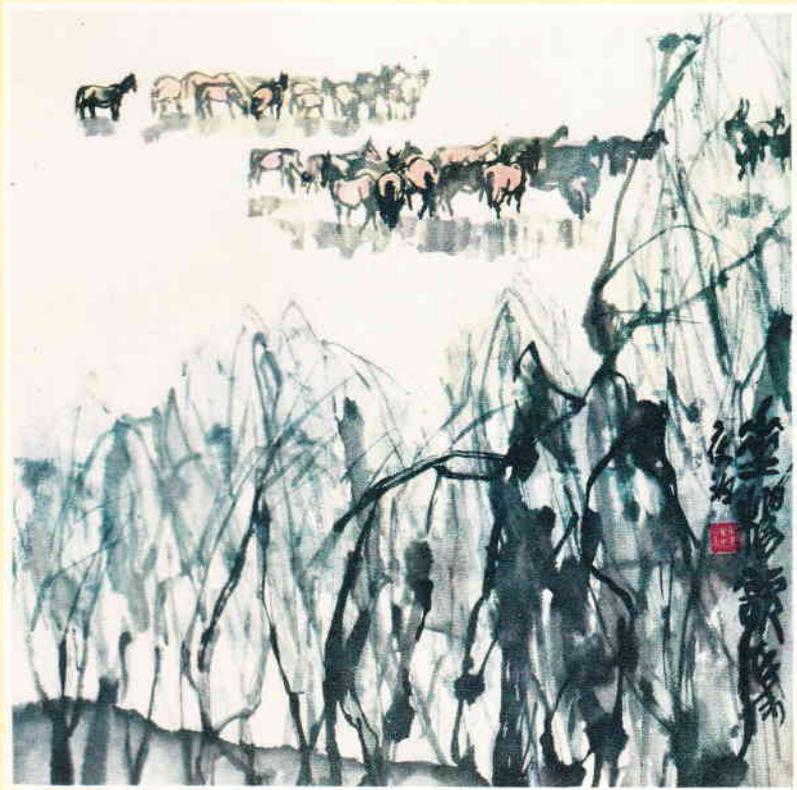


CHINESE LITERATURE



1978 10

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IN MEMORY OF KUO MO-JO

Kuo Mo-jo (1892-1978), chairman of the China Federation of Literature and Art Circles, died after a long illness on June 12 in Peking. In his memory, we publish below the article *Written in Deepest Grief* by Chou Yang, vice-chairman of the China Federation of Literature and Art Circles. Here, Chou Yang recalls his last conversation with Kuo Mo-jo, summarizing almost sixty years of Kuo's activities as a writer and revolutionary. We also publish Kuo Mo-jo's long poem *The Nirvana of the Feng and Huang* and *Two Fables*.

— The Editors

Chou Yang

Written in Deepest Grief

Kuo Mo-jo, outstanding proletarian fighter on our cultural front, well-known poet and dramatist, has left us. All our comrades working in the scientific and cultural fields feel the deepest grief at the loss of such a respected veteran and brilliant leader.

When Comrade Kuo was seriously ill, our China Federation of Literature and Art Circles was holding an enlarged conference of the national committee, and all attending it were most concerned for him and wanted to go and see him, but the hospital would not allow him to be disturbed. On the morning of the third of June, his secretary Wang

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Kuo Mo-jo at work

Ting-fang rang me up and said that early that morning, when Comrade Kuo woke up, he had asked for me and wished me to go and tell him about this conference. I immediately went to the Peking Hospital. When I entered his room and saw the old man lying there, emaciated by long illness, I felt a deep pang of grief, and my wife, Su Ling-yang, could not hold back her tears. But Kuo Mo-jo seemed not to notice this as he smiled at us serenely, in evident good spirits. According to Wang Ting-fang, he had not looked so well for many days. That pleased us as much as sunshine flashing through clouds, encouraging us to hope that this staunch old man's dynamism would enable him to overcome his illness and strengthen his hold on life. How we longed for him to live on to a great old age! This was the fervent desire of our hearts. Though by now he could only speak with difficulty, in his elation he talked eagerly at some length.

I passed on to him the good wishes of other comrades and their earnest hopes for his speedy recovery. I also described to him the indignant denunciations of the "gang of four" at the conference, and

our determination to spare no pains to bring about the flourishing of our literature and art. Kuo Mo-jo, very glad to hear this, urged me repeatedly to give the delegates his greetings. He regretted that his illness had made it impossible for him to attend this conference in person, depriving him of a good opportunity to learn from the rest of us. As we all know, Comrade Kuo Mo-jo himself was hounded by the "gang of four", especially after the start of the campaign to repudiate Lin Piao and Confucius, which they used as a pretext to smear and persecute him. But he stood firm and unshaken. When later the gang directed their vicious attack against our beloved Premier Chou, Kuo Mo-jo saw through their dastardly plot and confronted them fearlessly, showing a firm revolutionary stand and political vigilance of a high order.

I told him that we all felt such concern for him because of our heartfelt love and respect for him. Kuo Mo-jo was the founder of China's new poetry movement. His first collection of poems *The Goddesses* published in 1921 opened up a new period in Chinese poetry. In this collection the poem "The Nirvana of the Feng and the Huang" foretold the death of the old world and old China, the birth of a new world and a new China. Nirvana is not the end but a rebirth, a rebirth through pain and death. This poem shows profound dialectical thinking and fervent aspirations, intense patriotism and confidence in the future. I informed Kuo Mo-jo that since my student days I had been a faithful reader of his poems as well as of the periodicals such as *Creation* which he edited at that time. During the revolutionary wars between 1924 and 1927, deciding that writing revolutionary poetry was not enough, he resolutely gave it up to take part in the war as a leading cadre doing political work in the Northern Expeditionary Army. When Chiang Kai-shek betrayed the revolution* and precipitated a national crisis with the forces of progress and reaction locked

*The revolution of 1924-27 was an anti-imperialist and anti-feudal revolutionary struggle. The Northern Expedition was undertaken on the basis of co-operation between the Chinese Communist Party and the Kuomintang. On April 12, 1927, Chiang Kai-shek launched a counter-revolutionary coup, massacring many Communists and revolutionaries. This led to the defeat of the Northern Expedition.

in mortal struggle, Kuo Mo-jo wrote his famous manifesto *See What Chiang Kai-shek Has Done Now!* Ruthlessly exposing that arch renegade and traitor and drawing a clear distinction between revolution and counter-revolution, this manifesto inspired our revolutionary people and gave them fresh faith and courage to fight on.

I told Kuo Mo-jo that this manifesto had made such an impact on me when I was young that later, when he took part in the famous Nanchang Uprising* then went into exile in Japan and I could get no news of him, I worried about his safety. Every day I scanned the newspapers for some clue as to his whereabouts. The fact that a young man who had never met him felt so attached to him and so concerned for his safety that he would remember it clearly after half a century shows what a strong influence he had over young intellectuals at that time and how deeply his revolutionary poems moved us. Though I had known him for the last forty years, I had never before expressed to him my admiration for him when I was young. I had not thought it necessary. But on this occasion I could not hold back this tribute.

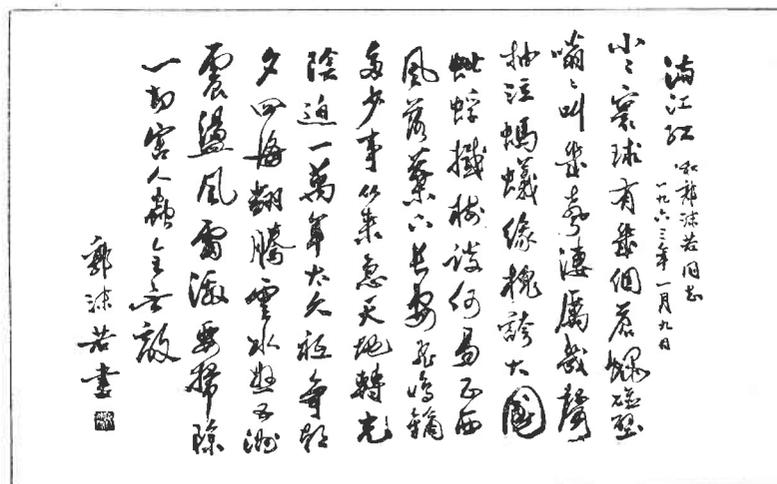
Kuo Mo-jo made a tremendous contribution to our revolutionary culture. He was the first in our country to try to interpret Chinese history from a Marxist viewpoint, and the first to raise the revolutionary banner of "proletarian literature". He and his old comrades-in-arms of the "Creation Society" had the courage during the time of the white terror to propagate Marxist ideas on culture and proletarian-revolutionary literature, thus sowing seeds of revolution among tens of thousands of young intellectuals and helping them to take the revolutionary path. His achievements were monumental. Even during his years of exile in Japan he never stopped working for the revolution. He did outstanding research work in deciphering the inscriptions on Shang oracle bones. But that was not where his true interest

*The uprising on August 1, 1927 at Nanchang, capital city of Kiangsi, was led by the Communist Party of China in order to combat the counter-revolution of Chiang Kai-shek and Wang Ching-wei and to continue the revolution of 1924-27. More than thirty thousand troops took part in the uprising which was led by Comrades Chou En-lai, Chu Teh, Ho Lung and Yeh Ting.

lay. His constant concern was for his unhappy motherland, and he kept in close touch with the Left-wing cultural movements in China.

After the outbreak of the War of Resistance Against Japan in 1937, Kuo Mo-jo returned to China. During those war years, under the guidance of Premier Chou En-lai he worked indefatigably in the Kuomintang controlled area to build up the resistance, develop revolutionary culture and set up united front organizations among literary and art circles to resist Japanese aggression. In this head-on confrontation with the Kuomintang reactionaries he never wavered. His well-known play *Chu Yuan*, written with revolutionary passion, reflects the image of Kuo Mo-jo in its hero — a great patriotic poet of ancient China. When *Chu Yuan*, the poet in the play, attacked the reactionary policies of the Chu ruling class which oppressed the people and yielded to foreign aggression, Kuo Mo-jo was denouncing Chiang Kai-shek's reactionary regime. This historical drama with a strong political commitment aroused great interest at that time in the Kuomintang controlled area. He followed it up with his celebrated article *Commemorating the 300th Anniversary of the Year "Chia-shen"* (1644) in which he discussed the causes that led to the de-

Chairman Mao's poem *Reply to Comrade Kuo Mo-jo* in Kuo Mo-jo's calligraphy



feat of Li Tzu-cheng, famous leader of the peasant insurgents, after he had succeeded in overthrowing the Ming Dynasty. This article was highly praised by Chairman Mao at that time.

After Liberation Kuo Mo-jo was in charge of scientific and cultural work in China, yet he made time to write many poems, articles and new historical dramas full of revolutionary romanticism and passion. At the same time, he wrote not a few poems praising the friendship and solidarity of peoples throughout the world and their opposition to imperialism, revisionism and the super-powers. Extremely versatile, he was active in many fields. His achievements were tremendous. Many of us were his pupils and learned from him. But Comrade Kuo always modestly disclaimed credit and said that he had done too little.

During one call on him last year, in the course of conversation I happened to mention Goethe, whose *Faust* and other works Kuo Mo-jo had translated. Recalling that Engels had called Goethe an Olympian, I felt that Kuo Mo-jo could be called the god of Mount Tai — China's sacred mountain. Indeed, these two cultural giants had much in common: encyclopaedic knowledge, intellectual brilliance and artistic genius, as well as devotion to the natural sciences. In other respects, of course, the two men differed. And so I said to Kuo Mo-jo: "You are our Goethe, but a Goethe belonging to socialist New China." When he heard this, he smiled. Like Goethe, Kuo Mo-jo was a cultural giant, the pride of our nation.

Little did I think that this conversation I had with him on the third of June was to be the very last. When I called on him on the morning of the twelfth, he was sinking rapidly and could no longer speak. However, his last instructions to me still ring in my ears, and I shall never forget them.



Kuo Mo-jo

The Nirvana of the Feng and Huang

In Arabia in ancient times there lived a magical bird, the Phoenix. When it had reached the age of 500 years, it made a pyre of fragrant wood and immolated itself. Then from the dead ashes it returned to life never to die again with a fresh and extraordinary beauty.

Now, this bird may well be the Feng-Huang bird of China. The Feng is the male, the Huang the female. In the *Kung Yen Tu* (The Sage's Interpretations of the Book of Changes) we read: "The Feng-Huang is the essence of fire; it is born on Mount Tanhsueh." According to the dictionary *Kuang Ya*: "As to the Feng-Huang . . . the cry of the male bird is jig-jig; that of the female jug-jug."

The first draft of this poem was written in 1920. It was revised in 1928.

Prelude

The eve of the new year is at hand and in the sky
The Feng-Huang pair dart here and there.
Mournful strains are heard as they fly away,
Bearing fragrant twigs in their bills they return,
Flying back to the Tanhsueh Mountain.

To the right is the withered plane tree,
To the left the parched spring;
Before the mountain the limitless expanse of the sea,
Behind it the vast dismal plains,
Over the mountain the frozen sky traversed by icy winds.

The sky is now dark with evening,
The fragrant wood is heaped high.
The Feng is weary with flying,
The Huang is weary with flying;
Their hour of death approaches.

The Feng pecks the twigs:
Points of flame fly out.
The Huang fans the sparks:
Wreaths of fragrant smoke rise up.

The Feng pecks on
And the Huang fans the flame.
The fragrant smoke overspreads the peak,
The glow of the fire suffuses the peak.

The dusk has now deepened,
The fragrant wood is burning.

The Feng is weary with pecking,
The Huang is weary with fanning:
Their hour of death is at hand.

Alas for the Feng and Huang!
The Feng dances, dances high and low,
The Huang sings, sings in tragic vein.
The Feng dances,
The Huang sings her song.
The commonalty of birds flock thither,
Fly in from the skies to witness the death-rite.

Song of the Feng

Jig-jig, jig-jig, jig-jig,
Jig-jig, jig-jig, jig-jig,
Vast is the universe, cruel as iron.
Vast is the universe, sombre as lacquer.
Vast is the universe, rank as blood.

Universe, O universe!
Why do you exist?
Whence do you come?
Where are you cradled?
Are you an empty sphere limited in reach,
Or a continuum of unlimited size?
If you are an empty sphere limited in reach
Whence comes the space that contains you?
What else has existence outside yourself?
If you are infinite and all-embracing

Whence comes the space that you hold in yourself?
And why does life exist within you?
Are you a life-endowed flux,
Or a lifeless mechanism?

I raise my brow and ask of heaven,
But heaven, reserved and aloof, has no knowledge of these things.
I bend my brow and ask the earth,
But the earth is dead, it has no breath.
I look out and ask the sea,
But the sea is raising its voice in grief.

To exist in the mire and gloom of this world
Would cause even a diamond sword to rust.
Universe, O universe,
Let me rail at you with all my powers:
You blood-besmirched slaughter-house,
Prison surfeited with misery,
Graveyard clamorous with ghostly hordes,
Hell astir with capering demons,
Why should you exist at all?

We fly westwards:
The west, alike, is a slaughter-house.
We fly eastwards:
The east, alike, is a prison.
We fly southwards:
The south, alike, is a grave.
We fly northwards:
The north, alike, is a hell.
Living in such a world
We can but learn from the lament of the sea.

Song of the Huang

Jug-jug, jug-jug, jug-jug,
Jug-jug, jug-jug, jug-jug,
Five hundred years of tears have streamed like a cataract,
Five hundred years of tears have dripped like wax from candle.

Unceasing flow of tears,
Filth that cannot be washed away,
Flame of passion that cannot be extinguished,
Shame that cannot be cleansed.
This shadowy life of ours,
Towards what haven is it drifting?

Ah, this dreamy, shadowy life of ours
Is like a lonely boat on an ocean:
To the right are trackless waters,
To the left are trackless waters.
No beacon shines ahead,
No shore is seen behind.
The sail is torn,
The mast broken,
The oars have floated away,
The rudder has rotted away.
The weary boatman merely sits and moans,
The angry surge rolls over in the sea.

Ah, this shadowy, drifting life of ours
Is like a drugged sleep on such a dark night as this.
Before us is sleep,

Behind us is sleep.
We come like a gust of wind,
We go like a wisp of smoke.
Coming like wind,
Going like smoke,
Sleep behind,
Sleep before.
In the midst of this sleep
We are but a fleeting breath of smoke.

Ah!
What sense is there in it?
What sense is there in it?
Folly . . . folly . . . folly:
There remains only grief, vexation, desolation, decay,
A back-cloth for our living corpses,
A thread running through the lives of our living corpses.

Ah! Where is now the freshness of our youth?
Where is now the sweetness of our youth?
Where is now the pleasure of our youth?
Where is now the splendour of our youth?
Gone! Gone! Gone!
All is gone!
All must go!
We are gone,
You too must go.
Grief . . . vexation . . . desolation . . . decay.

Together

Ah!
The fire flares dazzling bright
The fragrant smoke hangs heavily in the air.
My time has now come,
My hour of death has come,
All within us,
All outside us,
All in all,
Farewell! Farewell!

Choral Song of the Birds

EAGLE

Haha! Feng-Huang! Feng-Huang!
In vain have you been the most magical of birds.
Are you dead? Are you dead?
Henceforth must I assert my sway over the aerial world.

PEACOCK

Haha! Feng-Huang! Feng-Huang!
In vain have you been the most magical of birds.
Are you dead? Are you dead?
Henceforth let you behold the royal sheen of my plumage.

OWL

Haha! Feng-Huang! Feng-Huang!
In vain have you been the most magical of birds.
Are you dead? Are you dead?
Whence comes this sweet fragrance of mouse flesh?

PIGEON

Haha! Feng-Huang! Feng-Huang!
In vain have you been the most magical of birds.
Are you dead? Are you dead?
Henceforth see the contentment of our docile tribe.

PARROT

Haha! Feng-Huang! Feng-Huang!
In vain have you been the most magical of birds.
Are you dead? Are you dead?
Henceforth listen to the discourses of our orators.

STORK

Haha! Feng-Huang! Feng-Huang!
In vain have you been the most magical of birds.
Are you dead? Are you dead?
Henceforth see the strutting to and fro of our high-stepping
race.

Rebirth Song of the Feng and Huang

SONG OF THE MALE BIRD

The tide of dawn has risen,
The tide of dawn has risen,
The light that died is born anew.

The tide of spring has risen,
The tide of spring has risen,
The cosmos that died is born anew.

The tide of life has risen,
The tide of life has risen,
The Feng and Huang that died are born anew.

FENG AND HUANG TOGETHER

We are born again,
We are born again.
The one that is all is born again,
The all that is one is born again.
We are he, they are me,
You are in me and I in you:
I am therefore you,
You are therefore me.
The fire is the Huang,
The Feng is the fire.
Soar then, soar!
Sing for joy! Sing for joy!

We are made anew, we are purified.
We are resplendent, we are steeped in fragrance.
The one that is all is steeped in fragrance,
The all that is one is steeped in fragrance.
Fragrance steeped are you, fragrance steeped am I,
Fragrance steeped is he, fragrance steeped is fire.
Fire are you,
Fire am I,
Fire is he,
Fire is fire.
Soar then, soat!
Sing for joy, sing for joy!

We are pledged, we are deeply in love,
We are devoted, we are truly matched.
The one that is all is truly matched,
The all that is one is truly matched.
Truly matched are you, truly matched am I,
Truly matched is he, truly matched is fire.

Fire are you,
Fire am I,
Fire is he,
Fire is fire.
Soar then, soar!
Sing for joy, sing for joy!

We are vigorous, we are free,
We are fearless, we are immortal.
The one that is all is immortal,
The all that is one is immortal.
Immortal are you, immortal am I,
Immortal is he, immortal is fire.

Fire am I,
Fire are you,
Fire is he,
Fire is fire.
Soar then, soar!
Sing for joy, sing for joy!

We sing for joy, we soar,
We soar, we sing for joy!
The one that is all sings for joy,
The all that is one sings for joy.
Is it you who sing for joy, or is it I?

Is it he who sings for joy, or is it fire?
It is joy itself that sings for joy!
It is joy itself that sings for joy!
Only joyfully singing,
Only joyfully singing!
Singing!
Singing!
Singing!



Two Fables

A Shepherd

A shepherd was sitting under a big tree, watching his flock of sheep, a pipe in his mouth and a rifle at his back.

A cowherd came up with his cow and sat down to rest under the same tree. In his hand was a bamboo whip.

The shepherd asked: "Do you beat your cow with that whip? You should not use violence."

The cowherd retorted: "Then why do you carry a rifle?"

"Just in case thieves try to steal my sheep. But I'd rather be without this damn thing."

The shepherd took off the rifle, placing it beside him. The cowherd picked it up to play with it.

Suddenly there appeared a tiger. The terrified shepherd climbed up the tree.

These two fables were written in 1962 to satirize the theory of "a world without weapons, without armed forces and without war" as advocated by Khrushchov and his followers.

The cowherd aimed the rifle at the tiger. The shepherd, even more panic-stricken, cried out from on top of the tree, "Don't shoot, young fellow. Tigers eat people."

But the cowherd had fired and hit the tiger between the eyes. The beast dropped dead, the bullet having pierced its brain.

Slowly the shepherd climbed down from the tree and reproached the boy. "You didn't bother to listen to me, young fellow. Why did you shoot for no good reason?"

"The tiger would have gobbled me up if I hadn't."

"Not necessarily. It would have taken a sheep at most. It was pure luck you got it in the eye, otherwise it would surely have eaten you."

The shepherd took the rifle from the boy, reloaded it and then pointed it at him. "I'm going to borrow your cow to carry the tiger to my house."

"But I shot the tiger. Why should you take it home?"

"You shot it with my rifle and I'll shoot you if you don't agree."

The Elephant and the Flies

An elephant was working hard moving logs in a forest.

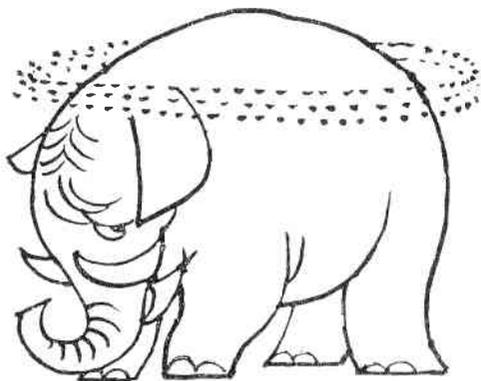
Swarms of flies were buzzing around tormenting it, sucking its sweat, crawling over the corners of its eyes or blocking its nostrils. Helpless the elephant could only flap its ears.

When the elephant was resting, the flies swarmed round it again. It tried to drive them away with a swish of its long trunk.

That wasn't very effective. When it drove them off from one side, they would attack from the other. No sooner had one swarm been driven off, then another one came.

Lashing wildly with its trunk, the elephant finally killed a few flies.

The flies were outraged.



“You’ve used violence, you villain. You’ve obstructed our freedom, interfered with our sovereignty and encroached upon our territory.”

“Encroached upon your territory? Go on back to your stinking latrine.”

“So! We’ll go wherever we like, anywhere in the world. We never interfere with people. But you’ll be punished for your violence today. Our allies are all over the world; cholera, plague, dysentery and tetanus are all our supporters. We’ll wipe you out even if we have to fight a thousand years or even ten thousand years. We’ll fight till we’ve beaten the lot of you!”

The friends of the flies started buzzing too, using the same language as the flies.

Illustrated by Huang Yung-yu

Loyal Hearts

— A play in five acts

Dedicated to our beloved Premier Chou En-lai

CHARACTERS

- Fang Ling-hsuan** *An old traditional Chinese medicine doctor at the Hsinhua Hospital in Peking. Fang is seventy-five years old, a member of the Communist Party and a deputy to the National People’s Congress.*
- Ting Wen-chung** *An old traditional Chinese medicine doctor at the Hsinhua Hospital. He is seventy-eight and Fang’s old friend.*
- Chuang Chi-sheng** *Fang’s son-in-law, who is also a doctor. He is forty years old and a member of the Party Committee of Hsinhua Hospital.*
- Fang Ching-shu** *Chuang Chi-sheng’s wife, a surgeon at Hsinhua Hospital, thirty-five years old.*
- Wu Su-hsin** *Fang’s wife, aged sixty-four.*
- Cheng Sung-nien** *A doctor at the Hsinhua Hospital, thirty-six years old and a Communist.*
- Liang Chen** *A reporter and Cheng Sung-nien’s fiancée, thirty years old.*

Li Kuang *Party secretary of the Hsinhua Hospital, fifty-four years old.*
Chao Kuo-chu *A retired old worker, aged eighty.*
Chen Hsin-sheng *An arts and crafts artist.*
Wu Li-fang *Wu Su-hsin's grand-niece, a dancer in a song and dance troupe. She is twenty-six years old and Chen Hsin-sheng's fiancée.*
Tsao Ya-ping *A laboratory worker in the Hsinhua Hospital, twenty-five years old.*

Doctors A, B, C, D
Head Nurse
Nurse Sun
Young Li and other staff members of the hospital

ACT 1

(January 1975 just after the close of the Fourth National People's Congress.* In Fang Ling-hsuan's house in a Peking courtyard. In the rooms facing south. On the right is Fang's study with a door leading into his bedroom. In the centre of the stage is the living room with a door at the left leading to the kitchen and the bedroom of Fang's daughter and her husband. Upstage is a door leading to the courtyard. Visible through the windows are the bare branches of a crab-apple tree and a cluster of graceful green bamboos outside. The living-room furniture is made of hardwood. Thread-bound books fill the bookcase. Near this is a desk with a telephone. An old-fashioned clock hangs on the wall. On a long narrow table is a miniature garden and a pot of fragrant green orchid. On the wall beneath Chairman Mao's portrait is a scroll in rustic script quoting his words: "Chinese medicine and pharmacology are a great treasure house; efforts should be made to explore them and raise them to a high level." There are also a few landscape scrolls on the wall. In a corner near the window is a little round marble-topped table. Beside the door on the left is a side-board on which are a tea-set, a box of

*The First Session of the Fourth National People's Congress was held in Peking from January 13 to 17, 1975. Premier Chou En-lai, already seriously ill, attended the congress and gave his report on the work of the government.

sweets and a porcelain vase. This and the two armchairs beside the round table give a modern touch to the room, which is essentially old-fashioned like its owner, an old scholar of great learning and prestige.)

(The sounds of songs and cheerful music from the loudspeaker system are interspersed with exploding firecrackers, the shouting of slogans, the laughter and the marching of the paraders celebrating the successful closing of the Fourth National People's Congress.)

(As the curtain rises, Fang Ching-shu is standing beside the round table washing some fruit. Her mother Wu Su-hsin bustles in from the kitchen.)

Wu: Why isn't Chi-sheng back yet? (*About to go out.*)

Ching-shu: Where are you going, mum?

Wu (*pointing out of the window*): Just listen. All those firecrackers must mean your father and his guests will be here any minute. And how can we eat dinner without fish? Your father's like a cat about fish.

Ching-shu (*taking the basket from her mother and smiling*): Stop worrying, mum. Chi-sheng promised me he'd bring back a live fish. With the Fourth National People's Congress ended and dad coming home, Chi-sheng said he'd do the cooking and show you a thing or two. So why not give him a chance? (*Pulling her mother to a seat, she makes her sit down.*)

Wu (*unties her scarf but soon puts it on again and stands up*): No, I can't sit down. We still haven't got everything. Fresh ginger's so hard to get these days. I'll go and have another try.

Ching-shu: Now, mum! All year round you're busy doing everything, so why not just this once be the boss and order us around. We'll take care of everything.

Wu: You?

(*Li-fang comes on, pouting.*)

Li-fang (*on the verge of tears*): Please put something on my hand, aunty.

Ching-shu and **Wu**: Why? What's happened?

Li-fang: I got burned, and now I've got a huge blister.

Wu: Goodness! You're supposed to be frying meat.

Ching-shu (*examines Li-fang's hand and laughs*): Oh! Is that all?
What a fusspot!

Li-fang: But it's really sore. You surgeons never have any feelings.

(*Chuang Chi-sheng enters holding packages with one arm and carrying three live fish.*)

Chuang (*displaying the fish*): Look, mum, live fish!

Wu: How lovely! (*Taking the fish from Chuang, she goes into the kitchen.*)

Chuang (*to Wu*): What's the matter?

Li-fang: I burnt my hand!

(*Wu can be heard exclaiming from the kitchen: "Oh no! It's burnt!"*)

Li-fang: *Aiya!* My fried mutton slices.

(*Wu enters with a frying pan.*)

Wu: Just look at this. What a pity! Some fried mutton slices!

Chuang (*laughing*): Burnt to a crisp!

Li-fang: All because of my burnt hand!

Chuang: Now, now, Li-fang, don't worry. Without trying, you've cooked one of Peking's best known specialities — "charred mutton".

Li-fang: Don't tease me!

Chuang: I'm not. Fried mutton slices should be juicy and tender. But many years ago, when an old chef was quick-frying mutton, he was distracted for a few seconds and the mutton was charred. He was going to fry another portion to replace the burnt one but, to his surprise, when the customer tasted it he praised it to the skies. So a new Peking dish was created known as "charred mutton". Nowadays only a few old chefs can cook this delicacy. However, unknown to the world, a talented new

chef has appeared this day among us ... (*pointing to Li-fang*)

Wu Li-fang!

Li-fang: Oh, uncle, you've got a way of talking!

Wu: And how! He's certainly got the gift of the gab.

Chuang (*taking a small paper package from his bag*): Here, mum, ginger powder and dried ginger. ...

Wu: That's very kind of you, but the best thing is. ...

Chuang (*groping again in his bag and producing two pieces of ginger*): Fresh ginger!

Wu: Wonderful! (*Takes the fresh ginger in delight.*)

Li-fang: Uncle, you seem to anticipate her every wish.

Wu: Yes, not like you. You only manage to annoy me. Come on, let's go and do the cooking. (*She goes off with Li-fang.*)

Chuang: Dad's not home yet?

Ching-shu: No, but why are you so late? (*Pours Chuang a cup of tea.*)

Chuang: I was suddenly summoned by telephone to the ministry today by that top official.

Ching-shu (*startled*): Why?

Chuang: She wanted to know what I thought about the new o₃ medicine and the work of the o₃ research group.

Ching-shu: Why should she ask your opinion?

Chuang: I don't know. It's very strange.

Ching-shu: What did you say?

Chuang: I said that the effect of the o₃ tablets was often, but not always, very good, and that while the o₃ research group had achieved a lot, it naturally had its shortcomings, that we should see things from both sides. ...

Ching-shu: Just listen to you! Why so diplomatic?

Chuang: To find out what she was driving at.

Ching-shu: Well, what did she say?

Chuang (*stands up and paces around in annoyance*): Once I'd finished she blew her top. "You call yourself a member of the Party committee?" she said. "And the ministry picked you specially to take part in the meeting of the Chaoyang Agricultural Insti-

tute.* How can your understanding of the struggle between the two lines be so limited?" She continued that the o3 research group was opposing the experience of the Chaoyang Agricultural Institute; that it was a typical case of a closed-door policy in research work, serving only the city big-shots.

Ching-shu: I see!

Chuang: Oddly enough, three times she remarked on my being Fang Ling-hsuan's son-in-law.

Ching-shu: So what? What's that got to do with it?

Chuang: She mentioned more than once about Party Secretary Hsueh's removal. She wants to cut down the o3 research group and me to announce this at the hospital.

Ching-shu: I thought we had a new Party secretary, Li Kuang.

Chuang: Exactly. She's never spoken to me before, or shown any interest in our work. So why now?

Ching-shu: Couldn't you ask her?

Chuang: Don't be ridiculous! One has to digest such directives to see their nuances. How could I ask her outright what she meant?

Ching-shu: So what are you going to do?

Chuang: Think before I do anything. This is no time for a false move.

Ching-shu: You know the report you made after your visit to Liaoning about the experiences of the Chaoyang Agricultural Institute caused a lot of comment?

Chuang: What did they say?

Ching-shu: Uncle Ting, for example, openly said that you were trying to sit on the fence.

Chuang: That old fellow's always gunning for me. Life is difficult.

*This institute was set up as a model of "educational revolution" by the "gang of four" in 1974. They wanted students to spend all their time out of the institute doing practical work but gave no place to the teaching of basic scientific theories, and they called this the "open-door" method. They had people from all over the country visit this institute to learn from it, and at a big meeting to popularize it they viciously attacked Premier Chou and other leading comrades of the government.

(Li-fang enters.)

Li-fang: Uncle, great aunt asked me how you want those fish dressed, and if we should gut them now?

Chuang: I'd better come and do it myself. It has to be just right. *(Exit.)*

Ching-shu: Will you tidy up this room please, Li-fang?

Li-fang: O.K. I'll make it so nice that great-uncle will be pleased.

(Ching-shu goes out. Wu Li-fang tidies the room and polishes a table.)

(Li Kuang enters from the upstage door, a bag of tools slung over his shoulder.)

Li: Excuse me, I'd like to know. . . .

Li-fang: Who do you want?

Li: I'd like to know. . . .

Li-fang: What?

Li: Are you one of Old Comrade Fang's family?

Li-fang: Yes, he's my great-uncle.

Li: So you're the dancer!

Li-fang: Yes. How did you know?

Li: You look like one.

Li-fang: But who are you?

Li: Who do you think?

Li-fang (examining him): You're a mason.

Li: Quite right.

Li-fang: Well, you've come at just the right time. My great-uncle's wall needs repairing. Can you do it?

Li: Of course. That's why I'm here. The hospital sent me.

Li-fang: Oh, good. I'll show you the way.

Li: When your Dr. Fang returns, be sure to tell me. I'd like to join in our deputy's welcome.



Li Kuang

Li-fang: O.K.

(Li Kuang goes out with Li-fang.)

(There is the sound of laughter offstage. Liang Chen and Cheng Sung-nien enter, followed by Li-fang.)

(Ching-shu and her husband enter.)

Liang: Hello, Dr. Chuang! Hello, Dr. Fang!

Ching-shu: Hello, Liang Chen! Come, sit here.

Chuang: You can hear her charming voice long before she makes her appearance. May we welcome the arrival of the great reporter, Liang Chen.

Liang: You're always so sarcastic.

(Cheng puts two bottles on the table.)

Ching-shu: What have you brought, Sung-nien?

Cheng: Two bottles of *teh chu*.

Chuang: Dr. Fang's favourite drink. You certainly deserve to be his favourite student.

Liang: Why put it like that?

Ching-shu: Well, Liang Chen, how have you been lately?

Liang: Oh, so so.

Ching-shu: What do you mean?

Liang: Every day I have to do something which goes against my conscience.

Chuang: Like what?

Liang: Take writing for instance. When I finish an article and if his lordship, my editor-in-chief, approves of it, then it's bound to include things that bother me.

Ching-shu: Where's your integrity?

Liang: Well, that's why I go along with them superficially but actually still say what I want to say.

Ching-shu: You're a deep one!

Liang: What a pity that today's readers don't read more between the lines.

Cheng: She's certainly doing something her predecessors never had to do before.

Chuang: Liang Chen, remember that story you wrote about our research group on coronary disease, saying how good it was? When is that going to be published?

Liang: It's been suppressed by his lordship.

(A nearby firecracker suddenly explodes in mid-air followed by laughter. Ting Wen-chung appears at the door, a stick crooked on his arm, a glowing incense stick in one hand and a firecracker in the other. All approach to greet him.)

All: Uncle Ting! Old Comrade Ting!

Ting *(laughing)*: Wait, let me light this first.

Ching-shu *(pressing her hands over her ears)*: Uncle Ting, not in the room!

Ting *(goes out of the door, lights the firecracker and waits for it to explode, then says laughing)*: You see! "Allow an old man to have his fun."

(Wu rushes in.)

Wu: Who threw a firecracker in our yard?

Liang: Mrs. Fang, that was Old Comrade Ting's...

Wu: Brother Ting! You really are a big baby!

Ting: The Fourth National People's Congress has given me a new lease of life. Did you hear, Su-hsin? Premier Chou announced at the congress that we are going to modernize the country.

Wu: Yes, I heard about it. That's why you're being treated to a slap-up meal tonight.

Ching-shu *(helping Ting to a chair)*: Sit here, Uncle Ting. *(Brings a dish of sweets.)* Have some sweets, Uncle Ting.

Ting *(looking at them)*: No, thanks. A cup of black tea and three maraschino dates. That'll be plenty. Isn't Ling-hsuan back yet?

Wu: Here's your tea and dates ready for you. *(Brings a tray with a covered cup of tea and a dish of dates preserved in liqueur.)*

Liang *(takes the tray and offers it)*: Here, Old Comrade Ting.

Ting: Thank you. Hey! I hear you've been reporting on the National People's Congress.

Liang: I was called out halfway through to come and get an article from you.

Ting: An article from me? Asking Ting Wen-chung to write something for your paper is news in itself. Your chief certainly knows how to fabricate news.

Liang: And you know how to make the most witty remarks, Old Comrade Ting.

Ting: I never have any dealings with your newspaper. The last time you mentioned me was to call me an old ditchard.

Liang: That's because you said something that was not in tune with the times.

Ting: Untimely, was it? Why, all I said at the meeting was a few friendly comments reminding you people not to go too far in your propaganda. You can't claim to "cure all ailments, serious or otherwise" in Chinese villages. This can't be done at the moment.

Liang: But now our paper wants you to write something criticizing the Confucians.*

Ting: Do you mean to say you want the "old ditchard" to criticize the Confucians? You must be joking.

Liang: We want you to discuss the treatment of coronary heart disease from the angle of criticizing Confucius, linking this with the experience of the Chaoyang Agricultural Institute and the orientation of the o₃ research group.

Ching-shu: But what does it all mean?

Chuang: Ah, so that's it.

Liang: See, Dr. Chuang's caught on already.

Ching-shu: Whatever does it mean, Chi-sheng?

Chuang: It means that our o₃ medicine is serving the Confucians.

Ting: Rubbish! What has the new medicine got to do with criticizing the Confucians?

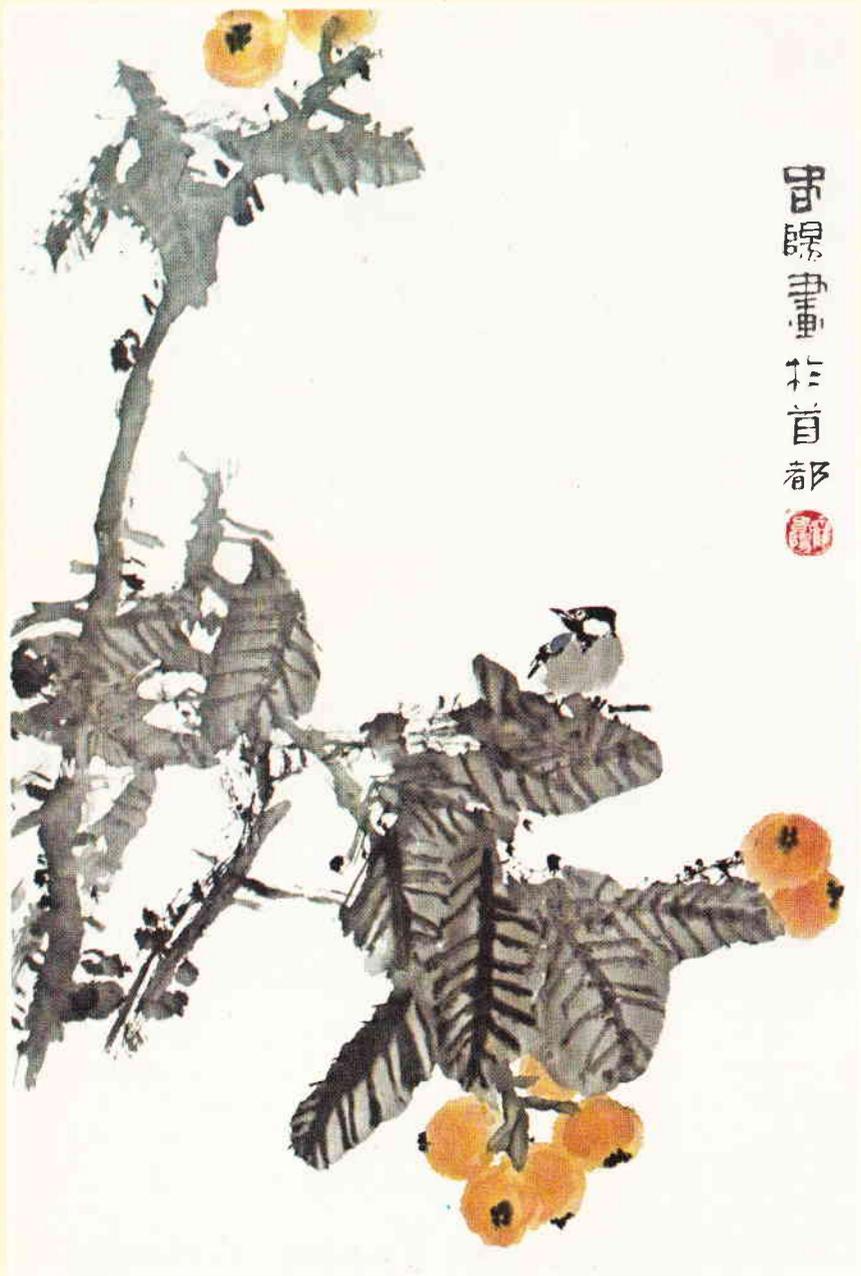
*The Legalists and the Confucians represented two schools of political thought in ancient China. In 1974 the "gang of four" launched a campaign to criticize Confucius and insinuated that Premier Chou and other leading comrades who persisted in Chairman Mao's revolutionary line were the "contemporary Confucians".



Autumn Forest

by Wang Wei-pao

Paintings by Young Artists



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Loquat and Bird by Huo Chun-yang



Tai Girls by Chou Ssu-tung



Flowers in Bloom

by Tsui Ju-tso

Liang: Our chief says you are the ideal person to write this because you oppose this research. Your criticism of the o₃ group from an academic point of view would carry weight.

Ting: So you're using me as a mouthpiece in your attack? True, my opinion of the o₃ medicine differs from the research group's both in principle and prescription, but this is an academic dispute. Some people are trying to claim that this research on coronary disease serves only the city big-shots. Let me tell you, that's just a political frame-up. So he wants me to say that the o₃ research group is Confucian, does he? I must say that chief of yours certainly has got a nerve.

Liang: But Old Comrade Ting, if you won't write the story, how can I do my work?

Ting: No. I won't. Absolutely not!

Liang: Sung-nien, help me persuade Comrade Ting.

Cheng (drawling): I think we need to produce lots more laxatives.

Liang: Why?

Cheng: To cool down passions and relieve constipation. That's making a lot of people delirious so that they talk rot.

Liang: Look, stop being provocative! I'm frantic. Old Comrade Ting, you must agree to write. Once your article is published, you'll...

Ting: Once my story is in print, it'll be an excellent advertisement, telling the world that old Ting Wen-chung is selling himself out dirt cheap.

Liang: A few words from your pen will be my salvation!

Wu: Really, Wen-chung, poor Liang Chen sounds desperate.

Ching-shu: Oh, mum! Don't you see Liang Chen is being ironic.

Ting: You're too trusting, Su-hsin. Her editor-in-chief wants me to put my name to a repudiation of Ling-hsuan.

Wu: What! Attack my husband! Of course you mustn't do it.

(To Liang) But how about you? How will you face your chief?

Liang: Oh, I'll just say I tried my very best and Old Comrade Ting was just about to agree when Mrs. Fang stepped in and stopped him.

Wu: Fine. Just say that. After all, I'm an old woman.

Ting (to Liang): I see. You were just provoking me.

Cheng: So there's a story behind this story.

Liang: Take it for granted there's a story.

Cheng: This is just the first sip. Wait till you've swallowed the whole draught.

Chuang: I think this is the start of a new wave in the movement to criticize the Confucians, and to counter-attack the return of the old order.

Cheng (slowly): Then we'll be getting lots more patients at the hospital.

Ching-shu: Why?

Cheng: Many more will be ill or crushed.

(A pause.)

Ting: Sung-nien always manages to get to the root of our problems.

Liang: He's like a stick of wood. He doesn't know how to bend.

Ting: What's wrong with wood? Trees have roots. Not like duckweed drifting with the current. Some people always manage to come out on top.

(Silence.)

Wu: Brother Wen-chung, how have you been lately?

Ting: Remarkably well. Nowadays there are some people who are mad because we old folks won't pop off quickly. However, as I'm not about to kick the bucket just yet, all I can do is sit around and be a pain in the neck to some people.

Cheng: Moreover, our o₃ research is trying to help old people with heart diseases to live longer.

Liang: There you go again. He can't say three sentences without talking about o₃ medicine. I get at least three lectures on the subject a day from him and he never seems to worry about boring me.

Ching-shu: It's his one-track mind that attracts you.

Wu: Liang Chen, when are you going to treat us to some wedding sweets?

Liang: Never! He married those o₃ tablets long ago.

(All laugh.)

Chuang: So Sung-nien's fallen in love with his research work. He's very single-minded.

Ting: Well, that's much better than being in love with promotion.

(Silence.)

Wu: Chi-sheng, it's time you cooked the fish. (To Ting) Brother Wen-chung, today we're celebrating the triumphant ending of the Fourth National People's Congress, as well as the fifty-fifth anniversary of Ling-hsuan's and your years as doctors. Chi-sheng went to all the trouble of getting you some live fish and he's going to cook his speciality....

Ching-shu: What's the name of that fish dish of yours, Chi-sheng?

Ting Wen-chung

Liang: Its fame reached me long ago. Old Comrade Ting, it's called "Fish à la Chuang."

Ting: Umm, a fine name. (Shaking his head) Now, fish I love, but "Fish à la Chuang" I've never tried. Fancy names never attracted me. I believe in being down to earth.

Chuang (smiling to hide his anger): Well, Uncle Ting, you try it first. You shouldn't dislike a dish because of its cook. Not everything Chuang Chi-sheng does is bad. (Laughing loudly he goes out.)

Ting (taken aback): What... he!

Ching-shu: Uncle Ting, don't be angry. Chi-sheng's just....



Wu: Brother Wen-chung, you're their uncle, you should help them.

Ting (*looking at the women*): I won't condone his hedging, chopping and changing and lack of principles.

Wu (*nodding*): Yes. (*To Cheng*) Sung-nien, you stay and chat to Uncle Ting. (*To Ting*) Make yourself at home while I go and see to things. (*Goes out.*)

Liang: Did you hear, Sung-nien? Mrs. Fang's asked you to entertain Old Comrade Ting.

(*Cheng moves his seat to face Ting.*)

Cheng (*besitantly*): Old Comrade Ting. . . .

Liang: Oh, you! You buzz off to the kitchen. At least you can help stoke the fire or learn to cook "Fish à la Chuang". One day perhaps, you can cook me one of your "wooden" fish dishes.

Cheng (*taking her words seriously*): All right, Mrs. Fang, wait for me! I'll come and help too. (*Goes out.*)

Liang: You see what he's like! Please don't mind him.

Ting: Sometimes the very wise appear to be stupid. I rather like that in him.

Liang: Now, don't you go encouraging him.

Ting: Ching-shu, where's your little Yen-yen?

Ching-shu: I took him back to the kindergarten yesterday. He's not coming home today.

Ting (*producing a toy and handing it to Ching-shu*): Here.

Ching-shu: How you spoil him!

(*Li-fang runs in.*)

Li-fang: Oh, there you are Grandpa Ting. Just the person I want to see. Will you treat me?

Ting: Treat you? You've a whole family of doctors here. Ask Ching-shu.

Li-fang: I don't trust doctors trained in western medicine. I prefer traditional Chinese medicine. It's like poetry.

Ching-shu: Poetry?

Ting: Poetry? Well, that's one point of view, I suppose. . . .

Li-fang: Chinese medicine uses so many kinds of exotic plants and flowers: peonies, convolvulus, honeysuckle. . . . Isn't it poetic?

Ting: Seems you've read a few medical books.

Li-fang: Well, since I've nothing to do, I leafed through some to pass the time and amuse myself. In *A Dream of Red Mansions** Chia Pao-yu brews herbal medicine for Ching-wen in his own room saying he likes the aroma. Chia Pao-yu's a connoisseur.

Ting: So you're a "Red-ologist" as well.

Li-fang: Reading helps to kill the time.

Ting: How can a young person like you have nothing to do but kill time!

Li-fang: Grandpa Ting, I'm dying for something to do. I'd be delighted to go and fry doughnuts.

Liang: A dancer fry doughnuts?

Li-fang: What's wrong with that? At least it would be serving the people. But look at me. I'm not doing anything. Sitting around all day will make me ill.

Ting (*scrutinizing Li-fang and then saying slowly*): Umm. In that case I'd better treat you.

(*Li-fang sits down and Ting feels her pulse.*)

Li-fang: What do you think's wrong?

Ting (*holding her wrist and pretending to be serious*): Well . . . there's something wrong with your heart.

Li-fang: My heart? Can it be cured? Please give me a prescription.

(*Chuang and Cheng enter together.*)

Ting (*to Li-fang in real earnest*): Now listen to me! In spite of his illness, Premier Chou has taken part in the Fourth National

**A Dream of Red Mansions* (also translated as *Dream of the Red Chamber*) is a famous Chinese eighteenth-century novel. A translation of the first part of this novel in English was published in 1978 by the Foreign Languages Press, Peking. Chia Pao-yu, hero of this long novel, is a young rebel of the feudal society, and Ching-wen is his maidservant. Many Chinese scholars have written researches on this novel and they are usually known as the "red-ologists".

People's Congress. And that in itself is a good prescription for you, for me and for everybody. The premier is extremely ill, yet he snatches time to do as much work as possible for the people. But you, a healthy young woman, moan and groan and complain about having nothing to do.

Li-fang (*exploding*): The people trained me to work on the stage. Do you think I like doing nothing and living off the people? Yet they've practically wiped out all traditional dances. If I train hard, they criticize me for being ambitious. They say that I'm trying to be a bourgeois specialist. When a dancer can't perform, she's wasting her talent and youth. (*Crying with anger*) I'm already twenty-six, Grandpa Ting, do you think I feel happy like this? We've no theatre, no dances, and not even novels to read. Yet some people keep spouting on about how good the situation is, with a hundred flowers blooming in literature and art.

Ting: Huh! (*Pointing to Liang*) Your paper turns black into red, employs a whole bunch of hacks, who specialize in churning out crap, explaining why black should be red.

Chuang (*placating*): Now, Uncle Ting, don't get so excited.

Ting: What? Don't get excited? I'm not made of stone! When I heard Premier Chou announce on behalf of Chairman Mao the great plans for our motherland and saw the premier's picture as he made the report, I think even a piece of stone would have been moved. You're all younger and should know better what you should do at a time like this.

Liang (*going up to Ting*): Old Comrade Ting, I'm deeply moved by what you say. I also feel we should think more about certain matters. (*Softly*) For instance, before the congress was convened there were all kinds of rumours floating around about government appointments. . . .

Ting (*nodding and also speaking softly*): The fact that our premier appeared to deliver the report must have surprised some people.

Chuang (*loudly*): Don't you think that's going a bit too far, Comrade Liang Chen, talking like that?

Ting: Strange, extremely strange! Why can't we even discuss the National People's Congress? Can't we even talk about our Premier Chou?

Chuang: I've the greatest respect for you, Uncle Ting, but you know class struggle is extremely complicated at present.

Ching-shu: That's enough, Chi-sheng.

Ting: Here I am in the house of an old friend with whom I've always spoken freely on any subject. Surely it's not necessary now to put up a notice on the wall saying: "Don't discuss politics." As for Li-fang, her letting off steam just now was not unjustified. After all, many artists are wasting their time, their youth, having nothing to do. On stage there are only those few blooming flowers blooming away. May I be permitted to ask, Comrade Party Committee Member, if you call that an excellent situation?

Cheng: Some people cannot face the facts. They only feed on flattery, intoxicating themselves with fine, empty words.

Chuang (*smiling tolerantly*): You've got too many complaints. They could get you into trouble.

Ting (*annoyed*): Bah!

(*Chao enters with Chen Hsin-sheng.*)

Chao: Here's someone looking for you, Wu Li-fang.

Chen (*catching sight of Li-fang, runs over happily*): Li-fang!

Li-fang (*grasps Chen's hand and exchanges a look, then turning to the others, she says smiling*): Here, let me introduce you to everybody — this is Grandpa Ting, Old Dr. Ting Wen-chung. This is Aunt Ching-shu, this is her husband Dr. Chuang Chi-sheng. This is Uncle Cheng and that's Aunt Liang Chen.

(*Chen gives the kite he has brought to Ching-shu.*)

Ting: Who's he, Li-fang?

Li-fang: He's a friend.

Chen (*introducing himself*): My name's Chen Hsin-sheng.

Ting: Ah, here comes Chia Pao-yu.

(*All laugh and Chen looks baffled.*)

Ting: Do you like the aroma of herbs brewing?

Li-fang (*petulantly*): Grandpa Ting!

Chen: Herbs? You mean herbs to kill mosquitoes?

Li-fang: Hush, Grandpa Ting's teasing.

Chao (*pats Chen on the shoulder*): I was standing in the street when I saw this young man looking lost, so I asked him what was the matter. He couldn't find your address. (*To Li-fang*) Why didn't you give it to him?

Li-fang: But I wrote the address down for you on a piece of paper. Where is it?

Chen (*slapping the back of his head*): How stupid of me! I left it in a book.

Ting: There! Another bookworm.

Ching-shu: Won't you sit down for a while, Uncle Chao?

Chao: No, thanks. I've got to make arrangements for the parade from our neighbourhood.

Ting: Well, Brother Chao, you certainly keep yourself busy.

Chao: Working for the neighbourhood, the busier I am the better I feel.

Ting: You look good and healthy to me.

Chao: My heart trouble hasn't bothered me at all this year. Your hospital accepted me as one of its guinea-pigs, and I owe my health to your o3 tablets.

Ting: That's nothing to do with me. Any credit goes to Ling-hsuan and Dr. Cheng here.

Cheng: Nonsense! You helped too with your vast experience.

Chao: Dr. Ting's being modest. When your father comes home, Ching-shu, put in a word for me. Tell him we want him to speak to the neighbourhood committee about the congress when he has time. Don't forget.

Ching-shu: O.K. Don't worry, I'll remember.

(*Chao goes out.*)

Ching-shu: Uncle Chao, you watch your step.

Ting (*to Chen*): What do you do, young man?

Chen: I'm in arts and crafts.

Ting (*interested*): Wonderful, that's good work! That's part of our great tradition. One way, I think, of making a contribution to the world is through Chinese medicine and the other, perhaps, is through our arts and crafts.

Chen (*sighs*): But it's difficult.

Ting: Why? That exhibition I saw two years ago at the Nationalities Cultural Palace was very good.

Chen: Oh that? (*Lowering his voice*) You know it's been condemned as a typical example of restoration of the past.

Ting (*shocked*): What! So anything good has become a return to the past?

(*There is an explosion of firecrackers outside. The women, smiling, go to the door.*)

The women: Hello, dad! Great-uncle! Old Comrade Fang!

(*Laughing joyfully, Fang appears at the door.*)

Fang: Why are you blocking the entrance?

The women: We're a guard of honour welcoming you.

Ting (*standing up*): Ling-hsuan, on behalf of old medical friends and colleagues, I welcome our deputy's triumphant return.

(*He applauds. The others join in.*)

Fang (*gripping Ting's hand*): Brother Wen-chung, this time things are really fine! (*Removes his overcoat.*)

(*Wu enters.*)

Wu: No wonder there are firecrackers and clapping. So you're back.

Fang: Aren't you going to welcome me back?

Wu: The food's nearly ready. We've got Chi-sheng's "Fish à la Chuang" and Sung-nien's *teh chu* to drink. All to welcome you home.

Li-fang: Great-uncle, there's also my charred mutton slices.

(*All laugh.*)



Fang Ling-hsuan

Fang: Wonderful. I'm no glutton but today is really an occasion to celebrate.

The women: Oh!

Fang (*in high spirits*): Brother Wen-chung, that awful weight that's been preying on my mind for months has been lifted at last at this congress. I feel younger, rejuvenated! For the past few months only criticisms! Saying research on heart disease was serving only the city big-shots. This time I took the opportunity to ask Premier Chou's opinion.

Ting: What did he say?

Fang: He said that heart disease is a common and recurring disease, that we should do careful research and learn how to prevent and treat it. Premier Chou talked with us deputies from the medical group for a full hour.

Ting: Ling-hsuan, tell us what else he said.

Fang: He seemed to know all about us. He asked me how effective the O₃ tablets were. Sung-nien, he even knows about our plan to investigate herbal medicine using modern scientific methods.

Cheng (*stunned*): Really?

Fang (*to Ting*): The premier specially asked me to send you his regards.

Ting (*very excited*): So, the premier still remembers me?

Fang: He praised you for your scientific attitude and the bold, direct way you present your views. He thinks your criticism of our propaganda on public health, pointing out it must be based on facts, is quite right. The premier even asked about how my writing up of the case histories was going on.

Ting: We can tell the premier that your work on clinical case histories is now in my hands and, in my opinion, it's going to be a great achievement.

Fang: You're being too generous.

Ting: No, I'm just telling the truth. Once read and edited, it'll be ready for the press.

Fang: Then I entrust everything to you. (*A pause*) The premier talked to us for an hour. He was alert and energetic showing no signs of fatigue.

Ting (*delighted*): Ah, that's really good to hear. We must drink to that.

Fang: Yes, Sung-nien, where's that marvellous wine you brought us?

(*They raise their cups in a toast.*)

Ting: Let us drink to good health and a long life for Chairman Mao and Premier Chou!

Fang: To success in our research on the new medicine for heart disease!

Cheng: To overcoming all difficulties in our way!

Liang: To victory!

All: *Kan pei!* (*They drain their wine cups.*)

Fang (*holding his cup, says thoughtfully*): At first I was worried, wondering whether the premier would be able to take part in and preside over this important event. (*Getting excited*) But I never expected him to appear suddenly on the platform. My heart was in my mouth! (*Gesturing*) We all applauded, shouted slogans and some of the deputies even stood up on their chairs. The premier kept motioning to us to sit down and be quiet, but the people just couldn't help clapping. I heard that one of the reporters was so excited that he kept taking photographs completely forgetting that he'd run out of film.

Liang: Please, don't spread that around.

Fang: Why not?

Liang: That was me!

(*All laugh. Wu exit.*)

Ting (*going up to Fang and asking softly*): Ling-hsuan, didn't you ask the premier about his health?

Fang (*slowly*): I did. The premier said: "I mean to do more work for the Party!"

(*A pause.*)

Fang: The premier also said: "I hope to see as soon as possible good results from combining traditional Chinese and western medicine." (*Pause*) Brother Wen-chung, you and I haven't too many years left. How hard we must work to live up to the expectations of Chairman Mao and Premier Chou!

Ting (*excitedly gripping Fang's hands*): Ling-hsuan, those are exactly my feelings!

Cheng (*excitedly*): In the medical world, the new generation will strengthen our ranks, so that we will surely realize the glorious aim of Chairman Mao and Premier Chou.

Fang: While at the meeting, I drafted this plan to accelerate the o₃ research work. Chi-sheng and Sung-nien, come and see if I've left out anything.

Chuang (*glances through the plan*): Dad, I don't know how to say this as I'm feeling a little confused.

All (*taken aback*): About what?

Chuang: This afternoon that top official at the ministry summoned me. She wants me to inform you that the o₃ research work should be cut down. The chief members of the group are to be transferred elsewhere on the open-door method, based on the Chaoyang Agricultural Institute.

All: What!

Chuang: She also said that as your prestige is high among doctors for Chinese medicine and you're without doubt the most eminent doctor of our time. . . .

Fang: I hardly warrant such praise from her. . . .

Chuang: She wants to transfer you so that you can write a pamphlet called *How Confucian Ideas Obstructed the Development of Chinese Medicine*.

Fang: Are you serious?

Cheng: That's just paying lip service to the integration of traditional Chinese and western medicine, but it's actually sabotaging it.

Chuang: Of course. With you transferred, how can the work go on?

Cheng: You should have argued with her. You're in the right.

Chuang: I did argue. But it seems that she's quite determined. . . .

Ting: First they dismissed our Party secretary, Hsueh, because he fully supported o₃. Now they want to remove Ling-hsuan. That's pulling the rug from under our feet!

Cheng: That's tantamount to strangling the o₃ group.

Fang: Let him finish, Sung-nien.

Chuang: She reminded me more than once that we are related, which is why she has chosen me to break the news to you.

Fang: You're my son-in-law. But you're also a member of the Party committee and the o₃ group. How do you feel about it?

Chuang: I . . . I think that the ministry's directive comes from a higher source. Dad, this afternoon that top official wanted me to express my views then and there and she insisted that I take a clear stand. That's why I'm trying to give you an idea about what's going on. I don't want you to make mistakes.

(*Wu enters.*)

Wu: Dinner's served. Let's talk while we eat. Your fish is all cleaned and dressed, Chi-sheng, ready for your expert touch. Come, Brother Wen-chung, we must sit down to dinner now.

(*Chuang Chi-sheng goes off.*)

Ting: Su-hsin, I'm afraid your dishes will taste a bit off.

Wu: Why, what's the matter?

Ting: When a fly buzzes around, it affects the taste of the food.

Wu: What fly? Where did it come from? What's the matter, Ling-hsuan?

Fang: Oh, never mind. Where's Chi-sheng?

Wu: Gone to cook the fish.

Fang: Oh, to hell with his damn fish! Tell Chi-sheng to come here. He hadn't finished what he was saying.

(Ching-shu goes quickly off.)

(There is a pause. Chuang enters followed by his wife.)

Chuang *(gaily)*: Dinner's ready! "Fish à la Chuang" is on the table. Dad, here's a dish you'll like.

Fang *(sitting without stirring)*: Chi-sheng, you didn't finish just now. How do you feel about it? What do you intend to do?

Chuang: Let's have dinner first. Then we can talk about it at leisure after the meal.

Fang: No, it would be better to discuss it first.

Chuang *(slowly)*: All right. *(Pauses.)* Dad, I feel that perhaps our O₃ research may have got involved in something more complex.

Fang: Go on.

Chuang: The prospects for O₃ are hardly good . . . with the present movement to criticize the Confucians getting fiercer, our O₃ research group sticks out like a sore thumb. If we link it to the movement to criticize the Confucians, it becomes a question of which road to take. Therefore I feel the ministry's directive . . .

Fang: You mean . . .

Chuang: Yes, we may as well go along with the ministry for the time being.

Fang: You propose to stop our work on O₃?

Chuang: We're forced by the situation to consider that. The general trend is going that way.

Cheng *(agitated)*: Old Comrade Fang, we've got to go on!

Ting: That's right, a person's got to have integrity.

Chuang: Uncle Ting, they're pulling the rug from under our feet. You'll only make things worse, persuading him to make mistakes.

Ting: Yes, I'm afraid I'm always making untimely remarks. Ling-hsuan, you've certainly got yourself a smart son-in-law. *(To Chuang)* I wish you smooth sailing. *(Stalks off.)*

Wu: Brother Wen-chung, you mustn't go.

Ching-shu: Uncle Ting! *(Chases after him.)*

(Fang plonks himself down on the rattan chair and leans back. He spreads out his hands, a typical gesture when he is angry. Ching-shu enters.)

Wu: Now, Ling-hsuan, don't take it like that.

Fang *(gestures with his hand)*: Su-hsin, take the others in to dinner.

Wu: Sung-nien and Liang Chen, come, let's have dinner.

(Ching-shu, Wu, Cheng, Liang, Li-fang and Chen go out.)

Chuang *(softly)*: Dad, please don't be so angry, but let me try to explain things to you.

Fang: Just now you said I might make mistakes. Well, how, in your opinion, can I avoid them?

Chuang *(after some thought)*: There are times when we all have to compromise.

(Fang reclines against the back of the chair and dismisses him with a wave of his hand. When Chuang is gone, Fang in misery spreads out his hands and the plan he drafted at the congress flutters quietly to the floor.)
(Li Kuang enters, looks at Fang and picks up the plan.)

Fang *(motionless)*: Give it to me.

(Li hands him the plan.)

Fang *(sighs)*: Ah!

Li *(smiling)*: Old Comrade Fang!

Fang *(sits up automatically)*: You . . . who do you want?

Li: I once attended your classes. You could consider me as one of your students. My name is Li Kuang.

Fang *(stands up)*: Li Kuang! You're the new Party secretary?

Li: Yes, but I'm afraid I may not be good enough.

Fang: On the contrary, I think you'll do very well.

Li: Why?

Fang: As long as you follow the ministry's directives, you'll be their favourite.

Li: It depends of course on what kind of directives are issued.

Fang: And if they are correct?
Li: Then, of course, I'll carry them out.
Fang: But suppose they're wrong?
Li: That's another matter.
Fang (*studying Li*): Where have you been?
Li: At cadre school.
Fang: But surely you were sent here to carry out certain directives of the ministry.
Li: How do you know?
Fang: Instinct.
Li: Instinct is hardly reliable. At first glance, my instinct tells me you're a man sighing in despair, but in fact you're itching to get things going.
Fang: You're quite right. So we're bound to quarrel.
Li: Not necessarily.
Fang: All right then, have a look at this. (*Hands him the draft plan.*)
Li (*reading the plan*): Oh, speed up the schedule for the o₃ research.
Fang: You see? Our quarrel's begun.
Li: I think you ought to add two other items to your plan. First, appropriate two more rooms to increase your lab space. Second, get more animals for your experiments. You'll want rabbits and dogs. Satisfied? (*Gets ready to sign his approval.*)
Fang: Wait a moment. Comrade Li Kuang, were you sent to our hospital by the ministry?
Li: Yes.
Fang: Do you know why your predecessor Secretary Hsueh was transferred?
Li: Yes.
Fang: Do you know that in the ministry there are people whose views are quite different from ours?
Li: Oh, yes, I'm aware of that. But the approval for your plan is within my jurisdiction.
Fang: You really are going to...
Li: In my mind the combining of traditional Chinese and western medicine to further medical science and pharmacology is exactly what Chairman Mao instructed us to do. Besides, the o₃ research

is making a contribution to improve the health of people all over the world. I should support it.

Fang: So!
Li (*with a flourish of his pen he signs his approval of the plan*): There! No quarrels.
Fang: Amazing!
Li: Our Party's tradition is to base everything on facts. There's nothing strange in that, Old Comrade Fang!

(*Wu enters.*)

Wu (*to Li*): Ah, there you are, comrade, so you've finished plastering the wall. That was quite a job.

Fang: Plastering the wall? What wall?

Wu: This comrade was sent by the hospital to repair our wall. He's a very good mason.

Fang: "Mason?" You silly old woman! This is our new Party secretary. Let me introduce you. This is Comrade Li Kuang.

Wu: Heavens! I'm so sorry.

Li (*laughing*): Well, Mrs. Fang, do you think my plastering will do? I learned it at cadre school.

Wu: And you haven't even eaten your dinner yet. You must eat with us.

Li: Mrs. Fang, masons have terrific appetites you know.

Wu: Good! We'll start eating right away.

Li: You certainly don't waste time.

Fang (*delighted*): Comrade Li Kuang, let me ask you a question. Since you're new here, how did you know my wall needed repairing?

Li: Why, through investigation of course.

Fang: Investigation, eh? Very thorough too.

(*Li-fang enters with a spray of plum blossoms.*)

Li-fang: Look, great-uncle! I got these beautiful plum blossoms from the backyard.

Fang: Yes, the harbinger of spring. Go and put them in water. Comrade Li Kuang, I saw Premier Chou at the National People's

Congress. I want to tell you all about it. *(He brings out his notebook and makes Li sit down with him by the stove.)*

(The two of them huddle over the stove and begin to talk.)

(Curtain)

ACT 2

(More than twenty days later, after nine o'clock on a cloudy winter morning.)

(On the stage there is a hallway joining the research centre and the offices.)

(The opaque glass door is flanked by windows, through which the staircase and bare trees behind the building are visible. On the left side is the o₃ research centre with its laboratory, electron-microscopic and pathology departments. A door on the right leads to the offices. The ramp in the right corner leads to the operating room. At the front of the stage are the telephone, a sofa and a long table, where people can rest and smoke.)

*(The curtain rises with some medical workers reading a big wall poster.)**

Dr. A: Good idea, I think.

Dr. B: Yes. We've got to get even for everything done in these seventeen years before the Cultural Revolution. *(So saying, both go out of the main door.)*

Dr. C (to a nurse): Better not mention anything about the o₃ group.

Sister Sun: What's the poster about, Young Li?

Young Li: The o₃ group is said to have taken a wrong political line, a typical case of studying science in the closed-door way. The writer requests the minister to disband them and advises Comrade Fang to give up his research while there is still time.

*In present-day China people often voice their opinions or criticize something or some person by putting up wall-posters in public.

Sister Sun: Who's the author?

Young Li: I don't know. But some people round here have been in contact with the highest authorities. They won't be satisfied until they've created a lot of trouble in our hospital.

(Enter the head nurse.)

Dr. D: Look! Such a wonderful poster.

Sister Sun: What's so marvellous about it?

Dr. D: They've suggested a panacea for all our ills.

Young Li: And what's that?

Dr. D: When a patient appears, they hold a meeting to discuss the Legalists and criticize the Confucians. The moment it's over, the patient is cured.

(All laugh.)

(Chao Kuo-chu enters by the central door.)

Young Li: Whom do you want to see, uncle?

Chao (testily): Whoever I can. I've something to do.

Sister Sun: What's it, uncle?

Chao: Why has your o₃ coronary research group stopped accepting patients?

Sister Sun: I never knew that.

Chao: You never knew?

(Young Li and Sister Sun go off. Chuang Chi-sheng comes out of the o₃ laboratory.)

Chuang: Uncle Chao.



Chao Kuo-chu

Chao: Ah, Dr. Chuang! Why isn't your o3 group registering us patients?

Chuang: You'll just have to register now like everybody else.

Chao: Like everybody else! But we've been getting along fine. Since the beginning of your coronary research, I was your guinea-pig. After some treatment, I began to feel the benefit of your medicine. Look, (*fishing out of his pocket a wad of paper*) here's my card — I have an appointment. And here's my case history and a record of dosage I took. All the forms have been filled in. To whom shall I give them?

Chuang: They're all useless now, uncle. By an order from our ministry not only our o3 group but also all other units on coronary research affiliated to the municipality are not permitted to receive patients.

Chao: Why?

Chuang: They say that our political line was wrong, and that our research only served the city big-shots.

Chao: What? You mean we workers become big-shots the moment we grow old and suffer from heart disease?

Dr. D: Good, uncle. That's a good question.

Chao: So the correct line means leaving us patients to await death? Who could change our class status? Well, I understand. Only your ministry. I'll go and have it out with them.

Chuang: Don't go, uncle, or you might get into trouble.

Chao: I'm afraid of nothing. I'll go and put up a poster about it. (*Goes out.*)

Dr. D: Gracious! See what a hornet's nest your refusing patients has stirred up!

Chuang: What can I do about it?

Dr. D (*to Chuang*): Go and report to the ministry, arguing against the ban.

Chuang: Argue against it? Easier said than done. Every time I argue with them, they say I am pleading for my father-in-law. You see what powerful weapons they're using, criticizing Confucius and learning from the Chaoyang Agricultural Institute.

Dr. D: Weren't you chosen by the ministry to attend the meeting in that institute? They certainly are fond of you.

Chuang: Pure chance! (*Feelingly*) Am I glad to see the o3 group broken up? No! But I can't help it. One big-character poster and bang go my arguments.

Dr. D: You mean this one?

Dr. C: Of course. Certainly you can see that Dr. Chuang has his difficulties. (*To Chuang*) I'll be seeing you. (*He pushes Dr. D away.*)

Chuang: If that poster will shake the old man up and make him give up his research, I'll be very relieved.

(*Through the central door, Fang Ling-hsuan and Ting Wen-chung enter.*)

Ting: Ah, Ling-hsuan, you've hit the headlines! Your name's up on the wall, the poster tells you to abandon your research before it's too late.

Fang: Hmml I feel highly honoured.

Chuang (*hurries over to Fang*): Today the o3 group's stopped receiving patients. Please go home, dad.

Fang: But there's a poster here. I want to learn from it.

Chuang: It's not worth reading. Most likely a parrot's chatter!

Ting: That makes it all the more interesting. Who's the parrot's master then?

Fang: You say it isn't worth reading, Chi-sheng?

Chuang: I mean you shouldn't take it so seriously and get het up about it. It takes all sorts to make the world.

Ting: Yes, and this one's a particularly nasty piece of work!

Chuang: On the other hand it may represent some people's views. Perhaps we've been too engrossed in our work, while others less involved see it more clearly.

Fang: What are you getting at? Do you or do you not agree with it?

Ting: Both. That's his brand of dialectics.

Chuang: All I mean is that my father-in-law shouldn't worry about it. Yet it's no joking matter. The ministry orders us to reduce

our group and, furthermore, the masses are demanding to have it closed down. (*Going to Fang*) I think we may as well. . . .

Fang: What?

Chuang: Wash our hands of it at this point.

Fang: You want me to be a deserter?

(*Tsao Ya-ping enters from the door on the left, looking a bit flustered, followed by Cheng Sung-nien.*)

Tsao: Dr. Chuang, how come that dog No. 50 you operated on now has just died on the table?

Fang: Died? How?

Chuang: I'm not clear myself.

Cheng: Did you examine it before the operation? Could some complications have caused its sudden death?

Chuang: No. The dog was in good shape.

Tsao: Did any accident occur while you were operating?

Chuang (*vexed*): Really, Little Tsao. You know very well it's not the first time I've done that kind of operation.

Tsao: Of course, Dr. Chuang. I'm just very worried.

Cheng: As you know, Old Chuang, we're using both pharmacology and pathology to test the O₃ drug. The dog's death must affect our research. If the operation didn't kill it, then perhaps it was our medicine.

Tsao: Yes. So contrary to our expectations our new drug may have caused the dog's death! Won't that mean that all our research has failed?

Fang (*shocked*): What?

Chuang: Now, keep calm! Scientific experiments often fail. We have to face this. Perhaps there were some impurities in the new medicine.

Tsao: Impossible. Dr. Cheng made it.

Cheng: The basic ingredient is a medicinal herb extract. It's never been found to have any toxic properties.

Chuang: Only a few drams of the herb are used in a dose; its toxic effect must be very slight, if at all. The 40 milligrammes we

used are equal to two hundred catties of the herb. How severe could its toxic effect be?

Fang: The medical book says that this kind of herb has no toxic effect.

Chuang: Nevertheless the dog died. All right I'll examine it later.

Tsao: Why not right away?

Chuang: Little Tsao, you know I'm not just a researcher, but also a member of the Party committee. This poster has created chaos in our hospital. How can I go and bury myself in the lab at a moment like this?

Tsao: Then tell me how to write up the notes.

Chuang: I'll do that. You can go.

(*Tsao returns to the O₃ laboratory.*)

Ting: Just as well that the dog's dead. There's no need for you to waste your time on it any more.

Fang: How can you talk like that? Now that I've started this, I'll see it through to the end.

Cheng (*thoughtfully*): But why did the dog die?

Fang: We must weather failure, Sung-nien, and carry on with our research.

Cheng: Of course.

(*Enter Li Kuang from the right-side door.*)

Li: Ah, here you are, Old Comrades Fang and Ting.

Fang (*pointing to the poster*): Have you read this, Li Kuang?

Li: Yes, it's good. Better to bring such contradictions out into the open than try to hide them. Now we can all join in the debate.

(*Liang Chen hurries in, looking rather nervous.*)

Liang: Sung-nien, I'd like to speak to you. . . .

Cheng: Yes?

Liang: Comrade Li Kuang, your complaint to the ministry has caused a hell of a row, you know.

Chuang: How do you know we complained to the ministry?

Ting: It's not top secret. That charming parrot has broadcast it. Haven't you read the big-character poster?

Li: You seem to have come with thunder and lightning, Comrade Liang Chen.

Liang: For Old Comrade Ting's article for our paper, our editor-in-chief told me first thing this morning to go to your ministry to listen to the minister's brief. I had the honour to be received by the lady herself. The minute Hsinhua Hospital was mentioned, she blew her top: She said there's a negative example in the medical world, a unit specializing in serving the city big-shots. The 03 coronary research group. She said she'd instructed you to cut down on research workers and set an example of relying on the masses, but that your Party committee had lodged a complaint against the ministry and disregarded the experience of the Chaoyang Agricultural Institute. Would they dare do this without some strong backing? It's the big-shots who are behind them. Despite the dismissal of Hsueh, the former Party secretary, they're still at it. They're a bunch of dickheads!

Fang (*gritting his teeth*): What rot!

Liang: Then she told me to come here to get some news about the great debate over the political line.

Cheng: There's been no great debate. Merely that one big-character poster. The masses ignored it in disgust.

Liang: How can you sneer at the poster? You know it's supposed to represent the voice of the masses.

Li: Yes, the poster's like one soldier in an opera posing as the whole army.

Liang (*to Cheng*): You wait and see. In a few days there'll be an order from the ministry that the 03 group should be disbanded "to comply with the people's wishes".

Fang: It's just a pretext to smash our group with one blow.

Liang: The minister said the reactionary flag must be hauled down. Its followers must either be rightists or bourgeois experts. Therefore all of them ought to be driven away to the countryside.

Chuang: So it's no longer simply a question of cutting back the 03 group as I was told at first. The situation's escalated.

Ting: A strong dose this time.

Li: They've launched their attack, and your press is co-operating very well with them, it seems.

Liang: Please Comrade Ting, hurry up with your article.

Ting: No, never!

Liang: The minister also told me you don't actually have to write it. The article's been written by someone else. You just have to sign your name to it. I glanced at it. The dry humour and critical style are quite similar to yours.

Ting (*getting up*): Damn it! Why did the minister and your editor-in-chief have to pick on me?

Liang: It's their way of undermining things from within.

Ting (*bangs his fist on the table and stands up*): Disgraceful!

Liang: Moreover, the minister expects you to be a turn-coat and denounce the 03 research group.

Fang: They're enlisting traitors, but they won't find one here.

Ting: Don't be so certain. One may be bought if the price is high enough.

Li (*stands up and slowly walks to the window, then turns round*): The minister's fury, the machinations of the press and the big-character poster are all aimed at the same target. Very well. This is the blast of wind before the storm.

Ting: And you'll bear the brunt of the attack.

Li (*pacing thoughtfully*): That doesn't matter. I'm ready to help draw their fire.

Liang (*gives Li a glance*): Goodbye. (*She and Cheng go out of the central door.*)

Fang: There's no other way but to fight back.

Chuang (*hurriedly*): Oh, dad, you . . . mustn't be impulsive!

Fang: I've never expected such a bitter struggle in my old age. Good, then I won't have lived in vain. (*He goes towards the 03 laboratory.*)

Chuang: Try to keep calm, dad.

Fang: I'm too calm! (*Goes out.*)

Ting (*glances at Li then at Chuang*): A blizzard's coming. You should wear more clothes to keep warm. (*Goes out.*)

(*Li and Chuang remain.*)

Chuang: Who would have thought that your complaint could have created such a rumpus. In the last Party committee meeting I disagreed with you and I tried to talk you out of writing it. See what's happened? You're simply fanning the flames.

Li: No, you're wrong. We aren't fanning the fire, but someone is playing with it.

Chuang: Say what you like but we'll be the first to get burned.

Li: Are you scared? Do you know of a way out?

Chuang: Yes, they've given us a way out — that is to disband the o₃ group, repudiate the black line to serve the city big-shots and implement the experience of the Chaoyang Agricultural Institute. Otherwise we'll all land in the fire.

Li: But I like fire. It tempers steel.

Chuang: But it can also destroy everything.

Li: So what! Remember what our Tang-dynasty poet* said about grass on the plain: No prairie fire can burn it utterly, the spring wind blows it back to life again.

Chuang: Come down to earth, please. That's poetry, not reality. Perhaps we'll all have been burnt to cinders before we can see any blossoms.

Li: Oh, you're too pessimistic. Don't forget that all reactionaries will come to a bad end. Those who play with fire will perish by fire.

Chuang: Please be serious, Old Li. Let's first break up the o₃ group to gain the initiative, then make a self-criticism to admit our mistake. . . .

Li: Coronary disease is common. It's got the highest rate of fatality in our country. The Party Central Committee is concerned about its cure and prevention. The masses need it. Why shouldn't we carry on the work? What mistake have we committed?

*Pai Chu-yi (AD 772-846), a famous Tang poet.

A Communist should give his life for truth. I'd rather be burnt by fire than retreat half a step.

Chuang: There's no need to be so pig-headed as to sacrifice your political future for the o₃ group.

Li: For the o₃ group only? No! But what the ministry is doing now is only the tip of the ice-berg.

Chuang: You're too sensitive.

Li: Through avoiding a struggle over a crucial issue in order to accommodate the current situation, one is liable to become an opportunist.

Chuang: Now, now, don't let's fall out before the fight has begun.

Li: Haven't we already fallen out? The ministry is informed the same day who's yawned in a committee meeting. How come the author of that poster knew about the argument in our meeting over the complaint? The present struggle goes very deep. As Liang Chen said, they're trying to nose out all our backers.

Chuang: Don't jump to conclusions!

Li: We must defend the truth and the Party's principles. (*He goes into the office.*)

Chuang: He's another one who never turns back until he's smashed his head against the wall.

(*Enter Fang Ching-shu, who meets the head nurse.*)

Ching-shu: Hello, prepare the patient in bed No. 24, please. I'm going to operate on him this afternoon.

(*The head nurse goes out.*)

Chuang: Wait a minute, Ching-shu. I'd like a word with you.

Fang Ching-shu



Ching-shu: Later. I have to prepare for the operation.
Chuang: Just a word.
Ching-shu: Very well.
Chuang: What's the date today, Ching-shu?
Ching-shu: It's Wednesday.
Chuang: Gracious! Don't you remember twelve years ago today? ...
Ching-shu: Oh, of course, it's our twelfth wedding anniversary.
I've been so busy, I forgot it.
Chuang: But I didn't. I remembered today. ...
Ching-shu: What's the matter with you, Chi-sheng?
Chuang: Have you read the poster?
Ching-shu: Yes, I have.
Chuang: The struggle's becoming so complicated. Sometimes I need someone to talk to, but whom? When I talk to you at home I feel you don't understand me. ...
Ching-shu: I know, Chi-sheng, you're under pressure.
Chuang: Perhaps you think I haven't shown you enough love and consideration these past few years.
Ching-shu: Look, let's talk about that when we go home. We'll have a good talk. Now I must go and arrange for this afternoon's operation.
Chuang (*suddenly annoyed*): Oh, well, on you go.
Ching-shu (*goes a few steps before turning round*): You look tired, Chi-sheng. Why don't you have a rest?
Chuang: Oh, go on!

(*Exit Ching-shu.*)

(*The telephone rings. Chuang picks up the receiver.*)

Chuang: Dr. Chuang Chi-sheng. Yes, that's me. What? A big-character poster pasted up in the ministry? He's a patient, a retired worker. He wrote it of his own accord. No, I didn't know about it before. What? The minister is furious. Oh! An urgent memo's coming? Yes, all right. (*Putting down the receiver, he goes out.*)

(*Fang and the head nurse enter from the laboratory, the latter holding*

a big-character poster written by Fang. Tsao Ya-ping carries in a small table followed by some medical workers.)

Head Nurse: Shall I paste up the poster at the entrance, Comrade Fang?

Fang: No. Over here, Little Tsao. Bring the small table here, please.

(*Enter Young Li, a nurse.*)

Young Li: Oh, a poster!

Fang: Have a look at it.

Tsao: How d'you like it?

Young Li: Very good, Comrade Fang. (*She calls the others to come.*)

Dr. D: So you've taken up their challenge, old comrade.

(*Enter Ching-shu, Ting and Chuang in succession.*)

Ching-shu: There was no need for that, dad.

Ting: Ling-hsuan, you are. ...

Fang: I'm taking the initiative in launching an offensive.

(*Li and Cheng enter from the doors on either side of the stage.*)

Ting (*stooping to read the poster aloud*): Announcement: I challenge the writer of the poster criticizing me and his patron to a public debate. Time: 11-12 a.m. and 5-6 p.m. every day. Not during my office hours. I am the bourgeois intellectual, reactionary authority, Communist Party member and deputy to the National People's Congress, Fang Ling-hsuan." Excellent! You're a man of mettle.

Dr. C: Particularly that ending of yours!

(*A commotion from all the onlookers is heard.*)

Ting (*loudly*): Regarding the treatment of coronary disease, I admit I differ from him. But over the political issues I stand by him. (*Going over to Fang*) Come on Mr. Poster-writer, stand up and let's debate!

Cheng (*moved*): Comrade Fang! (*Going to stand by Fang, he says to the onlookers.*) Over the o3 group, I'm ready to debate with the poster writer too.

Tsao (*goes to Fang*): Count me in.

(*Silence.*)

Li (*steps towards Fang*): There's no need for this, Old Comrade Fang.

Fang: Yes, there is! The more we debate, the clearer the truth will become.

Ching-shu (*imploringly*): Please don't, dad. Let's go home.

Fang (*checking his watch*): No. The time isn't up yet.

Chuang: Such a man isn't worth your anger, dad. Public opinion will settle it. . . .

Fang: It's not a question of venting my spleen. It's a matter of principle that must be clarified. I've never sailed with the wind or hidden my mistakes. If he can convince me that our coronary research is really serving the city big-shots, then I'll bow down before him.

(*Enter a messenger.*)

Messenger: Comrade Li, here's an urgent memo from the ministry. (*Goes out.*)

Li (*looks at it*): This is addressed to you, Dr. Chuang. (*He gives it to Chuang who hands it back to Li after glancing at it.*)

Li (*reads it before giving it back to Chuang, calmly*): Read it aloud, please.

Chuang (*reads*): "Hsinhua Hospital. An order. 1. Li Kuang, the Party committee secretary of the hospital, and Cheng Sung-nien, the deputy leader of the o3 coronary research group, will leave today for cadre school to take part in manual labour. 2. Dr. Fang Ling-hsuan must report immediately to the Office to Appraise the Legalists and Criticize the Confucians for a new assignment. 3. The o3 group is disbanded from today. The laboratory will be sealed indefinitely and its staff sent back to their original departments. I wish to know how these orders are carried out today." Signed by the minister.

(*All eyes upon him, Fang goes to the central door.*)

Ching-shu: Where are you going, dad?

Fang (*slowly*): To the ministry to ask her the reason.

Ting: Right!

Chuang: You mustn't, dad.

Li (*goes over*): Don't go, Comrade Fang.

Fang (*emotionally*): I want to know what crime I've committed serving the people? It's correct to combine traditional Chinese and western medicine. And no one is going to stop me (*loudly*) until my dying day! (*Striking the end of his stick on the floor, he glances round and pushing the door open leaves.*)

Chuang: Dad!

Cheng: Old comrade!

Ching-shu (*runs after him*): Dad! (*Exit from the central door.*)

(*With everyone watching Chuang starts to paste the sealing paper in an ostentatious way.*)

Dr. D: Are you really going to seal it?

Chuang: If I don't, how can I face the minister? (*Goes to the o3 laboratory.*)

Tsao (*shouts*): Hey! Wait a moment! My bag's in there. (*Goes out.*)

Cheng: And my books. (*Exit.*)

(*Chuang waits.*)

(*Tsao reappears. Cheng comes back with a pile of books in his arms, then leaves from the central door.*)

Tsao: Dr. Chuang, dog No. 50's carcass should be removed immediately from the lab for dissection and examination to find out the cause of death.

Chuang: No need now. (*He begins to seal up the door.*)

Ting (*bangs his stick on the floor*): What a pity that there aren't enough seals to seal up every mouth. Ha, ha, ha. . . .

(*The light fades.*)

(*In the darkness the wind is audible.*)

(*Then the lights grow brighter. The hall becomes visible. The snow-*

flakes outside the windows can be seen swirling in the street light.)
(Suddenly a gust of wind drives the snow against the window-panes.)
(Covered by snow, Fang slowly enters and walks towards the laboratory, stares at the seals and then touches them with his shaky hand.)

Fang (*speaking in a trembling voice*): Sealed! Really! Why? (*Facing the audience*) I simply wanted to do some medical research in order to cure more patients. Is this a crime? Who can tell me? I'm old. My heart has been beating for seventy-five springs and autumns. Soon it will stop for ever. But I wasn't really born until the People's Republic of China was founded. I want to serve my motherland many more years. The old soldiers who fought all over China, the old workers and peasants who suffered such terrible hardships, and the intellectuals who vainly attempted before Liberation to help build up our country, they all want to live longer and make greater contributions. Unfortunately, many have heart disease. So they're watching and waiting for me! And I want to help them to conquer their illness. So what crime have I committed? My laboratory's been sealed! Well, seal! You're no stranger to me. When I was young, you were stuck on my door. You sealed up the broken cauldron, the stove and empty beds in our poor house. It was in front of a seal like this that my father passed out in the blizzard. Later another seal was stuck on the door of my clinic. You sealed my medical equipment and books. Blows from rifle butts drove me and my wife into the wilds. In the old society, a seal was the symbol of my fate as a traditional Chinese doctor. But today, in our socialist motherland, I meet you again. Why? You're stuck there on my door without any qualms, depriving me of my right to serve the people. Tell me why!

(The wind blows violently.)

(Li enters from the door on the left, finding Fang standing there alone.)

Li: Old Comrade Fang!

Fang (*tears in his eyes*): Look at this, Li Kuang. Just look. . . .

Li: Don't grieve, old comrade. Their arrogance, like the snow-storm, can't last long.

Fang (*mutters to himself*): Chairman Mao and Premier Chou told me to devote my remaining years to combining traditional Chinese and western medicine. What are these others trying to do? I don't understand. Ask them to come and explain it to me.

Li (*supports him*): Old comrade.

(Enter Wu Su-hsin, Ting, Ching-shu, Cheng and Tsao.)

Wu: Come home, Ling-hsuan. Let's go home.

Fang (*dazedly*): Go home, yes, go home. No! I won't! I'd rather die here. (*He takes hold of the back of a chair.*)

Wu: Ling-hsuan.

Ching-shu: Don't get so excited, dad! Be careful of your heart!

Fang: I gave my heart to my work.

Ting: Listen to me, Ling-hsuan. We're old. It's very easy for us to die. But in my opinion, we should strive to live on hale and hearty, just to annoy them.

Fang (*sadly*): Brother Wen-chung!

Ting: Please go home.

Fang (*holds Ting's hand*): All right. I'll go.

(Wu helps her husband towards the central door.)

Cheng and Tsao: Comrade Fang!

Fang (*eyeing them*): Sung-nien, Ya-ping, we've worked hard together for many days and nights. Just as we were beginning to achieve something, we're forced to part. (*Tears are coursing down his cheeks.*) I've failed Premier Chou!

Cheng: Don't worry, old comrade. At cadre school I'll keep up with the research and carry out experiments.

Tsao: They can seal the door, but not our hearts.

Wu: Let's go, old man.

Li (*sincerely*): Don't worry about a temporary set-back! Chairman Mao told us, "Range far your eyes over long vistas."

Fang: Ah? Right! Range far our eyes over long vistas. (*Turns to his wife.*) Let's go,

(Wu and Ching-shu help him out. Through the window Fang can be seen turning round at every step.)

(Cheng and Tsao follow behind. Chuang comes down the stairs.)

Ting (*holding Li's hand*): The gates of my house are always open to you and we'll be honoured by your visits, Li Kuang.

Li (*nods*): Thank you very much, old comrade. (*Exit.*)

Chuang: Be careful, Comrade Ting, Li Kuang will be doing hard labour under surveillance.

Ting (*laughs*): Ha, ha, ha...! An old man like me is afraid of nothing. But you also should watch your step.

Chuang: Why?

Ting: Who told about the conflict in the Party committee? Who egged on someone into writing the big-character poster criticizing Old Comrade Fang? Licking everyone's boots, smug in your success....

Chuang: That... that's slander!

Ting (*slowly*): Some day your father-in-law will declare you for what you are — how low you've sunk!

(The lights fade.)

(Curtain)

ACT 3

(Immediately after the previous scene. Night. Fang Ling-hsuan's house. The same setting as in Act 1. Cheng Sung-nien sits in the armchair, while Liang Chen listens attentively at the door of Fang's room.)

Liang (*quietly moving away from the door of the inner room*): Let's go, Sung-nien! Old Comrade Fang's already gone to bed. He's exhausted.

Cheng: But I'm leaving for cadre school tomorrow, and I want to hand over something extremely important to him in person.

(Wu Li-fang enters, holding a bowl of heated herbal medicine.)

Cheng: Is that for Old Comrade Fang, Li-fang?

Li-fang: Yes. He wept again when he came home and it's affected his old heart trouble.

Cheng: He was so enthusiastic and hopeful. Yet it took only one order to close down his O₃ research group and seal off his lab. It's been too much for him!

Li-fang: Say nothing about his illness when you see him. He's stubborn and doesn't want anyone to know. You know he praised you just now.

Liang: Praised Cheng?

Li-fang: Yes, he learned from Aunt Tsao that you removed all the experimental data from the lab before it was sealed, especially that little notebook. He said that was very clever of you.

Liang: It seems that even wood can make a spark!

Cheng: But that dog's carcass is still there.

Liang: Really?

Cheng: So we can't find out yet why it died.

Liang: Why seal a dead dog in the lab?

Cheng: That's a good question. Anyhow, I'm going to carry on with our experiments at cadre school. They aren't going to stop our work.

(Fang from the inner room: "Who's that talking? Is it Sung-nien?")

(Wu answering from the same room: "Why not leave it till tomorrow?")

(Fang: "No. I want to see him right now." He enters from the inner room.)

Fang: Sung-nien!

Cheng: Old Comrade Fang!

Fang: I've been waiting for you, Sung-nien. I knew you'd come.

Cheng: Here is all the data, Old Comrade Fang. (*He hands over a file. Wu enters.*)

Fang: What about that little notebook?

Cheng: Here it is. (*Giving him a small red notebook.*)

Wu: That notebook's been on his mind all the time.

Fang: Marvellous! I noted down here all Premier Chou's talks with us medical representatives and his directives about our



Cheng Sung-nien

research work. It's of vital importance. I'm going to put it in a safe place and read it from time to time for inspiration.

Cheng (*slowly*): Old Comrade Fang, I'll be off in the morning.

Fang (*in deep thought*): Yes. There's just one more thing I want to say to you. Do you remember a medicinal herb called *Selaginella tamariscina* in the Chinese *Materia Medica*?*

Cheng: Yes. Its other name is Evergreen Pine.

Fang: That's it. It grows wild and never dies in winter.

Cheng: Evergreen Pine.

Fang (*taking a few books from the shelf*): Here are some medical books and my experiences in curing coronary disease. Take them with you.

Cheng (*deeply grateful, taking the books*): Thank you, Old Comrade Fang.

Wu: Now it's time you took this medicine.

Fang: But I'm not ill.

Cheng: You must take care of yourself, Comrade Fang. As the ancient poet said: "Where hills bend, streams wind and the pathway seems to end, past dark willows and flowers in bloom lies another village."**

Fang: Thank you.

Liang: I'll come and see you often, Comrade Fang. (*To Cheng*) He must be very tired now. We should be leaving.

*The Chinese *Materia Medica* is the *Pen Tsao Kang Mu*, a compendium of traditional Chinese drugs in 52 volumes by Li Shih-chen (1518-1593) in the Ming Dynasty.

**These lines are from a poem by Lu Yu (1125-1210), a Sung-dynasty poet.

Cheng (*with emotion*): Goodbye, Comrade Fang. (*Abruptly he bows to Fang.*) My teacher! (*He quickly leaves by the upstage door followed by Liang.*)

Li-fang: I'll go and shut the door. (*Exit.*)

Fang: So another one's left us!

Wu: Go and rest, Ling-hsuan.

Fang (*to himself*): "An old war-horse may be stabled,
Yet it still longs to gallop a thousand *li*;
And a noble-hearted man though advanced in years
Never abandons his proud aspirations."*

(*Li Kuang enters softly.*)

Li: "Never abandons his proud aspirations." Well said, Old Fang!

Fang: Ah, Li Kuang! Please sit down.

Li: I'm leaving early tomorrow morning so I thought I'd bother you now. I've got some good news for you.

Fang: Good news?

Li: Yes. I've been to see your neighbour, that old retired worker Chao Kuo-chu, and he's agreed to produce the drug in the street committee's pharmacy. He'll be over to discuss it. So now you can carry on your research, can't you?

Fang: How can I ever thank you?

Li: On the contrary, that's what I should be doing to you.

Wu: You're really leaving early tomorrow morning?

Li: Yes.

Fang: They say your work will be under surveillance.

Li (*laughing*): Well, I don't care.

Fang: I'm so sorry.

Li: How do you feel?

Fang: Not bad. But I really don't understand why they...

Li: Old Comrade Fang, it's not a personal attack on you. It's just a small symptom of something much more serious.

*These lines are from a poem by Tsao Tsao (AD155-220), a famous statesman and poet, and first emperor of the Wei Dynasty during the Three Kingdoms Period.

Fang: Oh?

Li: Before I took over from Hsueh, the former Party secretary, he told me why he'd been dismissed. I didn't quite realize then what the struggle centred around the o₃ group was aiming at. Now I know that their target is neither you nor I.

Fang: Then who?

Li (*in a low voice*): Think for a minute. Before and after the Fourth National People's Congress was being held, some people, mad with ambition, launched their attack on the one man who's given his life for the revolution. They're trying to overthrow him, the pillar of our Party and country. He's always carried out Chairman Mao's revolutionary line... He's our most beloved...

Fang (*shocked*): What? Him? (*To Wu*) Him! (*To Li*) You can't mean him?

Li: Old Comrade Fang, our veteran revolutionaries taught me the Party spirit. A Communist can never be undermined by any force! All that stuff about the Chaoyang Agricultural Institute and open-door scientific research is pure rubbish to hoodwink the people. So is their campaign against so-called retrogression and the criticism of the contemporary Confucian. Old Comrade Fang, I realize now that it is not enough for me to be just a shield. I should take the initiative and attack! (*In a low earnest voice*) Although I've been penalized, I'll appeal to the Party Central Committee. We mustn't give them one inch, Old Comrade Fang, but we must hit back, even at the cost of our own lives.

Fang: Now I see. Though I was directing a research group, I didn't realize it was a weapon... a weapon to defend our Party. Whatever happens, whatever the difficulties, I'm going to produce that o₃ medicine if it's the last thing I do.

Li: That's the spirit, Old Comrade Fang! (*Grasping his hands.*) But you must take good care of yourself! Well, I must be going.

(*Wu enters with cups of tea.*)

Wu: Won't you stay a moment longer and drink this?

Fang (*taking a cup*): Li Kuang, you've helped to clarify things for me. I'm afraid this tea is rather weak, unlike our friendship which is strong. So with this tea, I wish you a safe journey.

Li (*looks at the tea then drinks it in one gulp. Putting down the empty cup he says*): That was good. Like our friendship. (*He stops abruptly. Then with emotion*) Goodbye! (*He walks quickly to the upstage door.*)

Fang: Li Kuang! (*Stands up.*) I'll see you out. (*Walks over.*)

Li: No, don't bother. Next spring I'll be here again. (*Exit laughing.*)

(*The wind howls. Li-fang's voice can be heard from outside saying goodbye to Li Kuang.*)

Fang (*staring in their direction*): So now he's gone too.

Wu: He's a good tough man.

Fang (*after a short pause*): Where's my medicine?

Wu: Here. Shall I heat it again?

Fang: No need. (*He drinks it quickly, then walks to his desk, turns on the lamp and starts to work.*)

(*Fang Ching-shu enters.*)

Ching-shu: You should be in bed, dad. It's very late.

Fang: Something on my mind...

Ching-shu (*pleading*): You must take it easy, dad. Health comes first.

Fang: Perhaps, but if one's mind is all warped, what's the point of being fit? Where is Chi-sheng?

Ching-shu: Still at the hospital.

Fang: Ask him to see me when he comes in.

Ching-shu: All right.

Wu (*turning off the lamp*): It's late. Go to sleep. You can say the rest tomorrow.

Ching-shu: Yes. Off to bed, dad.

(*Fang and Wu enter the inner room. Ching-shu tidies up. Chuang Chi-sheng enters.*)

Chuang: Where is dad?

Ching-shu: Ssh! Quiet! He's just gone to bed.
Chuang (*sitting in an armchair*): Oh dear!
Ching-shu: Why the sighs? You've surely done a good day's work today!
Chuang: They're driving me into a corner.
Ching-shu: Can't you fight back?
Chuang: I daren't. Now they're on at me again. Not satisfied with having succeeded in closing down the research group, they're now demanding that I persuade the old man to write that article appraising the Legalists and criticizing the Confucians. It's a test to see where I stand.
Ching-shu: Haven't you done enough already? Better wash your hands of it once and for all. Stop hesitating...
Chuang: I want to quit, but I can't.
Ching-shu: What was so wrong with the o₃ research group anyway? Why the big fuss, sealing up the lab, closing down the group?
Chuang: You haven't a clue about class struggle today.
Ching-shu: No, I can't seem to tell right from wrong any more.
Chuang: Use your nose! Use your eyes!
Ching-shu: How?
Chuang: Sniff out the class struggle. Watch the political trends. The real truth about the o₃ research can't be told.
Ching-shu: Not even to dad?
Chuang: No one! Not even your parents. (*In a low tense voice*) Their attack is aimed much higher. But why should our old man be a pawn in their game?
Ching-shu (*taking the hint*): Then do be careful what you say.
Chuang: Do you really think our little research group was worth all that row? They pretended to aim at one target while really shooting at another. It's not going to be easy in such a situation to save one's own skin or even keep afloat. (*He pauses.*) I must talk to dad again. My advice is, don't be a sacrifice to the political struggles of others. It's up to him to see what I mean.

(*Fang enters.*)

Fang: When did you get back, Chi-sheng?
Chuang: Just a few moments ago.
Fang: Ching-shu, go and rest and see to Yen-yen. There's something I want to say to Chi-sheng.
Ching-shu (*nodding*): Yes. But don't be too late. (*To Chuang*) Don't let dad get too tired. (*Exit.*)
Chuang: Dad, there's something I'd like to discuss with you first.
Fang: Oh, what?
Chuang: The ministry has just telephoned me asking me to persuade you to agree to writing that article on the Legalists and Confucians. Then your Case Histories can also be published.
Fang: Old Comrade Ting has just finished checking the manuscript and I have no objection to its publication. (*Hands over the manuscript.*)
Chuang (*taking it and glancing through it*): Would you agree to a few more changes? After all, to have it published as quickly as possible will be a personal triumph for you. All you have to do is add to the first part something about the Legalists and Confucians.
Fang: Over my dead body! I don't agree with their way of criticizing the Confucians.
Chuang: Don't be like that, dad. Don't you see why they've singled out the o₃ group?
Fang: Now that's exactly what I wanted to ask you about.
Chuang: It's because it's directly connected with the struggle against the Confucians.
Fang: I still don't understand.
Chuang: Every political movement of ours has an aim. Take the present one. Who do you think they mean by the "big contemporary Confucian"?
Fang: You tell me.
Chuang (*ambiguously*): Well, it must be against someone.
Fang: Who? Speak out!
Chuang: It has to be someone at the top.
Fang (*rises and stares at Chuang and says slowly*): You're sure you know?

Chuang: No, not exactly. I was just speaking in general terms, based on my experiences of political movements. Now, dad, don't get so serious. Listen. Accept the work the ministry asked you to do. Write that article. Politically they're offering you a real break. As a deputy to the National People's Congress, a Party member and a well-known doctor, your article will carry some weight. You be useful to them, and in return you will enjoy political immunity for the rest of your life. Why refuse just for the sake of a few sentences? Behind their attack is a bitter political struggle, which is beyond our control. They're trying to pin down who's backing the whole project. Why sacrifice yourself for others?

Fang (*enraged but trying to control his anger*): It's not because you know all about their intrigues, (*exploding into anger*) but because you're a traitor! Selling out! You're responsible for the 03 group's disbanding, for handing on their orders and sealing up the lab... because you're a stinking collaborator selling out! I must have been mad to have chosen such a splendid son-in-law as you! Get out of my sight!

(*Hearing the commotion, Wu and Ching-shu rush on.*)

Ching-shu (*badly shaken*): Dad, dad!...

Wu: Please stop....

Chuang (*ashen-faced, holding the manuscript of the book in his hand and murmuring*): He's mad! He's gone crazy! (*He goes towards the inner room.*)

Fang: Give me back my manuscript!

(*Chuang looks at it and then hurls it down on a table. The pages scatter on the floor.*)

Fang (*his voice trembling*): Pick them up! At once!

(*Chuang remains motionless.*)

Fang (*staring at Chuang*): Get out!

Ching-shu (*burying her face in her hands, tears streaming down her cheeks*):
Oh!

Chuang: I've tried to help, but you don't want to know what's right or wrong. (*He walks into the inner room.*)

Ching-shu: Dad! Chi-sheng! (*She rushes after Chuang.*)

Wu: Ling-hsuan! (*She helps him.*)

Fang (*sighing towards the sky*): In his heart he knew it all along.

(*Chuang enters followed by Ching-shu.*)

Ching-shu: Where are you going, Chi-sheng?

Chuang: Where I should be! (*He goes out from the upstage door.*)

Ching-shu: Come back! Chi-sheng! (*She dashes off after him.*)

Wu: Bring him back! (*She follows Ching-shu.*)

Fang: The chips are down! Bolt the gate after him.

(*Tears in her eyes, Ching-shu rushes on followed by Wu. Little Yen-yen's voice can be heard calling from the inner room: "Mummy, come here!" Wu and Ching-shu go to him.*)

(*Through the window outside in the lamplight heavy snowflakes are falling.*)

Fang (*looking at this*): What a heavy snow! Softly it covers the whole land, spreading its cold everywhere. But those whose hearts are ablaze will not freeze. Do you think you can harm such a noble leader by your cunning tricks? Never! You are too base, too small! All of you put together amount to nothing.

(*Wu enters.*)

Fang: He's like a brilliant star, dispelling the dark and shedding his splendour and warmth over the millions of our people.

(*Wu helps him to sit down.*)

Fang (*deep in thought*): Su-hsin, do you remember our first meeting with Premier Chou?

Wu: How could I ever forget it?

Fang: It was in Chungking during the War of Resistance Against Japan in 1942.

Wu: It was a drizzly autumn day.

Fang: We'd just finished supper when we heard someone knocking at the door.

Wu: Running to open it I found a youth accompanying a man of about forty. They stood in the rain at the threshold. In the dark I could faintly make out that the man's right arm was slightly bent across his chest. His large eyes were shining. Their expression had a way of making people feel warm.

Fang: Entering he sat down and smiling asked me to make a diagnosis. His face seemed so familiar that I couldn't help asking his name.

Wu: With a smile he replied: "My name is Chou En-lai."

Fang (*standing up*): I was so stunned that I just stood there speechless! When I finally found my tongue I asked him why he had come to see me in person, instead of sending for me.

Wu: He explained: "That would have caused you too much trouble."

Fang: He asked about our living conditions and what I felt about the future of traditional Chinese medicine, for at that time the Kuomintang reactionaries were trying to stamp it out. He talked about Yen-an and the greatness of Mao Tsetung. His words were an inspiration and guide to us. And now... today...

(The telephone rings.)

Wu (*raising her head*): Who could be calling so late as this?

Fang: I'll answer it. (*Picks up the receiver.*) Hello. Who are you speaking to? Why... that's me. Who are you? (*Too excited to control himself*) What! You!

(Wu hurries to her husband's side and listens.)

Fang (*covering the receiver with his hand and turning to Wu*): It's him!* Himself! (*Speaking into the receiver*)... And how are you? All

*There is a tradition among Chinese Communists to keep close links with the masses. Premier Chou was well-known for his wide contacts with the people during his lifetime.

my family are anxious to know about your health! Oh, you mean the new medicine. We... we are trying to speed up the research. My Case Histories? It should be published soon... All the comrades are working hard. Difficulties?... No, no problems. (*Tears are in his eyes.*) Please give our warmest wishes to Sister Teng... Yes, she's here. (*Handing the receiver to Wu*) He wants to speak to you.

Wu: Me? What can I say to him? (*Wiping her hands on her tunic, she takes the receiver.*) How are you?... It's me, Wu Su-hsin... You've a very good memory. Yes, I do have a little grandson called Chuang Yen, meaning "solemnity". But he's not at all solemn. In fact he's always fighting with swords and playing with guns all day long.

Fang (*in a low voice*): You silly old woman. Stop babbling on!

Wu (*still talking into the receiver*): Hello? Yes, that was him. Complaining about me talking like an old wife to you. (*Covers the receiver with her hands.*) He's criticizing you. You... that would be so nice. (*Smiling and with tears in her eyes*) With all our hearts we're missing you. When will you get out of the hospital?... From your photographs you look much thinner... Yes, yes, thank you! We hope you'll leave hospital soon! Goodbye! (*Replacing the receiver, tears pour down her cheeks.*)

(The old couple stand together, looking at each other in silence. On top of the bookshelf a pot of blazing red winter-plum blossoms is spotlighted. Fang stares at it.)



Wu Su-hsin

Fang (*to himself*): How shall I live up to your expectations? (*He paces around.*) Supported by our premier we can be like these plum blossoms and withstand the wind and rain. These flowers are not only fragrant, throughout the bleak winter they remain bright red. So we too will weather all storms until the spring comes again.

(*The lights gradually fade.*)

(*Curtain*)

ACT 4

(New Year's Day, 1976. Fang Ling-hsuan's house. The same setting as the previous act. Curtain rises. Fang is standing before his desk comparing a pig's heart in one hand to an anatomical diagram. The sound of meat being chopped is heard from the kitchen. Wu Su-hsin is heard saying from the kitchen: "Please bring me that new bottle of condiment powder, Ling-hsuan.")

Fang (*absent-mindedly, concentrating on the pig's heart*): Yes.

(*After a while Wu calls again: "Hurry up!"*)

Fang: Coming. (*Still holding the pig's heart, he picks at random a small bottle and makes for the kitchen.*)

(*Enter Wu.*)

Wu: Coming indeed! (*Takes the bottle.*) Well, what's this supposed to be?

Fang: What did you want?

Wu: Condiment powder.

Fang: Well, what's that?

Wu (*going over*): See for yourself. It's your herb extract. Do you want me to poison everyone?

Fang (*holding the pig's heart in one hand and examining the bottle with the other*): Poison? I don't believe it. But why did that dog die? Damn it!

Wu: I forbid you to mention that dog again today!

Fang: All right, all right! I won't say a word. What a tyrant you are!

Wu: I've enough to do what with the cooking and chopping the meat and. . .

Fang: Then don't make such a fuss. Dumplings alone will be fine. (*Still studying the pig's heart.*)

Wu: Only dumplings for the New Year? And Chi-sheng coming home today? This is one reunion we're going to celebrate. With wine too. (*Walks over to inspect the pig's heart.*) Please put that treasure of yours down for just one moment.

Fang: But I'm trying to do my research, mother dear.

Wu: I know, but do some on my menu first, please.

Fang: Then don't bother cooking. After all it's just the family.

Wu: Oh, stop fiddling with that. (*She takes the heart and puts it on his desk.*) You're just getting better. If you must do something (*handing him a jacket*) sew this for Yen-yen. That'll keep your fingers busy.

Fang: Very well. (*Sits down to sew.*)

Wu: Do you think a man in his seventies can learn to be a surgeon?

Fang: I miss Sung-nien and the others very much. Without doctors trained in western medicine helping me in my experiments, I'm like a man with only one leg.

(*Silence.*)

Wu: Chi-sheng will be home soon. You remember our three conditions?

Fang: Yes.

Wu: Say them once more, please, just to make sure.

Fang: One. Don't mention the ministry. Two. Don't mention the drug. Three. Don't mention the dead dog. In other words, "No politics!"

Wu: I never said that. Only don't talk about them today. Chi-sheng has decided to come home. By all means criticize his



Wu Li-fang

wrong ideas and help him, but don't go blasting him out of the house.

(The door bell rings.)

Wu: Coming. (Turning round as she hurries to the door.) Try and smile a little, dad. Go on, smile!

Fang: I'm not having my photograph taken. (Wu is at the door as Li-fang enters.)

Wu: Oh, so it was you. Why did you ring the bell?

Li-fang: What a welcome!

Wu: It's just that I thought it was your uncle.

Li-fang (pouting and joking): So the mother-in-law is missing her son-in-law. Since I'm not welcome here, I'll go. (Turns to leave.)

Wu: Stop that, you silly girl! Come back!

Li-fang: I've got good news for you, great-uncle.

Fang (laughing): What, Li-fang?

Li-fang (nonchalantly): My name's up on a wall too.

Wu: Praising you?

Li-fang: No, criticizing me.

Wu: But why?

Li-fang: On Great-uncle Ting's advice, I trained with a few comrades and rehearsed a national dance. Then someone reported us saying that we were being frivolous and following the "black" line. We've been called a typical case of restoration. Isn't that hilarious?

Wu: How can you laugh?

Li-fang: Would you rather I wept? What should I do, great-uncle, laugh or weep?

Fang: Laugh and laugh. To your heart's content.

Wu: What a pair!

Fang: That's right! We're the two great typical examples! Stay and celebrate the New Year with us, Li-fang.

Wu: Yes, you must.

Li-fang (removing the gauze covering the pig's heart. She jumps): What's this, great-uncle?

Fang: A heart. Don't touch it.

Li-fang: Human?

Fang: No, a pig's.

Li-fang: Have you ever seen a wolf's one?

Fang: No, never.

Li-fang: I've heard it's black.

Fang: It could be.

Li-fang: And men's hearts?

Fang: They should be red, warm and loyal.

Li-fang: Some are pink.

Fang: Pink?

Li-fang: Yes. Half black and half red, neither cold nor warm. Just lukewarm! Wavering and weak. Strange. Have you ever seen one like that, great-aunt?

Fang: An interesting thought.

Wu: She's a girl with a sharp tongue.

(Enter Chen Hsin-sheng.)

Fang (to Chen): Did you manage to sell my book?

Chen: Yes.

Fang: They knew it was a Ming-dynasty edition?

Chen: The comrade in the bookstore said that a Ming-dynasty edition of Li Shih-chen's *Materia Medica* is very hard to find and immediately offered five hundred yuan. They also inquired about the owner of the book.

Fang: Did you pay the printers?

Chen: Yes.

Fang: Well, five hundred yuan won't cover all the expenses. I've some calligraphy and paintings. Wait a moment. (Goes into the inner room.)

Wu (to Chen): Did you pay the printers?

Chen: Yes. Here's your bank-book back.

Wu: Where's the book?

Chen: I didn't sell it but left it at Great-uncle Chao's place.

(Fang enters with some scrolls.)

Chen: There's no hurry, great-uncle. They'll want their money later. They're only binding the book now. Even though it's a street workshop the printing is quite good. When the workers heard that Premier Chou had been interested in your Case Histories, they took special care with their work. In fact the printing is really first-class.

Fang: All thanks to Great-uncle Chao for getting me that introductory letter from the street committee. Nobody will print something for an individual nowadays.

Wu *(to Li-fang and Chen):* Will you help me chop the meat?

(Li-fang and Chen go out.)

(Ching-shu enters with some pork and leeks.)

Ching-shu: Hello, mum and dad.

Fang: Where's Yen-yen?

Ching-shu: Liang Chen took him to see some performance at the press. They'll be back soon.

Wu: Chi-sheng isn't with you?

Ching-shu: No, he's seeing off some foreign delegation. He'll be here soon.

Wu: Then come and help me knead the dough. *(Takes the pork and leeks and goes into the kitchen.)*

Ching-shu: I'm just coming. *(Seeing Fang sewing Yen-yen's jacket.)* What are you doing, dad?

Fang: Basic surgical training. I've something to say to you, Ching-shu.

Ching-shu: Yes, dad?

Fang: As doctors we never try to avoid the fact that we all have to die sometime. Recently, when I was seriously ill, I realized that I wouldn't live much longer.

Ching-shu: Dad!

Fang: Lying in bed, I remembered the past and tried to assess my life. In the first half of my life I was like a blind man groping

about. Then after I joined the Party I changed. All my life I've tried to be just, though sometimes I fly off the handle. That's because I'm still too self-centred. I quarrelled with Chi-sheng because I saw him as my son-in-law instead of treating him as a comrade. Then I'd have been more patient and persuasive. Everything would have been different and you wouldn't have been separated for over six months. And Yen-yen wouldn't have been missing his father.

Ching-shu *(moved):* Don't blame yourself, dad.

Fang: If I were to die now, I should have two regrets. Regarding my work, I've not yet accomplished the task Premier Chou set me. And when I recently heard that he was seriously ill, I felt I'd let him down. As for my personal life, I feel I've failed as a good Party member and a loving father. I didn't help Chi-sheng enough.

Ching-shu: It's not you, dad, who let anyone down. We failed you.

Fang: Hear me out. Here are two sentences which may help you both. Work like a silkworm spinning silk to its last breath. Live like a candle burning from the first to the last, shedding light all its life.

Ching-shu: I'll remember them always.

Fang: I'm not just moralizing. I'm speaking from my own experience. I hope you'll always try to be honest and open. Never compromise your principles for personal reasons.

Ching-shu: I know what you mean, dad. Perhaps it's wishful thinking on my part. Then sometimes I try to see things from his point of view. Still I'm sure Chi-sheng's changed. He says he was very moved by what you did. Please try to help him more.

(Enter Chuang in a happy mood, loaded with parcels.)

Chuang: Hello, dad.

Fang *(turning round):* Hello.

Chuang: How are you? I've been so atrociously busy lately that I didn't have a moment to spare to see you. . . .

Ching-shu (*going to the door of the inner room*): Mum, he's here.

Chuang: Mum!

(*Wu enters quickly.*)

Wu (*happily*): You're home at last, Chi-sheng. Since early morning dad's been nagging me to make the dumplings and cook. We've all been waiting for you. . . .

(*Enter Li-fang.*)

Chuang: Hello, Li-fang.

Li-fang: Hello, uncle.

(*Chao Kuo-chu's voice can be heard calling from the courtyard as he approaches the upstage door: "Brother Fang, the dogs are here." The sound of dogs barking can be heard.*)

Fang (*pleased*): Brother Chao! (*Goes out.*)

Wu: Brother Chao! (*Goes out.*)

Li-fang: I want to see the dogs too. (*Goes out.*)

Chuang: Dogs? What dogs?

Ching-shu (*taking his presents*): Dad's going to do some experiments at home, so he asked Uncle Chao to buy him a few dogs.

(*Dogs barking.*)

Chuang (*looking out of the door*): Have you told him about the criticism meeting we're going to hold the day after tomorrow?

Ching-shu: But you said not to mention it. Anyway I don't see why Li Kuang has to be criticized once more.

Chuang: He's got a complicated background. Some high-up connections.

(*Re-enter Fang, Chao and Wu.*)

Fang: I'm so grateful to you, Brother Chao.

Chao: It's nothing. The neighbourhood ought to support you in your research curing people. (*Seeing Chuang*) Hello, Dr. Chuang. Will the o₃ research ever be resumed?

Chuang: In fact we are going to start it up again immediately.

A decision from the ministry.

Wu: What?

Fang (*stunned*): What?

(*Everyone is amazed.*)

Chao: Nobody can impede progress, Brother Fang. What did I tell you? It had to be resumed sooner or later.

(*Enter Li-fang.*)

Li-fang: My goodness, they're fierce! They tried to bite me even though they're tied up.

Chao: That's the nature of dogs. Brother Fang, you'd better use them for your experiments quickly or else your neighbours will complain. Well, goodbye! (*Goes out.*)

All (*going to the upstage door*): See you later.

Chuang: Well, Li-fang, how are you? When are we going to have the pleasure of watching you perform?

Li-fang: Perform? When our days are spent being criticized. Not like you. . . .

Wu: Li-fang, go and help in the kitchen.

(*Laughing, Li-fang runs off.*)

Wu: Chi-sheng, have a good talk to dad. (*To Fang*) Now don't forget our three. . . .

Ching-shu: Three what?

Wu: Three. . . er, three cartons of cigarettes we bought for our friends. (*Leads Ching-shu away.*)

Fang (*looking at Chuang*): Why does the ministry suddenly want to resume the research work?

Chuang (*elated*): The situation has completely changed, dad. Today I've just seen off a foreign delegation of heart specialists. They visited our hospital a few days ago and were extremely interested in and thought highly of our o₃ tablets. When the minister heard this, she ordered us to start up the research again and quickly publish our results.

Fang: But she was the one who tried to kill our group. Does she now think she can revive it with a stimulant?

Chuang: It's not like that, dad. She was opposed to the political orientation of the group, doing research in a closed-door way. This time we will adopt a mass line and do it in an open-door way.

Fang: How do you mean?

Chuang: The concrete measures still have to be worked out. However, it was decided to hold a national symposium on heart disease. The minister wants you to present a paper at it.

Fang: Me?

Chuang: You're a world-wide authority on traditional Chinese medicine. During your o₃ research you tackled many problems. The minister would also like to meet you.

Fang: She refused to see me last time. I don't want to meet her now. When will the symposium take place?

Chuang: It's up to you really. The sooner the better, the minister said.

Fang: My, my! How eager she is!

Chuang: "Seize the day, seize the hour!"*

Fang: I can talk about the o₃ drug, but we don't know if it is toxic. We never found out the cause of that dog's death. . . .

Chuang: Well, never mind. It was the only casualty in fifty cases.

Fang: And you can't play about with science either. Even if it was just one in ten thousand cases, we'd still have to investigate. We are responsible to the people.

Chuang: Then just talk about what you've already achieved.

Fang: And?

Chuang: The minister says that if you agree, I'm to draft a monograph on the o₃ drug based on our research and publish it. But I don't know where all our data disappeared to?

Fang: I have them here. I held on to them. (*Walks over to the desk, opens a drawer and produces a file.*)

*A quotation from a poem by Chairman Mao, *Reply to Comrade Kuo Mo-jo*, written in 1963.

Chuang: You always wanted to get results as quickly as possible. Well, now's your chance.

Fang: The change is too sudden.

Chuang: But that's how it is. Everything's changing. Your report will give the medical world a jolt, dad.

Fang: I'm not interested in fame. Only in doing my bit.

Chuang: Now's the time for you to make a great contribution. You must give that address.

Fang: I'll have to think about it. It's still all too sudden. Besides, I've no time to prepare anything.

Chuang: That's all been taken care of. The minister drafted an outline and I'll write it up for you overnight. If you agree, you can just read my text. As it's all medical stuff, it's easy to write up.

Fang (*thinking*): Let me sleep on it. (*Gives Chuang the file.*) Many people sweated blood and tears for this.

Chuang: Don't worry. (*Looking at the file.*) I seem to remember a little notebook too, dad.

Fang: Yes, but that's not for you. It's my personal one and there's nothing medical in it. No, I'm sorry but you can't have that.

Chuang: Very well, but put it away and don't show it to anyone any more.

Fang (*surprised*): What exactly are you trying to say?

Chuang: Only that I am concerned about you. (*Puts the file into his brief-case and locks it.*)

Fang (*watching this*): Chi-sheng.

Chuang: Yes?

Fang (*slowly*): Are you sure there's nothing crooked about all this?

Chuang (*quickly*): No. Honestly. You can't play games with science.

Fang: Will Cheng Sung-nien and Li Kuang take part in it?

Chuang: I've no idea. Sung-nien may be able to, but Li Kuang. . . .

Fang: But he's the Party secretary who supervised the research.

Chuang: But his connections are complicated. We can't begin to understand his case. Nowadays to assess someone like him. . . . I've heard that when he didn't agree to the disciplinary measures meted out to him, he wrote a letter of complaint to somebody at the top. The minister is having it investigated. . . . Better to leave such things to our leadership. No need for us to worry about it.

Fang: Is that so?

(Silence.)

(Enter Wu.)

Wu: What about that fish you're cooking, Chi-sheng?

Chuang: All right. *(Goes out.)*

Wu *(to Fang):* You didn't quarrel, did you?

Fang: I'm not a child. *(Pauses.)* There's no point in quarrelling.

(Yen-yen's voice is heard from backstage: "Oh, how nice! Three spotted dogs!" Dogs bark. Liang Chen's voice: "Don't tease them, Yen-yen. They'll bite you!" Enter Liang Chen.)

Liang: Hello, Dr. Fang, Mrs. Fang. Happy New Year! Yen-yen's being a naughty boy. He wants to shoot at the dogs with his air-gun.

Wu: Has Sung-nien come back too? Surely they have some holidays at cadre school.

Liang: He was ordered to be on duty.

Fang: Come and sit down.

Liang: Thanks, but no. I must go to the office and read some proofs.

Fang: What a busy life! No rest even on New Year's Day!

Liang: It's an emergency. My article on your o₃ research group which was shelved by our boss for nearly a year has suddenly been resurrected and sent to the printers.

Fang: Really?

Wu: How come? Why the sudden turnabout?

Liang: But His Lordship has made some very queer changes.

Fang: Like what?

Liang: Oh, that part about learning from Taching and realizing the four modernizations* has been cut. He's added instead something about learning from Chaoyang Agricultural Institute and doing scientific research in an open-door way. Then he substituted Chuang Chi-sheng's name for Li Kuang's and turned Premier Chou's concern into the "concern of some leaders from the Central Committee and the minister of health".

Fang: What?

Liang *(smiles and pauses):* Well, Dr. Fang. I must dash off. Bye! *(Goes out.)*

Fang *(takes a few steps):* Chi-sheng!

Wu: Now, dad! Our three agreements.

(Enter Chuang.)

Chuang: Yes, dad?

Fang *(slowly):* Oh, nothing. *(Takes a few more steps and then says calmly.)* I wanted to ask you whether or not I should mention Premier Chou's concern for the research in my talk.

Chuang *(considering):* Since it's a purely scientific symposium, just stick to discussing the research. Everyone knows about Premier Chou's concern, so there's no need to mention it. But you can stress the minister's support for your future plans.

Fang: Should I mention about the sealing of the lab?

Wu: Ling-hsuan!

Chuang: Why not? After all it was sealed off because of our erroneous political line.

Fang: I see.

(Enter Ting Wen-chung.)

Wu: Brother Wen-chung.

*The Taching Oilfield is a model for Chinese industry. In 1964 Chairman Mao said: "In industry, learn from Taching." The "gang of four" opposed to Chairman Mao's line was against setting Taching up as the model. "The four modernizations" means the modernization of agriculture, industry, national defence and science and technology before the end of the century, a target set for the Chinese people by Chairman Mao and Premier Chou at the Fourth National People's Congress.

Fang: Hello, Wen-chung.

Chuang: Dr. Ting.

Ting: H'mm.

Wu: What wind blew you here?

Ting: An ill wind.

Fang: Do sit down.

Ting: No, I can't. I'm on tenterhooks.

Wu: Why? What's wrong?

Ting: I've been ordered to spend a revolutionized New Year's Day writing up a report.

Fang: So you're taking part in the symposium too?

Ting: That's it. My glorious task is to be the scapegoat in order to boost up you.

Fang: What?

Ting: I've to say how I opposed you and how you fought resolutely against my conservatism. And finally how I, die-hard though I was, recognized my mistakes and threw myself down at your feet in admiration. I'm to be the opposition leader to the 03 research group, surrendering myself for criticism. Brother, I'll have to sacrifice myself for the sake of the 03 drug. So here I am, at your mercy.

Wu: But what does it all mean, Brother Wen-chung?

Fang (*walking over and touching Ting*): Brother Wen-chung. Can we withstand the storm? A man's worth is known through difficulties. We'll meet at the symposium.

Ting (*giving him a meaningful look*): Yes. We'll meet at the symposium. I'll be waiting for you there. (*About to leave.*)

Wu: Have some tea now, Brother Wen-chung. Later we'll have some wine. Don't run away like that.

Ting: Another time. Today I don't want to be either warm or intoxicated. I need to keep a cool head and be on the alert. (*Goes out.*)

Fang: What's going on, Chi-sheng?

Chuang: I've no idea. Perhaps there's been a misunderstanding.

(*The telephone rings.*)

Chuang (*picking up the phone*): Hello... Speaking. Fine. No problems. Don't worry. (*Puts down the phone.*) Dad, the meeting has been postponed until 8th January, so you'll have plenty of time to prepare.

Fang: Yes, it needs careful preparation.

Wu: That's enough. Let's drop it for now. Have a rest, Ling-hsuan. Chi-sheng, come and help me prepare the stuffing.

(*Wu drags Chuang off.*)

Fang (*to himself*): A foreign delegation... the sudden support of the minister... the altered article for the newspaper... Ting Wen-chung ordered to criticize himself... I'm to brag... And the most important point, all references to Premier Chou cut out...

(*Enter Li Kuang.*)

Li (*softly*): Dr. Fang.

Fang: Li Kuang! (*Grasping his hand*) You're browner... and thinner.

Li: I've shed some of my load.

Fang: You're back now from cadre school?

Li: Yes.

Fang: Our hospital still hasn't a real leader.

Li (*smiling*): A new Party committee deputy secretary has been appointed to take my place.

Fang: Who?

Li: Someone you know very well. Chuang Chi-sheng!

Fang: Him?

(*Wu enters with a bowl of dough.*)

Li: Hello, Mrs. Fang.

Wu: Why, hello, Li Kuang. How are you? Would you like to join us eating dumplings?

Li: What luck! I certainly chose the right moment to come.

Wu (*loudly*): Ching-shu, Chi-sheng. Li Kuang is here.

(*Enter Chuang, Ching-shu and Li-fang.*)

Ching-shu: Hello, Old Li.

Chuang: Hello, Old Li.

Li (*laughing*): How are you, Old Chuang?

Chuang: And how are you?

(*Li and Chuang smile at each other.*)

Wu: Don't just stand there grinning at each other like a pair of idiots. Help to make these dumplings.

(*They bring over a table and put the bowls of dough and stuffing on it.*)

Li: Just watch how well I make the wrappings.

(*All wash their hands.*)

Chuang (*hinting*): New Year's Day, Old Li. Time for a celebration, isn't it?

Li: Yes, that's right.

Fang: Are you here for the meeting too?

Li: Of course. I'm the star of the whole show.

Chuang: Now, now. Let's get on with these dumplings.

Fang: You're taking part in the symposium?

Li: Well, not exactly. I'll be at the repudiation meeting.

Fang (*shocked*): Repudiation meeting? Who's being criticized?

Li: Me.

Fang: You? But why?

Li: I haven't a clue. But I've to explain why I wrote a letter to the head of the State Council "slandering" the minister of health. I've to reveal the contents and who put me up to it.

Chuang: Those wrappings are too thin.

Li: Yes. If they're too thin all that is inside will get exposed.

Chuang: Dad, I'm sure Comrade Li will take it with good grace. What about your report, dad.

Fang (*squeezing a dumpling*): I certainly shall deliver a good speech.

Li-fang: Watch out! You've squeezed out all the stuffing.

Fang: Have I? (*Looks at the dumpling and then at Li Kuang.*) Just look at these wrappings of yours. If I squeeze one all the stuffing comes out.

(*All burst out laughing.*)

(*Curtain*)

ACT 5

(Seven days after the previous act from the evening of 8th to the dawn of 9th January 1976. In Fang's house. The same setting as in the previous scene.)

(The wind is howling. As the curtain rises, Wu is anxiously waiting for the return of her husband. Li-fang sits in an armchair reading.)

Wu (*looking through the window*): Why hasn't your great-uncle returned yet?

Li-fang: Don't worry. He'll be back after the symposium. He is making his report before over a hundred heart specialists from all over the country. At last he can hold his head high.

Wu: Two nights running he was up at midnight and I was so afraid he'd do too much and make himself sick again. Do go and see if they're coming.

Li-fang: No need. The car that fetched them will bring them back.

(*Laughter from outside. The door opens and Fang, Ting and Liang enter.*)

Liang: Mrs. Fang.

Wu: So you're back. Why didn't they drive you home on such a cold day?

Ting: We preferred to walk trailing our clouds of glory!

Fang: Indeed a triumphant return.

Ting (*loudly*): Li-fang, give me a cup of strong black tea. . . .

Li-fang: And three marashino dates.

Wu: What a happy lot you are! What happened?

Liang: Auntie Fang, Old Comrade Fang sang the part of the Monkey King* from the opera *The Monkey Subdues the White Bone Demon* at the symposium. It was a magnificent performance.

*In the ancient Chinese novel *Pilgrimage to the West*, the Monkey King sees through the White Bone Demon's tricks and succeeds in killing the monster. The two lines

The Golden Monkey wrathfully swung his massive cudgel,
And the jade-like firmament was cleared of dust.

are from Chairman Mao's poem *Reply to Comrade Kuo Mo-jo* written in 1961.

Ting: "The Golden Monkey wrathfully swung his massive cudgel; and the jade-like firmament was cleared of dust." Marvellous!

Wu: Good gracious!

Li-fang (*banding Ting the cup*): Great-uncle, Great-uncle Ting, hurry up and tell us all about it.

Fang: That woman from the ministry was expecting some elixir of life, but instead I gave her a strong dose of poison.

Wu: What?

Ting (*sputting out some tea laughing*): Oh, my! She was like a punctured balloon. Su-hsin, Li-fang, if only you could have seen her. (*Stands up and starts to act.*) She was so stunned that her lips curled, her chin trembled violently and the sweat poured down her face. She was a sight to be seen!

Liang: I never thought that an elderly, respectable man like old Comrade Fang could have put on such a performance. It was the climax of the meeting.

Wu: Frankly I don't understand a word of what you are talking about, what with your elixir of life, your strong dose of poison and your White-bone Demons. . . .

Liang: At the start of the symposium, Her Ladyship ranted on about how the ministry had supported the research, how the leading personage from the Party Central Committee had "spared no efforts in her concern for it. How she had encouraged it. How she had instructed us to learn from the experience of Chaoyang Agricultural Institute in open-door methods".

Wu: What a bare-faced lie!

Fang: Utterly shameless.

Ting: With her nose in the air, her brows raised and her sleeves rolled up. . . .

Liang (*butting in*): Quivering from head to foot! I took a photograph of her.

Ting: Then let me write the caption.

Liang: Yes, do.

Ting: How about, *A Tigress on the Rampage?*

(*All laugh.*)

Li-fang: That's wonderful.

Liang: She said that under her leadership, Old Comrade Fang had straightened out his ideas and was working even harder. How he'd struggled against the capitalist-roader, Li Kuang, under the guidance of the Party committee headed by Chuang Chi-sheng to overcome backward thinking. . . .

Ting: Meaning my humble self.

Liang (*continuing*): . . . to make an outstanding contribution, starting the whole world.

Wu: How could anyone be so shameless?

Fang: However, those scoundrels and flatterers swarmed up to the platform, jostling each other to take the floor and sing their empty praises and chant her virtue. It was at that point that. . . .

Liang: A loud bang was heard.

Li-fang: What was it?

Fang: Your great-uncle Ting had risen to his full height and struck the table.

Liang: Then he only spoke one sentence.

Li-fang (*to Ting*): Oh, tell us what you said.

Ting (*rising and acting*): "Your servant Ting Wen-chung, panic-stricken by Her Highness' imperial edicts, kowtows to the old hero Fang Ling-hsuan, and I don't mean a word of it!"

(*Everyone laughs.*)

Liang: Then Old Comrade Fang stood up calmly. . . .

Ting: And boldly began to speak.

Liang: Starting from the Fourth National People's Congress, he talked about the research work, about Chairman Mao's concern for the work and Premier Chou's special interest in it and the instructions he'd given.

Ting: He spoke of Li Kuang's support and how the ministry strangled the o₃ group. How Chuang Chi-sheng had been ordered to seal up the lab and how he had urged Fang to boast at the meeting. He let the cat out of the bag and disclosed everything.

Wu: So you went and exposed their shabby schemes?

Fang (*bowing*): Yours truly did just that!

Liang: Madam from the ministry collapsed in a fit.

Li-fang: How marvellous! Oh, I wish I'd been there.

Fang (*laughing*): I'd been planning it for a whole week.

Wu: No wonder he was so restless each night.

Ting: Su-hsin, from now on I shall bow my head in admiration for Ling-hsuan.

Fang: Now, now. Don't exaggerate!

Ting: I was always aware you knew your own mind, but sometimes I felt you were a bit too outspoken. Who would have guessed that in your old age you'd launch such a brilliant attack on that bunch?

(*Enter Ching-shu.*)

Ching-shu (*perplexed*): Uncle Ting. Are you all right, father?

Fang: Why? Anything wrong?

Ching-shu: I'd just finished the operation when I heard some people whispering in the corridor, saying you had wrecked the symposium.

Ting: Ching-shu, today your father was like a whirlwind demolishing everything.

Ching-shu: No wonder someone said you were up to no good.

Ting: The bastard!

Fang: Ching-shu, whether you see me as good or bad depends on your viewpoint. Only the future will tell. We say that history will be the judge and it will be the masses who will have the final say. Today's symposium was a bitter struggle. I have a feeling that several high-ranking people are stirring up trouble trying to turn back the clock and make right into wrong. From his sick-bed Premier Chou is still concerned about the people's health and our work. Yet they dare to suppress his name! It's absurd. This bunch of fools are crazy enough to attempt anything. But I'll give my life for our premier!

Ting: You really have a loyal heart.

Ching-shu: Now I see, dad. You've done the right thing.

Fang (*pausing, then speaking slowly*): Yes. Ching-shu, you must take good care of little Yen-yen. Now go and fetch my towel, toothbrush and a few clothes.

Ching-shu: What do you mean?

Wu: Is it really that serious?

Fang: Better be prepared just in case. (*Moving over to Wu*) Su-hsin, in the old days we were just a poor husband and wife. Now in the new....

Wu: Hush, now. You don't need to explain anything. I know you. Your heart is loyal. And remember I'm no weakling either!

(*Enter Tsao Ya-ping.*)

Tsao: Hurry, Old Comrade Fang! Something's happened!

All: What's wrong?

Tsao: Dr. Cheng has been experimenting with our o₃ medicine on himself.

All: What?

Tsao: After he returned from cadre school he secretly began to experiment on himself. It could kill him! He made me promise not to tell anyone. But I'm so worried!

Fang: Trust Sung-nien! The drug's been prohibited for clinical use since that dog's mysterious death. He would go and do a thing like that! (*Starts to go out.*) Let's go and see what's going on.

(*All move towards the upstage door, as Cheng enters and stands smiling. A pause.*)

Liang: Sung-nien!

Tsao: Dr. Cheng!

Cheng (*quietly*): What's the matter with all of you?

Fang: You've been experimenting on yourself, haven't you?

Cheng: Yes.

Fang: How do you feel?

Cheng (*honestly*): Just fine.

Tsao: *Aiya!* Is that all you can say? We're all dreadfully worried about you.

Cheng (*gesturing with his hands*): But it's nothing. You'd have all done the same. Here's a record of my experiment over the past few months, Old Comrade Fang. Today I took the largest dose yet and I'm positive it isn't toxic. That means our research is a success!

Fang: You mean you've proved the drug isn't toxic?

Cheng: No question!

Fang: For six months I've been unable to sleep for worrying about it. How can I ever thank you, Sung-nien?

Li-fang: Uncle Cheng, what made you do it? Why experiment on yourself?

Cheng: I simply wanted to get to the bottom of that dog's death.

Li-fang: But what if...

Cheng (*calmly*): Li-fang, we all need something, an ideal to which to dedicate our lives. Without that life has no significance. As a doctor, I have devoted my life to improving our people's health. That means giving my all, including my life. Now take you for example...

Li-fang: Me?

Cheng: Yes, you. You train hard to perform well for the people. And you've never given up even though you've been criticized for it.

Li-fang (*moved*): Oh, great-uncle, he has a loyal heart too!

Fang (*looking at Cheng and Tsao excitedly*): Sung-nien, Ya-ping!

Cheng and Tsao: Old Comrade Fang?

Fang: How happy I am to know that there are fine young people like you to take over from us.

Wu (*to Liang*): Now that the research is a success it's high time, Liang Chen, you got ready for your wedding celebrations.

Liang (*with mixed feelings*): Sung-nien, we're going to be parted again. At least for another three years.

Cheng: Why?

Liang: Yesterday I had an argument with my boss over the proofs of that article. I opposed his views and so he's transferring me to some out-of-the-way place for three years to collect news.

Cheng: But when will you leave?

Liang: Tomorrow.

Cheng (*gazes at her and moves forward, only to check his emotion. Then slowly he says*): You... you'll have to go.

Liang: I'm going to a freezing wilderness of snow and mountains.

Cheng: Well, you'll be stronger for the experience.

Liang (*thoughtfully*): Yes, I'll be much tougher, and I can practise my writing.

Cheng (*holding her hand with deep feeling*): Good. I'll be waiting for you.

(*Liang looks tenderly at Cheng.*)

Ting: Sung-nien, Liang Chen, then you must get married today! I'll preside over the ceremony. So first drink to your wedding and later to your departure.

(*The door is pushed open violently by Chuang who looks furious.*)

Ching-shu: Ah, Chi-sheng!

(*Silence. Chuang throws his bag on a chair and flops down into it still wearing his overcoat.*)

Ting (*pointedly raising his voice*): Returned is our hero who always keeps abreast of the time. You'll have your share of the wine later.

Chuang: I wouldn't celebrate too soon if I were you. You won't be sitting around so comfortably after what you've done!

Wu: Chi-sheng!

Ching-shu: Chi-sheng!

Fang (*slowly*): No, let him have his say.



Liang Chen

Chuang (*angrily*): My say! I work day and night racking my brains to try and make things easier for you. And what thanks do I get? You just go and make a complete fool of me.

Ching-shu (*grasping his arm*): Shut up!

Chuang: No I won't! You haven't a clue how to survive today. You're pedantic and stubborn. Ignoring the realities, paying no attention to which way the wind is blowing. No. You just cling to your outdated principles, useless values and rigid truths. How can you possibly cope with a situation which changes so rapidly? You're on the brink of disaster!

Ting: That's enough! Your opportunism stinks!

Fang: According to you, whatever is advantageous to you is the truth. If you don't compromise you'll make mistakes.

Chuang: Go ahead! Play at being heroes, martyrs. And where will that get you? You think they'll stand for that? They'll just clamp down on you all the more.

Fang: So we'll be impoverished, ruined, imprisoned or killed. So what?

Chuang: You've sacrificed yourselves and me too this afternoon. Later the minister gave me a hell of a row. I'm ordered to make a self-criticism and accept all responsibility for the incident. I may even be kicked out! I hope you're enjoying every minute of this.

Wu: Fine. Then you won't have to compromise your conscience for your ambition.

Ting: It seems Her Excellency, your leader, is going to sacrifice her pawn to save the queen.

Chuang: Don't gloat!

Cheng (*quietly*): Comrade Chuang, we've been colleagues for years, yet no one knew what you were really like. Now at last you've shown your true colours. There's not the least trace of a Party member about you!

Chuang: Who are you to lecture me? As for how to deal with today's struggles, you're just a baby compared to me.

Ching-shu: Chi-sheng, you should be ashamed of yourself! How dare you speak to Sung-nien like that! In order to find out

the cause of that dog's death, he experimented on himself with the drug.

Chuang (*taken aback, looks at Cheng and then with a wave of his hand*): Then he's an even bigger fool than I thought!

Ching-shu: Stop that!

Chuang: All he needed to do was use his brains a little. That damned dog had been injured by a box before the experiment and that caused its death. It was an accident but a useful one. I used it to save you all from getting into deeper trouble. But you all refused to let dead dogs lie with your endless investigations.

All: What?

Ching-shu: Do you mean to say that you knew all along that the dog had not died because of the drug?

Chuang: Of course. I just made use of the situation.

Ching-shu: You lied about the dog?

Chuang: I had no choice. You don't have to take it so seriously.

Fang: You're disgusting!

Ching-shu (*very upset, then calmly walks to Chuang and says slowly*): Get up!

Chuang (*surprised*): What for? (*He rises.*)

Ching-shu (*pointing to the door*): Now get out!

Chuang (*bewildered*): But what's the matter, Ching-shu? Ching-shu. . .

Ching-shu (*losing her self-control*): Chuang Chi-sheng, for twelve years you've been deceiving me, while I trusted

Chuang Chi-sheng



you. I commiserated with you. I sympathized with you in your difficulties. I tried my best to share your successes and failures. I tolerated your rudeness and coldness. I sacrificed everything for you. I hoped you would be a good Party member and a good doctor. (*Pauses.*) But I never, never imagined this. You are a hypocrite, a political opportunist, one who would lie over scientific information. You've sold out your family, your comrades... You've betrayed Chairman Mao and Premier Chou! This is the end. I won't live with a man who's sold his soul!

Chuang: But you...

Ching-shu (*points to the door*): Go away. I never want to see you again!

Chuang: Ching-shu, Ching-shu, you must feel something for me!

Ching-shu: That only made me blind to you. I even supported you! What a fool I was!

Chuang: But don't you see. I did it all for you, for father and mother, for our little Yen-yen, as well as for myself.

Ching-shu: You liar! You didn't sell your soul for others! You did it for yourself. Now you can go and live with yourself! Get out!

Chuang: We've been married twelve years. We can't be separated now. (*Walks towards Wu.*) Mother, mother, please talk to Ching-shu. Little Yen-yen needs a father...

Wu: He's got his grandpa, grandma, his mother, many uncles and aunts. All love him very much. (*Walks towards Ching-shu.*) Ching-shu, I blame myself. I... oh, how could this have happened?...

Ching-shu: Don't cry, mother. I've liberated myself from a lasting shame. (*To Chuang*) Remember, Chuang Chi-sheng, the world doesn't exist for you alone! Now go away!

Chuang (*woodenly*): All right, I'm going. (*He makes for the door.*)

Fang (*solemnly*): Stop!

Chuang (*slowly turns round with a wry smile*): Don't think you can judge a hero by his successes or failures. One day I'll be on top again. Just wait and see.

Fang (*dignified*): No need to shout! You made your bed, but know this — trickery will get you nowhere in politics or science. Chairman Mao told us that we should be honest. Those who pride themselves on their cleverness and cunning are doomed to fail. You still have two choices open to you. One leads to utter destruction. The other is to correct your mistakes and turn over a new leaf. If you choose the latter, our door will still be open to you.

Chuang (*groaning*): But there's only one way out — we're ruined, done for! ... (*Lifting his voice*) They're going to force you to hand over that little notebook. If you refuse, they'll come and search for it tomorrow morning. (*Hysterically*) Take care. We're doomed, all of us! (*Exit.*)

(*The howling of the wind.*)

Fang: Spineless!

Ting: He's as slippery as an eel. And he's got more up his sleeve. There's something more in his warning than meets the eye.

Fang: You mean they'll really come and search for the notebook tomorrow morning?

Ting: Of course! You must be careful. They won't give up easily!

Fang: Don't worry. I'll guard it with my life. I'll never hand it over.

Ting: No, that won't work. Just because you're a deputy of the People's Congress, don't think they'll let you go so easily. They'll tear the place apart. They won't stop at anything. (*Pausing, slowly*) For the the time being only one person is in a position to safeguard it.

Fang: Who?

Ting (*under his breath*): Me, Ting Wen-chung!

Fang: You?

Ting: Everybody knows that I'm opposed to 03.

Fang: Brother Wen-chung! (*Solemnly produces the notebook and hands it to Ting.*) With my life I entrust it to you.

Ting: Don't worry. *(Takes the notebook and puts it into his breast pocket.)*

(The two old men look at each other.)
(Chen and Chao enter delightedly.)

Chen: Great-uncle, good news!

Chao *(loudly)*: Younger Brother Fang, your book has been printed.

Chen *(handing over the draft)*: Look! The old workers of the street workshop rushed it out by working overtime.

Fang: That's wonderful.

Chao *(placing a bundle on the table)*: Now Brother Fang, take back your Ming-dynasty edition of *Materia Medica*. As a doctor you can't do without it.

Fang: What? Hsin-sheng, you didn't sell it? How did you finance the printing then?

Chen *(laughing)*: Well, great-uncle, your wife sold her things. . . . We're not a single cent short.

Chao: What a pair you old couple are!

Wu *(touching the books)*: Well, they are finely printed.

Fang *(walks over to Wu. Gazing at her fondly)*: Su-hsin, I've caused you so much trouble.

Ting *(goes over to them, with emotion)*: For years you've lived together sharing all the good and bad times. I'm a witness to it. You're an example of our country's splendid traditional morality.

Fang: With the new drug tested successfully and your book printed, we can report it and comfort our premier. Let's write a letter to Premier Chou right now. It'll cheer him up while he's lying there ill.

Ting: I more than agree with that.

All: Agreed!

(They start to pack the books, wrap up the drug and start writing the letter.)

(In the howling wind, the sound of funeral music is faintly heard.)

(Tears pouring down his cheeks and bareheaded, Li pushes the door open. All are taken aback. Li cannot speak.)

Fang *(his lips quivering)*: Li Kuang, who?

Li *(his lips trembling and weeping)*: He, our beloved Premier Chou. . . .

(Shocked, every one stands there stunned. Then tears streaming down their cheeks, they weep with grief.)

Li: I heard from some comrades who were there. . . . With his very last words. . . our premier told his nurse. . . since nothing more could be done. . . he should go and look after other patients who needed his care. . . . Those were his last wishes. . . to us medical workers.

Fang *(raising his head in grief)*: Our beloved premier. You were the good premier of the people. Your loyal heart beat only for the people. *(Pauses and looks round at the others. With trembling voice)* Don't weep! We shouldn't mourn him with tears. But we must try to live and struggle like him! *(He turns to face the audience, very moved and says with deep feeling.)* He will never leave us. He will live for ever like a brilliant flame, warming the hearts of the people, lighting our way. *(Inspired)* His life as a great communist fighter will always encourage us to struggle and march forward!

(All raise their heads and look into the distance.)
(“The Internationale” is heard.)

(Final curtain)

Sketches by Ah Lao

How I Came to Write "Loyal Hearts"

Loyal Hearts concentrates my love and my hatred.

The plot deals with the period between the Fourth National People's Congress in January 1975 and January 9, 1976 when news of Premier Chou En-lai's death was announced. During that year our people bravely resisted the "gang of four". It was a period of intense grief and joy, of bewilderment and awakening, of hope and anxiety. During these stormy months, the political realities made people pose questions and seek for the answers. I saw for myself how many Party cadres, intellectuals, writers and artists were persecuted by the gang, their individual fates closely bound up with the fate of our Party and our nation. This is why I chose old Chinese doctors, Party cadres, a reporter and an artist as some of the characters for this play, and tried to portray their hopes and frustrations at that time to voice the thoughts and feelings of the masses. Premier Chou showed infinite

Su Shu-yang studied history in the China People's University and after graduation became a teacher. In recent years he has been working in the Traditional Chinese Medicine Institute.



The playwright Su Shu-yang

concern for such people, and his noble character was an inspiration and encouragement to them. By depicting their devotion to the premier and their dauntless spirit in struggles, I hoped to enable audiences to see the premier as the main and most glorious hero of this play, although he never once appears on the stage.

I still remember clearly those cold winter nights after our beloved Premier Chou's untimely death, when I lingered by the moat

before Tien An Men, looking up at the portrait of our great leader Chairman Mao Tsetung and thinking of the gathering storm. The moat was frozen over, and at that time we could not even voice our sorrow: we had to bury it deep in our hearts in angry silence. I foresaw that these pent-up feelings would become seeds of fire which would one day burst out in a great conflagration; and I longed to write something to vent our people's passion and to praise our beloved Premier Chou. However, the strict censorship of the gang forced me to suppress my urge to write of my love and hatred.

In October 1976 under the leadership of Chairman Hua, we succeeded in smashing the "gang of four" and were free to speak out again. Jubilation over this "second liberation" made me think back, recalling our late premier. Unable to contain my feelings any longer, every day when my family had gone to bed I would sit up late into the night to jot down characters and incidents I remembered, as well as my own feelings at that time. Little by little, the plot of this play took shape. I wrote it very quickly. Sometimes my writing was blurred with tears as my devotion and anger poured from my pen. I cannot say whether this work meets our people's requirements, but since I drew my characters from real life, showing their love for Chairman Mao and Premier Chou and their hatred for the "gang of four", I believe it accords with their wishes.

A New Peking Stage Success

Loyal Hearts written by Su Shu-yang and produced by the Peking People's Art Theatre is a very good new play. I have seen it several times, both during rehearsals and after it was publicly shown, and each time I felt deeply moved by it. I think there are various reasons for this, but the main one is the impact made on me by the characters in the play.

As a playwright myself, I have long paid close attention to characterization, considering this the main factor in writing a play. We should concentrate on depicting characters, and especially on revealing their mental outlook, thoughts and feelings; for these are what determine all their actions as well as the development and denouement of the drama. In this respect *Loyal Hearts* is highly successful.

I have seen this play in company with many other people, including scientists, veteran cadres and youngsters. All of us were moved to

Tsao Yu is a well-known Chinese playwright. His best known works include *Thunderstorm* and *Sunrise*.

tears. I believe this is because the characters in this play touched us from different angles and taught us something. For we who have lived through the period shown in the play can see that its characters are true to life.

The old doctor Fang Ling-hsuan is very well depicted and stands out successfully as the central figure. He is upright and honest, a man of moral integrity. Devoted to his work and unmoved by any selfish considerations, he dares to speak his mind. A man with high ideals himself, he loves Premier Chou En-lai and despises base characters. When he becomes aware of the schemes of the "gang of four" and their followers, he confronts them fearlessly and fights back.

His son-in-law, Chuang Chi-sheng, is a hypocrite and a political opportunist, who is willing to falsify scientific research, betray his professed principles and sell his soul. Motivated purely by self-interest, he veers with the wind. Chuang does not give himself away by any blatant behaviour, but as the plot unfolds his rottenness is gradually revealed. He prides himself on his shrewdness in steering clear of this political maelstrom, and he will do anything to satisfy his ambition, even if it means turning traitor to the people. He views Premier Chou, so loved by the Chinese people, from his own contemptible standpoint. Yet he poses as a man of principle, a good son-in-law and a hard-working member of his Party committee. Rotten characters of this type, living only for themselves, were the social basis of the "gang of four".

Doctor Fang finally sees through Chuang and exposes him as a fraud. His denunciation of Chuang is good theatre. The dramatist only makes him say a few words: "Get out!" and "The chips are down! Bolt the gate after him!" Thus the audience is a witness to the conflict.

The deep contradictions and dramatic conflict between the old doctor and his son-in-law arise from their diametrically opposed views. Their frequent clashes are as inevitable as their final rupture. Thus an irreconcilable struggle breaks out between husband and wife, father-in-law and son-in-law, mother and daughter in this formerly affectionate and closely-knit family. Chuang Chi-sheng is repudiated by his comrades and family as well as by history. Doctor Fang still

says to him at the end of the drama: "You still have two choices open to you. One leads to utter destruction. The other is to correct your mistakes and turn over a new leaf. If you choose the latter, our door will still be open to you." His answer is vacuous, hysterical laughter, because Chuang feels lost and isolated. This is a good exposure of his mentality.

Apart from Doctor Fang and his son-in-law, other characters in this play are also vividly drawn, such as the old practitioner of traditional Chinese medicine, Ting Wen-chung, Fang's closest friend, who likes to air his own political views. He has a strong individuality, keen perception and a sharp tongue, always opposing and attacking opportunists. His trenchant comments are unforgettable.

Doctor Fang's student, Cheng Sung-nien, reminds me of a sturdy tree with deep roots, as he stands firm unswayed by evil trends, uncontaminated by filth. He is a fine and lovable character.

Doctor Fang's wife Wu Su-hsin and his daughter Ching-shu also make a deep impression on people. They love Doctor Fang not just because one is his wife and the other his daughter, but because of his integrity. Hence they support him through all the difficulties. Ching-shu's relationship with Chuang is well handled, making it easy to understand why they finally separate. Indeed, we are pleased when she leaves her despicable husband.

The Party secretary of the hospital, Li Kuang, is well depicted too. His behaviour in each episode is most appropriate. He makes no impassioned or moving speeches, but impresses us as a good Party functionary. He does not strike us as a strong man of action but as a steady, serious and sincere Party secretary. It is he who helps Doctor Fang to understand the nature of the struggle, thereby making him stronger.

Other characters in the play such as the reporter Liang Chen, Doctor Fang's grand-niece Wu Li-fang and the retired worker Old Chao are all drawn from life and have their distinctive features. Even the minor role of young Chen Hsin-sheng, who only appears twice, heightens its dramatic effect.

I find these characters so interesting because it is through their depiction, their contradictions and conflicts that the playwright succeeds

in conveying his message. He pays a passionate tribute to Premier Chou and our medical research workers who loyally serve the people, and he bitterly attacks the "gang of four" and their followers.

We should point out that in this play there is another character who does not appear on the stage — our beloved Premier Chou En-lai. Though he does not take the stage, his image is deep in our hearts. We can see from Doctor Fang, Li Kuang and Cheng Sung-nien the power of the premier's teachings. The production of the new drug "o₃" involves a fierce struggle, but what moves us most is the struggle to the death to defend Premier Chou. In those grim days, it was the premier's heart that warmed ours. Late at night, he telephones to the old couple to express his concern for the experiment with the new drug, as well as his concern for their family. The audience is very surprised. Yet on reflection, this was how it was. How fortunate we are to have had such a premier! When Doctor Fang's book is printed and the experiment with his new drug proves successful, he is about to report this good news to the premier when he hears funeral music — Premier Chou has died. But his spirit, his ideals and his loyal heart will always encourage us in our lives and struggles.

Herein lies the significance of this play.

NOTES ON ART

Huang Tu-wei

Woodcuts by Huang Hsin-po

Huang Hsin-po is one of the first generation of new woodcut artists who received direct guidance from Lu Hsun. China's new graphic art came into being in the early thirties when the Chinese people were fighting against imperialism and feudalism. From the very start, striking its roots in the struggles of the people, it was a close reflection of real life. Lu Hsun who promoted and fostered this new art said, "During a revolution, woodcuts can be used widely since they can be made in a short time." He also said, "The woodcut art was indigenous to China, but it has long been buried underground. Now it is being resuscitated, but it is full of new vitality." This explains why new woodcuts were produced at that time and what their basic characteristics were.

Huang Hsin-po began to make woodcuts in 1933 and has worked in this field for the past 45 years. From the beginning his woodcuts showed sympathy for the labouring people who lived in poverty and hunger in the old China. Many of his early works record their sufferings. *Pushing Carts*, reprinted in this issue, is one of his early works depicting ragged workers pushing heavily loaded carts. *After Selling Blood* depicts a labourer who has long been unemployed. To sup-



Youth (1961)

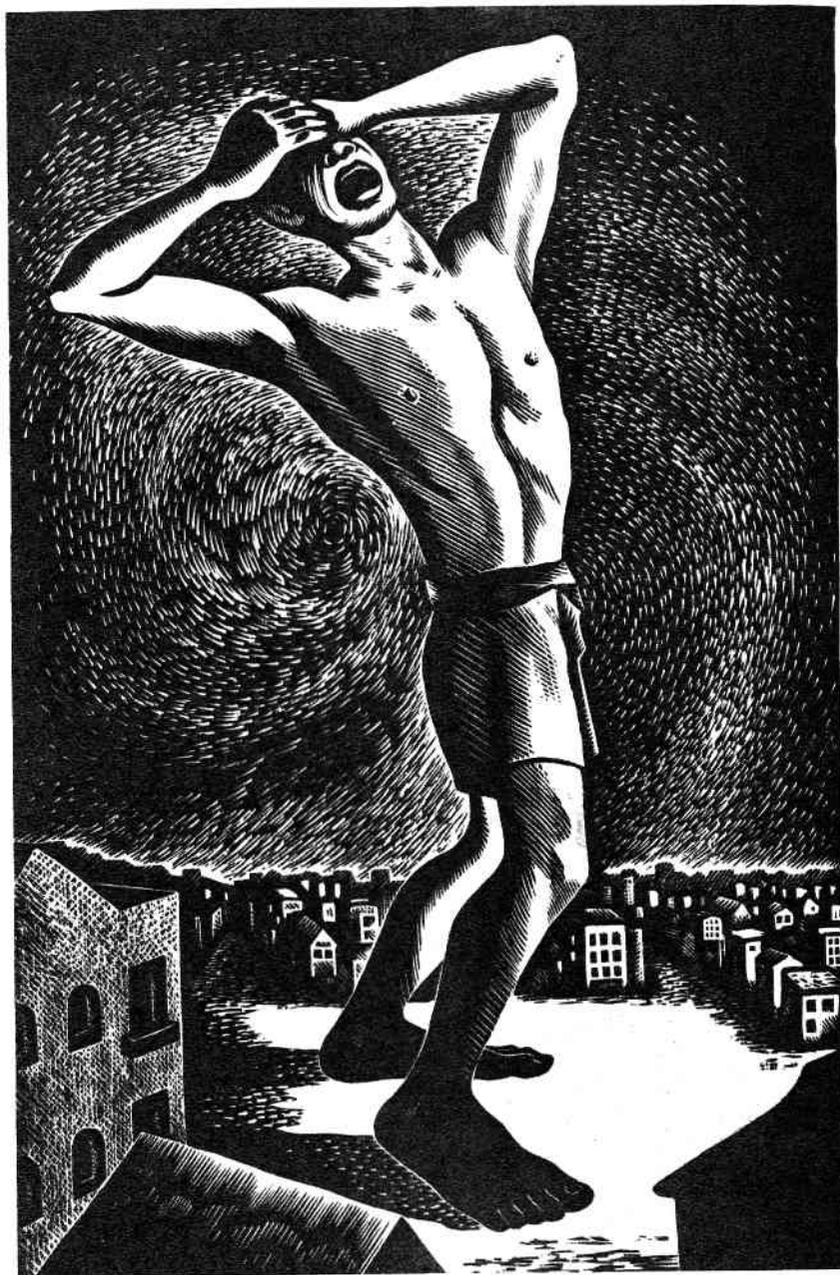
Woodcuts by Huang Hsin-po



Stormy Petrel (1973)



A Good Harvest (1958)



After Selling Blood (1948)



On October 8, 1936, Lu Hsun, though seriously ill, went to visit the Second Woodcut Exhibition and have a talk with young woodcut artists. Lu Hsun (first on the left) and Huang Hsin-po (on Lu Hsun's left)

port his family, he is reduced to selling his blood for a pittance. Now he has lost so much blood that he is overcome by dizziness. These works express the artist's deep sympathy for the poor and his indignant denunciation of the old society. Besides delineating the sufferings of the oppressed and downtrodden labouring people, he also projects in many of his woodcuts their awakening and their struggles.

After the outbreak of the War of Resistance Against Japan in 1937, Huang Hsin-po took the war of resistance as his theme. When New China was founded in 1949, the new life of the people supplied him with new subject-matter. Whereas in the 40's his main emphasis had been on exposing the enemy, he now devoted himself to praising the labouring people. He worked tremendously hard to evolve new methods to present his new subject-matter, experimenting until he achieved maturity as an artist. The characteristics of his later works are exuberance, optimism and genuine feeling. These can be seen

in *Youth*, *Stormy Petrel* and *A Good Harvest* which are reproduced in this issue.

In the past 45 years, Huang Hsin-po has steadily evolved and improved his artistic style. His works are known for their original composition, high degree of generalization, poetry and beauty. He is noted for his black and white woodcuts and shows great skill in their formal arrangement and juxtaposition of fine lines with bold ones, as well as in the contrast between light and shade and abstract and concrete. Besides making full use of the special features of graphic art, he is adept at applying revolutionary romanticism to convey characters and ideas. His works have great artistic impact.

Huang Hsin-po is well-known in Chinese woodcut circles. He has produced more than 600 woodcuts, though unfortunately most of those done during the war years have been lost. The People's Art Publishing House in Peking is planning to put out a *Selection of Huang Hsin-po's Woodcuts* including 138 of his works.

Lu Hsun (woodcut)

by Huang Hsin-po



Thoughts After Visiting the Japanese Higashiyama Painting Exhibition

In the eighth century, at the invitation of two Japanese Buddhist monks, the celebrated Chinese monk Chien Chen (688-763) risked his life six times to voyage to Japan, finally reaching the south of Kyushu after five unsuccessful attempts. By the time he landed he was totally blind. Yet under his direction the Toshodaiji Monastery was built in Nara, and this played an important role in the early cultural exchange between China and Japan. Chien Chen himself is still respected by the Japanese people.

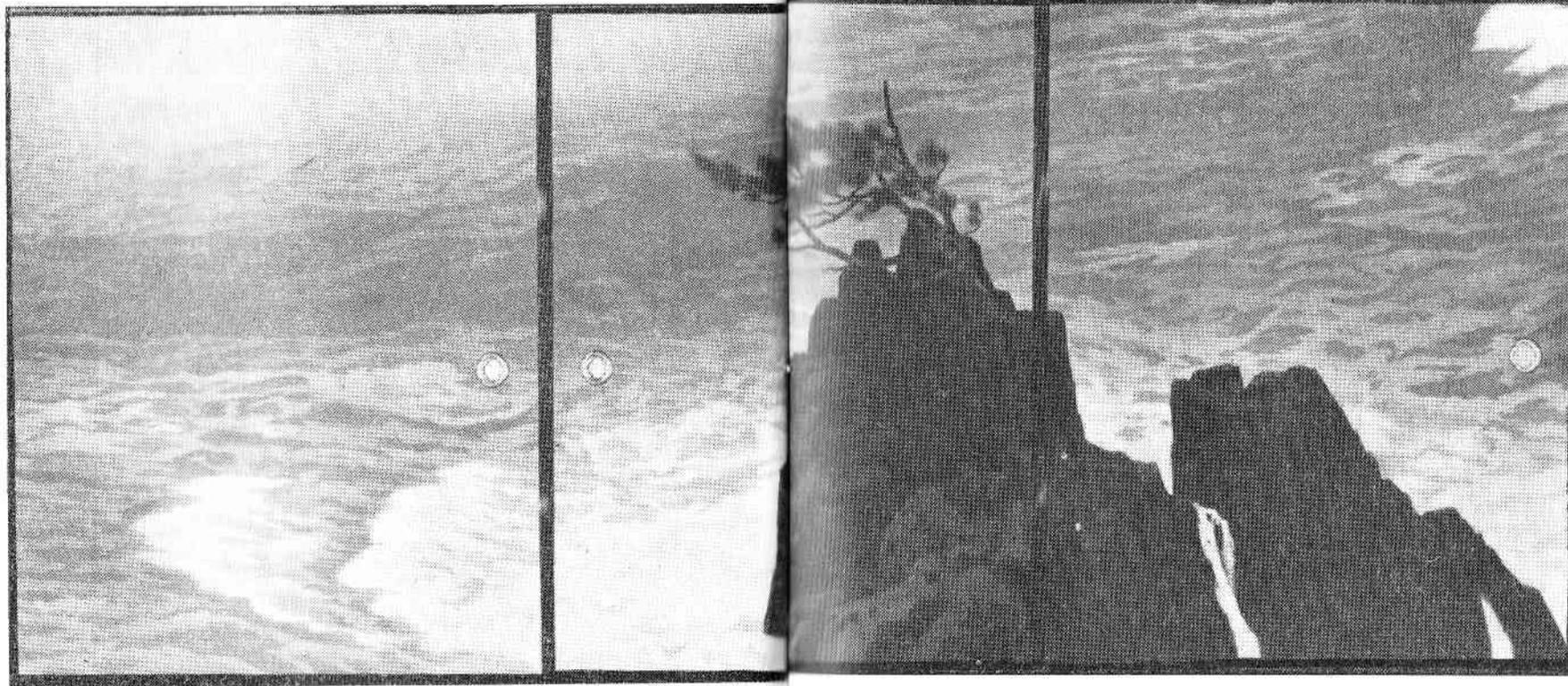
In order to commemorate Chien Chen, Mr. Kai Higashiyama spent three and a half years to paint screen frescos for the Toshodaiji Monastery. He gave very careful thought to their composition. Because Chien Chen had been unable to see the scenery of Japan, Mr. Kai Higashiyama decided to paint its landscapes. But what season should he show? He settled on June, the month of Chien Chen's death and painted *Mountain Clouds* and *The Sound of Waves* for the front of Chien Chen's shrine as a tribute to him. The former

shows a vast expanse of verdant cedars and clouds, with a cuckoo in the left corner to mark the season. The latter shows white-capped waves breaking against reefs in the boundless sea. There are no high billows, no boats, simply rank upon rank of waves advancing rhythmically, so that we seem to hear the deep-toned surge of the tide.

The magnitude of these screen murals must have made it difficult to paint them to scale. But Mr. Kai Higashiyama spared no pains, sometimes kneeling, squatting, or perched on a ladder, to paint two harmonious, well-integrated landscapes.

To honour Chien Chen's memory, the artist decided to paint certain scenes from China too. During his visits here in 1976 and 1977, he went to Yangchow, the monk's birthplace, as well as Sian,

The Sound of Waves



Kweilin and the Sinkiang Uighur Autonomous Region. This year he will revisit Yangchow and go to Loyang, Mount Huangshan and other places. Mr. Kai Higashiyama has drawn many sketches in China. The beautiful mountains, river and streams of Kweilin enchanted him. He says that his visits to China have aroused his interest in ink painting and he has begun to paint in a new style.

I stood spellbound for a long time before the landscapes in the exhibition; and when at last I moved on, I could not help turning back for another look, so strong was their appeal for me. Paintings are made by artists and a good painting, I believe, is bound to be in rapport with the artist's mind and virtuosity. I remember that Lu Hsun once said that a work of art, while apparently a painting or a

sculpture, is in fact the expression of the artist's views and personality; and this is why it has the power to move us and influence our minds after we have appreciated it as art. The landscapes of Mr. Kai Higashiyama are highly esteemed both in Japan and abroad, and there is much that we can learn from them.

Mr. Kai Higashiyama insists that he is no master hand but will always remain a learner. And as he now wants to paint in ink and water-colours too, there is no limit to what he needs to learn. This shows, indeed, his sterling qualities: his modesty, honesty and enterprise. To paint landscapes he has to undertake difficult journeys over mountains and over the sea to observe the changes in nature in the four seasons. He is moved to rapture by the beauty of his chosen subjects, and puts his own deep feeling into his landscapes. He makes sketches as raw material for his work. He is a superlative draftsman, dispensing with all superfluous strokes to produce fine compositions with a wide range of enchanting colour effects. Each of his landscape paintings brims over with poetry. For example, when he paints reflections in the water, some are clear and limpid, others ruffled by ripples, to enrich the charm of the whole picture. When he paints moonlit scenes, sometimes the full moon shines on a profusion of cherry blossom and sometimes there is no moon in sight but a bamboo grove bathed in moonlight. The fiery leaves in his autumn scenes are entrancing; but what appeal to me most are his winter scenes. *Winter Blossom* for example, shows a solitary tree with intertwined snow-laden branches which none the less have a lovely symmetry. With the reflection of moonlight on the snow, it conjures up a world of silver tranquillity.

Mr. Kai Higashiyama has combined European and Chinese techniques with traditional Japanese painting skills, to evolve a style of his own — vigorous, graceful, lucid and clear-cut.

CONFERENCE OF WRITERS AND ARTISTS

The China Federation of Literature and Art Circles was set up in 1949, the year the People's Republic of China was founded. This year an enlarged meeting of its third national committee was held in Peking from May 27 to June 5, to discuss how to develop socialist literature and art. It was announced at the conference that the China Federation of Literature and Art Circles, disbanded for twelve years by the "gang of four", had resumed activity. The unions of Chinese writers, dramatists, musicians, film artists and dancers, affiliated organizations of the federation, had also resumed activity. And the *Wenyi Bao*, an organ of the federation, would resume publication.

The late Kuo Mo-jo, chairman of the federation, sent a message from hospital which was read at the conference. His death a week after the closing of the conference made this his final message to literary and art circles. Huang Chen, Minister of Culture also gave a talk at the conference. We publish below excerpts from the message and the talk. A report about the conference was printed in *Chinese Literature* No. 9, 1978 under "Cultural Event".

— The Editors

Kuo Mo-jo

My Heartfelt Wishes

The China Federation of Literary and Art Circles and its affiliated organizations have done much useful work for the Party and the people and have considerable achievements to their credit, but the "gang of four" imposed a fascist rule in the field of culture, hounded our tried and tested veterans as well as our spirited new recruits, and

disbanded our ranks. The federation and its affiliated unions and societies were forced to suspend all activities for many years. Now the summary smashing of this insidious gang by Chairman Hua and the Party Central Committee has enabled us to assemble joyfully again to discuss plans for rebuilding and strengthening our literary and art front. At this moment I am deeply moved and a myriad thoughts crowd into my mind. Though I am unable to sit among you and learn from you due to illness, my heart is with you, for I share your feelings.

What should we do now that our federation has been reconstituted? I think our foremost task is to step up our criticism of the "gang of four", set right the errors in line, ideology and theory brought about by them in the cultural realm, and eliminate their pernicious influence. This is bound to be a hard and protracted struggle. There can be no construction without destruction, and in the process of criticizing the revisionist fallacies of the gang we must strike off the mental shackles with which they fettered our writers and artists, especially the younger ones among them, to liberate the productive forces of literature and art. We must bring about a flourishing of socialist literature and art, develop Marxist literary and art theory, and strengthen our ranks through struggles until step by step we have built up a powerful contingent of proletarian writers and artists.

No headway can be made in science or in literature and art without a hundred flowers blossoming and a hundred schools of thought contending, without creative initiative and the courage to speak one's mind. The smashing of the "gang of four" has liberated our minds. Why shouldn't our writers and artists who want to create socialist literature and art speak out freely and work boldly? What we hope for, above all, is the emergence of a host of fearless fighters on the cultural front, who will strive to arm themselves with Marxist ideology, uphold the truth, maintain close links with the masses, write freely and join in struggles with their pens according to the wishes of the Party and the people. We want them to stamp underfoot all the mental shackles imposed by the "gang of four", to give us penetrating and brilliant portrayals of our great era.

All literature and art stem from the life of the masses. We must determine to steep ourselves in the life and struggles of our people and to remould our ideology, so that our thinking and our work conform to the demands of this new period of socialist revolution and socialist construction. Only so can our writers and artists freely sing the praise of the general task of this new period.* After the revival of our federation and its affiliated unions and societies, no efforts must be spared to encourage and organize writers and artists, including young amateurs, to go deep into life and do more creative work. Those who succeed best in reflecting our people's lives and struggles should be commended and their experience publicized, so that going deep into life becomes our established style of work.

Being a writer or artist, going deep into life and doing creative work, involves hard exertions. Writers and artists are brain-workers, a part of the labouring people. Any work they do that benefits our society will win respect from the Party and the people. Chairman Mao and Premier Chou always paid attention to the training of writers and artists, regarding their work as an indispensable part of the revolutionary cause. Our Party Central Committee headed by Chairman Hua pays equally great attention to our work. We members of the federation and its affiliated unions must learn from the fine tradition of our Party's mass line and good style of promoting democracy. Socialist democracy should be encouraged in literary and art circles to create a lively political atmosphere.

*The general task formulated by Chairman Hua in his *Report on the Work of the Government* delivered at the National People's Congress on February 26, 1978, is to steadfastly continue the revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat; deepen the three great revolutionary movements of class struggle, the struggle for production and scientific experiment; and transform China into a great and powerful socialist country with modern agriculture, industry, national defence and science and technology by the end of the century.

Strive to Bring About the Flourishing of Literature and Art

The China Federation of Literature and Art Circles and its affiliated unions and societies were set up under the brilliant leadership of Chairman Mao and the Party Central Committee, and Premier Chou showed kindly concern for them. As national people's organizations promoting revolutionary literature and art, they are indispensable assistants to the Party on the literary and art front. After their establishment, guided by Chairman Mao's revolutionary line they united literary and art workers throughout the country to take an active part in our socialist revolution and socialist construction, including all the important struggles on the literary and art front. They helped writers and artists to study Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought, to go deep into the life of the masses, remould their world outlook, develop socialist literature and art, train new writers and artists, and organize cultural exchange with foreign countries. In this way they made a useful contribution to the proletarian revolutionary cause. During the seventeen years before the Cultural Revolution, despite

interference from Liu Shao-chi's counter-revolutionary revisionist line, Chairman Mao's revolutionary line remained predominant, and our achievements in literary and art work were very considerable.

Chiang Ching conspired with Lin Piao, Chen Po-ta and Chang Chun-chiao to concoct the theory of the "dictatorship of a sinister line in literature and art". They totally negated the splendid achievements in literature and art since the May 4th Movement of 1919 and the founding of our people's republic, labelling many fine works as "poisonous weeds" and many of our cadres, writers and artists as "agents of the sinister line", "renegades", "enemy agents" or "active counter-revolutionaries". Thus countless good comrades were cruelly persecuted and condemned.

Chiang Ching and her associates smashed the China Federation of Literature and Art, the Writers' Union and the affiliated unions and societies throughout the country. They banned literary and art periodicals, stopped the masses' amateur literary and art activities, suppressed new writers and artists, and with their reactionary fallacies and writings wantonly poisoned people's minds, especially those of the younger generation. Their fascist control over this field did great damage to our socialist literature and art.

Of course, their aim was not simply to sabotage our culture but to make a breach here, then extend it in order to claim that there was "a dictatorship of the sinister line" in all fields of our socialist revolution and socialist construction led by Chairman Mao. Their vicious plot was to negate all our achievements, usurp power from the Party and the government, and restore capitalism. Many comrades here today as well as others elsewhere were victims of gross injustice during the days when the gang was rampant, but they stood up to severe tests in this struggle and further steeled themselves. Since the downfall of the gang, under the leadership of Chairman Hua and the Party Central Committee, wrongs have been righted and a new period has begun. The great movement to expose and criticize the evils of the gang is deepening: its remnant forces are in the main crushed; the false charges levelled against literary and art circles have been debunked; many wrongly accused writers and artists have been or are being vindicated; the fallacies spread by the gang are being

refuted; fine works of literature and art which were banned are now being republished or shown publicly; a variety of comparatively good new works has appeared; new writers and artists are emerging; and mass literary and art activities are gradually being restored.

I would like to make some proposals for your consideration.

First, at present and for some time to come our most important task is still to raise high the great banner of Chairman Mao and carry through to the end the struggle to expose and repudiate the "gang of four". The "gang of four" were political charlatans and fake Marxists who posed as ultra-"left" while carrying out a thoroughly rightist line. Unless we tear off the mask of these pseudo-"leftists", we cannot enable our socialist literature and art to develop in a truly healthy way.

Secondly, we must adhere to the Party principle "let a hundred flowers blossom and a hundred schools of thought contend" to stimulate the development of art and science through free emulation and discussion, in order to build up a flourishing socialist culture. This principle has nothing in common with bourgeois liberalism, but is a firm proletarian class policy. Our Constitution explicitly provides safeguards for the implementation of this principle, which no one will be permitted to negate or violate.

Literary and artistic creation should follow the six political criteria put forward by Chairman Mao, the two foremost being that art works should help and not hinder the exercise of Party leadership and the following of the socialist path of development. With these conditions as prerequisites, there should be great variety in subject-matter, form and style. Most works should be on contemporary revolutionary themes, but there should also be others on historical and other subjects. We should work hard to portray proletarian heroes, and also create lifelike characters of different types. Integrating revolutionary realism and revolutionary romanticism is the best creative method for this. Our aim should be the unity of revolutionary political content and the best possible artistic form. However, we should not be hypercritical. Provided a work of literature or art is politically beneficial to the workers, peasants and soldiers and to the leadership of the Party and the socialist road, if it has reached a rea-

sonable artistic level we should enable it to be published or publicly shown; then it can be revised and improved on the basis of the opinions of the masses. We should develop all forms of art, allowing different styles to compete freely. Various local operas, balladry and other forms of folk art which were for so long suppressed by the "gang of four" should be revived, and we should continue to let the new emerge from the old. All those good works dating from the May 4th Movement onwards which were banned for many years by the gang should be republished, publicly shown or restaged. Good traditional operas, balladry and other forms of entertainment can also be revived after a discriminating choice has been made of those which meet the needs of the masses. We should, however, give priority to new works with contemporary themes.

We are a multi-national country with a long history, and all our nationalities have contributed to the creation of our splendid culture. We must therefore pay attention to the literature and art of our national minorities, helping them to develop and add beauty to our socialist garden. We should also pay attention to the popularization of literature and art, encouraging amateur writers and artists so that our socialist literature and art have a broad and solid mass base.

We must raise the standard of our literary and art criticism and make a systematic study of our own cultural heritage as well as that of other countries, on the principle of making "ancient things serve the present and foreign things serve China". We should explore the laws governing literary and artistic creation, and write more reviews to foster fragrant flowers and wipe out poisonous weeds. Regarding controversial problems in literary and art creation and theory, we should encourage free, lively discussions in the spirit of upholding truth and correcting errors. In place of a single pundit, we want everyone to speak out.

Thirdly, we must organize more people to produce new works of a higher standard, to create a wealth of socialist literature and art.

The smashing of the "gang of four" liberated our writers and artists and has completely changed the situation; for in the past the fascist rule of the gang resulted in a dearth of culture. Still, we have a long way to go to satisfy the needs of our people for revolutionary

literature and art of greater variety and better quality. We need an emulation campaign to raise our standards. We should produce more and better works to mirror the new successes of our revolutionary movements and our people's heroism in building a modernized, powerful socialist state, as well as the glorious achievements of Chairman Mao, Premier Chou, Chu Teh and other proletarian revolutionaries of the older generation. Such works on revolutionary struggles will inspire our people to press on towards yet grander goals.

The "gang of four" severed the close ties between our writers and artists and the masses, divorcing literature and art from real life, so that what had been a garden became a wasteland. Our writers and artists must resolve to integrate with the masses and go to the forefront of class struggle, the production front and the field of scientific research, living for long periods among the masses and taking part in fiery struggles. We hope that with the encouragement and help of the federation, the Writers' Union and other affiliated unions, our writers and artists will go eagerly to experience life among the masses, and that this in turn will hasten a new upsurge of artistic creation.

Fourthly, we must unite all writers and artists throughout the country and help to train younger people, in order to organize a mighty force.

Fifthly, we should promote cultural exchanges with progressive literary and art circles abroad. The "gang of four" was against all the best culture. For years they obstructed and sabotaged normal cultural exchanges between our people and the rest of the world. We must make a clean sweep of their cretinous refusal to retain ties with other countries, to make friends and to learn from the good points of others. We must further strengthen cultural exchanges with different countries to increase mutual understanding and friendship and to unite against the super-powers. At the same time, by learning from the best world literature and art and systematically translating and introducing good literary and art works from abroad, we shall absorb their beneficial features to enrich our own literature and art.

THE LITERARY SCENE

News of Some Veteran Writers

Here is some information about certain veteran writers since they were freed from the cultural despotism of the "gang of four".

Pa Chin, 74 years old now, plans to finish his translation of the 19th-century Russian writer Alexander Ivanovich Herzen's *My Past and Thought* in five to six years. He also intends writing a novel on a contemporary theme and a couple of reminiscences. For a decade the "gang of four" deprived him of all his political rights, including the right to write and publish works. The gang's downfall has given him new confidence and drive. He says: "I hope to keep on writing till I am eighty."

Yao Hsueh-yin, author of the long historical novel *Li Tzu-cheng — Prince Valiant*,* is now writing the third volume of this novel which will be completed early next year. The first two volumes were published in 1963 and 1977. He also wants to write a long historical novel entitled *The Tragedy of the Heavenly Capital* to reflect the 19th-century peasant revolutionary movement of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom; and providing his health permits, yet another historical

*See *Chinese Literature* Nos. 4-8, 1978.

novel to mirror the Chinese people's revolutionary struggle at the beginning of the 20th century.

Chen Teng-ko, the author of *Wind and Thunder*, is engaged in writing the second part of the novel. The first part was widely acclaimed after its publication in 1965, but the "gang of four" fabricated charges against it and condemned it as a "poisonous weed". The writer himself was imprisoned as an "enemy agent". While in prison, he worked out the plot of a novel about the Chinese people's War of Resistance Against Japan, and he is now working on this new novel.

This year Liang Pin will complete his panoramic novel *The War of Resistance*, the sequel of his other two novels *Keep the Red Flag Flying* and *Sowing the Flames*.

The veteran playwright Yu Ling is at work on a new play *Opening Up a New World* to depict Chairman Mao's revolutionary activities in the early 1920's, and this should be finished this year. He then plans to write three other plays: *Three Uprisings* depicting Chou En-lai's exploits during the armed uprisings of the Shanghai workers in 1924; *Pomegranate Blossoms in May* portraying the May 30th Movement in Shanghai; and *Morning Star* reflecting the May 4th New Cultural Movement in 1919. Yu Ling is confident that he will fulfil his plan. "I did underground work for the Party for many years in Shanghai," he says. "I have long wanted to stage our Party's early history and portray the brilliant images of Chairman Mao, Premier Chou and other proletarian revolutionaries of the older generation."

Li Chun is a writer who matured after the birth of New China. His new scenario *The Surging River* (Part 1 and Part 2), now being filmed by Peking Film Studio, reflects the tremendous changes in the area of the Yellow River Valley once devastated by floods. Now he is writing a scenario based on Yao Hsueh-yin's *Li Tzu-cheng — Prince Valiant* and plans to produce four more scenarios and two novels in the coming five years.

The well-known war-correspondent Liu Pai-yu has lately published a new piece of reportage, *Song of the Oil Workers*, which portrays the stirring scenes in the North-China Oilfield.

Hsu Chih has recently published two articles, *Splendid Achievement in Geology* and *The Goldbach Conjecture*, the former introducing the famous geologist Li Szu-kuang and the latter the brilliant mathematician Chen Ching-jun. Now Hsu Chih is visiting an observatory more than 3,200 metres above sea level to gather material for a new article. His reportage *Towards the Twenty-first Century* will soon appear in print.

Mao Tun, the 83-year-old vice-chairman of the China Federation of Literature and Art Circles, is especially concerned about the growth of young writers. He reads their works every day and not long ago published an article entitled *Some Remarks on Creative Writing* in which he summarized his own experience over many decades to help the writers of the younger generation.

The well-known playwright Hsia Yen was so cruelly persecuted by the "gang of four" that his health was impaired. During the last few months he has read more than forty film scenarios and suggested many improvements to their authors.

Yeh Sheng-tao, in his eighties now and blind, is none the less writing a review of a novel by a young writer which he heard serialized on the radio.

CHRONICLE

Kuo Mo-jo's Play Restaged

The historical Play *Tsai Wen-chi* by Kuo Mo-jo has recently been restaged in Peking.

This play was written in 1959. Tsai Wen-chi, a poetess living at the end of the Eastern Han Dynasty (AD 25-220), was forced into exile because of wars and had to live among the Huns for twelve years. The famous statesman Tsao Tsao wanting to enlist all talents decided to invite her back, and so she left her husband and children and returned to the Han court to take part in the compilation of Han history.

Basing his play on this historical episode, Kuo Mo-jo praised Tsao Tsao for his breadth of vision. He wrote in the preface: "The main purpose of this play is to reassess the historical figure Tsao Tsao and his contributions to the political and cultural development of the Chinese nation. In the past, owing to feudal prejudice, he was unjustly condemned, especially in the popular *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* and on the stage he has always appeared as a treacherous official. Now times have changed, and we should treat him justly."

In 1959 this play was produced by the Peking People's Art Theatre and performed more than three hundred times. It was banned, however, by the "gang of four" who imposed a fascist control over progressive literature and art. Now that the gang has fallen, the play has been restaged and is enthusiastically acclaimed.

Revival of Cartoons

Recently cartoons by well-known artists such as Hua Chun-wu, Ying Tao and Miao Ti have appeared again in the weekly pictorial supplement of the *People's Daily*. Hua Chun-wu also wrote an article to call upon artists to produce more and better cartoons. He said: "In different historical periods of the revolution, artists have used cartoons as a weapon. During the time when the 'gang of four' was rampant, cartoons were banned along with other art forms. In our struggle to debunk the 'gang of four', many cartoons appeared all over the country to ridicule the gang. The appearance of cartoons in the *People's Daily* is of significance and will help the flourishing of a hundred flowers."

A Special Performance by Well-known Folk Artists

During the Enlarged Meeting of the Third National Committee of the China Federation of Literature and Art Circles, famous folk artists attending the conference gave a special performance. Hou Pao-lin, the comic dialogue artist, said: "Comic dialogue is the art of laughter. The masses like it but the 'gang of four' opposed it; they said I was a monster and deprived me of the right to make people laugh. I'm not a monster; I am the god of mirth." He and another comic dialogue artist Kuo Chuan-pao together gave a performance called *The Art of Laughter* which was a great success. Li Jun-chieh, the clapper-ballad artist, presented a clapper-ballad which he had adapted from the novel *Red Crag*. Han Chi-hsiang, the well-known blind singer, sang the Shensi ballad *I Went to Perform for Chairman Mao*. Kao Yuan-chun, famous for his Shantung clapper-ballads, performed *How Wu Sung Killed the Tiger*. Lo Yu-sheng, a drum-ballad singer from Tientsin, sang *Calling in Li Yueh-hua at Midnight* praising the deeds of a barefoot doctor.

Playwrights Forum Held in Peking

During the past year or so, since the downfall of the "gang of four" more than two hundred dramatic works have been created in our

country, including about a hundred plays, in many of which Chairman Mao and Premier Chou appear. Portraying revolutionary leaders and veteran revolutionaries is a new departure. In order to discuss this question, over a hundred famous playwrights from various parts of the country recently attended a forum in Peking.

They said that portraying revolutionary leaders and veteran revolutionaries was their duty and that it should be encouraged. Cheng Shih-jung, who wrote the play *The Sian Incident*, said: "Our job is not to write historical textbooks, but to create literary and art works reflecting those times. Therefore, by concentrating, generalizing and showing typical examples, we can make history come alive. The general story and historical reality must be reconciled and concrete circumstances and figures can be drawn from life." Chairman Mao, Premier Chou and Marshal Chu Teh appear in his play *The Sian Incident*.

Playwrights also discussed the question of going among the people to experience life. They stressed the importance of this to writers and artists, especially in the present period. In this way, the thinking and characters of workers, peasants and intellectuals in New China can be better portrayed.

A Number of Good Traditional Peking Operas Restaged

To enlarge the opera theatre's repertoire, the Ministry of Culture recently selected more than forty good traditional Peking operas to be restaged, including *Three Attacks on the Chu Family Manor*, *Reconciliation Between the General and the Minister*, *At the Crossroads* and *Mu Kuei-ying Takes Command*.

They have chosen operas with educational value which praise the revolutionary struggles of our people and reveal their diligence, bravery and wisdom.

"Art Reproductions" Published in Shanghai

Art Reproductions was recently published in Shanghai. The paintings in the first issue were mainly of Chinese landscapes. Most of the

seventy-three works were by famous painters, illustrating a variety of styles and techniques. Among them were *The Ching-kang Mountains* and *The Lichiang River* by Li Ko-jan, *On the Lake* and *Autumn* by Lin Feng-mien, *The Koleh Mountain in Rain* and *Forests in Fukien Province* by Lu Yen-shao, *A Great Wall of Green Forests* by Kuan Shan-yueh and *The Great Wall in the Morning* by Chien Sung-yen. There were also works by some young painters and eight paintings by the late well-known artists Chi Pai-shih, Pan Tien-shou and Huang Pin-hung, as well as articles on art. The aim of *Art Reproductions* is to encourage the growth of art in our country.

Romanian Folk-Song and Dance Ensemble in China

The Romanian Cununa-Carpatilor Folk-Song and Dance Ensemble recently visited Peking and gave performances. The Romanian artists performed a variety of distinctive items, including folk dances



from different parts of their country and a comic dance drama *The Magic Flute* which vividly showed the enthusiasm and open-minded character of the Romanian people and the rich variety of their folk art.

Chinese and Japanese Musicians Perform Jointly in Peking

At recent concerts in Peking, the world known Japanese conductor Seiji Ozawa conducted the Chinese Central Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra in a mixed programme of Chinese, Japanese and Western music. They played the Chinese works *The Moon Reflected in the Two Fountains* and *Sisters on the Grasslands*, a Japanese symphonic work *Woodcutters' Song* and Brahms' *Symphony No. 2 in D Major*, etc. The Central Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra learnt much from the occasion and the friendship and cultural exchanges between Chinese and Japanese musicians were strengthened.

Philippine Madrigal Singers in Peking

Recently the Philippine Madrigal Singers — a group of university students, faculty members and graduate students — gave performances in Peking, Shanghai and Kwangchow. The highly skilled singers performed many folk-songs with a strong Philippine national flavour. They also sang traditional and modern songs, including sixteenth-century European songs, Asian, African, Latin American and Chinese songs.





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