

CHINESE LITERATURE

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THREE POEMS

Mao Tsetung

A Poem

— to the tune of *Ho Hsin Lang*

We wave our hands in farewell.
Heart-rending, your sad face turned to me
As you recounted your sorrows.
Your eyes and brows bespoke your grief,
But you held back the hot brimming tears.
In our last letters were misunderstandings;
Now, clouds and mist swept away,
On earth we two alone know each other's heart.
What ails men —
Does Heaven know?

The road from the east gate is heavily frosted at dawn,
The waning moon low in the sky lights up the pool —
A scene of desolation.
A whistle sounds, my heart is broken,
Henceforth I shall fare alone to the earth's end.
We must cut through the tangled skein of anguish
As if cleaving a precipice in the Kunlun Mountains,
Or sweeping like a typhoon through the universe.
Flying again side by side,
We shall soar with the clouds.

1923

Mourning Comrade Lo Jung-huan

— a *lu-shih*

I recall that year when we sped over the grassland,
How seldom I came across you in the Red Army.
Those days of the Long March were not hard to endure;
But the battle for Chinchow posed us a grave problem.
We often hear sparrows mocking the giant bird,
Barn-door fowls laughing at the eagle.
Now that you, alas, have left the world of men,
Whom can we consult when the state has difficulties?

December 1963

Notes on the Three Poems

Li Shu-yi:

A Poem — to the tune of "Ho Hsin Lang"

Fifty-five years ago Chairman Mao wrote this poem for his beloved wife Yang Kai-hui which was published for the first time in September 1978. Reading it, I am deeply moved by his sincere feeling and his revolutionary aspirations. As a love poem written during his youth, it has a unique place among Chairman Mao's poems.

It was written in 1923, when the situation in China was critical. That spring the labour movement led by the Party had been savagely crushed by the northern warlords who were the stooges of foreign imperialists. Since the revolution was at a low ebb, Chairman Mao had to travel from place to place to organize revolutionary forces. In April he left Changsha for this purpose, returning briefly in autumn; but then he set off again on a long journey, leaving Kai-hui behind. This poem was his farewell to her.

Li Shu-yi was a close friend of Yang Kai-hui's.

The first lines describe his anguish at leaving the wife whom he loved so dearly, and Kai-hui's grief. During those hard years she had been his close comrade-in-arms, but now they had to part. She would be remaining behind in their home district with their baby son while her husband went away to face unknown dangers, so inevitably she was bitterly distressed. However, she was no ordinary woman but a great proletarian fighter educated by Chairman Mao. With the strength of character to stand this hard test she "held back the hot brimming tears".

In some previous letters Kai-hui may have written of her anxiety, longing for her husband, or certain misunderstandings which had arisen between them, for this would be only natural, especially when they were separated by their revolutionary work. However, Chairman Mao understood her so well that he wrote:

Now, clouds and mist swept away,
On earth we two alone know each other's heart.

Here he expressed his devotion to her which was her greatest comfort. Since the start of their joint work for the revolution Kai-hui was Chairman Mao's closest comrade, staunchly supporting him and devoting all her talents and energies unreservedly to the revolution, till finally she gave her own life for it. Her loving concern for her husband was very touching. Once, I remember, they were caught out in the rain, and before going to borrow an umbrella from a friend she took off her coat and draped it over his head to keep him from getting wet. . . . Another time, when I called on her, she insisted on taking him to a barber's shop as he had long been too busy to have his hair cut. Truly knowing his heart, she cared for him in every way she could.

What ails men —
Does Heaven know?

is a skilful transposition from the poet's personal feeling for Kai-hui to the need to transform society. He is demanding if Heaven knows what men suffered under the iniquitous rule of those days.

The second stanza reverts to the scene of departure: the time of day and the place. It was late autumn. In the frosty dawn

with the waning moon reflected in the pool outside the east gate, the poet set off on his journey through a scene of desolation.

A whistle sounds, my heart is broken,
Henceforth I shall fare alone to the earth's end.

Here the poet shows his deep love for his wife, but the task of transforming the country must come before personal considerations, and so he bids her farewell.

The last lines encourage Kai-hui to look ahead and express the poet's own aspirations. These magnificent lines, full of revolutionary heroism, voice Chairman Mao's determination to transform the world and his confidence that in the march to victory they will meet again and, flying side by side, soar with the clouds.

This is the earliest poem of Chairman Mao's which we possess today, and it has a special significance, expressing as it does his love for Kai-hui in the context of the revolution.

Judging by the mature and vigorous calligraphy of the manuscript copy of this poem which has been reproduced in facsimile, it must have been written in the sixties or even later. This is a point worth noting, because it shows that forty or fifty years later Chairman Mao copied out this poem in his old age to show his profound and lasting love for Kai-hui.

Ku Ling:

Mourning Comrade Lo Jung-huan — a "lu-shih"

On December 16, 1963, Lo Jung-huan, Director of the General Political Department of the Chinese People's Liberation Army, died. With profound grief Chairman Mao wrote this poem to commemorate this brilliant commander.

The opening lines take us to the war years in the old revolutionary base, the Ching kang Mountains, which had stood firm

against repeated attacks by Chiang Kai-shek's troops and beaten back a series of "encirclement" campaigns, until the Red Army set off on the Long March and crossed snowy mountains and marshy grassland. Thus the first three lines sum up Lo Jung-huan's early fighting record and his contributions to the revolution.

On September 9, 1927, Chairman Mao went to Hunan to organize the Autumn Uprising, and raised troops in the border region of the three provinces of Hunan, Hupeh and Kiangsi. Lo Jung-huan joined his troops and followed Chairman Mao to the Ching kang Mountains, the first revolutionary base. The region was well forested and overgrown with grass. Here the Red Army men wearing straw sandals waged guerrilla warfare against the Kuomintang enemy; hence the reference to speeding over the grassland.

Although in the Red Army Lo Jung-huan was under the direct command of Chairman Mao, in those days of arduous fighting they did not often meet, and so Chairman Mao expressed regret that he had seldom seen Lo Jung-huan at that time.

Between 1931 and 1934 Wang Ming was in control of the Party. Chairman Mao was no longer in a leading position, and Lo Jung-huan who persisted in carrying out his revolutionary line was also in disgrace. Because of Wang Ming's opportunist line, the Red Army failed to defeat Chiang Kai-shek's fifth "encirclement" campaign and had to leave the revolutionary base and set off on the Long March. The Tsunyi Conference in January 1935 established a new Party leadership, headed by Chairman Mao, which saved the Red Army and the Party. Chairman Mao also reinstated Lo Jung-huan, so that he could shoulder heavy tasks again for the revolution.

In 1948, the third year of the War of Liberation, Chiang Kai-shek's armies suffered repeated defeats and began to panic. It was imperative for our People's Liberation Army to press the enemy hard, giving them no chance to rally their strength. Chairman Mao determined to launch a series of decisive campaigns. The outcome of the war depended at that time on the northeast front, where Chinchow was the key to victory. Chairman Mao in his telegrams pointed out that attention must be centred on the

operations in Chinchow in order to capture this city as quickly as possible, leaving the enemy forces at Changchun and Shenyang alone. Lin Piao, then the commander of our forces in the north-east, opposed Chairman Mao's plan and the orders from the Central Committee. He insisted on attacking Changchun and delayed deploying troops round Chinchow. Lo Jung-huan, his political commissar, resolutely acted on the orders of Chairman Mao and the Central Committee in spite of Lin Piao's opposition, though the latter derided and attacked him for this. By carrying out Chairman Mao's plan, our forces succeeded in wiping out 470,000 enemy troops and won a decisive victory on the northeast front. The People's Liberation Army then pressed on irresistibly to liberate the whole mainland; so the capture of Chinchow was of the utmost importance.

In the next two lines Chairman Mao used two classical allusions. The first, "sparrows mocking the giant bird", was based on a fable in *Chuang Tzu*; the second, "barn-door fowls laughing at the eagle", came from a Russian fable quoted by Lenin. Barn-door fowls may laugh at the eagle, but Marxists and revolutionaries always fly high while revisionists, careerists and conspirators are no better than fowls pecking at garbage in the backyard.

The last two lines pay a high tribute to Chairman Mao's old comrade-in-arms and also express his hopes of other veteran revolutionaries.

Chang Chien-yeh:

Reading History — to the tune of "Ho Hsin Lang"

The first half of this poem is a summary of the history of mankind. As we know, men evolved from apes, and during this evolution labour was the decisive factor in developing their

brains. In primitive society, stone implements were used. During the paleolithic and neolithic periods stone implements were gradually improved, and stone axes, spades and sickles appeared so that production reached a higher level. This was the period of men's infancy. Then primitive society developed into slave society and bronze and iron were smelted. The bronze age in China started about four thousand years ago, while about two thousand years later iron implements took the place of bronze and production attained new heights. After the emergence of class society and private ownership, men waged endless class struggles. The incessant wars throughout history included unjust wars between different ruling factions contending for power, and even more just wars in which the oppressed classes rose against their oppressors. Such revolutionary wars propelled history forward.

The second half of the poem is in praise of the uprisings of slaves and peasants in Chinese history, projecting the Marxist view that the common people are the true moving force that makes history.

Reading over a chapter, one's hair turns white,
Only a few fragments here and there remembered,
Some traces of the past.
Legends deifying the Five Sovereigns and Three Emperors
Have cheated countless wayfarers through history.

The ruling classes always claimed that history was made by a few emperors and heroes, and the historians of the exploiting classes eulogized such characters; but in Chairman Mao's eyes these legendary rulers were not the real creators of history.

The real heroes in Chinese history were the leaders of slave and peasant revolts. Tradition has it that Brigand Chih led a slave revolt in the State of Lu at the end of the Spring-and-Autumn Period (770-476 BC), and Clubfoot Chuang headed a slave revolt in the State of Chu in the Warring States Period (475-221 BC). Later on, in the autumn of 209 BC, Chen Sheh and Wu Kuang started a well-known peasant uprising and founded a kingdom called Chu Resurgent — the first political power set up by peasant insurgents in China. Although this uprising was crushed, the

heavy blow it dealt at the Chin empire prepared the way for the dynasty's overthrow. So the poet wrote in praise of men such as these whose revolutionary struggles continued for thousands of years like a never-ending song, until finally with the establishment of the Chinese People's Republic and socialism the people became the true masters of the country. The people's victory today is the continuation of these thousands of years of struggle, and it was won after arduous struggles by the working class and the masses under the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party. Now it is evident that the people are the true masters of history.

Chairman Mao Tsetung (oil painting)
by *Chin Shang-yi*



Liu Hsin-wu

The Class Teacher

How would you like to meet a young hooligan and spend every day with him? I'm sure you wouldn't like it. You'd probably find the question outrageous.

But Chang Chun-shih, the teacher of a junior grade three class, didn't find it so odd when Old Tsao said this to him. Perhaps Tsao didn't put it quite so bluntly, and of course he did it in a confidential way. Thin and wizened, Old Tsao was the Party Secretary of Kuangming Middle School. In the Party branch office where they talked, Chang thought seriously for a moment before answering curtly: "All right. I'll meet him..."

A few days earlier, Sung Pao-chi, a juvenile delinquent, had been released from detention. He had been arrested as a member of a gang of hooligans, but during questioning he had made a clean breast of his offences and informed about the crimes committed by the leader of the gang. His parents, too ashamed to remain in their neighbourhood, had moved and applied to have him transferred to Kuangming Middle School, which was near their new home. Sung was of the age to join junior grade three, and Chang's class fortunately had a vacant place. Chang was an ex-

perienced teacher and a Party member, so the Party branch committee agreed to accept the boy. Old Tsao asked Chang what he thought of the situation: "What do you say? Will you accept Sung Pao-chi?"

Chang's thoughtful eyes met Tsao's hopeful and encouraging glance. He agreed.

*

2

What was this Chang like? Let's have a closer look at him as he cycles towards the Public Security Bureau in the dusty spring wind to find out more about his new pupil.

Thirty-six years old, Chang was of medium height and slightly overweight. His clothes were old, but clean and tidy, every button done up. Friendly, lively and an animated talker, he tried to instil in his students revolutionary ideas and knowledge, while weeding out their muddled and wrong thoughts. Chang pedalled his bike calmly. When he reached the bureau and heard the details about young Sung's case, he had been filled with strong emotions, rather hard to identify, but bordering on indignation, disgust and scorn. These had later given way to determination, worry and a heavy feeling of responsibility.

It was three o'clock in the afternoon before Chang returned to school. Wiping the sweat from his brow with a neatly folded handkerchief, he walked into the teachers' staffroom. Everyone knew that young Sung was to join Chang's class the next day. Yin Ta-lei, the maths teacher, confronted Chang immediately. That was the first ripple that young Sung's coming caused in the school.

3

Yin and Chang were the same age and had graduated from the same teachers' training college. Together they had joined the staff of Kuangming Middle School. They had often taught the

same classes and were very good friends. If they had an argument they spoke out without any reservations.

In that spring of 1977, Yin had great hopes for the future of education in the country, in his work and classes. The "gang of four" had been overthrown in the previous October, and education was moving ahead rapidly. It was just what he had longed for as a teacher.

But the imminent arrival of Sung Pao-chi had infuriated him. Immediately he saw Chang he attacked him. "Why the hell did you agree to admit that little thug?" he blasted forth. "You know damn well all our grade three classes are trying to improve their work and study harder. If we teachers have to cope with that little hooligan as well, we'll have our hands full just keeping an eye on him. How can we pay attention to improving our teaching methods as well? A rotten apple spoils the barrel, as the saying goes. Why didn't you consider this before you agreed to take him? Really, I can't fathom you!"

Some of the other teachers agreed with Yin, though not with his harsh words. Others felt he meant well but disagreed with him. A few hadn't formed any opinions on the subject and merely pitied Chang for his extra burden. All stared at him silently. Even a model of an ear used in the biology classes, which was on top of a bookshelf, seemed to be waiting expectantly for Chang's reply.

There was some truth in what Yin was saying, but he had taken it to extremes. Chang thought before answering: "Well, we can hardly send him back into detention or to his former school. I'm his class teacher, so it's my responsibility to help him. . . ."

His few quiet words struck Yin as just, and the other teachers were moved too. They wondered how they would have behaved if young Sung was joining their classes.

Chang started his work at once when Hsieh Hui-min, the young secretary of his class' Youth League branch, came to see him.

Hsieh Hui-min was taller than the boys in her class, and carried herself very erect. She had a healthy athletic look, and one basketball coach thought he saw the makings of a promising player in her. Imagine his disappointment when this big-eyed, oval-faced girl jumped too low and kept her wrists as stiff as boards when she tried shooting. She had no interest in such games whatsoever.

She had little interest in any kind of recreation except going to the pictures or singing some songs she had learnt from the radio. Her studies were mediocre and sometimes she didn't finish her homework, but this was excused since she had to engage in many social activities for her Youth League work.

When Chang had become their class teacher, Hsieh was already the secretary of the Youth League branch. Soon after that they went to the countryside to do some agricultural work with the peasants. On their way back home, Hsieh had noticed a boy waving an ear of wheat in his hand. Angrily she had demanded: "Why did you take the peasants' wheat? Give it to me. I'm going to give it back to them." The boy had argued, however: "I want to show my parents how well the wheat is growing." Most of the students thought that Hsieh was making a mountain out of a molehill. So Chang had the last word. Holding the wheat in her hand, Hsieh looked at Chang, her lips parted expectantly.

To everyone's surprise, Chang supported Hsieh. Heated arguments and whispered conversations buzzed around as Chang watched Hsieh race back along the muddy dirt track to the village. Chang was strangely moved. Perhaps Hsieh could have handled the situation differently, but she had had only three months' experience in the Youth League and her determination not to suffer the peasants to lose a single ear of wheat showed the pure and fine feelings in her young heart.

But the sinister influence of the "gang of four", which so oppressed and damaged our country, also affected the everyday life of our teachers and students. The municipal Youth League, which

was controlled by the "gang of four" had sent liaison men to Kuangming Middle School to set an "example". Hsieh, naive and honest, was often summoned to talks. While failing to see their motives, since it was not her habit to speculate about politics, she found that some kind of unexplained contradiction arose between her and her teacher.

For instance, when Hsieh had reported that two of the five members were inattentive at Youth League meetings, Chang, instead of criticizing them, suggested: "Perhaps it's because you always read newspapers. Why not do something different for a change? Have a hill-climbing contest?" Hsieh stared at him. She could hardly believe her ears. "A hill-climbing contest!" she protested. "No, that won't do for a League meeting."

Another time, in between classes, all the girls went over to the window to get cool in the suffocating heat. Chang called Hsieh over. Looking her up and down, he said: "Why are you wearing a long-sleeved blouse in this hot weather? You should wear short sleeves and set the others an example. Anyway, you girls should wear skirts." Hsieh blushed with annoyance though she felt very hot in her long sleeves. What was he talking about? There was only one girl who wore a pretty blouse and skirt, and that was Shih Hung, the Youth League committee member in charge of propaganda. Hsieh secretly thought this meant she had "bourgeois" ideas.

With the fall of the "gang of four", some of the differences between her and Chang were bridged, though not completely.

Hsieh now said to Chang: "We hear that Sung is going to join our class. The boys say he is a hooligan. Some of the girls are scared and say they won't attend school when he comes."

Chang was stunned. He hadn't expected this. The Youth League committee must help. "Are you scared?" he asked. "What do you think we should do?"

Shaking her two short plaits, Hsieh replied: "Of course I'm not afraid of him. It's a question of class struggle. If he tries to bully us, we'll fight against him."

Chang was stirred and recalled Hsieh running along the dirt track with the ear of wheat. In a warmer tone he asked her to call a meeting of the Youth League branch and the class monitors.

5

The meeting ended at twenty minutes past four. Chang, Hsieh and Shih Hung remained behind.

Shih sat facing the window. The afternoon sun shone on her round cheeks. Her full chin rested on her hand as she slowly gazed around, trying to work out the lines of a poem she was writing to stick up on a wall-newspaper the next morning. Chang and Hsieh talked. Preparations for young Sung's arrival were under way. The boy League members had the job of explaining to all the other boys that Sung had done wrong and so needed a lot of help. Instead of isolating him, they should all do their best to help him. The girls were sent to the homes of those girls who were refusing to attend school either out of fear or disgust. They promised them and their parents that Sung would not be allowed to bully them, and tried to persuade them that to avoid him would only make him worse. They should attempt to transform him into a useful member of the society.

Chang would later visit Sung and talk to him and his parents. Shih Hung, in her poem, was encouraging her classmates to help China advance under the guiding principle of order and discipline.

Chang and Hsieh had ended their discussion as Shih Hung was touching up her poem. Chang had brought back some objects from the Public Security Bureau to show to the League members. They had been found after Sung had been arrested. There was a long bicycle chain which he used as a weapon in fights, a pack of worn playing cards, a metal cigarette case with a lighter attached and a coverless novel. Hsieh proposed: "Tomorrow we'll call a meeting of the Youth League members and activists among the classmates and show them these things and criticize them." Shih supported the idea. Chang also agreed saying:

"O.K. We'll use this opportunity to educate the students against corruption."

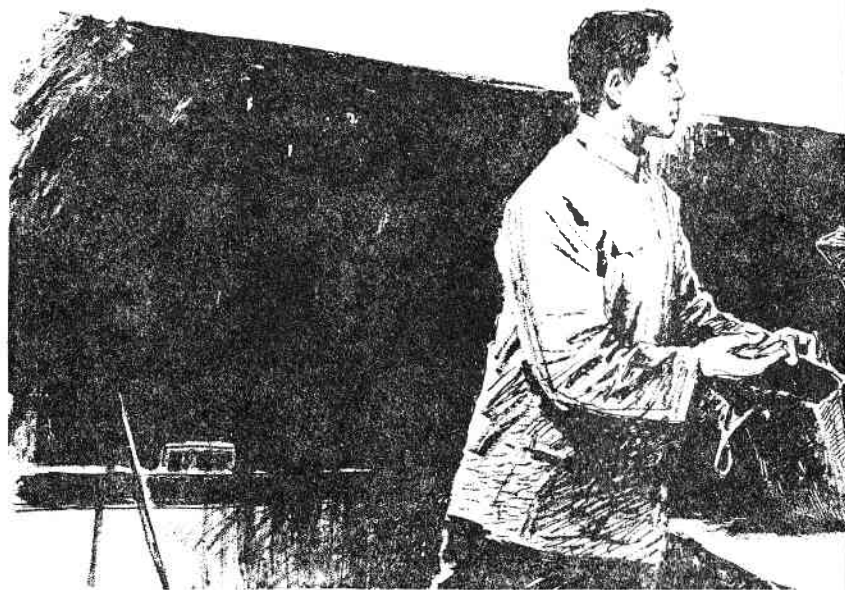
But an unexpected argument arose as Chang was packing the things in his bag. It was the last object, the coverless novel, which he hadn't had time to examine carefully before. He was astonished to find it was a translation of *The Gadfly*, which had been published before the Cultural Revolution by the China Youth Publishing House.

Hsieh quickly took the book, never having read or even heard of it before. An illustration of a foreign man and woman embracing made her cry out in horror: "How terrible! A decadent book! We must condemn it tomorrow."

Chang's brows were knitted in thought. He remembered when he'd been a Youth League member at middle school, and this book had been recommended to them. Once around a bonfire, they had taken turns to read it aloud with much youthful passion. During an outing to the Great Wall they had heatedly discussed *Gadfly's* merits and faults. This novel, written by an English woman, Ethel Boole Voynich, had greatly inspired Chang and his classmates. Perhaps they had underestimated the book's weak points and failed to understand fully its good ones. Yet... He turned to Hsieh and replied sharply: "The book is not decadent."

Hsieh frowned in indignation. Glaring at him, she demanded angrily: "Not decadent? Then what is?"

Hsieh was convinced that all books obtained outside bookstores and libraries were automatically bad or pornographic. How could she think otherwise, having grown up during the time when the "gang of four" exercised a fascist dictatorship over culture? Hsieh had naively and trustingly swallowed all that had been printed, devoutly reading the newspapers and magazines which were full of the "gang's" pernicious writings. If only someone very close to Hsieh could have pointed out at that time that the "important articles on theories of proletarian dictatorship" by members of the "gang of four" like Chang Chun-chao and Yao Wen-yuan were dubious and not authoritative Marxist-Leninist writings. But for various reasons no one ever did. Her parents urged their



children to follow Chairman Mao, listen to the broadcasts, read newspapers, be disciplined, respect their teachers and study hard.

She grew up a daughter of workers, with strong proletarian feelings. Yet when the bourgeoisie and revisionists appeared in a revolutionary disguise, then people with simple proletarian feelings were prone to be duped. Young and inexperienced, aspiring to be a good revolutionary, Hsieh had become narrow-minded and confused under the influence and restrictions of the "gang of four". To her, *The Gadfly* was a poisonous book. And not only that, even people who talked about a newly revived film and a new song on the radio were "bourgeois".

A few days previously, she had confiscated a thick novel that Shih was reading in a self-study period. Hsieh's heart pounded as she leafed through *The Song of Youth* published in 1959, and she determined to hand in the "decadent" book to her teacher. Shih, however, snatched it away and told her: "It's a very interesting book. You should read it." A quarrel had ensued.



Hsieh forgot to report the matter to Chang because she had had to attend a meeting. Now she was shocked to find her teacher to be worse than Shih, defending a foreign book. And foreign decadent literature was a hundred times more dreadful than anything Chinese. She thought of other disagreements she'd had with him and her respect for him lessened. She pursed her lips and frowned.

Shih, having finished her poem, wanted to recite it to Chang and Hsieh, when she heard Chang's defence of the book. She quickly went over to have a look at it. Seeing Hsieh so angry, Shih shook her arm and urged: "Don't talk like that. You know my parents said that this book is worth reading. I'm now in the middle of *How the Steel Was Tempered*. Its hero, Pavel Korchagin, a proletarian, was a great admirer of Gadfly." Shih had wanted to read *The Gadfly* but hadn't been able to get hold of a copy. Taking the book from Hsieh, she flicked through it and her desire to read it grew even stronger. What was the book

about? Who was this Gadfly? Was he really a hero to admire? Handing it back to Chang, she couldn't help asking: "What can we learn from this book? What should we note?" Hsieh looked at her friend feeling irritated.

Chang turned the pages of the worn book, wishing he could explain that it wasn't a decadent book, but checking his impulse to do so. In Sung's copy, all the pictures of the heroine had a moustache drawn savagely on her face. Had Sung thought it decadent also? The book had been through some strange experiences. It would take time and a suitable opportunity to explain to a naive child like Hsieh the very complicated phenomena of life, and how to distinguish between good and bad literature.

Putting the novel into his bag, he said kindly to Hsieh: "Let's discuss this another time. It's almost five. Recite your poem to us, Shih, before we leave."

Shih's poem fell on deaf ears as Hsieh stared at the flickering tree shadows on her desk. She wanted with all her heart to respect Chang, yet his attitude to such a book distressed her. She wondered how a teacher could talk like that.

6

Shortly afterwards, Chang arrived at Sung's new home; two rooms in the east wing of a small courtyard where everything still lay scattered about.

Having swapped her rest-day to move house, Sung's mother, a shop assistant, was busily putting things in order. Chang's appearance both comforted and embarrassed her. She summoned her son from the inner room to greet his teacher and serve tea.

Her husband, who worked regular hours in a tree nursery, got off at six but didn't come home until after eight o'clock each evening. Sadly his wife told Chang that for a year he had got into the habit of playing cards after work. He bicycled to the Yuehtan Park where he sat on the ground playing with his friends. When it became too dark, they moved to the light of a street lamp and continued until one of them left to go on night shift.

Without any ideals in life, it was no wonder that he hadn't educated and handled his son well. The mother's bitterness showed how much she had suffered, having doted on her only son.

But the family were not bad. Although the rooms required a lot of work before they would be spick and span, already portraits of Chairman Mao and Chairman Hua were neatly hung side by side on the northern wall. A smaller one of Premier Chou in a homemade frame of silver plum blossoms was carefully placed on top of the cabinet. This ordinary, middle-aged couple shared the feelings of their countrymen. They had their faults of course, but who was really responsible for their barren inner life?

At a quarter to six, Chang suggested that the mother continue her work, while he went into another room to have his first talk with young Sung.

What was Sung like? His muscular, well-fed body was revealed by his nylon vest. He was lucky to be part of a society where there was sufficient food and clothing. Chang, who was accustomed to studying the faces of his students, shuddered when he looked at Sung. It wasn't that he was ugly. No. But the muscles on his face, his scarred upper lip, torn and stitched after a fight, the nervous quivering of his nostrils and particularly the vacant stupid expression in his eyes showed a warped and twisted youth. Chang was depressed.

After about thirty questions, Chang had summed up young Sung. He had no sense of political consciousness whatever; his educational level was grade one; though muscular, he was rotten at sports. People who were content to label a person and then forget about him might have said he was "full of bourgeois ideas", but this was a most inadequate definition of him. Nor could it help him to start a new life.

Sung was, of course, bourgeois in his thinking. But what were these bourgeois ideas?

The bourgeoisie uphold "freedom, equality and fraternity". They strive to be independent, expert and famous. They cloak their exploitation and oppression of others with their "humanism". And

Sung? Well, he had to obey the strict rules of his gang. Bigger hooligans had bullied him and tortured him, burning his scalp with cigarette butts. This didn't enrage him or make him retaliate. It simply never occurred to him to be independent or demand "freedom, equality and fraternity". He was blindly loyal to his gang and obeyed the older hooligans. And he, in his turn, bullied the younger ones.

To be an expert in some field and be famous had never once occurred to Sung. After all, he'd grown up at a time when all scientists, engineers, writers, professors and others were attacked as decadent intellectuals by Lin Piao and the "gang of four". The status of intellectuals was even lower than that of hooligans like young Sung. So why should he emulate them and strive to be one? To hell with knowledge! Where did knowledge get you? Rather "rebel". Look at Chang Tieh-sheng, who handed in the blank examination paper for the university entrance examination! He got promoted to a high official position.

You had to understand young Sung's problems in order to help him. It wasn't enough to dismiss him as being "full of bourgeois ideas". Those bourgeois concepts played little, if any part at all, in his thinking. What was wrong with him was his blind attachment to the so-called "brotherhood" of feudalism and the reactionary hedonism of the bourgeoisie in their decline. To some extent, young Sung's problems were quite common.

Chang took out the worn novel from his bag. "Do you remember the title of this book?" he inquired.

The sympathetic questions of this teacher were much better than those posed by the Public Security Bureau. Sung replied meekly: "It's Gad . . . something."

"*The Gadfly*. Do you know what that means?"

Staring at a butterfly, the boy frankly said he didn't.

"Have you read it?"

"Oh, I must have flicked through it, but I didn't understand it."

"Why do you have it then? Where did you get it from?"

"We stole it."

"Where and why did you steal it?"



"It was in the room where our teachers kept forbidden books. We broke in and stole two bundles of books."

"Which ones? Do you remember their names?"

"Of course!" Sung was pleased that he could show he wasn't a complete ignoramus. His eyes blinked for the first time in concentration, as he tried to recall the list. "There was *Red Crag*, and . . . *Peace and War*. Or was it *War and Peace*?"

Chang was distressed as he listened, not by the theft, but by the list of harmless and valuable books that had been hidden away and prohibited. Sung and his gang had not committed the crime

of reading bad books, as was generally supposed. They had enjoyed creating havoc and profiting by it. Their behaviour had not been influenced by their reading.

Fingering the book, Chang demanded: "Why did you draw a moustache on all the pictures with a woman in them? What was the idea?"

Ashamed, Sung lowered his eyes and replied: "It was a competition. We each took a book and drew a moustache on every woman in the pictures. The one who drew the most was to be the luckiest. . . ."

Chang was outraged and speechless. Sung stole a glance at him. Afraid he had displeased him, he quickly added: "I know it was wrong. We shouldn't have read those decadent books. . . . We were just trying to find out who would be the first to find a girl friend. . . . I . . . I won't do it again." He thought of the Public Security Bureau and his mother's tearful eyes, showing a mixture of love and hate, as she took him home.

"We shouldn't have read those decadent books. . . ." This upset Chang. After all there was a world of difference between good girls like Hsieh and bad boys like Sung. Yet both had one thing in common. They'd reached the same conclusion that *The Gadfly* was a decadent book without ever having read it. What a shocking social phenomenon! What was the reason?

Chang's hatred for the "gang of four" burst forth more violently than ever. Never before had so many people been fooled by reactionary policies disguised as true revolutionary logic, as during the period of the "gang of four".

His chin on his chest, Sung sat propped up by his strong arms on his bed. He gazed aimlessly at his feet which he rubbed together in a pair of black cloth shoes. This boy had rejected useful knowledge and culture. Chang almost cried out in despair.

How to salvage the children whom the "gang of four" had ruined?

7

Spring days were short, dusk was descending as the clock on the Telegraph Building struck seven.

Wheeling his bicycle into a small park, Chang found an empty bench in a quiet spot. Parking his bike beside it, he sat down and lit a cigarette. He frowned as he tried to channel his feelings into some positive plan of action.

The long willow branches swept over the bench in the breeze. Elm seeds drifted down on him. The fragrance of lilac flowers came from somewhere out of sight.

His first contact with Sung and his family had evoked in him feelings so strong and powerful of love and hate that he had almost lost control of himself. He wanted to talk to his class there and then, explain his ideas, pour out his heart to them, give them his suggestions and criticisms, guiding and encouraging them. He was certain that if he could speak to them at that moment, he could move them with his thoughts and examples, so that they would accept his words.

His love for China deepened. His country's future now was bright. The goal of a fully modernized state by the end of this century made him feel more anxious to defend China from those who would insult, ridicule, or try to impede her progress. He thought of his responsibilities as a teacher of the people and as a class teacher. He wasn't just teaching students, he was nurturing China's future, so that the Chinese people could live in prosperity among the nations of the world.

He had never hated the followers of the "gang of four" who had done so much harm to the country as then. It wasn't just the damage done to the economy, it was the harm done to the mind by the "gang of four" which was so serious. The so-called "rebels" like Chang T'ieh-sheng weren't the only freaks brought about by the "gang". Remember that delinquent youths like Sung and good children like Hsieh were made that way and confused in their thinking by the "gang of four". The "gang" had not only trampled on China's present, but also on her future.

Chang's hatred for these wrongs intensified his love for his people and vice versa. When love mingled with hate, it gave people courage to fight for the truth and even to sacrifice their lives for it.

Abruptly he rose and looked at his watch. A quarter past seven! Supper-time! He'd almost forgotten it until he was reminded by his rumbling stomach. He still wanted to see a few of his pupils and find out their feelings about Sung. But supper-time was not a good hour to go. He strolled about slowly, hands behind his back, planning to leave the park after half-past seven.

The scent of the lilac flowers, growing stronger all the time, brought pleasant thoughts to his mind. With the "gang of four" overthrown and the Party Central Committee headed by Chairman Hua, the new, good situation gave the country hope in the present and for the future. Young Sung wasn't a hopeless case beyond saving any more. And Hsieh's misunderstandings and anger with him could be removed. That girl, despite her confusion, was basically good and committed to socialism.

8

Pushing his bicycle out of the park, Chang ran into Yin who was carrying a bulging bag.

Flabbergasted to see him, Yin asked: "How come, Chang, you're still able to relax and enjoy a walk in the park?"

Chang answered with a smile. He didn't ask Yin where he had been or where he was bound. He knew that for the past month Yin had been coaching some pupils who were poor at maths at four o'clock and then at their homes, teaching them individually in turns. He knew Yin very well. During the time of the "gang of four", Yin had complained about the Ministry of Education, the school leaders, the pupils and the parents. To hear him, you would have expected him to quit. In fact he'd worked very hard. However much he complained, he never slackened in his efforts despite many setbacks and difficulties. Even when the students, influenced by the anarchist ideas of the "gang of

four", had created hell in his classroom, he returned as soon as the bell rang despite his threat to leave made the moment before in the staffroom. He continued to persuade, scold and cajole the students, urging them to listen attentively while he rapped on the blackboard with a piece of chalk.

Chang knew that Yin was making for the bus stop, on his way home after some individual coaching. His day's work done, he'd start complaining when something triggered him off. Sure enough, Yin patted Chang's bicycle seat, let out a deep sigh and launched into his grumbling before Chang could say a word. "Look what a bunch of dummies the 'gang of four' has presented us with. I had to explain a simple mathematical theorem again and again to two of my students. . . . You're even luckier with that oaf Sung on your hands. Really I don't understand you. There's so much to be done, and you waste a whole afternoon on him. Was it worth it? Why can't he go back to his old school if the Public Security Bureau has finished with him? And if they won't take him back, then he can stay at home. . . ."

Chang began to explain sincerely: "After today, I realize it's not a question of whether or not we accept him. Perhaps we should have special schools or classes for juvenile delinquents. Perhaps he should start in grade one, which is his level. But these questions aren't the crux of the matter. The crux is that the 'gang of four' has had a bad influence on the younger generation. That was made clear this afternoon. It hadn't struck me so deeply before. You know, Yin, this spring is beautiful and people are happy. We must work and fight harder. We must think of the future."

Chang didn't say all that he felt in those few words, but when Yin saw in his friend's eyes his new confidence and strength, all his complaints vanished. The spring breeze blew gently as the two teachers fell into silent thought.

Chang was planning to have a talk with Yin soon, to point out to him that he sometimes over-simplified things foolishly. Emotions should never be a substitute for sound policy, and impetuous behaviour and complaints did not help the revolutionary cause to advance. It required persistence and patience. Hatred for

young thugs like Sung could be transformed into sympathy and love for the young people who had been warped by the "gang of four". So he wanted to talk to him about philosophy, dialectics, the present and future, love and hate, life and work, as well as about books like *Red Crag* and *The Gadfly*.

The clock struck half-past seven. Patting Yin on the shoulder, Chang said: "We must have another talk soon. But now I must be off and see some of my students."

"Oh," said Yin, suddenly remembering. "First go immediately to Shih Hung. One of my students told me that she and Hsieh had a quarrel. I think you'd better go and sort things out."

Worried, Chang pedalled away at once.

9

Shih Hung's father worked in the district committee, and her mother taught in a primary school. Not long before the start of the Cultural Revolution, both had joined the Party. They had made it a habit to study Marxism-Leninism. The books on their shelves were dog-eared, underlined and marked for future study. Their edges were covered with finger prints. Shih had become a bookworm too.

She was lucky. In her family, after supper meant sitting round the table reading. Her father pored over the historical books he so loved; her mother corrected homework; while Shih worked on physics or maths problems. Sometimes they discussed the news or literature and art. They all debated furiously. Even during the time of the "gang of four's" suppression of culture, they had on their bookshelves "forbidden" Chinese and foreign literature.

Chang had once asked Shih Hung to bring the works of Marxism-Leninism and the *Selected Works of Mao Tsetung* which she had read from cover to cover and two of her notebooks to school to show the other students and for a parents' meeting. Her ability to analyse according to the principles of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought pleased Chang very much.

Chang knocked at her door and entered to find a room full

of people. Sitting at the table, Shih was reading a book. Five of her classmates were listening. One, wide-eyed, stared at Shih. Another rested her chin on her hands. Another had her arms round the back of her chair. One played with her pigtails. These were the girls who had sworn not to attend school if Sung did.

Absorbed in her book, Shih was oblivious to Chang's presence, but some of the girls looked up and smiled shyly at him. Not wishing to interrupt Shih's moving story, they didn't greet him aloud.

Shih's mother appeared and led Chang into another room, asking him to sit down while she softly explained: "They are listening to Lu Hsun's translation of *The Watch*."

The Watch was a story for children written by the Russian writer Pantalejev soon after the October Revolution. It described the transformation of a young offender in a reformatory. Lu Hsun had translated it with great enthusiasm. Chang having read it years before remembered some of the episodes and characters. He knew at once why the girls were reading the book. Shih's mother explained. "Shih Hung told me about young Sung when she came home. During supper she didn't say much, she was thinking so hard. While we were washing up she spoke to me about inviting Hsieh and the other girls over here to listen to *The Watch*. I agreed and so here they all are except for Hsieh."

Having just finished a paragraph, Shih popped into the room, book in hand, and exclaimed happily: "You're just the man I want to see. Please come and talk to us."

The girls all rose to greet him and then bombarded him with questions.

"May we read this book, Teacher Chang?"

"Hsieh said it was a bad book. Is that true?"

"Did you go and see Sung? Was he better or worse than the boy in this book?"

In reply, Chang simply said: "Why isn't Hsieh here? Did you quarrel with her, Shih? You should all try to convince her of your opinions."

As all the girls spoke at once, Chang couldn't understand a word they were saying. Shih told them to be quiet and then ex-

plained: "She refused to come until the newspaper published an article stating *The Watch* is a good book."

Shih's initiative had pleased Hsieh when she had seen her approaching, but immediately her feelings changed to disgust when she heard about the plan to read *The Watch*. Shih felt the book was good and would help the girls. Hsieh cut her short by asking if it had been recommended in the papers. Shih was disappointed. After a while she replied it hadn't been.

"So you don't care about its bad influence?" Hsieh inquired. "We cadres shouldn't corrupt ourselves or others." Earnestly Hsieh warned Shih against making mistakes. Shih then shouted at her out of frustration. As she left, she took Hsieh's hand and begged her to come. Hsieh merely brushed her hand away. After she had left, Hsieh was very upset as she went outside, the night breeze caressing her flushed cheeks.

Chang sat down and talked to the girls about *The Watch*, the transformation of the Soviet Union, the misguided youth in the book and then about Sung. He spoke about the education of delinquents and his confidence in transforming most of them into useful citizens. Then Chang asked them: "So will you stay away from school now?"

Exchanging glances all the girls cried: "No!"

Chang left. The starry sky was a deep blue.

Hsieh was in Chang's mind all the time he spoke to the girls. He cared for her like a doctor for a healthy child who has caught some infectious disease. The germs spread by the "gang of four" on an upright and simple girl with a strong sense of justice could be got rid of with careful treatment.

He felt depressed as he rode. Although he could hardly be held responsible for Hsieh's present ideas, he did blame himself for not having fought against the reactionary lies of the "gang of four" in a stronger and more determined way before their overthrow. Soon after he had become their class teacher, he had subtly suggested to her that instead of memorizing quotations and blindly accepting articles explaining Chairman Mao's thinking, she should study for herself the original writings of Marxism-Leninism and have an independent mind. Hsieh had failed to

see what he was driving at. Perhaps he should have talked more directly with her to help her to open her eyes and be more discriminating in judging fallacy and truth.

He had an idea. He would leave *The Gadfly* with her and try to persuade her to read it and tell him her opinions of the book. She could analyse it from a Marxist-Leninist-Mao Tsetung Thought standpoint and try to find answers to certain questions. How should we understand life and history? How should we look at literary and artistic works? How should we criticize what is bad and assimilate what is good from our cultural heritage? How do we view questions in their entirety and dialectically? How do we distinguish between true and false Marxism-Leninism? What kind of a woman does she hope to become? How can we fight for the modernization of our country and the bright future of communism?

Feeling moved, Chang braked and dismounted at Hsieh's gate. His idea had crystallized. He would organize extensive study activities to repudiate the "gang of four" and educate the class, including young Sung. He would talk to the Party branch the next day and get their support. He pictured Old Tsao, the Party secretary, saying: "Now is the time to run education according to Chairman Mao's thinking."

Chang sought hard work, and he would get the support he needed. But the doubts of some of the teachers passed through his mind also. He must speak at the teachers' meeting. Apart from teaching science and arts subjects in class, and giving the students an overall education, developing their morality, intelligence and physical health, a teacher must not only take them to farms and factories to integrate theory with practice, but also broaden their horizons and interest them in world culture. They must develop their analytical abilities, so as to be better successors of the socialist revolution and construction.

The sweet fragrance of the flowers and the twinkling stars overhead seemed to approve of his idea and encourage him. . .

Illustrated by Chen Yu-hsien

Liu Hsin-wu

A Place for Love

Just as the early shift was over, Old Wei, foreman of our workshop, summoned me to his office, a three-plywood compartment in a corner of the workshop.

When I followed him into his office, he turned to me with a strange look on his face, as if he was seeing me for the first time or scrutinizing me as if I was guilty of something. I couldn't help laughing at his expression.

"Trust you, Meng Hsiao-yu!" he exclaimed, despair and concern shining from the eyes in his stern weather-beaten face. Waving a calloused hand, he continued: "I never imagined that you'd fall in love too. You're far too young! Why the hurry? Wait till you're as old as Ya-mei, and then I'll introduce a really fine young man to you. What kind of person do you want? Just tell me nearer the time. But to start now. . . ."

I was astonished. Who had told him my secret? Or had I carelessly given the game away? Surely not. So pretending to be indifferent, I replied: "I really don't know what you are talking about. It's nonsense."

Old Wei slowly shook his head and sighed as he took an envelope from his pocket. Handing it to me, he said: "Old Ho at the gate gave it to me when he came with the newspapers. Your

young fellow doesn't even trust our post office. He delivered the note to the gate himself."

I snatched the sealed envelope, my heart beating madly at the sight of the familiar and beloved handwriting: "To Meng Hsiao-yu". I felt myself blushing as I tore it open and found these few lines: "I've bought two tickets for the 3.15 p.m. performance of *On Guard Beneath the Neon Lights* at the Great China Cinema. Don't be late." Involuntarily I looked at my watch. It was already eight minutes past two. I quickly turned to leave, when Old Wei coughed and forced me to turn and say to him: "Honestly, Old Wei, I'll tell you everything tomorrow."

Although he didn't believe me, I always had confidence in him. I understood exactly how he felt. He had always shown great concern for us eight young people who joined his workshop during the Cultural Revolution. He had guided us politically, helped us in our work and in our daily life. His kindness could fill a book. Of course there were differences of opinion, but no one had a bad word to say about him behind his back.

Rushing to the locker-room, I found everyone had left except for Ya-mei, who was carefully combing her hair in front of the only mirror in the room. She was the oldest of us younger workers, being almost twenty-eight years old. She had been going steady, and everyone had approved of her boy friend. It was Old Wei, who was always quite strict with us, who had introduced her to a young man six months earlier and she had liked him on first sight. Later, however, on learning that he had an invalid mother and a large family to support, she had broken it off with him. Then she found a boy who suited her very well. Recently she had been going on so much about all his good points that I could recite them by heart.

"He's a college graduate who doesn't have any dependents to support. Already he's saved several hundred yuan in his deposit account. He's quite a handy-man. He's made a beautiful wardrobe, a sofa and armchairs and a desk with five drawers for when he sets up house. His work unit has some vacant rooms in a flat, which he can have when he gets married. And he has a cousin

who works in a theatrical company, so he can easily get tickets for performances.”

Having changed my clothes, I squeezed my way to the mirror to tidy my loose hair. Ya-mei grasped me and said excitedly: “When do you want your photograph taken? Just tell me. He’s got a new Seagull camera.”

I smiled, about to say something, but then checked myself. I really wanted to ask her: “What kind of person is this man of yours? Do you really know him? Do you really love him? After all, Ya-mei, you are marrying him, not his camera, deposit account and everything else. He’s more important than all that. You’ve got to live with him all your life. What if something happened to his money or his wonderful wardrobe, would you still find him so attractive?”

Afraid of hurting and offending her, I kept quiet. Taking out a long woollen scarf from her handbag, Ya-mei tied it around her head and, taking my arm, led me nearer the mirror and asked: “Do you like it? Do you think it goes well with my coat?”

I was horrified. The bright red scarf clashed with her blue overcoat. My taste is very unobtrusive. Even so, I think seven out of every ten girls would have considered that combination too flashy. But as a group leader of our Youth League, I didn’t want to argue over such trifling matters. I nodded, saying nothing.

When I finally left Ya-mei, immersed in her own happiness, and caught the trolley-bus to the Great China Cinema, it was already almost half-past two.

2

I never sat on the buses, even though there were vacant seats. During the period of the “gang of four”, our social behaviour and morality had seriously deteriorated. Many young people my age jumped the queues at the stops or grabbed empty seats, refusing to offer them to elderly people or women with babies. One afternoon in August 1976, I caught the bus after work and noticed a young fellow with a moustache sitting on one of the single seats.

Beside him was an obviously sick old man hanging on to one of the loops and looking as if he was about to collapse at any moment. The young man kept glancing nervously at the old man, afraid that the latter’s dusty clothes would soil his snow-white shirt as he brushed against him. Several of the passengers and I wondered what we should do, and I was trying to pluck up enough courage to ask the young man to give up his seat, when a firm deep voice said: “Look, comrade, please stand up and give this old comrade a seat.”

I looked up to see a broad-shouldered young man in a grey shirt. He had a wide forehead and a pair of shining eyes.

Folding his arms and assuming indifference, the young fellow sitting replied: “No, I won’t. I’m not the only person sitting. Let those who are willing do it, but not me.”

Then the old man intervened: “Stop arguing. I’m all right. I can stand.”

Immediately a grey-haired old woman rose and said: “Nonsense! You come over here and have my seat.”

Gratefully the old man sat down with a sigh and that was that.

But the young man in the grey shirt gazed angrily at the other young man. “Please explain why you wouldn’t give up your seat.” His voice, however, adopted a friendly and gentle tone.

The young fellow shrugged and answered belligerently: “Why should I give him my seat? Who knows, perhaps he was a landlord, a rich peasant or a reactionary. Don’t be such a do-gooder!”

I’d met some layabouts before, but none quite as rude as this one. Most of the other passengers were of the same opinion. Glancing angrily at him, they muttered: “Really, it’s disgusting. . . .”

I looked at the other young man, whose behaviour had impressed me. Frowning, he said slowly to the other one seated: “One of these days you’ll see your mistake.”

When the bus reached the next stop, the young man in the grey shirt alighted amidst admiring glances from the other passengers. Through the window I gazed at his retreating figure until he was out of sight. That night I wrote in my diary about the strong impression he had made on me.

Later, when I changed to day-shift, I often encountered him

on the bus. Whenever he got on, he'd go to stand at the rear and taking out a stack of cards on which were written many foreign words, he'd start memorizing them. I wondered where he worked and if he was a technician.

One day, early in 1977, after the overthrow of the "gang of four", he got on the bus and went to stand at the back as usual. But instead of his file of cards, he took out of his pocket a small book in a foreign language with a pencil stuck between the pages. Opening it, he began reading in a low voice, making marks with his pencil. I thought he might be one of the bright young people at a research institute.

Although it was drizzling, the bus wasn't crowded. The conductress beckoned to him and me to sit down.

I refused with a smile, no longer challenging the "gang of four's" bad influence, just out of habit.

The conductress was a cheerful, fat woman. Gazing candidly at both of us she smiled and said: "You're a queer pair!" That was how his eyes and mine met for the first time. He smiled and seemed to say: "So we have the same habits!" I blushed and quickly lowered my head.

After that, whenever we met on the bus, he would smile and go to the rear to study.

It has been said that true love sometimes blossoms from small accidents of fate. But as I see it, that chance happening was inevitable. It was mid-April, the morning that Chairman Mao's fifth volume went on sale. There was already a queue in front of the Hsinhua Bookstore in Wangfuching Street in Peking by the time I arrived. I regretted my lateness. Surveying the people, I tried to find someone I knew. I didn't want to jump the queue, but hoped that a friend might get a copy for me too. There, twenty-sixth in line, stood my young man. He spotted me at the same time, and we smiled at each other.

"You see, I'm late..." These were the first words I ever spoke to him.

"Never mind. I'll get you a copy," he replied at once.

So that's how we got to know each other. Outside the bookstore, the fifth volume in our hands, we started to talk as we

strolled along the street to Changan Boulevard. He happened to be free that morning too, and I felt very happy. We started to ask each other questions. Did you watch Premier Chou's hearse pass in the funeral procession along Changan Boulevard in January 1976? Where were you standing? Did you get hold of a copy of the collection of poems in memory of Premier Chou? Which one did you like best? When did you first hear about the downfall of the "gang of four"?

As we talked I saw that we had many things in common and I was content to continue, when we reached a stop for the number ten bus. He suddenly halted and quickly parted saying: "I have to take this bus now. I've something urgent to do."

Off he went while I felt left alone. Yet I was elated in a strange way. I looked up at the poplar trees, their buds and leaves vivid green in the sunshine, set against the blue sky. I knew that I had at last fallen in love.

The following day when we met on the bus, we smiled as always but began chatting again.

"Are you learning a foreign language too?" he asked me as he produced his English book.

"Yes. I'm learning Japanese from the radio. My uncle is a Japanese translator and he helps me. But most of my time I like to study literature, especially short stories, modern or ancient, Chinese or foreign."

"Do you write stories yourself?"

I nodded feeling very self-conscious.

"I like literature too," he added. He spoke encouragingly, having noticed my shyness. "But at the moment there aren't many good short stories. I like to read those by Chekhov, Maupassant and O. Henry, as well as Chinese ones such as *The Story of Li Shuang-shuang* by Li Chun, *Spring Night* by Wang Wen-shih and *Reminiscences of the Mountain Region* by Sun Li. I'll read them again after a while."

I felt as if I had been bathed in sunshine. Of my generation, he was the only boy I had met who had touched my heart with his few words.

Usually he got off the bus first. This time before leaving, he made a date with me to go to the Peking Library the next morning.

Our subsequent meetings took place there in the library. Each time we parted, we fixed a time for our next meeting. Like me, he was always punctual. At our first few meetings, we both arrived at the library cloakroom at about the same time. Once, when my watch ran fast, I was almost a quarter of an hour early. As I walked along the small pathway flanked by tall cypress trees, I saw him standing by a pillar staring eagerly in the direction of the entrance. As he didn't see me, I slipped into the front hall of the library with a feeling I couldn't describe. I thought he would soon come, but he didn't. He waited until the appointed time and then walked in as if he had just arrived. I said nothing, but my heart sang.

Each time we parted, we looked forward to our next meeting. In the library, we went to the quiet reading-room and read the books we loved. Sometimes, unintentionally, our eyes met and then each found the strength to study harder.

Without our realizing it, the leaves on the plane trees in front of the gate of Peihai Park began to turn yellow. People were discussing the university and college entrance examinations in Peking. One day, on leaving the library, we walked past Peihai Bridge and came to Tuancheng. Standing under the plane trees by the wall, we spoke of our plans.

"I want to write stories about young workers to encourage young people to work hard to modernize our country," I told him. "I've decided not to study Chinese literature at university, but let my factory and society be my university."

He nodded vigorously in agreement, his hair bobbing up and down. "That's wonderful!" he said warmly. "I want to try studying foreign languages at an institute. If I fail the entrance examination, I'll carry on as before. After all, professional people are not necessarily the cream and those who are self-educated are not the dregs either. While it's ludicrous to scrap all professional training, it's just as stupid to worship it blindly. As for writers, I think those who are self-taught are usually better than those who have studied literature in a college."

His words delighted me. I remembered how Ya-mei had shrieked in surprise and pummelled me on the back when I had told her I wasn't going to sit the entrance exams. "You idiot!" she had cried. "Give me your brains, and I'll sit them for you. As a college graduate, I'd get the pay of a fourth-grade worker." What a difference between her and him! I felt he understood me better than anyone else I knew.

It was dusk as we came to the moat round the Forbidden City and inhaled the fragrant scent of mimosa. He touched my hand gently and then held it tightly for a long, long time. . . .

That night, on my way home, I bumped into Aunt Feng, who lived in the same building as I. She was about sixty-six, but she had no family and I felt very sorry for her. Taking her bag from her, I helped her to her room, and determined to do more for her in her home. I was so brimming over with my own happiness that I was bursting to help those who seemed less fortunate.

Two days later, as soon as I met him on the bus I told him as if I was eager to turn my back on our happiness: "I won't meet you in the library for a month."

He frowned a little and then smilingly asked: "Why not? Are you going to write a story?"

"No time for that now," I said seriously as I smiled back. "We've formed a technical innovation study group in the workshop. After our shifts each day we must work on a problem. It will take a lot of evenings before it's solved. Old Wei has even brought his bedding to the workshop. He asked me to join the group and though I hesitated at first, I finally agreed."

"Why did you hesitate?"

"Don't be such a fool!" I said looking at him.

For the first time I saw him blush a deep red.

For a month we did not see each other, yet I never stopped thinking about him. And my love for him grew.

Old Wei praised me for my work in the study group. "Hsiao-yu, you really work as if you had the energy of two people!"

I laughed and thought to myself: "Old Wei, how right you are!"

There were seven stops before the trolley-bus reached the Great China Cinema. It gave me time to think things over.

The more I thought, the more I wondered. Is there a place for love in the life of us revolutionaries? If so, what is that place?

In the past I had thought of some questions. Why was love never presented in our films and plays? Why were couples rarely featured in their plots? Life wasn't like that.

I was more fortunate than Ya-mei, for example. My parents had allowed me to read some famous literature, both Chinese and foreign, ancient and modern, which they had at home. They had answered some of my questions. This was during the years when the "gang of four" restricted our cultural life with their fascist policies.

I clearly remembered how deeply I was moved by Pavel and Tonya and Pavel and Liza in the Russian novel *How the Steel Was Tempered*. Yet I had felt a little guilty about it. Was Pavel really a proletarian hero? How could he care for people like Tonya? How could he feel more than just comradeship for Liza? Should our proletarian heroes be like the characters in our films, who although well over thirty or forty still lived with their mothers? It seemed that love had no place in the life of proletarian revolutionaries.

The banishment of love from our cultural life resulted in two abnormal consequences. Some young people mistook their biological urges for love, and a few of them degenerated into hooligans. But I won't dwell too much on that here. Many people only admitted they thought about marriage, but refused to talk about love. When young people reached the age of about twenty-five, their parents, colleagues, neighbours and they themselves all started to think about finding a partner. Not only did they talk, they took action!

There seem to be various ways of falling in love. Sometimes it is love at first sight; sometimes through shared interests; introductions by close friends; or it develops through the comradeship

of working together. Such love can result in happy marriages and a happy family life. I was always opposed to marriages where love had no place. Even Old Wei had asked me what kind of young man I'd like to have, as if I was choosing a wool-len sweater to wear!

Some lovers came late to work or left early, became absent-minded or liked to dress up. But we never behaved like that, so Old Wei and Ya-mei had never guessed my secret. But my mother and father must have had an inkling, from the way they exchanged glances and looked at me. I knew that I would soon have to tell them all about it. . . .

As soon as I got off the bus I saw him anxiously waiting for me.

Elbowing my way through the crowd, I broke into a run to meet him.

"You idiot!" I complained. "Why didn't you ring me up instead of sending a note?"

"But I did! I rushed to a call box the moment I got the tickets, but the line was engaged all the time and I couldn't get through. Fortunately I had to pass your factory on an errand this morning and so I decided to leave you a note. Was it so wrong?"

I felt very pleased. Long ago we had made a date to see that film as soon as it was shown again. Both of us had seen it when we were at primary school and we hadn't understood it very well. Now as adults we wished to see it, even more so because it had been banned for ten years by the "gang of four". We hoped to see something very good and inspiring, so I understood his eagerness to tell me. Smiling I said: "It's nothing. Let's go and see the film."

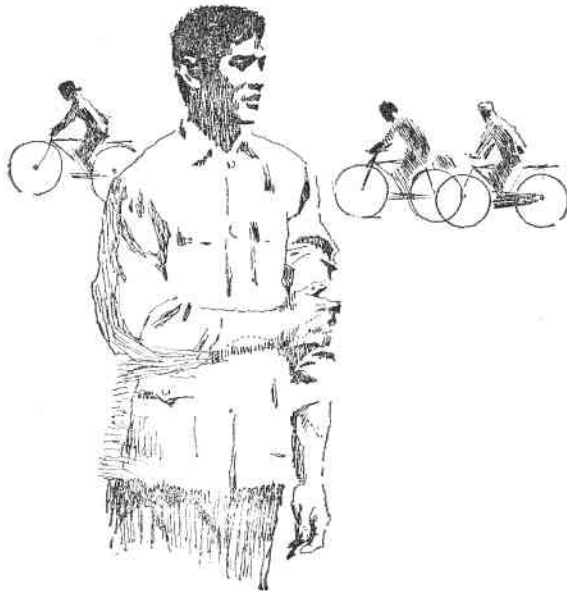
How strange! He had a peculiar expression on his face. Leading me to a window of a food store a little distance from the cinema, he said apologetically: "Well, it's like this. Old Ho, my work-mate, came to me at noon and asked if I would work his shift

at four o'clock because his child is ill. I agreed. Please don't be angry with me, but I'm afraid you'll have to see it by yourself."

I was bitterly disappointed. See it alone! How could I do that? What a difference from seeing it with the man I loved. That Old Ho, barging into our lives like that! Of course, I didn't resent it. I just wished his child hadn't picked this particular moment to be ill. Why couldn't he have asked someone else, rather than the person I wanted to see most at this time?

"If you're . . . if you're not happy," he began hesitantly, obviously being sensitive to the slightest change in my expression, "I'll try to phone him and ask him to find someone else. But it might be difficult. . . ."

As he talked, he crumpled the two tickets in his hands. "Don't be silly," I said and, snatching the tickets, went to a couple who were despairing of getting any for the film. "Here, take these!" I said, thrusting them into the hands of a pretty girl.



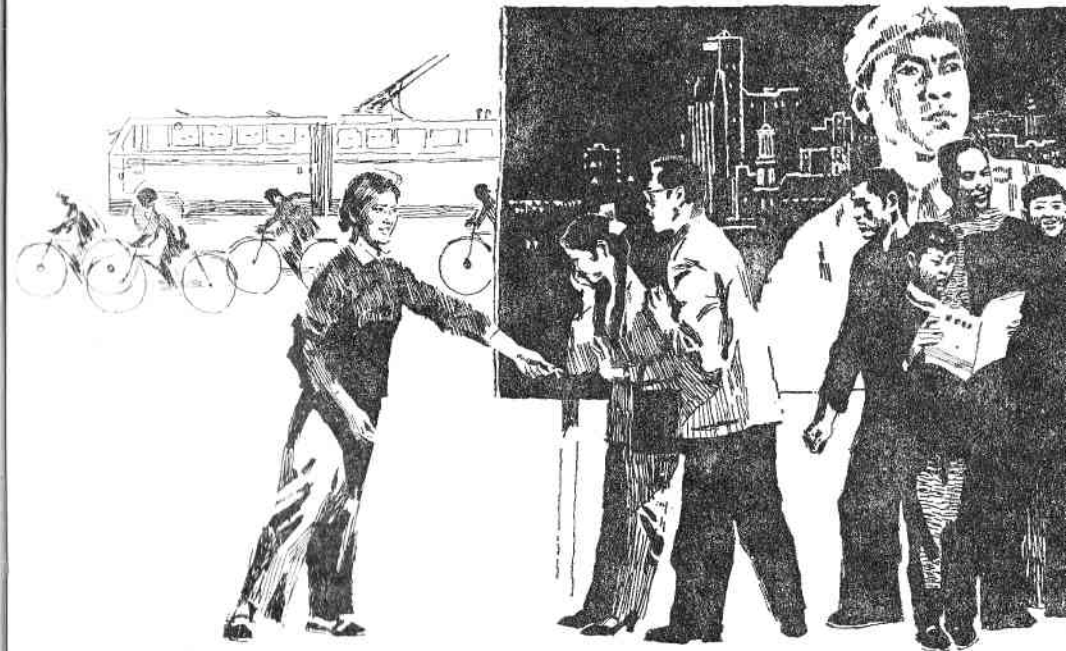
Delighted, the girl accepted them at once and both looked very grateful.

They paid me, and then I returned to my beloved who was astonished by my action. I punched his arm and reproved him: "What a fool you are!"

He was anything but foolish and his eyes shone with joy and understanding. It made us even closer as we walked to where he worked. We sauntered along since there was plenty of time to spare before four o'clock.

5

It was time to say goodbye, but we had so much to tell each other. We didn't want to stop in the middle of an animated discussion about a short story I was planning to write, but we could do



nothing about it. Unfortunately both our watches read three minutes to four.

We parted easily, since we planned to meet again the next day. He walked towards a tiny restaurant between a pharmacy and general store. It was a very ordinary place. All its customers were casual passers-by wanting a quick meal. I was sure most of them appreciated the clean floor, spotless tables and chairs, not to mention the delicious fried noodles and beautifully browned wheat cakes.

My boy friend was the cook in this restaurant.

As I gazed lovingly after him as he disappeared into the restaurant, someone gripped my arm.

I jumped!

It was none other than Ya-mei! Her face, wrapped in her red scarf, had a very inquisitive expression. Her eyes seemed to pop out of her head: "So, Hsiao-yu, is that the boy you're in love with?"

I looked at her in silence.

She dragged me away from the restaurant as if protecting me from some danger, trying to save me.

"That was Lu Yu-chun, wasn't it? I know him. We were once neighbours. His mother has been paralysed for a long time, though her health otherwise is normal. She could easily last another five years or so. Because of her, after his graduation, he had to start work in that shabby little restaurant. Hasn't he told you about this? Surely you don't want an invalid mother-in-law to look after and wash all her dirty linen. Have you gone crazy? You could easily have gone to university, yet you refused to take the exam. Now you've gone and got yourself a cook. He may be the best worker and cook, but what good is that? You're an attractive girl and you have a talent for writing. You shouldn't find it too difficult to find yourself an actor or someone like that."

I felt my cheeks getting red and my heart beating violently. I was sorry for her. What a pity there wasn't some book to advise young people about love, marriage and family life. Unable to cite an authority to convince her, I spoke frankly: "I know him very

well. He hides nothing from me. Don't you see, Ya-mei, I'm not just hunting for a husband. I'm really in love."

This shut her up and she relaxed her grip on my arm. Dumbfounded, she stared at me, wondering how I, a Youth League group leader, could dare to talk about love! Words like boy friend, husband, marriage and register were quite acceptable to her. Love, though not pornographic, had a bad connotation. Why should the very idea of love find no place in her mind? How did a good, hard-working girl like her become so insensitive regarding love? It was a terrible shame.

Now it was my turn to grip her arm. I wanted to say a lot to her, so I spoke frankly: "You told me a lot about your boy friend and I agree it's nice to have all that furniture. When we get married we'll buy some when we can afford it. But the most important thing is the man. What is he really like? You don't say much about that. Do you love him? Would you prefer to marry another man if he had nicer things? I don't mean to be rude, Ya-mei, but you should seriously think it over."

She was a good-natured girl and didn't take offence. "If someone better came along, I wouldn't necessarily marry him." She was being very honest. "You see, I'm older than you and so I can't wait so long. If I keep picking and choosing, I may even lose the one I've got. You ought to be a bit more practical too."

I was about to argue, when she suddenly looked at her watch exclaiming: "Oh!" She forgot all about rescuing me from my terrible fate, saying: "We agreed to visit his cousin at five o'clock. It's almost that now." Hurrying to the bus stop, she turned round and shouted again to me: "Believe me, you must be practical."

6

Since Ya-mei knew my secret, the news would be spread all over our workshop by tomorrow. Even Old Wei would feel sorry for me. I'd have to face all kinds of glances, questions and jokes.

My parents would certainly cross-examine me too. Perhaps after supper tonight.

It wasn't that I was afraid, but I wanted them to understand my attitude to love.

If I said my boy friend was a cook, some people would be surprised, sorry and disappointed or even start sneering behind my back.

I had to make one thing quite clear. Our relationship was not based on money or so-called social status. Nor was it my desperate need for a husband. Yes, he was a cook and might be one all his life. So what? As long as he was upright and honest and his thinking was good, I would be happy and stay with him always. I loved him, not his work or possessions.

I had reached home before I realized it. Behind the windows of our apartment block were all kinds of families, most of them happy and harmonious. But there were some unhappy ones. One day a tea-cup was thrown out of a first-floor window when a newly-married couple were having a quarrel. I'd seen their flat and they had all the furniture and things they wanted, but there was something vital lacking. Love. There were many reasons for their fight, one being that while the "gang of four" lived in debauchery and luxury, literature on how to deal with love and marriage was banned. Just to talk about it publicly meant a criticism. Love had no place in our lives whatsoever.

But was I correct? Perhaps a good revolutionary should dismiss it as nonsense. Perhaps there was no place for love after all.

I climbed the stairs mulling this over in my mind. Reaching the first floor, I thought of Aunt Feng who lived there. Wasn't she a fine revolutionary? Love had no place in her life.

As early as 1935, when the December Ninth Student Movement took place, Aunt Feng was one of the underground Party leaders in her university. I knew from various episodes she had described that she had led an unusual life. After Liberation she had worked in a publishing house. During the period when the "gang of four" had been in power, she naturally became one of their main targets, but as the evidence against her was only circumstantial,

they could do nothing about her. After the fall of the "gang" she had become an adviser at her work.

Everyone in our building respected her, but there was a mystery about her personal life. Why hadn't she got married? We young girls couldn't help gossiping about it. She must have had some suitors when she was younger, because she was such a nice person. Why had she refused love then? Wasn't there one man she had loved? Did she want to show us that love had no place in the life of a true revolutionary? Did she want to show that she could be more devoted to her cause as a single woman?

I suddenly wanted to talk to her and so I knocked on her door.

7

As Aunt Feng made me sit down on her armchair in her single-room flat, she said something for which I was totally unprepared: "What's the matter, Hsiao-yu? You're in love, aren't you?"

I lowered my head shyly like a child caught stealing sweets by his parents.

Meanwhile she poured me a cup of tea and asked: "What sort of a person is he? Do you mind telling me?"

I looked up to meet her sympathetic gaze. Her hair was already grey, while her complexion was still good. So I started to tell her all about him, even our arguments, dreams and doubts, as she sat opposite me listening. I talked and talked until night fell. The sunset rays bathed the room in a rosy glow. I even told her about my talk with Ya-mei and what Old Wei had said. Finally I asked her if she thought there was a place for love in our lives.

I stopped speaking and she remained strangely quiet, her eyes half-closed as if meditating, the tea in her cup cold. She was silent for a couple of minutes.

I waited feeling a little nervous. At last she put down her cup and, rising to her feet, paced up and down her room, her hands behind her back. Then she halted and spoke as if to herself: "Yes, it's shocking the way the 'gang of four' have disrupted our lives. They've particularly poisoned the minds of our youth. These days

we're having meetings to discuss how to implement the policies laid down at a recent conference on publishing. I'll raise this issue. We must immediately start publishing books to advise our young people about love, marriage and family life. We must produce novels and stories about these problems."

That didn't satisfy me. I persisted: "But, Aunt Feng, is love, even a good love, a burden, or luxury? Should it play any role at all in a revolutionary's life?"

She was very surprised that I uttered such thoughts. "Who put that nonsense in your head?" she asked instead of answering, her eyebrows raised.

"Nobody," I said, "but I have the feeling it is like that. From what I read and hear, it seems quite true. There's no love in our contemporary fiction. It's treated like something revisionist and decadent. No one dares to write about it."

Aunt Feng sat down again. Slapping the side of the armchair with her hand, she said angrily: "To deny the place of love in the life of a revolutionary is itself revisionist and decadent."

"But you seem to lead a pleasant life without it, don't you? And you're a true revolutionary," I blurted out before I could stop myself. Then I didn't know whether or not I should regret my blunder.

Her face clouded at once, and I wondered if she had been hurt by my words. I thought that perhaps she would explain that she was an exception. I was wrong. She sat with her eyes closed and thought for a while before saying loudly as if giving an order: "Hsiao-yu, please go behind the screen."

A tall purple screen enclosed about a fifth of her room. I'd guessed that was where she kept her suitcases and things.

I went behind the screen rather confused. There were the suitcases I expected and also a chest of drawers. As it was dark I couldn't see clearly. I wondered if she had an attack of high blood pressure and needed some medicine from the chest.

Her voice sounded strong again as she ordered: "Switch on the lamp and have a good look."

I found the lamp on the chest of drawers and turned it on. Immediately I saw an old large photograph in a brown frame. It

was of a smart young man in a long flowing Chinese gown, a woollen scarf round his neck. He was smiling, his hair tousled by the wind. Beside this was another frame with some calligraphy by Aunt Feng. It was a poem entitled *Happy Meetings*. It read:

I see you many times in dreams,
My eyes filled with joyful tears.
The monsters have been swept away;
The dark clouds have been blown away;
Our red Party flag is flying high.
We must reverse the wrongs
And bring order to our land.
Don't laugh at your grey-haired girl
For telling you her feelings!
Your death was not in vain,
You are my constant inspiration!
When our country's plans have been fulfilled,
We will meet in our dreams and celebrate our victory.

I read it again a second time to myself. The truth suddenly dawned on me. I had felt sorry for Aunt Feng, alone and without love. In fact, she still cherished her love and derived strength from it. This was a true revolutionary's love! It was so powerful and true, she would never feel lonely or depressed. I only wished my boy friend could have been with me, so that both of us could have learned something from the photograph and the poem.

I went back to her, tears in my eyes and begged her to tell me about it. She nodded.

"It happened a long time ago," she began slowly. "When I was twenty, my parents married me off to a distant cousin whom I didn't love. He was a meek man, an office clerk. We were polite to each other, but I was bored. After nine months, news about a revolutionary uprising reached us and I was filled with the desire to do something. I told him that either we joined the revolution together, or I would leave him. He was shocked and wept, but refused to go with me and so we got divorced.



"I remember that it was a rainy autumn day, the maple leaves fluttered in the breeze. I carried a small suitcase and left our stifling home. He carried an umbrella to save me getting wet as together we walked along the lane. It wasn't that he was reluctant to see me go, he was going to a shop on the corner. That was the last time I ever saw him, and I very rarely thought about him later. But for you, I wouldn't have thought of him now.

"Then I attended some classes at the university. Gradually I became involved in the turbulent changes in our society. At last I made contact with the Communist Party. And it was then that I also found true love..." Now she spoke more quickly. "At the time of the December Ninth Movement in 1935, he looked just as he does in that photograph. He was like a flame that no wind or water could extinguish. It was during those moving times that we became engaged, encouraging each other in the struggle. With the approval of the Party, we soon got married. After a brief yet beautiful wedding ceremony, together with our guests, we went out into the streets to join the parade and sing anti-Japanese war songs.

"One night in the autumn of 1937, he came home and told me that the Party had decided I should go to Yen-an, the revolutionary base, while he remained to carry on his underground work. The dusty autumn wind blew at our papered lattice window. My feelings were a mixture of joy and sorrow. I'd longed to go to Yen-an to be with Chairman Mao and the Central Committee. But if only he could go with me... I understood the situation was difficult and that he was needed there. That night neither of us slept. Since it was impossible for us to write letters to each other, we agreed that I should write to him in my diary and show it him when he joined me in Yen-an.

"I kept my word and wrote letters to him in Yen-an. There was practically no news of him, and so I tried to imagine how he was according to the situation in the enemy-occupied areas. I pictured the way he looked and smiled, his hatred of the enemy, his sense of humour with his comrades. Early one morning in the winter of 1940, I was busy writing my twenty-fifth letter to him in my diary. A leading comrade entered and silently gave

me a parcel that had been passed from hand to hand through enemy territory until it had reached Yen-an. It was from him! My hands shaking, I unwrapped it and found that photograph you saw just now. Tears poured down my cheeks, but I choked back my sobs. The comrade talked to me the whole morning. My husband had been arrested six months earlier and had died a hero's death.

"Although I will never see him again, his image will live in my heart for ever. His other comrades never forgot him either. That afternoon I wrote my twenty-sixth letter to him, feeling he would somehow know it. It's thirty years now that I've been in the habit of writing to him, telling him how things are. Whenever I meet with problems, whenever I experience joy, I write to him, sharing the good and the bad. That poem you read was taken from one of the letters I wrote to him after the fall of the 'gang of four' in October 1976...."

I was enrapt. Her face became a blur in the darkness, but I could see her eyes gleaming with youth.

"Hsiao-yu," she continued, "love is very complicated. It should be based on common ideals and interests. It should withstand every test. As time passes, it should get stronger. Of course, personal characteristics, looks and manners are important, but you shouldn't put love above everything. If it makes you forget the revolution, then you've given it a wrong place in your life. If it encourages you to work better, then it is in the right place. Only then do you feel real happiness. Love, you see, has a very important place in a revolutionary's life after all!"

She had spoken with emotion. Stopping, she rose, while I took her hand and said: "Please write something about what you told me just now. It would be so helpful to us young people."

She nodded and said: "I'll try. I think your love for Lu Yu-chun is a fine thing. Go ahead with your plans."

I hugged her. All my doubts had vanished, and I felt deliriously happy.

A few minutes later I left and ran upstairs as if on wings. Whether or not my parents wanted to question me that night, I

would tell them everything. I was sure now that they would be delighted. And I'd explain everything to Old Wei as soon as I reached the workshop the next morning. I pictured him pointing a calloused hand at my nose and saying in a happier tone: "Trust you! You naughty girl!"

Illustrated by Chen Yen-ning



Wu Chuan-kung

At an Entrance Examination

The examination was in progress. Occasionally Wu, the chief examiner, cast an eye at the nervous candidates, tense and waiting for their turn, seated in rows on benches. Her attention was caught by a young man, who had buried himself in his book ever since he had entered the examination hall. He seemed oblivious of what was going on around him. With years of experience as an actress, Wu recognized this as how an old professional would immerse himself in his part. But wasn't this candidate a bit too young for that? Perhaps it helped his nerves.

"Wang Hsiao-lei!" Wu called.

"Here!" replied a young girl stepping forward confidently on to the rehearsal stage.

Glancing at her, Wu announced to all the candidates: "The piece for today's examination is your own choice. You select the most significant event in your life and perform it as you would on stage." Wang, the young girl, prepared for her performance. She enacted a prison scene. With one hand holding the chains of her fetters, she took out a large sheet of paper on which were verses commemorating Premier Chou En-lai, written in her own blood. She read them in a passionate low voice. Then as she raised her hands, the fetters were level with her eyes and indignation showed

on her face. She angrily stared at the door of her prison, when suddenly it was flung open and her comrades came to release her. Rushing to them, she took the portrait of Chairman Hua that they had brought and held it high with both hands, tears pouring down her cheeks. . . . Everyone was moved by her performance and the sound of soft weeping was heard in the hushed hall.

Wu was also touched but she remained impassive before the candidates. Thousands from all over the country had applied to take the examination, but only a few dozen would be chosen. Only one in every thousand would be selected according to various criteria.

After a whispered consultation with the other examiners, Wu wrote down their appraisal. Then she raised her head to find that the young man who had been reading was staring out of the window.

"Chang Chieh!" Wu called out the next name on the list. There



was no response. She repeated the name louder this time: "Chang Chieh! Is Chang Chieh here?"

"Oh, yes! Here!"

It was none other than the young man with the book in his hand, who had been startled out of his day-dream. Frowning, he hurried to the stage, shoving his book into a bulging shoulder bag. Suddenly the bag fell to the floor, its contents scattered. Looking over her desk, Wu saw lying on the floor about a dozen picture-books. Chang stood stiffly beside them, ignoring the stifled giggles from the other candidates. Wu rose to her feet to have a closer look. Most were adaptations of Chinese and foreign classics.

Puzzled, the experienced examiners could not refrain from exchanging glances with Wu.

"Why did you bring all those books?" ventured Wu.

"To read. I was preparing for the exam," Chang replied awkwardly. His answer provoked a burst of laughter from the other candidates. Keeping his head down, he gathered up his books hastily.

"Just a moment," Wu stopped him. "Have you read the original versions of all these books?"

Chang shook his head.

"Why not?"

"Because I..." Chang hesitated for a second before continuing, "I couldn't get hold of them ... and anyway I can't read them..."

"What? You mean you can't read them?" Surprised, Wu looked at the register of candidates and found that Chang was a senior middle-school graduate. To ascertain his level, Wu changed the procedure and asked him to read an article aloud.

Chang skimmed over the article nervously and then coughing a few times, cleared his throat before beginning.

As he read in a stammering monotone, Wu and the other examiners were amazed, while the other candidates were helpless with suppressed laughter. After a time, unable to bear Chang's performance any more, Wu stopped him. He had made so many mistakes that it was hardly credible that this sturdy, handsome youth had actually graduated from senior middle school.

"How did you manage to graduate?" Wu questioned him.

"There wasn't any difficulty in those years," Chang answered naively. "All our teachers were afraid we'd beat them up, so they never made us repeat our courses. We all copied each other's work and automatically graduated."

His words confirmed Wu's first impressions. She'd already decided that he wasn't up to university standard. It would be futile to continue the examination, since he was so ignorant and lacking in ambition. Unfortunately he was a typical victim of the fascist control over culture exercised by the "gang of four" during the Cultural Revolution. Wu decided to cut short this exam by saying: "Did you read the enrolment regulations?"

Chang stared at her, uncertain how to reply, embarrassed by the scornful glances of the other candidates and the questioning eyes of the examiners. He felt very embarrassed and humiliated. Angrily he shouted: "I ... I love the cinema. I can act! I want to act in films! I hope..."

Wu and the others stared at him in surprise. She wondered what she should say to this poor youth. Calmly she asked: "What sort of roles could you play?"

"I ... I could be an illiterate serf, a coolie or a slave in the old-society..." Chang replied seriously.

The hall was so quiet, you could have heard a pin drop. Chang's words had touched everyone. The atmosphere had immediately altered. Everyone asked himself how come this young man had turned out to be like an "illiterate", a "coolie" or "slave". Wu felt tears pricking her eyes.

Chang saw this and, sensing her sympathy, he continued: "If I had studied well, I would have tried to become an engineer." Wu wished she could help him. She spoke seriously to Chang: "But don't you see that the part of an illiterate isn't played by one..."

"Then..." Chang implored Wu in despair, "You mean I can't act any part at all?"

"Chang Chieh, you must go back and study to make up for what you have lost," Wu explained.



Chang considered this, his mouth trembling. Then claspng both hands, he looked out of the window as his anger mounted into rage. Suddenly he shouted loudly: "Give me back my lost youth, you diabolical, fascist 'gang of four'!" Pain, outrage and hatred showed in his face.

His voice echoed round the hall. Wang Hsiao-lei bit her lip in anger as she remembered her days in prison, when her youth had been taken from her by those same fascists. The older generation of actors and teachers remembered their wasted days, their careers interrupted. Wu herself was filled with painful memories of those years suppressed by the "gang of four".

The hall was silent for a long time, as everyone felt their own private hatred of the gang. Instead of sneering at Chang, all now felt a deep bond of sympathy with him. Wu stood up realizing how Chang had awakened this deep response in his audience. So she encouraged him: "Carry on with your examination, please."

Chang wiped away his tears and regained control of himself as he walked to the stage. "But how can I act a piece?" he asked.

"Raise your head," Wu said gently, "and just be yourself. Accuse the 'gang of four' of all your sufferings. Express your feelings so that everyone can identify theirs with yours."

"Is that all?" Chang chuckled. Then to everyone's surprise words poured fluently and feelingly from him. At the end he said: "Thank you. That's my piece finished."

Illustrated by Hsu Hsi

Hsiao Fu-hsing

The Quarrel in the Store

It was the Sunday just before the Chinese Lunar New Year. The Yungmao Store had no sooner opened than people crowded in. It was soon packed to overflowing. The festive atmosphere was earlier here than in other shops, as the customers smilingly left the counters with boxes and packages of all shapes and sizes. The shop-assistants were practically run off their feet attending to the crowds.

Behind the dress counter was a new young assistant, who had only been working for about a month. Clever and eager to learn, Pi Li-ping had been given a lot of help by a more experienced older comrade, Shang. Li-ping was just saying goodbye to a customer when a girl came to her counter and took out a blue drill jacket. She asked Shang if she could change it for another. It was a common practice to exchange goods that didn't fit or suit the customers.

Li-ping had come across a few such cases herself, but this particular girl infuriated her. It seemed to her she had been here making trouble every Sunday. She drew closer to make sure she was the same girl. About her size, though four or five years older, with a pretty face, arched eyebrows and a mole below her left ear. Yes, there was no question. It was her all right!

Li-ping recalled the first time she had seen her, when she'd come in window-shopping. Of course, not everyone bought something, so that wasn't unusual. But what was strange was the way she scrutinized every article on the rack and at the counter, then stood back to survey everything from a distance, as if she were watching a performance. She looked absolutely fascinated.

A young man also intrigued Li-ping that day when he entered and stared at both her and Shang for the best part of an hour, a file under his arm. Li-ping dismissed both him and the girl as a pair of cranks.

The following Sunday, the man arrived first, looked around and made some sketches on a pad. He was about to leave when the girl entered and made straight for the clothes counter. The young man changed his mind and remained to watch what went on at the counter.

The girl asked Shang for two jackets, a polyester and a woollen pair of trousers from the rack. Shang patiently explained their different qualities and prices. After examining the clothes, the girl simply said: "Thanks very much, Comrade Shang. I don't want them, but you've been very kind and patient." Li-ping was astounded. Not buy something! She wanted to tell her to make up her mind and stop wasting their time. If everyone was like her, they'd get no work done.

Instead she heard Shang saying: "Not at all. We'd like to hear your opinions and suggestions. Are you buying for yourself or for someone else? Perhaps we can advise you if you aren't too sure about the material. Of course, you want the best bargain. A jacket ought to last for some years. It's very upsetting to buy something you don't like."

The girl became rather embarrassed and stammered: "I . . . er . . . I'm buying them for another girl who's about my age and size. . . ."

"Well, there are several kinds of jackets in stock at the moment," Shang went on. "We've got some western or uniform ones, and some with raglan sleeves. By the way, does your friend want it for winter wear or just for spring and autumn? The collars have various designs too. Some are round, others are like a coat

collar. It's up to you. Personally, I think that coat collar design suits you best. That's one of our latest ones and it looks good on you."

The girl blinked and listened attentively. Li-ping felt sure she would have to buy one this time, but she did not. All she said was: "Thank you again. I'll see next time." Then she left. Perhaps she wanted to think it over.

The young man watched everything, nodding to himself. He gazed at Shang for a while and then left. He seemed to just enjoy watching Shang at work.

Another week passed. On the third Sunday they both turned up again. This time, the young man had brought an easel with him and after working for a while he left. Nobody could figure out what he was up to.

The girl asked again for jackets and spread them all over the counter. Eventually she picked out three she liked. One was made of woollen polyester, the second of a heavy drill and the third pure wool. Again Shang patiently explained the differences to her and how to wash them. Customers like her were a lot of trouble. She kept pestering Shang with questions, which Li-ping would never have been able to answer, even if she had had the patience to do so. But Shang answered them all very politely.

The girl smiled, dimpling. Happily she bought the heavy drill jacket and gratefully said to Shang: "Thank you so much for all your help."

"You're welcome," he replied, wrapping up the jacket. He met all kinds of customers each day and he had a way of making even the impatient and bad-tempered ones calm. Li-ping had been glad to see the back of her when she finally left. She felt as if a weight had been lifted.

Yet here the girl was, back again with the jacket after all the fuss she had created. Li-ping was furious. Before Shang could take the jacket, she grabbed it, determined to deal with the girl once and for all. Who did the girl think she was, causing so much trouble?

Li-ping examined the jacket carefully, trying to find an excuse for refusing to take it back. She immediately noticed a dark stain

on the collar. Wonderful! Pointing at it, she said without looking up: "You can't exchange this."

"But why not? It doesn't fit me properly."

"Why not? It's obvious why not."

Hearing Li-ping's curt tone, the girl asked jokingly: "Then what shall I do with it? Throw it in the dustbin?"

"I couldn't care less. It's none of our business," Li-ping retorted rudely.

The girl, managing to keep her temper, remarked: "Look, the 'gang of four' have gone. Times have changed. Good service is expected everywhere now. But your attitude. . . ."

Li-ping cut her short: "You're not the only customer in the shop. Good service or not, what you say isn't important."

To prevent a scene, Shang intervened at this point by taking the jacket and examining it. The girl immediately pleaded with him: "What do you think, Comrade Shang?"

Afraid that Shang might give in, Li-ping interjected: "According to rules we can't accept it."

The girl, however, pressed Shang: "But what can I do? I can't change it, yet I can't wear it."

Some of the customers took sides, supporting Li-ping or the girl. Others were in a hurry to buy their purchases and leave. A commotion began in the store.

At this a young man elbowed his way through the crowd, a file under his arm. He went towards Li-ping and said to the customers: "I've seen everything here." Then he turned to the girl: "It would be wrong to change it. Look here, the collar's soiled. It's your own fault."

Li-ping recognized the young man.

Then Shang spoke: "We always change jackets and other garments if they don't fit. That's only fair. But if something is stained, like this collar, then I'm sorry but we can't give you a new one. Those are our rules."

Li-ping was pleased that Shang had calmed down the customers and reasoned so well with the girl. She shot her a quick glance while Shang continued: "But of course it's a shame to have it and not be able to wear it. So how about this? We take it back

as a reject and refund you eighty-five per cent of the original price. Then you just have to make up the difference to buy a new one. What do you think?"

Shang was really experienced. It was a good idea, Li-ping thought. The problem was solved. She couldn't help but admire the old man. The girl was happy too.

Li-ping remembered what Shang had often said to her: "If a customer isn't happy with his purchase, he'll be upset for days. And that naturally affects his work for our socialist society. It's most important that we do our job well and consider the customers. In that way we really serve the people." He's right, thought Li-ping, looking round at all the customers who were nodding in agreement with Shang's decision.

The girl was touched and put the jacket back into her bag. Li-ping was puzzled. Couldn't she pay the fifteen per cent difference for a new one? Did the jacket perhaps fit her after all?

"I'm sorry to have caused you so much trouble," the girl said shaking Shang's hand. "You are so kind and I've learned so much from you."

"Now, now," said Shang. "Never mind about that. There's a lot more we could do to serve our customers better and we want you to help us do it."

Li-ping could see why Shang was always being cited as a model shop assistant. Despite his age, the old man was always trying to do his best to serve the people. Then she heard the young man say to the girl: "You'd better think twice before you buy anything. . . ."

"Yes, but let me explain something first," the girl answered with a smile. They walked out and Li-ping watched them go to talk under a mimosa tree. . . .

Half a year passed. The mimosa tree in front of the Yungmao Store was laden with fluffy blossoms that looked from a distance like a red cloud. It was Sunday evening and the store was about to close. Just then a young man rushed in. Looking round he asked Li-ping: "Where is Comrade Shang?" Li-ping explained that he was away at a conference of model workers in commerce

but that he was due to return in a couple of days. Fishing out two invitations, the young man said: "These are for you and Comrade Shang. Please come."

Li-ping wondered who the young man was. After so many months, she no longer recognized him.

She opened her mouth to ask what it was all about, when the young man said quickly: "I'm in an awful hurry. I'll explain everything when you come. I must dash. Goodbye!" And with that he left.

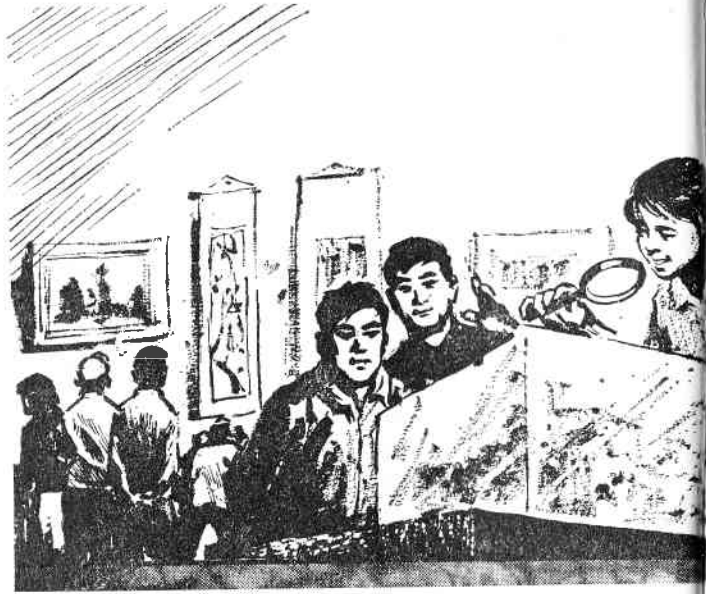
Li-ping looked at the invitations. They were for a preview of an arts and crafts exhibition that was going to be sent to Latin America. She wondered what that had to do with Shang and her. The young man sounded very serious. It was all very puzzling.

As soon as Shang returned, she showed the invitations to him and he couldn't figure it out either. On the following Sunday they went there.

There was so much to see. Each exhibit demonstrated the fine craftsmanship of the workers. The exhibition showed Chinese traditional arts at their best. Li-ping excitedly went here and there fascinated by everything.

Then they came to a stone carving, which so surprised them that they stood rooted to the spot in front of it for a long time.

It was the Yungmao Store, carved out of a beautiful translucent stone. The man serving the customers was the spitting image of Shang, while the girl with pigtailed was unmistakably Li-ping. It was so well done that even the wrinkles on the old man's forehead were visible. The man's stance was exactly like Shang's. It was really true to life. Even small details like the store badge on Shang's chest and the ribbons in Li-ping's hair had not been neglected. The carving was elaborately designed so that the red of the stone became the red of the mimosa flowers. The natural hues of precious stones such as malachites, agates and others were turned into blue hills, a green river, golden wheat and dark tall chimneys. It seemed to show that although the store was small it was a part of the community.



Li-ping was thrilled. Her eyes, like the stones, sparkled with happiness. Turning to Shang she was surprised to see the old man's eyes fill with tears. Memories of those bitter days before Liberation flooded his mind. He'd been a shop assistant for forty years, and in those days no one had ever cared about him.

"Comrade Shang!" The words jolted Shang out of the past. Standing by them were the fussy girl customer and the young man.

Li-ping remembered the quarrel months ago in the store. For a moment she didn't know what to say. Then Shang cried: "Hsiao Teng, so you're here too! Small world isn't it?" Li-ping racked her brains. How could Shang know her name?

"Let me introduce you two," Shang said. "This is Hsiao Teng, a model shop assistant from Hsinming. I got to know her at the conference. Hsiao Teng, this is Pi Li-ping."

Shang then told Li-ping about the reasons for their quarrel. Hsiao Teng had wanted to learn more about her work, and so she had pretended to be a troublesome customer to see how Shang



handled the situation. She hoped one day to be as good a shop assistant as Shang. This made everyone laugh.

"I'm Comrade Shang's student," Hsiao Teng said seriously. "I've put all the problems I usually meet in my work before him and I've learnt so much from him."

Li-ping asked her about the jacket. Everyone laughed again at the incident. Hsiao Teng pointed and said: "Can't you see, I'm wearing it now. Don't you think it's a perfect fit?"

"What a cheat!" Li-ping gave her a friendly punch on the arm. "So it was all a plot at my expense!"

"Yes, but you should ask him what happened after that." Hsiao Teng pointed at the young man.

He smiled and explained: "Well, I'd been thinking of carving a shop assistant for some time. I'd heard that Comrade Shang was a model worker, so I came to your store. But I thought it would be more natural if I didn't mention what I was doing. I came every Sunday..." He paused for a moment looking at Hsiao Teng, before continuing: "Shang's kindness that day you quarrelled

really moved me. That decided me, and so I set to work. I gave my carving a title. It's *The Friendly Little Store*. It took me six months to finish it. Of course, more experienced craftsmen helped me too. I'd like to know what you think of it. You're the best people to judge."

Shang and Li-ping exchanged looks and then turned again to the stone carving in the glass case. Shang took the young man's hand and said: "Your carving will be a great encouragement to us in our work. Actually, we've never done very much, but this is a great honour. We'll work even harder in future. Isn't that so, Li-ping?"

The girl nodded.

Later, after they'd left the exhibition and were alone, Li-ping asked Shang: "How do those two know each other?"

The old man winked: "It was after your quarrel in the store that they got acquainted. Before that they'd never spoken to each other. Don't you remember how they squabbled over that jacket. That quarrel started their friendship."

"And I knew nothing about it all this time," smiled Li-ping and they both laughed merrily.

"Let us go now to Hsiao Teng's store to see what we could learn from her," said Shang, waving his hand in that direction.

Illustrated by Chiang Chen-li

Ho Yi

The Chicken Who Became a Phoenix

A muddy stream wound its way through a stretch of reedy marshland. By the water, a purple hen sat in her nest on her fifteen eggs.

"Twenty days have passed," she cackled as she stretched herself. She looked worn out. "Another day and my little darlings will be hatched. I wonder what they'll look like when they grow up?"

Just then a phoenix flew across the sky, singing. Her beautiful plumage shone brightly.

The hen looked up at her in admiration.

"What a beauty she is! If only my chicks could grow up into phoenixes!" Then a wild thought came into her head, but she immediately reproached herself for it. "What nonsense! She is a magical bird. We are just common fowls. How can a chicken become a phoenix? I mustn't be silly and think such crazy thoughts."

But she couldn't help thinking about her brood and their future. While she was day-dreaming an evil snake slithered out of the

muddy water and saw the hen lost in thought. Flashing his forked tongue, he fixed his greedy eyes on the poor bird.

Silently he crawled to the nest and attacked, killing the hen with one bite. One by one he began to gobble the eggs, until fourteen had been devoured. As he was reaching for the last one, his mouth wide open, a big bird swooped down from the sky like lightning and snatched up the snake. It carried the snake high into the air and then dashed it down on the ground with all its force.

The wicked snake got what it deserved.

The big bird was none other than the phoenix.

"What a pity I came too late," the bird sighed. "The mother hen is dead and only one egg is left. What shall I do?"

Examining the egg carefully, she heard a movement from inside the shell.

"That poor little orphan will soon be hatched. Unless I protect it, its life will again be in danger," she decided.

Acting as a foster-mother, she sat on the egg, until early the next morning a fluffy, little chicken emerged from the shell.

"Mummy! Mummy!" cheeped the tiny chicken.

"My poor baby!" The phoenix embraced the little chicken and fed it some food from her beak.

Five days passed. The chicken grew big and strong enough to run, jump, flap his wings and search for food for himself.

"Why don't I look like you, mummy?" he asked puzzled, nestling up to the phoenix.

Smiling she answered: "Because you are a chicken." After a moment she added, "To tell you the truth, I'm not your real mother, poor child! Your mother was a purple hen."

"Then where is she?"

"A wicked snake killed her."

"Then I'll kill that murderer!" the chicken vowed through his sobs.

"Don't cry now, my darling pet! I've already punished him with death." The phoenix tried to comfort him. "There are plenty of bad snakes and evil-doers around, who are our deadly enemies."

The chicken swore to kill them all.



"Well said, my dear!"

"If I am a chicken, what sort of bird are you?" he asked.

"I'm a phoenix."

"What's that?"

"A bird who helps to make other birds happy," his foster-mother explained.

"Mother phoenix, I'll try to follow your example when I grow up," the chicken declared.

"Wonderful!" The phoenix was overjoyed. "I wasn't born a phoenix, just an ordinary bird. If you are determined, you will succeed. Tomorrow I must leave you because I have a lot of work to do. So you must learn to take care of yourself."

"What shall I do?" The little chicken was very unhappy.

"You'll be all right. Don't worry. Look, you have a pair of wings. If you don't try to use them, they'll never be strong enough for you to fly away. You have a beak and claws. These are our weapons. Keep them sharp and learn to use them. You can't become a phoenix by sitting in your nest or sticking close to me. No, from now on you are on your own and up against the real

world. Wherever you go you must always help others. Now I'll teach you how to fly. You won't be a chicken any more once you can fly long distances."

Patiently the phoenix taught the chicken how to fly. It was very difficult for him, but he persevered, even though he ached all over from several bad falls.

The phoenix rejoiced at his tenacity. After he had rested for a while, she taught him how to use his beak and claws. He practised continually and wouldn't stop even though he was completely exhausted.

The phoenix was delighted: "Just keep this up and you are bound to succeed."

The next day the phoenix flew away. The chicken felt very miserable but he didn't cry.

He continued practising flying and using his beak and claws.

The days passed. Gradually he learnt to fly over some shrubs, then a pine-tree grove, a lake and finally over some high mountains. His beak grew hard and sharp enough to crack a nut, snap a branch or even peck a hole in a tree. With his claws he could snatch up while in flight a piece of food, a stone or even a small animal.

Following the advice of his foster-mother, he left his nest to join the vast sky world of the birds.

"Goodbye, home!" He circled round and round his nest by the muddy river soaring higher and higher until it became a faint black dot.

Flying over a lake, he saw his reflection mirrored in the water. On his head was a fine comb. His neck and cheek feathers were green, his eyes scarlet, and his plumage had a dazzling sheen. His tail was as beautiful as a pheasant's.

He flew a long way over many lakes and mountains, eating bitter herbs when he was hungry and drinking cold water when he was thirsty. At night he rested, perched on a high cliff. His wings grew stronger, his eyes sharper and his beak and claws more powerful.

One day, while flying over a village, he noticed a hen with a brood of chickens. They were scratching in a pile of grass for

food. The hen was scattering the grass with her claws and pecking out the fat worms for her chickens, who were enjoying their meal.

Suddenly a hawk appeared. He circled them and then swiftly swooped down on his prey. Cackling in fright, the hen puffed out her feathers, while her terrified chickens scurried to hide themselves under her wings.

Seeing their danger, the chicken who wanted to be a phoenix followed the hawk. Just as the hawk stretched out his claws towards the hen, he felt a current of air over his head. As he looked up in surprise, the brave chicken pecked one of his eyes. Screaming in pain, the blood pouring from the wound, the hawk desperately tried to grab the chicken who dodged away and then pecked at the hawk's other eye. The hawk flapped about blindly in the air. Then the chicken swooped down on him again and pecked him so hard on the head that he dropped to the earth like a stone.

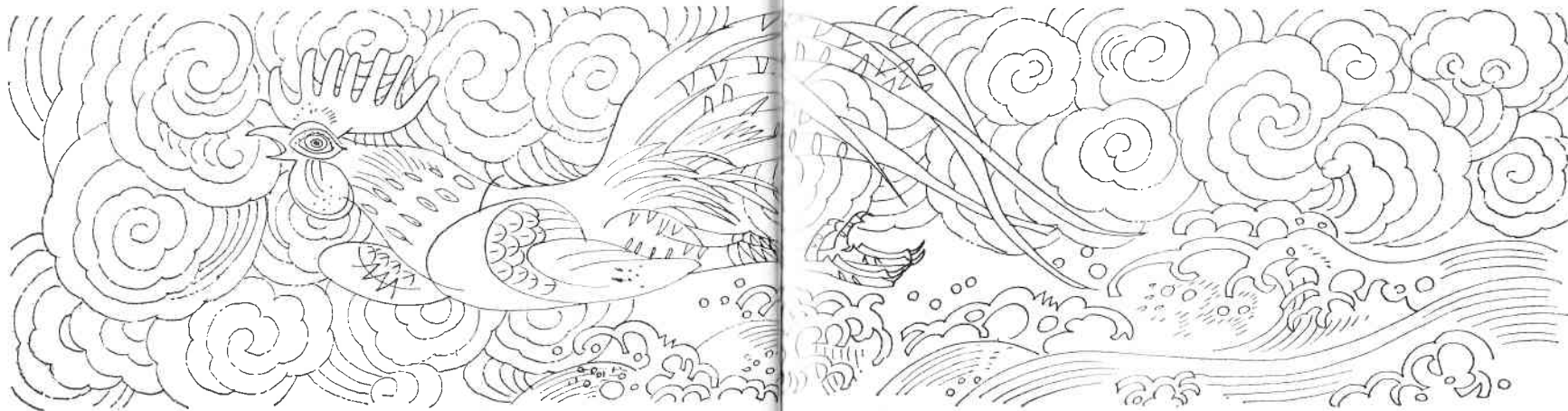
The hen poured out her gratitude to her rescuer, but the chicken said modestly: "It was nothing. I just did what I could."

He continued on his way until he came to a lake near some mountains. Here the weather suddenly changed. The wind howled and dark clouds covered the sky. The blue water in the lake turned dark, and it seemed as if the island in the middle of the lake would be swallowed up by the huge waves. The rain lashed down.

Braving the storm, the chicken continued flying, drenched by the rain and buffeted by the wind. It took all his strength to wing his way forward, to the other side of the lake, yet after a long while he still hadn't reached it.

Then he heard a call for help coming from the lake. Someone must have fallen in, he thought. Scanning the rough water with his keen eyes, he spotted a woodpecker struggling for his life in the water. He was on the point of drowning.

The chicken swooped down to save the bird and snatched him up in his claws, but still the waves submerged them both. Determined to rescue the poor bird, the chicken tightened his grip and with all his might lifted the woodpecker out of the water and flew with him to the island. There he deposited the bird safely on a tree.



The woodpecker was deeply grateful to him for saving his life, and explained: "I was pecking at a tree to rid it of worms, when a strong gust of wind blew me into the lake. But for you I would have drowned. How can I ever thank you for saving me?"

"It was nothing. I just did what I could."

Once the storm had abated and the blue sky's reflection could be seen again in the lake, the chicken took his leave of the woodpecker and resumed his flight. By day he patrolled the forests, grasslands, mountains or coast. At night he slept perched on rocks or precipices. Whatever the weather and in all seasons, he helped the other birds in every way that he could.

Time passed. One day he saw an oriole at the edge of a forest sitting on a tall tree crying bitterly.

"Why are you so sad?" asked the chicken.

"I've lost my little daughter," answered the oriole. "I've looked everywhere for her, but I can't find her. I'm afraid she may have been caught by a fox or eagle."

"Don't worry. I'll help you search for her and perhaps we'll find her." So saying he flew off into the forest.

Searching carefully he came across a turtle-dove and told her: "The oriole has lost her daughter. Have you seen her?"

The turtle-dove hadn't, but she suggested: "Go and ask the skylark. She always plays high in the sky and makes friends with all the song-birds. Perhaps she knows where the little oriole is?"

The chicken found the skylark under a white cloud and asked her about the missing bird.

"Yes, I saw her this morning," replied the skylark. "We were singing and playing together. Then she flew westwards."

The chicken hurried off in that direction, until he saw rising from the forest a column of smoke.

"Oh! The forest is on fire! I must call everyone to extinguish it."

Just then he heard a cry for help. Someone was trapped in the smoke. There was no time to be lost. He raced into the dense cloud and found the little oriole flapping her wings wildly, almost suffocated by the smoke. Holding her tightly in his claws he flew with her into the fresh air.

"It's too dangerous here," he told her. "Your mother is waiting for you over there by the edge of the forest. Go on! Hurry up!"

After thanking him, the little bird flew away, while the chicken raised the alarm. Thousands of birds and animals who lived in the forest came to fight the fire with branches and sand. The

chicken soaked himself in some water and then tried to douse a burning tree with his dripping feathers.

Time and again he did this until his feathers were singed and his breast badly burnt. All the time he worked with and encouraged the others.

He ached all over. His eyes smarted, his throat was parched. Although totally exhausted, he still fought on. The fire still raged. Wetting his feathers he dashed once more into the flames, but this time he fainted and fell into the blaze.

All the birds and animals were horrified and wept over the loss of their brave friend. Then the chicken rose from the flames into the sky. He had been transformed. His body was much larger and his plumage shone with golden rays. When he flapped his wings the smoke dispersed. Suddenly there was a rumble of thunder and flash of lightning. Then the rain poured down.

The fire was soon put out. The forest was once again green. All the animals and birds cheered, and a young phoenix hovered in the sky.

Illustrated by Chiang Tieb-feng

Wang Chih-yun

The Egg That Ran Away

A speckled hen called "Speckles" laid a beautiful pinkish coloured egg that looked just as if it had been carved out of amber.

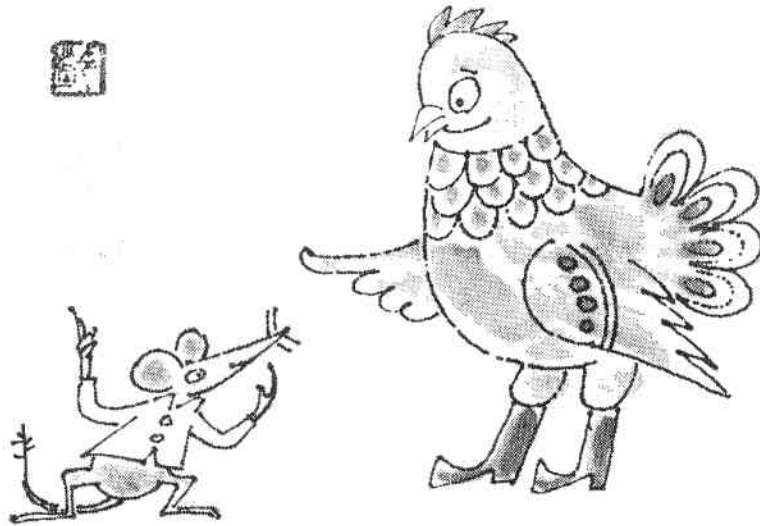
It was her first egg. She was so happy that she was flushed with excitement.

Jumping down happily from her nesting box she was about to rush out and announce her achievement so that all her neighbours could praise her. Then she stopped suddenly. Should she tell every one immediately or should she take another peep at her egg?

She stood at the threshold and glanced proudly back at her egg. The more she looked, the prouder she felt. She imagined what a fine chicken she would hatch.

So she jumped up on to her nesting box again and fondly pecked her egg. It rolled a little with the movement and in alarm she flapped her wings to stop it. Then she gently nudged it to the centre of nest. "What a fright you gave me, you little rascal!" she laughed. Then she spread her wings and ran outdoors clucking, her cackles filling the village air.

Summer was approaching. Poplar leaves hung limp in the noon sun. When a breath of a breeze set the leaves fluttering, it was like hundreds of tiny green handkerchiefs waving a greeting.



The movement of the leaves worried Speckles. Perhaps her egg would be blown down and smashed. She began to run back.

On entering her nesting-box, she was horrified.

Her little egg had disappeared!

She searched the box from top to bottom. Only a shadow flashed against the wall. She went back out into the dazzling sunlight and screwed up her eyes. Peering around she spotted an ugly little grey-haired animal with two round ears, a pouting mouth and a few whiskers. It also had a long hairless tail.

Before Speckles could open her mouth, the animal said: "Your feathers are much prettier than the peacock's and your singing is sweeter than the lark's, Sister Speckles."

"Who are you?" asked Speckles.

"Me? I'm Mouse."

"Mouse. Then you are always stealing things, aren't you?"

"Oh no! But if I do something wrong, then I criticize myself and pluck out one of my whiskers. Of course it hurts, but I don't mind that. As time goes on, my moustache gets thinner."

Ugly as he was, it seemed he had a heart of gold. So thinking highly of him, she confessed: "I've just laid my first egg, but

now it's disappeared and I don't know where it has gone. Have you seen it by any chance?"

"What? But you invited everyone to come and have a look just now." The mouse seemed genuinely flabbergasted. "I came here to see it as soon as I heard your announcement. Perhaps your egg's playing outside."

"How can it? It hasn't any legs."

"Well, perhaps they popped out just as you went to tell everyone."

"So quickly?" asked Speckles surprised.

"Oh yes. As soon as I lay my eggs, out come the legs. I watch them growing one by one. Don't you believe me?"

Now Speckles didn't know that mice couldn't lay eggs; since this one said he could, perhaps it was so. He looked so sincere, how could she help but believe him.

"You must hurry and find it, or perhaps it will fall in the river and be drowned. I'd like to help you look for him, but my neighbour, Big Cat, wants me to help him make some clothes. He's such a lazy fellow and I can't just leave him naked like that. I must dash off now, and you'd better get a move on too."

So saying he was out of sight before Speckles could say goodbye.

Not losing a moment she set off anxiously clucking and thinking to herself: "Whoever saw an egg with legs?"

As she went up a slope she noticed in the distance a duck waddling towards her. It was her good friend, Fatty, so named because she was rather fat. She flapped her wings and quacked: "Congratulations!"

"No time for that. My little egg's run away," Speckles sniffed.

Fatty wobbled and bumped into Speckles. "What! Your egg's run away?"

"Yes."

Fatty thought for a moment before speaking, "In our last meeting we criticized you for your naivety and foolish chatter. But now..."

"But I've changed. You can't hold that against me."

"Well, how can an egg run away? Are you sure you really laid an egg?"

"Of course I did! And now it has run away."

"How could it? It hasn't got legs like us." And with this Fatty scornfully turned away.

Seeing Fatty waddling away, Speckles muttered unhappily: "I thought of you as a sister. But now when I needed your help, you just scolded me."

Speckles felt Fatty had been unjust and wept. Walking along she kept asking: "Has anyone seen my little egg with legs?"

Her clucking roused White Paw, a yellow dog who guarded an orchard. Getting up, he walked towards Speckles. Though they were neighbours, Speckles disliked him. His loud barking often grated on her ears or woke her from her dreams. If he was in a bad temper, he gave everyone a piece of his mind. The other day Speckles had been caught by White Paw, helping herself to some grain in the wheat field. He had given her a severe telling off before letting her go.

Seeing Speckles look so distressed, White Paw asked: "What's the matter?"

Normally she would have cut him dead, but in her misery she wept: "My little egg, my very first egg, has run away."

"You must be joking!" White Paw laughed.

"No! No!" Speckles stamped the ground.

"Well, did you actually see it running away? I mean, how can an egg have legs?" White Paw thought to himself that there was something very odd about all this.

"If I'd seen it, do you think I would have let it get away? No, it was that mouse told me that eggs grow legs as soon as they're laid, and that his eggs grow two more legs than mine."

"What rubbish! How could you believe a thieving trickster like him?"

"But he's not a thief. He's gentle and very polite. Whenever he makes a mistake, he plucks out a whisker. He never tells lies."

"You're so naive, little Speckles."

"No, I'm not," Speckles said angrily. Then she asked: "Are you sure it can't run away? Then can it fly away?"

White Paw was so irritated by her stupidity that he felt like giving her another piece of his mind, but seeing the tears still on

her face, he kept his temper and suggested: "If you ask me, that mouse stole your egg."

But Speckles refused to listen to him. "You all criticized me for not knowing my own mind and since then I've changed. I listen to the truth. Now that mouse's head is much smaller than my egg, so how could he have eaten it?"

Almost at the end of his patience, White Paw with difficulty said: "Listen, there are red ants in the south that can eat a crocodile alive..."

"But they aren't here." Speckles thought White Paw was too academic.

"I mean..."

"Oh, stop wasting my time with your nonsense! If I don't hurry, my egg will have run further away." And with this she trotted off.

White Paw was furious and barked loudly after her: "You stupid fool! Just you wait. Your next egg will be stolen too."

As Speckles disappeared, White Paw felt some remorse for not having helped the foolish hen to see the truth. Instead he had made her more unhappy. Bowing his head, he decided to go and talk to Fatty about the problem.

When Fatty heard White Paw's tale, she too confessed to not having helped Speckles enough.

So they both went in search of Speckles, looking everywhere but to no avail. In the heat of the day, they finally ran to her home, panting with exhaustion while they discussed her problem.

The next afternoon, Speckles laid her second egg. To the observer the two eggs appeared identical, but to Speckles the second was fairer and more pointed. She felt certain it would become a beautiful speckled chicken, once it had hatched. Perhaps her first one would have been a cheeky cock. Thinking of this, Speckles sighed.

At this moment, Mouse sneaked in. "Have you laid another egg, Sister Speckles?" he asked. "I felt it in my bones and so I came to congratulate you."

"Why, how kind of you. Please sit down."

As he crouched down to peep at the egg. Mouse said: "Aren't you lucky! This egg is much larger than the last one." His greedy eyes were fixed on the egg.

"No, they were about the same size I think. Perhaps this one's a bit more pointed." Then suddenly it struck her: "But you said you never saw my first egg, so how come you know this one is bigger?"

Mouse thought quickly, knowing he had given himself away. He grinned: "Because normally the second egg is always bigger than the first."

This chased away the suspicion Speckles had harboured.

Mouse suggested: "Why not go and tell everyone about your egg, so that they can come and congratulate you."

Speckles glanced fondly at her egg. "No. I don't want to leave this one unguarded."

"Naturally. You'd be very upset if it also ran away." Suddenly Mouse tapped his head and said: "Oh, I'm such an idiot! Seeing your beautiful new egg, I forgot to tell you something terribly important. I must pluck out three of my whiskers for that mistake." So saying, he pulled out three of his whiskers, the tears welling in his eyes.

"Please don't do that," soft-hearted Speckles stopped him. "Just tell me what you wanted to say."

"On my way here, I saw an egg playing..."

"Oh! That must be my little egg. Where was it?" Anxiously she jumped out of her nesting-box.

"It was in your backyard. It looked as if it was making for the peach orchard. Hurry up in case that yellow dog eats it. Your egg is so small compared to him!"

Already half out of the door, Speckles turned to Mouse and asked: "Would you mind keeping an eye on my little egg for me?"

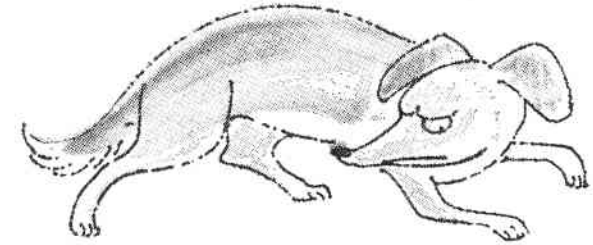
"Of course. Don't worry."

Reassured, Speckles raced off. Sure enough, she found a pinkish egg in her backyard rolling towards the peach orchard.

"Hey! Stop!" clucked Speckles.

But the egg with legs only ran faster than before.

Speckles stopped calling and flapping her wings flew to the egg.



They entered the orchard at the same time, but in a flash the egg had disappeared among the weeds. While Speckles was searching for it, White Paw leapt out from behind a tree and quickly snapped at something and threw it at Speckles.

Speckles screamed and closed her eyes. "How could you smash my darling egg to death?" But when she opened her eyes, she gaped in astonishment. At her feet were a dead mouse and a broken shell.

Unknown to Speckles, White Paw had watched the mouse creep under the shell in the backyard to fool Speckles, and so the dog had lain in wait to ambush him.

"But this isn't the kind Mouse, who's watching my egg for me."

"You'd better go home quickly or your second egg will have disappeared," snapped White Paw dragging her homewards.

Speckles foolishly followed behind him.

But instead of going to Speckles' home, he took her to his place where Fatty was waiting, craning her neck to peer through a hole in the wall at something on the other side. Then she whispered to Speckles: "Come and have a look at this."



Speckles was dumbfounded. There was Mouse lying on his back, her egg on his belly, while a bigger mouse lugged him by the tail to the door.

White Paw said to Speckles in a low voice: "Now do you see what your kind-hearted Mouse is up to."

Speckles could only hiss with hatred: "Just let me peck him to death."

"Keep calm!" White Paw restrained her and then whispered something to Fatty, who nodded.

Then Speckles and Fatty ran squawking into Speckles' home.

Terrified the two mice squeaked. Mouse abandoned the egg and raced towards the chink in the wall to escape, deserting his friend. But his way was blocked by Fatty who had been directed earlier by White Paw to stand there. Then Mouse turned to sneak out, Speckles' attention being focused on the bigger mouse, but he found barring his escape route a dog's head.

"Please let me go, sir," he begged. "As the ancients say, a dog never interferes in a mouse's affairs. We've no grudge against each other, so please. . . ."

White Paw jeered: "The ancients also say, to show mercy to an evil-doer is to commit a crime oneself."

And with that the treacherous mouse was finished.

Illustrated by Miao Yin-tang

Chao Pien

Liu Hsin-wu's Short Stories

"I graduated from Peking Teachers Training College in 1961 and taught in high school until 1976. During this period, I was a class teacher for about ten years. So I was familiar with the life of the school teachers and students and felt an urge to write about it."

Liu Hsin-wu, the author of *The Class Teacher* and *A Place for Love*, was an avid reader as a boy. He had written many short stories before *The Class Teacher* which has been widely acclaimed since its publication in China's main literary magazine *People's Literature* in 1977.

We interviewed him in his office at the Peking People's Publishing House where he works as an editor, to find out how he had come to write this popular short story.

"After the fall of the 'gang of four' in October 1976, I often thought back to my time as a teacher. Familiar faces of all kinds kept coming into my mind. All I went through in those days — the good and the bad — impelled me to write a short story."

Liu reached this decision one summer night in 1977, when he worked out the basic plot. Already he had a vivid mental pic-



Young writer Liu Hsin-wu

ture of the chief characters. He could hardly wait to pick up his pen and start writing.

However, he hesitated. One of the main characters he envisaged for the story was a juvenile delinquent, and that was unheard of in contemporary fiction in China. Was it right to portray such a character in such a setting?

He had read some stories dealing with school life, such as tales about paralysed students or seriously ill teachers who struggled

to cross turbulent rivers or to rescue somebody who had fallen through the ice. The plots were moving, of course. But the daily round of teaching involved fearful struggles too. The broken windows and doors of the school buildings, the graffiti the children scribbled on their exercise books, showed how seriously the educational system had been disrupted by the "gang of four". More serious still was the way they had poisoned young people's minds. Working for fifteen years in this field, Liu was outraged by the damage done by the gang. His heart bled when his students ran wild, turned into cynics or committed crimes. Some others became bigoted and ignorant.

It was a problem affecting the future of China and worrying millions of people. Had he the courage to tackle it in a story?

Night had fallen. All was quiet except for the faint scratching of a pen on paper. He wrote that Class Teacher Chang decided to take into his class the young hooligan Sung Pao-chi who had just been released from detention, and the argument this gave rise to among the teachers. Then he introduced Hsieh Hui-min, girl secretary of the Youth League branch. . . . Then, like a boat caught in a whirlpool, he could not continue.

Here was another problem. Readers might accept Sung Pao-chi, but how about a girl generally regarded as a model student?

Would it be acceptable to present her as someone whose whole mental outlook was warped?

Never before had he been in such a dilemma. He turned the question over in his mind.

The girl could have been depicted as a positive character who eagerly helped the class teacher to reform Sung, and then the story would have a happy ending. But Liu chose to write it in another way.

Spring had brought fresh life to the earth, but the ravages of winter had not yet been completely eradicated. No one in literary circles dared challenge Chiang Ching's theory that the basic task of socialist literature and art is to portray proletarian heroes. When the comedy *When the Maple Leaves Turn Red* was staged, public opinion about it was divided because the main characters were followers of the "gang of four". Would people consider stories like *The Class Teacher* as "literature of exposure"? He asked himself many such questions and answered them one by one. He was not looking for trouble but felt like a man who, coming out of a dark room, was unable to open his eyes in a bright place. The kind of thing he wanted to write had been taboo for so many years that it was not easy, in a short time, to liberate his mind.

"All the dark forces harming the masses of the people must be exposed." Liu was encouraged by Chairman Mao's words and determined to make a thorough analysis of Hsieh regardless of the conventions. This would expose the criminal harm done by the gang to society and the younger generation.

Another summer night in Peking. When the hubbub in the large compound where Liu lived quieted down, he spread out his paper on the desk and continued writing. He had no scruples now. Characters, words and episodes flowed from his pen as if of their own accord.

The Class Teacher was completed.

The editors of *People's Literature* discussed the story and came to the unanimous conclusion that it was true to life, its message profound. Before long, it appeared in the magazine, the eleventh issue in 1977.

Soon the author and the editorial board received letters from all over the country.

A mother wrote bitterly, "Sung Pao-chi is just like my son who refuses to accept all the gifts of civilization." She confided that she had been in despair, even hoping that her "monstrous son" would meet with an early death. The story told her that it was the "gang of four" who had poisoned young people. She declared emotionally, "We can't cast him away. We must save him!"

In a collective letter more than a hundred high school teachers wrote, "Being in the same line as Teacher Chang, we are deeply moved by his sense of responsibility and realistic attitude. There are students like Sung who need rescuing and others like Hsieh who need our help. But, as in Hsieh's case, our own minds bear the imprint of the obscurantism of the gang. . . . We all resolve to be good teachers like Chang and do our bit for the nation and for the prosperity of our land."

The educational system was seriously disrupted and undermined when the "gang of four" was in power. Inevitably, that gave rise to students like Sung and Hsieh. We cannot agree more when we read the lines: "The 'gang of four' had not only trampled on China's present, but also on her future." The author's indignation voices that felt by our people. And the depth of his feeling enabled him to make *The Class Teacher* a genuinely moving story.

Liu Hsin-wu does not restrict himself to considering only types like Sung and Hsieh. He feels concern for all kinds of young people. Take Ya-mei in *A Place for Love* for example. Young as she is, Ya-mei has unconsciously become a philistine whose criterion for an ideal husband is largely materialistic. What matter to her are status, salary, property and such "practical" factors. This is not uncommon in our society. Brought up in those days when the gang fettered young people's minds, she cannot understand the meaning of "love". To her, love is something bourgeois and taboo, while getting married simply means getting registered and going through certain procedures. Even the positive characters Meng Hsiao-yu and Lu Yi-chun have to grope

their way and travel tortuous paths before they come to understand true love and its place in life.

A Place for Love roundly refutes the gang's fallacious claim that "a proletarian hero has nothing but class feeling". It is ridiculous that love should be kept out of fiction, plays and films. Articles discussing love and pointing out the correct approach to love and marriage were not allowed to be published. No wonder, then, that within a few months after the publication and broadcasting of this short story, *People's Literature* and Radio Peking received thousands of letters acclaiming it.

Liu has his own style of writing. Before setting pen to paper he makes a thoroughgoing study of his subject, and he takes as his themes important and urgent issues, presenting his own views about these problems after analysis. The characters in his stories are mostly ordinary people — teachers and students, young people and their parents and neighbours — of the kind we meet every day. The author depicts these characters' different sets of values which come into conflict. He is a serious writer who delves below the surface of life; hence his works often contain philosophical ideas and the images he creates are typical. This is why his writings are so much loved by the general reading public.

Shao Wen-chin

Yangliuching New-Year Pictures

During the Spring Festival, the traditional holiday of the Chinese people, nearly all households in the countryside paste New-Year pictures on their doors and walls to decorate their houses and welcome in the lunar New Year. This adds to the gay festive atmosphere.

New-Year wood-block pictures have a long history in China. The three best-known centres of this art are Weifang in Shantung, Taohuawu in Kiangsu and Yangliuching in Tientsin, each centre having its distinctive style. The Weifang prints were introduced in *Chinese Literature* No. 6, 1978.

Yangliuching, a small town near Tientsin, became an assembly and distribution centre of New-Year wood-block pictures early in the 17th century. Many workshops there made wood-block prints and others were collected from over thirty nearby villages. From there the pictures went to north China, the northeast and northwest and even the remote regions where minority peoples lived. In the 18th century every household in the villages near Yangliuching was adept at this craft. Customers came by boat, by cart or on foot, and the town's peak sales reached tens of millions of copies. The

distinctive feature of Yangliuching prints is the combination of wood-block printing with painting. These are integrated through the processes of designing, tracing, carving, printing, painting and mounting. In the process of wood-block printing sombre colours such as grey, dark green and deep red are widely applied to produce a print with harmonious colour tones. To improve the effect and present a striking contrast, other light and vivid colours are then painted on. The sombre, stable colours of the wood-block printing and the bright, rich ones of the painting set each other off in bold relief. The end result is fresh but not frivolous, rich but not confused, and powerful but not glaring.

Most Chinese New-Year pictures are highly decorative and use artistic exaggeration. These two features blend well in the Yangliuching prints where instead of being extraneous they serve to bring out the subject matter. Figures and scenery alike look convincing, true to life and charming.

Much attention is paid to the dramatic interest of a design. Old craftsmen say, "A picture with a story in it never palls." Thought goes into the arrangement of episodes, the characterization and setting, and even the flowers, birds, insects and fish, in order to make these traditional prints richly evocative. For example, pines and cranes symbolize longevity, pomegranates "many sons" ("son" and "seed" are the same character in Chinese), and peonies riches and honour, for these were the things hoped for by the toiling people.

Like other forms of folk art in China, the Yangliuching prints are mainly produced by the labouring people. They take themes from all facets of life, mostly the rural. Depictions of villagers exulting over good crops, enjoying timely snow, or hard at work convey an optimistic exhilaration. Other themes are drawn from popular historical novels, legends or local operas.

The Yangliuching artists produce a wide range of prints to suit our people's actual living conditions. There are "door pictures" — usually a pair — for double gates, "hall pictures" to paste on a wall of the main room, friezes for above the brick bed, prints to flank a window, as well as decorative pictures designed for minority nationalities.

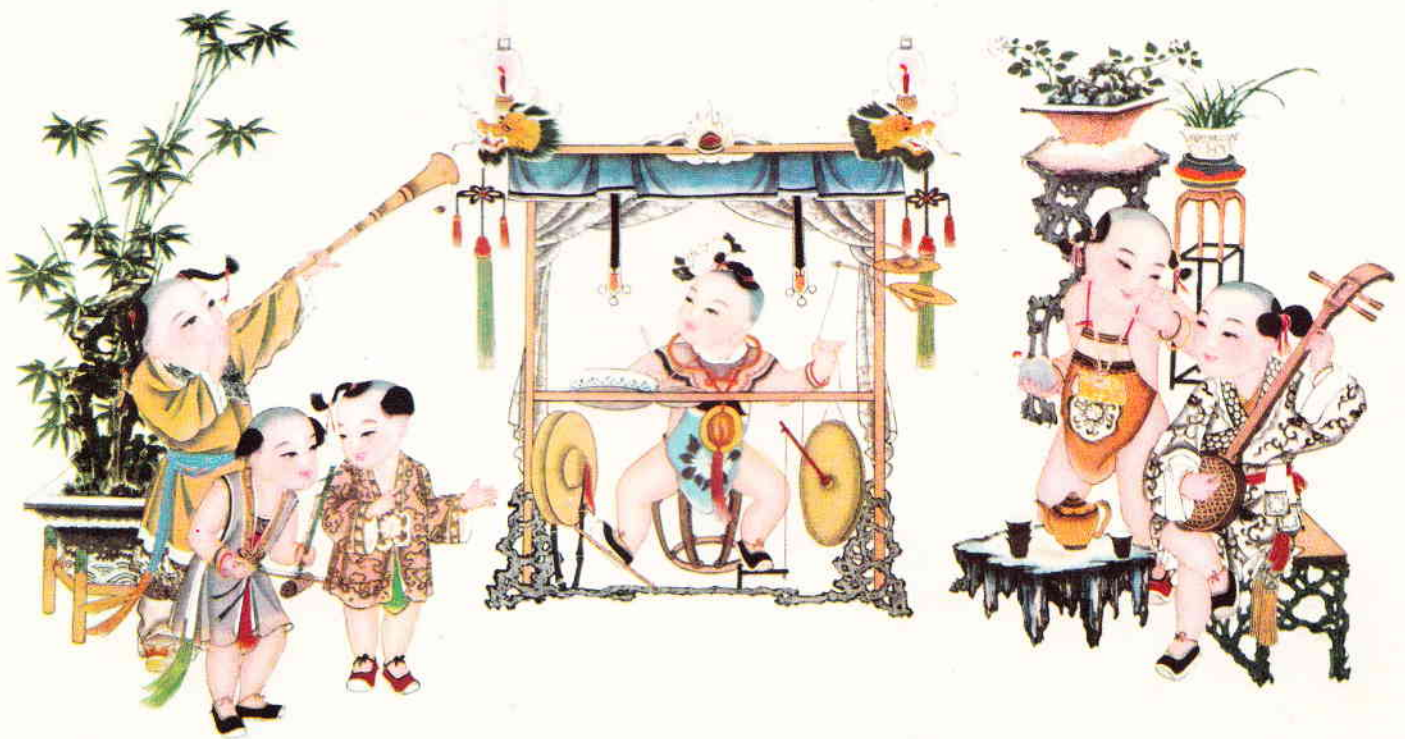
Before Liberation, imperialist aggression and the ruling class repression of folk art led to the bankruptcy of the Yangliuching workshops. Wood blocks were burnt, artists lost their livelihood and this art form was on the verge of extinction. After Liberation, the help given by the people's government averted this disaster. The folk artists were organized and new workshops established. A store selling Yangliuching prints opened in Tientsin in 1958. Since then, great improvements have been made both in design and printing. Apart from producing pictures in the traditional style with a healthy content, they have also made many new ones reflecting the socialist construction in our country.

The "gang of four" slandered this art as a medium for propagating feudalism, capitalism and revisionism. Since the downfall of the gang it has entered a new stage of development. In collaboration with amateur artists the professional art workers are going deep into life and working hard.



Playing with Grasshoppers

Yangliuching New-Year Pictures



Playing Music



Children and Lotus



Feng Tzu

New Productions in the Peking Drama Theatre

Modern drama, damned as "a dead art" by Chiang Ching, has shown itself very much alive in the two years since the downfall of the "gang of four". This art form introduced to China at the beginning of the century has played a prominent role in modern Chinese literature and art, being quick to reflect the spirit of the times. But in the ten years during which the "gang of four" lorded it over China's cultural circles, modern drama was driven off the stage and virtually no plays were shown in the country.

In the past two years, however, nearly twenty new plays have been staged in Peking as well as old favourites from the seventeen years before the Cultural Revolution. These include plays with contemporary themes and others with revolutionary historical themes. Repertory theatres with fine records have been restored and many artistes, forced into retirement, have come back to the stage. The modern drama theatre, silent for nearly a decade, is once more astir, carrying on and developing its fine traditions.

The appearance in Peking of a number of plays portraying the deeds and struggles of revolutionary leaders and fore-runners has aroused special interest. *Yang Kai-hui*, a play named after Chairman Mao's first wife, and *Autumn Thunder* show something

of the chairman's early revolutionary activities; *Newspaper Boys* and *Turning-point* describe Premier Chou En-lai's work for the revolution; *Morning Lights* portrays how Marshal Ho Lung set up a revolutionary base at Hunghu Lake; and *Eastward March* depicts how Marshal Chen Yi founded an anti-Japanese base in Northern Kiangsu. This repertory, bringing the images of beloved leaders to the stage and portraying episodes from the militant course of China's revolution, has won warm applause from Peking audiences. As the noted playwright Tsao Yu puts it, these plays mark a new stage in the development of modern Chinese drama.

Actors and playwrights are now sparing no pains to find more effective means of portraying revolutionary leaders and the older generation of proletarian revolutionaries on the stage.

Autumn Thunder, the first play to present the image of Chairman Mao after the fall of the "gang of four", sings of the Autumn Harvest Uprising led by him in 1927, and how he set up China's first revolutionary base in the Ching kang Mountains of

From *Yang Kai-hui*



From *Newspaper Boys*

Kiangsi Province. In this play Chairman Mao appears only a couple of times. *Yang Kai-hui* breaks fresh ground. Describing the life and revolutionary struggles of Chairman Mao and his wife in the twenties, the play sings of her courage and integrity and how bravely she went to her death at the hands of the enemy. It portrays Chairman Mao's close relationship with workers and peasants and the deep feeling between him and Kai-hui, shedding light on his family life and giving a realistic picture of Chairman Mao as a young man.

In *Turning-point* Premier Chou appears only once, but *Newspaper Boys* brings him on stage several times. The background of the play is Chungking during the War of Resistance Against Japan where Premier Chou fought against the Kuomintang reactionaries. Though the two Parties had agreed to co-operate in repulsing Japanese aggression, Chiang Kai-shek broke his word



From *When the Maple Leaves Turn Red*

and launched a sudden attack in 1941 on the Communist forces in southern Anhwei, massacring a large number of our anti-Japanese commanders and men. This is the central theme of *Newspaper Boys*, which portrays how the Kuomintang censors in Chungking forbade the *Hsinbua Daily News* to print a news item about this incident and the editorial written by Chou En-lai exposing and condemning Chiang Kai-shek's political treachery. To counter-attack, Premier Chou wrote a short poem to fill in the space left as a result of the censorship. The poem reads:

The worst atrocity since ancient times:
A leaf falls south of the Yangtse,
Foretelling a harsh winter.
Brothers take up arms
As cruel fratricides!

Premier Chou himself went through the streets selling that day's *Hsinbua News Daily* banned by the reactionaries, in order to help the people of Chungking understand the true situation. We see both his defiance of the White Terror and his heart-warming concern for the newspaper boys.

The earliest play to expose the "gang of four" is *When the Maple Leaves Turn Red*. This satirical farce depicts a certain research

institute in September 1976 when the members and workers of the institute suppressing their bitter grief over Chairman Mao's death work hard to complete a research project, putting up a fierce fight against the opposition and sabotage of followers of the "gang of four". By means of burlesque the play shows up the reactionary nature and ugly features of the gang to give vent to the people's indignation against them. As Wang Ching-yu, one of the playwrights, explained, they hit upon the idea of writing this satire one day in October 1976 when they first learned the news of the gang's downfall. They were living at that time in the Western Hills and they climbed the hills to shout and sing for joy. The hills were then red with maple leaves, and so they decided to name their play *When the Maple Leaves Turn Red*. It was later staged by nearly two hundred theatres throughout the country.

Other widely acclaimed plays about the people's struggle against the "gang of four" are *Loyal Hearts*,* depicting the fight of medical workers against a henchman of the "gang of four" in the Ministry of Health, and *Mountain Spring*, portraying some scientists' opposition to the gang. Both show the extent of the damage done to the revolutionary cause by the "gang of four" and also make us see that they were doomed to defeat because they went against the mainstream of history.

In the past two years, Peking theatres have also presented plays with diversified and original themes such as *A Great Fighter* which portrays Dr. Norman Bethune, the great internationalist; *By the Yenho River*, a play about Yen-an School where the children of revolutionaries grew up during the War of Liberation (1945-1949); and *Sons and Daughters of Taiwan* depicting the brave struggle waged by our brothers in Taiwan to unify our motherland. *Song of the Silver Stream*, dealing with a water conservancy project carried out in Shaoshan, Hunan Province in 1965 under the leadership of Hua Kuo-feng, shows the people's great love for him.

Among the revivals is *Tsai Wen-chi* by the late Kuo Mo-jo. This play has again won acclaim for its profound content and fine artistic form. Tsai Wen-chi, a poetess living at the end of the Eastern

* See *Chinese Literature* No. 10, 1978.



From *Tsai Wen-chi*

Han Dynasty (AD 25-220), is captured during a war and carried off by the Huns. She marries a Hunnish chieftain and has two children. Twelve years later the famous statesman Tsao Tsao invites her back to take part in the compilation of a history of the Han Dynasty. The drama gives a vivid portrayal of her inner contradictions and her noble decision to put the affairs of state above her personal feelings. It also shows Tsao Tsao's statesmanship and respect for talents. This production combines majesty with poignant feeling.

For the last two years our playwrights have concentrated on exposing the "gang of four" and singing the praise of the older generation of revolutionaries, for these themes are close to the hearts of our hundreds of millions of people and voice their inmost feeling.

Tu Ho

Make the Past Serve the Present and Foreign Culture Serve China

Chairman Mao's directive that we should make the past serve the present and foreign things serve China is now being carried out again after the smashing of the "gang of four". In Chairman Hua Kuo-feng's *Report on the Work of the Government* in the Fifth National People's Congress last February, he pointed out that to speed up the development of our science and culture we must carry out the policy of letting a hundred flowers blossom and a hundred schools of thought contend, as well as the directive "Let the ancient serve the present and foreign things serve China". Accordingly, during the past year our state publishing houses have reprinted and published a number of good literary works, ancient and modern, foreign and Chinese. Research into Chinese classical and modern literature and folk and foreign literature, which was for a time interrupted, is now being undertaken again.

This directive "Let the ancient serve the present and foreign things serve China" was first issued in 1956. Like the other directive "Let a hundred flowers blossom and a hundred schools of thought contend" published in the same year, it was aimed at developing our scientific and cultural work as fast as possible. During the subsequent ten years before the Cultural Revolution,

and before the "gang of four" exercised a fascist dictatorship over our culture and sabotaged these directives, our writers and artists did much good work. Many fine classical Chinese works of literature and art were edited and published, many world classics were translated and studied, hundreds of local operas were revived, tens of thousands of old libretti were rescued from oblivion, and the folk music, literature and art of China's different nationalities were collected, recorded, published and further developed. Notable results were achieved in using traditional opera forms to express modern themes, while foreign art forms such as the western ballet and symphonic music were transplanted and transformed into Chinese art.

China has a long history. Our ancestors have left us a rich cultural heritage reflecting incidents from different periods of history and the experience amassed by our forefathers. This repays careful study and serves as a useful example for us today. It is the basis from which our modern culture has developed; we must therefore not cut ourselves off from the past but must take over all that is best in our heritage.

We must remember, too, that all the world's peoples have made their contributions to human progress. Great works of art know no national boundaries but are the common heritage of all mankind. Furthermore, the culture and art of different countries have often enriched each other. The art of our Han Dynasty (206 BC-AD 220), for instance, was clearly influenced by that of certain Central Asian countries, and our Tang Dynasty (618-907) art owed much to Indian Buddhist art. In recent times, especially since the May 4th Movement of 1919, progressive western culture exercised an even greater influence on our own. Today, to develop our new socialist culture, we must make a serious study of all the world's best culture. This directive "Let ancient things serve the present and let foreign things serve China" was issued by Chairman Mao after he had studied and summed up the general laws of cultural development.

But in carrying out this policy we need a criterion. Literature and art are complex social phenomena: some works serve the reactionary ruling class, others speak for the oppressed; but

despite this contradiction they tend to influence each other. So instead of accepting all our past literature and art indiscriminately, we should analyse each work to pass judgement on it, absorbing what is good and rejecting what is bad, to evolve new things from the old. The criterion is the role played by each work in history and the attitude shown to the people. All works of art which express sympathy and respect for the people or voice their feelings, demands and aspirations, and which in their day played a progressive role, should be accepted by us. All which opposed the people and retarded historical progress should be rejected.

We study ancient and foreign works to help us develop our own socialist culture; for it makes a difference whether or not we have such examples — the difference between crudeness and refinement, between roughness and polish, between a low and a high level, between slower and faster work. But using such works as examples does not mean apeing the ancients and foreigners; we must sum up their experience to create original work of our own. This is our basic starting-point in carrying out this directive.

Chairman Mao used classical forms and modes of expression, but instilled new content to produce poems magnificent in their originality and profundity. He is a shining example of how to make the past serve the present in Chinese poetry.

China's great writer Lu Hsun not only absorbed much that was good from our own cultural heritage but also drew inspiration from world literature. He wrote, "I usually modelled my writings on foreign authors." In 1934, he wrote in a preface for a collection of Chinese woodcuts, "One way is to adopt good examples from foreign countries and further develop them, to enrich our own works; another way is to make use of traditional Chinese forms and combine these with new ideas, so that our works in future will have a new look."

The directives "Let the ancient serve the present and foreign things serve China" and "Let a hundred flowers blossom and a hundred schools of thought contend", together with the creative method of integrating revolutionary realism and revolutionary romanticism, are three of the main guidelines in literature and art formulated by Chairman Mao.

Liu Ming-chiu

The Role of Critical Realism in European Literature

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, after the establishment of capitalism in Europe, a new trend in literature appeared. It preached bourgeois humanism and aimed at a realistic representation of the society, including criticism of its negative aspects. Such literature has been termed critical realism. It was the most significant literary phenomenon of the nineteenth century and occupies an important position in world literature in general.

During the Cultural Revolution, when the "gang of four's" cultural policies were suppressing Chinese cultural life, to affirm critical realist literature was to "kowtow before western bourgeois literature and advocate the return of capitalism in China". Therefore, all foreign literature, including the literature of critical realism, was condemned. No articles introducing western literature could be published. Only a few translations of western literature were allowed to appear, and those already available in libraries were removed and locked away. No courses on western literature were taught in our colleges and universities, and research units or work were either disbanded or halted.

With the overthrow of the "gang of four" and their followers, foreign literature is once again beginning to be translated and pub-

lished, while research has again been resumed. In this article I shall attempt to make an appraisal of the historical role played by the literature of critical realism, based on examples from English and French writers.

Critical realism, as the literature of developing capitalism, was anti-feudal and useful in the struggle of the bourgeoisie against the feudal aristocracy.

Although the French bourgeois revolution had succeeded in toppling the monarchy and aristocracy by the end of the eighteenth century, the French nobility supported by other European feudal monarchies attempted time and again to seize back the power it had lost. In 1814, after Napoleon's defeat, the Bourbon aristocrats returned to Paris escorted by Czarist Cossacks and the monarchy was restored. France was again occupied by the forces of the Holy Alliance so that the fruits of the bourgeois revolution were almost lost. It was in such conditions that the first outstanding writer of critical realism, Stendhal, appeared.

From the very beginning, his early writings were strongly anti-feudal. He participated in the romantic movement against pseudo-classicism. Here he was the first to expound a critical realist view, that literature was a reflection of society, and that nineteenth-century literature would differ from past literature in its accurate and passionate descriptions of life. In his prose writings and novels he attacked the Bourbon Restoration. In *Rome, Naples et Florence*, he supplemented his recollections with much documentation, giving a truthful account of European society after 1814, when the bourgeois revolution was at a low ebb. His indignation against this retrogressive trend was evident. His first novel, *Armance ou quelques scènes d'un salon de Paris en 1827*, was a denunciation of the Bourbon reactionary act of 1825 to compensate all émigrés who had lost their estates during the revolution. He also exposed the nobility as a moribund class, lacking in vitality. Towards the end of the Restoration Period, when the French nobility were even more corrupt and the class struggle intensified, Stendhal wrote his great novel, *Le Rouge et le Noir*, profoundly reflecting the

corrupt society and the reactionary nature of the nobility and church.

In 1830, the Bourbon monarchy was overthrown by the July Revolution, re-establishing the control of the bourgeoisie. They made various attempts to eliminate the influence of the nobility in ideology. Critical realism attempted to do this in literature. All writers of critical realism since the July Revolution exhibited this tendency. Mérimée's *Chronique de Charles IX* has the Massacre of St. Bartholomew as its theme and exposes the savagery of the aristocracy. Another of his novels, *La Jacquerie*, describes and sympathizes with the masses who took part in a famous medieval peasant revolt, while criticizing the nobility who suppressed it and their connections with foreign aggressors. Flaubert, who began writing in the 1850's, exposed the suppression of women through education and literature by the nobility in his celebrated novel, *Madame Bovary*. Balzac, the most outstanding representative of this school, attacked the society more profoundly than his contemporaries. As Engels has stated, Balzac in his *La Comédie humaine* has given a brilliant and accurate account of French society, especially of upper-class Parisian life.

The British bourgeois revolution had started before the French one, but as it was more moderate, the result was the establishment of a constitutional monarchy with the nobility enjoying special privileges and retaining great influence in the government. The big capitalists and landed gentry in the government pursued policies in the interests of the nobility. With the Industrial Revolution, towards the end of the eighteenth century, contradictions between the industrialists and the aristocracy and big financiers became acute.

English writers of critical realism of this period criticized the feudal remnants left over from their unfinished revolution. Dickens in his novels described the corruption and pessimism of the bureaucracy. He exposed those noble families who monopolized official positions, and caricatured marriages based on aristocratic pedigree. Thackeray also satirized the nobility.

Critical realism, with its lifelike descriptions, showed that the feudal ruling class had no right to its dominant position and

prepared public opinion to accept the takeover of power by the bourgeoisie. It thus hastened and consolidated the final victory of capitalism over feudalism. It penetratingly exposed and criticized the capitalist system. This was its most important historical role and ideological feature.

By the first half of the nineteenth century, capitalism had been established in most European countries. Although it was more progressive than feudalism, it was by no means the rational system predicted by the thinkers of the Enlightenment before the revolution. By showing that the new capitalist society was corrupt, the literature of critical realism debunked the myth that it was rational. It clearly exposed the worship of money and its evil effect on society. Earlier writers had pointed this out before, but the writers of critical realism, especially Balzac, made a more penetrating analysis. In Balzac's novels, money together with class exploitation is shown to be a means of class control. Money was shown to control the law, politics and society in an unprecedented way. Thus the rotten core of capitalist society was exposed.

Flaubert in *Madame Bovary* shows corrupt government officials concealing capitalist exploitation in the countryside. He also portrays an exploited woman worker who for fifty-four years had toiled on a country manor. In Balzac's *Les Paysans*, the cruelty of high usury is described vividly. By the latter half of the nineteenth century, Zola and Maupassant concretely described the exploitation of workers, and the manipulation of the banks and stock exchange in wartime to make profits. Dickens and another great English novelist, Mrs. Gaskell, also reflected capitalist exploitation in their works.

The insatiable greed of the bourgeoisie for wealth was such that they resorted to all kinds of unscrupulous behaviour to achieve their aims. In critical realist literature often the family was the theme. Instead of family unity there was a tragic struggle for money. Although capitalism was in the ascendant, the literature of critical realism served to awaken people to the corruption and contradictions within society.

As the contradictions between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat grew more acute, critical realist literature depicted the life of the

masses and expressed sympathy for them. This was a progressive tendency.

Industrialization in the first half of the nineteenth century brought poverty, disease and misery to the working class. In the big cities workers were concentrated in slums. The writers of critical realism described the sufferings of the workers, while praising their spirit and inventiveness. Such writers did not belong to the proletariat or feel as they did, but they did sympathize deeply with them, and some pointed out that capitalist exploitation was the cause of all this misery.

It is easy to understand why the literature of critical realism was anti-feudal in character. What is less easy to grasp is why, as soon as the bourgeoisie seized power, their literature became critical of the order they had established, and why it sympathized with the working class.

First, it is worth examining the political, economic and social position of the writers of critical realism in both France and England. Most belonged to the lower middle-class and lacked financial security. Balzac, for instance, was hounded by debts all his life. Stendhal before the publication of his great novel, *Le Rouge et le Noir*, lived in poverty in Paris. Zola was also poor in his early life. Dickens from the age of twelve was employed in an assortment of low positions. Most started to write in order to earn some money. Even after they had won acclaim, they felt the oppression of capitalism keenly and remained bitter. Thus they were closer to the lower classes and could understand to a certain extent their misery and feelings. Their writings were more democratic, and they were able to retain a certain objectivity towards the ruling classes and criticize the legal, political and social system. Their thwarted ambitions made them both envious of and indignant with those in high positions.

In their writings they created characters like themselves, discontented with society; idealistic young men and women prepared to revolt against its iniquities. Balzac's Rastignac, Stendhal's Sorel, Rolland's Christophe and Charlotte Brontë's Jane Eyre are all such

examples. These characters were either the heroes or heroines, or expressed the feelings of the writers, critical of their age and society.

These writers inherited humanist thinking from the Renaissance and especially from the Enlightenment. Humanists opposed feudal superstition. Man, not god, was the centre of the universe. They emphasized reason and the dignity of man, his independence and freedom to develop. In the eighteenth century, thinkers of the Enlightenment continued to oppose the feudal system and advocated instead the rights of man — liberty, equality and fraternity. Early writers of critical realism were their successors, inheriting this philosophical legacy.

But the new bourgeois society was far from rational. Writers of critical realism with their liberal bourgeois humanist legacy were indignant to see men slaves of money. Money, like birth in the old feudal society, controlled everything. There was no freedom to develop. Their bourgeois ideas of the equality of men were offended by the blatant injustices in capitalist society, where men were classified according to wealth and social position. Thus with their historical background it is natural that these writers criticized their society bitterly and sympathized with the workers.

Of course these critics of capitalism never doubted the validity of private ownership. Limited by their class and times, their viewpoint was bourgeois and they did not see class interest and struggle as the decisive factor in human nature. They often regarded the "evil" in human nature as the cause of contradictions, and abstract "love" as a solution. They were therefore unable to express correctly the role of the proletariat and its position as the dominant force in that period of history. Some works also distorted the image of workers.

As Chairman Mao has said: "As for foreign culture, it would be a wrong policy to shut it out, rather we should as far as possible draw on what is progressive in it for use in the development of China's new culture." Critical realism in literature must be appraised for its progressive historical role as well as for its limitations in order to understand its legacy. All cultures inevitably influence other cultures. A country which attempts to isolate its culture will produce a stagnant, lifeless one.

China's new culture and new literature blossomed with the May 4th Movement of 1919. The old culture and literature of semi-feudal, semi-colonial old China had long become moribund. The main reason for the growth of this new movement was the awakening of the Chinese people and the appearance of the Chinese proletariat, but the introduction and translation of foreign progressive literature also helped to hasten it.

Western critical realist literature is still important today in studying capitalist society. It not only provides us with an accurate picture of that period of history, but also supplies many economic and political details of the development and decline of the bourgeoisie. It thus enriches and deepens our understanding of society and there is still much to be learnt from such works.

Furthermore, it is a significant peak in the history of world literature. It further developed what it had inherited from the past, especially in depicting typical characters in typical circumstances. As a historical model which can help us to develop our own socialist literature, it deserves to be treasured and studied by our proletariat and working people.

Tien Hsiu

Pien Ching-chao and His Painting "Bamboos and Cranes"

Pien Ching-chao was a fifteenth-century court painter of the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644), whose exact dates are unknown. According to an old record, "he was widely read and an accomplished poet, with a flair for painting flowers, fruit and feathers. The flowers he painted were charming, the birds seemed in flight and singing, the leaves looked real and the colours he used were vivid. His brush-work and use of ink were highly original." The painting *Bamboos and Cranes* reproduced in this issue is a good example of his work.

In feudal China, the court set up an art academy for the enjoyment of the emperor and other members of the ruling class. Those artists who succeeded in entering the academy were not only highly proficient but enjoyed great prestige. They had to paint according to the instructions and requirements of the emperor, and the Ming emperors made strict demands on artists. Any artists who painted pictures that displeased the emperor were dismissed from the academy or executed. They therefore took

great pains to select safe themes and to perfect their technique. Undoubtedly, this fettered their talents. On the other hand, the artists who painted meticulously according to set rules and regulations created many magnificent works, and *Bamboos and Cranes* is typical of the court paintings of this period.

The crane in Chinese legend was a bird ridden by immortals. It symbolized happiness and longevity. Thus all emperors liked to keep cranes and enjoyed works depicting them.

Hsueh Chi (649-713) of the Tang Dynasty was known for his paintings of cranes. In the Five Dynasties, Huang Chuan (c. 903-965), a court painter in Szechuan, was influenced by Hsueh Chi's style but the cranes he painted were even more decorative. The King of Shu in Szechuan is said to have procured six cranes and ordered Huang Chuan to paint them on a wall of a hall. This Huang Chuan did in such a lifelike fashion that real cranes gathered round his painting, and the king in high delight renamed that hall "The Six Cranes Hall". Unfortunately, none of the work of Huang or Hsueh has come down to us. However, their painting techniques were inherited and further developed by Pien Ching-chao.

To paint well in the court style was far from easy. Some later artists, although meticulous, could only produce rather lifeless and stereotyped works. However, those with real talent were different. Having sketched the outline delicately in ink they added colour washes in a way to bring out the main features of their subject. So their works have both charm and spirit. *Bamboos and Cranes* is a vivid work in this outline-filled-with-ink style. Among green bamboos stand two cranes with scarlet crests, white plumage and black tails. They are most resplendent and lifelike, looking as if about to move. In the distant background a sandbank in light ochre gives the painting an effect of spaciousness and makes it a well-balanced composition.

Bamboos and Cranes, painted on silk 131.2 cm long and 117.9 cm wide, is in the Palace Museum in Peking.

Bamboos and Cranes (Chinese traditional painting)
by Pien Ching-chao



The Magazine "World Literature" Published Again

The magazine *World Literature*, first published under the title *Translation* in 1953, was banned in 1966 by Lin Piao and the "gang of four" who put all foreign literature under taboo. After a twelve-year suspension, it resumed publication in October 1978, with the noted poet and translator Feng Chih as its editor-in-chief and Chen Ping-yi its assistant editor.

In an article "To Our Readers" published in its first issue, the journal explains its policies. It states: *World Literature* is mainly to introduce and review contemporary and modern foreign literature. But foreign classics, a valuable heritage the Chinese people should critically take over and assimilate, will also be introduced and reviewed. Fine foreign art works and pictures will be published, as well as articles and reviews on various foreign literary works so as to give Chinese readers a general picture of the development and trends of world literature. In discussing a work, different views and opinions are encouraged.

Published in the first issue of the magazine were: excerpts from *Sea of Blood*, a Korean novel; *Paprat I zatra*, a story by the Yugoslavian writer Antionije Isaković; *Talks with the Immortal*, a story by the Yugoslavian writer Branko Copić; *Selected Poems* by the Indian poet Hemango Biswas; *The Judge and the Hangman*, a story by the Swiss writer Friedrich Dürrenmatt; *Kbolstomer*, a satire by Tolstoy and some articles.

Unpublished Manuscripts of Lu Hsun Discovered

Manuscripts of 18 unpublished articles by the great Chinese writer and revolutionary Lu Hsun (1881-1936) have been discovered by the Lu Hsun Research Centre in the course of compiling the complete collection of Lu Hsun's manuscripts.

The new materials are prefaces, postscripts, notes and research articles, all dealing with China's ancient cultural heritage.

Between 1912 and 1914, Lu Hsun studied and compiled fragments quoted in other works from *Hsieh Cheng's History of the Late Han Dynasty*, a book lost since the Sung Dynasty (960-1279). He revised this compilation four times and wrote two introductions and two prefaces to it.

In the newly discovered manuscripts, Lu Hsun recounted the history of certain lost books and gave his views on them. Six of the 18 scripts are research articles on ancient stone inscriptions.

Lu Hsun devoted great pains to the study of classical Chinese works. It is due to him that some ancient books which had been thought lost were recovered. The newly discovered manuscripts demonstrate his fine scholarship and his historical materialist attitude.

Works of Classical Chinese Literature Published

A number of works of classical Chinese literature were recently published by the Chung Hua Book Company and the People's Literature Publishing House.

Among the new publications are such collections of poems of the Tang Dynasty (618-907), the golden age of classical poetry, as *An Anthology of Poems of the Tang Dynasty*, *Three Hundred Poems of the Tang Dynasty* and *Collected Poems of Li Ho*. Many great poets such as Li Po (701-762) and Tu Fu (712-770) came to the fore in the Tang Dynasty and their works influenced the development of Chinese literature.

Among the classical dramas are *Collected Operas Based on "A Dream of Red Mansions"* compiled by the noted playwright Ah Ying and an early version of *The West Chamber* from the Kin Dynasty (1115-1234). Other publications are *The Scholars*, a satirical novel; *Warring States During the Eastern Chou Dynasty*, a historical romance; *Exposure of the Official World*, a late Ching Dynasty novel; and *An Anthology of Essays from the Tang and Sung Dynasties*.

National Folk-Song Festival Held in Peking

Sponsored by the Ministry of Culture, a national festival of folk-song solos and duets was recently held in Peking. Some two hundred singers of 15 nationalities from literary and art organizations in 16 provinces, municipalities and autonomous regions as well as those attached to government ministries and army organizations displayed their talents at the festival. This was the first of its kind sponsored by the Ministry of Culture since the downfall of the "gang of four".

In an opening address, Chou Wei-shih, Vice-minister of Culture said: "The aim of the festival is to carry out the policy of 'letting a hundred flowers blossom and a hundred schools of thought contend', to better carry forward the fine traditional heritage of folk-songs from various nationalities in China, and to encourage and train outstanding folk singers."

Exhibition of Traditional Chinese Painting

An exhibition of paintings of landscapes, flowers and birds by eight famous artists of the traditional school was held in the Jihtan Park in Peking. The eight painters were: Li Ko-jan, Li Kuchan, Chang Ting, Yu Chih-chen, Tsui Tzu-fan, Pai Hsueh-shih, Huang Chou and Lou Shih-pai.

Most of the paintings were new works including *Clouds on Wushan Mountain*, a landscape by Li Ko-jan, *Bridge Between Cloud-capped Mountains* by Chang Ting, *Pine and Eagle* by the flower-and-bird painter Li Ku-chan, *Donkeys* by Huang Chou, *Peony* by Lou Shih-pai, *The Three Gorges of the Yangtse* by Tsui Tzu-fan, *Ancient Cedars* by Pai Hsueh-shih and *Flowers* by Yu Chih-chen. The artists used traditional brush work and themes and demonstrated their individual styles.

Traditional Chinese painting has long been popular among our people. Using ink and water-colours and taking flowers, mountains, rivers and birds as its themes, it is very graphic and evocative.

The Journal "Studies of Music" Published

The first issue of *Studies of Music*, a journal edited by the People's Music Publishing House, came off the press recently.

The issue carries articles on contemporary music, Yang Yin-liu's *Postscript to the "History of Ancient Chinese Music"* and other articles.

A note in the journal states that future issues will carry research articles on musical appreciation, composition and performance techniques as well as on ancient music, the history of Chinese and foreign music, folk music, opera, national minority music, musical education, and Chinese and foreign composers.

Five Thousand Year Old Pottery Basin Unearthed

A 5,000-year-old pottery basin painted with figures of dancers has been found by Chinese archaeologists in Chinghai Province.

The basin dates back to the neolithic age. It has a diameter of ten centimetres at the base, then widens sharply to a central diameter of 28 centimetres and curves slightly inward at the rim.

The yellowish brown basin has a rolled rim and is 14 centimetres high. On the upper part of the inside there are drawings of three groups of five dancers hand in hand. Each dancer has what is probably a braid hanging from a headdress which is decorated with an animal's tail. The arms of the dancers on the outside of the groups are drawn with double lines, representing rapid swinging movements. Four parallel lines below the dancers represent the ground and the edge of a pond.

This pottery basin is the first of its kind found in China and very valuable for studying the history of art and dance in primitive society.





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