ching cut in:

"I don't think much of his education then! It's unpleasant even to be near such a man."

Yung-tse's small eyes widened in surprise. Obviously this delicate, graceful girl had a resolute, unyielding spirit. Why was

* Five *tou* of rice, the equivalent of five pecks, was the salary of a small official in ancient China. The reference is to Tao Yuan-ming, a Tsin dynasty poet (365—427) who preferred to live simply on his farm rather than submit to the will of his superiors.

she so wilful, so naive in her pursuit of an unattainable ideal? He wanted to convince her of her mistake, but when he saw the stubborn determination in her eyes he said nothing. The two of them sat facing each other in silence.

It would soon be dawn. The cocks were beginning to crow. Worn out, Tao-ching rested her head on the table, her mind in a turmoil, unwilling to say more. Yung-tse stood up and walked to the window. The rain had stopped and the day promised to be fine. In the glimmering dawn he stood beside her for a few minutes and said hoarsely:

"I'm going now. You ought to get some sleep. When you see Yu Ching-tang, on no account show that you know of his scheme. Don't mention what we've been discussing either. . . . You can't go away just yet. We'll discuss what's to be done later. Let's go to the beach this afternoon for a talk, shall we? I know how you love the sea."

Tao-ching rose, nodding her head. When Yung-tse turned in the doorway to look back, their eyes met and both blushed deeply.

Towards dusk a smiling sea was gently lapping the shore, breaking into white foam as it reached the soft, sandy beach. Sea-gulls soared below a few floating evening clouds and uttered occasional cries. The setting sun shone upon a crag on which, facing the sea, sat Tao-ching and Yung-tse. The girl was gazing pensively at the sparkling, golden waves, while Yung-tse was scanning the pale far-off horizon where water and clouds met. From time to time he turned his head to steal a glance at her. After a while he broke the silence. He was a young man who talked well.

"Lin, . . . I hope you'll feel able to trust me. Although we have only met by chance, I can see you are a most remarkable girl with a clear purpose in life. So from the bottom of my heart. . . . My sympathy and respect for you make me forget everything else but your welfare. . . . I do beg you to stay here for the time being. I can give you my word of honour that no one will dare to insult or molest you. Yu Ching-tang has already agreed to your teaching here. I'm sure you'll make a splendid teacher for the third form. What do you say?"

Tao-ching raised her head to fix melancholy eyes on Yung-tse's dark face.

"Thank you," she said. ". . . I often think of Gorky's words that our most glorious and greatest task in life is to play the man. To uphold the dignity of life I'm not going to live it carelessly." Her voice gained in strength as she spoke, and she grew so animated that Yung-tse could not but marvel at the bashful, reserved young girl's brave determination to meet and overcome all difficulties. "If I'd wanted the luxuries of life I'd long ago have become some rich man's concubine or a fashionable society lady. Then I wouldn't be in this fix, forced to fend for myself as best I can. But the kind of life I've turned my back on has no spiritual value at all. It's a living death!"

He looked at her with amazement, and for a while could not speak. Both were silent again. After some time, Yung-tse broached a different subject.

"You like literature, don't you? You must have read a good deal."

"I love books, but I haven't read very many . . . I haven't yet asked you what you're studying at Peking University."

"I'm in the Chinese Literature Department. It seems we have the same tastes."

Having found a good topic, Yung-tse held forth at some length on literature and art. He spoke of *War and Peace, Les Misérables* and *Camille,* Heine and Byron's poetry, of the *Dream of the Red Chamber,* Tu Fu's poems and the works of Lu Hsun. He had evidently read widely and had an excellent memory. Tao-ching listened in wide-eyed wonder to the beautiful and moving expressions that rolled off his tongue, as he told of characters and tales of high romance. By degrees she grew rapt and her delight shone on her face. Finally he changed the subject, coming back to her present position. "Lin, you must have read Ibsen's *A Doll's House.* Have you read *Breaking Away* by Feng Yuan-chun?* The main theme of both is the struggle against outworn tradition and the independence of women. But I think you are even braver and more determined than their heroines. You are only

---

*A well-known woman writer of the late twenties.

eighteen, aren't you, Lin? I am sure you will go far, you are so fine. . . ." A measured flood of words fell from his thin lips, and Tao-ching listened, fascinated.

By now the new moon had risen above the horizon, and the deserted beach had long been silent but for the pounding of waves against the rocks. Still the two young people lingered by the sea to talk. Tao-ching's heart slowly filled with the happiness of youth, the happiness of one who finds fresh hope when all had seemed utterly lost. In addition to the gratitude she felt to Yung-tse for saving her life and showing sympathy, she respected him because he shared her ambitions and outlook on life. In fact, in one short day she had come to look upon him as her ideal, her hero.

The next day at dusk they met again on the beach.

When the moon rose they were still strolling by the sea.

A gentle wind was sweeping wisps of dark clouds towards the horizon as Tao-ching and Yung-tse sat down together on a promontory to rest. Once more Yung-tse started talking about literature, but as he spoke he fastened his eyes intently upon Tao-ching till he lost the thread of his discourse. Tao-ching, who had been hanging on his words, suddenly realized that he had broken off to stare at her. She lowered her head in embarrassment.

"Do you remember Heine's poetry, Lin?" Yung-tse seized on a new subject to cover his confusion. "I have loved this great German poet ever since my middle-school days and know quite a few of his poems by heart – especially those about the sea."

"Can you still recite them?" Tao-ching heard her own unsteady voice as if in a dream.

Yung-tse nodded and began to recite in low, passionate tones:

> Hazy twilight is approaching,
> The tide runs stronger,
> As I sit on the shore watching the snow-white waves,
> My heart surges like the mighty ocean.
> A deep longing for home makes me think of you,
> Your beautiful image is everywhere around me,
> Calling me always.

> It is always present,
> In the sound of the wind, the roar of the sea,
> In the sigh from my breast.
> I write it in the sand with a fine reed pipe:
> "Agnes, I love you."

Yung-tse came to a sudden stop. He had seemed to be pouring out his heart, rather than reciting a poem. Under his burning gaze, Tao-ching turned her head away in confusion.

A secret surge of happiness made her forget all her troubles and bitterness of soul in the fascination of an imaginary world which she could not wholly understand. As they walked slowly back to the village in the moonlight, Yung-tse said softly:

"Lin, stay on in this village! Don't run away! Look how beautiful it is here by the sea!"

Each word of someone you trust and respect carries weight. Tao-ching promised without hesitation not to leave.

A few days later the primary school began its autumn term, and Tao-ching saw Yung-tse off to Peiping* to continue his studies.

The morning he was to leave, they waited in the small deserted station for a train from the east. As it was still early, they strolled together on a plot of waste land outside.

Although they had been friends for a few days only and all their talk on the beach had been about art, life and society, at this moment of separation both felt an indescribable reluctance to part. Tao-ching, in particular, experienced something of the grief and panic of a child who has lost its mother. Thanks to Yung-tse's influence in Peitaiho, Yu Ching-tang had abandoned his dastardly plan, but she sensed that she would again be helpless and alone as soon as her new friend should leave.

After strolling for some time, they came to a standstill.

Tao-ching's melancholy eyes and abundant bobbed hair slightly ruffled in the autumn breeze made Yung-tse's heart beat faster. He had fallen in love at first sight with this beautiful girl. But his native steadiness and caution counselled him that to speak out too soon would be dangerous. So all this time he had kept him-

* Peking (Northern Capital) was called Peiping after 1920 under the reactionary Kuomintang regime. The city resumed its name Peking in 1949 when the People's Republic of China was founded.

self in check and talked only of subjects likely to please Tao-ching. Now the knowledge that she had some feeling for him and was so open-hearted tempted him to speak. But a wrong approach might ruin his chance of success. So he vacillated, gazing at the white-clad figure beside him, his heart afire with the thought:

"This lovely, innocent girl – if only she were mine!"

When Tao-ching turned and saw Yung-tse's gleaming eyes fixed upon her again, a fresh wave of emotion set her blood racing. She bent down to pick a wild flower. By the time she straightened up the young man was smiling placidly as usual.

"You had better go back," he said. "The train will soon be in."

"No, I shan't leave till the train has pulled out again."

Tao-ching tossed her head with a childlike laugh.

As they waited in the station, Yung-tse earnestly advised her:

"No matter what Ching-tang says, I hope you'll be patient. He won't make any trouble for you because . . ." he smiled at Tao-ching – "because I told him you and I are good friends. That's right, isn't it?'

"Whether we are or not, why tell him?"

"It's better this way. Then he can look after you."

"I'm not a child. I'm earning my own living. I don't need him to look after me."

Afraid she had taken offence, Yung-tse looked fondly into her eyes and said softly:

"Don't be so impatient, Lin! You know during the last few days I've been to some trouble . . . to smooth things out for

you . . . for you, yes! Well, let's not talk about that. But since today's society is what it is, 'it's easy to be an official if you have friends at court.' If Ching-tang knows we are friends, that's all to the good. Just don't take these annoyances too seriously."

With lowered head Tao-ching answered:

"At any rate, I'd rather starve than try to get on the good side of him!"

Yung-tse gave up the argument, thinking: "What a headstrong filly!"

The train pulled into the station, and Yung-tse carrying his suitcase boarded it while Tao-ching stood on the platform watching him. Over the heads of the noisy crowd she saw him standing sadly at the door of the coach. He was still staring fixedly yet absently at her when the train began to move.

To her he was a great-hearted knight, a brilliant young scholar. After the train had gone and the crowd had dispersed, Tao-ching remained standing motionless on the platform.

CHAPTER 6

So Tao-ching took up her duties in the Yang Village Primary School. Having succeeded at last to be self-supporting, her troubled mind found some peace and soon she was absorbed in her teaching and her pupils. The only fly in the ointment was the presence of Yu Ching-tang. Each sight of his long yellow face with its hypocritical smile and flickering, reptilian eyelids filled her with revulsion.

The school children told Tao-ching that her cousin had been dismissed by Yu Ching-tang because he disapproved of the head's interference with the teachers. Yu was a big landlord in the village, a prominent member of the local gentry and a favourite with the county magistrate. Their nickname for him was "The Smiling Tiger." Still, he was invariably polite to Tao-ching. Whenever he met her he would crow with delight and greet her with a smile.

"You are very busy, aren't you, Miss Lin? Our humble school is very poorly equipped. I'm afraid it's not fair to you, not fair to you!"

Tao-ching would nod coldly, unable to bring herself to speak to him.

But Yu's face remained creased in a smile. His quizzical glance as he nodded and crowed did remind her of a smiling tiger.

One day Tao-ching met him at the top of the flight of steps outside the school. With a leer he thrust his face close to hers:

"Congratulations, Miss Lin! Yung-tse's wife has just died. Luck is certainly with you — now you can take it easy. . . ."

"What's that?" Tao-ching recoiled indignantly. "I don't know what you're talking about."

"Oh, nothing, nothing. Yung-tse's wife has just died, that's all. The broken-down cart blocking the way has gone. The dying wife no sooner draws her last breath than the match-maker comes to the door with a new proposal. That's the custom in our humble village. Think nothing of it."

He walked away chuckling to himself.

Tao-ching went to her room in such a rage that for long she could do nothing but sit motionless, her head resting on the table.

Two days later, when the afternoon classes were over and a few of the teachers were sitting chatting in the staff room, Yu came in muttering angrily under his breath. He had a bundle of letters in his hand. Seeing Tao-ching there reading a newspaper, he went up to her, clearing his throat.

"Miss Lin, your letters! The post-office will soon have to move into our school. Look, what a large correspondence you have!"

Before Tao-ching could get up, he waved the letters over his head and turned to her colleagues with a laugh. "Miss Lin should open a post-office for herself. Her letters arrive in shoals. The rest of the village put together doesn't have as many letters as she does." This said, his expression changed. Blinking and pulling a long face, he sawed the air and hissed: "I must warn you, Miss Lin, that there has been talk about you in the village for some time. Do you understand? A teacher must consider public morals. The relations between men and women. . . ."

Tao-ching snatched the letters angrily from his hand. "Mr. Yu! I came here to teach, not to listen to your stories about chaste women! I am a teacher, free to do as I see fit." Thereupon without looking back she ran to her room, threw herself down on the bed and buried her face.

Not until dusk fell did she regain sufficient composure to light the lamp and read her letters. There were about a dozen, almost all were from Yu Yung-tse. The thin university student was evidently head over heels in love, for every day he wrote to her — sometimes three times a day — letters burning with passionate ardour. Because the village postman made a delivery only every few days, her letters arrived in a pile. And this had given Yu something definite against her. He was not at all pleased with Yung-tse's interference in his plan — he had not only contemplated presenting Tao-ching to Magistrate Pao but was hoping for some favours himself. Just as he was conveying this juicy morsel to his mouth a quick hand had reached out and seized it. But he could not afford to offend Yung-tse's father or the young man himself, for as a university student his cousin was highly thought of in the village and might in future become an important official. So he had to transfer his displeasure to Tao-ching. The homeless young girl was after all in his power.

In the dim light of the paraffin lamp, Tao-ching read Yung-tse's ardent yet tender letters one by one, and a smile dawned on her face. Stirred by his outpouring of sweet sentiments mingled with fiery yet reticent avowals, her young heart lost itself in the ecstasy of love. All her weariness forgotten, she picked up her pen to write a long, long reply. And one passage in that letter read less like the reflections of a young girl than those of a grown woman with more than her share of the sorrows and misfortunes of life.

> Yung-tse, how I long to destroy this wicked society which I hate! But I am like a small insect caught in a spider's web. No matter how hard I struggle I cannot escape from all the horrors around me. I ran away from home to escape ill-treatment; but society is everywhere just as corrupt as my home, as disgustingly wicked. I find that your cousin and my father are birds of one feather: all their talk is of humanity, justice and morality, while

in their hearts are nothing but greed and lust. I feel like a beast of burden stumbling through the trackless desert alone.... Oh, Yung-tse, shall I ever see an oasis? Shall I ever find the cool refreshing spring for which I am longing?

Let me tell you something. You accuse me of lacking in warmth, of being too cold to you. Well, from now on I promise to love you. To love you dearly. If you only knew how heavy my heart is today! I cannot stand this humiliating treatment. I want to run away . . . but where can I go? . . . I love you with all my heart.

It was very late, she could hardly keep her eyes open. She finished the letter and, without reading it through, flung herself down on the bed fully dressed and fell asleep. Tightly clasped in her hand were her lover's letters.

To Tao-ching's sorrowing mind, the commonplace village, the commonplace daily round, even the beautiful majestic sea, by degrees became colourless and meaningless. Her letters to Yu Yung-tse and Wang Hsiao-yen were filled with pessimism and despair. Yung-tse and Hsiao-yen urged her not to be discouraged but to take a happier view of life. And she herself sometimes marvelled that at her age she should be subject to such unhealthy fits of depression. But life — all that she had seen of it — was so dark and cruel that not even the first flush of her love for Yung-tse could overcome her dejection.

One day, however, a bolt from the blue awoke the sleepy little village and aroused Tao-ching from her apathy and frustration.

September 24, 1931, was an unforgettable day.

That day the train coming through the Shanhaikuan Pass from beyond the Great Wall brought coach-loads of refugees, weeping and in great distress. The people of Yang Village near Peitaiho Station were startled out of their complacency. And when they learned that Japanese imperialist troops had occupied Chinwangtao just up the coast, the whole village was thrown into a ferment. Men, women and children fleeing from Chinwangtao and the neighbouring country crowded the village streets and struck dread into the inhabitants. Classes stopped, those teachers who lived in the neighbourhood went home, and even those who lived in the village stopped coming to school. Only Tao-ching was left in the deserted temple.

She was sitting alone that afternoon in the staff room. The westering autumn sun was gleaming faintly on the gourd vine covering the arbour outside the east windows, casting the shadow of leaves on the window paper. She was trying to read a novel but could not concentrate. Her thoughts kept turning to the confusion and misery so evident on the streets, and to Chinwangtao, only twenty *li* away, which had been occupied by the Japanese navy.

The school porter brought in a newspaper. He was the old drunkard who had locked her outside the temple the day she arrived. He tottered in, muttering to himself. When he saw Tao-ching, he called out: "Miss Lin, this is the end! The Japanese have taken our three northeastern provinces!"

Dumbfounded, Tao-ching quickly took the paper from him. It was true. Big, angry characters announced that the Japanese army had occupied Shenyang and other cities in the Northeast. She read on and on to the end. Then with the newspaper clenched in her hand, she sank on to a stool.

The temple was fearfully quiet, the staff room was fearfully quiet, the whole world seemed to be fearfully quiet and still.

"Miss Lin, what's the news? What are the latest developments?"

Tao-ching started and raised her head. The old porter had gone and before her stood Li Chih-ting, another teacher of about forty. He had come in quietly and been struck instantly by her stunned expression.

Tao-ching rose and handed him the paper. Her eyes, usually so clear, were red. Li took the paper — it was *The Daily World* — and presently began shaking his head and sighing.

"This is terrible! Our country is being carved up before our very eyes. We are finished! This is the end of China!"

"Don't say that, Mr. Li! I can't bear to hear you!" Tao-ching, generally so calm, added with tears: "I don't believe China can ever be destroyed. The fortunes of our country depend on us, the ordinary people of China. How can we let our home land perish?"

While Tao-ching was speaking a young man walked in with a firm, heavy tread. He stopped just inside the door and nodded to her informally with a smile.

"You are absolutely right," he said. "The fortunes of a country depend on its people. Are you a teacher here?"

"Yes, I am." She looked at Li Chih-ting as if to ask what this outright young man was doing there.

"Let me introduce you. This is my brother-in-law, Lu Chia-chuan, a student of Peking University. He has come to see his mother, who's ill, and his sister. From the moment he arrived he's been on the go and made me show him around. This is Miss Lin Tao-ching, one of my colleagues. She studied in Peiping too."

"Splendid! It's not often we find a Peiping student teaching in a village school. . . . Please sit down. The situation these days is very tense, isn't it?"

This young man had a strangely magnetic quality. Tao-ching was so attracted by his lively way of talking and buoyant manner that she shed her usual reserve to ask:

"Where are you from? You know Japan has occupied the three northeastern provinces. Do you think China will fight?"

Smiling slightly, the young man seemed in no hurry to reply. His intelligent, pleasant eyes rested reflectively on the two faces before him.

Li Chih-ting, who was smoking a cigarette and quietly watching his brother-in-law, told Tao-ching:

"You know, Miss Lin, this brother-in-law of mine is especially interested in politics. Once he starts holding forth on Chinese or foreign affairs, ancient or modern, there's no stopping him. . . . Well, Chia-chuan, talk away. You can see how worried Miss Lin is."

"Do tell us what's happening, Mr. Lu," she urged him.

"I don't know any more than is in the papers." Lu Chia-chuan glanced through the papers on the table before looking up to speak slowly. "There's only one point I want to make: Chiang Kai-shek is bold enough when it comes to civil war, but he gave strict orders to our hundreds of thousands of troops in the Northeast not to resist the invaders. So Japan, without firing a single shot, has taken the largest arsenal in the country – that at Shenyang – along with the munitions factory and an aerodrome with two hundred planes. After that, the Japanese attacked cities like Penhsi, Yingkou and Changchun. I understand Kirin has

been occupied, and on this side Chinwangtao has gone. . . . But the Kuomintang government's method of dealing with this fearful disgrace was to send a telegram to the Chinese representative at Geneva, Shih Chao-chi, asking the League of Nations to see that justice is done."

With a keen look at Tao-ching he demanded earnestly: "Do you think this kind of wild hope can come to anything? Can China defeat Japan without using force?"

Tao-ching gazed steadily at Lu Chia-chuan. Mingled with the indignation he had aroused in her was an element of surprise. She had never before met a university student like this. He was certainly very different from Yu Yung-tse, who talked of nothing but beautiful forms of art or moving romances. Lu Chia-chuan had a good understanding of current events, and this was the first time Tao-ching had heard such a bold exposition of the situation.

"I don't know!" she answered frankly after a moment's thought. Her cheeks were hot.

"But someone so anxious about our country's fate ought to know, don't you think?" Lu Chia-chuan smiled.

"Well. . . ." Tao-ching smiled too. She did not know how to answer this young stranger.

"Chia-chuan, let's move on. Didn't you say you wanted to find out about the situation in Chinwangtao? Come on, let's go!" Li Chih-ting had tact and when he saw that Lu's questions were embarrassing Tao-ching he decided to take his brother-in-law away.

As Tao-ching escorted the two men to the gate, Lu Chia-chuan told both the teachers:

"In this national crisis we can none of us stand aside with folded arms to look on!"

"What can we do?" muttered Li Chih-ting, shaking his head and sighing. "We are pale-faced intellectuals with no weapons in our hands."

"A patriot need not shoulder a rifle and fight on the battlefield. You can arouse people by propaganda. If you fill your students with love for our country, that's the same as taking up arms."

Li Chih-ting said nothing and Tao-ching made no answer either, but in her heart she knew that this was true. She felt a respect for this young man who was somehow unlike other people. In a few minutes' conversation he had opened her eyes to a great many things.

In two days the storm was over and classes started again. Tao-ching did not give the third form a regular lesson during the first period. Ardent love for China triumphed over her personal emotions and for a whole period she talked to the children about the bitter news of the September the Eighteenth Incident* and the wickedness of Japan's invasion of China. She added what Lu Chia-chuan had said about the Kuomintang's lack of resistance. Her voice was neither high nor loud, and she often paused, but her tone of grief and the tears that kept welling up in her eyes deeply stirred the children. They listened quietly and did not move. The eyes of many glistened with tears, while several of the older girls were openly crying.

"Miss Lin, why don't we fight?" asked one boy gruffly.

"Because the government doesn't love our country."

"To fight Japan, Miss Lin, what do we need?"

"An army, rifles and big guns."

"Doesn't China have rifles and guns?" "Doesn't China have aeroplanes?" "Doesn't China have an army?" . . . Tao-ching, bombarded with questions, could not answer fast enough.

"All the Kuomintang cares about is fighting a civil war, fighting the Chinese people. It doesn't dare fight Japan. It's afraid. . . ."

"We're not afraid! We'll fight!"

"We'll fight! I can fire a rifle!"

"We'll fight! We'll fight!"

The class-room, usually so quiet, re-echoed with the children's shouts. And Tao-ching's heavy heart felt a lift of joy. They were such fine, sweet children! They all loved their country and knew they must resist Japan, must fight!

After this Tao-ching often told the children stories of patriots like Wen Tien-hsiang, Yueh Fei, Shih Ko-fa, or foreign tales

* The Japanese attacked Shenyang on September 18, 1931 and then occupied China's three northeastern provinces.

like *The Two Fishermen* and *The Last Lesson.* The children loved to hear these stories and she derived satisfaction from telling them. A closer bond sprang up between teacher and pupils, and her heart was no longer empty.

But one day another storm arose.

Yu Ching-tang came to the staff room. Blinking as usual he looked round with his crafty, hypocritical smile at the four teachers sitting there, before fixing his eyes on Tao-ching. Speaking softly at first, he asked:

"Well, have you all heard? In Peiping and Tientsin the situation has grown very tense. The trouble-makers and students are creating general confusion by carrying on demonstrations and going on strike. Some have even gone to Nanking to demonstrate. . . . What fool's game are they playing, anyway? In name they are opposed to Japan, but in fact they are controlled by the Communists." Abruptly raising one hand, he started to harangue them seriously. "Aren't they blindly creating confusion? Can a few parades and demonstrations save the country and defeat Japan? Remember that Generalissimo Chiang has forbidden resistance because he has a way to deal successfully with the whole problem. Now it has reached my ears that there is anti-Japanese propaganda going on in our school!" He swallowed audibly, turned to the four teachers sitting there in silence and threw each a crafty, ingratiating look before finally letting his eyes rest on Tao-ching. "Yes, Miss Lin, you are very young but you must be especially careful! What's this you told your students about two fishermen? If you give outsiders the impression that we have Reds in our school, I may lose my head!"

The other teachers remained silent. Tao-ching fixed angry eyes on Yu and cried:

"I don't care in the least, Mr. Yu, what happens to your head. At a time of national crisis like this, doesn't every Chinese have the right to speak about the need to resist Japan? Does calling for resistance to Japan make you a Red? Is this a law?"

The other teachers sat dumbfounded. Li Chih-ting's face was white. They were astounded to hear shy, quiet Miss Lin answer the head back so boldly.

Yu Ching-tang's thin face grew black, he even stopped blinking. Speechless for some seconds, he swung around and walked away.

At the door he halted, turned and swished his wide sleeves. Blinking at Tao-ching he sneered in a voice that trembled:

"Don't ask me! If there's anything you don't understand, I suggest that you go and ask Generalissimo Chiang!"

"Don't worry!" retorted Tao-ching as the head retreated. "The students of Peking University have gone to Nanking to ask for me."

Yung-tse's letters had told her that the students of Peking University were opposed to the government's policy of non-resistance and to the proposal to make Chinchow a neutral zone. Many of them had gone to Nanking to demonstrate in the streets of the capital. Yung-tse said he had meant to go too, but had been prevented by an attack of influenza. He also told her that the deputy leader of the demonstrators was Li Chih-ting's brother-in-law, Lu Chia-chuan.

"Lu Chia-chuan?" Sitting alone in her room, still smouldering after her argument with the head, she remembered her unexpected encounter with Lu. She smiled to imagine him leading a contingent of students to Nanking to settle scores with the Kuomintang. It seemed as if by giving vent to her indignation the young man had raised her spirits. With a sense of gratitude she murmured his name.

CHAPTER 7

It was a cold, dark night. Pale moonlight glimmered wanly on a long train hurtling through the countryside. All the coaches were carrying unusual passengers — students from universities in Peiping who were hurrying to Nanking to demonstrate in the Kuomintang capital.

"Well, Chia-chuan, Ta-fang, the Party has given us a heavy responsibility this time! When the Nanking government sees that we have come thousands of *li* to protest against its policy and can't be fobbed off with fine talk, they'll probably use force." The speaker was Li Meng-yu, leader of this contingent going south to make a demonstration.

"We're not afraid!" Lo Ta-fang, a sturdy, red-cheeked youngster lightly struck the little table with his clenched fist. "Even if many lives are lost — as happened in the March the Eighteenth Incident — fresh blood will arouse men as nothing else can. The people, those who are still sound asleep will be roused to wakefulness if our blood is shed!"

The other youth was Lu Chia-chuan, whom we first met in Peitaiho. His half-closed eyes widened to stare at Lo Ta-fang, and shaking his head he said:

"No, Ta-fang, don't be so naive. Wise men use the smallest possible sacrifice to win the biggest possible victory. We triumphed over the reactionary Students' Union on November 30 and won over a great many fellow-students to come and demonstrate in Nanking; but now we must consider how to gain an even greater victory after we reach Nanking. How will the reactionaries try to deal with us? This is something we ought to think over." He grew thoughtful and said no more.

The day after the September the Eighteenth Incident, students in Shanghai, Peiping, Tientsin, Hangchow, Taiyuan, Sian and elsewhere had launched a widespread movement to resist Japanese aggression and save the country. Refusing to attend their classes, they presented petitions and paraded in order to impress upon the Kuomintang government the need for calling out troops to resist Japan. But the Nanking government, determined to capitulate, ignored the demands of the people. On November 25, 1931, they even cabled to their representative in the League of Nations instructing him to ask the League to arrange that Chinchow be made a "neutral zone" under the control of an international body, promising that Chinese troops would withdraw to within the Great Wall at the Shanhaikuan Pass. This treacherous proposal to surrender the Northeast to the imperialists aroused such anger throughout the country that workers in factories went on strike, while students in schools and universities stopped going to class and set off in large numbers to Nanking to protest. The students of Peking University were among the first to organize a group of demonstrators, who were now on their way to Nanking.

The train was swaying slightly. A bitter wind howling across the North China plain was making the unheated coach colder than ever. Big, burly Li Meng-yu pulled his cap forward and Lu Chia-

chuan rubbed his numbed hands; but Lo Ta-fang, oblivious to the cold, lowered his head and became absorbed with his own thoughts. After some time his head jerked up.

"Other students send petitions, we are coming to demonstrate," he said. "Of course that will enrage our lordly rulers in Nanking. . . . Is that what you're afraid of?"

"No, Ta-fang, what an idea!" Chia-chuan smiled and gripped Ta-fang's big hand. "Anticipating the worst isn't cowardice. Don't forget we are Marxists."

"Right," said Li Meng-yu. "Chia-chuan is right to use forethought. We must never underestimate our enemies. Let's talk of practical problems. I think we need a new division of labour. Chia-chuan, you're alert and quick-witted. You be responsible for dealing with the reactionaries this time. Ta-fang and I are tough and have loud voices. We'll take charge of the parade."

Li Meng-yu had no sooner stopped talking than shouts rang out outside their door:

"Down with Japanese imperialism! Long live the liberation of the Chinese people!" The passionate voices were filled with righteous indignation. Sounding so late on this cold night from a

dark, windowless coach, they were more than usually arresting and stirring.

Before dawn the three young men in the small compartment were beginning to yawn and droop. During their determined struggle against the reactionary Students' Union and the university authorities who were trying to check their activities, these newly-elected leaders of the reorganized union had worked tirelessly for three days and nights without sleep. They were overcome with exhaustion. Chia-chuan and Ta-fang had dropped off when Li Meng-yu roused them with these words:

"Here! I've had an idea! When we get to Nanking, suppose we inform the garrison headquarters of our plan and ask them to give us 'protection' during our demonstration?"

"What?" Ta-fang sounded highly dubious. " 'Protection'? When we demonstrate before a treacherous government we first ask it for 'protection'? What's the idea?"

Li Meng-yu remained unruffled. He smiled and in an unhurried manner added:

"Sometimes we use peaceful methods, sometimes we must resort to force. That's what's meant by strategy."

"You're right! That's one approach." Chia-chuan started waving a bundle of small paper flags to ward off the unbearable urge to sleep. "Old Li's given me an idea. According to dialectics, there are two sides to everything, a good and a bad."

. Ta-fang stared round-eyed at his two comrades-in-arms as if to say: "What has come over you two veterans anyway?"

Ta-fang went elsewhere to sleep while Chia-chuan curled upon the berth and dozed off at once. That left only Li Meng-yu sitting on a stool leaning against the small table. He had too much on his mind to sleep. After a little he stood up and, noticing Chia-chuan curled up for warmth and muttering in his sleep, he gently covered him with his own cotton padded coat. Then he left the compartment.

He walked past fellow-students sleeping on the coach floor in every position imaginable, and went to the closed door. His head was swimming and he wanted to clear his brain with a breath of cold fresh air. He leaned close to the door and saw through a wide crack the murky, grey open country through which they were passing. The sky would soon be light, for already the horizon

was grey-white like the belly of a fish. As the ever-changing countryside flashed past, he caught glimpses of a few unchanging stars twinkling above. A high range of mountains in the distance was only faintly visible against the grey horizon. "We must be nearing Tsinan," he thought to himself. He breathed in deeply and yawned. When he heard the distant crowing of cocks and the barking of dogs something seemed to tug at his heart. The countryside before him appeared to be falling back swiftly never to appear again. He stared avidly at a bright stream and a few saplings as they flashed past, and his eyes filled abruptly with tears.

CHAPTER 8

A day came when Tao-ching could no longer endure Yu Ching-tang's petty persecution in Peitaiho. Without waiting for the winter holiday, she fled from Peitaiho to Peiping just as she had once fled from Peiping to Peitaiho.

Her salary had been a mere fifteen dollars a month, and after paying for her board, stationery, postage stamps and other incidentals, she had not been able to afford warm clothing. She set off dressed in a thinly padded gown with a small roll of bedding and clothing, nothing else. She had given her musical instruments, which she had long had no heart to play, to her students. On the train she wondered where she could stay in Peiping, and reflected that Director Hu was probably still looking out for her. Of course she would rather starve than "sell her soul," as she called it in her diary. She was determined to keep her integrity unstained by any base, material considerations. . . .

Not till the train was pulling in to Peiping Station did she decide to seek out her good friend Hsiao-yen.

Wang Hsiao-yen was a third-year student in high school and the same age as Tao-ching. Even-tempered and warm-hearted, she was the sort of girl whom others call "Big Sister." Her father, Wang Hung-pin, was a professor in the History Department of Peking University; her mother was a gentle, kindly housewife with some education. Hsiao-yen, who had grown up in a happy

home surrounded by affection, was the reverse of impulsive, fearless Tao-ching. She was cheerful and fastidious, and she studied hard so that in time she might become a scholar like her father.

As soon as she saw Hsiao-yen, Tao-ching seized her hands and was too moved to speak. Hsiao-yen could hardly recognize her at first. Cold as it was, her friend was wearing a very thinly padded black cloth gown covered with dust and marked with grease spots. She was looking exhausted, too, after her journey. Hsiao-yen gazed at her incredulously for some seconds.

Then she cried: "Tao-ching!" and smiled warmly in welcome. "Come and have a wash," she urged, not knowing how else to show her affection. "Then you can change into some of my things — you look just like a country girl."

"Don't you dare look down on country people. My mother —" Tao-ching realized there was no need to flare up and with a smile changed the subject. "You don't know how lucky you are, Hsiao-yen, to have a family — father, mother and sister." Though Tao-ching smiled her eyes grew moist and she turned quickly aside to reach for a towel.

"You mustn't feel sorry for yourself all the time," said Hsiao-yen with earnest sympathy. "You must stay here while we ask father to find a good way to help you."

"All right," Tao-ching smiled ruefully. The two girls looked at each other for a few seconds. Then, unable to contain herself any longer, Tao-ching threw her arms around Hsiao-yen and whispered to her: "Do you know Yu Yung-tse? We have become good friends."

"As if I didn't know that long ago!" Hsiao-yen smiled calmly and gently pushed Tao-ching away. "You had better call on him at once. He must be anxious to see you."

That evening Tao-ching called on Yung-tse and they talked in his small room in the hostel till late. When she left he insisted on seeing her back, and the two walked together slowly through the quiet of the night. At the moat in front of Tien An Men they halted beside the marble balustrade. By the dim light of the street lamp, Yung-tse gripped Tao-ching's cold hand tightly and gazed into her eyes for what seemed an eternity. Then, deeply stirred, he begged her in a voice that trembled:

"Lin, will you become my sweetheart? I shall always, always love you!"

Tao-ching bent her head without a word. Her heart was throbbing with rapture, her cheeks were hot and crimson. Was this what it meant to be in love? Deliriously happy, she took Yung-tse's hand and leaned her head against his shoulder. . . .

But not even love could drive away her depression. She was living with the Wangs and Hsiao-yen and her parents were kindness itself, but she could not continue there indefinitely. She must find a way to make a living. So the day after her return to Peiping she set to work to look up old friends and former teachers who might help her to find a job, and went through the advertising columns of various newspapers in the hope of finding a post that might be open to her.

The days went by till two weeks had passed in this way. Desperate as she was, hard as she tried, there seemed to be no hope of her finding employment. Professor Wang explained to her tactfully that under existing conditions even university graduates and those with special qualifications had little chance of getting work unless they had pull. For a young girl like Tao-ching to find a position was not going to be easy. For these reasons he counselled patience. But Tao-ching was unconvinced. She believed that in a city the size of Peiping it must be possible to find a job. She continued her search. Soon a month had passed, but she had still found no opening. Mrs. Wang constantly begged her not to be in such a hurry, assuring her that if she could not find work she was welcome to stay on with them. Hsiao-yen also urged her to exercise discrimination and not to become involved with the wrong kind of people. And yet their advice, intended to reassure her, could not overcome her sense of urgency. She followed up even the slightest chance of a job, but all to no avail. One day there appeared an advertisement for a governess. She had the required qualifications and felt hopeful.

She dressed herself carefully and attractively, put on Hsiao-yen's green woollen overcoat and was just going out with a handbag under her arm when she ran into her friend coming home from school. Hsiao-yen stopped her and asked:

"Are you going out to try your luck again?"

"No. Only to post a letter." After so many lectures on the subject of finding employment, Tao-ching decided not to tell the truth.

But Hsiao-yen saw through her and smilingly gave her a shove. "Run along, then! I wish you luck! Don't be too late home!"

With an embarrassed smile Tao-ching turned and left.

The address given in the advertisement proved to be an imposing residence with a large red gate near the Eastern Arch. She was ushered into a smart reception room somewhat Japanese in its style of furnishing. After a long wait in came a "gentleman" in a Western suit sporting a bushy moustache. He politely offered her tea and cigarettes. Then he asked how old she was and where she had studied, appraising her all the time with his dull, shifty eyes. Though ill at ease, she forced herself to answer. Finally she asked:

"Where are your children, sir? How old are they? What lessons will they be having?"

The stout, ungainly "gentleman" sprawled back on the couch and gave a bellow of laughter, disclosing a mouthful of gold teeth. After stroking his moustache and straightening his tie, he seemed to come to a decision. He said with a smile:

"Miss Lin, you are a very worthy young woman. My wife and son are still in our country. Great Japan, you know. You can begin your duties by teaching me. I shall pay you well. You will make plenty of money, plenty of money! Ha, ha, ha!"

Tao-ching felt stunned. With some faltered excuse she fled like a frightened deer. When she was some distance outside the imposing mansion she stopped to stare back at the haughty red gate and with trembling fingers rubbed her bewildered eyes.

Instead of going back to Hsiao-yen's home she went to see Yung-tse.

She found him at his desk writing. He rose to take her hand, but with a shake of her head she sank into a seat. Burying her face in both hands, she sat silent and motionless.

Yung-tse, nonplussed, stood anxiously by her side.

"What is it, Lin?" he asked gently. "Are you angry with me?"

"Oh, no! Not with you. Don't pay any attention, please. I'll be better in a minute."

Yung-tse dared say no more but watched her in dismayed perplexity. The room remained silent till Tao-ching calmed down enough to raise her head and look at him with a wan smile.

"I'm all right now. It's passed. . . . I can see now more clearly than ever that China is a sacrifice on the altar of greed: there are vicious, lawless bandits everywhere. . . . Yung-tse, do you know the story of Chiang Tai-kung? When I was a child my old nurse often told me: 'Bad luck never lasts. Before Chiang Tai-kung met Emperor Wen and became prime minister, he lost his fish-hook when fishing and upset his basket when he was selling flour.' I wonder if my luck will ever change." She did her best to hide her bitterness, but tears stood in her eyes. Presently she recovered herself. Throwing back her head defiantly, she exclaimed: "But I don't believe in fate! No matter what comes, I'll meet it as best I can! I am bound to find a way out some time."

She told him of her recent experience, and Yung-tse listened avidly. When she finished, his manner changed. He was no longer his usual genial self. After pacing the room a couple of times he came to where she sat, and watching her seriously and steadily he said:

"Lin, forgive me for speaking plainly! Our feeling for each other makes it impossible for me to keep silent any longer. It isn't safe for you to go job-hunting blindly. In times like these even men with great patience and experience often meet with bitter disappointments. Yet you dash to and fro like a wild colt. What is the use? Ideals are all very well, but you can't get away from reality. I'm afraid if you go on like this, you'll soon wear yourself out with nothing to show for your pains."

It struck Tao-ching, staring at Yung-tse's lean dark face and small bright eyes, that he was neither handsome nor cultivated. In any case, this was strange advice to be giving her. More distressed than ever, she watched him coldly and said nothing.

"Darling!" After a moment of silence he took her in his arms, murmuring softly: "Listen, Lin! Come and live with me! I've asked you so often. . . . Think how happy we can be here! I shall come back from lectures to a delicious meal prepared with your own hands. I shall be able to teach you more about the literature you love. I can help you polish any poems you write.

It's true my allowance from home isn't very large, but if we practise a little economy we can make it do for two. Why don't you take the happiness ready waiting for you? Why must you rush about so wildly getting nowhere? You're just wasting your energy and sponging on others."

"Don't say another word, please!" Tao-ching put her hands over his mouth and then drew away to hide her eyes. Soon she looked up and said: "Yung-tse, you've changed. Sponging on others? Wouldn't I be sponging on you if I stayed with you? Please stop harping on this every time we meet. If you don't, I shall know you are trying to take advantage of me." Her lips trembled as she struggled to control her anger.

Yung-tse took her arm and pleaded:

"Darling Lin! Don't talk like that! I love you! I shall always, always love you! You are my life, my soul. I can't live without you!"

Tao-ching smiled. These assurances were sweet to hear and they cast a spell over her.

CHAPTER 9

Dearly as Tao-ching loved Yung-tse, she had no wish to marry as yet. Each time he urged her he met with a flat refusal. This distressed him so much that one day he took to his bed and buried his head in the quilt, not going to his classes. When Tao-ching discovered him in this condition she demanded anxiously:

"What's the matter, Yung-tse? Are you ill?" She felt his forehead but he had no fever. He was simply in very low spirits.

"Sit down, Lin." He looked at her with a bitter smile. "I have an unaccountable pain in my chest. I've had heart attacks before, in fact I nearly died of one; but during the last few years I've had no trouble. Yesterday I had another attack. It was probably brought on by. . . ." He closed his eyes and said no more.

"Brought on by what?" probed Tao-ching.

"Let's not talk about it." Yung-tse opened his eyes and shook his head weakly.

"Don't stop like this!" cried Tao-ching. She shook him gently, frowning in perplexity. "What's the matter? Don't stutter and stammer and talk in riddles. If you've something to say, for goodness' sake speak out!"

Yung-tse's eyes filled with tears which rolled slowly down his cheeks. His long, thin fingers gripped Tao-ching's hand so tightly that it hurt. She watched him, bewildered, till he broke the long silence to whisper solemnly:

"Lin, tell me the truth! If you don't love me, if I'm not good enough for you. . . . Tell me the truth!"

For some minutes Tao-ching did not understand. When at last his meaning dawned upon her she seized his hands and held them tightly, a prey to conflicting emotions.

"Don't say such things, Yung-tse!" she cried. "You mustn't talk like that!" She turned her head to wipe away the tears in her own eyes. He was ill because of her.

The suggestion of a smile hovered at the corner of Yung-tse's mouth, but he wiped it quickly away. He pulled Tao-ching towards him and made her sit on his bed. Then he proceeded sadly:

"No, you don't really love me. But if I can't have you by my side, my life seems like a yellow leaf withering away. . . . Lin, save me! I can't live without you!"

What an agonizing avowal of love this was, coming from one who had saved her life! In his arms, melted by his tears, she agreed to live with him.

So a new life began.

The day before she left the Wangs' house Tao-ching felt all the fearfulness and uncertainty of a young bride about to leave home. Late that night, when her few belongings were in order, she took Hsiao-yen's hand and said softly:

"Hsiao-yen, tomorrow I shall start on a new kind of life. I'm a little afraid. But what else can I do? I hope you will study harder than ever so that soon your wish will come true. You're luckier than I am. I don't know what the future holds for me. . . ." She hung her head sadly.

"But you are far braver than I am!" exclaimed Hsiao-yen with a smile, wiping away the tears that were misting her glasses. "You've always shown plenty of courage in dealing with life. I

admire the way you've tackled your problems and you know I sympathize with your difficulties. But I can't quite make up my mind about Yu Yung-tse. Are you sure you understand him? If you go to him without thinking it over well first, what guarantee do you have that he'll always be true to you? Can you really trust him?" Hsiao-yen voiced her suspicions like a faithful big sister.

Tao-ching threw up her head, her eyes bright and stubborn as a child's.

"Hsiao-yen, do you think to have a successful marriage one must ride in a flower-bedecked car and have three match-makers and six witnesses? I've no patience with those vulgar ceremonies. Have you ever read Isadora Duncan's autobiography? That's a wonderful book. Isadora Duncan, who died only recently, was a great dancer in the West. She had to make her own way from childhood and overcome great obstacles in her struggle to win recognition for herself and her art. But she never lost heart or gave in to the powers of evil. She hated all the old, outworn moral standards. When her two children fell into the Rhine and were drowned, she went through such anguish that she decided she must have another child — though she had no husband at the time. So she waited on the beach until a handsome young man came along. Then she accosted him. . . ."

Prim and proper Hsiao-yen burst out laughing when she heard Tao-ching, usually so sparing of words, relate this romantic tale in all earnestness.

"You're taking this very casually, you wretch! What will you do when Yu Yung-tse deserts you?"

"I'm not afraid!" Tao-ching laughed briefly. "I don't depend on men. I can live without him. Besides . . . you don't know how he loves me." She flushed at these words.

Hsiao-yen chuckled. "How could I possibly know?"

As a matter of fact, Hsiao-yen thought the world of Tao-ching who was so intelligent and fond of books. She knew her friend had broader general knowledge and more of a flair for writing than she herself. Moreover she was sorry for her and indignant at the way her family had treated her. So she was ready to help her like her own sister. She did not approve, though, of Tao-ching's lack of restraint, her violent approach to many problems

and her unconventional views, which seemed to Hsiao-yen unfitting in a girl. But she could never defeat Tao-ching in argument. When the two friends had their occasional disagreements it was always Hsiao-yen who gave way with a laugh.

"Well, Tao-ching, from the bottom of my heart I wish you happiness!" Hsiao-yen had to remove her glasses again to wipe away her tears.

Tao-ching was deeply touched as she looked at her friend. She took Hsiao-yen's hand and smiling bravely said:

"Don't worry about me! I shan't go to the bad – not while I'm trying to deserve a friend like you!"

Tao-ching and Yung-tse set up house together in two neat little rooms in a house built round a courtyard. The top of their bookcase was graced with an old porcelain vase, the desk by a fern in a pot. On one wall hung a picture of Tolstoy in his old age, on another an eight-inch half-length photograph of the young couple. This recent photograph in a handsome frame smiled down on all observers. The small, old-fashioned rooms, when decorated, were warm and friendly, simple yet attractive, suggestive in some way of spring.

Yung-tse was a happy man. He congratulated himself on his good luck in winning such an untamable girl, in finding a mistress so beautiful and so young. Before going to class he would hold her in his arms and looking into her loving eyes would murmur:

"Darling! Wait for me! I'll be back soon."

Feeling very much in love, he would spin out his leave-taking as if he were setting out on a long journey.

At noon when he came back, he greeted her with an embrace before sitting at the little table on which they served their meals. Complacently rubbing his jaw he would ask:

"Is lunch ready? What are we having today? Pancakes and scrambled eggs? Fine! I certainly enjoy your cooking, Tao-ching. Our life is perfect, isn't it?"

It was true that Tao-ching was very happy too. Yung-tse's constant endearments and consideration satisfied her hunger for the love that had been denied to her since childhood. She was grateful, too, for the happy home he had given her. Although it

was small and modest, she felt at peace here after the uncertainties of her life in Peitaiho. After some time had passed, however, she grew restless and occasionally would say half in jest: "You're a university student occupied with useful studies. But what would you call me?"

He would comfort her:

"It doesn't matter. Many of our professors' wives are university graduates, some of whom have even studied abroad. Yet they stay at home to be good companions to their husbands and good mothers to their children. If you find life dull you can help me collect material or do some copying. Or you can learn cooking and sewing. There won't always be just the two of us, you know." Smiling he gently took her hand and kissed it.

"Yung-tse, why do you always talk like this?" Tao-ching drew back in dismay. "At Peitaiho you had so many interesting ideas. How I admired your views on life and art! But now you talk of nothing but eating, drinking and children. . . . Surely you know that to me life means much more."

"What do you want to do then?" he asked with a smile.

"I want to be independent. I want to be free."

"I have no objection!" Yung-tse changed his tone. "I have always been against confining women to the kitchen. But this is a social problem. What if you can't find work outside?"

There came a day, however, when Tao-ching declared exultantly:

"I've found a job!"

"What? Found a job?" Yung-tse looked stunned, but recovered quickly to ask: "Who found it for you?"

Tao-ching explained that the father of an old school-friend, Li Yu-mei, managed a book shop in the West City and needed a clerk. She had been offered the post and had accepted. She would start work the next day.

That evening Yung-tse was thoroughly dejected. He sat at his desk unable to concentrate, resting his head on his hands. Tao-ching, who was happier than usual, looked up from the book she was reading and noticed his mood. She put out a hand and asked:

"Why are you so depressed, Yung-tse? Don't you want me to work? It will make things easier financially, you know."

Yung-tse seized her hand and cried impulsively:

"I hate to see you go out to work! You see, in another year I shall graduate and I've given a great deal of thought to my future —to ours, I mean. For the last few years Hu Shih and other scholars have been calling for a study of old Chinese culture, and there is definitely a future in textual criticism. These days I haven't been reading so many works of literature but going to the library to dig deep into this subject. I chose my course with the same idea in mind. Nowadays there is a good deal of unemployment, but after graduation I don't expect to have any difficulty in finding a suitable job. We shall manage easily. That's why I'm not anxious to see my darling plunge back into the hurly-burly of life outside. You shouldn't have taken this job of assistant in a small book shop. And what about this Director Hu whom your mother found for you? Aren't you afraid you may run into him?"

"I haven't spent a cent of his money. Why should I be afraid of him?" Tao-ching shook her hand free and disappointment began to gnaw at her heart. "Yung-tse, I really can't understand you!" she cried. "You preach the emancipation of women, yet you don't want me to go out and work. But I must go! Please don't stop me!"

Yung-tse knew her well enough to do no more than nod sadly and keep silent.

Early the next morning Tao-ching set off cheerfully to the West City to take up her new duties. The first day everything went splendidly. The work was not hard and allowed her time to dip into many new books. The second and third days brought her annoyance, however, while by the fourth she felt she could stand it no longer, and on the sixth she resigned. What had happened was this. The second day some loafers and rowdies had drifted in and out of the shop, making a great commotion but buying nothing. The arrival of a beautiful young assistant had excited their vulgar curiosity and they swarmed like flies inside and outside the shop. On the sixth morning posted on the shop door was this doggerel:

> Oh, this book shop here isn't bad at all,
> With a beautiful clerk at our beck and call;
> Give me a kiss or a friendly look,
> And I'll pay a whole dollar for a ten-cent book!

When Tao-ching saw this she trembled all over with anger. In a few words she gave the manager notice. She received no pay for her few days of work, during which she had swallowed so many insults. This experience left her cast down for many days. She began to despair of ever finding a job. Yung-tse, of course, was pleased to think that he had gained another victory.

CHAPTER 10

It was the middle of winter. During a snowstorm one Sunday shortly before the lunar New Year, Yung-tse came home loaded with parcels – tender roast duck, cooked pork, rolls, pastries and a bottle of brandy. As Tao-ching relieved him of these packages, she asked curiously:

"Why did you buy these today?"

He kissed her cheek tenderly and told her gaily:

"I've invited someone important over for a meal. Come, let's tidy up the room and lay the table."

"Who is this someone important?" pouted Tao-ching, refusing to move. "I'm not here to wait on anyone important."

He put her hand to his face. "Feel my cheek, it's like ice from shopping in the bitter cold, yet you haven't even a kind word for me. Come and make me warm."

Tao-ching smiled and drew back her hand. "Tell me who's coming," she demanded.

"You'll soon find out," he teased. "He can do something very important for us. You must be a perfect hostess and entertain him well.... Shall we put these out on plates? Later you can warm up the rolls in the steamer. No, wait! Will you get those Sung cups out first? This is an occasion for our best porcelain."

They had just laid the table and straightened the room when a voice outside called: "Does Young Master Yu of Yang Village live here?"

Tao-ching made haste to open the door. Outside stood a frail, shabbily dressed old man. As he slapped the snow and dust from his clothes he quavered:

"Please . . . does Young Master Yu live here?"

"Come in!" Before she could lead the old man in, Yung-tse joined them asking:

"Whom do you want?"

A smile wrinkled the old man's dark face. "Ah, Master Yu, so you do live here! I had a hard time finding you." Without waiting for any further invitation he stepped inside.

"Who are you?" Yung-tse raised his arm to bar the way.

"Me? Why, I'm your Third Uncle Wei who lives opposite your house. Don't you remember me?" The old man's lined face clouded and he stared blankly at Yung-tse.

"Oh, it's you, Wei the Third." Yung-tse waved him into the room. At the same time he remarked curtly to Tao-ching: "This is one of our tenants from home."

Since the old man looked travel-stained and exhausted, Tao-ching guessed that he was probably cold and hungry. She ran for a stool, put it near the stove and made him sit there while she asked with concern:

"Have you eaten? You must share—" Before she could say "our meal," Yung-tse flashed her a look. She nodded, remembering the delicacies on the table and the "someone important" expected any moment. She fetched a package of baked cakes which she thrust into the old man's hands.

"Have some of these, uncle," she said.

"You're too good. Don't go to any trouble. . . ." With rough country courtesy the old peasant accepted the cakes and put one to his lips. Yung-tse disappeared through the cloth-curtained door into the inner room, while Tao-ching kept the old man company. Old Wei ate ravenously and had soon finished all the cakes. Then he took out his tobacco pouch and pipe. Lighting up, he screwed up his eyes and looked gratefully at Tao-ching, remarking pleasantly:

"You're the Miss Lin who taught in our Yang Village, aren't you?"

"Yes, uncle," she answered. "So you still remember me?"

"I should think so! My grandson, Puppy, was one of your pupils. He was always telling us what a good teacher Miss Lin was. He said Miss Lin wanted him to fight the Japanese."

At this point Yung-tse came out with some books under his arm and interrupted to ask:

"Uncle Wei, what did you come to see me about? Tell me quickly. I must be off now to a lecture."

The old man suddenly grew agitated. The tobacco pouch in his hand began to tremble. Slowly, with a great effort at self-control, he knocked out the ashes from his pipe and stowed it and his pouch back in his pocket. Even then he did not answer the question directly.

"Master Yu," he began, "you're a man of education. You'll understand. . . . I farm that land in the hollow which belongs to your family, but it's been flooded for three years on end. I've had no crop, my wife has died of starvation. My son Wu-fu was driven by hunger to join the army. There are only Puppy's mother and Puppy left at home—I had to sell Wu-fu's sister Yu-lai. Now we don't know where she is. . . ."

The tale of the old man's troubles might well prove a long one. Yung-tse struck the table and cut in again:

"Uncle Wei, tell me what has brought you here. If it's nothing urgent, wait until I come back. I must be going."

"Don't go, sir! Not yet awhile! I shan't keep you long." The old man rose abruptly and reached out as if to embrace Yung-tse, crying out brokenly:

"Poor folk like us can't make a living anyhow these days. I haven't been able to pay the rent for two years. . . . Your father is pressing me. . . ." The old man shook his head and sighed. All at once he began fumbling in his pockets, and after a while produced a crumpled envelope. Holding this high, he presented it with shaking hands to Yung-tse. "See! This is a letter from Wu-fu in the army. It made us very happy. He told us he was stationed at Changhsingtien outside Peiping, and I came here to see him!"

"What use was that?" Yung-tse smiled at the old peasant's folly.

"You're right, sir. It was no use. I came several hundred *li* to see him and had a hard time borrowing four dollars for the train fare. When I got there, he was gone. His unit's been sent away, I don't know where. . . . All of us at home were hoping we could find him and get him to help us out. If he'd had good luck and could help us to pay your father the rent, that would have been even better. But Heaven is blind, Heaven is blind! We don't know where they've sent him! In troubled times like these,

fighting may break out any day. One bullet, and my poor boy. . . ." He sank down on a stool, gulping painfully. Tao-ching's heart went out to him. When the old man wiped his eyes with the back of one grimy hand, she hastened to pass him a towel. But Yung-tse twitched it from her hand with a quizzical smile, and turned to the old man.

"Cheer up, Uncle Wei. You say you have no money for your fare home? I'll give you a dollar toward your ticket and you can borrow more from other people. But go home as soon as you can." Yung-tse took a note from his pocket and laid it on the table, smiling at Tao-ching as if to say: "See how generous I am!"

When Yung-tse started speaking, the old man's face lit up; but it contracted convulsively when he saw that he was being sent away with one dollar. He looked steadily for a moment at Yung-tse, then turned to Tao-ching who was standing near by.

"Master Yu, do a good deed!" he cried distractedly with lips that trembled. "My family's starving to death one after another. One dollar — why, one dollar won't even take me home! I know you're a kind man, sir. When you were a child you gave Wu-fu white steamed rolls to eat. . . ." His bleared old eyes filled with tears. "Let me have nine or ten dollars sir, and you'll be saving our lives! Don't send me back empty-handed to Puppy and his mother!"

The old man's tears were flowing freely. But Yung-tse, who had always seemed to Tao-ching the embodiment of kindness, retorted roughly and coldly:

"Uncle Wei, if you tenants don't pay your rent, what money has my father to send me? I'm a student, I don't draw any salary. Even one dollar is more than I can afford." He glanced surreptitiously in Tao-ching's direction, but she had left the room.

Yung-tse had more to say, but the old man had risen shakily to his feet. He heaved his bag with an effort to his shoulder as if it weighed a thousand catties. Limping to the door he muttered:

"All right, all right. When a man's in trouble, that's always the way it goes."

When Yung-tse saw that the old man had not taken the dollar, he pocketed it again. He did not trouble to see old Wei out.

Through the falling snow, the old peasant crossed the courtyard. He was stopped at the gate by Tao-ching, who called to him: "Here's ten dollars for you, uncle! I know it's not enough, but. . . ." She hesitated, glanced back towards their room and added: "Do you know your way to the station? Be careful with this money! There may be pickpockets on the train!"

The old man's tears fell again, this time in a torrent. After taking the money he groped desperately in his clothes for a safe hiding-place. Finally he muttered:

"There are good people everywhere! Good people. . . . Bless you, bless you! Our whole family will always be grateful to you!"

This stirring scene had brought tears to Tao-ching's eyes too, reminding her of her white-haired grandfather, her mother's father, and all that he had been through. Poor people, tenant farmers — was there no end to the misery in the world? She stood with a heavy heart beside the gate to watch the old man walk slowly away with many a backward glance till he passed out of sight. Returning to their room she saw that Yung-tse was angry.

"You gave the old man money?" he asked accusingly, his brows knitted in a frown.

Tao-ching raised her head, looked steadily at him and nodded. "Yes."

"How much?"

"Ten dollars."

"Playing Lady Bountiful with my money, are you? What do you

mean by it?" This was the first time he had spoken harshly to her.

"What!" Tao-ching could hardly believe her ears. She leaped to her feet and faced him with blazing eyes.

"You talk of nothing but love and right, yet this is how you treat the poor! Don't worry – I'll pay you back your money!" She threw herself on the bed, covered her head with the quilt and started crying as if her heart would break. What distressed her most was that Yung-tse whom she loved so dearly was proving to be quite different from what she had imagined. Her beautiful dream was being shattered.

When Yung-tse saw that Tao-ching was deeply hurt, he forgot his own annoyance. He put his arms around her and begged her to forgive him. In an instant, he was all affection and kindness again.

"Forgive me, darling!" he pleaded. "I was wrong. I was thinking about our budget. I'm not really selfish. That's why the old man came to me to borrow money. He knows I'm not like my father. . . ." After a pause he continued: "Please don't be angry, Tao-ching. To make you happy, I wouldn't mind giving him all the fifty dollars which my father just sent me – not to say ten."

Tao-ching was paying scant attention, but her expression was less stormy. He pulled her to her feet, smoothed her hair for her and patted her tear-stained cheeks with a powder-puff. "I don't think Chang Pi, who painted his wife's eyebrows for her, was such an affectionate husband as I," he boasted. "Stop sulking now, and I'll tell you a funny story. When I was a boy, I was friends with old Wei's son Wu-fu. Our families lived opposite each other, and we often went together to nearby pools to splash around and play. Since I wasn't born till my father was over fifty, they tried to molly-coddle me. I wasn't allowed to go swimming, but I went without telling the family. And if anyone came looking for me, Wu-fu and the other boys helped to hide me by milling around in the water to keep me out of sight. When I felt like it, I stole steamed rolls from our kitchen for my friends. One day the cook steamed a fresh batch, and as soon as his back was turned I reached in through the open window and grabbed

the lot. I stuffed them into a bag and ran off with them. When the cook turned round and saw that the steamed rolls had gone, he shouted: 'A fox fairy has been here!' Wasn't that a joke?"

"A great joke," answered Tao-ching coldly. "But why weren't you so generous today? Why wouldn't you let the old man eat at your table?"

"Who says I'm not generous?" Yung-tse retorted smugly. "When my father dies and I become head of the family, I shall do like Tolstoy – give all my land to the peasants."

"Give?" Tao-ching sniffed and narrowed her eyes. "After sucking the blood of the peasants all these years, you'll suddenly become their benefactor, I suppose."

Yung-tse said nothing. Busy thinking of the "important" visitor expected, he had not even heard Tao-ching.

After a while when the storm had subsided a little, the "important" visitor arrived. Sturdy and strongly built, in baggy trousers and gym shoes, he looked like an athlete. His large eyes were remarkably shrewd, however. Yung-tse introduced him to Tao-ching:

"This is Lo Ta-fang, a fellow-student in the History Department." Then he introduced Tao-ching to his friend. "This is Lin Tao-ching, my sweetheart."

Lo Ta-fang held out a large hand, shook Tao-ching's hand warmly and smiled.

"Very pleased to meet you. Are you neither studying nor working now?"

Tao-ching flushed. But she liked Lo Ta-fang's straightforward manner and this concern he showed for others even at a first meeting. He was behaving more like a friend than "someone important." Smiling, she poured tea for their guest and busied herself as the hostess while listening to their conversation.

"Well, Old Yu, I understand you've started working on textual research."

"Yes. In the Chinese Literature Department we have to delve into old books. At the moment I find it intensely interesting. How about you? Still busy saving the country?"

"No." Ta-fang evaded this topic to pursue the subject he had raised himself. "You researchers into the past are doing very useful work too by giving us a better knowledge of our ancient culture.

This is an important contribution to scholarship. But don't let yourself be led up a blind alley by Dr. Hu Shih's talk of 'saving the country by study.' That would be. . . ." He rolled his big, shrewd eyes at them and throwing back his head broke into hearty laughter. "Here, friends! Let me recite you a passage from Dr. Hu's masterpiece."

"Ha, ha! Wait a bit though while I ask you something," Yung-tse interrupted with a most unnatural smile. "Isn't your father a good friend of Hu Shih's? Tell me, what are their relations now? . . . I mean to say, has Hu Shih been very busy recently?"

"You want to know about my father and Hu Shih? They are inseparable. They are both studying Dewey's experimentalism, so that they can sell it to the Chinese people till we admit gladly that 'where there's milk there's a mother,' so making it easy for the imperialists and feudal warlords to enslave China. What about it, Old Yu? Why do you ask if Hu Shih is busy or not?" Ta-fang ran on like an ever-flowing stream.

"I'll tell you why later. Let's have something to eat and drink first." With a hospitable smile, Yung-tse made his friend sit down. Seated at the small table spread with a snow-white cloth, Ta-fang exclaimed in amazement: "Why, what a spread! You shouldn't have got all this food and wine, Old Yu!"

"We're old school friends, it's a pleasure to entertain you. You asked just now why I want to know about Hu Shih. I've been reading the works of Wang Kuo-wei and Lo Chen-yu* and come across some problems which rather puzzle me. I was thinking of calling on Hu Shih to consult him. Although he's clearly mistaken on certain points and has come in for a good deal of criticism, as far as I can judge he's one of our finest scholars. We can learn a good deal from his scientific methods of research as well as from the enormous range of his knowledge. That's why I'd like his opinion on these questions. But he's a famous scholar and I'm a poor student. I hesitate to go to him directly. Since he and your father are such good friends, I'd like to ask you. . . ." With an ingratiating smile, Yung-tse placed some succulent duck on Ta-fang's plate.

* Both were scholars in textual research.

Ta-fang's infectious laughter rang out again. He shook his head vehemently as he laughed.

"There are plenty of other professors with lots of learning," he countered. "Why pick on Hu Shih? Take my advice and steer clear of him! I can introduce you to some other scholars if you like, but not to Dr. Hu Shih!"

Yung-tse did his best to hide his disappointment and annoyance. Turning to Tao-ching he said: "Come and sit down too!" Then he asked Ta-fang with a smile:

"Say, Old Lo! What's become of the others who went south with you to save the country by demonstrating? Why don't we hear anything of your activities these days? Where is Li Meng-yu? He was certainly a very able leader."

"Of course," replied Ta-fang, "buried as you are among old books you wouldn't hear any news of the outside world." He rose from his stool and circled the room, looking at this and that to guess the tastes of its two occupants. At the same time he answered casually: "When we reached Nanking we held our demonstration in the teeth of police armed with rifles. In fact, to rescue our representatives whom they had arrested, we forced our way into the garrison headquarters. Naturally the Kuomintang reactionaries nearly burst with rage. They arrested more of our students and sent them back to Peiping bound hand and foot. Then on December 17, they began slaughtering students in Nanking. You must at least have heard of that. Since tearing off its mask, the Kuomintang has enforced such a fierce programme of suppression that our students' patriotic movement has had to keep quiet for a while. Li Meng-yu, as leader of that expedition, was so persecuted by the military police after his return here that he had to disappear." He looked at Yung-tse with clear, slightly accusing eyes. Then his glance fell on Tao-ching and his tone became grave. "Old Yu, you're both young – don't lose the fire of youth! If you can take part in any collective activities, do so by all means. Weren't you very enthusiastic at the time we went south to demonstrate?"

"Yes, I was," answered Yung-tse. "Even now I am. But I don't believe shouting slogans and shaking fists is much use. I am choosing my own way to save the country. Come on, have a little more." He refilled Ta-fang's glass.

"Your way is to change new foreign-bound books for old thread-bound books, to change a student's uniform for a long gown." Tao-ching chuckled as she joined in the conversation. Oddly enough, her sympathies were all on Lo Ta-fang's side although she was meeting him for the first time. In some unaccountable way he reminded her of Lu Chia-chuan whom she had met in Peitaiho.

Yung-tse had worn a student's uniform at first, but ever since taking a close interest in old books he had preferred a frankly "national style" of dress. In the summer he wore a silk or glazed cotton gown and thick-soled cloth slippers. In winter he wore a padded silk gown under one of plain blue cloth, a broad-brimmed hat and thick, boat-like boots of the kind usually associated with elderly men. Tao-ching disliked this outfit which made him look and act like an old man. But he insisted that this showed his patriotism. He argued that making a study of the classics and sticking to the national costume were concrete expressions of his love for the country. Ideas of this sort kept cropping up in his conversation. That was why Tao-ching had spoken as she did.

"Don't you believe her!" Yung-tse cautioned Ta-fang. "Because she can't find a job she has no way to work off her energy except by finding fault with me. This kind of society is frustrating I admit. I've run all over the place to find her a job, wearing myself to a shadow, but all for nothing. So she just has to waste her time at home washing and cooking for me. In times like these how true it is that 'graduation means unemployment.' I'm already worrying about finding a position myself after graduation. You won't have any difficulty, Old Lo, because of your father's influence."

"That doesn't mean a thing to me! I'm not counting on my father for help. As a matter of fact, we don't see eye to eye. Each goes his own way." Ta-fang rose to leave. "Thank you, both, but I must be going."

Neither Yung-tse nor Tao-ching made any move to detain him. At the door he turned back, saying:

"I meant to recite a passage from Dr. Hu Shih's masterpiece but didn't get round to it. Let me do that before I leave."

> You can't endure it? You can't stand the stimulating influence of the outside world? Your fellow-students are all shouting calls to arms and you can't resist the temptation to join in or bear their scorn if you don't? Do you sit alone in the library feeling embarrassed? Is your mind disturbed? . . . Let me tell you one or two stories. . . .

Lo Ta-fang stood there with staring eyes and a solemn face, wagging his head as this flood of words poured from him. Since Yung-tse was blowing his nose, it was hard to know how much he heard. Tao-ching was doing her best to keep from laughing. After a little, Ta-fang stopped for breath and said: "When Dr. Hu had finished condoling with the sorrows of youth, he held up the examples of Goethe and Fichte, urging others to do as they did. Even though enemy troops are at the city wall you must go on studying calmly. . . . No, Old Yu, don't let them fool you. Study alone is not going to save the country."

With a nod and a chuckle he was gone. Tao-ching went smiling to the door to see him off while Yung-tse, doing his best to control his feelings, saw him to the outer gate. But on coming back to their quarters he went straight to the inner room, threw himself down on the bed and lay there in silence staring at the ceiling.

Tao-ching sat at the table for a while. When she noticed Yung-tse's silence and depression she slowly walked over to him.

"Why should Lo Ta-fang's visit make you so unhappy? His advice was well-meant." She thought Yung-tse was sulking because Lo had made fun of him.

Yung-tse shook his head as he lay there. "It isn't that," he said. "Who is he that I should mind what he says? I feel depressed because, you see, I've got a home, I've got you, and no doubt we shall have children. I wouldn't have worried about the jaundiced-looking wife who died, but for you I do. In a few months I shall graduate, but there's still no job forthcoming, and by that time my family will stop my allowance. How am I going to keep you?" He sighed and fixed unhappy, anxious eyes on Tao-ching. "That was why I spent nearly five dollars on wine and food and asked Lo Ta-fang over for a talk. I hoped that through his father I might reach Hu Shih, or that his father might look for a job for me. I never expected the fellow to be so full

of the big truths of Marxism. Never mind! I'll find another way out. Come to me, darling. Come and comfort me!"

He sat up and held out his arms, but she drew back, gazing at him in horror. His totally different treatment of their two visitors that day had shown her his true colours. The bitterness of disillusion filled her heart.

The raptures of love and its enchanting rainbow-coloured illusions gradually lose their charm as time goes by. Tao-ching and Yung-tse were both being slowly awakened from their dream by harsh reality. Tao-ching had scarcely stirred outside their two small rooms, because their liaison made her reluctant to seek out her old friends — she was even growing apart from Wang Hsiao-yen. Her daily life was a round of washing up, marketing, cooking, laundering, sewing and other household tasks. As time went by she gave less and less time to study. Her dreams of the future, once unbounded as the sea and sky, were also fading into nothing. She felt depressed and frustrated. And worst of all was the realization that Yung-tse was not the fine character she had thought him. The chivalry and poetic quality which had made him superior in her eyes to all others had at last faded and vanished. He was obviously selfish and vulgar, petty-minded and concerned only with the trivial affairs of life. Ah, into what terrible impasse had a cruel fate forced her again?

(to be continued)

Illustrations by Hou Yi-min

WANG WEN-SHIH

Summer Nights

Every day at dusk, as the village bell rang for the last time, and evening shades gathered on the broad river flats, and stars began to appear in the summer sky, the young stranger, a winning smile on his face, would silently emerge through the twilight. Slung over his shoulder was a purple haversack invariably containing a few thin texts, a notebook, a flashlight, two cold muffins and a couple of scallions.

He had an air of serious preoccupation not usually found in one so young. Each time he arrived, he would greet the two girl tractor drivers with his confident attractive smile and put down his haversack. Then he would walk up to the tractor and examine its mechanism from every angle with his flashlight, asking no end of questions, like a master technician. Even when the tractor was in operation, he would walk along with it, his eyes fixed on the driver, watching her every movement. Not until cock's crow would he quit. Then, he would sit down in the field, eat his muffins and scallions, turn on his flashlight, and make some entries in his notebook, after which he would find a dry piece of ground, not far from where the girls had erected their tent, and sleep. At dawn, when the village bell sounded, he would rise, pat the dust from his clothes, take up his haversack, smile farewell at the girls and silently disappear into the morning mist. But the same day at dusk, he would punctually appear again. . . .

---

* Wang Wen-shih is a young short-story writer. His *The Shrewd Vegetable Vendor* appeared in *Chinese Literature* No. 8, 1959.

Ma Yun-yun, a cute and saucy young lady born and raised on a farm, had learned to drive a tractor after only three days' instruction. A determination to overfulfil her quota and a strong sense of responsibility for the proper maintenance of her machine, plus the usual girlish sensitivity in the presence of young men, caused Yun-yun to react in a manner that was definitely cool to this young stranger, with his comings and goings and persistent hanging around. In the past few days she had complained several times to her team mate, Hsu Yu-chin, who was also her teacher and chief of their tractor team.

"I hope a wolf gets him!"

The girls had just finished breakfast and a short rest, and were strolling towards the bottom land along the river. The sun had not yet risen. They could hear the hum of motors somewhere near the bank. Her eyes flashing, Yun-yun said irately:

"I really don't understand. Why are you so friendly to him? Who is he anyhow?"

"I don't know," Yu-chin replied apologetically. She was a sweet-faced girl with fair skin and a full figure.

"Fine! You don't even know him. A girl who's going to be married any day – why don't you send him away?"

Yu-chin laughed. "I'm keeping him for you, little sister! . . . He looks like quite a nice fellow."

Yun-yun set her mouth in a firm line. "What's nice about him?" she demanded proudly. "He sees he's not welcome, yet he's so thick-skinned and tactless he won't leave! . . ."

"If you don't want him, that's up to you," Yu-chin teased. "But why not let him come? He seems very honest."

"I'd like to know what you call dishonest, then! Do you have to wait until he steals our tractor?"

Arguing, laughing, before they knew it the girls had reached the high bluff overlooking the river. Their precious little Zeter, a twenty-five horsepower Czech tractor, stood on the flats below. Suddenly, they were startled to hear the roar of the tractor engine. With Yun-yun in the lead, the girls raced down the path. On the dyke beside the lotus pond, Yun-yun abruptly halted and stamped her foot.

"There's your 'honest' fellow! It's all because you were too easy on him!"

Swinging back her braids, Yun-yun waded straight across the pond to the field, like a bold nimble little lioness.

Yu-chin could see the tractor slowly advancing down the field, the young man in the driver's seat. He was proceeding carefully, looking back from time to time at the soil being turned behind him, observing the action of the machine, like an experienced ploughman watching his draught ox. Although angry, Yu-chin held her temper in check. She was a patient girl, in spite of her youth. As she hurried to the field, she noted that the ploughing was finely done and very even. "That upstart is clever!" she thought.

Yun-yun charged to the northern end of the field and planted herself beside a furrow, directly in the path of the approaching tractor, her cheeks splotched with rage. The machine halted. Yun-yun saw for the first time in daylight the face of the "criminal" in the driver's seat. She was very surprised. The glowing sunrise clouds lit up a handsome sunburned visage, a quiet smile, and tinted the slight fuzz on the young man's upper lip. A pair of honest, determined black eyes glanced back at the turned soil, then gazed at Yun-yun, as if expecting her approbation.

"Come down!" the girl commanded. But her tone wasn't as brusque as she had intended it to be.

With an apologetic smile, the young fellow leaped down from the seat.

"It isn't enough that you hang around all night. You have to come in the day-time too!"

"This is my day off."

"Who cares! If it is, why don't you go some place and rest? Why come here? This is no recreation centre."

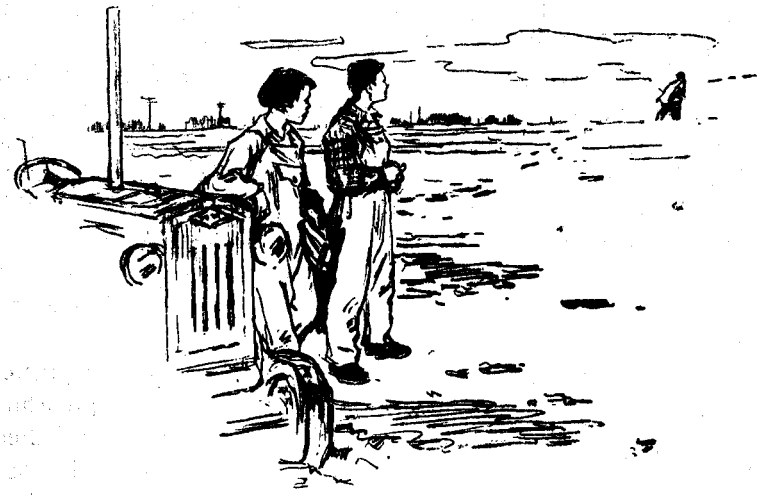
The young man's face fell.

"What you've been doing is illegal, do you know that? If you've spoiled any parts, you'll hold up the ploughing. . . ."

With startled eyes, the young fellow looked at Yun-yun, then at the tractor, then at the approaching Yu-chin.

"I don't think I've hurt it," he mumbled.

"You don't, eh?" Yun-yun countered. "Even if you were a grade eight technician, you'd have no right to take off with someone else's tractor without permission. It's not one of your



old ox carts that anyone can crack a whip over and drive away! You'll find out!" The blustering Yun-yun shot an inquisitive glance at Yu-chin as if to ask: Shall I hand this rascal over to the security section?

The young fellow stared at Yun-yun. He seemed to be mulling over her words, or perhaps he was waiting to see what she would do next.

The sight of this large brawny youth, so utterly cowed by a mere slip of a girl a head shorter than he, struck Yu-chin as very funny. She had been intending to criticize him severely, but now she only said in a firm but pleasant voice: "You must never do anything like this again. If we're going to bring mechanization to the countryside, we have to observe some rules and discipline."

After silently considering this for a moment, the young fellow smiled and said frankly: "I was wrong. Check over your machine, then tell me where I should go and what I should do."

His bold directness took Yun-yun by surprise. She was impressed by his calm, his sense of social responsibility. But Yun-yun, a girl who had been buffeted by waves during the building of the commune reservoir at South Mountain and scorched by the fires of the home-made blast furnaces they all had erected during the great drive to increase iron and steel production, a girl who

had been named one of the Nine Heroines for her part in the Tiger Shock Brigade – was she going to let herself be overawed by this young "criminal"?

"Of course I'll check it!" she said to him sternly. She made a thorough examination of the tractor, tapping here, looking there, finally climbing into the driver's seat, starting up the engine and driving forward a few paces. Only then did she solemnly wave her hand to Yu-chin to indicate that nothing was wrong with the machine.

Concealing her amusement at Yun-yun's antics, the older girl said to the young man: "Let's have no more of this monkey business. If you want to learn, come around to our station after the summer planting is over."

The young man thanked her, then looked at Yun-yun with a provocative smile that seemed to say: So you thought you could scare me! We'll see about that!

Yun-yun raised her chin. "Run along. Try staying out of places you don't belong. I'll let you go this time, but don't let me catch you around here again!"

"We may meet again at that."

"You heard me! I don't want to see you again!"

"We're in the same commune. If we don't meet in the morning, then maybe in the evening. If not here, then some other place. We're bound to run into each other!" With a farewell glance at the tractor, the young fellow picked up his haversack and strode towards the river flats, the confident friendly smile still lurking in the corners of his mouth.

"The demon! He sticks like glue!" Yun-yun glared after his retreating figure and shook her fist, unable to think of anything more devastating to say. But when he was out of earshot, she turned to Yu-chin and said with an entirely different expression: "That boy is certainly smart. He only watched us for a few days, but he had the nerve to get on and drive, all alone. . . . And he didn't plough badly either, did he, Yu-chin?"

The older girl nodded. "He's bold, forceful, intelligent – "

"And awfully good looking!" sighed Yun-yun.

"Yes," said Yu-chin with a subtle smile. "He knows what he wants, and he goes after it."

Yun-yun gazed at the young man who was disappearing into the distance. His face was raised to the lovely sunrise clouds; the ends of his unbuttoned shirt trailed behind him in the breeze.

"Hey! Wait a minute!" the girl shouted.

The young fellow hesitantly stopped, turning halfway around and waiting to hear what Yun-yun had to say.

"Listen," she called mischievously. "We think . . . you . . . are very clever!"

Clearly, he didn't know what she was driving at. He stood staring blankly in Yun-yun's direction.

"You're very clever, understand?" Yun-yun repeated sedately. She waved her hand. "All right. You can go!"

"Wretched minx!" Yu-chin scolded. "Must you clown with everyone!"

The following morning, according to plan, the tractor shifted its operations to the village in the eastern sector of the region to be ploughed. The little Zeter stopped beside a row of poplars on the flats north of the river. Yu-chin pointed to a compound deep within the poplar grove and said to Yun-yun:

"That's where we're going to live while working for this brigade. You'd better go and get some sleep or you won't have any energy for your night shift."

The compound, a short distance from the village, was occupied by a single family. On all sides stretched beautiful fertile fields. A newly-built dyke ran along the northern bank of the nearby river. Not far off, pumping station engines could be heard. The wheat had already been harvested, and the fields lay bare and shimmering in the June sun.

"How beautiful!" Yun-yun exclaimed. "A perfect spot for a tractor station!"

Before the sound of her voice had died away, a hearty laugh rang through the trees: "Another technical innovator!" A robust woman of nearly fifty emerged. Yun-yun felt that she had seen her before, but she couldn't remember where. "You're the second person who's had that idea!" the woman said.

"You mean someone's approached you from our commune's tractor station?" Yun-yun asked excitedly.

The woman shook her head. "No. Someone in my own family. My son."

"And what do you think, aunt?" the girl demanded eagerly.

"Me? I don't care. I do whatever the kids want. It's you youngsters who are shaping the world now!"

How carefree she is, thought Yun-yun, gazing at the woman respectfully. I wonder what her son is like.

The woman gave Yun-yun a hand with the can of diesel oil she was carrying. "Come on, girl. Don't stand looking at our bottom land all day. You'll have plenty of time to see it. Let's go home!"

The compound enclosed a spacious courtyard, with one-story buildings on three sides. Fruit trees grew along the wall; part of the yard had been planted with vegetables and cucumbers. Beneath the windows of the east wing a patch of blossoming roses spread their delicate perfume.

It was into this wing that the woman led Yun-yun. She bustled about, bringing tea and hot water. "Get some rest," she said to Yun-yun. "Treat this like your own home. If there's anything you want, just speak up."

After she left, the girl sat beside the window enjoying the breeze and examining her room. It was simply furnished, but spacious and cool. On a large platform bed was a woven sleeping mat that obviously had been scrubbed thoroughly. On the wall were pictures of tractors, a few diagrams of tractor mechanism, a string of outsize ears of corn, and many small sacks — each bearing the name of different wheat seed. On a table beside the window were books and magazines, a piece of iron ore and a bluish bar of pig-iron — mementoes, no doubt, of the owner's part in the nation-wide steel-making drive. Between the small glass top and the table were pressed several award certificates inscribed to "Comrade Wang Shu-hung."

"I wonder what he's like," Yun-yun mused. She lay down on the mat and idly turned through a magazine that was heavily underscored with red and blue pencil. Gradually, she dozed off.

Half-asleep, she seemed to hear someone outside closing the shutters of her windows. Another person tiptoed in and placed some things down, then went out softly and closed the door. Yun-yun heard a man's voice in the courtyard ask:

"Did you give them to her, Ma?"

And the woman replied: "You can rest assured. I'm taking good care of her."

Several hours later, Yun-yun awakened. The room was quite dim. She opened the shutters and the light of the setting sun streamed in. Yun-yun saw a big rush fan next to her pillow. On a bench was a basin with fresh water and a new face towel floating in it. In a black crockery jug on the table were some little washed cucumbers and next to the jug a note reading:

"Greetings to our farm mechanization comrades from the village Communist Youth League branch."

Pleased, Yun-yun hummed a little tune. Finding a new cake of soap beside the basin, she washed her face and neck thoroughly, then bit into one of the cool crisp cucumbers while fanning herself with the rush fan — as if trying to express her thanks to her hosts for all the manifestations of their hospitality simultaneously.

The woman entered with a tray of food and chatted with the girl while she ate. Yun-yun looked at her closely.

"Where have I seen you before, aunt?"

"Are you from around here?"

"Chen Village."

"That's it, then. Before liberation I worked in your village for about a year."

Yun-yun put down her chopsticks and thought a moment. "Aren't you the Aunt Wang who worked as a cook for the Chen Pan-hsien family? You had a little boy with you. . . ."

The woman nodded. "Little Hung. . . . That year Hung's Pa had just come back from the north mountains. He was the Party's underground contact here. The landlord's police caught and killed him and burned our house to the ground. I ran away to your village with Little Hung. We stayed with a friend for half a year, then I took that job."

"Aunt," said Yun-yun excitedly, "don't you remember me?"

"Whose girl are you?"

"Think back, aunt! Many's the time you held me in your arms, combed my hair!"

The woman gazed at her for several minutes, then, suddenly, grasped her hand. "Why, you're Yun-yun!" She hugged her to her breast with such force that the girl was breathless. "Who

would have believed it! Such a sallow skinny little thing you were, but now you're pretty as a picture! And you're educated and clever, and you can drive a tractor! . . . Are you still such a wild little filly?"

Yun-yun leaned against her bosom. "Was I wild then?" she asked impishly.

"As wild as they come," said Aunt Wang. "You were two years younger than my Little Hung, but you were always battling with him. He was scared to death of you!"

"I remember my Ma telling me you were very strict with Little Hung." Yun-yun sat down beside the older woman.

"You're such a big girl now! Are you married?"

Blushing, Yun-yun shook her head. "The big girl is even wilder than the little one used to be," she said with a smile.

"There's nothing wrong with a bit of wildness. Who's going to be wild if not the young folks — the old grandmothers? My Little Hung has become much too quiet. Not a sound out of him all day. He always has a belly full of big problems."

"Is he home? I'd like to see him — and have another battle! . . . I don't even remember what he looks like."

Aunt Wang pointed at the basin, the cucumbers, the fan, and said, "He was here, but you were asleep. He told me to bring these things in to you. He waited a while, then the brigade leader called him away. I think he had to go to a meeting."

In her mind Yun-yun formed a vague impression of an awkward young man. "What does he do?" she asked.

"Secretary of the Youth League branch, ever since he finished school three years ago. Last year, the factories were calling for men, and a lot of young fellows went. But not him."

"Couldn't bear to leave you?"

"That's right!" Aunt Wang laughed. "Or maybe it would be more accurate to say he couldn't bear to leave this land."

"You mean these bottom land fields?"

"Of course. Didn't you also want to make a tractor station out of this place the minute you set eyes on it?"

Laughing, Yun-yun clapped her hands. "I see! I see! Little Hung must be a wonderful fellow! When am I going to meet him?"

Yun-yun did indeed treat Aunt Wang's home as her own. Whenever she had time, Yun-yun fed the chickens, cooked the rice, washed the clothes and swept the courtyard. Often they sat and chatted in the shade of a tree. Aunt Wang treated her and Yu-chin like daughters.

Three days passed. As was the case with every brigade the commune tractor team had ploughed for, whenever there was a break, young men and women would run up to the drivers, crowd around and shake their hands. In those three days the girls quickly made friends with the other Youth Leaguers.

The lively Yun-yun had many new friends, but she still hadn't met the companion of her childhood. People said he was attending a conference in the main office of the commune.

Nor, since moving to Aunt Wang's house, did she see any more of that pestiferous young fellow. In fact, after hearing about her childhood friend Wang Shu-hung, she more or less forgot the other boy. For three days she talked to her tractor mate of nothing but Aunt Wang and her son Shu-hung. Based on only a vague recollection, Yun-yun described Shu-hung as a bold and handsome youngster, doing such a convincing job that she could clearly picture him herself.

After hearing this glowing account several times, Yu-chin laughed teasingly. "I don't care how wonderful you say he is, I won't believe it till I see him. For all I know he may be a lazy loafer."

"Listen to her!" said Yun-yun angrily. "A Youth League branch secretary, a boy who's won so many awards, who's so looked up to by the other Youth Leaguers, and you say he's a loafer!"

"Maybe he's bald, cross-eyed, hunch-backed – "

"Impossible!" Yun-yun shouted.

"Why not?"

"No one's said any such thing!" Yun-yun retorted hotly, her face red.

Yu-chin chortled with mirth. "All right. Sooner or later we'll see him. I admire your confidence!"

The broad fields of the bottom land rolled away to the east like waves, and the little Zeter sailed over them, working farther and farther from the white poplar grove. Yun-yun, who had just completed the afternoon shift, decided not to return to Aunt Wang's

but to sleep in a lean-to set up against the wall of a small temple. The day was over and the sun was setting into the Wei River. Scarlet sunset clouds gradually turned to blue. Lights of pumping stations along the river began to glow through the evening mist. The clanging of the bronze village bell floated into the lean-to and waked Yun-yun from her dreams. She went out and sat in the entrance way, enjoying the cool breeze coming up from the river. Hanging her cap on one of the ridge poles, she combed her hair and gazed out at the fields. One section had been newly ploughed. She appraised it with an expert's eye.

"Terrific!" she muttered admiringly. "Yu-chin's done over sixty *mou* in one shift!" This girl who loved work and new accomplishments so, couldn't restrain her enthusiasm. The blood in her veins sang; her spirits soared.

"Hey! Hey! Hey!" she cried through the night to Yu-chin on the little Zeter.

"Hey! Hey! Hey!" The echo rang back across the river flats, much to Yun-yun's delight.

She shouted again, wildly, and again came an echoing call. Only in addition to the sound of her own voice, there was another – ardent, vibrant, strong. Startled, she peered through the mist.

Someone was coming towards her across the stubbled wheat field, closer, closer, a pale figure growing larger and clearer. Halting at the lean-to, he addressed Yun-yun cheerfully, like an old friend.

"Is it our fine bottom land that makes you so happy?"

That bulging purple haversack again, that gay confident manner!

"What are you doing here?" Yun-yun asked.

"I told you we were sure to meet again."

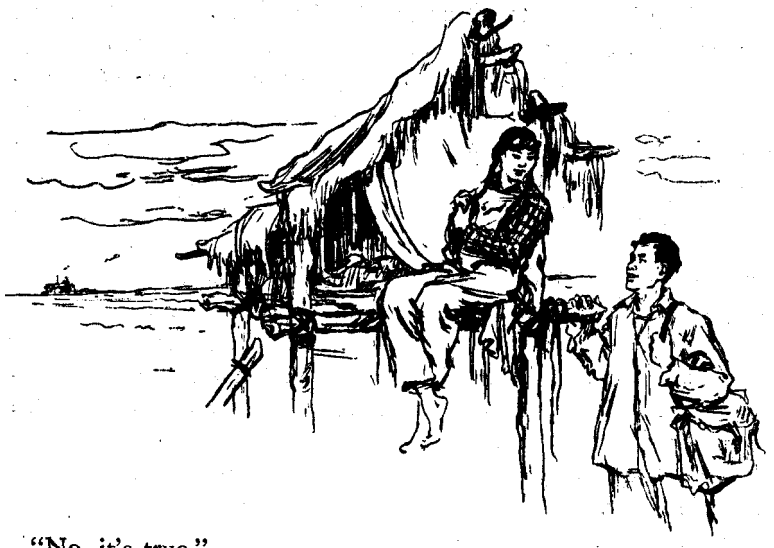
"If you've come to practise on our tractor, you won't get away with it. I'm on duty tonight. I won't even let you look at it!"

"You needn't worry, comrade. I won't put a finger on your tractor – unless you ask me to."

"We won't trouble you," Yun-yun laughed. "What is it you want?"

"I've just come back. I hear there's a party here tonight."

"A party? Last time, when you messed around with our tractor, you were having a day off. Tonight, you've come to a party. You must think we're running some kind of a club!"



"No, it's true."

"Well, you might as well go home. There's no party here – and that's even truer."

The young man laughed. "All right, I'll come the next time there is one."

"Then we'll never see you again," Yun-yun said sarcastically.

The young fellow hesitated a moment, then turned and started to leave. A gust of wind blew Yun-yun's cap off the ridge pole.

"Hey! Comrade!" Yun-yun cried. "Get my hat, will you?"

Surprised by the girl's boldness, the young fellow looked at her. But she seemed quite innocent and unaffected.

"Right!" he said. He put down his heavy haversack, picked up the hat and handed it to her.

As Yun-yun stretched out her hand to steady the haversack, which was toppling over, she could feel the bag's contents. "Why, they're all books!" she exclaimed. "Thanks for the hat!" she added saucily.

The young man grinned. "You're the limit – comrade!" He shouldered his haversack and walked away to the west.

Not long after, from the west came Aunt Wang, bringing food for the girls. Yun-yun shouted and hurried to meet her, relieving her of her basket.

"Did you see that fellow who just left here?" she asked.

"Yes."

"Where does that scamp come from? Does he belong to your village?"

Aunt Wang was taken aback. With great interest, she demanded: "What's he been up to?"

Yun-yun told her the whole story. Aunt Wang laughed.

"That boy is very stubborn. Sometimes he doesn't even listen to his own mother. When he decides to do something, ten oxen can't drag him back."

"He's impossible!"

"I'll speak to him later. I'll tell him to quit bothering you girls."

Yu-chin drove up with the tractor. She headed it around, turned off the engine, jumped down from the driver's seat, and greeted Aunt Wang.

"Let's eat," Yun-yun urged. "I don't want to waste any time."

"What's the hurry?" queried Yu-chin, washing her hands. "Why not wait till the moon rises?"

"Nothing doing! You ploughed so much on your shift. Can I spoil the team's record by doing less? Not me!"

"You're forgetting, tractors have to get some rest too," said Yu-chin. "Oh, yes, another thing – the Youth League is giving a party tonight. We're both invited."

"There really is a party?" said Yun-yun, remembering the young man's words.

"Of course. It's to welcome us and to send off some comrades going for a training course."

"Why didn't you tell me before? Even ten minutes earlier would have been all right!"

"You were sleeping so soundly. If I woke you to tell you that, you'd have lost that little temper of yours for sure."

Soon, a bright pressure lamp was hanging high on the pole of the lean-to, brilliantly illuminating a section of the dark fields.

Yu-chin said to Yun-yun, "When the crowd gets here they'll want to know about the tractor. Give them a brief talk, will you?"

"Right!" said Yun-yun, without any hesitation. She never bargained or tried to get out of anything her team-leader asked her to do.

The young men of the village, the girls, the young wives, arrived in twos and threes, chatting and laughing. Flashlight beams pierced the night. Fiddles and flutes broke the silence of the bottom land. Happy, healthy, confident young people gathered before the temple. They greeted the girl tractor drivers and peered with great interest at the machine. After hearing Yun-yun's introductory talk, they plied her with questions and engaged in heated discussion over the merits of the little Zeter. They praised it to the skies, but a few had dreams of something even better. One young fellow in a red sleeveless sweater asked in a professional manner:

"How many horsepower has this tractor?"

"Twenty-five," said Yun-yun, and she added, "we also have larger models at our station. Thirty-five horsepower. They're called Big Zeters." The girl was very proud of the commune tractor station. She would never let anyone say anything that might in the least reflect upon it.

"So what!" scoffed the boy, equally proud. "When our brigade organizes its own tractor team, we're going to use nothing but fifty-four horsepower jobs!"

"They're being made right now in the commune factory!" a dark chubby girl added.

Yun-yun knew that this was true. She hastily interposed, "Our general station has also put in its order. I hear we're getting first priority."

"I wouldn't be so sure about that!" said Red Sweater.

"We put in our order long ago," said Chubby. "And we paid our money too."

"The commune general stations come first," argued Yun-yun, "then the brigades. That's the rule."

"The commune general stations already have tractors. Now it's the brigades' turn," said Red Sweater.

"After that, they should go to the production teams," added Chubby.

As Yun-yun was groping for a convincing reply, from the darkness outside the perimeter of light, a voice said quietly, "What

are you arguing about? The whole country's working together as a single team. Surely every commune must do the same!"

"That's it exactly!" cried Yun-yun happily, peering through the darkness at the boy who had spoken. As he came forward, she noted that this time he was without his purple haversack. He blinked a moment till his eyes became accustomed to the glare of the pressure lamp. Then he looked at Yun-yun mischievously.

"Isn't there a party going on here?"

"Yes!" replied Yun-yun, half angry, half amused.

"Then I suppose it's all right for me to come?" the young man grinned.

Yun-yun looked over at Aunt Wang with a pout as if to say: You see how he torments me! But her eyes were smiling. The older woman winked at her, then turned to her son and said:

"Shu-hung, these girls think you're a nuisance. In the future, you're not to bother them, do you hear?"

Yun-yun looked up in surprise when she heard him addressed as Shu-hung. "I didn't say he was a nuisance," she interposed quickly.

"Comrade Yu-chin even taught me how to drive the tractor," the young man added.

"Well, Yun-yun doesn't want you hanging around!" his mother said, gazing at the little Zeter.

Yun-yun was standing by the driver's seat, looking down at the boy with her large beautiful eyes and smiling. "Ah, so Shu-hung is actually Little Hung!" she said to herself. With feigned sternness Aunt Wang commanded her son:

"Apologize to Yun-yun, Little Hung. You're not to trouble her again!"

"Is that right?" he asked the girl calmly.

Yun-yun laughed merrily, jumped down from the tractor and walked up to him. "Certainly not! I told your mother the next time we met we'd have to have another battle! I always used to beat you, too — ask your Ma if you don't believe me!"

Everyone was mystified. Shu-hung looked at his mother, puzzled. Aunt Wang was smiling, while Yun-yun gazed at him with eyebrows dancing, and Yu-chin watched both young people with a growing understanding.

"What does she mean?" The young people begged Aunt Wang for an explanation.

Red Sweater shouted that everyone should sit down and keep quiet and let Shu-hung's mother talk. The youngsters seated themselves.

"You all know who Shu-hung's father was," Aunt Wang began. "Yun-yun's Pa was also doing underground Party work. . . ." She called Shu-hung and Yun-yun to sit before her. In a low even voice, she told the story of the underground struggle. Concluding, she said with a sigh of limitless satisfaction, "Today you're all learning to run machines. If only my dear one were alive to see it, how happy he would be!"

At the word "machines," everyone grew very animated.

"Brother Shu-hung," called out Red Sweater, "when am I going to run a machine?"

"Soon!" replied Shu-hung.

"That's all you ever say," protested the stout girl. "Soon! Soon!"

"The commune's Party committee has added to the list of those going for training."

The young folks picked up their ears. "What about me?" demanded Chubby.

"You'll have to wait," said Shu-hung with feigned coolness. Raising his voice, he shouted: "Keng Wa, Liu Tsai and Yin Tsai will take the tractor course. Chu Jung and Yuan Chih will learn to be electricians!"

The youngsters set up a cheer.

Pouting, the dark chubby girl sighed loudly, "Hai!"

"If it wasn't for that 'hai!' I might have forgotten you," grinned Shu-hung. "The electricians' course will also be taken by our friend Chubby!"

"You're lying!" yelled Chubby, staring at him incredulously.

He waved the name list in front of her while she squealed, "I won't look! I won't!" at the same time peering at it out of the corner of her eye. Suddenly her face lit up and she snatched the list and read her name in a loud voice. Leaping and skipping she tore around in a joyous frenzy, colliding with this friend, embracing that.

Red Sweater nudged Shu-hung with his elbow and asked worriedly, "Then there's no hope for me?"

"Who says so? There's plenty of hope. Plenty!" cried Shu-hung cheerfully. He called together the young fellows who still would be doing their ploughing behind an ox and said to them: "We're all in the same boat, brothers! Our brigade will be following the ox's tail for a while yet. . . . You fellows know how I love machinery. But I let other comrades get their technical training first, don't I?"

"You've already had some training," Red Sweater protested.

"Not really. I'm only half-baked. And you know how I learned even that little bit? I had to ignore the dirty looks certain people gave me while I hung around and watched how they handled a tractor. Comrade Yun-yun can attest to that!" He made an ugly face at her; she impishly wrinkled her nose.

"My problem is that I'm too thin-skinned," said Red Sweater. "Today I've made up my mind — I won't care how they treat me, I'm going to follow those girls around wherever they go. I must learn to drive a tractor!"

"No, you can't do that," said Shu-hung with a firm wave of his hand. "My behaviour was a lot of trouble to the tractor driver comrades and was against the rules. I understand that now. You mustn't copy my bad example!"

"Forget it!" said Red Sweater. "Don't think I don't know! You're going to be the head of our tractor team, and you're trying to control me already!"

Shu-hung laughed. "Let's suppose that you're right. But if you knew my whole idea you'd be pleased instead of angry. I propose that we form a part-time technical training group, and invite Comrades Yu-chin and Yun-yun to teach us whenever they're free. I've been running around all day collecting material from our cultural centre, the technical station, the industrial section and the popular science association. I've got a whole pile of stuff. We don't have to worry about a lack of study material."

"Why didn't you say so!" grinned Red Sweater. "You've got my vote. You take charge!"

The other young men echoed this sentiment.

"We'll hold class in your house!"

"Let's start today!"

After talking it over with Yu-chin, Shu-hung called: "Hey, comrades! We're proposing a slight change in tonight's party. Why not make it an opening celebration of our part-time tractor school and a get-together for teachers and pupils? What do you say?"

"Fine!" the youngsters yelled in one voice.

In the quiet fields, beneath the starry summer night sky, the young people celebrated beside the first tractor to appear along the banks of the Wei. There was lively music, young voices raised in song, happy laughter. Inspired by this youthful merriment, the waters of the ancient Wei murmured a rhythmic accompaniment. . . .

Shu-hung and Yun-yun, shoulder to shoulder, strolled through the fields, recalling the hardships of their childhood, talking of their interests and their plans.

Yun-yun couldn't understand why she felt so close to this young man. She had thought only of him for the past few days, or rather of the person she had created in her imagination. But now, meeting him in reality, he seemed even braver, more satisfying, more lovable than the figment she had invented. She kept asking herself — when she had scolded him so severely and practically chased him away, had she liked him or disliked him? . . . She couldn't help admitting that even then he had drawn her like a nail to a magnet, and that her trying to shake him off was only due to her consciousness of the power of his attraction. He was so determined, so persistent, yet so selfless, so politically aware, so confident! . . .

Many thoughts ran through her mind as she listened to him speak. Before they knew it, they had reached the white poplar grove. A pale moon, rising from the bend of the river, shone on the tree-tops, reflecting on the dark leaves like flowing water. The innumerable fine poplar leaves rustled and danced in the gusty night breeze.

"What's this about you becoming a team-leader?" Yun-yun asked Shu-hung affectionately.

"That's right. It was decided officially only yesterday. Our brigade is going to have its own tractor team. The commune Party committee wants me to take charge."

"Why, that's wonderful!"

"Ma tells me you like our compound," said Shu-hung, gazing through the trees at the dark buildings ahead.

"It's this way — " said Yun-yun, "the first day I came, I said it would be a fine place for a tractor station. Your Ma overheard me. It really does seem just made for it!" She halted and pointed at the surrounding moonlight-drenched fields.

"Your idea is going to be realized very soon. Our compound is just where our brigade's tractor station is going to be."

"Really? Your Ma says you were the first one to suggest it."

"Yes, I made the request, and our superiors think it's fine!" He looked at Yun-yun and said, "If I had known you felt that way too, I would have added your name to our application."

Yun-yun glanced at him and smiled. "How does your Ma feel? Is she willing to give up the house? I've heard her say it was a lot of trouble to build it."

"You think my Ma is the kind of person to hang on to a mere house?" Shu-hung was obviously proud of his mother. He said warmly, "She's a woman who's lost her husband for the sake of the revolution. Is there anything else she'd be unwilling to give?"

Yun-yun realized she had made a slip. She quickly amended her question: "What I mean is won't it be hard to find a place to move to?"

Shu-hung laughed. "We hadn't thought of that. But my Ma says she'd like to look after the team and cook for it. She's a good manager and a magnificent cook!"

"Everyone knows that. Our whole Chen Village is still talking about her!" Again Yun-yun halted and smiled at him teasingly. "Aunt Wang says she built this place so you'd have a place to bring your bride. If you give it over to the brigade, where will you live when you get married?"

Shu-hung was silent for some time. Then he turned to the girl and said in a voice that trembled slightly, "If I'm lucky, I'll marry a girl who drives a tractor. That will solve the problem."

Yun-yun raised her head and met his gaze. How many questions and answers were exchanged in that brief meeting of eyes as the moonlight filtered through the trees! The usually wild Yun-yun was suddenly mature. The change was so marked that even she was aware of it. Hastily, she tore her eyes away.

In a light strange voice that was filled with happiness, she said, "The moon has risen. I've got to start my night shift."

"Aren't you afraid, all by yourself in the empty fields?"

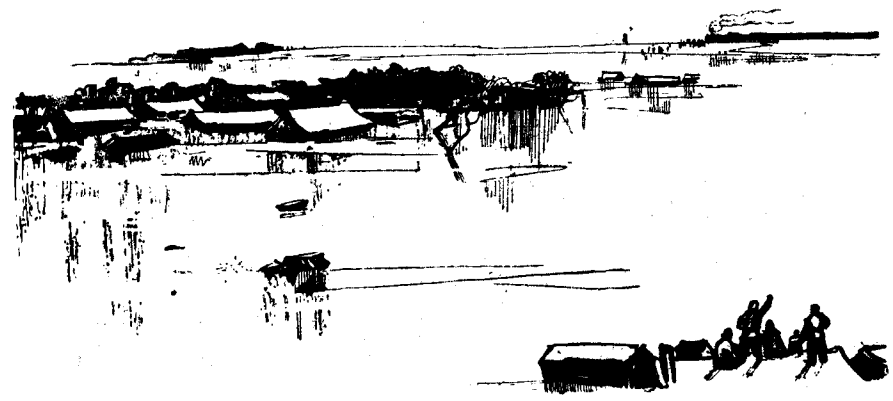
Yun-yun shook her head. "I can hear the pumping stations. People are working everywhere. Why should I be afraid?"

"Still, I don't feel easy about it," said Shu-hung. "Let me keep you company, will you?"

"Come along," said Yun-yun in a low urgent tone.

They returned through the grove, silently walking together, looking at each other and smiling, as if they could never see enough, never smile enough. The moon seemed to rise higher abruptly; the bottom land seemed suddenly to light up and grow broader. Not far beyond the edge of the grove, the celebration was going strong. Merry-makers were singing a vigorous chorus of a song about the drivers of tractors. . . .

Translated by Sidney Shapiro
Illustrations by Li Hu



KUO KUANG

Caught in the Flood

In a pouring rain, the Peking-Shenyang Express No. 12 pulled out of Shenyang Station. The time was 10:35 p.m. on July 21, 1959. It was the hottest part of summer and the storm brought a cool respite for the passengers. Nobody imagined that danger lurked close on the heels of the storm.

The train reached Hsingchen at five minutes after three in the morning of the 22nd. A sudden order came over the wire: "Due to the torrential rains the road-bed has become soft and the river is rising rapidly. Slow the train to five kilometres per hour when you go over Shihho Bridge."

Shihho River roared angrily. Half holding his breath, the engine driver steered the train slowly across the bridge. The train had almost reached the other end when a red signal flashed. A maintenance man came dashing towards the train, shouting: "Halt, halt!" Soaked by the rain water, the road-bed had become soft. Gaping holes had been discovered, and it was dangerous for the train to go on.

Kuo Kuang is an editor of the *People's Liberation Army Literature* (monthly). This is a true story.

However, no orders came for the train to turn back.

Li Kuei-chin, a Communist and deputy-leader of the train, was on duty that night. Anxious and worried, she looked at the river rolling turbulently under the bridge, its mighty waves pounding at the bridge piers. She glanced at her watch. Though the long hand seemed to share her worries and was moving very slowly, it had nevertheless covered twenty-odd minutes. She dared not waver any longer. Hurriedly, she woke Li Jih-kuei, one of the guards off duty. This young man of twenty-five was Party branch secretary on the train. Small in build but full of energy, he immediately went to look at the bridge piers when he learned how matters stood. On his return he pronounced firmly, "We must return to Chienwei Station. Oh, one moment, Little Li. Please send someone to fetch Captain Kuan." He referred to Kuan Hsi-chien, captain of the train guards and a member of the Party committee of the Shenyang Railways.

"Don't you think I should call our train leader?" asked Li Kuei-chin.

"Don't bother her. She went off duty very late and must be exhausted. She would agree if she were here."

Captain Kuan agreed with the young guard's proposal. They telegraphed to ask permission from the dispatcher, who soon replied with an order for them to return. Young Li jumped down to direct the train at the head of the bridge as it slowly backed to the other side.

At five forty-five the train reached Chienwei Station. Suddenly a thunderous crash was heard — the Shihho Bridge had collapsed in the flood. It was a close call! All six hundred train passengers gasped as they looked at each other. "A critical decision it was!" they exclaimed. "Had we turned back fifteen minutes late, we'd all be finished."

However, the passengers were in no position to breathe a sigh of relief. Just when tensed nerves had relaxed slightly, two shots rang out a short distance ahead. As people stared at each other in bewilderment, a guard came tearing down the road-bed shouting, "They are firing warning shots from the dam. The water has flooded over and mountain torrents are rushing down . . . look. . . ."

Even as he spoke, rolling white water could be seen pouring in from the northwest across the fields, uprooting big trees on its way. Confusion and alarm seized the passengers. Just then, a young woman in railway uniform appeared at the door of a compartment. She was of medium height, with a slender waist and thick black eyebrows on a small oval face. This was Chang Ming-yuan, leader of the train staff and also deputy secretary of the train Party branch. Her own composure did much to assure the alarmed passengers as she said, "Please don't panic, comrades. The train will start immediately." She walked down the corridor and gave the order to start. The train began to move. Li went to the engine to pull the siren and recall the passengers on the platform before the train pulled out.

The train was soon travelling up grade. The flood was approaching fast. In less than ten minutes the water had nearly caught up with the train. It was then that over a hundred peasants appeared between it and the water. These refugees, some of them with babes in arms, others supporting the old and the sick, carrying bags and bundles, rushed towards the train waving their arms.

"They're running away from the flood. We must rescue them," someone shouted.

"We mustn't stop the train or we'll all be sunk," was also heard in the ensuing din. Many pairs of eyes, full of indecision, were fixed on Chang Ming-yuan who paused in perplexity. Two words roared in her ears above the sound of the rain and flood: Train or Refugees? Unless she stopped the train the refugees would be

drowned. How could she watch them perish? But if she halted the train, the water might flood into the carriages and swallow all of them.

Even as she wavered, she had made up her mind. "Halt the train to rescue the refugees!" she cried. Simultaneously, Guard Li Jih-kuei said the same thing. Before they had quite finished speaking, a woman shot out of the train. She was Liang Kuo-chih, a Communist in charge of the baggage compartment. On her heels followed other Communists and Youth Leaguers. Some of them were on the train's service staff or were members of the crew, but others were passengers – armymen, workers, cadres and students. Braving the oncoming flood waters, more than a hundred people strode through the mud to relieve those carrying young children, offer a helping hand to the old and feeble and to pick up heavy bundles. In no time at all, the refugees boarded the train. By then the water had reached the tracks. Huge waves rushed at the long line of carriages as they backed steadily, picking up two more batches of refugees on the way.

At last the train pulled out of the clutches of the dangerous flood. Crawling up a high slope, it found itself stranded on an island made by the flood water. On the other side of the slope was a wide river and the railway bridge was also flooded over.

What to do? With a few other members of the train staff, Guard Li Jih-kuei went out to survey the line near the river bridge. Many of the courageous passengers joined him. As they were looking, someone spotted an old woman whirling in the water fairly near shore, clinging to something that looked like a section of stove pipe. Li drew in his breath.

"Who's a good swimmer? To the rescue!"

"The water's deep enough to immerse a house. Better go in with a rope."

When ropes were brought Ma Yu-lin, one of the service staff, and Chao Fu-hsiang, a People's Liberation Army officer, jumped into the water and swam towards the section of pipe. Some members of the train staff who knew Ma Yu-lin was not a very good swimmer called to him to come back, but he swam courageously onwards. The turbulent waves knocked him down, filling his mouth with muddy water. Would he turn back? No, not

he! Pausing slightly to catch his breath, he turned and in a few strokes caught up with Chao Fu-hsiang. They reached the old woman's side, tied the ropes they had brought to the pipe and helped her back to safety.

No sooner had they stepped ashore than it was discovered that a rolling wave had swept an old man from a roof top into the water. He could be seen struggling helplessly. Ma Yu-lin immediately jumped back into the water, though he was exhausted and could hardly move his limbs. Those on shore tried to pull him back. He felt a buzzing in his ears and had no strength left in his body. But the sight of the old man threshing wildly about in the water and the fear that he would sink out of sight made Ma feel strong again. He turned and swam in the direction of the old man who, alas, was caught in a rapid current which would surely sweep him out of the reach of his rescuer. Luckily someone on shore tossed a rope, lassoing the old man and pulled him out of the water. It was learned later that the old man, a book-keeper in a state food shop, had remained to salvage shop property for the state and was caught by the flood.

Co-operating with the passengers and working with a will, the train service staff managed to save nine more refugees from the water. Though a number of lives had been saved, danger for the train was not yet over. The surrounding flood water continued to rise as the minutes ticked by. But the train could neither go forward nor backward. Worst of all, they lost contact with their superiors, the railway bureau.

An emergency meeting of the train Party branch was called. Three resolutions were adopted: 1. Communists must prove themselves alert and brave, undaunted in the face of difficulties and good leaders in the struggle against the flood. 2. If, unfortunately, the water rose so high as to flood the compartments, the passengers and refugees must be organized to retreat in an orderly way to the heights near the railway. 3. All efforts must be made to establish contact with the railway bureau so as to obtain directions for future moves. The urgent task at hand was to maintain order on the train and to reassure the passengers.

Surrounded by the water, the passengers sat in their compartments, feeling worried and helpless. Just then a firm voice burst

out of the loudspeaker: "Comrade passengers! Though our train is surrounded by water, we are in a fairly high position and the water cannot reach us. Let's all remain calm. The Party continues to lead us here on the train. As long as we have Communists and service staff on the train, they will ensure the safety of the passengers."

"Captain Kuan," Chang Ming-yuan said to the captain of the train guards who had been broadcasting, "I'm afraid it's not enough merely to make this announcement. I'd like to mobilize the activists among the passengers to help us maintain order."

"Ah, you mean we should elect passengers' representatives."

That was exactly what Chang Ming-yuan meant. Later she appeared in the carriages and was greeted by a respectful silence. When she had made clear her proposal, many hands were raised. Several voices cried, "I'm willing to serve." An army officer with colonel's tabs on his uniform saluted her smartly. "I'm a Communist," he said. "Will the Party give me an assignment?"

Chang Ming-yuan realized that it was important for her to make a wise choice among those volunteering if she wanted to do a good job. The list of forty passengers' representatives she finally approved consisted of those who were most valiant and selfless in the battle against the flood. When the list was announced, she stressed again the importance of the representatives' task, after which they went back to their respective compartments to start organizing. In a very short time, proper arrangements were made for the young to help the old, the adults to help the children and the strong to help the weak. Good order was quickly established.

As if inspired by the examples of those on the train, the sun chose this moment to peep out of the heavy folds of clouds. The flood water too seemed to be somewhat frightened, and went slinking off with its tail between its legs. Danger was gradually receding.

But still poles along the tracks had been uprooted and communications disrupted. The train could not establish contact with the railway stations or the Bureau. Chang Ming-yuan and her staff ran around until they were ready to drop with exhaustion, trying to connect the lines. First they connected their portable telephone to a nearby plug, but repeated trials showed that the

line was dead. Ma Yu-lin picked up the portable telephone and walked nearly twenty *li* to plug it into an unbroken line, but still there was no response to his calls. Two armymen among the passengers were wireless experts. They volunteered to remodel the train's loudspeaker into a broadcasting set. Busy and energetic preparations were made but a shortage of essential parts made it impossible to complete the work. All trials ended in failure.

Nevertheless, hearts grew stouter instead of fainter. The train Party branch knew that the Party is an integral whole and that Party leaders from elsewhere could also give them guidance. In making all important decisions they sought the support and help of responsible Party comrades among the passengers. This enabled them to implement the Party's decision with success among the people on the train. The Party branch shouldered all responsibility unflinchingly.

This responsibility was not a light one. It involved many problems, the biggest of which was food. The train had no dining-car, and even if it had, one dining-car would not have been able to supply food for so many. Time was merciless, and the passing of the hours brought starvation nearer and nearer. The passengers and the train staff had not eaten for nearly twenty-four hours. Some of the younger children began to cry for food. Their tiny out-stretched hands seemed to clutch at the hearts of the service staff.

The only food available on the train was a batch of bread and sausages picked up at Shenyang. This, the Party branch decided to distribute among the children and the sick. When two passengers, a soldier and a government worker, saw this each brought out two muffins he had in his knapsack, requesting that they be given to the children and the sick. Soon many other passengers who had a bit of food began unpacking their bags and producing eggs, cakes and biscuits. In a very short time, piles of food were sent in from different compartments with requests to share them out. Many given food refused to take it asking that it "be kept for the young and the sick." Even the sick wanted to give up their share so that others might have something to eat.

The same selfless spirit was manifest in the struggle against illness. An armyman, suffering acute pain from a broken leg, insisted on giving the drugs the doctor accompanying him had

brought to the old man rescued from the water, who was still in a coma. Donating his entire supply, he endured agonies without any relief for two whole days.

The most serious problem was still the matter of food. Guard Li Jih-kuei, always optimistic, said to Chang Ming-yuan, girl leader of the service staff, "Don't worry, we'll find a way. Come, let's divide the work. You take charge while I run out to contact the local Party branch."

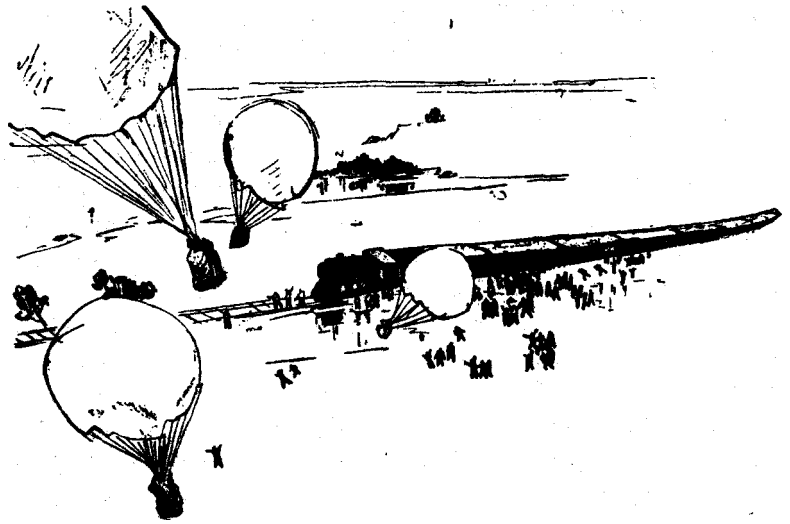
At that moment, a Comrade Wei arrived. He was League secretary of the local people's commune and had come in search of commune members missing in the flood. He was very grateful to find them safe and sound on the train. When he learned that the passengers were short of food, he promptly agreed to help.

"You've saved so many of us, it's nothing to supply you with some food. We have rice and wheat flour in the granaries, just come and get them. I'll write you a letter of introduction."

As soon as Comrade Wei left with some of the refugees, the young guard, Li, at the head of a group of train personnel and some able-bodied passengers, started out through muddy water up to their knees. The soggy bags of grain they returned with were extremely heavy. They stumbled and slipped all the way, but their spirits were high. Passing through a village, they borrowed a number of extra large pots and pans. One of the passengers, an army chief-of-staff by the name of Chiang, volunteered to serve as chief cook. He was given helpers and soon they were turning out stacks of pancakes.

When the food was ready all the service staff got busy: some served the invalids, some held babies to give mothers a rest, and others helped in different ways. Though they looked fagged out and hungry, none of them would sit down to eat. Many passengers tried in vain to make them also take some food. Eventually someone who knew the inside story said with a laugh, "Don't think you can make them eat; it's no use. Their leader had issued her orders and they have decided not to take a single bite until we've had our fill. They are afraid there won't be enough to go round. All we have to do is not eat too much so there'll be enough for them."

"What a sharp one that leader is!" remarked one passenger.



"Your suggestion is excellent. Let's not eat too much. That'll get around her order!"

Everyone laughed, but the food was still finished off in one meal. On the morning of July 23 a thick fog dampened the air and the people's hearts. There was no sign of breakfast and communications still had not been restored. Just then the faint hum of engines became audible.

"Planes! Planes!" shouted one delighted passenger after another.

Three silvery planes slipped out of the fog and clouds and circled overhead. Hats and handkerchiefs were tossed into the air by the delighted passengers and shouts of "Long live the Communist Party" and "Long live Chairman Mao" rang out, greeting the forty sacks of biscuits dropping down beside the train. On the sacks were printed these words: "Quality biscuits for the stranded train."

People hastened to pick them up. They collected them in piles and gazed at them fondly. One passenger whispered to a member of the service staff, "May I keep two biscuits as a souvenir?" Another stared at the biscuits in his hand and said with tears in his eyes, "I'll never forget Chairman Mao and the Communist

Party as long as I live." The man was from Shantung, a province much devastated by floods in the old society. The reactionary Kuomintang did nothing to help the people but piled taxes on taxes. He and his family barely managed to escape starvation. No wonder that the generous help given to the flood refugees today moved him to tears. Of course he was not aware of how difficult it had been to discern the green train against the green background all around. The planes had been compelled to spend an extra half hour searching for them in the fog.

The Party's concern for the stranded train was manifested in more ways than one. After the planes left, a seven-man group headed by An, chief of the passenger section of the Chinchow Railway Bureau, arrived on foot with a thousand muffins in sacks. The men had come through water and mud, walking all night with hunger gnawing their insides. But not a single muffin meant for the passengers was touched.

The next relief group to arrive consisted of doctors sent by the Shanhaikuan Pass Party committee. They promptly set up a clinic in one of the compartments.

The local Party and government continued to give help. Party Secretary Chang of the October Revolution People's Commune in Chienwei Township sent flour, vegetables and a thousand fresh eggs. The commune's primary school teachers, who happened to be on vacation, made steamed rolls which were sent to the stranded train. In this they were led by Yang, head of the agricultural department of the Chienwei Party committee.

Though the problems of food and medicine were solved, the question of drinking water remained. Several passengers were mobilized to repair the water tower of the Chienwei Station while another group headed by Liang Kuo-chih, a Communist, went eight *li* away to bring water back in buckets.

Finally there was only one problem left: how to get the train to its destination. It seemed almost hopeless. Two days and nights had gone by: everyone was anxious to get moving. Some who had urgent tasks waiting for them asked for permission to start out on foot for Shanhaikuan Pass so that they could go to Peking by another route.

The train service personnel were themselves anxious to leave, but they dared not show it. They had work to do: they had to explain the situation to the passengers and reassure them. Their efforts were not in vain, particularly since the passengers were already well organized. Eventually, they succeeded in persuading the passengers to relax and wait.

The next day was fine. As the people talked and laughed someone called out, "The head of the bureau's come." People rushed down to surround two men: one was the head of the Chinchow Railway Bureau and member of the Party committee and the other was the deputy secretary of the Shenyang Railway Bureau Party committee. They had brought with them not only good tidings but the concern and assurance of the Party. In another ten hours or so the train would be able to proceed on its way.

The stranded train would soon be able to go. But why let it travel home covered with the marks of devastation left by the flood? The train staff felt full of energy; excitement and a strong sense of responsibility drove away their fatigue. They decided to give the train a thorough cleaning.

Before they could begin their task though, the passengers had rolled up their sleeves and pitched in. "But this is our work," said one of the service staff. "You people had better rest a while."

"We've had quite enough rest," said one passenger. "It's your turn to rest a bit now. Your work is our work."

"Let's all pitch in. Let's see who does more and better," cried another.

"Let's compete with the other compartments." And so, a very enthusiastic competition began between individuals, between compartments, between the passengers and the train staff. Eager hands wiped the window panes, scrubbed the floors, swept the ceilings, cleaned the toilets. . . . When there were not enough mop cloths to go round, people brought out their face towels; when there was difficulty in removing grease stains, people produced their own soap. Some even walked several *li* to buy flyswatters in order to get rid of all the flies. After two exhilarating hours, the carriages emerged spotless and shining, as handsome as if they had just been overhauled at the junction.

The joy of victory was evident on every face in the train. To celebrate the victory over the flood, the train Party branch decided to throw a party. At twilight, some six hundred people from different parts of the country, thrown together by an accident which linked them closely, sat down on the grassy slope by the railway to enjoy this very unusual party. The first item of the evening's programme was performed by a few of the hostesses. The girls of the train service staff stood in a neat line as their clear voices sang:

Who can guess where I love best
  to work and battle?
My favourite place of work is
  not at the coal-mines,
  nor in factories and farms,
But in the fine clean compartments,
  which daily transport across this vast land:
Workers, peasants, traders, students and soldiers.
Ah —
If travel is a pleasure on the people's train
I too am joining in building socialism.
To be a faithful servant of the people
Is my pride and joy!

This was a song written by the girls themselves and voicing the sentiments in their hearts. The audience greeted the girls' performance with thunderous applause. Then it was the passengers' turn to perform. A rich and colourful programme was presented: there were snatches from Peking opera, modern opera, Honan opera, *pingchu* tunes and even a Korean dance. Different songs

---

Red Flowers by Tu Chi→

Tu Chi, a young artist, is art editor in the Chungking People's Art Publishing House. *Red Flowers* is one of his recent works.

and dances intermingled with cheers and handclaps which broke the silence of the quiet countryside.

"Will the leader of the service staff give us a song?" someone cried.

Chang Ming-yuan responded quickly. In a clear, sweet voice, she sang *Twenty Years Are Concentrated in a Day* and the tune caught the people's heart.

The party ended a little before midnight when everyone rose to join the favourite song: *The East Is Red.* At that moment all hearts turned to Peking.

Of the forty-seven who made up the train's staff, only one was a man. The others were all girls whose average age was twenty. The Party committee and the administration of the Shenyang Railway Bureau decided to confer on the train staff the title "March Eighth Young Red Flag Winners," that date being International Women's Day. Later, the Minister of Railways received the girls in person and gave them citations. In November 1959 some of them, representing the entire staff, went to Peking and took part in the Meeting of Heroes.

Illustrations by Liu Po-shu

The Giant

Khaechhogpawo was not his original name. He had changed it to Khaechhogpawo, which means a giant who can fell an ox with one blow, because he had done just that. After that feat he believed himself to be the mightiest giant in the world. The more he thought the more conceited he became until he felt he was really able to break a mountain!

"Modesty brings progress. Arrogance leads to destruction," his neighbours warned him. But he still considered himself stronger than anyone. "Don't over-estimate yourself. On the other side of the mountain, there is Drungjathrale, a giant who can carry a hundred yaks on one shoulder, and there is Lhopakhaetob who is too big for a pair of trousers made from the skins of nine oxen. They are real giants."

Unwilling to admit his inferiority, Khaechhogpawo made up his mind to try his strength against these two giants.

He climbed over the mountain and came to the home of Drungjathrale whose mother asked him:

"What have you come for, young man?"

"I have come to try my strength against Drungjathrale," he replied.

"He is hunting in the mountain. But you are certainly not his equal. Although you can fell an ox with one blow my son can carry a hundred yaks on one shoulder. You had better go home," Drungjathrale's mother urged. "There is no fun in being killed."

Sure of his victory, Khaechhogpawo refused to leave. Since she could not persuade him, the mother said, "My son eats fifty pots of buttered tea, a hundred catties of beef and a bag of *tsamba* at one meal. If you can eat that much, you may defeat him." She took out these things and invited Khaechhogpawo to

eat. But try as he might he could only eat one tenth of them. "Go home! You are not my son's equal," the mother urged again.

But Khaechhogpawo wouldn't leave. He still considered himself a giant although he couldn't eat much and waited to try his strength against Drungjathrale.

Drungjathrale returned in the afternoon. Mustering his courage Khaechhogpawo went up to him. But one look at Drungjathrale made him lose heart, for Drungjathrale had more than a hundred *chhiwas** on his left shoulder and more than a hundred roebucks on his right. How could he be Drungjathrale's equal? He took to his heels in fright. When Drungjathrale learned from his mother about Khaechhogpawo he laughed heartily and didn't even bother to chase after him.

"I'm no match for this giant. But the other one who is too big for a pair of trousers made of the hides of nine oxen is probably nothing," thought Khaechhogpawo as he was running. "He's got a big belly, that's all. The hides of nine oxen is nothing remarkable. I can fell him with one blow as I did the ox."

He felt as happy as if he had already defeated Lhopakhaetob. He walked hurriedly, for the sky was beginning to get dark, the path was tortuous, and he had no idea where Lhopakhaetob lived. Finally, he decided to find a shelter for the night and go on the next day. By the road was a cave. He crept into it happily. Actually, it was one of Lhopakhaetob's trouser legs. Feeling an itching on his thigh Lhopakhaetob thrust his hand into his trouser leg and nipped Khaechhogpawo out as you would a flea and said, "So you want to bite me, you little flea!"

"I'm not a flea. I'm a man," Khaechhogpawo quickly explained.

"Why are you here?" asked the giant.

"I'm Khaechhogpawo, the man who can fell an ox with one blow. I am looking for Lhopakhaetob. I don't think much of

---

* *Chhiwa* is a small fox-like animal.

by Hung Lin

him even if he is too big for a pair of trousers made from the hides of nine oxen."

"Ha, ha!" The giant laughed as he put him down. "I am Lhopakhaetob. What do you think of me?"

Khaechhogpawo ran away in great fright. Since then he never dared to pretend that he was brave or call himself Khaechhogpawo again.

The Man Who Sold Sandalwood

Once upon a time, there was a man who took a bundle of the best sandalwood to the market for sale. For days there was no buyer. In the inn one night he met a person who had come to sell charcoal. They talked about their business and all sorts of things and complained that goods were difficult to sell at that market.

The next day, the other man sold all his charcoal in a short time. But no one bought the wares of the sandalwood seller although he waited till dark. Taking them back to the inn untouched, he was very unhappy. What should he do?

by Hung Lin

Suddenly he hit upon a plan and said to himself, "A good idea!" He quickly burned the sandalwood and took the charcoal to the market, where it was bought instantly. He thought himself very clever.

But his cleverness made him lose more than he gained.

The Leopard and the Donkey

One day, the leopard caught a donkey and wanted to devour it. "How dare you eat me?" said the donkey. "My mere bray will frighten you to death." The leopard didn't believe it. So the donkey brayed. It brayed nine times and shook the mountains and rivers. The leopard was indeed somewhat frightened.

"Brother Leopard, let's co-operate," proposed the donkey. "With your strength and my bray we can be kings of the forest. You wait at the mountain pass while I bray. This will frighten the animals so, that they will flee from the forest into the pass, where you can catch them. What do you say?"

The leopard consented. Each did as they agreed. Many animals ran out from the forest and the leopard had a good feast. It felt very satisfied.

But the leopard still doubted the donkey's strength. So it said to the donkey one day, "Let's change today. You wait in the mountain pass while I drive the animals out from the forest."

The donkey was dumbfounded. But in order not to reveal its weakness, it had to agree.

The donkey stood in the mountain pass. Suddenly flocks of animals ran in. How could it catch any of them? As a matter of fact it was so frightened that it stuck its head into a fissure in the rock leaving its rear exposed.

The frightened animals ran by it. A little hare, who was running too fast, dashed itself to death against a rock near by.

Soon the leopard came out to see the donkey who pretended to be very haughty and said, "Nothing came by except this little

by Huang Yung-yu

hare which I killed by just stepping on it." The leopard, convinced of the donkey's strength, did not dare to attack it.

So whenever an animal wanted to devour the donkey, it would bray for all it was worth. And the leopard would come and kill that animal according to their agreement.

Once a tiger attacked the donkey who again brayed loudly. But the leopard was not near at hand.

Later when the leopard came to visit the donkey he found only a pool of blood and the donkey's bones and skin. "I would have eaten you long ago if I had known that you were so powerless," sighed the leopard.

PEI HSING

Tales of the Late Tang Dynasty

The tales written during the Tang dynasty form a notable part of early Chinese fiction. Indeed, in importance they are comparable to Tang poetry. The prosperity of the Tang dynasty with its rapid development of agriculture, handicrafts and commerce supplied a rich material basis for the complex social life which was the background to these tales. Since the authors were consciously writing fiction, they produced something more imaginative than the earlier Chinese tales of the supernatural or anecdotes of famous men. The middle period of the Tang dynasty — the eighth century and early ninth century — was the hey-day of this form of literature, and in *Chinese Literature* No. 2, 1954 we had published some of the best stories of this period: *Jen the Fox Fairy, The Dragon King's Daughter, Story of a Singsong Girl* and *Governor of the Southern Tributary State.* The end of the dynasty produced some fine tales too, well represented by the collection made by Pei Hsing who lived towards the end of the ninth century. His tales are strongly romantic and highly imaginative, with strange plots and a wealth of descriptive detail set forth in colourful language. The present name of the Tang dynasty tales — *chuan-chi* or strange tales — was taken from Pei Hsing's collection.

THE GENERAL'S DAUGHTER

Nieh Yin-niang was the daughter of Nieh Feng, a general of Weipo during the Chen Yuan period (785-805). When she was ten, a nun came to her father's house to beg for alms and took a fancy to the girl — she asked to have her as a pupil.

General Nieh flew into a passion and stormed at her.

But the nun said: "Even if you lock her up in an iron chest, I shall steal her."

That night, sure enough, Yin-niang disappeared. In great dismay, her father ordered a search to be made, but no trace could be found of her. Each time the parents thought of their daughter, they looked at each other and shed tears.

Five years later, the nun brought Yin-niang back and told the general: "Now I have taught her, you may have her again." This said, she vanished.

The whole family wept for joy and asked the girl what she had learned.

"At first I simply read sutras and magic chants," she said. "That was all."

General Nieh did not believe this and begged for the truth.

"If I tell the truth, you may not credit it," she warned him.

"Never mind. Let's hear it," he replied.

She said: "When the nun first carried me off, we travelled I don't know how many *li.* By morning we had come to a great cave several dozen paces across. No one lived in it, but there were many monkeys about and the place was overgrown with pines and creepers. There were two girls too who were also about ten and both intelligent and pretty. They ate nothing but could skim up sheer cliffs as nimbly as any monkey climbing a tree, not slipping once. The nun gave me a pill and a sword about two feet long, with a blade so sharp that a hair blown against it was cut in two. She ordered me to follow the two girls, and little by little I felt myself grow as light as air. After a year I could hunt monkeys and not miss one in a hundred. Then I hunted tigers and leopards, coming back with their heads. Three years later I could fly and strike at eagles, without missing a single

by Jen Shuai-ying

one. By degrees the blade of the sword was reduced to five inches, and the birds I went for did not even know it was coming. In the fourth year, the nun left the two girls in charge of the cave while she took me to a city – just where, I don't know. She would point a man out and list his crimes, then say:

" 'Now go and cut off his head for me without anyone knowing. Just be bold, and it will be as easy as catching birds.'

"She gave me a horn-handled dagger three inches long so that I could kill men in broad daylight in the streets unseen. I used to put the heads in a bag, and back in her lodging they would be changed into water by means of some drug. In the fifth year the nun told me that a certain powerful official was guilty of murdering several innocent people. She sent me at night to his house to cut off his head. I took the dagger and went there, creeping through a crack of the door without difficulty and hiding myself on the beam. But when I took his head back that night, the nun was very angry.

" 'Why did you take so long?' she demanded.

"I told her I hadn't the heart to kill him because I saw him playing with a dear little boy.

"The nun ordered me: 'Next time such a thing happens, first kill the one he loves and then behead him.' After I had apologized she said: 'I shall slit the back of your head to hide your dagger there, but it won't hurt. When you need it, you can take it out.' Then she said: 'Now that you have learned your art, you can go home.' As I was leaving, she told me: 'Twenty years from now we shall meet again.' "

This story struck dread into the general's heart.

After that, Yin-niang disappeared every night and did not return till the morning. Her father, who dared not ask where she had been, could not love her as before.

One day a young mirror-polisher came to their gate.

"This man will do for my husband," Yin-niang said.

Her father when she told him did not like to refuse, and so the two were married. Since her husband was fit for nothing but polishing mirrors, the general kept them well supplied with food and clothing, lodged in a separate house.

A few years later Yin-niang's father died, and the Military Governor of Weipo, who had heard something of her strange arts, gave her a stipend and appointed her an assistant officer. So several years passed.

In the Yuan Ho period (806-821), the Military Governor of Weipo fell out with Liu Chang-yi, Military Governor of Chenhsu, and sent Yin-niang off to Chenhsu to fetch his head. But Governor Liu, who was a diviner and knew that she was coming, ordered his officer to wait the next day north of the city for a man and woman who would ride up to the city gate on white and black donkeys. A magpie would start chattering in front of them and the man would shoot at the bird with his catapult but miss it, after which his wife would snatch the catapult from him and kill the magpie with one shot. Then the officer should bow to them and inform them that he had been sent by the governor, who wished to see them.

The officer, doing as he was told, met Yin-niang and her husband.

"Governor Liu must have magic powers," they said. "How otherwise could he have known that we were coming? We would like to meet him."

Governor Liu welcomed them, and Yin-niang and her husband bowed to him.

"We deserve a thousand deaths for meaning to harm you," they said.

"Not at all," replied Liu. "It is natural for men to serve their own master. But this district is just as good as your own: I hope you will stay here without distrust."

Yin-niang thanked him, saying: "Since you have no helpers we would like to come here, for we are overwhelmed by your divine wisdom." She knew that the Governor of Weipo was not his equal. When Liu asked what they would need, she said: "Two hundred cash a day will be sufficient." He granted this request.

The two donkeys disappeared, and though Liu had a search made they could not be found. Later he discovered a cloth bag with two paper donkeys in it, one white and one black.

When more than a month had passed, Yin-niang reported to Liu: "Since the Governor of Weipo does not know that we are staying here, he may send someone else. Tonight I shall put some of my hair tied up in a red handkerchief by his pillow to show that I am not going back." To this Liu agreed.

At the fourth watch she returned to report: "I have let him know. Still, two nights from now he will send Spirit Boy to kill me and cut off your head. But I shall do my best to kill him. There is no need to worry."

Since Liu was brave and broad-minded he showed no fear.

That night candles were lit and after midnight Liu saw two pennants, one red and one white, fluttering in the air as they fought around his bed. After some time a decapitated man fell from the air and Yin-niang, appearing at the same instant, announced: "Spirit Boy is killed!"

She dragged the corpse out of the hall and used her drug to change it into water, leaving not a hair behind.

Then she told Liu: "Two nights from now they will send magic-fingered Empty Boy along. He has miraculous powers, this Empty Boy. Neither man nor spirit can trace his whereabouts, for he vanishes into empty air without form or shadow. My art is no match for his: we shall have to count more on your luck. Protect your neck with jade from Khotan and wrap yourself well in your bedding. I shall change into an insect and lie in wait for him concealed in your body. That is our only chance."

Liu did as she said.

That night at midnight he had not yet dozed off when something clattered sharply against his neck. The next moment Yin-niang leaped out of his mouth and congratulated him, saying: "Your worries are over! This fellow is like a fine falcon: if he fails to catch his prey he goes far away, too ashamed to try again. Within a couple of hours he will be a thousand *li* from here."

When Liu examined the jade, he found a deep gash in it. After that he treated Yin-niang even more handsomely.

In the eighth year of the Yuan Ho period (814), Liu left his post to go to court, but Yin-niang did not choose to accompany him.

"I shall roam the hills and river banks to find exceptional men," she said. "But may I ask for a subsidy for my husband?"

After Liu had granted this she disappeared without a trace.

When Liu died at his post, Yin-niang rode to the capital on her donkey to mourn before his coffin.

During the Kai Cheng period (836-841), Liu's son Chung was appointed prefect of Lingchow, and on his way through the mountains to Chengtu he met Yin-niang, looking exactly as before, still riding her white donkey. Though pleased to see him, she warned him: "A great calamity is in store for you if you stay here." She produced a pill and told him to eat it, saying: "Your only hope lies in giving up your office next year and posting back to Loyang. This drug cannot protect you for more than one year."

Not altogether convinced, Chung offered her silk, but Yin-niang declined the gift. After drinking heavily with him, she went away. The next year Chung did not resign, but met his death in Lingchow. As for Yin-niang, she was never seen again.

THE JADE MORTAR AND PESTLE

During the Chang Ching period (821-824), a scholar named Pei Hang, who had failed in the examination, roamed the country till he came to Ngochu where he called on his old friend Minister Tsui. When the minister gave him two hundred thousand cash, he determined to go back to the capital and took a passage on a large junk which was sailing up the River Han. Another passenger, Madame Fan, was a most beautiful lady. They exchanged remarks across a curtain, chatting quite freely; but though so close, Pei Hang could not meet her face to face. So he bribed her maid Misty Wreath to deliver this poem to her:

> Were we as far apart as Hu and Yueh,* I would still long to meet you;
> But all that divides me from you, goddess, is a silk screen;
> If you are bound for the Jade City of the immortals,
> Let me follow your phoenix train up the azure sky!

For long he received no answer to this poem. He cross-questioned Misty Wreath several times, till she said: "What can I do if my lady chooses to ignore it?"

At his wit's end, Pei purchased good wine and choice fruit next time they stopped, and presented these to Madame Fan, who then told Misty Wreath to admit him. When the curtain was raised, he saw a beauty cold and bright as jade, lovely as a flower, with hair like clouds and eyebrows like the crescent moon. She behaved like a being from above who had condescended to visit a mere mortal. Pei Hang bowed and was lost in wonder at her beauty.

The lady said: "I have a husband south of the River Han who means to resign from office to live as a hermit in the hills. He has summoned me to bid farewell. Overwhelmed with grief and with anxiety lest I fail to reach him in time, what eyes can I have for others? I have enjoyed your company on the boat, sir, but I am in no mood for trifling."

---

* Referring to the Huns in the north and the State of Yueh in the south.

"I would not dream of such a thing!" he replied.

After drinking with him, she withdrew. She was as cold as ice, as forbidding as frost. Later she sent Misty Wreath to him with this poem:

> Drinking your wine I was deeply moved;
> Once the elixir is well ground you shall see Yun-ying;
> Lanchiao is the abode of immortals,
> You need not climb to the Jade City in heaven.

Pei Hang, reading this, admired her talent in versifying but could not fathom her meaning. He was not granted any more interviews, and they simply exchanged greetings through Misty Wreath. When the boat reached Hsiangyang, the lady and her maid took their dressing-cases and left without bidding goodbye, and he did not know where she had gone. Though he searched everywhere for her, she had vanished utterly leaving no trace. Then he gathered together his belongings to continue his journey on horseback. At Lanchiao posting station, parched with thirst, he dismounted to ask for a drink. He found a low thatched cottage of three or four rooms, in which an old woman was spinning hempen thread. Greeting her, he begged for a drink.

"Yun-ying!" called the old crone. "Bring a bowl! Here's a gentleman wanting a drink."

Pei Hang was astonished, remembering the name Yun-ying in Madame Fan's poem. While he was trying to collect his thoughts, from behind a reed screen appeared two slender white hands holding a porcelain bowl. Pei Hang took this and drank. It was like a true essence of jade, and a wonderful fragrance came to him through the door. As he returned the bowl he threw up the door curtain and discovered a girl lovely as a flower bathed in dew or spring snow melting in the rosy sunlight. Her face was like jade but softer, her hair like thick clouds. When she turned away shyly, hiding her face, not even a crimson orchid deep in the valley could match her exquisite beauty. Pei Hang stood rooted to the ground in amazement and could not tear himself away.

He told the old woman: "My man and my horse are hungry. We would like to stay here for a while. Grant me this request and I shall pay you well."

by Lu Hung-nien

She replied: "As you like."

When man and beast had been fed, Pei said to the old woman: "Just now I saw a young lady of astounding loveliness, a peerless beauty. That is why I hesitated and could not go away. May I send rich gifts and marry her?"

The old woman said: "The truth is she is promised to a man but not yet married. I am old and ailing. The other day an immortal gave me an elixir, but I cannot eat it till it has been pounded for a hundred days in a jade mortar with a jade pestle.

Then I can live as long as heaven. You shall marry the girl if you get me a jade mortar and pestle. I have no use for gold or silk or the like."

Pei Hang bowed in thanks, saying: "Grant me a hundred days and I promise to come back with the jade mortar and pestle. Don't let anyone else have her meantime."

The old woman agreed to this and Pei reluctantly left.

When he reached the capital he set aside other business to make the round of all the public squares, busy markets and bustling streets crying out that he wanted a jade mortar and pestle. But there was no sign of one. He ignored the friends whom he met, till he was generally thought to be out of his mind. When several months had passed he met an old jade pedlar, who told him: "Not long ago I had a letter from Old Pien who keeps a medicine shop in Kuaichow. He says he has a jade pestle and mortar for sale. Since you are so eager to find one, I can give you an introduction to him."

Pei Hang thanked him heartily, for at last he would succeed in getting the mortar and pestle. Old Pien's price was two hundred strings of cash, and to raise this sum Pei had to empty his purse and sell his man and horse into the bargain. Then, taking his purchases, he returned on foot to Lanchiao.

The old woman laughed and said: "I see you are a man of your word, sir! I can't keep the girl and not reward you for your services."

The girl said with a smile: "Still, he must pound the elixir for a hundred days before we can talk of marriage."

The old woman took the elixir from her pocket and Pei Hang started pounding it, working all day and resting at night, when the old woman took the mortar to the inner room. But in the dark the sound of pounding went on; and when Pei peeped in he saw a jade hare manipulating the pestle, while a light white as snow lit up the whole room so that every little thing in it stood out clearly. This further strengthened his determination.

When the hundred days had passed the old woman took the elixir and swallowed it, saying: "I am going to a cave in the mountain to tell my relatives to prepare the bridal chamber for you." Before taking the girl with her to the hills she told Pei: "Just wait here for a little."

Soon a retinue of attendants and carriages came to fetch him. They escorted him to a great mansion which reached the clouds, with pearl-studded gates which flashed in the sunlight. Inside he found curtains, screens, jewels and precious objects of every description, far surpassing the house of a noble. Pages and maids led him behind the curtain to go through the wedding ceremony. After that he paid his respects to the old woman and expressed his regret that she was leaving them. The old woman said: "Since you are a descendant of Saint Pei,* you will leave the world too. You need not regret this."

Then he was introduced to the guests, all of whom were immortals. One goddess, who wore her hair in a knot and whose gown was the colour of the rainbow, was introduced as his wife's elder sister. When he paid his respects she asked:

"Don't you recognize me, Mr. Pei?"

He said: "We are not kinsmen, and I cannot recollect meeting you."

The lady asked: "Don't you remember travelling in the same boat with me from Ngochu to Hsiangyang?"

Then Pei, taken aback, apologized.

Later he learned from others: "This is your wife's elder sister, Lady Yun-chiao, the wife of Lord Liu Kang.** She has already attained the rank of an angel and waits on the Jade Emperor in heaven."

The old woman sent Pei and his wife to stay in Jade Peak Cave, where he was given the Elixir of Rosy Snow and Jasper Flowers which made him ethereal: his hair turned colour, he could transform himself at will, and he became an immortal.

During the Tai Ho period (827-835) his friend Lu Hao met him west of Lanchiao Station. Pei told Lu how he had attained immortality and gave him ten pounds of fine jade and a pill to prolong his life. After conversing all day, he asked Lu to take his regards to his old friends.

Lu Hao bowed and said: "You have attained immortality. Can you give me some brief instructions?"

* An ancient Taoist saint.

** Another well-known Taoist saint.

Pei said: "Lao Tzu* has taught us: 'Keep the mind empty and the belly full.' But the men of today keep their minds so full that they cannot attain immortality." When he saw that Lu was bewildered, he added: "When the mind is full of vain desires, the belly cannot retain the vital spirit – that is what I mean. All men have it in their power to attain immortality and keep the vital spirit; but the time has not yet come for you to learn this. I shall explain it to you some other day."

Lu Hao realized that he would be taught no more. After a meal Pei Hang left, and that was the last that was ever seen of him.

THE PRINCE'S TOMB

During the Chen Yuan period (785-805) there was a certain Tsui Wei, son of the Censor Tsui Hsiang who enjoyed some reputation as a poet and ended his career as assistant prefect of Nanhai.** This Tsui Wei lived a carefree life in Nanhai, neglecting his estate but doing many gallant deeds till in a few years all his property was gone. Then for the most part he stayed in Buddhist temples. On the Chung Yuan Festival*** it was the custom in Panyu**** to display strange and precious objects in the temples, and all the showmen gathered in Kaiyuan Monastery. Tsui, going there to look on, saw a stall-holder beating an old beggar woman who had tripped over his wine jug and upset it. Since the wine spilt cost no more than one string of cash and Tsui pitied the old woman, he stripped off his own gown to make good the damage. But she left without a word of thanks.

The next day, however, she appeared and said: "I owe you thanks, sir, for coming to my rescue. I know how to cauterize tumours, and here is some mugwort for you from Yueh Well.

* The ancient Taoist philosopher who wrote *The Way and Its Power.*

** Part of the present province of Kwangtung.

*** The fifteenth of the seventh month.

**** Present-day Canton.

Any tumour you treat with this will be instantly cured. You will find a beautiful wife into the bargain."

As Tsui accepted with a smile, the old woman vanished.

Some days later, having strolled to Haikuang Monastery, he met an old monk with a tumour on one ear. When Tsui tried cauterizing this with his mugwort, it happened just as predicted. The grateful monk told Tsui:

"A poor priest has no means of repaying you except by chanting prayers for your happiness, sir. But old Mr. Jen, who lives at the foot of this mountain and owns millions of strings of cash, has a tumour too. If you can cure him, he will reward you well. Allow me to give you a letter of introduction." Tsui fell in readily with this suggestion.

Old Mr. Jen, overjoyed to see him, invited him in with all ceremony. And Tsui's mugwort effected an immediate cure.

"I cannot thank you enough, sir, for ridding me of this annoyance," said Jen. "Here are a hundred thousand cash for you. Pray make this your home. Don't be in any hurry to leave." So Tsui stayed in their house.

Now Tsui had a gift for music. When he heard a lyre played outside his host's hall he questioned a serving-boy about it. "That is our master's daughter," was the answer.

Then Tsui asked for a lyre and made music too. And the girl's heart went out to him as, in hiding, she listened.

Old Jen worshipped a demon in his house called the One-legged God. Every three years he killed a man for it. Now the day for the sacrifice was at hand, but he had as yet found no victim. Then abruptly forgetting Tsui's kindness, he called for his son and took counsel with him, saying: "Since the man I counted on hasn't come, there is no blood-offering for the demon. Even great kindness, they say, may go unrequited, and this fellow simply cured me of a minor ailment."

He ordered the sacrifice to be prepared, meaning to kill Tsui at midnight. And unknown to Tsui, he locked him into his room. Jen's daughter, learning of this plot, stole to Tsui's window with a sword to warn him:

"My family worships a demon and tonight they mean to sacrifice you to it. Break the window with this and escape; otherwise you

are a dead man. And take this sword with you, or I shall be in trouble."

Sweating with fear, Tsui took the sword and his mugwort. Breaking the lattice of the window he leaped out, unlatched the gate and fled. But old Mr. Jen got wind of this and gave chase with a dozen of his men carrying swords and torches. After six or seven *li* they had nearly caught up with Tsui when, missing his way, he slipped and fell into a large disused well. His pursuers, losing track of him, went back.

Tsui's fall had been broken by dead leaves so that no damage was done. When dawn came he saw that he was in a chasm a thousand feet and more deep, with no way out. There was space in those winding clefts for a thousand men. In the middle, in front of a stone mortar, a white snake dozens of feet long lay coiled. And into this mortar from the cliff dripped some substance like honey which the snake was drinking. Certain that this was no ordinary snake, Tsui made obeisance to it.

"Dragon King!" he cried. "I have had the misfortune to fall here. Take pity on me! Spare my life!"

He swallowed the dregs of the honey, which satisfied hunger and thirst. A closer look disclosed that this snake, too, had a tumour on its mouth; and to show his gratitude he would gladly have cauterized this, but there was no way to get fire. When some time later a flame from far off drifted into the cave, Tsui kindled his mugwort and with the snake's consent cauterized its tumour, which fell at once to the ground. Since this growth had long interfered with the snake's feeding, it experienced great relief and spat out a pearl about one inch across as a reward for Tsui. But declining this, he said:

"Dragon King, you who control clouds and rain, whose power is infinite, who can change your form at will and go where you please – you must know some way to rescue a man in distress! If you will carry me back to the world of men, I shall be eternally grateful. If I can only go back, I want no treasure."

The snake swallowed the pearl and uncoiled itself to move on. Having bowed low, Tsui mounted its back and they set off. But instead of leaving by the mouth of the chasm, they thrust several dozen *li* further into pitch darkness. The snake shed light upon both walls, however, so that from time to time they saw paintings

of men of old in official dress. At last they reached a stone gate on which was a golden beast with a ring in its mouth. Inside this gate all was bright. Halting there, the snake lowered its head to let Tsui alight, and believing himself near the world of men he entered. But he found a hall more than a hundred paces across with chambers hollowed out of the four walls. In the middle were embroidered hangings of gold and purple silk adorned with pearls and emeralds to sparkle like galaxies of twinkling stars. In front of these were ranged golden incense-burners in the shape of dragons, phoenixes, tortoises, serpents and sparrows, from whose mouths issued heady, aromatic fragrance. Beside was a small pool with a golden verge, filled with quicksilver on which floated water-fowl carved out of jade, while round the pool were couches inlaid with rhinoceros horn and ivory, laden with every manner of instruments: lyres, citherns, flutes, pipes, drums, clappers and many more. Observing that these showed signs of recent handling, Tsui wondered into what fairyland he had strayed. After a while he picked up a lyre to strum it. At once doors in the four walls swung open and a maid-servant appeared, who said with a smile: "So the Envoy of the Jade City has brought Mr. Tsui here!" With that she ran in again.

Presently four girls came out, each with her hair dressed in an antique fashion and a gown every colour of the rainbow.

"How dare you break into the emperor's inner palace?" they asked.

Tsui put down the lyre and bowed. The girls returned his courtesy. "If this is the emperor's inner palace, where is the emperor?" he inquired.

"He has gone to a feast given by the Fiery Emperor Chu Yung."*

They made Tsui be seated to play the lyre, and he played *The Hunnish Pipes.*

"What tune is that?" they asked.

"The Hunnish Pipes."

"What does it mean? We've never heard it."

Tsui told them: "The Han dynasty scholar Tsai Yung had a daughter, Wen-chi, who was captured by the Huns. On her return, recalling all she had seen, she made this song on her lyre resembling the wailing of Hunnish pipes."

* The god of the south.

The girls were enchanted. "It must be a new song," they said.

They ordered wine to be poured and passed round the cups. And when Tsui kowtowed and begged leave to go home, they replied: "Fate brought you here, sir. Don't be in such a hurry to leave. Stay a little while. Soon the Envoy of the City of Sheep will arrive, and you can go with him." They also told him: "The emperor has agreed to give you Lady Tien as your wife. You can see her now."

When Tsui, at a loss, did not venture to reply, the girls told their maid to fetch Lady Tien. But she refused to come, sending back the answer: "I cannot meet Mr. Tsui till I have orders from the emperor." Though the girls insisted, she was adamant. They told Tsui: "Lady Tien is matchless for beauty and virtue: You must take good care of her. This, too, is fated. She is the daughter of the Prince of Chi."

"Which Prince of Chi?" he inquired.

"That Tien Heng who lost his kingdom and fled to the isles early in the Han dynasty."

Soon rays of sunlight shone into the cave and Tsui, looking up, saw an opening above and what seemed to be the sky of the world of men. The four girls said: "Here is the Envoy of the City of Sheep."

Then from the sky above a white sheep descended slowly to where they were sitting. Its rider, splendid in offical robes, held a large brush and a bamboo slip inscribed with hieroglyphics, which he placed on the incense table. At the four girls' order the maid read out: "Prefect Hsu Shen of Kwangchou has died. Tribune Chao Chang of Annam will succeed to his post."

The girls poured wine for the envoy and said to him: "Mr. Tsui wants to return to Panyu. Will you take him with you?" The envoy agreed and turned to say to Tsui: "In return some day you must give me a new coat and repair my house." Tsui promised to do this.

The four girls announced: "The emperor has ordered us to present to you his great treasure, the Sunlight Pearl. When you take it back, a foreigner will give you a hundred thousand strings of cash for it." They told the maid to open a jade casket and

hand the pearl to Tsui. He accepted it with a bow, but said: "I have never paid my respects to His Majesty and am no relation to him. Why is such a priceless gift given to me?"

The girls answered: "Your father wrote a poem on Yueh Palace which moved Prefect Hsu Shen to repair it. The emperor was grateful and appended a poem, hinting that he meant to give this pearl to you. But surely you know this without our telling you?"

Tsui requested: "May I hear the emperor's poem?"

The girls told the maid to write it on the envoy's pen. The poem was as follows:

> A thousand years the ruined palace mouldered
> Till thanks to the governor it was restored;
> How can I repay your welcome services?
> I shall grant you a beauty and a precious pearl.

"What was the emperor's name?" asked Tsui.

"You will learn that later," said the girls. "On the Chung Yuan Festival prepare some good wine and a feast in a quiet room in Puchien Monastery in Kwangchou. We shall bring Lady Tien to you there."

Tsui took his leave and was about to ride off on the envoy's sheep when the girls stopped him. "We know you have some of Mistress Pao's mugwort," they said. "Will you leave us a little?" Tsui did as they asked, though he still had no idea who Mistress Pao could be. Then he left them and in no time was out of the cave and on firm ground. The envoy and the sheep had disappeared.

Looking at the sky, he saw it was nearly dawn. At once the Puchien Monastery bell tolled the fifth watch, and going there he was given breakfast by the monks. Then he went back to Kwangchou. Having originally had lodgings there, he went straight to his old rooms to make inquiries and found that he had been away for three years.

His landlord asked: "Where have you been all this time?" But Tsui did not tell him the truth. When he opened the door and found his couch covered with dust, he felt a pang of sadness. Inquiring about the local administration, he learned that Prefect Hsu had died and been succeeded by Tribune Chao Chang. He took his pearl, well concealed, to the Persian hostel, and the

moment an old merchant set eyes on it he prostrated himself with his hands spread out before him.

"You must come from the tomb of Prince Chao To of Southern Yueh,* sir," he cried. "Nowhere else could you have got this treasure which was buried with him."

At Tsui related the story he realized that the emperor was Chao To, who had assumed this title. The price of a hundred thousand strings of cash was paid.

"How did you recognize this jewel?" Tsui asked.

"This is the Sunlight Pearl which all Arabs treasure," said the merchant. "At the beginning of the Han dynasty, Chao To sent a magician over mountains and seas to steal this pearl and bring it to Panyu. That was nearly a thousand years ago. Because a soothsayer in our country foretold that next year this treasure would return to the Arabs, our king sent me with a great ship and store of money to Panyu in search of it. Today at last I have found it!" He produced an essence of jade to wash the pearl, and its brightness lit up the whole room. Then the foreigner boarded his boat and sailed back to the land of the Arabs.

Tsui bought property with his money, but looked in vain for the Envoy of the City of Sheep. During a visit later to the temple of the tutelary god, he saw that the image there resembled the envoy while the deity's pen was inscribed with tiny characters – the poem written by the maid. Then he sacrficed wine and meat to the guardian deity of the city, restoring and redecorating his temple; for he realized that Kuangchou was the City of Sheep, since this temple had images of five sheep.

Next he looked for the house of old Mr. Jen, and was told by the village elders that it must be the grave of Jen Hsiao, Tribune of Southern Yueh.** He mounted the ruined tower of the Yueh Palace and found there a poem by his father.

> By Yueh Well stand old pine and cypress trees;
> On Yueh Tower autumn grass grows rank;
> For years no descendants have come to this ancient tomb
> Which, trampled by country folk, has become a public road.

---

* Chao To assumed the title of prince when the Chin dynasty fell, but later acknowledged Han suzerainty.

** Tribune of Nanhai in the Chin dynasty, who was succeeded by Chao To.

by Jen Shuai-ying

He also found the poem appended to this by the Prince of Yueh, at which he marvelled exceedingly. When questioned, the care-taker told him: "Prefect Hsu Shen when he came here was so impressed by Censor Tsui's poem that he restored the palace. Then this miracle happened."

When the Chung Yuan Festival was approaching, Tsui prepared a rich feast with rare dishes and good wine, and took a room in Puchien Monastery. Towards midnight the four girls escorted in Lady Tien, a ravishing beauty whose conversation was distinguished. The four girls toasted Tsui and joked with each other till nearly dawn, when they took their leave. Tsui, having bowed

and asked them to deliver a letter of thanks to the Prince of Yueh, went back into the room with Lady Tien.

"If your father was the Prince of Chi, how did you come to marry a southerner?" he asked her.

"My country fell, my home was destroyed," she said. "I was captured by the Prince of Yueh, who made me his concubine. When he died, I was buried with him. How much time has passed since then I cannot tell. It seems just yesterday that Li Yi-chi died in the cauldron.* Recalling the past brings tears to my eyes."

"Who were those four girls?" asked Tsui.

"Two of them were presented to the prince by Prince Yao, the other two by Prince Wu-chu.** All four were buried with their master."

"Who was the Mistress Pao of whom they spoke?"

"The daughter of Pao Ching and the wife of Keh Hung.*** She often practised cautery in the south."

Tsui was astonished by this revelation. He asked next: "Why was the snake called the Envoy of the Jade City?"

She told him: "An Chi Sheng**** used to ride that dragon to the Jade City; hence the name."

Since Tsui had drunk dregs left by the dragon in the chasm, his flesh became tender and youthful, his sinews flexible and strong. After spending more than ten years in the south, he gave away all he possessed to devote himself to a holy life. Then he and his wife went to Lofu Mountain in search of Mistress Pao. And what became of him after that no one knows.

Translated by Yang Hsien-yi and Gladys Yang

---

* Li Yi-chi, an orator sent by the First Emperor of Han to persuade the Prince of Chi to come over to his side, was thrown into a cauldron by the prince.

** Two princes who reigned in southeastern China at the beginning of the Han dynasty.

*** A famous third century alchemist in southern China.

**** A Chin dynasty alchemist.

Notes on Literature and Art

FENG MU and
HUANG CHAO-YEN

Novel Writing in Recent Years

The novels written since liberation in 1949 may be divided into two main groups: those dealing with the Chinese people's life and struggles during the democratic revolution and those which have the socialist revolution and socialist construction as their theme.

The Chinese revolution was a long and arduous struggle: each step forward was made at great cost. Our novelists have given us penetrating and stirring pictures of the revolution, and there are many novels reflecting the armed struggle or incidents related to it. In October 1949, at the time of the founding of the People's Republic of China, Liu Pai-yu published *Flames Ahead,* which powerfully describes how the People's Liberation Army crossed the Yangtse in Hupeh. Ma Chia's short novel *Unfading Blossom* successfully depicts a battle on the Mongolian steppe and has given us an unforgettable character in that wise and dauntless Communist Wang Yao-tung. Liu Ching's *Wall of Bronze,* which relates how grain was sent by the people to help the people's army in northern Shensi throws light on the magnificent Battle of Shachiatien – the turning-point on the northwestern front in the War of Liberation. Although the author does not deal with the battle itself the whole book is pervaded with a fighting spirit, bringing home to readers the tremendous force of the People's Liberation Army and the

Feng Mu and Huang Chao-yen are both editors on the staff of the *Wenyi Bao* (Literary Gazette), Peking.

close ties between the army and the people. The chief character, Shih Teh-fu, is excellently drawn and leaves an indelible impression upon readers.

Another impressive novel about the War of Liberation is Tu Peng-cheng's *Defend Yenan!* This work, totalling over three hundred and fifty thousand words, vividly presents some of the great battles to defend Yenan. The heroes portrayed – men like Chou Ta-yung, Wang Lao-hu and Li Cheng – are as hard as diamonds and as splendid. They are drawn to the life, not only their heroic deeds but also their innermost feelings and their gradual growth in moral stature. Though the novel depicts a few characters only, these men embody all the best qualities of the labouring people: courage, industry, loyalty, self-sacrifice, and the fortitude to endure the severest trials. This novel makes a powerful impact and in style is an example of revolutionary romanticism.

Wu Chiang's *Red Sun* is another good novel with part of the War of Liberation as its theme. It treats of two famous battles on the East China front, bringing us stirring action and convincing portraits of officers and men of the People's Liberation Army. Army Commander Shen Chen-hsin, Deputy Commander Liang Po, Regiment Commander Liu Sheng and the soldier Yang Chun are true to life and have genuine character. The commanders are not the ordinary run of fearless soldiers but highly matured officers with marked individual traits, yet all imbued with the revolutionary spirit of the people's army. This novel shows various aspects of army life, introducing a love story and much cheerful laughter. Truthful pictures are also given of the enemy. Thus the Kuomintang commander Chang Ling-fu is not presented as some monster or fool but as a stubborn, over-confident reactionary. The convincing portrayal of the negative figures in this novel is one of its main achievements.

Chu Po's *Tracks in the Snowy Forest* is an unusual war novel which does not describe big battle scenes but tells the story of a small force of thirty-six men who destroy a much larger force of bandits by bold tactics. This picturesque book, packed with suspense, has won immense popularity in China.

Three Families Lane by Ouyang Shan takes as its theme the gallant fight put up between 1925 and 1927 by the workers and peasants of South China under the leadership of the Party against

the White Terror. Chen Tsing's *By the Golden Sand River* and *The Red Army Fears Not the Trials of a Distant March* by Chen Tsing and Li Pai, both deal with events at the time of the crossing of the Golden Sand River during the Long March.

Another dominating theme is the complex class struggle in enemy-occupied areas and the life and struggle of people in the revolutionary bases and guerrilla areas. The most noteworthy novel of the first category is Liang Pin's *Keep the Red Flag Flying,* which gives us a profoundly moving and rich portrayal of sterling characters and a colourful cross-section of life. It fairly comprehensively sums up the life and struggles of the Chinese peasants during the democratic revolution, and has reached a relatively high artistic level. This is one of the outstanding Chinese novels of the last ten years. The second category may be represented by Chen Teng-ko's *Living Hell,* Chang Lei's *The Upheaval* and Feng Teh-ying's *Sow Thistle* and *Honeysuckle,* which have well-constructed plots and describe in somewhat rugged style the complexity and difficulty of the fight. Malchinhu's *On the Boundless Steppe* and Ulanbagan's *Beacon on the Steppes* describe the revolutionary struggle in national minority areas. The former has a lively young hero in the herdsman Timur, the latter gives a most convincing picture of the awakening and mental growth of the young slave Batjargal. Since these novels are both by Mongolian writers, they have a distinctive Mongolian flavour.

The Song of Youth by the woman novelist Yang Mo is extremely popular among Chinese students, for it describes the stubborn fight put up by young intellectuals in North China during the thirties, a stormy period in Chinese history. The heroine of the book, Lin Tao-ching, is a petty-bourgeois intellectual, whose frustration, search for the right path, awakening and development help us to understand the underground activities led by the Party. Lin Tao-ching is most successfully portrayed, and her life makes it clear that the only way forward for intellectuals of that time was to link their fate with that of the people under Party leadership. Good portrayals are also given of Party members like Lu Chia-chuan, Chiang Hua and Lin Hung, who remain loyal to the cause throughout all difficulties and dedicate their lives to the revolution. Through such figures the novelist reveals the characteristics of the age, although each has strongly marked individuality. *Annals*

of a Provincial Town by Kao Yun-lan, written lucidly and with warmth, describes the underground struggle in South China and the psychology of some young intellectuals. Li Ying-ju's *Wild Fires and Spring Wind* and Lu Chun-chao's *The Squall* both deal with another type of underground struggle. The former describes work done to break down the enemy from within and the latter the uprising of some Kuomintang seamen.

Since the establishment of the People's Republic of China, imperialist forces have not ceased to threaten our frontiers and there have been continuous armed clashes. These incidents are also reflected in our literature, including such novels about the War to Resist U. S. Aggression and Aid Korea as Yang Shuo's *A Thousand Miles of Lovely Land* and *Farewell to Battle,* Lu Chu-kuo's *Sangkumryung,* Ma Chia's *East of Our Home Land* and Han Feng's *Eastern Front. Calming the East China Sea* by Lu Chu-kuo deals with the fighting on the eastern coast.

Our novelists have taken as their themes not only the contemporary revolutionary struggles but also struggles in the past. Novels written in recent years about the 1911 Revolution include Li Liu-ju's *Changes in These Sixty Years* and Li Chieh-jen's trilogy: *Ripples in the Stagnant Pool, Before the Storm* and *Huge Breakers.*

Mention should also be made of the large number of novels about guerrillas during the War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression. The most popular of these are Liu Chih-hsia's *Railway Guerrillas,* Feng Chih's *Behind the Enemy Line,* Liu Liu's *Heroes in Blazing Fire* and an earlier work by Yuan Ching, *Daughters and Sons.* These books are particularly popular with young readers, for they are packed with adventure, and though the characterization is relatively simple they tell a good story. They thus serve a definite educational purpose.

Notable results have also been achieved in novels dealing with our present life. Two well-known novelists, Chao Shu-li and Chou Li-po, excel in describing the Chinese countryside. In *Sanliwan Village* Chao Shu-li with his distinctive style shows the struggle between the capitalist and the socialist way in the Chinese villages during the socialist transformation of agriculture, and the conflicts between new and old ideas. A number of rich middle

peasants in this book – Always Right, Muddle-head, Fan Teng-kao and others – are authentic figures, well depicted. This novel makes a forceful attack on the middle peasants' tendency to take the capitalist road. *Sacred Fountain Cavern,* a later work by Chao Shu-li, has adopted many good features of the story-tellers' technique, and is outstanding for its portrayal of positive characters and dramatic situations. Chou Li-po's *Great Changes in the Mountain Village* may be considered as a sequel to *The Hurricane,* a novel about land reform in a Northeast village, although this describes the agricultural co-operative movement in a village in Central China. Judging by the rapid and far-reaching changes it brings to the peasants' life and social relationships, the co-operative movement in this remote mountain village is also a revolutionary hurricane. The narrative style of this novel is highly graphic. Many of its episodes are reminiscent of colourful genre paintings. Sun Li's *The Blacksmith and the Carpenter* is only the beginning of a longer work, the whole of which has not yet appeared; but we mention it here because the author's clear, fresh and individual style has now reached maturity, and this novel is much deeper than his previous works. Other notable novels dealing with the clash between old and new forces in the villages are Li Chun's *When the Snow Melts,* Liu Shu-teh's *Bridge,* Ouyang Shan's *The Bright Future,* Han Pei-ping's *High Mountains* and Li Man-tien's *The Water Flows East.*

Before liberation there was virtually no writing about industrial construction and the life of workers; but today we have quite a body of literature in this field. The veteran novelist Ai Wu has held an administrative post in a factory since liberation and produced a number of short stories about the workers' life. His recent novel *Steeled and Tempered* takes as its theme the construction of the Anshan steel base, and is a successful new attempt. The hero of this novel Chin Teh-kuei is a well-depicted worker. Few such characters have appeared in Chinese writing, but here this new type of worker is presented freshly and vividly – this alone constitutes a landmark in the history of our literature. Lo Tan's *A Stormy Dawn,* the first part of his work *River of Steel,* also takes Anshan as its background and gives a successful description of the development of the workers, while one old worker – Hsieh

Nien-kuei – is an unforgettable figure. Tu Peng-cheng's *In Time of Peace* is only an episode in a longer work he has planned but already makes a stirring tale and presents us with two fine characters, Yen Hsing and Liu Tzu-ching, who are working on the construction site of the Paochi-Chengtu Railway. Because this book emphasizes certain contradictions within the ranks of the people it has aroused considerable attention and discussion. Lei Chia's trilogy *Latent Strength,* comprising *Spring Comes to the Yalu River, Standing in the Forefront* and *The Blue Forest,* describes the development of a paper mill after it is taken over after liberation. Tsao Ming's *The Moving Force, The Locomotive* and *Riding on the Wind* also describe various phases in the development of heavy industry since liberation. Hsin Lei's *Evergreen* deals with the building of the Wuhan Bridge over the Yangtse. All these novels give good pictures of industrial construction.

China is a multi-national country. Since liberation, thanks to the national policy of the Party and Chairman Mao, the minority peoples have been freed from darkness and suffering to gain a new life. Today, happy to be a part of the big Chinese family, they are doing their share in socialist construction. Since the contradictions among different nationalities have been solved and there is no longer ground for misunderstanding and prejudice, the life of the minorities has undergone a fundamental change. Our writers have not been blind to this, and many novels have been written to describe the life of the minorities and the border regions. Outstanding among these is Hsu Huai-chung's *On the Tibetan Highland.* Written in a concise style with an unusual plot, authentic scenes and characters, it shows us the life and tortuous struggles on the Tibetan highland after liberation and how our cadres, guided by the Party's national policy, overcome difficulties and hardships till they finally succeed in sowing the seeds of socialism among the Tibetan people. Other popular books dealing with minority peoples are Kuo Kuo-fu's *With the Anmeina Tribe,* Ko Kang's *Gold Bridge,* Lin Yu's *The Beacon Fire at the Pass,* Pi Yeh's *The Sun Shines Brightly on the Tienshan Mountain* and Li Chiao's *The Joyful Golden Sand River.*

Chou Erh-fu's *Morning in Shanghai* describes the gradual transformation of national capitalists. The section of the book published so far deals with the frenzied attack launched on the working class by Shanghai capitalists in 1951 on the eve of the *san fan** and *wu fan*** movements. Two other books with fresh themes are Chin Mu's *The Golden Coast* about the life of Chinese overseas and Wang An-yu's *Fishermen on the Sea,* which deals with fishermen on the East China Sea.

An important place in the Chinese writing of the last decade must be given to the work done by amateurs in their spare time. Though most such works are naturally poems and short stories, there are also several fairly successful novels and short novels. For instance, *Kao Yu-pao* by the once illiterate writer of that name has been widely read and served as an inspiration to many. Chang Meng-liang's *Tale of Wind and Dust* is another popular autobiographical novel.

Ten years ago a new dawn broke over China when the labouring people became the masters of the land, and it followed that they had to have the position of masters in our literature too. Although a few labourers and peasants appeared in our May the Fourth literature, the role of most of them was that of the humiliated and exploited. China's indomitable industrious millions, who shaped our country's history and speeded up the revolution, held a subordinate place in our new literature, even in progressive literature. In the last decade this position has changed, however. More and more labouring people are appearing in our works, not merely as the main figures in our daily life and struggles but as the heroes or heroines of our books. And ideologically as well as artistically they far surpass the standard reached in most pre-liberation works. On this basis we are producing splendid new typical figures, of whom the most noteworthy is Chu Chung in *Keep the Red Flag Flying.*

Keep the Red Flag Flying is about the revolutionary struggle of peasants in North China from before the Revolution (1924-1927)

* The movement against corruption, waste and bureaucracy.

** The movement in 1952 against the bribery of government workers, tax evasion, theft of state property, cheating on government contracts and stealing economic information from government sources.

to the War of liberation. So far only the first part, totalling some three hundred thousand words, has been published. But in this first volume the author has created a typical figure of historic significance – the revolutionary peasant Chu Chung.

Chu Chung is important not merely because he stands for all poor peasants and hired hands, but because he is a revolutionary hero with marked national characteristics, belonging to one specific period in history. He has the courage of all the Chinese peasants who revolted through the centuries; his strong sense of justice makes him stand up for the weak; there is nothing servile or subservient about him; he goes boldly, fearlessly, selflessly ahead; he is also shrewd and far-sighted. In short, he is one of those heroes described by Lu Hsun as "the backbone of history." But in addition to inheriting the fine qualities of the labouring people down the ages and the splendid attributes of the heroes of old, he embodies the revolutionary spirit of the new age – the age of proletarian revolution. Starting out as one individual bent on revenge, he moves forward till he finds Party leadership and relies on the strength of the Party. Originally a rebel who dares to rage, curse and fight, he ends up by joining in an organized struggle for a definite goal. From a rugged individualist he grows into a steeled and tested Bolshevik. To cross the gulf between the old age and the new involves a long and exceedingly difficult process of change. Only in a great age like ours, an age of the firm leadership of the working class, could a peasant like Chu Chung take the correct road and advance from acts of individual heroism to participation in the revolution led by the working class. Chu Chung was infinitely more fortunate than his predecessors, for his struggle bore fruit and was bound to prove victorious, whereas his forbears – the thousands of peasant heroes in history including his father Chu Kung – could only sacrifice their lives and come to a tragic end.

The historical significance of a typical figure like Chu Chung is that he personifies the revolutionary spirit of those peasants who liberate themselves under Party leadership. It is no exaggeration to claim that Chu Chung stands for the heroes of our fathers' generation of working people.

Another striking achievement in recent Chinese novel writing is the development of a much greater variety in style. In the early years of the People's Republic of China few of our writers even attempted to use the novel form; but today after ten years we have a considerable number of novelists, including experienced authors and new writers who have grown up in the struggle, who have produced good works truthfully and profoundly reflecting the events and spirit of this age. Moreover, by dint of hard work, they are gradually developing distinctive styles. Thanks to the Party's policy: "Let a hundred flowers blossom, weed through the old to let the new emerge!" we now have considerable variety both in the subject matter and form of our novels. Chao Shu-li's distinctive style is clearly apparent from *Sanliwan Village* and his other works—it is a deep yet simple and humorous style reminiscent of the peasants of North China. Chou Li-po's style, as is evident from *Great Changes in the Mountain Village,* is as clear, pleasing and varied as the smiling villages of Central China. Liang Pin's rich forceful prose in *Keep the Red Flag Flying* is very different from the direct earnest style of Liu Ching, who also writes about the struggles of North China peasants. Both Ai Wu and Tu Peng-cheng take socialist construction as their theme, but we can distinguish their work at a glance. Ai Wu's subtle, highly polished and moving prose reminds us of a painting with delicate brushwork, while the powerful blacks and whites of Tu Peng-cheng's style are more reminiscent of woodcuts. Liu Pai-yu's prose is as magniloquent as a stirring battle song, while Sun Li's is delicate, natural and lyrical. An author's style is determined by his experience of life, the materials he uses, his outlook, feelings and artistic sense. It also depends on his skill in the use of language and artistic techniques, his ability to endow these with distinctively national qualities and forms. Our novels display many different artistic techniques, a variety of atmosphere and richly individual styles. Indeed, not a few of our novelists, thanks to long practice and experimentation, are beginning to write works which both in form and content, in feeling and language, could be produced in no other country but China; and this national style is welcomed by our readers.

The most noteworthy author in this respect is Chao Shu-li. His mastery of the Chinese language and the traditional techniques

of story-telling are not his only claim to distinction, however. *Sanliwan Village* and all his works are radiant with simplicity and humour—this comes out not only in the language but in the perfect unity he has achieved between form and content. His richly distinctive style is thoroughly Chinese. Chou Li-po's colourful and succinct prose is completely different, but equally expressive and exuberant. His language may be less intimate than that of *Sanliwan Village,* but it is nevertheless clear and natural. Though it may not bear the same traces of careful polishing, it is highly evocative and rich in local colour.

Liang Pin is a new author, but by no means a beginner in the art of writing. *Keep the Red Flag Flying* was written after twenty years of painstaking preparatory work. Hence though this is his first novel, it has a mature and marked style of its own. In addition to successful characterization, *Keep the Red Flag Flying* is remarkable for the fresh, strongly national spirit which distinguishes it. One reason for this is the careful study the author has made of traditional literary craftsmanship. But though Liang Pin owes much to the classical Chinese novels and to *Outlaws of the Marshes* in particular, he is in no sense fettered by old conventions. He attempted, in his own words, to find a way of writing "more vigorous than in Western novels, yet rather neater than in most Chinese novels." Beyond doubt he has succeeded in adapting and integrating traditional Chinese methods with certain devices used in Western novels. His book is still unmistakably Chinese.

Indeed, there can hardly be a single Chinese novelist today who has not drawn inspiration from the best of our old literature and been helped by this to form his own individual style. In fact, although some of our novelists have not yet reached a very high standard ideologically or artistically, their willingness to learn from tradition and to experiment with Chinese forms has given them a grasp of language and a skill in handling details which enables them to write stirring works about our life today. We cannot say that Chu Po is yet a mature writer. Apart from his rich revolutionary experience which contributes much to the success of his novel, his strongly national style is also an important reason for his popularity.

The few examples mentioned give a very imperfect idea of the achievements of Chinese novelists in the last ten years. Naturally it is no easy matter to write books that will give a faithful, historically accurate, detailed yet comprehensive picture of the spirit of this age. We are living in a period of incomparable splendour, but one that is turbulent and swiftly changing. During the last thirty or forty years, under the leadership of the Party, we have travelled a road which it took other countries centuries to traverse; while in the last ten years we have raced through two stages of the revolution. The changes in our society are so speedy that the minds of our people are changing and developing with well-nigh inconceivable rapidity, daily becoming healthier and more advanced. This great land of ours, once so impoverished and backward, is being transformed from day to day — sometimes we ourselves can hardly keep track of the changes. Life is racing with Time, advancing with the speed of lightning or spring thunder. Hence our writers must have the ability to "catch the fleeting image," to embody in our literature all the breath-taking victories in construction, all the earth-shaking struggles, all the magnificent pageantry of life, all the splendid, unconquerable men and women of our time.

We can assert with confidence that during the last ten years we have had not a few writers who have proved worthy of their noble calling. In addition to using reportage and essays, stories, lyrical poems and other short forms, they have also made use of the broader scope of the novel and with a socialist revolutionary spirit, with splendidly brilliant colours and a rich variety of styles have produced for us a great pageant of the spirit of New China.

Planting Rice by Yuan Yun-fu→

Yuan Yun-fu is a young artist on the teaching staff of the Central Institute of Applied Arts. *Planting Rice* is a mosaic he designed in 1958 during his trip to visit the Yao minority people in Yaoshan.

LIANG SZU-CHENG

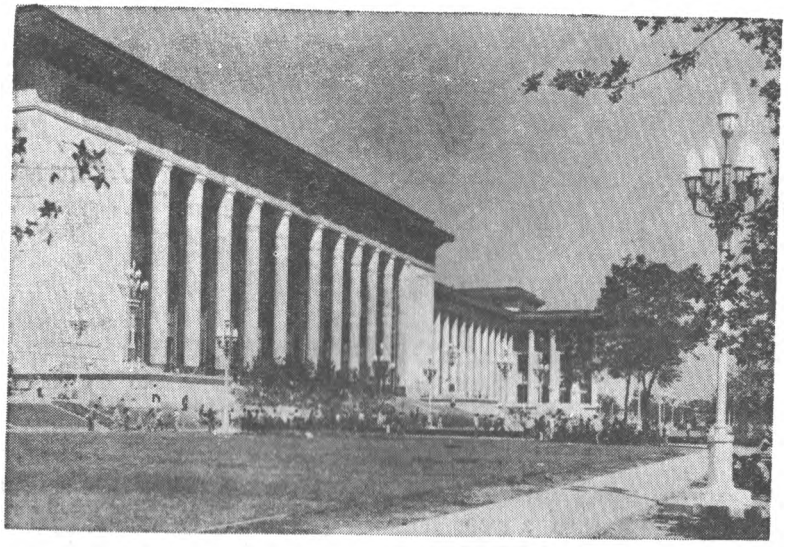
The Great Hall of the People in Peking

Anyone who visited Tien An Men Square in Peking in October 1958 and returned a year later in October 1959 would find it difficult to believe his eyes. He might well think he had come to the wrong place. Within the brief space of a year the world-famous Tien An Men Square* was miraculously transformed.

Whenever I pass there now I remember what happened not so very long ago. One early September morning in 1958 I came back with some other architects from a trip abroad. As soon as our plane came down on the airfield we were told that more than a thousand architects, engineers and other Peking workers had assembled to hear the new task assigned to them by the mayor of Peking. Within a year a number of monumental new buildings were to be erected to welcome the tenth anniversary of our Republic on Oct. 1, 1959. I can still recall the excitement and trepidation I felt at the prospect of this arduous yet glorious task. A few days later all the best-known architects in China had gathered in Peking. Hundreds of students and professors from the departments of architecture of different universities also took part in drawing up schemes, and so the work began.

Incredible as it may seem, in less than a year all these buildings were completed. On two sides of the new Tien An Men Square stand two gigantic buildings: the Museum of the Chinese

* See *Tien An Men Square* by the same author in *Chinese Literature* No. 2, 1960.



The Great Hall of the People

Revolution and the Museum of Chinese History face China's monumental building — the Great Hall of the People.

Several months have passed since this hall was completed, and during these several months whenever I entered this magnificent hall I asked myself: Is this the building we started to design last September? Then I smiled at my own folly, for there it stood before our eyes, magnificent and solid. I was taking part in meetings and social activities in this hall.

The fact is, this is a colossal building. Its main section is a vast meeting hall with over ten thousand seats; its left wing holds a banquet hall which can seat five thousand, while the right wing houses the offices of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress. Linking these three main sections there are of course many lobbies, galleries and corridors, stairways, lounges and service rooms. The usable floor area of this building is 172,000 square metres, 20,000 square metres more than the total area of all the rooms in the famous imperial palace built up in the course of five centuries; yet the construction, from designing to completion, took only one year.

This magnificent building has completely changed the appearance of Tien An Men Square, and since this Square is the centre of Peking, our whole capital has been transformed. Gigantic in size, it is splendidly proportioned. Its facade is over 300 metres long and more than 30 metres high, and it stands 500 metres away from the Museum of the Chinese Revolution and the Museum of Chinese History opposite. The predominant colour of the buildings is light buff and the eaves spread like an imperial crown embroidered with the traditional glazed tiles which our people love. The main entrances of both buildings are emphasized by marble porches and columns. Though the two buildings form a pair, each has its individual character. The museums may be more elegant and more beautiful in the traditional manner, but the Great Hall of the People is modest yet imposing and powerful, with a creativeness that marks a further development in Chinese architecture.

Its most outstanding feature seen from outside is the rows of columns. Colonnades are a traditional feature of Chinese architecture and arrayed in the old days on both sides of Tien An Men Square; thus in using them on the facade of the hall we are carrying forward a distinctive tradition of Chinese architecture and of the Square itself. We did not let ourselves be limited by the old form, however. Our new colonnade has a less cloistered look than the old, but is fresher and gayer in appearance.

The columns at the main entrances of both the middle section and the wings are made of pale grey marble with dark red bases and cream capitals carved with Chinese designs — another traditional device. Hung from the middle of the frieze under the eaves of the porches facing east is the national emblem of the People's Republic of China. Gleaming with gold, this adds emphasis to the entrance, investing it with greater dignity.

Into this solemn atmosphere a note of gaiety is introduced by the lamps in magnolia patterns around the terraces which set off all sides of the building.

Walking up the steps towards the main entrance on the east, we pass through two huge vestibules to enter the lobby of the meeting hall. As a matter of fact, terms like "lobby" or "vestibule," appropriate in connection with smaller buildings, cannot

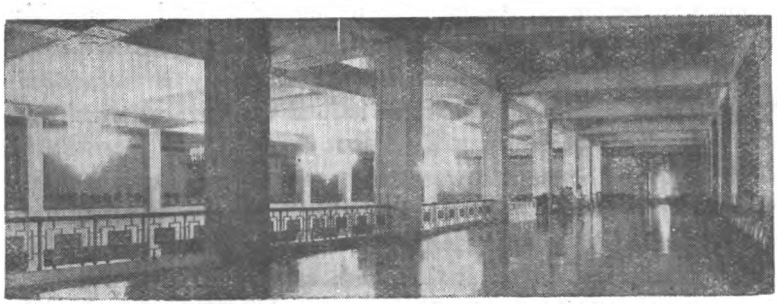
convey the correct impression here, for each is a fairly large hall in itself. The lobby provides space for moving about before entering the hall and serves as a centre of communication between the three parts of the building. It is a large two-storeyed room with galleries all around; the twenty columns and the spandrel of the balustrade are of white marble while the capitals of the columns and both ends of the beams of the caisson ceiling have golden bands in the traditional Chinese style. The wainscoting is of dark red marble, the floor of marble in dark and light red laid into simple geometrical patterns.

The lobby leads to the meeting hall of the People's Congress which has two galleries with 9,770 seats; and it can if necessary hold 14,000 people. The 3,674 seats on the ground floor are provided with desks and earphones which enable one to listen to twelve different languages. The seating accommodation is spacious and comfortable. The large presidium facing the auditorium can hold more than three hundred people.

This is a remarkable hall, if not a unique one. In addition to incorporating a series of highly complex devices for acoustics, illumination, ventilation, heating, broadcasting, photography, television and so forth, we had to consider it as an artistic whole and avoid appearing too low and oppressive or too empty. The presidium must not remind people of a theatre, but when necessary it must be possible to convert it into a stage.

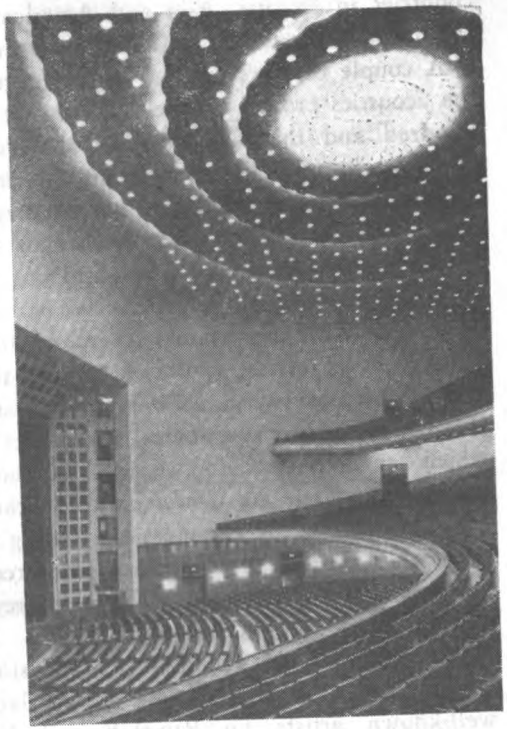
In order to solve the first problem, the architects made the walls and the ceiling the same colour — a pale blue — to form a united whole. After careful study of the proportions of the hall,

The Galleries of the Lobby



they made the ceiling dome-shaped with no distinct demarcation line between it and the walls. Subtle lighting effects in the ceiling give the hall freshness and distinction.

The second problem was solved by utilizing the great dimensions of the hall and the comparatively low height of the presidium determined by the human height, so that the presidium does not appear much higher proportionately than the seats. No traditional proscenium divides the presidium from the auditorium, but lozenge-shaped designs lead the wall and ceiling of the auditorium in to the presidium, linking both in one harmonious whole.



The Meeting Hall

At the meeting to celebrate the tenth anniversary of our Republic, the ground floor and the two galleries seated ten thousand delegates from all parts of China and guests from different countries, while the presidium was occupied by more than three hundred people including leaders of the Chinese Communist Party and government, as well as Party leaders from different countries and heads of delegations from friendly states. I saw then that our design was satisfactory; for the vast audience made the hall appear larger than ever, and there was none of the sense of oppressiveness which we had feared. The whole made one pleasing entity. As an architect, I have visited several dozen

countries in Europe, Asia and America, but I must admit that this is the largest meeting hall I have ever seen.

A couple of days later a big performance was held here and the acoustics proved excellent. On that occasion more than two hundred and thirty generals of the People's Liberation Army sang a chorus. These veterans of many battles, who had achieved immortal deeds for our country, were an unforgettable sight in their splendid uniforms as they sang with feeling of our motherland, our people's army and our great Communist Party. We architects counted it a great honour to have created this hall to provide an appropriate background for their singing.

Now let us look at another section of the building, the banquet hall in the left wing. We go in through the north entrance, through two more vestibules, and enter a huge square lounge which can accommodate two or three thousand in comfort. On the right and left are cloakrooms. In the middle of this lounge are four red marble columns; the ceiling is divided into squares with white designs in relief on a pale green background, creating an effect of cool elegance. The pale greyish green marble floor has dark red and reddish borders.

At the end of this lounge is a grand stairway of white marble. At the head of the stairs hangs a great landscape painting by the well-known artists Fu Pao-shih and Kuan Shan-yueh. This painting in the traditional style conveys the magnificent spirit of Chairman Mao's poem *Snow** and is inscribed by Chairman Mao himself with the words: "Such great beauty like this in all our landscape."**

The vast banquet hall upstairs can hold five thousand guests. On three sides are rows of columns with galleries above. The beauty of this spacious hall is achieved mainly by these columns and the lamps and decorations on the ceiling. The columns are pale yellow with gold linear designs in relief; the ceiling is pale blue with lamps set inside it in the form of cherry blossom — yellow, pale green, white and gold. The whole effect is fresh, splendid and gay.

On the eve of the tenth anniversary of our Republic last year, Chairman Mao and other leaders of the Party and the govern-

* For a translation of this poem, see *Chinese Literature* No. 3, 1958.

** A reproduction of this painting appeared in *Chinese Literature* No. 2, 1960.

ment held a great banquet here which was attended by honoured guests from all parts of China and the world. Under the gay lamplight thousands of people were sitting at round tables, and there was laughter and animated talk; it seemed that here all the people of the world were united. When Chairman Mao Tse-tung, Comrade Khrushchov and others appeared at the entrance to the hall the orchestra struck up the familiar strains of *The East Is Red,* and thunderous applause broke out as thousands stood up like one man and all eyes turned towards them. As I gazed around this building which served as the background for this historic banquet, my heart leaped within me; for the architecture of the hall supplied an appropriately festive setting.

Each of the various sitting-rooms and lounges of the hall has its distinctive style, for the interior decorations were designed by different provinces and municipalities. For example, since the province of Chekiang is famous for its bamboo wares, the Chekiang Lounge makes the most of this local product; all the furniture is made of bamboo, while even the paintings on the wall and on the screens are woven out of fine slivers of bamboo. The Kansu Lounge, naturally enough, has copies of the Tunhuang frescoes on its walls. The Hunan Lounge makes full use of the docorative effect of the famous Hunan embroidery. The well-known lacquerware of Fukien shows the special feature of that province. . . . In fact these lounges arranged by different provinces are "show-windows" for their industrial art, painting and sculpture.

The tremendous scale of the celebrations during the tenth anniversary put this hall to a severe test. Now we can look back with pride to the time a year ago when we began to design and build this hall, and speaking for myself I feel sheer amazement. But on second thought I realize that this is no isolated, accidental phenomenon. It simply means that in the all-round great leap forward of the whole people we in the field of architecture are making a great leap too. Chinese architects under the leadership of the Party have won a great victory by carrying out the mass line.

In designing these monumental buildings, we adopted a method which as far as I know has never been used before. We held a competition. Various schemes were put forward, but instead of simply choosing one of these we analysed their merits and com-

pared them in order to assimilate and amalgamate the good points of each. Then a few days later the competitors produced new revised schemes. Finally the architects produced together a scheme with the most merits and the fewest defects, and this was tentatively decided upon. During each study of plans, architects, structural engineers, mechanical, electrical and sanitary engineers, as well as the administrative staff, the supply department, painters, sculptors, decorators, horticulturists and landscape designers all took part in the discussion. Thanks to such a collective effort, in little more than a month the actual building had begun.

I shall never forget the fact that during the building, whether by day or by night, there were constantly thirteen to fourteen thousand workers on this construction site of less than half a square kilometre. These were professional builders, volunteer workers, peasants, students, government office personnel and soldiers. Throughout the year these men and women worked with self-imposed discipline in perfect co-ordination, like thousands of musicians performing a glorious symphony under one conductor.

On this work site many heroes of labour emerged. Chang Pai-fa's team of ten steel reinforcement workers was given ten days for a task which normally takes half a year. The ten of them relied on the masses and mobilized about two hundred volunteers who had never done this work before, who were divided into groups to learn as they worked under the guidance of the ten professionals. The whole job was satisfactorily completed in nine days. Similarly the interior decoration and installation of appliances, from the installation of the interior facing materials, painting and whitewashing of the ceiling and walls to the flooring, wiring of various sorts, installation of fixtures and other appliances, including all kinds of mechanical equipment and furniture, were done by teams working on eight different levels simultaneously. In my thirty years of experience as an architect, I have never seen anything comparable to this. With so many workers one might expect great confusion, but actually each man was at his own post and all was done in a smooth and orderly fashion. This was owing to the workers' sense of responsibility and discipline and to the fact that they had a strong organizer and leader in the Communist Party. The Party gave each one a clear goal and encouraged him to devote his strength and skill at his own post

to this enterprise of socialist construction. No one worried about personal rewards, losses or gains; different departments helped each other and co-ordinated closely, displaying the true spirit of communism.

In the *Book of Songs* there is a song describing how Emperor Wen of Chou constructed a tower.

> They started building the tower,
> Constructing and building it;
> The people worked at it,
> It was ready in no time;
> Building must not be hastily done,
> But men flocked there as if they were the king's own sons.

If that poet of three thousand years ago had visited our work site, I fancy he would have sung a new and better song with our poets today. Our people at present are literally "flocking like sons," for China's millions are building up their socialist home land under the leadership of the great Communist Party of China, which is a father to them all.

CHA FU-HSI

The Chinese Lute

The *chin* or Chinese lute is one of the oldest stringed instruments in China. Twenty-five centuries ago it was used by the nobility in sacrifices and other ceremonies as well as to cultivate virtue. It was not so much music for enjoyment as a part of the self-cultivation and moral training of the upper class. Confucius, speaking of the self-cultivation of the superior man, said he should first study the *Book of Songs,* then the *Book of Rites* and attain accomplishment through music. Such was always the view of the old Chinese literati. Thus the Sung dynasty writer Ouyang Hsiu said: "Though we strum the *chin* with our fingers it is the mind that directs the sound, and we hear the *chin* not with our ears but our hearts." In other words, the lute-player should be pure of heart and his hearers should appreciate the moral message. This is an indication of the importance attached to the *chin* by scholars of past ages.

During the period of the Warring States (403 B.C. — 221 B.C.) the *chin* began to be more widely played, turned into music for enjoyment and developed further, becoming one of the most important forms of music in ancient China. Before it won this popularity the *chin* was commonly played in rituals with another stringed instrument, the *se,* and these performances were known as "hall music." After the fifth century B.C. such ritual music

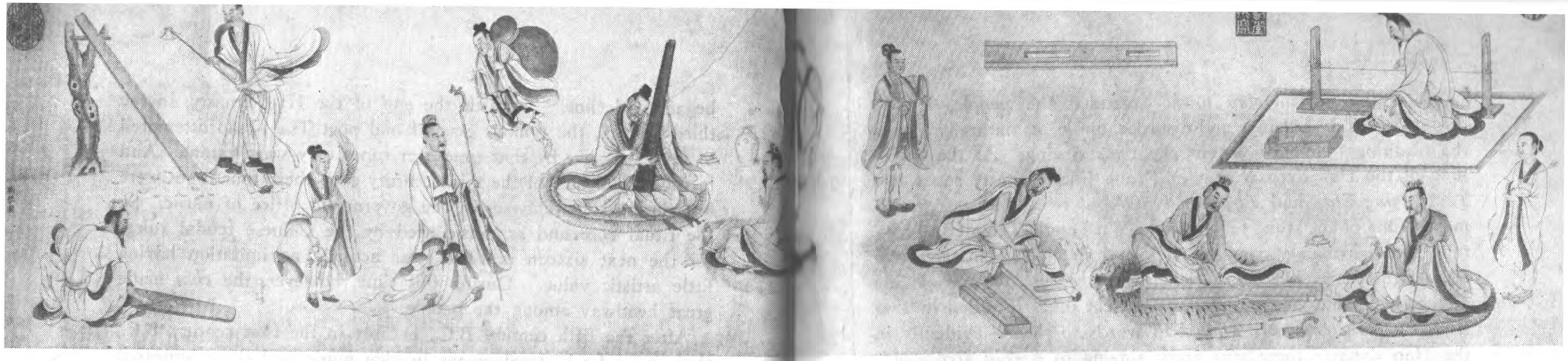
* Cha Fu-hsi, an expert *chin* player, is president of the Association of *Chin* Artists.

began to decline. Towards the end of the Han dynasty, in the third century, the famous general and poet Tsao Tsao attempted to revive it; but by that time four tunes only were extant. And in the second half of the third century even these four tunes were lost during some changes in the government office of music. So the ritual *chin* and *se* music used by the Chinese feudal rulers for the next sixteen centuries was actually an imitation having little artistic value. During this time, however, the *chin* made great headway among the people.

After the fifth century B.C., notably in the first century B.C., there were fresh development in *chin* music and there appeared such famous lute-players as Shih Chung, Chao Ting and Lung Teh, all of whom performed in the imperial court. These men were not only virtuosi on the *chin* but composers with a grasp of musical theory, who left certain written works. Although these have been lost, archaeological finds tell us certain things about the *chin* music of ancient times.

After this period the scholars became attached to the *chin* too; many of them learned to play it, studied the theory and wrote works on *chin* music, until gradually there grew up quite a body of writing on the art of playing the lute. These old scholars, in addition to making good instruments and composing music, paid considerable attention also to musical theory. A famous lute-player and writer towards the end of the Han dynasty, Tsai Yung (133-192), wrote *The Character of the Chin,* elucidating various traditional tunes. In the third century another well-known scholar, Chi Kang (223-262), wrote a poem which contributed to the appreciaton of the *chin.* In the sixth century Chen Chung-ju and in the seventh Chao Ya-li and others created special musical notations for *chin* scores. In the ninth century Hsueh Yi-chien in his *Chin Technique* wrote on the aesthetics of this art. In the eleventh century Chu Chang-wen wrote a *History of Chin Music.*

All these early writings were recognized in the Ming and early Ching dynasty, from the fourteenth to seventeenth century after printing became widespread. There were also large editions of *chin* scores and works on *chin* music which embodied the results of centuries of study by earlier scholars and musicians. Down the centuries scholars and folk artists in collaboration laboured to



Making the *Chin* This is a copy made by a Ching dynasty painter in the 18th century of an earlier painting.

improve the instrument, to produce new compositions, scores and notations, and to raise the standard of performance and appreciation. Though certain pedants refused to include works on the *chin* in their bibliographies on the ground that such literature was heterogeneous and vulgar, there was a scientific body of writing on *chin* music by the seventeenth century.

In every generation lute-players complained that few could appreciate their art, indicating that there were never too many expert exponents of the *chin* and that there were many different schools with different styles. Nevertheless for centuries the Chinese people have loved this music. Already 1,700 years ago the instrument had a fixed form. It is about 1.2 metres long, 0.17 metres wide at one end and 0.13 at the other, about 0.2 metres across at the broadest part — the shoulder — and between 0.03 and 0.07 metres thick. The sound box is convex above and flat below; the strings are stretched from the broad to the narrow end and attached to the pedals underneath. The most ancient *chin,* dating from before 1,700 years ago, were a little shorter and broader, like the stone *chin* in Chuke Liang's temple in Mienyang, Szechuan.

Considerable skill is required to make a *chin.* It was not usually made for sale, and few folk artists could fashion one. But men of the Han dynasty still possessed quite a few ancient lutes handed down from Chou dynasty nobles, and these were of such good quality that during the four hundred years of

the Han dynasty no new *chin* were made until Tsai Yung at the end of the dynasty revived the art. The great Tsin dynasty painter Ku Kai-chih depicted a man making a *chin,* while Hsieh Chuang in the fifth century and other Tang dynasty men of letters left sketches and notes on the construction of this instrument. During the Tang dynasty there were nine famous *chin* makers in the Lei family in Szechuan, while the Yangtse Valley had such famous craftsmen as Shen Liao and Chang Yueh. In the Sung dynasty large numbers of *chin* were made in official and private workshops. Chu Chih-yuan of the Yuan dynasty was a celebrated *chin* maker, as were Chu Kung-wang and Chang Chin-hsiu of the Ming dynasty. Many well-to-do lute-players followed the tradition of leaving good instruments for posterity, which accounts for the thousands of fine *chin* passed down from one hand to another through these centuries. So although the ancient *chin* was not manufactured as a commodity, the old instrument has come down to us through twenty centuries.

From archaeological evidence and nearly two hundred records concerning *chin* music, we can see that after the Han dynasty it was played among the people first as an accompaniment to singing, then in conjunction with the *hsiao* or flute and finally in solo performances. After the Sui and Tang dynasties solo performances on the *chin* became more popular. For two thousand years these were the only three forms of music in which the *chin* was used: no other combination has been successfully developed.

When the ancient *chin* music spread to the people, it was during a period of change and disorder, musicians naturally played the traditional tunes to accompany their singing. At the beginning of the Han dynasty they still sang Chou dynasty songs like *The Crying Stag* and *The Lonely Orchid* to a *chin* accompaniment. One of the stone reliefs of the Wu Family Temple in Shantung shows a man playing the *chin* and singing. Han terracotta tomb figures also include musicians playing the *chin* and singing at the same time, and most of the ancient tunes recorded in Tsai Yung's *Character of the Chin* had words to them — evidently in the Han dynasty there was much singing to a *chin* accompaniment. We have now collected *chin* songs totalling some four hundred thousand characters from old scores. This shows that for the last two thousand years the *chin* has served to accompany singing.

The sound volume of the ancient *chin* is not large. Since the *hsiao* is the only Chinese wind instrument with a comparable volume, it is easy to understand why the *hsiao* was used to accompany the *chin*. Han stone reliefs and terracotta figures show these two instruments being played together. Of course, both were used to accompany singing too. At the beginning of the nineteenth century when the traditional scores circulated widely, scores of *chin* and *hsiao* duets were published, having come down through the ages.

Solo pieces on the *chin,* however, form the most important part of ancient *chin* music. Since these melodies were more expressive, unrestricted by language or differences in local dialects, they spread very easily. Most of the most celebrated old *chin* tunes were performed as solos. The Chekiang school of lute-players in the Southern Sung dynasty and the Yushan school towards the end of the Ming dynasty both opposed using the *chin* as an accompaniment to singing, insisting that it was independent instrumental music. During the last three centuries the *chin* has been less and less used for an accompaniment to singing or for duets with the *hsiao*.

In the past two thousand years *chin* music has developed very slowly. The instrument was never produced in large quantities, the music was seldom performed by more than two or three musicians together. Though scores were written for nearly twenty

Pu Hsueh-chai, contemporary *chin* artist, giving a performance

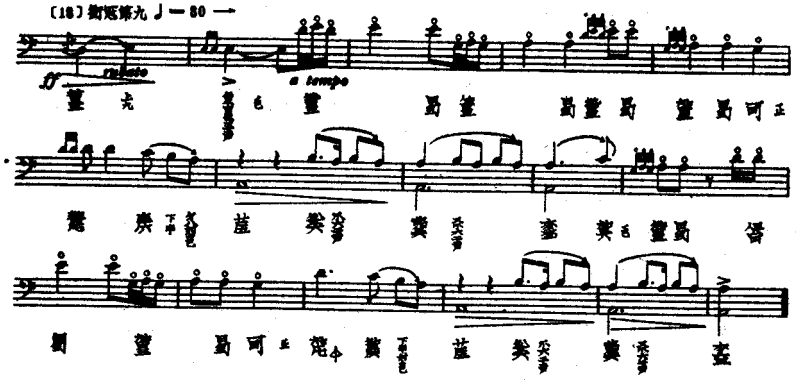
centuries, no single player could read those dating from more than three centuries before him, for the methods of notation and scoring kept changing. After the fall of the Ching dynasty in 1911, attempts were made to revive the ancient music, but those doing this fell into the mistake of trying to preserve the *chin* as an ancient relic. Hence this did not lead to any real revival. In fact, after the War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression many old lute-players died or gave up playing and most of the old *chin* clubs were disbanded. When the last maker of *chin* strings died the art appeared to be extinct.

After liberation, however, following economic rehabilitation, in 1953 the Communist Party and the government called a conference of artists and writers and put forward the appeal to let a hundred flowers bloom, to weed through the old and let the new emerge. This directive gave timely encouragement to art and literature, and brought about a revival of *chin* music too.

Amateur lute-players have been organized throughout the country to take part in performances and to teach pupils, while professional lute-players have joined the conservatories of music or research institutes. Many ancient tunes are now broadcast or

made into gramophone records. Today lute-players frequently perform in concerts to thousands of listeners and receive an enthusiastic response. Some of our new historical plays and ballets include *chin* performances; film orchestras sometimes also use the old *chin* music in historical films. The conservatories of music in Peking, Shanghai, Chengtu and Shenyang now offer special courses in the *chin;* the *chin* clubs and other musical organizations in different parts of the country are searching for lost tunes, composing new tunes and teaching people to play this traditional instrument.

The Institute for the Study of Chinese Music has collected a great many works and scores of *chin* music. In addition to 67 works and scores recorded within the last century, 70 unknown and hitherto unrecorded works have been discovered. Now we have about 3,300 scores of more than 560 compositions dating from after the Han dynasty, as well as directions for the fingering of more than 1,100 scores from the Southern and Northern Dynasties (A.D. 317-581) onwards. Researches carried out under the guidance of the Chinese Musicians' Union have enabled eight experts to reconstruct the ancient compositions *The Lonely Orchid* and *Kuanglin San* which have not been played for several cen-



The *Kuanglin San*, a tune popular 1,700 years ago

turies. All these old *chin* scores and directions for fingering have been embodied in two encyclopaedias of two million characters, which make it possible for us to rediscover and play again tunes forgotten since ancient times. In the past, lute-players without

access to such material found the scores more than three centuries old incomprehensible. Today they are exulting because under our socialist system we can collect and study materials from all over China to revive the fine old traditions of *chin* music.

Today in addition to solo *chin* recitals, not only have we revived *chin* and *hsiao* duets and *chin* accompaniments to singing, but there have also been fresh innovations. Many old music lovers in local groups and clubs are helping the daily increasing number of new amateur musicians to learn this ancient art and practising hard to improve their own playing. Some old compositions have been adapted for performance with other instruments in orchestral concerts. Three years ago the *chin* could be used in concerts only for three or four traditional tunes; now the standard of performance has been greatly raised and the repertoire extended. Today lute-players can give a recital of *chin* music lasting for two or three hours.

Thousands of old instruments are being collected by lute-players, organizations of musicians and museums. These old *chin* are refurbished with pegs and strings and used again: indeed a number of museums are even lending their *chin* for musicians to use. The Chinese Musical Instruments Factory in Soochow is now manufacturing *chin* on a large scale and they are selling in hundreds. The co-operative in Soochow which produces *chin* strings has taken on new apprentices. The reforms made in other traditional instruments have encouraged lute-players to experiment with the *chin.* Thus the Central Conservatory, the Institute of Musical Research, the Chinese Musical Instruments Factory in Soochow and other craftsmen have produced four types of improved *chin* with a larger sound volume which have been used in concerts. Experiments of this kind are still going on.

So within a few years of the establishment of the People's Republic of China, this traditional art with its history of more than two thousand years has been carried to a new stage. And this is just the beginning. Such a development is no accident. The old musicians can see clearly that only under the socialist system is it possible to have a genuine renaissance of the best traditional arts.

Chronicle

King Geser, a Tibetan Epic

Since the eleventh century the epic poem *King Geser* has been dear to the hearts of Tibetans in Chinghai, Tibet, Szechuan, Kansu and Yunnan. King Geser was a much admired hero who loved the people as a father. He braved all manner of difficulties and trials to conquer monsters for the people and achieved great feats. This magnificent poem is deservedly popular. The Folk Literature Research Group of the Chinghai Federation of Writers and Artists has collected more than twenty versions of the epic and is now revising and translating them. In the past year, many revised versions and translations of the epic have been published as reference material for research on this great work of the Tibetan people.

Korean Graphic Art Exhibition in Peking

Recently an exhibition of Korean graphic art opened in Peking with more than two hundred exhibits of traditional Korean paintings, oil paintings, sculptures, posters, cartoons, woodcuts and handicraft works. Most of the exhibits date from after the establishment of the Korean Democratic People's Republic. They are the achievements of Korean artists under the Korean Workers' Party's policy of "Art and literature must serve the people." A well-known Chinese painter, Chiang Chao-ho, commented that these works fully reflected the profound understanding of life on the part of the Korean artists and that the Chinese people were therefore able to appreciate and understand the meaning and skill of their works. He pointed out that some of the paintings of landscape, flowers, birds and human figures had much in common with Chinese paintings. The Korean artists with their long tradition of craftsmanship have not let themselves be limited by tradition but have gone forward on the basis of their past heritage.

First Ballet Company Set Up in China

The first ballet company in China — the Experimental Ballet Troupe of the Peking School of Dancing — was set up on December 30, 1959. The company is composed mainly of last summer's graduates with the addition of some young instructors and students. The Peking School of Dancing, founded five years ago, has now more than six hundred teachers and students. With the help of Soviet experts, it has successfully presented three ballets: *Swan Lake, The Corsair* and *Maid of the Sea* which is based on traditional Chinese folk dances.

Mongolian Graphic Art Exhibition in Peking

At the end of last year, the Mongolian Graphic Art Exhibition opened in the Peking Palace Museum with more than a hundred oil paintings, water colour paintings, posters, woodcuts and sculptures. The oil paintings, *Clouds, At the Foot of the Hill, Weaving Carpets,* and *Music Lesson* by Chultum, Chairman of the Union of Mongolian Artists, fully show the artist's love for his motherland and people. *Mother* by Damdensuren and *Folk Artist* by Yadamsuren make a successful use of traditional forms to present the Mongolian people, thereby developing and enriching their folk art. *Guerrilla* and *The Miner* by Oden are lively and vivid works. The eighteen sculptures exhibited also reveal outstanding skill. These various works of art met with a warm reception.

Writings of Peking Opera Actors

A number of books by well-known Peking opera exponents on the art of acting have been published recently. Mei Lan-fang's *Notes on Peking Opera* deals with the rules of acting based on the author's own rich experience; it also teaches young actors how to play different roles. Veteran dramatist Ouyang Yu-chien's book, *Since I Became an Actor,* presents reminiscences of his stage career, revealing his deep understanding of the singing, dialogue, acting, dancing and acrobatics of Peking opera. Chou Hsin-fang, founder of a school noted for its old men's roles, in his *Notes on Peking Opera* gives his personal experience of playing such roles. Kai Chiao-tien, the best exponent of warrior roles, has written *Paint and Powder* describing his earlier years on the stage and dealing in detail with

specific aesthetic problems. *Hsun Hui-sheng's Art of Acting*, written by this famous exponent of female roles, tells how the artist trained and acquired his skill. The author also gives detailed accounts of his performances in *The Beggar Chief's Daughter, The Red Maid, Third Sister Yu* and other operas. The late Cheng Yen-chiu has made an original contribution to the theatre in the *Writings of Cheng Yen-chiu*. The late Yen Chu-peng founded the Yen school, noted for old men's roles. *Yen Chu-peng's Art of Acting*, written by his sons and daughters and close friends, describes his life as an actor and the distinctive features of his art. These books have been eagerly read by Peking opera lovers.

Commemoration of Nikolai Vaptsarov

Peking literary circles gathered to honour the memory of the fiftieth anniversary of the birth of the Bulgarian revolutionary poet, Nikolai Vaptsarov, on December 7, 1959. The meeting was sponsored by the China-Bulgaria Friendship Association, the Union of Chinese Writers, and the Peking Library. Emi Siao, poet and council member of the Union of Chinese Writers, and Ko Pao-chuan, also council member of the Union, spoke on Nikolai Vaptsarov's life and poetry. The Bulgarian ambassador, Peter Panchevsky, also spoke at the meeting. Some of Vaptsarov's poems were recited and a film about his life was shown. An exhibition of pictures dealing with his life was held in the Peking Library.

Site of Han City Excavated

The site of an ancient city of the Han dynasty (206 B.C.-A.D. 220) has been discovered south of Chungan County in the province of Fukien. Digging has already begun there. The discovery of this site about 2,000 years old supplies important material for the study of the history and culture of China's east and south coasts. There are traces of city walls three to six metres high and eight to ten metres thick. A survey reveals that the city was an irregular oblong of 400,000 square metres, with two gates. In the 200 square metres of the first excavated area a number of bronze, iron and pottery utensils as well as large quantities of Han dynasty tiles have been unearthed.

Paintings by Workers, Peasants and Soldiers

The Shanghai People's Art Publishing House has collected a large number of remarkable works of art by the people of East China and has published four volumes by workers, peasants, soldiers and sailors. Each volume contains sixty to seventy paintings, all strongly realistic and some of them revealing interesting new techniques.

Thirtieth Anniversary of the Discovery of Peking Man

A special meeting to mark the thirtieth anniversary of the discovery of the Peking Man was held in Peking in December 1959. The meeting summed up our achievements in the field of palaeo-anthropology during the last five years and discussed further development in this field. The meeting was attended by 141 palaeontologists, geologists, anthropologists, archaeologists, museum workers and college teachers from sixteen provinces, municipalities and autonomous regions. Coching Chu, Vice-President of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, opened the meeting. Twenty-eight monographs were given during the session — six on human fossils and skeletons of primitive man, nine on palaeolithic archaeology, five on ape fossils, seven on palaeontology, and one on the Snow Man. The fact that most of the materials used were gained after the Big Leap of 1958 testifies to the great spur given to palaeo-anthropology by the rapid advances in socialist construction.

英文《中国文学》月刊 1960 年第 3 期
本刊代号 2—916