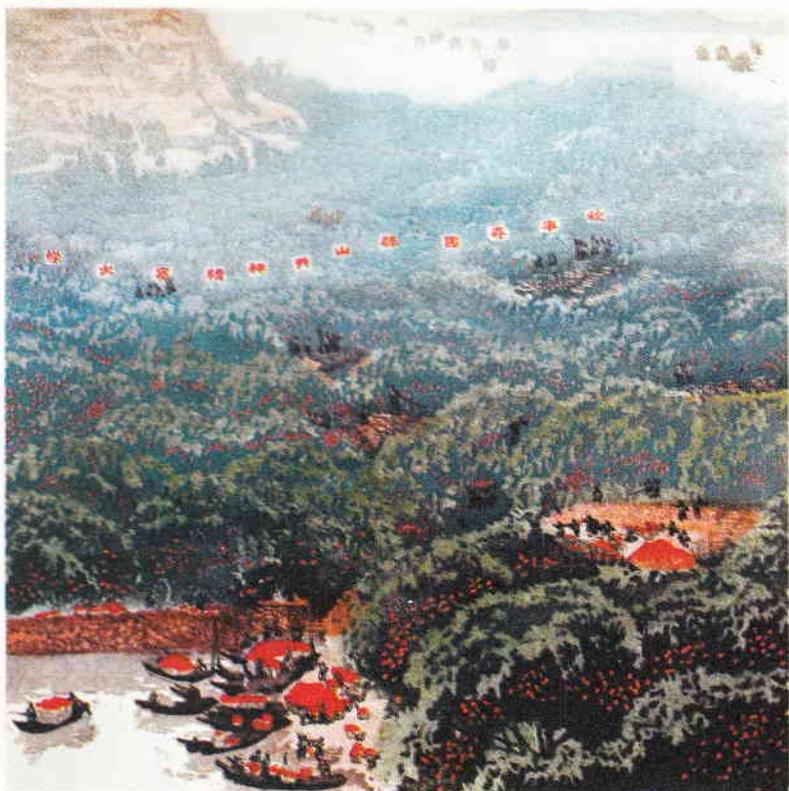


CHINESE LITERATURE



Lu Hsun's Writings
Sunflower (a story)

1977 **9**

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No. 9, 1977

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

LU HSUN'S WRITINGS

Literature of a Revolutionary Period

— *A talk given on April 8 at the Huangpu Military Academy**

The subject of my short talk today is "Literature of a Revolutionary Period". This college has invited me here several times, but I kept putting off coming. Why? Because I believed you invited me as I am the author of a few short stories, and you wanted to hear from me about literature. Actually I am not an author and have no special knowledge. The first subject I studied seriously was mining, and I could probably give you a better talk on coal-mining than on literature. Of course, my own liking for literature makes me read a good deal of it, but I have not learned anything from my reading which would be useful to you. And my experience in Peking in recent years has gradually undermined my faith in the old literary theories on which I was brought up. That was the time when students were

*The Huangpu Military Academy was founded after Sun Yat-sen reorganized the Kuomintang with the help of the Chinese Communist Party in 1924. To start with it was jointly run by both parties and trained many officers for the Northern Expeditionary Army. After Chiang Kai-shek's coup on April 12, 1927, the academy was taken over by the Kuomintang.

shot and there was a strict censorship, when to my mind only the weakest, most useless people talked about literature. Those who are strong do not talk, they kill. The oppressed have only to say or write a few words to be killed; or, if lucky enough to escape, all they can do is shout, complain or protest, while those who are strong go on oppressing, ill-treating and killing them, and they are powerless to resist. What use is literature to people then?

It is the same in the animal kingdom. When a hawk catches a sparrow, the hawk is silent, the sparrow is the one to cry out. When a cat catches a mouse, the cat is silent, the mouse is the one to cry out. And the one that can only cry ends by being eaten by the one that is silent. An author if he is lucky may write a few things which win him a name during his lifetime or an empty reputation for some years — just as after the memorial service for someone who has died for the revolution, no mention is made of the revolutionary's actions but everybody can discuss the merits of the funeral couplets — this is a very safe business.

However, I suppose writers in this revolutionary place like to claim that literature plays a big part in revolution and can be used, for instance, to propagandize, encourage, spur on, speed up and accomplish revolution. But to my mind, writing of this kind lacks vigour, for few good works of literature have been written to order; instead, they flow naturally from the heart with no regard for the possible consequences. To write on some set subject is like writing a *paku* essay,* which is worthless as literature and quite incapable of moving the reader.

For revolution we need revolutionaries, but revolutionary literature can wait, for only when revolutionaries start writing can there be revolutionary literature. So to my mind it is revolution which plays a big part in literature. The literature of a revolutionary period is different from that of ordinary times for, in a revolution, literature changes too. But only great revolutions can effect this change, not small ones which do not count as revolutions.

*A form of essay set in the imperial examinations of the Ming (1368-1644) and Ching (1644-1911) Dynasties. These essays, divided into eight sections, were stereotyped and devoid of real content.

Everyone here is used to hearing about "revolution", but if you use this word in Kiangsu or Chekiang you will terrify people and endanger yourself. Actually revolution is nothing strange, and we owe all social reforms to it. Mankind could only progress, evolve from protozoa to men, from barbarism to civilization, because of ceaseless revolutions. Biologists tell us: "Men are not very different from monkeys. Apes and men are cousins." How is it then that men have become men while monkeys remain monkeys? It is because monkeys will not change their ways — they like to walk on all fours. Quite likely some monkey once stood up and tried to walk on two legs, but many others protested, "Our ancestors have always crawled. You're not to stand up!" Then they bit him to death. They refused not only to stand but also to talk, being conservative. Men, however, are different. They eventually stood up and talked, and so they won out. But the process is still going on. So revolution is nothing strange, and all races not yet moribund are trying to revolt every day, though most of their revolutions are merely small ones.

What influence do great revolutions have on literature? We may divide this into three different periods:

(1) Before a great revolution, nearly all literature expresses dissatisfaction and distress over social conditions, voicing suffering and indignation. There are many works of this kind in the world. But these expressions of suffering and indignation have no influence on the revolution, for mere complaints are powerless. Those who oppress you will ignore them. The mouse may squeak and even produce fine literature, yet the cat will gobble it up without any consideration. So a nation with only a literature of complaint is hopeless, because it stops short at that. Just as in a lawsuit, when the defeated party starts distributing accounts of his grievances his opponent knows that he cannot afford to go on and the case is as good as wound up, so the literature of complaints, like proclaiming one's grievances, gives the oppressors a sense of security. Some nations stop complaining when it proves useless and become silent nations, growing more and more decadent. Witness Egypt, Arabia, Persia and India all of which have no voice. But nations with inner strength which dare rebel when complaints prove useless wake up to the facts and

their lamentations change into roars of anger. When such literature appears it heralds revolt, and because people are enraged the works written just before the outbreak of revolution often voice their fury — their determination to resist, to take vengeance. Literature of this kind heralded the October Revolution. But there are exceptions too, as in the case of Poland where although there had long been the literature of vengeance* the country owed its recovery to the Great War in Europe.

(2) During a great revolution, literature disappears and there is silence for, swept up in the tide of revolution, all turn from shouting to action and are so busy making revolution that there is no time to talk of literature. Again, that is a period of poverty when men are so hard put to it to find bread that they are in no mood to talk of literature. And conservatives, staggered by the high tide of revolution, are too enraged and stunned to sing what passes with them for "literature". Some say, "Literature is born of poverty and suffering", but this is a fallacy. Poor men do not write. Whenever I was short of money in Peking, I made the rounds to borrow some and wrote not a single word. Only when our salary was paid did I sit down to write. In busy times there is no literature either. The man with a heavy load and the rickshaw man with a rickshaw both have to put them down before they can write. Great revolutions are very busy and very impoverished times, when one group is contending with another, and the first essential is to change the existing social system. No one has the time or inclination to write. So during a great revolution the world of letters is bound to lapse into a temporary silence.

(3) When the revolution has triumphed, there is less social tension and men are better off, then literature is written again. There are two types of literature in this period. One extols the revolution and sings its praise, because progressive writers are impressed by the changes and advances in society, the destruction of the old and the construction of the new. Rejoicing in the downfall of old institutions, they sing the praises of the new construction. The second type of writing to appear after a revolution — the dirge — laments the

*Referring to the works of such early 19th-century Polish poets as Mickiewicz and Slowacki.

destruction of the old. Some consider this "counter-revolutionary literature", but I see no need to pass such a harsh sentence on it. Though a revolution has taken place, there are many of the old school in society who cannot change overnight into new people. Since their minds are full of old ideas, when their surroundings gradually change, affecting their whole mode of life, they think back to the good old days and hanker after the old society. Because they keep harking back, they express most old-fashioned, outmoded sentiments, and create this literature. All works of this kind are mournful, expressing the writers' discomfort. The evident success of the new construction and the ruin of the old institutions make them chant dirges. But this longing for the past and this chanting of dirges means that the revolution has been carried out. Without a revolution, the old people would still be in power and would not chant dirges.

Only China today has neither type of literature — either dirges for the old or praise for the new; for the Chinese revolution is not yet accomplished. This is still the transitional period, a busy time for revolutionaries. There is still a good deal of the old literature left, though, practically everything in the papers being written in the old style. I think this means that the Chinese revolution has brought about very few changes in our society, scarcely affecting the conservatives at all, and therefore the old school can still hold aloof. The fact that all — or nearly all — the writing in the Canton papers is old proves that society here is equally untouched by the revolution; hence there are no paeans for the new, no dirges for the old, and the province of Kwangtung remains as it was ten years ago. Not only so, there are no complaints or protests either. We see trade unions taking part in demonstrations, but with government sanction — not revolting against oppression. This is merely revolution by government order. Because China has not changed, we have no songs of mournful yearning for the past and no new marching songs. In Soviet Russia, however, they have both types. Their old writers who have fled abroad write mostly dirges for the dead, while their new literature strives to make headway. Though no great works have yet appeared, there is already a good deal of new writing and they have passed from the period of raging to that of paeans. Praising

construction follows upon the completion of the revolution, but we cannot yet predict what will come later. I suppose it will be a people's literature, for as a result of the revolution the world belongs to the people.

In China, of course, we have no people's literature, nor does it exist yet anywhere in the world. Nearly all literature, songs and poems are for the upper-class, who read them on full stomachs, reclining on their couches. A talented scholar leaves home and meets a beautiful girl, and the two of them fall in love; some untalented fellow makes trouble and they go through various trials, but finally all ends well. Reading like this is thoroughly delightful. Or the books may deal with interesting, happy upper-class people, or ridiculous lower-class people. A few years ago *New Youth* published some stories about the lives of convicts in a cold land, and professors did not like them — they do not like to read about such low characters. A poem about rickshaw-boys is low-class poetry, a play about law-breakers is a low-class play. In their operas you find only characters like talented scholars and beauties. A talented scholar wins first place in the court examination and a beautiful girl is made a lady of the first rank; so the scholar and the lady are happy, the professors who read this are happy too, and low-class people, I suppose, have to be happy with them.

Some writers today use the common people — workers and peasants — as material for their novels and poems, and this has also been called people's literature when actually it is nothing of the sort, for the people have not yet opened their mouths. These works voice the sentiments of onlookers, who put words in the people's mouths. Though some of our present men of letters are poor, they are all better off than workers and peasants, otherwise they would not have had the money to study and would not be able to write. Their works may seem to come from the people, but in fact they do not: they are not real stories of the people. Now some writers have started recording folk-songs in the belief that here we have the authentic voice of the people, for these are sung by the common folk. However, old books have had a very great indirect influence on our common folk, who feel boundless admiration for those country gentlemen with three thousand *mu* of land, and often adopt these gentlemen's views

as their own. Gentlemen frequently chant poems with five or seven characters to a line, so this is the common metre for folk-songs too. This is as regards their form, and as their content is very decadent too they cannot be called true people's literature. Present-day Chinese poetry and fiction are not really up to the standard of other countries. I suppose we have to call them literature, but we cannot talk about literature of a revolutionary period, still less of people's literature. All our writers today are literati, and our workers and peasants will go on thinking the same way as the literati until they are liberated. Only when they achieve true liberation will there be a true people's literature. This is why it is wrong to say, "We already have a people's literature."

You gentlemen are actual fighters, fighters for the revolution, and I think you had better not admire literature just yet. Studying literature will not help in the war — at most you may write a battle song which, if well written, may make pleasant reading when you rest after fighting. To put it more poetically, it is like planting a willow: when the willow grows and gives shade, peasants knocking off work at noon can eat and rest beneath it. The present situation in China is such that only the actual revolutionary war counts. A poem could not have frightened away Sun Chuan-fang,* but a cannon-shell scared him away. I know some people think literature has a great influence on revolution, but personally I doubt this. Literature is after all a product of leisure which does, it is true, reflect a nation's culture.

Men are seldom satisfied with their own occupation. I have never been able to do anything but write a few essays, and I am tired of that; yet you who carry rifles want to hear about literature. I myself would naturally rather hear the roar of guns, for it seems to me that the roar of guns is much sweeter to listen to than literature. This is all I have to say. Thank you for hearing me out.

*Sun Chuan-fang (1884-1935), a warlord active in Kiangsu and Chekiang. In 1926, he was defeated by the Northern Expeditionary Army in Kiangsi.

STORIES

Hsu Kuang-yao

Sunflower

A passenger train on the Peking-Kwangchow Railway was hurtling north across the boundless plain.

Sitting silently beside a window was a solemn-faced army man in his sixties. His hair was grey, but under the bushy black eyebrows below his broad forehead his eyes were piercingly bright.

The young people around him, having learned that he had fought in these parts during the hardest years of the Anti-Japanese War, were begging him to tell them his experience.

Looking out of the window he let out a soft exclamation. The others turned to look too.

The platform of a little station flashed past; then villages, like strongholds dotting the land; young wheat like emerald brocade against a background of verdant hills and white clouds. . . .

Arching his brows, the old soldier softly hummed the wartime song, "Go to the enemy's rear; drive the bandits away. . . ." Then he pointed outside the window and said in a deep voice, "See that? That's Langya Mountain in the distance. The small station we passed just now reminded me of a girl who guided me thirty-four years ago

when I went to the enemy's rear." Slowly he took off his army cap and staring at the bright red star on it began to reminisce. . . .

In the summer of 1943 I took part in a meeting on Langya Mountain and was staying there to recuperate from a wound when I received orders to rejoin my unit at once in central Hopei. Our sub-district commander had been wounded and our political commissar transferred. As the unit next to ours was about to launch a major campaign, our sub-district was to help them by fighting a battle at Taching River to pin down the Japanese troops there.

There was no time for the higher command to provide me with armed guards, so I was entrusted to the liaison station to be passed on from one station to the next until I had crossed the Peking-Hankow Railway and reached my own headquarters. A comrade of the liaison station guided me down the mountain after dark. We were crossing the enemy blockade line after midnight when we were discovered and shot at. Puppet soldiers chased after us, but we got away and before daybreak reached a small village beside the railway. I was handed over to the local liaison station who put me up in a peasant's home. Soon I heard the rumbling of a passing train. This was obviously enemy territory.

The cottage belonged to a family of three. The eighteen-year-old son Ta-san was a strapping youngster as strong as a young tiger.

While Ta-san tidied the room and made my bed he told me that two *li* to the east of this village was the Peking-Hankow Railway. On this side of it was a ditch over ten feet in width and depth. And along it the enemy had built various strongholds: Sungchuang three *li* to the southeast, Liaochun two *li* to the northeast, and Pohochiao — a big garrison — five or six *li* further north.

"Don't worry," said Ta-san gruffly. "You've come home now and can sleep with an easy mind."

"Is the enemy active?" I inquired.

"Last night a few dozen Japs reinforced Pohochiao. They keep milling about — helps them to digest their food. You just go to sleep. Nothing will happen." He grinned reassuringly. The papered window was white now, as dawn was breaking.

"Can I move on this evening?" I asked.

"Don't worry. From here you can always get across. We won't keep you cooped up here." He made me lie down and tucked the quilt around me, then went off.

When I opened my eyes again the midday sun was shining through the window. The only sound in the vicinity was a faint whirring. I sat up and looked out of the window. This cottage at the edge of the village was spick and span, strikingly picturesque too. In front of it, a dozen paces or so from the living quarters, stood a small outhouse. And along both walls of the square courtyard in between grew two rows of tall sunflowers. Fabulous flowers they were, with stalks as thick as a man's arm, leaves the size of fans, flowers larger than basins, and big yellow petals stretching out like children's hands across the wall towards the sun. I couldn't help exclaiming in admiration. What a lot of hard work must have gone into growing such splendid sunflowers!

The whirring noise went on. My eyes fell on a mound at the foot of the west wall. It was a vegetable clamp where cabbages were stored in winter. Standing on it one could see the fields beyond. Ta-san's mother must often climb up there to summon her husband and son back from the fields at mealtime. And I guessed that under the cottage there must be a dugout. Otherwise where had the mud for the clamp come from? And why had Ta-san assured me I could sleep with an easy mind?

Ta-san let himself in now through the wicker gate and went into the outhouse. The whirring sound stopped and a girl emerged, a blue scarf round her head, in her hand a little broom. After listening carefully to what Ta-san whispered to her, she tossed the broom into the room, pulled off her scarf and dusted her clothes with it. Then she walked over to my room followed by Ta-san.

I quickly got off the *kang*. The girl lifted the door curtain, came in and looked me up and down. Stepping forward she asked cordially, "Did you sleep well, comrade?"

"Yes, I did." I sized her up. She looked under twenty, about the same age as my daughter. Tall, with an oval face and bobbed hair, she was wearing a white tunic with blue stripes and baggy black trousers. Holding her scarf in one hand she was smiling warmly.

"She is one of the comrades of our liaison station," Ta-san told me over her shoulder. Oddly enough, this strapping young man seemed suddenly tongue-tied. He didn't tell me her name.

"You've been ill, haven't you?" asked the girl after her scrutiny of me.

I must have looked pale. But I assured her that I had recovered from my wound and was in good health now. Then her gaze fell on my shoes.

"Why, you're wearing mountain shoes. Don't you find them too heavy?"

I was an Eighth Router, but not in uniform. And since coming to the mountains I had soon worn out my cloth shoes and got this sturdier pair of mountain shoes. Their thick soles were reinforced with nails which set sparks flying when I tramped over rocks. All the people on the plain thought such shoes clumsy. Why had they caught the attention of this girl?

Suddenly running footsteps were heard in the street. I gave a start. The girl quickly put on her scarf again, fastening it under her chin. We all listened intently. Next came the sound of horsehoofs and the rumble of carts. Then someone yelled, "The Imperial Army is here. Boil water. . . ." Ta-san's mother hurried out into the courtyard, picked up a bundle of grain stalks and stood there beside the vegetable clamp.

Soon the noise receded into the distance. Turning around the girl calmly took off her scarf and smiled at me. "It's nothing. Their usual routine."

Sitting on the edge of the *kang* and leaning against a wall, she told me matter-of-factly that a Japanese officer named Sato had recently joined the Pohochiao garrison. He was said to have had special training, was very wily and had won awards. He had come to Pohochiao determined to prove his ability. As ruthlessness and treachery were his chief characteristics, this visit to the village today was just routine terrorism. If he'd had a definite target he would not have made such a fanfare. "But," she added, "none of his tricks come to anything. He can storm, but we go on with our work as usual."

How casually she seemed to take the serious situation. My mission was an important and urgent one. I began to feel misgivings.

"Comrade, under these circumstances, can I still go this evening?"

She looked at me with her beautiful eyes. "Is it essential for you to leave tonight?" she asked.

"Absolutely. I must be back at my unit in three days," I replied firmly.

She looked at me again and nodded. "All right. We'll cross tonight."

"But, what about the enemy?" I asked pointing outside. Her relaxed air gave me the feeling that she had forgotten all about them.

"The enemy?" She eyed me askance for a second, then smiled and said solemnly, "Don't worry, comrade. All the villagers are with us. There's only one bad woman who has anything to do with their strongholds. And we've got her under control."

Ta-san still standing there now blurted out, "This comrade doesn't know the set-up here. No wonder he's a bit worried. Let me escort him tonight. All right?"

The girl hesitated, then with a stern look ordered, "First go and get some sleep."

"Yes." Ta-san almost jumped for joy. He went straight into the inner room without waiting to see her off.

Through the window I watched the girl deftly pour ground maize into a crate and carry off the empty baskets. She looked like any ordinary village girl.

Ta-san's mother brought me my supper. As I munched the maize pancakes my uneasiness grew. Ta-san evidently took orders from the girl. Did that mean she was in charge of this strategically placed liaison station? Why then did she adopt such a casual attitude to the enemy manoeuvres, the crafty Jap who might be on the war path, and the thoroughly unpredictable situation? If danger cropped up could she guarantee my return to my headquarters in three days?

The sky darkened. Ta-san came out with an oil lamp in his hand. Having had a good sleep, he was full of pep, his eyes bright with anticipation.

"Is that girl we saw this morning in charge of your station?" I asked bluntly.

His face fell. "Isn't it obvious? Of course she is."

I smiled. "But she's not even twenty!"

"What of that? She's big-hearted enough to keep everyone's welfare in mind."

The way he leapt to her defence made me want to tease him. Feigning astonishment I asked, "Does she keep the welfare of your whole village in mind?"

"Not only our whole village but the whole world." Placing the oil lamp on the *kang*, Ta-san looked me straight in the eye and went on, "She says that after defeating the Japs we'll fight for a new communist society until all the suffering people in the world are liberated. That's how big-hearted she is." His words carried conviction. I felt new respect for the girl.

Nodding, I asked earnestly, "How did she come to be this way, Comrade Ta-san?"

"How? Through education by the Party, of course. I joined a year later, so I'm way behind her." Ta-san had lowered his voice but I was very pleased. Evidently they were both Party members, though instead of being proud of the fact Ta-san was troubled, ashamed of not yet having caught up with the girl in every way. That was why the mere mention of her brought a note of mysterious excitement to his voice. Was this the secret of this tough youngster's deference to her?

Ta-san went on to tell me more about her. Her mother came from Paiyangtien a hundred *li* away. When a flood destroyed all their crops she begged her way here and met a young man who gave her some corn pancakes. They married and she gave birth to this girl, who had such a hard childhood that she felt for all those in need. She joined the Children's Corps when the Communists and the Eighth Route Army came to the village. Two years later she joined the young Anti-Japanese Vanguard. The previous year when the enemy occupied the village she dropped all other work to join the underground liaison station. She kept busy then, although always looking relaxed, visiting different households to look after and help out the

villagers. She even made a point of calling on the woman who frequently visited the strongholds. Chatting with her she got information about the enemy's movements amidst joking and laughter.

"But what's her name?" I couldn't help asking.

Ta-san hesitated. Finally he pointed outside and said softly, "Don't tell her I told you this. We all call her — Sunflower."

I turned to look outside. Like sentinels on night duty the two rows of tall, sturdy sunflowers were vigilantly guarding the small courtyard. Why had the girl been given this name?

The question was on my lips when in she burst like a gust of wind, bringing with her a sense of tenseness. The situation had changed. All the nearby enemy positions had been reinforced before dusk and received orders to be ready for action. One puppet officer claimed that they were going to clear out the villages on the western side of the railway the following day, because some Eighth Route Army soldiers had infiltrated this area. But according to a more reliable source, a Communist headquarters had been discovered to the east of the railway.

I tried to read the expression in the girl's eyes. How was she going to cope with this complicated situation? Had it become really impossible for me to get back in three days? She appeared just as calm as ever, with no sign of hesitation or panic. Only her eyes looked brighter and more alert. They seemed to be flashing fire.

"Comrade." She looked at me searchingly. "You don't want to postpone your departure, do you?" She had brought up the question first.

"No," I said. "You must understand that I have an important task in connection with a military manoeuvre." I stressed the word "important" to make her give up any thought of postponement.

Fearing that his escort duty might be cancelled by the situation, Ta-san put in, "They can bring in all the reinforcements they like, but we can still cross the railway. Isn't it just a question of crossing that ditch? I guarantee this comrade's safety."

Taking the girl's stern look at him for opposition I chimed in, "That's the spirit. We have to take risks in war time. We can't

shrink back before difficulties but must charge them and overcome them. A real hero can scare bullets away."

"Ha!" The girl eyed me intently, then turned away to reflect.

She turned back presently with a smile — a smile as radiant as if she had made some exciting discovery. Yet when she spoke her voice was composed. "All right. That's settled. We'll leave tonight. I'll be your escort."

"What?" Ta-san jumped up. "What ... about me?"

Seeing his eagerness she lifted the door curtain to have a look out. "The black clouds in the northwest predict foul weather. You can come along." She walked out. Ta-san hastily followed as if he had some urgent question to ask her.

It was settled. We were starting on a dangerous expedition. I experienced the excitement one feels on the eve of a battle. The oil lamp flickered and the night grew darker. After eating the food Ta-san's mother had prepared for me, I waited for a long time before footsteps were heard — the girl and Ta-san had come back. They first entered the east room, then came into my room. They both looked different now. The girl had knotted her blue scarf behind, concealing her bobbed hair. She had a sash around her waist. Her trouser-legs were tied round the ankles, her shoes tightly laced. A pistol was stuck in her sash, she held herself proudly and with the fervid look in her gleaming eyes was the very picture of courage. The change in Ta-san was at his waist where he had stuck a wooden-handled hand-grenade and a pistol, one on each side. They had evidently armed themselves with all their weapons.

Without a word the girl squatted down beside me, pulled off my mountain shoes and helped me put on a pair of new shoes she had brought. Ta-san took off his own shoes and put on my old pair. Both of us found the shoes a perfect fit as if they had been made to measurement. Stamping his feet, Ta-san looked as pleased as if he had acquired another weapon.

We started out soon. As we left that little courtyard I looked again at the two rows of huge sunflowers which were reaching towards the moonlit sky. When we were out of the courtyard and in the maize fields, we could still see the big flowers over the wall. They

seemed to be waving goodbye and urging us on.

The girl led us northeast by winding paths through the fields. The crops brushed against us. Insects chirped in the fields. A half moon rose in the east, to the northwest loomed pitch-dark clouds. After having been confined for a whole day I found it exhilarating to be in the open. After crossing the line tonight I would be free. Once we got the enemy tabbed and were ready to attack our blows would be heavier than theirs.

The girl often craned her neck to the right where, fifty or sixty metres ahead, stood a lone elm tree among a sea of crops. Suddenly a muffled cough sounded from the elm tree. Who was that? Ta-san behind me coughed too. Then the crops beneath the elm rustled as a group of people moved away. Then silence reigned again. The girl quickened her steps, the two corners of her scarf bobbing behind her neck as she sped lightly on.

I turned and whispered into Ta-san's ear, "How many groups of men have come out tonight?"

"Three," he answered softly.

"Why?"

"To be on the safe side, as things are tricky."

Three groups! Though the girl had shown no anxiety she had made special arrangements for my crossing. The enemy had spread a big net to catch us. But the girl in charge of this small liaison station in enemy occupied territory had spread a net for them too. We were all set for a head-on confrontation between our pistols and grenades and the enemy's far more powerful equipment. Yet the girl walked briskly on, the corners of her scarf fluttering. Where did her confidence come from if not from the thousands of villages and the people in them?

The distance to the railway was two *li* but we covered a good four, picking our way through the fields until I lost my bearings. Finally we stopped at the edge of a *kaoliang* field right below an enemy stronghold. The girl signed to us to squat down among the black beans planted between the *kaoliang*.

We crouched there so long that the season seemed to change from summer to autumn. First we had to put up with damp suffocating heat, listening to the croaking frogs. When black clouds gradually obscured the moon, the wind turned cold and the dampness dispersed. Then the moon shone out again. It was a real trial of tenacity. I wondered how the girl was sticking it out.

At last the signal she had been waiting for sounded. In the south, about two or three *li* away, a volley of shots broke out as if fighting had started. We could make out the muffled shots of local rifles and the resounding reports of bigger guns, now intermittent, now concentrated in a fierce barrage. Ta-san, unable to contain himself, jumped up to rush towards the ditch. But the girl sprang up and pushed him down.

We waited for ten more minutes until a train rumbled past to the south. It was barely a *li* away when a ball of fire leapt up. Sharp machine-gun fire followed. From experience I knew that the ball of fire came from a pack of explosive while the machine-guns must be fired by the enemy. Another explosion was followed by the rattle of machine-guns and rifles. Fierce shouts were heard too. I turned to look at the girl who, as if oblivious of all this, was concentrating on the opposite bank. As she had foreseen, the shadowy



figures of a dozen enemy soldiers with rifles, their backs bent like hunters, raced south along the dyke.

"Good for you!" I exclaimed.

The crops rustled as a wind sprang up. Once again black clouds obscured the moon. Lightning flashed not far away. The darkness intensified and the temperature dropped. A storm was brewing.

The girl leapt up and dashed towards the ditch with the two of us behind her.

Everything went smoothly. Ta-san slithered to the bottom of the ditch. Holding on to the sash the girl had taken off and was lowering little by little, I got down within reach of Ta-san who helped me to the bottom. Then the girl slid down. Ta-san gave her a leg up the other side, and with her sash she helped pull me up and then Ta-san. Big raindrops lashed down, cooling the air even more. Taking my arm the girl helped me up the dyke. As we were sliding down the other side she nimbly unfolded her sash and wrapped it around my head to protect me from the rain. Then, suddenly, the maize leaves rustled as men converged swiftly on us from three or four parts of the fields. We were surrounded. The cunning enemy had cast his net.

"Hold them, Ta-san!" the girl ordered in a steely voice.

"Yes. I'll take the lot!" Ta-san replied. I saw him pull out his one and only hand-grenade.

The girl pulled me at a run along the edge of the field and towards the north. We were barely a dozen yards away when Ta-san behind us thundered, "Halt!" I could hardly recognize his booming voice, but who else could have let out such a deafening roar?

The grenade exploded. Then a shot rang out, and another. Whole volleys were fired.

The girl and I raced on to get out of range. Suddenly a clump of bushes barred our way. We were looking for a way through when a shaft of white light flashed before us. We were standing near a towering three-storied enemy stronghold. The girl led me east through sesame, *kaoliang* and then maize fields, not letting go of my hand until we were three *li* away.

"Were you injured, comrade?" she asked softly, the first sentence she had addressed to me since we started, her voice gentle and composed.

"No," I answered.

She circled around me to make sure that I was unhurt before leading me on again.

I suddenly felt cold and realized that I was drenched. The rain and wind had stopped. The black clouds had been blown far away to the southeast. The darkness lifted a little. Here and there a cricket chirped.

Finally we came upon a path and speeded up through the puddles and wet grass. The soft-soled shoes on my feet made me think of tough young Ta-san who was wearing my mountain shoes. How many bullets had he left after throwing his only grenade and firing the two shots? But he had held the enemy and accomplished his task. He had promised to "take the lot" and had been as good as his word. I saw him in my mind's eye pulling out the grenade and confronting the enemy. Then I recalled the two rows of magnificent sunflowers which were waiting in the rainy night for the rising of the sun and their dear ones' return.

The girl walked briskly ahead of me till we came to a river where frogs were noisily croaking and made ready to wade across. The water was murky and rapid. The bubbles on its surface showed that it had rained heavily in the upper reaches. By now the half moon had reappeared in the sky. Along the meandering dyke on the opposite bank there stretched a long grey road.

"How far have we still to go, comrade?" I asked softly and hopefully.

"Six more *li* after we've crossed the river," she answered in the same composed voice.

"What village are we heading for?"

"Tayang Village."

"I've really put you to great trouble tonight. . . ." I wanted to thank her but how trite this sounded!

"You mustn't say that. You have an urgent mission, and you're much more important than us. You..." Stopping abruptly, she threw herself down on the grass.

On the dyke opposite, the shadowy forms of half a dozen enemy soldiers were advancing east, making a search. Cold light gleamed on their bayonets. Fifty metres or so behind them slouched about a hundred soldiers armed to the teeth. They were followed by helmeted men with machine-guns and other weapons.

This enemy manoeuvre late at night made me sure that Sato, reputed to have had special training, was on the track of something. Hadn't he claimed to have discovered a communist headquarters? Maybe this was no empty boast.

But when I told the girl this, she said she thought the enemy was after Tayang Village liaison station. We must get ahead of them to warn the comrades there. She pulled off her shoes and waded into the river. We pressed on eagerly across the rapid water and being good swimmers soon reached the other bank. Having climbed over the dyke we broke into a run. My guerrilla training stood me in good stead now. Otherwise I could never have kept up with her. Speeding on before me she brushed against the crops, splattering my face with the raindrops on the leaves. Racing against time, we soon reached the western end of the village. To avoid possible enemy encirclement she led me quietly by twists and turns to a row of sunflowers on the edge of a cotton field. Yes, another row of sunflowers, as tall as those standing in Ta-san's courtyard. She ran over to them as if they were dear to her heart. Beneath them was the bare opening of a well.

After a quick glance around the girl knelt down beside the well as if to drink some water. Feeling thirsty I knelt down too. But she made no move to draw water. Cocking her head to listen carefully she picked up some clods of mud and threw them into the well.

"Lao-wu," she called softly.

"Is that you?" I was startled by this voice from the well.

"Fix up the plank, quick," the girl urged. "This is urgent."

Lamplight lit up the well. I looked in. Above the water a plank stuck out from a hole. The girl crawled down it and disappeared into the hole. I followed her into a shallow tunnel where four sweating men were crouching with pistols and hand-grenades. They were waiting tensely and eagerly, having had word of the enemy's approach. Lao-wu, a middle-aged bearded man, told the girl anxiously that the previous night the sub-district headquarters had moved to Pengchi Village three *li* away. But it had been impossible to let them know that the enemy was passing by.

"Let's fire," suggested the girl pulling out her pistol. "Detain the enemy."

"There's nothing else for it," agreed Lao-wu.

"Only four of you here?" she asked.

"Yes."

"Come on. I'll go with you." The girl waved her pistol.

"Count me in too." I squeezed forward.

"You?" The girl seemed to have forgotten my existence. She laughed, "You're a guest. We can't let you do that." Turning to Lao-wu she said, "You keep an eye on him. He's somebody important." She took Lao-wu's pistol, thrust it at a young man, then disappeared.

Lao-wu and I, left behind, waited anxiously beside the lamp, pricking up our ears to catch any noise above. Five minutes passed, then ten. The explosions of hand-grenades were heard, followed by some random shots. Crisp reports were interspersed with rounds of light machine-guns and explosives. The enemy had been taken unawares.

Waves of content passed through me as I waited in the tunnel. However cunning the enemy, the masses of people with justice on their side could easily see through their plots. They might puzzle their minds over how they had been found out, and marvel at our astuteness which made them helpless before us in spite of their formidable equipment. They would never know that the secret lay in the people and the close-meshed net they formed, a net bound to entangle them and crush them. Their mad struggles, resistance and plots were all doomed to failure... At the same time, we should not underestimate such small actions as gathering herbs for Ta-san's moth-

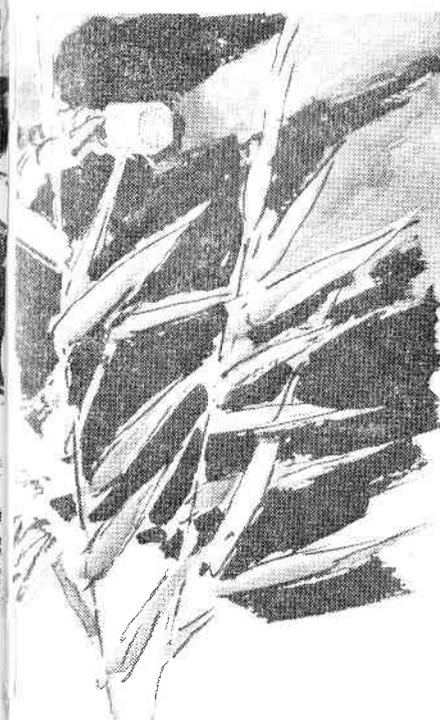


er, grinding grain for children and keeping tabs on bad characters, for together they helped to make up the big, enduring and invincible net. And small actions like these had made the girl more steadfast, resourceful and brave.

I was roused from these thoughts by the arrival of a young man to announce that the girl wanted me to go over. I asked where she was and was told: at the station. Leaving Lao-wu behind, I groped my way into the deep dark tunnel.

As we crawled along the young man explained that after emerging from the tunnel south of the village just now, they had rushed to the river bend where the enemy were mustered preparing to do battle. Together, they hurled their grenades, then charged the enemy who were milling about in confusion.

A light flickered ahead and the tunnel became wider. In a dug-



out here sat the girl and the men I had met in the well. Two cans of food stood at the girl's feet. Flushed with excitement she was showing the others a damaged rifle, saying that after the broken part of the barrel had been sawn off it would make a perfect weapon in tunnel warfare.

"So you've captured a rifle!" I exclaimed.

The girl turned her keen eyes on me, her eyebrows arched, and smiled enchantingly. She offered me a can saying, "This is for you, comrade. You must be worn out after last night."

"Certainly not! I feel bad not having anything to give you people. How can I accept your trophies?"

Seeing that I meant what I said, she stopped smiling and told me

calmly, "All right. We'll eat it together. Here's good news for you. You'll be able to get back to the sub-district headquarters this evening. The enemy has helped us to locate it. It'll be your turn then to bash the enemy." Bright-eyed she smiled at me.

"This evening?" Overcome by gratitude I leaned towards her and exclaimed, "You've really done marvels!"

She blushed. Gazing at the tin which mirrored her face, to my surprise, she addressed me as "commander". She went on, "There's nothing special about us. You're the outstanding one."

"What's so outstanding about me?" I retorted.

"I recognized you, commander, when you said that a real hero can scare bullets away. Three years ago, your regiment fought at Pohochiao. We sent your regiment a pig and heard you make that statement. You won't remember me. I was a member of the Chil-

dren's Corps then. I never imagined meeting you in civilian clothes. But it's you fighters who are really great. You're like the wind of revolution, we're nothing but the leaves swept along by the wind."

"That comparison is incorrect," I protested. "We're all of us drops of water in a river. There is no difference between us."

"Still, you're the current in midstream carrying us along with you."

"Where is the river source?"

"In Yenan of course. The new world sketched for us by Chairman Mao is beckoning us forward!"

Impressed by this I leaned forward to ask, "Tell me, lass, what is your name?"

"Commander, our liaison station has suffered losses. None of us has a name now. If you must call me something call me Sunflower. That's the flower I like most." Smiling disarmingly she took off her blue scarf and shook it in front of her.

Although tears were glinting in her eyes, the girl's ruddy face was determined and confident. Gleaming in the lamplight, it shone with spirit and vigour, like a sunflower in full bloom.

The old army man's story ended here. The train thundered proudly on at full speed.

By now not only the youngsters sitting beside him but other passengers too had crowded round to listen to the veteran commander. Even the carriage attendant had stopped there with his kettle, forgetting to fill the passengers' cups with hot water. All their faces were solemn, showing how stirred they felt.

"What wonderful sunflowers," a young man exclaimed. "They symbolize our Party cadres and our people in the period of the revolutionary wars. And yet the 'gang of four' labelled them bourgeois democrats."

"The 'gang of four' are out-and-out devils!" a middle-aged man swore.

A girl grasped the old commander's arm and asked, "Comrade, where is Sunflower now?"

Adjusting his cap he said, "Where? She's everywhere. Isn't that true?"

Again he gazed out at the vast plain where villages lay scattered. The hard-working and brave people living there were advancing with the train. . . . Suddenly the train let out a rending whistle. The passengers looked ahead. Peking was in sight. . . .

Illustrated by Tung Chen-sheng

HAILING THE PUBLICATION OF VOLUME V

Mao Tun

P o e m

— to the tune of *Man Chiang Hung*

To all parts of the earth
The east wind is now speeding,
While the warmth of the glorious sun
Is melting ice and snow
Into a vast spring flood,
Washing away the stinking filth.
A fierce revolutionary storm has ushered in a new phase;
Seas become mulberry fields; mutation is the law of nature.
The two super-powers can only tear their hair
In impotent fury and lament till they're hoarse.

So many deeds cry out to be done;
We must seize the day, seize the hour!
Fiercely debunk and expose the "gang of four".

When Party and people grasp class struggle
As the key link, everyone is aroused and full of joy.
To guide us we have *On the Ten Major Relationships*,
To spread Marxism-Leninism we have
The newly published Volume V.
Throughout the whole land, in cities and countryside,
All our people sing and study diligently.

March 15, 1977



Radgae Basang
(Tibetan)

Happy News Brought by the Rainbow

A seven-banded rainbow arches over the grassland,
Bringing warm spring breezes that caress the ears of *chingko* barley,
Making our fields a green carpet for hundreds of miles,
Gladdening the hearts of our herdsman.

Ah, land of my heart,
For acons of time you have been longing for this day!

It is no rainbow, nor real spring breeze,
But the happy news that at last the Fifth Volume is published.
With feelings as irrepressible as the undulating waves of barley,
We welcome the eternal sun needed for our bumper harvest.

A seven-banded rainbow spans our snow-clad mountains,
Bringing bright morning skies. Over our sentry post

The boundless sky, with its rosy morning clouds,
Reflects the hearts of our soldiers guarding the frontier.

Ah, skies over my homeland,
So beautiful with the fulfilment of our hope!

There is no rainbow, nor real rosy morning cloud,
But the happy news that the Fifth Volume is finally published.
With hearts clear and bright as the wind-swept sky,
We welcome the sun which no dark clouds can hide.



Gasang Cedan
(Tibetan)

When the Fifth Volume Came to Our Grassland

Sanggaegad, the best lad chosen from so many,
Riding the dapple-grey horse selected from the swiftest,
Has arrived with the rainbow and the morning clouds,
Bringing back copies of the Fifth Volume with him.

Now the red sun shines on high;
Our most precious gifts we offer in welcome;
In tune with the merry sound of the guitar,
Our hearts are dancing with joy and gladness.

What is more glorious than sea coral?
What is more precious than mountain jade?

What is that which is always invincible?
It is the infallible Mao Tsetung Thought.

With Mao Tsetung Thought as our guide,
We shall fly on towards our splendid future.



Mudi (Mongolian)
and *Wang Jan* (Han)

Spring Comes Early to Our Village

My village, why are you awake so early?
Lark, why are your trills so sweet and clear?
Overnight flowers have blossomed, fields turned red,
The early spring breeze has brought colour to our grassland.

Old grandad is tuning his fiddle with care;
Old granny is preparing the ox-hide drum;
Girls are tying coloured ribbons to the drum-sticks;
Boys are fixing fire-crackers to their lasso poles.

At dawn when our tents are painted crimson,
A decorated arch is erected across the highway.
When we first hear the soft purr of the truck's engine,
Our whole village instantly erupts with joy.

Joy stimulates the wildest dancing,
Happiness sends off the loudest fire-crackers,
Clapping accompanies the gongs and drums,
Cheering flows on like a racing tide.

Then it came at last, the gaily decorated truck
Filled with precious volumes sent to us by Chairman Hua.
Ah, what a priceless treasure Chairman Mao has left us!
As it drew near, the portraits of our leaders
Smiled down on us sons and daughters of the grassland.
Ah, the great banner of Chairman Mao will fly for ever.



Chen Chi-kuang

Ode to the Locomotive

As an engine-driver I can hardly suppress my pride and joy in our locomotive which keeps running day and night.

Look, here it comes, whistling and rumbling, hauling a long chain of wagons loaded with construction materials of different kinds. . . .

1

Watching a train pass, I remember the couplet painted on the tender of one:

Strong enough to haul off a mountain,
In a twinkling it has covered scores of miles.

It is in the minute when the train starts that the locomotive can best demonstrate its strength. Resting their hands on their shovels or wiping their brows, the railway workers watch it leave the station. A whistle sounds the signal for departure. The engine-driver, his right hand releasing the brake, raises the regulator handle with his

Chen Chi-kuang is a Shanghai engine-driver.

left. Slowly but forcefully the wheels revolve. A flick of the engine-driver's hand sets the whole train's wheels in simultaneous motion. The steam-whistle rends the air, reverberating through the railway station and the surrounding country like spring thunder. Thus, nearly ten thousand tons of goods in about a hundred wagons are hauled away.

When two trains pass each other, we are most conscious of their speed. Here comes a train of school-leavers on their way to the countryside. Barely have the laughter and singing from the first carriage reached our ears when we catch the lively chatter from the last. Wait, don't open the window yet — here comes a goods train loaded with brand-new red tractors being sent to a commune to support agriculture. Before we can make out their size they have flashed past, and our carriage is filled with the pungent smell of varnish. Looking out of the window, it is hard to tell whether the train is speeding over the earth or towing the whole earth behind it.

To many people a locomotive is a symbol of "strength and speed". But this has not always been the case, as I know from a story about the first steam-engine — the forerunner of our modern locomotive. As I recollect it, the story went like this:

. . . People heard that a man had invented a machine to take the place of the horse. A curious crowd gathered round to see this "monster" which was belching flame and smoke. It had a long scrawny neck and a fat body from which steam was rising. When the time came to test it, the inventor pulled a lever. The "monster" let out a screech and chugged slowly forward, followed by the curious crowd applauding this "iron ostrich". However, it had not gone far when with a long wheeze from its scrawny neck it stopped dead. The inventor tugged and pushed it, then climbed up to tinker with it till he was pouring with sweat. Then up rode a richly-dressed horseman. Shouting to the crowd to clear the way he galloped off, the bells on his horse's neck tinkling. Presently he returned to challenge the inventor to a race, and sneered at him, "Your 'ostrich' seems to have buried its head in the sand!" With that he rode smugly away. . . .

Since then the facts have proved that that smug horseman was the "ostrich" burying its head in the sand. But the great proletarian teachers were most far-seeing. Wilhelm Liebknecht in his memoirs

describes Marx's delight when he saw a model engine. Pacing his study, eyes sparkling, he prophesied that this splendid invention would transform the whole world.

The proletarian programme of revolution, the *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, and other articles by Marx and Engels contain many enthusiastic and significant references to the locomotive. Every time I read them, I seem to see the train's dazzling headlight piercing the dark night and to hear the thunder of its wheels and the resounding hammer blows on the rails.

A locomotive is far more than a symbol of "strength and speed".

2

But now, instead of letting my imagination run away with me, it is fitting to recall a familiar motto:

Learn from Taching's example,
Keep blazing new trails.

These are the words on the banner of the "Mao Tsetung Locomotive".

This locomotive named after our great leader and teacher has been running day and night for thirty years since October 30, 1946. I saw statistics of the distance it has travelled in these thirty years:

In this period, no accidents large or small have occurred. It safely covered three million kilometres, equal to 75 trips round the earth.

It transported goods weighing 98,550,000 tons. If piled up, they would make a great mountain like Mount Tai.

In addition, it broke ten records and six times proposed increasing its load. It now transports 4,000 tons each trip — more than four times the original load. Other locomotives have followed its example. Thus the "Mao Tsetung Locomotive" has made a fine contribution to our country.

In these thirty years, seven men have served in succession as chief engine-driver. They have also trained nearly a hundred first-rate stokers and other personnel now doing a fine job on railways all over our country.

This "Mao Tsetung Locomotive", which travels vast distances through the worst storms, was rebuilt from a locomotive that was derailed and wrecked by the Mutan River at the foot of the Hsingan Mountains. Later, it braved enemy strafing and bombing in the Liberation War, and its crew cleared away the mines laid on the track, to guarantee the successful delivery of military supplies to our army. But instead of dwelling on its glorious history, let me tell you a story about this locomotive which is known to all railway workers in China today.

One day the "Mao Tsetung Locomotive" was hauling up a slope a trainload of goods to aid a foreign country when a high wind sprang up. Black clouds swept the cab roof. Through the humid air there came a clap of thunder. Soon rain poured down and pelted against the roof. The chief engine-driver quickly switched on the headlight, but its rays were blotted out by the rain.

"Stormy weather, look out!" the chief engine-driver cried.

"Stormy weather, look out!" his assistant chimed in.

"On the key stretch, get up steam!"

"Very good!" replied the new stoker.

In an instant all that could be heard was the howling wind, the



pelting rain and the scrape of the stoker's shovel. Before long the new stoker was drenched with sweat. In the glow from the firebox he caught sight of the chief engine-driver. One hand on the brake, the other on the regulator handle, he was leaning out to watch, defying the tempest. He was soaked to the skin, rain was trickling down his clothes and even brimming over from his boots. The stoker could not understand why he let himself get so drenched.

In fact, a number of questions were flashing through the chief engine-driver's mind: Had the road-bed ahead subsided? Had the bridge been damaged? Was the line clear of pedestrians and maintenance-men? Which signal would they be given, green or red? Were there any fallen trees lying across the track?...

When the train crossed the peak, the storm subsided and the sky cleared. No sooner had the train halted than the driver took up his hammer and jumped down from the cab to examine his engine. The stoker who had wanted to dry his clothes in front of the firebox immediately followed him, an oil-can in his hand. He saw the engine-driver cleaning the bas-relief of Chairman Mao on the front of the locomotive. The stoker handed him a towel to wipe his wet face and brought up the question which had been puzzling him.

His hand on the embossed gilded characters "Mao Tsetung Locomotive", the chief engine-driver said with feeling, "Ours is the only locomotive our great leader Chairman Mao has allowed to use his glorious name. The thought of this is like a fire in our hearts. Every time we see this name, we feel as if Chairman Mao were standing beside us and directing our train's victorious advance."

The chief engine-driver's words went home to the stoker's heart. After that, the glorious title was not only engraved on the engine but in his mind as well.

One fine spring day I went back to the "Mao Tsetung Locomotive", taking a newspaper with a report of how Chairman Hua and other members of the Party Central Committee had received the delegates to the conference on railway work and given them important directives. Once again I heard a touching dialogue, which took place this time in a small station. Sitting in a passenger train I was absorbed in the news about the "Mao Tsetung Locomotive", when I

realized that the train had come to a halt. Suddenly I overheard voices from the platform:

"... Chairman Hua's directives are just what we've been wanting," said one with a broad Kiangsi accent.

"They say the crew of the 'Mao Tsetung Locomotive' have challenged others to another labour contest," replied a native of Hopei.

"Well, we should go all out too, shouldn't we, Old Li? These last few months things have been going fine. We're really getting somewhere now.... The 'gang of four' gloated a bit too soon, didn't they? They fancied that in no time at all they could switch our socialist trains on to their revisionist track...."

The two men were in view of my window now. The Kiangsi man with a hammer on his shoulder looked like a veteran maintenance-man; the other, a sturdy fellow with an arm-band and red and green flags in his hand, was a middle-aged signalman. His eyes under his frowning brows were filled with determination.

"What the engine-drivers said is correct. Although our great leader Chairman Mao has passed away, our socialist locomotives have never stopped rolling."

He waved his green flag, and the train I was on left the station. The light from its headlamp pierced the dark night. The thunder of hundreds of wheels rolling over the rails was music in my ears.

3

The book I am reading has deepened my understanding of locomotives and made them still dearer to me.

This book was written by a Russian railway worker who met Lenin both before and after the unforgettable October Revolution. Its red cover calls to my mind a film about the October Revolution in which there was a scene of an express train looming larger and larger as it came roaring forward. The train described in my book was driven by a locomotive which shuttled between Lake Lazlif and a border station of Finland. The flames from its firebox kindled a fire in the crew's hearts. This is recorded by the engine-driver whose proud task it was to drive Lenin safely to his destination.

.....
Smilingly Vladimir Ilyich looked curiously around the engine-cab. The milestones outside the window were flashing past, now the train had speeded up. My assistant was about to go to the tender for firewood, when Vladimir Ilyich stopped him and rolling up his sleeves clambered up there himself. We were curious to see how he'd throw the logs into the firebox. Lenin did it like an experienced stoker. The fire soon burst into a blaze.
.....

Imagine that: Before kindling the flames of the October Revolution to light up the road for all mankind, the great teacher Lenin first "rolled up his sleeves" and like "an experienced stoker" set the fire in the firebox blazing. This description must stir the hearts of all railway workers, especially the drivers and stokers at their fighting posts in different locomotives.

When we think of locomotives, we think of the great teacher Lenin. When we think of Lenin, we think of the revolution's locomotive. You know, Lenin was delighted to accept the title "Honorary Engine-driver".

In May 1923, Moscow's engine-drivers and mechanics rebuilt a locomotive in their spare time and unanimously recommended Lenin to be its "Honorary Engine-driver". He was ill in bed when he received their letter of recommendation and the engine-driver's handbook they enclosed. His face lit up with a smile, and he sent them word that if not for his illness he would certainly have attended their celebration. As it was, news of his honorary title spread amongst the Russian railway workers. On May 20 that year, on the occasion of Lenin's fifty-third birthday, on behalf of millions of railway workers the Central Committee of Soviet Transport Workers issued the statement: "Wherever there is the sound of an engine whistle or rolling wheels, the army of railway workers have only one burning desire: We want our great engine-driver to recover from his illness, stick to his post in the engine-cab and keep his grip on the lever of the world revolution. . . ."

In January 1924, however, when a bitter wind was roaring, great Lenin died.

Who was to take over the locomotive of history? And which way would it take, the bright or the dark? At that juncture, Trotsky's



clique was switching the points to divert it to the track leading to capitalism. But brightness prevailed over darkness. The locomotive's lever passed into the hands of the Party Central Committee headed by Stalin who carried out Lenin's behests.

Before the memorial locomotive left Leningrad for Moscow with Lenin's remains, another moving scene occurred. The railway workers solemnly brought a bronze statue of Lenin which they had made themselves and mounted it on the memorial locomotive. On the pedestal of the statue was the inscription:

Our Honorary Engine-driver's gone
But our locomotive drives on.

Yes, this locomotive, spanning the passage of time, has linked the struggles of over fifty years ago with the victories of the revolution today.

This locomotive mirrors modern history. Didn't the arrogant "gang of four" try to turn back the wheels of history exactly as Trotsky did? However, as great Lenin pointed out: Theirs "are just as witless as are attempts to stop a train by means of a wattle fence".

Ah, Locomotive, you are a symbol of the revolution.

Ah, Locomotive, you have close links with our great leaders. Marx and Engels laid the tracks of revolution for you; Lenin set the fire blazing; and our great leader Chairman Mao agreed to your using his own glorious name. Locomotive, you should be proud! Sing out with jubilation as you drive full speed ahead!

Spring Rain

Spring rain was pattering down. . . .

The night before had been fragrant with spring flowers. The east wind skimmed over mountains and plains, factories and mines, and blew through the windows of countless households. Meanwhile Radio Peking came on the air with the news that Volume V of the *Selected Works of Mao Tsetung* had been published!

I stood transfixed by the window, staring out at the Dipper. In the quiet of the night, how many young people would suddenly wake up, laughing, from their sweet dreams? How many old men would sit up till dawn with tears of joy? Tomorrow Hsinhua Bookstore was going to distribute the new volume of Chairman Mao's selected works. I placed my little alarm clock by my pillow.

However, before daybreak, the clatter of footsteps woke me. A small boy's rosy face peeped through the door.

"Brother, get up quick! There's already a long queue in front of the bookshop."

It was my younger brother. I usually had to pull the little rascal out of bed to march him off to school. But today he was the first

of our family up and had gone out in the rain to "reconnoitre". My kid brother seemed to have grown a lot overnight!

The sky was dim and the street lights were still on. Spring comes early south of the Yangtse. Along the boulevard peach-trees with their pink blossom, Judas-trees in full bloom and willows just putting out leaves were all bathed in the scented spring rain.

In front of a small bookshop near the outskirts of the city, the queue lining up for the new volume was lengthening every minute. I saw workers just come from the ship-way, commune members on their way back after delivering vegetables to town, soldiers on leave, grandads leaning on canes, grannies carrying small stools, housewives with shopping baskets and even in-patients in pyjamas who had slipped out from the hospital. Little Red Soldiers were standing in line as patiently as the grown-ups, their cheeks caressed by the fine rain. . . . It was a stirring scene. For years they had been longing for this day. And now that the gang which had blocked the fifth volume's publication had been cleaned up, the precious red book had come out at last. Gongs and drums were sounding, fire-crackers popping, and through the amplifier came the strains of the song *Sailing the Seas Depends on the Helmsman*. Amidst this jubilation, the big glass door of Hsinhua Bookstore swung open.

A stalwart veteran cadre strode up to the counter and reached out hands that had once grasped a gun. He had followed Chairman Mao for forty years and fought all over the country. Time had tinged his temples grey, but his heart was as loyal as ever to the Party. The moment he got his copy he opened it to read the table of contents. His feelings were much the same as when, in the doorway of a cave-dwelling in Yen-an, he first got hold of a mimeographed copy of Chairman Mao's *Talks at the Yen-an Forum on Literature and Art*. He had gone without food and sleep to read it straight through. Now, clasping the precious book in both hands, he was so absorbed in reading that he forgot where he was. Not until the shop-assistant nudged him did he make way for others with a sheepish smile and, unbuttoning his coat, place the book next to his heart.

A woman with a chubby little boy in her arms came up and told the bookseller: "There are two of us, comrade, so I want to buy

two copies." Spotting his hesitation, she hurriedly explained, "It's like this, comrade. My husband is away in Africa helping with construction work there. When he heard that the fifth volume was off the press, he sent me a cable that same night asking me to buy him a copy and send it to him at once by registered air mail."

Smiling, the shop-assistant handed her two books with both hands. When the small boy saw them, he promptly reached out and babbled, "Big — red — books! Big — red — books!" This raised a laugh in the shop. The mother, hugging her little son, burst out laughing too, tears of joy springing to her eyes.

The spring rain kept pattering down. . . .

I saw a retired worker showing up for the third time at the counter.

"Do you need three copies for yourself, old master?" I asked him.

"No," he explained. "I have two apprentices, both of them crack turners. Our factory's started a new emulation campaign. The two of them challenged each other and they're hard at it now to see which makes the better showing. When they heard that the fifth volume was on sale they longed for a copy, but these days they are too busy to leave their posts. So they asked me to come in their place." Waving the two copies in his hand the old man added with pride, "See now, comrade? Including one more for myself, I shall have bought three. You don't think that's too many, do you?" He chuckled.

Suddenly we heard a commotion at the doorway. A man with a hold-all wanted to jump the queue and one of the shop-assistants was reasoning with him:

"Comrade, you must take your turn like everyone else."

Frantically the other man produced a train ticket. "I just haven't time, comrade," he pleaded. "Do sell me a copy first. I'm going to Sinkiang on business. The journey takes several days, and I do want to be able to read this valuable book on the way."

The assistant sympathized and thought it over. But he was in a dilemma, because he knew that the customers outside had been waiting for a long time. At this juncture, a young PLA man standing near by offered the traveller the copy he had just bought.

“But what about you?” the other asked.

“Don’t worry. I’m going to line up again.” The young soldier gave a salute, then turned and vanished into the spring drizzle.

It was still raining when I left the bookshop. In the distance stretched fields where moistened by the spring rain the wheat had grown greener, the rape-flowers even more golden. Through the channels criss-crossing the fields clear water was gurgling. . . .

The scene warmed my heart. A single drop of water could reflect the sunlight, and a single bookshop could present a significant new picture of China’s revolution. The veteran cadre who had fought many battles, the mother with her small son, the warm-hearted retired worker and the young soldier were unknown to me by name, but my fleeting impressions of them helped me to see the deep love of the whole people for our great leader Chairman Mao. Like spring rain on the parched earth his brilliant teachings would go home to the hearts of millions, to nurture fresh generations of revolutionaries. Spring rain keeps streams and rivers from running dry and the earth from losing its fertility; and Chairman Mao’s teachings give our people strength and wisdom to write fresh pages in the history of the Chinese revolution!

The spring rain pattering down sounded like eight hundred million pairs of hands softly leafing through the precious red book all over our motherland. . . .



Chairman Mao (sculpture) by *Sun Hsin-chou*

The Story of a Ballad-Singer

The fiddle-ballads of Soochow are sung to distinctive local melodies, and the singers play their own accompaniments on *pipa* and *sansien* guitars with four or three strings respectively. Their stage properties are simple, making it easy for them to go and perform in factories, communes and army units where they receive a warm welcome from the workers, peasants and soldiers. One of their most popular items is Chairman Mao's poem *Reply to Li Shu-yi** — to the tune of *Tieh Lien Hua* set to a traditional Soochow fiddle-ballad melody with certain variations. The sonorous, stirring melody with its strong lilting rhythm serves to convey Chairman Mao's splendid flight of fancy and deep feeling for his comrade-in-arms and wife Yang Kai-hui** as well as his friend Liu Chih-hsun, both of whom gave their lives for the revolution. So whenever I hear this stirring tune I try to join in the words, and the most moving passages bring tears to my eyes.

*Chairman Mao wrote this poem in May 1957 for Li Shu-yi, a middle-school teacher in Changsha and former friend of Yang Kai-hui. Earlier that year she had sent him a poem written in memory of her husband Liu Chih-hsun who fell in battle in Hupeh in 1932.

**She was killed by the reactionary Ho Chien in Changsha in 1930.



This evening, though the cold was piercing, an excited crowd had gathered at the entrance to the theatre to which I went.

The performance started. And when the fiddle-ballad *Reply to Li Shu-yi* was announced the audience cheered and applauded enthusiastically. Then a middle-aged actress in high spirits took the stage. She was Fang Hua, well known for her rendering of the item, but audiences had not seen her for many years as she was forced to quit the stage when performances of this ballad were forbidden by Chiang Ching. After the Party Central Committee headed by Chairman Hua smashed the "gang of four's" plot to usurp Party and state power, saving the revolution and the Party, Fang Hua experienced her "second liberation". So here she was back on the stage.

Fang Hua in her jubilation had tied a red silk rosette to the top of her *pipa*. Her hands trembled with excitement as she played it. Her clear voice sounded slightly hoarse.

**I lost my proud Poplar and you your Willow,*
Poplar and Willow soar to the Ninth Heaven.**

Her familiar voice and the sight of her *pipa* reminded me of some incidents from the past, making my heart beat faster.

On the eve of the Liberation, Fang Hua's family fled south as famine refugees. They were intercepted by reactionary Kuomintang troops who killed her mother and pressganged her father. Fang Hua, then seventeen or eighteen, was adopted by an old ballad-singer and they roamed the streets as wandering minstrels.

One New Year's Eve, I and some other homeless cotton-mill workers were listening to her playing the *pipa* in the street when up rushed a handful of thugs. "Why don't you go to our boss' home to perform for his guests?" they shouted. Throwing back her braids, Fang Hua retorted: "I can't sing the sort of tunes you like." The men immediately snatched her *pipa* from her and smashed it on the ground. . . .

On the stage, Fang Hua was singing:

**Wu Kang, asked what he can give,
Serves them a laurel brew.**

Listening, I felt as if the *pipa* in her hands had become another like that she played during the war years with an azalea attached to it.

Just after Liberation, to celebrate the victory, Fang Hua danced *yangko* dances and beat a waist-drum with us workers. Later she joined the art troupe of the Chinese People's Volunteers and went to Korea. In the fine tradition of our cultural workers on the battlefield, she created and performed new items based on her own family's sufferings in the past. The melodious and stirring ballads she sang fired our soldiers' hearts, inspiring them with fresh courage. People compared her *pipa* to the azaleas braving the wind by our trenches, which imparted to us all their own fighting spirit.

Listening, I seemed to see cotton fluff floating round her *pipa* as I recalled meeting Fang Hua at our textile mill during the tem-

*The Yang in Yang Kai-hui means "poplar", and the Liu in Liu Chih-hsun means "willow".

pestuous Cultural Revolution. She had already been demobilized and assigned to our municipal fiddle-ballad troupe. She told me that under the guidance of Chairman Mao's revolutionary line on literature and art, she and her comrades often went to learn from and serve the workers, peasants and soldiers, and this had helped her to remould her thinking and produce some original work. To improve her performance, she often sang *Reply to Li Shu-yi* to us in our workshop and asked us for our comments. We were very impressed by her conscientious attitude to work.

Before long, however, an ill wind sprang up. Soochow fiddle-ballads came under fierce attack. We were told that "leading comrades of the Central Committee" had condemned them as "decadent" and said that their "impact was lethal". Particularly the song *Reply to Li Shu-yi* which was said to be intensely irritating to a leading comrade. This was sheer slander. But after that the song disappeared from programmes and soon Fang Hua stopped appearing on the stage.

One day, someone came to our mill to get us to write critical articles claiming that the workers disliked Soochow fiddle-ballads. He singled out the popular ones, songs like *Reply to Li Shu-yi* for attack.

This made us explode: "What dirty trick are they playing? Songs like *Reply to Li Shu-yi* are fine; these are our favourite items."

After that fellow left, the others sent me as their representative to visit Fang Hua. Her home was simply furnished. When I arrived there she was practising singing *Reply to Li Shu-yi*. "Very good," I exclaimed. "You haven't given it up." She smiled. "Surely it is all right to practise at home!" So saying, she showed me some of her fan mail. One of the letters read:

"... Whenever we read Chairman Mao's poem *Reply to Li Shu-yi* — to the tune of *Tieh Lien Hua* we always remember your ballad version of it. However, we haven't heard you sing for a long time. At first, we thought you might be ill; later on we guessed maybe you had a sore throat. Finally... we made up our minds to write you this letter to urge you to pluck up your courage and do what you can to enrich our socialist literature and art. No one can deprive

you of the right to serve the workers, peasants and soldiers..." It was signed: A few of your worker audience.

How could Fang Hua help being stirred as she read this enthusiastic, heartfelt advice!

When I left her house, she gazed at the red plum-blossom in the courtyard and said to me: "The day everyone is hoping for will surely come!"

Her prophecy came true. The day we had longed for arrived. The happy news spread from Peking that the Party Central Committee headed by Chairman Hua had smashed the "gang of four's" anti-Party clique. The whole nation was jubilant. In order to celebrate the great victory, Fang Hua was requested to perform the fiddle-ballad *Reply to Li Shu-yi*. She could hardly sleep for some nights after hearing this exciting news. Stroking her beloved *pipa* she thought: "Today, *pipa*, you can sing at the top of your voice!" She took out the red rosette that she had used when dancing the *yangko* and beating a waist-drum and tied it on the *pipa*. Meanwhile she recalled Premier Chou's cordial instructions and warm encouragement after one of her performances of this song.

Fang Hua sang with deep emotion:

**The lonely moon goddess spreads her ample sleeves
To dance for these loyal souls in infinite space.**

The audience held their breath and listened raptly to the lyrical melody in memory of the dead revolutionaries.

Suddenly the music took on a new grandeur. My eyes fixed on her *pipa's* red rosette I listened intently to the final couplet:

**Earth suddenly reports the tiger subdued,
Tears of joy pour forth falling as mighty rain.**

Applause burst out in the hall. Fang Hua's eyes filled with tears.

Today the flowers of socialist literature and art are blossoming again. The resonant *pipa* is playing splendid songs in praise of Chairman Hua and new fighting songs denouncing the "gang of four".

The prospect stretching ahead of us is brilliant...

Illustrated by Chen Yu-hsien

Before Returning to China

The night sky over the east African plateau was an amazing blue. Like a silver sickle, a new moon hung over the azure horizon.

The broad leaves of the papaya tree outside our hostel swayed in the breeze. Golden fruit glowed under the moonlight. This tree planted two years earlier by Mlinga, a Zambian worker, and myself was often described as a symbol of the friendship between the Chinese and Zambian peoples.

I would be starting for home tomorrow. My fellow workers and a number of Zambian friends who had heard about my impending departure had come to bid me farewell. Gathered under the papaya tree we relaxed after a day's hard work, chatting and reminiscing.

I picked a few plump papayas to share between us. As we ate the sweet, succulent fruit we workers of two different continents felt very close to each other.

"Why isn't Mlinga here yet?" asked a young man from his section.

Only then did I realize that our good friend Mlinga was missing. Some important work must be keeping him. The sweet papaya in

my hand reminded me not only of Mlinga but of all the battles we had waged together and the friendly co-operation between the Chinese and Zambian railroad builders. . . .

1

In April 1972 Zambia, just after the rainy season, was a mass of greenery under cloudless blue skies. Everything looked lush and full of vitality.

I was on my way with our team leader Tien Kuang-ching, Yang the interpreter, Chang an excavator operator and a few others to set up camp at a construction site. Our two excavators carried our luggage, tents, cooking utensils and other supplies. We rumbled along as quickly as we could, sleeping and eating in the open. The roar of our motors stirred the slumbering jungles and prairie and our caterpillar-tracks left a trail for our road-building contingent to follow.

One afternoon we were crossing a stretch of wasteland close to the border of Tanzania and Zambia, only an hour or so from our destination Louchindr, when the temperature in our cab suddenly shot up. Soon, with a hiss, steam spurted from the radiator.

"The water in the radiator's boiling, damn it!" Chang switched off the engine, and we found ourselves stranded.

When we looked up, the sun was slanting westward. All around was wilderness. Where could we get water? After some consultation we decided that Tien and Chang should remain there while Yang and I went off in search of someone who would supply us with water.

We followed a hazy trail for about thirty minutes until we reached a grove of trees. Soon we heard the sound of wood-chopping.

"There are people here," cried Yang. "They'll help us out."

The woodcutters emerged at the sound of our voices. A man in his prime was the first to appear. He was big and robust, his brilliant eyes shining under a crop of curly hair. In one hand he held an axe. A scar marked his left brow but his simple honest

face shone with a friendly smile. Behind him came a woman and a boy of less than ten, evidently his wife and son.

As I went up to greet them Yang asked eagerly: "Is there any water hereabouts, friend?"

"Water?" the man repeated dubiously.

I immediately explained why we needed water. The man nodded, dropped his axe on a tree stump and said something to the woman. They took the boy by the hand and walked swiftly away.

I was puzzled by their disappearing so quickly. "Yang, do you think he misunderstood?" I asked.

"No. Look." Yang pointed to the axe they had left. "Let's wait for them here."

After more than half an hour the man and the woman returned, panting heavily. Both had a jar of water on their heads. They were followed by the boy, a calabash on his head. Water, yes, but not just ordinary water. It was brimming over with the Zambian people's friendship.

I took the water, thanking them profusely.

"No need to thank us," said the man shyly but with sincerity. "Zambia-China . . . good friends."

"Good friends!" These ordinary words meant so much! They bound our peoples together.

Together we walked towards the excavators stranded in the distance. On the way, Yang learned that the man's name was Mlinga. He lived with his wife and their only son Shafiri on the other side of the jungle.

After filling up with water, we continued on our way. We went through the grove where Mlinga and his wife were cutting wood and emerged on a flat between the river and some hills. A few thatched huts with rounded tops were scattered over the flat, surrounded by fields of maize and cassava. Near the huts grew banana palms and papaya trees. There was no road our excavators could take.

"What to do?" Chang slowed down.

"Stop!" was Tien's decisive answer. "Let's get down and have a look. We must find some detour."

No sooner had we halted when out came an old man of about sixty, his hair silvered at the temples. He came up to scrutinize us, then looked over the excavators and pointed at a plot of cassava. "You can go through there!"

"But grandpa, your cassava plants. . . ."

The old man brushed aside Yang's protest. "To build the Freedom Railway why should I begrudge a few cassava plants? It's getting late. You should be on your way!"

Dusk was indeed fast approaching. I gripped the hands of this sincere old man and said: "Thanks, thank you for your help."

We started out again and soon reached our destination — a site previously chosen for construction. We pitched tent under the stars and set up our station that very night. . . .

The curtain of night slowly lifted to let out the golden rays of morning sunshine. After Tien had made arrangements for our first day's work, Yang and I went back to visit the old man who had so generously given us permission to go through his fields.

"If only we could find Mlinga too," said Yang.

"The old man may know where he is," I suggested hopefully.

When we neared the old man's house, a lively little boy in shorts and shirt came rushing out. "Shafiri!" cried Yang in delight.

The old man whom we had met the night before turned out to be Shafiri's grandpa, Rungu. The family had lived here for several years. When Mlinga and his wife went home to fetch water for us the day before, Grandpa Rungu learned that we Chinese were here to help build the railway. That was why when we stopped by his field, he resolutely urged us to drive through it.

At the sound of our voices Grandpa Rungu, Mlinga and his wife all came out to welcome us like old friends.

When I mentioned that the purpose of our visit was to compensate grandpa for the damage done to his cassava plants, the old man took me by the hand. He led me to the cassava plot where I saw that the plants had been pulled out to make a broad track to the other side. This was where we had crossed the day before. What did it mean? Yang learned from Shafiri that grandpa had told his family early that morning, "Since our Chinese friends have come to help

us build the Freedom Road, we must welcome them with our actions." They had made that track through their cassava plot there and then so that when more Chinese workers came to build the railway, they could pass without any delay.

I felt very touched. This was just an ordinary Zambian family but to help their Chinese friends build the Freedom Road, what noble spirit they showed!

"That was most considerate of you, grandpa," I said. "You've really given us tremendous help."

"Help?" he answered. "It's you who've come all the way across the ocean to help us! It's only right that I should pull up a few cassava plants for the sake of our national construction." He pulled Mlinga to my side then and pointed out the scar on his left brow.

"I'm 62 this year. I moved house six or seven times before finally settling down here. A year before independence one of my sheep was run over by a colonialist's truck. Mlinga asked him for compensation. In a rage, the devil whipped him over the head. So all the compensation he got was a scar. . . ."

Grandpa Rungu angrily denounced the criminal rule of the colonialists. Pointing to me and Yang, he told his son and daughter-in-law: "They've come to help us build up our country. They've only crushed a few cassava plants but they come specially to offer us compensation. These are true friends!"

Like a glass of hot spirits these words warmed our very hearts. Grandpa refused to accept any compensation. But it was our rule to make good any damage we caused. So after talking it over, Yang and I decided to get some Zambian friends to reimburse him later. When we bid farewell to this family, we made up our minds to do everything possible to speed up the construction of the railway as our expression of appreciation for the help and support given us by the Zambian people.

After breakfast the next morning, we gathered outside our tent to discuss how to welcome our comrades who would be coming to work on this site as well as the main force of railway builders — our Zambian friends. Suddenly Shafiri came skipping merrily to-

wards us. Behind him were Mlinga, on his head a papaya sapling, and Grandpa Rungu leaning on a stick.

"To express our friendship for our Chinese friends," said grandpa pointing to the sapling, "I've brought you this papaya I planted myself. Let it bear witness to the friendship between the peoples of Zambia and China."

How could we refuse this gift offered with such heartfelt feeling? I took a spade and dug a big hole. Yang found some wood ash to put in it and solemnly Grandpa Rungu set the sapling in place and held it straight while we packed soil round the roots, then watered it.

And so this papaya tree symbolizing friendship took root where the Chinese construction workers lived. Bathed in sunshine and dew it grew sturdily.

2

The papaya was in full bloom. The treetops starred with pearly flowers quivered in the breeze, filling the air with fragrance.

Since we were pioneering there were plenty of difficulties. As Yang put it: Our camp was nothing but a stretch of wilderness under the blue sky. For one thing we were short of hands, and had no cook. Team Leader Tien was frantic trying to get things into working order. So I volunteered to do the cooking.

To prepare food for about a dozen people should not be too hard. But getting things started is always difficult. What was more, my hands used to holding a mason's trowel were very clumsy at wielding a chopping-knife, especially when I had to get the meals ready on time. But I knew the only way to learn was by practice. At the worst, I'd get a few burns or cuts on the fingers. A few weeks later I was managing not too badly. Pretty soon, I began to take on additional tasks such as fetching water, sending food to the work-site, keeping hens and pigs and growing vegetables.

The last couple of days I'd been boiling water too. This had been the job of my old friend Mlinga ever since he came to work at the site. But for some reason he had not shown up recently.

Was he ill? Or was something else keeping him at home? At lunch, I had just made up my mind to visit him with Yang after work when Mlinga appeared, his face haggard with worry.

"Have you been ill, Mlinga?" I asked.

He shook his head. "My wife's very sick. . . ."

He told me that his wife was laid up and they had no way to get her to hospital. Anxious to help solve our friends' problem, I took Mlinga to Team Leader Tien and got his permission to go at once with Yang and our newly arrived Dr. Wang to Mlinga's house.

After a few days of treatment Mlinga's wife recovered. Then he brought her and Shafiri to live at the worksite, leaving only Grandpa Rungu at home to till their fields. Mlinga explained that in this way his wife and son could look after him as well as the old man, as their home was not far from our worksite. Not until later did I understand the real reason for his wife's move.

One afternoon when Yang came back from work he shouted to me: "I say, squad leader, what's come over you? How can you let Mlinga's wife carry wood for us?"

Bustling around in the kitchen I thought at first that Yang was joking. "Don't talk nonsense," I snapped. "Want me to cut off your tongue?"

"Why don't you come out and see for yourself?" Yang was not only serious but a little annoyed.

I rushed out in time to see Mlinga's wife coming into our compound, a bundle of chopped firewood on her head. I noticed several other bundles of chopped wood stacked neatly by our tea stove. Immediately I recalled the jar of water she had brought for our excavator the day we arrived. I strode over to Mlinga, who was boiling water, to ask him what this meant. He simply rubbed his forehead, a sheepish smile on his face. I had to repeat my question before he told me that his wife was grateful to their Chinese friends for restoring her to health and she was bringing us firewood in order to show her gratitude.

I thanked Mlinga and his wife for their thoughtfulness and urged them repeatedly to take the firewood home. But they would not

hear of this. After work, Yang and I got hold of a hand-cart and smuggled the firewood to Mlinga's home.

One day someone scalded Mlinga by accident. Dr. Wang told him to take a week's sick-leave. As he went home to recuperate I got up an hour earlier than usual to boil the water for tea. On the third morning, to my surprise I found the water already bubbling merrily. Who had lit the stove and fed the fire? Later, I asked all our comrades but nobody owned up to it.

I kept wondering who had boiled the water for me. To find out, I got up extra early the next morning and tiptoed to the stove where a figure was moving in the flickering firelight. Now I've got you! I thought, going closer. "Why, Mlinga!"

Mlinga smiled bashfully at sight of me.

"Your burns," I cried reproachfully. "You should be resting at home."

"Never mind. Friends . . . much work . . . no water . . . no good."

I understood. He felt our work would suffer if we had no water to drink. Mlinga was no eloquent speaker but in his quiet way he had taken over some of my work load. What an honest, faithful friend he was! I gripped his big, callused hands, at a loss for words. I felt it was not Mlinga who stood before me, but the embodiment of all the hard-working, honest African people.

3

Red flowers dotted the verdant green of the land. We were entranced by the beauty of Zambia.

Batch after batch of Chinese technicians and Zambian workers had arrived at the worksite. The preparatory work was quickly completed and we began laying the rails. I left the kitchen to go back to bridge building. Mlinga who headed his section was in my squad.

One evening when the western sky was crimson with sunset clouds a truckload of Chinese and Zambian workers sped back towards our station. We were nearly there when the truck turned past a wood. From among the trees came the sound of cries and moaning.

"What could have happened?" asked Yang.

"Stop! Let's go and see!" As I spoke, the driver pulled on the brake and several people jumped off. Yang was in the lead as they raced towards the sound of wailing.

Soon Yang returned carrying a little boy followed by his mother with an axe in one hand. I took the boy in my arms. It was Shafiri who had been cutting firewood with his mother in the hills when a viper bit him. Lively, lovable Shafiri, the only son of Mlinga and his wife and the apple of Grandpa Rungu's eye was their family's joy and pride.

The others surrounded Shafiri as he lay on my knee. "Shafiri!" we called, but he could only moan. His face was contorted with pain, his leg was swelling.

The poison must be spreading. The case looked desperate. Any delay might cost the boy his life. I carried him into the cab. Our truck sped towards our station and stopped under the papaya tree.

"Dr.Wang! Quick! Come and save Shafiri!" cried Yang before he could alight.

Dr.Wang rushed out of the clinic.

Our clinic was too small to hold all those concerned about the child. Chinese and Zambian workers crowded outside it.

"Save Shafiri, friend!"

"Do you need blood for transfusion? Take mine!"

Dr.Wang met the anxious eyes of Shafiri's mother. "Don't worry. We'll do our very best to wrest Shafiri back from the jaws of death!" His words carried conviction. The crowd quietened down. Shafiri's mother brushed the tears from her cheeks and tried to smile.

Dr. Wang worked frantically, using every means to combat the poison. He gave Shafiri injections, fed him medicine. Sweat poured down his face. My heartstrings were so taut I felt they would surely snap.

Seconds ticked by in this tense battle for life. The people waiting quietly outside the clinic were oblivious of fatigue and hunger. Finally at nine o'clock Shafiri opened his eyes. "Mama!" came his boyish treble, faint but sweet.

His mother smiled, stroking his curly hair, and bent down to kiss his round cheeks.

Simultaneously Dr.Wang, Yang and I let out a sigh of relief.

"Shafiri's saved!" cheered the workers at the door.

As if coming out of a blissful trance, Shafiri's mother stood up, tears of happiness in her eyes. "China — good!" she cried.

Mlinga and Grandpa Rungu came in. Mlinga moved his lips but no sound came. He grasped Dr.Wang's hand, then mine. After a while, he managed to say: "Thank you! You good specialists brought up by Chairman Mao Tsetung are our Zambian people's true friends." I saw tears in the eyes of this big, stocky worker too. Grandpa Rungu took Shafiri's little hand. Shaking it for emphasis, he said, "Remember, child, and never forget, that it was your Chinese uncles who saved your life."

After this, Shafiri always trailed along when Mlinga came to work. When the workers mixed cement and heaped up stones, Shafiri helped to keep them supplied with material. When anyone dropped some mortar on the ground, Shafiri would scrape it up with his little spade and carry it to this worker or that. When surveys were made, Shafiri acted as guide and helped to carry the surveying poles. He had sharp eyes and was good at picking out targets. Chinese and Zambian workers alike were so fond of him they couldn't resist teasing him. Yang nicknamed him our "worker not on the payroll". His mother came every day to the worksite carrying food and water for their Chinese friends. Even Grandpa Rungu, leaning on his stick, often came to help to look for sources of sand and earth or to find patches of grass. We called him our "walking map". As for Mlinga, he worked away silently, taking on the dirtiest, hardest or most dangerous jobs. Some Sundays too he went quietly to the bridge site to put in some extra work. He had become an outstanding squad leader. But every time someone commended him, he simply fingered his scar and smiled sheepishly, making no other reply.

In this way every member of Mlinga's family of four chipped in to help with the construction of the railroad of friendship. Talk of this "whole family working for the railway" spread all along the Tanzania-Zambia Railway.

Our detachment worked shoulder to shoulder with our Zambian friends. Time passed quickly in the midst of hard battles while our friendship grew with the number of battles shared. Soon two years went by.

Stories of our friendship spread, ceaseless as the waters of the Yangtse and the Zambesi, enduring as the Qomolangma Feng and the Kili-manjaro Mountains. This friendship, growing and maturing like the papaya tree outside our hostel, put out countless silvery white flowers and bore golden fruit.

As I reviewed our friendship I realized that Mlinga's family merely epitomized the four million hard-working and fearless people of Zambia. They also represent the millions upon millions of our African friends. With deep hate for imperialism and colonialism, they love their motherland with all their hearts. Their strong sense of comradeship with the Chinese people and us workers sent to help with their construction made them work with might and main of their own free will, to pave the way for the railway of friendship. Our friendship with Mlinga's family symbolized the mutual support our two countries give each other and our friendship which will endure for generations to come.

While I was still lost in this reverie, someone cried, "See! Here comes Mlinga."

I looked up. Approaching us in the silvery moonlight was Mlinga's sturdy figure. Behind him came Grandpa Rungu, leaning on a stick, then Shafiri holding his mother's hand. . . . A wave of gladness swept over me. I stood up and strode towards my friends with outstretched arms.

Chairman Mao in His Study
(woodcut) by *Chang Chiang*



POEMS IN PRAISE OF TACHING

Wang Wu-chen

Steadfast and Unflinching

With fiery zeal,
With iron hands,
And the morning sun in our hearts,
We go into battle.

We brave wind and rain,
Ignore snow and ice,
However great the difficulty
We remain unbowed.

We're not afraid to sweat,
We're not afraid of freezing,
We're not afraid of being soaked in grease;
We shall aim high and go all out for socialism.

Wang Wu-chen is a model worker of Taching and honoured with the title of "steadfast fighter on the oil front".

Acid, savage as a tiger, we shall conquer,
Then hasten on to capture the oil dragon,
We care not that our skin is flayed or flesh torn
So long as the oil comes gushing up.

Let the oil from a thousand metres underground
Add fuel again and again to our locomotive;
Raise high the red flag and follow the Party,
Steadfast and unflinching in the revolution.



Chiu Kuei

We Shall Go Everywhere for Oil

With aluminium helmets on our heads,
Keeping Chairman Mao's works in our pockets,
Year after year with our drill we go
Through many a dangerous mountain pass.

In the south we quench thirst with rain;
In the north snow serves for a bed;
We roam freely in the East Wind;
Breathless enthusiasm fills our hearts.

We set up derricks in wastelands and deserts;
We make camp on hills and heights;
Following the footsteps of past revolutionaries,
We drill through rock in our search for oil.

Drilling rods we use as paint brushes,
To depict this land of eternal spring,
Peaks and rivers smile at the hum of our drill,
Wasteland, slumbering for a thousand years, is now awakening.

We're trained to take on the toughest jobs,
We pit ourselves against the most formidable terrain,
We go with glee wherever there is oil,
And we'll fight all our lives with undiminished strength.



**Wang Hou-kuang
and Kan Feng**

In the Iron Man's* Village

Visiting this village where Wang Chin-hsi once lived,
It seems we see that "man of iron" once more.
Murmuring his name among ourselves, we say:
Ah, old team leader, how we long to see you again.

We long to see you again, old team leader,
Your talk and laughter are indelibly printed on our minds.
Each time the snow melts and the spring breeze
Paints the willows green, we think once more of you.

* Your eyebrows were like the wing-span of an eagle;
Your eyes were always filled with sparkling light;

*Iron Man was the name first given to Wang Chin-hsi who was an outstanding labour hero in our oilfields.

Wearing only an old sheepskin jacket in coldest winter,
You kept the whole country's welfare in your heart.

In the early days you drilled in the Chilian Mountains
And planted the red flag on the Yumen Oilfield;
Then with great strides in the Big Leap Forward,
You came to the wind and dust of the northeast wasteland.

Out there together on the vast grasslands,
By the campfire we studied Chairman Mao's works together.
Through arduous labour you blazed a new trail;
The earth shook when we sang our songs of triumph.

We ate fried flour, mixing it with snow;
We lived in caves, the bare earth our softest bed;
We tugged and shouldered heavy loads in the whirling snow;
Singing our work chants we set up the derrick.

Since then the reek of oil has pervaded this village,
Every single drop mixed with our sweat.
Small village paths are now broad avenues,
Your footprints you left on every inch of soil.

So firm and deep are your footprints,
You should be here today to see your village:
Such bustling crowds, such enthusiasm and roaring engines;
No ice or snow could ever quench these fiery spirits.

We ask a worker:
What records has your drill marked up this year?
With smiles, waving its iron arm a derrick answers:
Just wait to see me plant the red flag in the sky.

We ask a young wife:
How much grain have you produced this year?
The tractor roars aloud: Our fields,
Like those in Tachai, are full of golden grain.

Suddenly we hear the sound of children's laughter,
As Little Red Soldiers march into the village.
Keeping in step they sing aloud in unison,
We'll do our best to become young "men of iron".

Coming to the Iron Man's village
Our hearts beat with the thud of a thousand galloping horses.
Vast oilfields stretch as far as eye can see,
And everywhere there have appeared new "men of iron".



*Chang Pao-hua and
Chang Kuei-tien*

The Hatters

(a comic dialogue)

- A:** Recently a certain firm has been unable to sell its goods.
B: Really? You mean it makes things which it can't sell?
A: Nobody wants their stuff.
B: What do they make?
A: Hats.
B: I want one. I happen to need a hat.
A: Their hats are too big.
B: Big hats are comfortable.
A: Heavy too.
B: Heavy hats are nice and warm.
A: They'd give you a terrible headache.
B: Why should a hat give me a headache? I don't believe it.
A: Once hatted you'd never get it off again.
B: What kind of a hat is that?
A: The hat of a counter-revolutionary.
B: That's too much! What hatters sell hats like that?

- A:** The hat factory run by the "gang of four".
B: You mean the Wang-Chang-Chiang-Yao anti-Party clique?
A: That's it. Wang, the chairman of the board of directors, runs the firm. Chang is the brains of the business, he does the designing. Yao handles advertising and public relations. And Chiang as boss trots around touting their wares.
B: So that's it.
A: For the firm they rack their brains to design the widest possible range of fabulous hats. Classical, modern, Chinese and foreign — you name it, they have it.
B: What sort of hats do they have in stock?
A: They've revamped the tattered headgear of Confucius, taken over the old stock of hats in Wang Ming's* storeroom, monopolized the old hats left by Liu Shao-chi and appropriated the newer hats made by Lin Piao.
B: Wow! Quite a collection they've got.
A: Their hats come in three sizes: Large, medium and small.
B: So they've got different sizes?
A: They give different people different hats.
B: What are the large ones?
A: Renegade, spy, big warlord, anti-Party careerist, capitalist-roader, capitulationist, big revisionist despot. . . .
B: Wow! And the medium-sized?
A: Followers of the black line, non-revolutionary, black writer, black hand, black accomplice, empiricist, democrat, middle-of-the-roader, chameleon. . . .
B: Those are quite a size too. What about the small ones?
A: Stumbling-block, broken reed, muddler, revisionist bud, rumour-monger, mouthpiece, adverse current, ill wind, worm. . . .
B: Those hats all take some measuring up to.
A: Well, which size would fit you?
B: I can't afford any of them.
A: What about one at bargain price?
B: Nope! Not even at bargain price.

*A "Left" opportunist in the Chinese Communist Party in the early thirties.

A: If they decide to hat you, you can't refuse. And whether the hat fits or not, wear it you must.

B: What kind of people don't have to wear their hats?

A: Lickspittles, informers, liars and sycophants don't have to wear their hats.

B: Sycophants, eh?

A: Suppose they say balls of coal are white. . . .

B: Balls of coal white?

A: Just querying that will land you with a small hat.

B: Then. . . .

A: You've got to talk their way.

B: I see. Balls of coal seem to me white as dumplings. . . .

A: Suppose they say balls are square. . . .

B: Of course, all spherical things are angular. . . .

A: Even the moon is brighter abroad than in China. . . .

B: Naturally. Every country's got a moon of its own.

A: "How accurately you put it."*

B: (*Aside*) But what about my conscience?

A: Now, you won't need to wear one of their hats.

B: But what a spineless fool I have to be.

A: As long as you say and do whatever they want, then even if all you can do is write a simple song, dance a single ballet, sing one little opera, hand in a blank test paper** or say a few words in their praise, you'll soar up to the skies. You'll be able to live in a cosy little house, ride in a little saloon-car and enjoy the fat of the land.

B: I'd be sitting pretty! But I'd have to take orders from them and work for them?

A: Then Chiang Ching would recommend you for Party membership.

B: Who? Me?

*This and other lines in quotes are the kind of things said by the "gang of four".

**In 1973, Chang Tieh-sheng, a student in Liaoning Province, handed in a blank test paper when sitting for the entrance examination to college. On the back of it he wrote a note defending his action and pleading to be admitted. The "gang of four" cited Chang as a hero who dared to go against the tide.

A: She has only to say the word.

B: My grandfather's an old Trotskyite.

A: "No such thing."

B: My father was a renegade. . . .

A: "Doesn't matter."

B: My own history. . . .

A: "All white as snow."

B: I don't know any of the answers to the test paper.

A: "That shows the fine spirit of going against the tide."

B: You're indeed a standard-bearer.

A: "I think you should be made a vice-minister."

B: This is sheer sectarianism — building up cliques.

A: They want those who follow them to flourish and those who oppose them to perish.

B: We should struggle hard against them.

A: Anyone who stands in the way of their seizing power, opposes their reign of terror, refuses to do as they say or crosses them is a bad character — the sales target of the hatters.

B: However many hats they make, they can't put any of them on my head.

A: If they want to hat you, you can't escape.

B: But I've followed Chairman Mao for dozens of years, fighting all over the country. I've always carried out Chairman Mao's instructions.

A: "You're a democratic revolutionary, the same thing as a capitalist-roader within the Party."

B: So that's how the hat comes flying. I'm a new cadre.

A: "A newly emerging bourgeois element."

B: I'm not a leading cadre.

A: "A bad egg among the masses."

B: I say, you've not made any investigation. . . .

A: "You're attacking the leadership."

B: You. . . .

A: "Slandering your superiors."

B: I'll keep quiet then. . . .

A: "You're cooking up something on the sly."

B: I'll close my eyes. . . .

A: "Mulling over your revenge."

B: (*in despair thrusts his hands into his pockets.*)

A: "Are you fishing for a pistol?"

B: So I just can't get away, eh?

A: See? That's how they clamp hats on you.

B: But it's all dreamed up.

A: Exactly. Chiang Ching had the nerve to clamp hats on our beloved Chairman Hua and Premier Chou in the hope of becoming empress and taking over the Party. They dreamed up charges to overthrow a whole batch of responsible comrades in our Party, army and government, in the provinces as well as the capital.

B: I see. With those older revolutionaries around they couldn't have their own way.

A: Whatever Chairman Mao was for, the "gang of four" clapped a hat on it, denouncing it.

B: Chairman Mao said, "**In industry, learn from Taching.**"

A: The gang said: "It's not true that Taching got going by studying *On Practice* and *On Contradiction*. That's a lie."

B: Chairman Mao said, "**In agriculture, learn from Tachai.**"

A: The gang said: "Politically, Tachai is backward. The cadres are conceited and self-satisfied."

B: Chairman Mao said, "**The whole nation should learn from the PLA.**"

A: The gang said: "We've got to teach the army a lesson."

B: They opposed Chairman Mao's instructions all the time.

A: Chiang Ching stirred up trouble right and left. Her hats flew all over the place. She went to factories to stop the workers from grasping revolution and boosting production — they couldn't do anything right.

B: Pretend I'm in a factory. Let's see what kind of act Chiang Ching puts on.

A: "Let me hear how you're getting on here."

B: We've taken Taching as our example and persisted in grasp-

ing revolution and promoting production. We successfully fulfilled our production quota for the first half of the year.

A: "You're sticking to the old routine, following the beaten track and giving no thought to the country as a whole, satisfied to let things slide."

B: Just four medium-sized hats, eh? . . . We've studied the Charter of the Anshan Iron and Steel Company* and set up a system of rational rules and regulations.

A: "That's a way to control, strangle and oppress the workers."

B: We take an interest in the masses' welfare.

A: "Ah! Material incentives!"

B: Our workers have a strong sense of discipline.

A: "That's slavism."

B: For the sake of the revolution they work hard to master technique.

A: "They are taking the road of White specialists, forgetting revolution."

B: We've speeded up production.

A: "We'd rather have a slow proletarian pace than bourgeois high speed."

B: Going all out for socialism we've fulfilled our task for the latter part of the year ahead of schedule.

A: "Fine. . . ."

B: At last, I've got you saying a good word.

A: "A fine example of concentrating solely on production."

B: The hat's getting bigger and bigger.

A: She went to army units and blatantly hatted our PLA commanders.

B: Suppose I'm an army unit.

A: "I've come on behalf of myself to bring you some study material."

B: This is going behind the back of the Central Committee.

A: "I'm full of concern for you here in the army. I've come this time to . . . to . . ."

*A set of principles established by Chairman Mao for running a socialist enterprise.

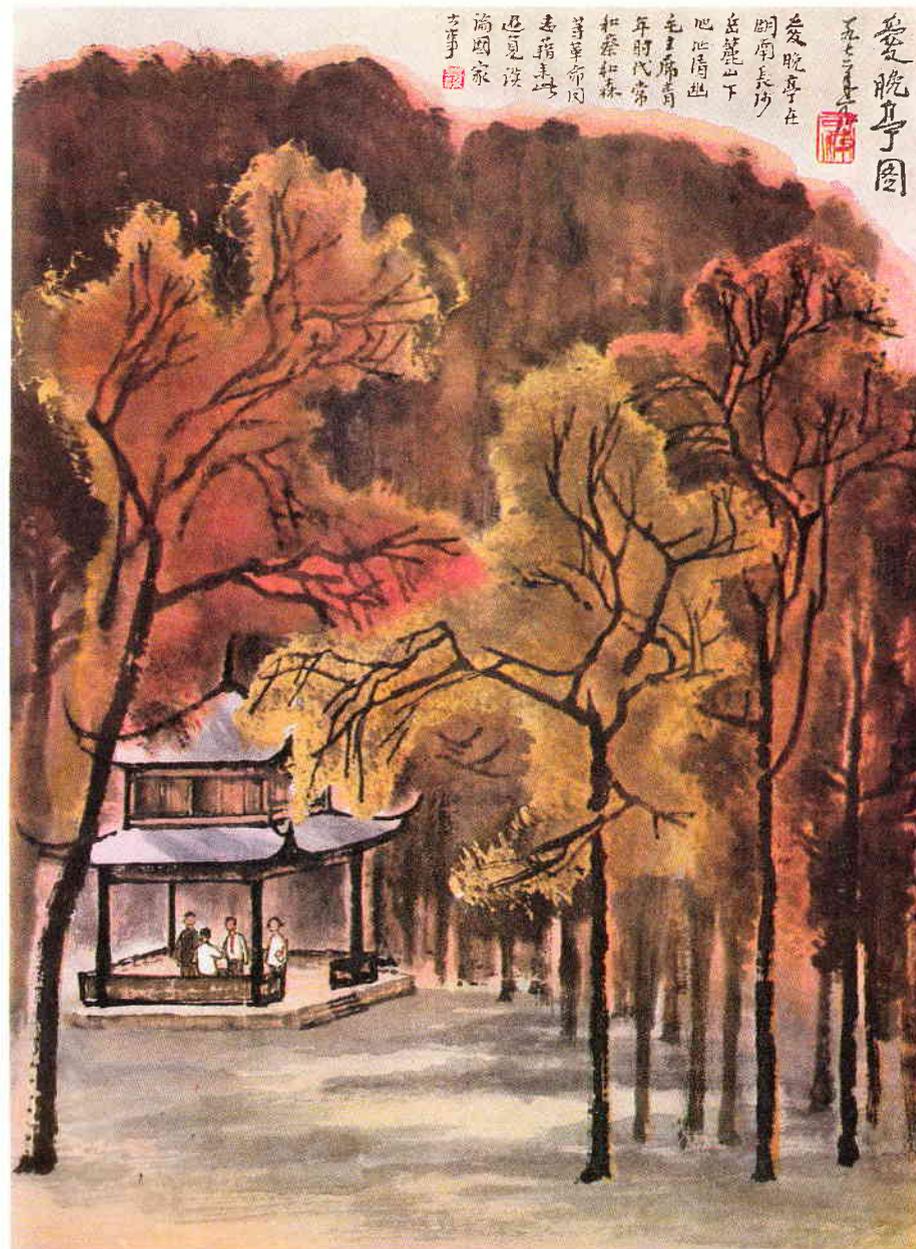
B: How are you going to show your concern?
A: "I've come to light a fire."
B: Light a fire!
A: "Light a fire to make it hot for your older commanders."
B: We should learn from our veteran comrades. They've got rich revolutionary experience.
A: "That's empiricism. Bad!"
B: They've fought battles and distinguished themselves in action.
A: "They're resting on their laurels."
B: They've kept up the spirit of the war years.
A: "You should beware of capitalist-roaders with red stars on their caps."
B: Now the hats are beginning to fly.
A: "If you can't catch them, I'll help you."
B: But we haven't any capitalist-roaders here.
A: "Nonsense. You're blinded by the theory of the dying out of class struggle."
B: We've only a squad of men here.
A: "Then you've got soldier capitalist-roaders."
B: Soldier capitalist-roaders! So they've that kind of a hat too.
A: "In line with my instructions, you must make a careful study of the material I've brought you and grasp its deep underlying meaning. . . ."
B: Is it Marxist works we're to study?
A: "No. The *Biography of Empress Lu*."
B: You want the army to read that kind of a book?
A: "You . . . you're the kind who doesn't read, eh?"
B: Now, she's given me another hat.
A: She opposed the Party and stirred up trouble in the army because she wanted to become an empress. Chairman Mao detected that Chiang Ching had wild ambitions and warned her more than once. But she paid no attention and went from bad to worse

*This empress whose maiden name was Lu Chih was the wife of Liu Pang (256-195 B.C.) first emperor of the Han Dynasty. After his death she usurped power and tried to establish a dynasty of her own family but was eventually defeated.

as she frantically opposed all criticism. When she went to the villages, she exposed herself even more.
B: Tell me how she did it.
A: "I've come here to work with you."
B: Can you work in that costume?
A: "I'm just like any of the poor and lower-middle peasants."
B: Like hell you are! So you've come to work. All right, here's a spade. Let's see you dig a storage pit.
A: (*putting on an act spits on his hands.*)
B: Well, go on! Dig away.
A: "I'm waiting for the photographer."
B: What!
A: "Here, take the spade away."
B: Finished?
A: "They've finished snapping me."
B: So you come just to be photographed.
A: "Have the picture sent to the museum for exhibition."
B: But what've you done?
A: "It seems your leaders here . . . aren't too bad."
B: Good. No hats this time.
A: "Except for a rather serious case of male-chauvinism."
B: There she goes again.
A: "Why not change your number-one man for a woman. Don't think men are superior to women. Why, pretty soon we'll have a woman chairman in the Party too. A woman can be a monarch. Even when we reach communism there'll be empresses."
B: Revealing her wild ambitions now.
A: "Wasn't Empress Lu a ruler in her own right? Now, that's a model for women, an example for me. I'm a red empress, a Bolshevik Empress Lu."
B: That wild dream will never come true.
A: The Party Central Committee headed by Chairman Hua took brilliant, decisive action to smash the "gang of four's" anti-Party clique.
B: With the four pests wiped out, how happy everyone is.

- A: But listen to Chiang Ching wailing: "You are persecuting the revolutionary standard-bearer."
 B: Still clapping hats on people?
 A: She was calling on high heaven and hopping with rage when suddenly — "Flop!"
 B: What happened?
 A: Her wig flopped to the ground. "My hat, my hat. . . ."
 B: So she wants a hat herself now.
 A: Yes, and we got her one that's a perfect fit.
 B: What hat?
 A: Bourgeois careerist!

Aiwan Pavilion (traditional Chinese painting)
 by Li Ko-jan



FABLES

Buying a Pair of Shoes

A man in the state of Cheng decided to buy himself a pair of shoes. He measured his feet at home, then left the measurement on his seat and went to the market without it. When he found the shoes he wanted, he gave an exclamation of dismay:

“I forgot to bring the measurement, confound it!”

He hurried home to fetch it.

By the time he got back to the market the fair was over, so he failed to buy his shoes.

“Why didn’t you try the shoes on?” someone asked with surprise.

“I trust the ruler more than my feet,” was his answer.



Marking the Boat to Locate the Sword

A man was ferrying across a river when his sword fell into the water. He lost no time in marking the side of the boat.

“What use is it making a mark there?” someone asked.

“This is where my sword fell in. When the boat moors presently, I’ll get down into the water by this place I’ve marked to fish out my sword.”



Self-Knowledge

King Hsuan of Chi had an officer called Tsou Chi. One morning he dressed himself up, looked at himself in a mirror and asked his wife: “If you compare me with Master Hsu who lives in the north of the city, which is the more handsome? He or I?”

“Of course, you are far better looking,” his wife answered. “Master Hsu can’t be compared with you.”

As Master Hsu was known throughout the land for his fine looks, Tsou Chi could hardly believe this. So he went to ask his concubine: “Who do you think is the more handsome, Master Hsu or I?”

“You, of course.” His concubine gave the same answer. “He can’t be compared with you.”

Then a visitor came. Tsou Chi put the same question to him and received the same answer: “You are much better looking.”

The next day Tsou Chi happened to meet Master Hsu. He scrutinized him minutely and, drawing a careful comparison between the two of them, still could not see that he was better looking. He went back to examine himself in the mirror again and realized that he was not up to Master Hsu.



Lying in bed that night, he thought it over and finally decided:
“My wife says I am handsome, because she is partial to me; my concubine says I am handsome, because she is afraid of me; and my visitor says I am handsome, because he needs help from me.”

Illustrated by Chang Yi-min

NOTES ON LITERATURE AND ART

Sun Yu-shih

Reading Lu Hsun's "Literature of a Revolutionary Period"

On April 8, 1927, Lu Hsun was invited to give a talk at the Huangpu Military Academy in Kwangchow (Canton). It was raining that evening when he went there accompanied by Ying Hsiu-jen, a Communist. The small assembly hall was packed as he spoke on "Literature of a Revolutionary Period". Later Lu Hsun revised the notes of this speech and published it in his collection of essays *And That's That*.

Lu Hsun made this speech at a most critical period of the Northern Expedition. In January that year he had come from Amoy to Kwangchow because it was then the centre of the revolution. In March, Chairman Mao published his famous *Report on an Investigation of the Peasant Movement in Hunan* giving high praise to the peasant movement there which with the force of a hurricane had speeded up the development of the revolutionary struggle in south China. Owing to the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party and the support given by the armed workers and peasants, the Northern Expeditionary

Army which had set out from Kwangtung Province was sweeping forward from victory to victory. On March 21, Shanghai workers led by Chou En-lai rose in arms and took Shanghai; then Nanking was captured too. These victories dealt a heavy blow to the rule of the feudal warlords and foreign imperialists in China, but they struck dismay into the Kuomintang Right wing headed by Chiang Kai-shek which represented the interests of the imperialists, big landlords and capitalists. These diehards plotted to disarm the workers and suppress the peasant movement and began to massacre Communists and other progressives. Chen Tu-hsiu, then general secretary of the Chinese Communist Party, carried out a Rightist line of compromise and capitulation which played into the hands of Chiang Kai-shek. Thus the people's armed revolution was in danger of defeat.

Lu Hsun had acute powers of observation, and after his arrival in Kwangchow his communist friends helped him to perceive that counter-revolutionaries were still working away quietly in the dark and revolutionary armed force was needed to smash the plots of the Kuomintang Right wing. Lu Hsun also grasped the complex situation in literary and art circles in Kwangchow. Some reactionary Kuomintang writers had organized so-called revolutionary literary societies to promote revolutionary literature, when in fact they were trying to sabotage the revolution. Others, such as the Modern Critic Group which had worked for the Northern Warlords, had come in force from Peking to the south posing as "revolutionaries" too. Yet other petty-bourgeois writers who dared not face up to reality were also shouting empty slogans calling for "revolutionary literature". Should the revolutionary forces persist in armed struggle? Should revolutionary fighters take an active part in this struggle? What is the relationship between revolutionary literature and the revolution itself? Lu Hsun made this important speech on these questions at a crucial time when the forces of revolution were engaged in a mortal struggle against the forces of reaction.

Literature of a Revolutionary Period, one of Lu Hsun's most significant articles on the question of literature and the revolution, was written at a time when his outlook was changing from that of a revolu-

tionary democrat to that of a Communist. In it, from his revolutionary stand he made a profound and succinct analysis of certain major questions of principle. Its profundity, clarity and sober foresight are typical of Lu Hsun's writing.

Lu Hsun had witnessed for himself the March 18th Incident a year before this, when the Northern Warlords massacred young patriots. Their "pale blood-stains" brought home to him the importance of armed struggle and the need for literature to serve the revolutionary armed struggle. So in this speech Lu Hsun first analysed the role of revolutionary literature in the social revolution and the need to take up arms to change the social system. He said: "... My experience in Peking in recent years has gradually undermined my faith in the old literary theories on which I was brought up." He refuted the bourgeois idea that literature has a great influence on revolution and can change the world. The blood of the massacred made him realize that the only way to do this was through revolutionary violence. Speaking to the cadets of the Huangpu Military Academy, Lu Hsun warmly acclaimed revolution and pointed out that only through revolution could society change and human beings make progress. He emphasized that "the present situation in China is such that only the actual revolutionary war counts. A poem could not have frightened away Sun Chuan-fang, but a cannon-shell scared him away".

However, in his speech Lu Hsun also affirmed the important role of revolutionary literature. He sharply criticized the "literature of complaint" of the petty-bourgeoisie before the revolution, saying, "These expressions of suffering and indignation have no influence on the revolution." Instead, such writing "gives the oppressors a sense of security". He hoped that "nations with inner strength which dare rebel" would wake up to the facts and change their lamentations into "roars of anger. When such literature appears it heralds revolt..." But bloody massacres had taught him this feature of class struggle: "Those who are strong do not talk, they kill. The oppressed have only to say or write a few words to be killed..." It is the same in the animal kingdom. When a hawk catches a sparrow, the hawk is silent, the sparrow is the one to cry out. When a cat catches a mouse, the cat is silent, the mouse is the one to cry out.

And the one that can only cry ends by being eaten by the one that is silent." With these simple, vivid similes Lu Hsun expounded a basic truth of historical materialism. The reactionary ruling class will always use counter-revolutionary armed force to suppress the people's revolt; therefore the revolutionary masses must use revolutionary violence to smash counter-revolutionary violence and win real liberation. "What use is literature to people then?" With this understanding, Lu Hsun told the cadets who carried rifles that they "had better not admire literature just yet". And he declared: "I myself would naturally rather hear the roar of guns, for it seems to me that the roar of guns is much sweeter to listen to than literature." These statements show Lu Hsun's profound understanding of the relationship between literature and revolution and his full support for the revolutionary war.

Lu Hsun said: "For revolution we need revolutionaries, but revolutionary literature can wait, for only when revolutionaries start writing can there be revolutionary literature." This is another most significant statement regarding the relationship between revolutionary writers and the revolutionary struggle.

The fiery life of revolutionary struggle is a mine of inspiration for revolutionary literature and the furnace in which revolutionary writers are steeled. Only by taking part in revolutionary struggles can a writer understand the revolution. Lu Hsun divided the revolution into three phases and analysed its relationship with literature, making it clear why anyone who wanted to write revolutionary literature must take part in the struggle and become a revolutionary himself. Before the coming of the revolution, only rebellious fighters who thirst to revolt and take vengeance can express the fury of their awakening people by writing "roars of anger". During the second phase, revolutionary writers must be swept up in the high tide of revolution and turn from shouting to action, taking part in the struggle to change society instead of simply shutting themselves up in their rooms to write. After the victory of the revolution, they should sing its praise. Without a revolutionary struggle, there will be no revolutionaries and hence no revolutionary literature.



Lu Hsun pointed out in his speech that to become a revolutionary a writer must rid himself of old ideas. Writers in a centre of revolution liked to talk about the relationship between literature and revolution, but unless they rid themselves of their literati outlook their writings would be too feeble to spur on the revolution and might even impede it. This being the case, revolutionary literature could only be produced when a true revolutionary wrote from his heart not at the orders of others, and with no thought of the consequences to himself. As Lu Hsun stated in a later essay: "I think the basic problem is whether or not the writer is a revolutionary. If he is, then whatever he writes about and whatever material he uses it will be revolutionary literature. Out of fountains comes water; out of veins comes blood." If, however, a writer fails to progress with the times and his mind is filled with old ideas he will hanker after the past and lament the old system that has been overthrown. Good evidence of this can be found in the writings of those White Russians who fled the country after the October Revolution and wrote mainly laments and dirges for the past. So here Lu Hsun emphasized the need for revolutionary writers to remould their world outlook. Later changes in the ranks of revolutionary writers proved the validity of his views.

Lu Hsun also showed his good judgment in predicting the direction which revolutionary literature would take. He pointed out clearly: "Only when they (the workers and the peasants) achieve true liberation will there be a true people's literature." This famous dictum regarding the relationship between revolutionary literature and the masses is another highlight of this speech.

Lu Hsun was convinced, in the first place, that revolution would result in the world belonging to the people and in their full emancipation. Only when the workers and peasants become masters of the state will they have the right to open their mouths and speak out. Only then can there be a real development of people's literature. Later, Lu Hsun said that mass literature, to be organized on a big scale, must have political backing. Analysing the current situation he stated that it was untrue to claim that China already had a people's literature. Firstly, the workers and peasants were still oppressed,

and most literature was written for the upper classes. Secondly, although some writers wrote novels and poems about the common people and called these people's literature, they actually voiced "the sentiments of onlookers, who put words in the people's mouths". Thirdly, even many folk-songs expressed the views of the landed gentry. On the basis of this analysis he concluded: "All our writers today are literati, and our workers and peasants will go on thinking the same way as the literati until they are liberated." These words go to the heart of the problem. To create a real people's literature, the working people must shake off the ideological influence of the exploiting classes, and professional writers must discard their literati outlook and start thinking like workers and peasants by living with and becoming one with them. In this speech Lu Hsun correctly indicated the way to create a true people's literature.

Four days after Lu Hsun delivered this speech, Chiang Kai-shek staged his April 12 coup and massacred progressives in Shanghai, Kwangchow and elsewhere. Lu Hsun's prophecy came true. The centre of the Chinese revolution became a centre of counter-revolution. After trying in vain to get some arrested students released, Lu Hsun angrily resigned from his university. Some months later in one essay he recalled his feelings at that period, describing the world as "enshrouded in dark night". Since then fifty years have passed. The old China enshrouded in darkness has become a new China bathed in sunshine, and the whole world has entered upon a revolutionary period. We need militant revolutionary literature for this great age, and rereading this speech of Lu Hsun's we feel there is much we can learn from it today.

Huang Kang

An Unforgettable Night in Yen-an

— *In commemoration of the 35th anniversary of Chairman Mao's "Yenan Talks"*

When the First Star Glimmered in the Night Sky. . . .

Thirty-five years have passed since that unforgettable night in Yen-an.

In May 1942 in Yen-an, a forum on literature and art was held under the guidance of Chairman Mao. In the afternoon of the 23rd, before the end of the third session, we were thrilled by the announcement that Chairman Mao would come in person that evening to conclude this forum.

We could hardly wait for the evening to come.

May in Yen-an is enchanting. Summer is drawing near but there is still a trace of spring chill in the air. There was no wind at dusk. As the blue sky gradually darkened, the evening star appeared over the far horizon. . . .

The site chosen for this meeting was a flat stretch of ground in front of some loess cave-dwellings on the west side of Yangchialing. Earlier on we had met in the half-finished assembly hall at Yangchialing where the Seventh Party Congress was to be convened in 1945. At

the time of this forum on literature and art, the doors and windows were just being fitted and the walls had not yet been whitewashed. The hall was lined with long benches. Here the writers and artists of Yen-an held heated discussions, the third session being just as heated as the first two. . . . Outside this assembly hall still under construction, from the foot of the slope to its south rhythmic hammering could be heard continuously as masons quarried rocks. All this made me feel that it was no ordinary assembly hall that the people of Yen-an were constructing but the new China of the future, and they were racing against time, seizing every minute and second. This was the atmosphere those days in Yen-an, headquarters of the Chinese Communist Party during the War of Resistance Against Japan.

In the afternoon of the 23rd, Commander-in-Chief Chu Teh gave us an important talk. He warmly affirmed the splendid achievements of our Party and the Eighth Route Army and New Fourth Army under its leadership, and sharply criticized those who professed themselves "unwilling" to sing the praise of the proletariat and the working people. These were the individuals referred to by Chairman Mao that same evening when he said: **"Persons of this type are merely termites in the revolutionary ranks; of course, the revolutionary people have no need for these 'singers'."** Chu Teh in his speech urged literary and art workers to go to the front and to the countryside, to pay more attention to new writing and reportage, and to make all forms of literature and art serve as weapons in the war.

In the open space in front of the loess caves, wooden props had been fixed up for the acetylene lamps to be lit that evening, and many of us gathered there well ahead of time. Suddenly clapping burst out from one corner of the meeting-place. The clapping came closer and closer, accompanying a group of new arrivals. . . .

These were Chairman Mao, Commander-in-Chief Chu Teh and other members of the Party Central Committee. With a spring in his step Chairman Mao strode to the small rectangular table in the centre of the crowd. There, under the dark blue night sky of Yen-an in early summer, in this simple, open-air meeting-place, he delivered the conclusion of his famous *Talks at the Yen-an Forum on Literature and Art*, now known as an epoch-making Marxist-Leninist classic,

After their arrival we all sat down and waited in silence to hear Chairman Mao's conclusions.

Before speaking, Chairman Mao looked round with a smile at all of us waiting there with rapt attention. Then he said that comrades had set him a test, and the title of his talk that night was "The Conclusion".

At this point acetylene lamps were hung on the props in the four corners, making the whole place brightly lit and giving us a clear view of Chairman Mao's magnificent figure and the sheaf of notes in his hand.

All the cadres in Yen-an knew that Chairman Mao had talked to many comrades in the literary and art circles in Yen-an and made a deep study of the problems of literature and art for this forum, and had prepared these concluding remarks with great care. He opened them by demanding gravely and forcefully: **"What then is the crux of the matter? In my opinion, it consists fundamentally of the problems of working for the masses and how to work for the masses."** **"My concluding remarks will centre on these two problems and also touch upon some related ones."**

Scientific Foresight — Clear Demarcation of Epochs

Even now I remember clearly Chairman Mao's resolute expression and forceful tone as he predicted explicitly in his *Talks* the direction in which Chinese history would progress.

The *Yen-an Talks* was born in the midst of a fierce struggle between two lines. However, that evening, as on other important occasions when Chairman Mao made speeches, he looked perfectly calm and relaxed. Sometimes, but not very often, he made simple gestures to reinforce his profound analysis. Though he had an outline of his speech in his hand, he gave us the impression while speaking that he was following through his profound line of thought. At one point he swung his arm forward in a swift, incisive and impressive gesture, as if to convey that the darkness of the past had been swept away and the brightness of the new society was being ushered in.

This was when he asserted: **"The past epoch is gone, never**

to return.” This categorical statement showed his conviction, just as his clear and ringing delivery expressed his unshakable determination, bringing home to us the tremendous strength of the Chinese Communists who meant to make a thorough break with traditional ideas.

Chairman Mao based this pronouncement on his historical analysis of the Chinese and the world revolution and on the existence of the resistance bases built up by our Party. As the great leader of the Chinese people, the revolutionary teacher of the proletariat, he was announcing the birth of a new age and the certainty of victory.

It was during the Second World War, when mankind was approaching a turning-point in history, that Chairman Mao reached this brilliant scientific conclusion that Chinese history had entered upon a new age. At that time many people deluded by the savage attacks of the fascists could not see that the enemy was about to collapse; nor could they see that the people’s strength was increasing in the anti-fascist camp while the enemy’s was on the wane. However, Chairman Mao was announcing in no uncertain terms to the whole world: **“China is moving forward, not back, and it is the revolutionary base areas, not any of the backward, retrogressive areas, that are leading China forward.”** **“To come to the revolutionary bases means to enter an epoch unprecedented in the thousands of years of Chinese history, an epoch in which the masses of the people wield state power.”**

In other words, even in those days when the German, Italian and Japanese fascists and the reactionary forces in China were rampant, when China was plunged in the darkness before dawn, we were in the ascendant and the revolutionary forces led by our Party showed the direction in which Chinese history was advancing.

Soon after this, irrefutable facts proved the validity of Chairman Mao’s scientific predictions based on Marxist-Leninist thinking.

We Are Called Upon to Integrate Ourselves with the Masses

Without any sign of fatigue Chairman Mao spoke on. It was already midnight. The moon overhead made the night as bright as day.

Under the moon and the stars, hills nearby and distant were darkly silhouetted. Not far away the Yenho River flowed merrily, its surface shot with silver. . . .

At the start of Chairman Mao’s speech I had noticed that everyone present, including members of the Central Committee, had notebooks to take notes. The leading comrades of the Central Committee were seated at long wooden tables behind Chairman Mao, with most of the rest of us around them and Chairman Mao. Some people sat on the ground on the padded jackets which they had brought along, their notebooks on their knees as they wrote with concentration. After midnight the environment became even quieter — we could hear the scratch of pens on paper.

“We must integrate ourselves with the new masses without any hesitation.” This was Chairman Mao’s great call to us on that unforgettable evening, in those days when foreign aggressors were trampling on our land and class enemies were rampant in many parts of China.

This was a mighty call to advance in our revolution in literature and art for the proletariat.

Chairman Mao’s answers to a series of questions regarding whom our literature and art should serve were based on the characteristics of this age when capitalism is doomed to extinction and socialism is definitely on the ascendant. They were linked with his far-sighted judgment regarding the direction in which China must advance. He stressed: **“This question of ‘for whom’ is fundamental; it is a question of principle.”** The workers, peasants and soldiers are the central figures in this new epoch of the masses and decide the direction our country is to take, so our literary and art workers must move their feet over to the side of the proletariat by going into their midst, into the thick of mass struggles, and by studying Marxism and society. **“Only in this way can we have a literature and art that are truly for the workers, peasants and soldiers, a truly proletarian literature and art.”** This was the first time that a Marxist-Leninist solution was formulated for the problem of the relationship between the writers and artists of the proletariat and the people they serve.

For the last thirty-five years, political and cultural developments in China have proved that the *Yenan Talks* can serve as an irresistible weapon for the proletariat to criticize bourgeois ideology in the struggle between two antagonistic classes and two antagonistic lines. While thoroughly debunking various manifestations of the bourgeois world outlook the *Yenan Talks* makes clear the essence of the struggle between two lines on the ideological front, pointing out that this involves the important problem: in the image of which class should the Party and the world be remoulded?

Since the establishment of the People's Republic our experience in the struggles between two lines within the Party, including our present struggle against the "gang of four", has shown that sooner or later all conspirators and careerists who pose as revolutionaries in order to build up their own counter-revolutionary cliques are bound to be seen through by the masses and thrown on to the rubbish heap of history. The "gang of four" proved to be "termites" of the type described by Chairman Mao in the *Yenan Talks* when he exposed those political cheats who had sneaked into the revolutionary camp and posed as "singers" of the new society.

"The Direction Pointed Out by Comrade Mao Tsetung Is the Direction for the Chinese Communist Party"

The dawn of the 24th slowly approached.

The Yenan Forum on Literature and Art concluded before dawn this day.

For many who attended it, the memories of this forum are merged with memories of those arduous war years and stormy mass struggles.

It was not until we had been steeled by the flames of war, by tempestuous mass movements and by stormy class struggles, which taught us profound lessons, that we began to understand more fully the truth of Chairman Mao's injunction: We must shift our stand and move our feet over to the side of the masses. The *Yenan Talks* is a mirror reflecting the inevitable laws of class struggle, especially in the ideological sphere. It is valid as a guide for us for all time.

Early that morning after the forum ended, I returned to the office

of the *Liberation Daily* where I worked as a reporter with Chairman Mao's instructions fresh in my mind. Inspired by them, my thoughts flew to the fighting front. Chairman Mao had said in the concluding part of his speech: **"I am confident that comrades here are determined to move in the direction indicated."** Only a few hundred *li* from Yenan, on the east bank of the Yellow River still occupied by the Japanese, enemy guns could be heard. There the local people and militiamen co-ordinating closely with the Eighth Route Army were harassing the enemy from every ditch, graveyard, cottage, pine forest and roadside, attacking both their strongholds and sentry posts. With their lives and blood they were writing a glorious page in our history.

This was no ordinary day in the unprecedented struggle of a great nation of several hundred million led by our Party, a day which would shine for ever in the history of revolution. From this day onwards, hundreds and thousands of literary and art workers in our revolutionary bases found a new weapon in the *Yenan Talks*. Their minds liberated, they determined to go among the masses of workers, peasants and soldiers, into the heat of the struggle, to blaze a new trail in literature and art.

Two years later, early in the autumn of 1944, Comrade Chou En-lai who had just returned from Chiang Kai-shek's wartime capital Chungking invited some of us literary and art workers in Yenan to the Yangchialing assembly hall which had now been completed. He told us about the profound and nationwide influence of the publication of the *Yenan Talks* and how progressive writers and artists in Kuomintang-controlled areas and many Party sympathizers there supported the idea that literature and art should serve the workers, peasants and soldiers. He also spoke about the corrupt and reactionary nature of the Kuomintang regime, which was bound to lead to its downfall. Chou En-lai had returned to Yenan on July 16, 1943 after an absence of three years. At the meeting to welcome him he said:

"The twenty-two years of our Party's history prove that... the direction pointed out by Comrade Mao Tsetung is the direction for the Chinese Communist Party... Comrades, shouldn't we feel

proud to have such a Party? Shouldn't we feel proud to have such a leader?"

Today again we are proud that our Party Central Committee headed by our brilliant leader Chairman Hua is carrying out Chairman Mao's behests and raising high and defending his great banner. With one blow they have smashed the "gang of four" and are now destroying the traitorous clique which they secretly built up over recent years. Today we are acting according to the Party's plan to ensure that, under the guidance of Mao Tsetung Thought and following Chairman Mao's revolutionary line, our revolution advances from victory to victory. This will also mean a new upsurge in our socialist literature and art.

Our Mountains Transformed (traditional Chinese painting) by *Teng Yao-ping*



My Recollection of the Production and First Performances of "The White-Haired Girl"

After the successful smashing of the "gang of four" we are celebrating the thirty-fifth anniversary of the publication of Chairman Mao's *Talks at the Yen-an Forum on Literature and Art*. During these celebrations, some good literary and art works produced since the *Yen-an Talks* have been republished or restaged after having been banned for some years by the gang. The modern Chinese opera *The White-Haired Girl* is among these. As one who took part in this opera's production, I was thrilled to see the revival of our fine tradition in proletarian art inspired by the *Yen-an Talks*. So I would like to recall how this opera was made and what a tremendous impact Chairman Mao's brilliant talks had on the development of our proletarian art.

The production of *The White-Haired Girl* was not accidental but stemmed directly from Chairman Mao's thinking on literature and art. It was representative of the work done by revolutionary literary and art workers in Yen-an after their initial grasp of the spirit of the *Yen-an Talks* and their endeavours to put it into practice.

Chang Keng was head of the Drama Department in the Lu Hsun Art Academy in Yen-an.

Before the *Yenan Talks*, as Chairman Mao pointed out, a wrong style of work still existed **“to a serious extent in our literary and art circles”** and there were **“still many defects among our comrades, such as idealism, dogmatism, empty illusions, empty talk, contempt for practice and aloofness from the masses”**. This was the situation too in the Lu Hsun Art Academy which produced *The White-Haired Girl*. It was particularly evident from the fact that we tried to raise our standards behind closed doors. In other words, instead of thinking how best to serve the workers, peasants and soldiers, we laid stress on studying classical literary works divorced from the real life and struggle in Yenan, in the hope of producing more mature writers and artists after the liberation of the whole country.

Soon after the Forum on Literature and Art, Chairman Mao came to give us a talk at the Lu Hsun Art Academy. He criticized us for trying to raise our standards behind closed doors and called upon us to liberate ourselves from the narrow confines of our college. His graphic summary of the situation was that we must leave this “small” academy to study in the “bigger” art academy of real life.

The cadres and students of the Lu Hsun Art Academy took Chairman Mao’s instructions to heart and determined to act upon them. Our first problem was the question of whom to serve; the second, of how to serve. During the early days of the War of Resistance Against Japan many of our art workers had staged shows for the masses, but because their own thoughts and feelings were still different from those of the labouring people they failed to produce works of art which the masses liked. After the *Yenan Talks* and our study of it, we made up our minds to serve the workers, peasants and soldiers and realized that only by learning from them could we produce art which the masses would enjoy. As the people of northern Shensi enjoyed the *yangko*, a kind of folk dance popular in northern China, we learned this art form from them, then used it to carry out revolutionary propaganda. The masses not only accepted this, it proved very popular. They would follow our *yangko* team wherever it went and watch our performances time and again with unflinching interest.

The great success of our new *yangko* team in Yenan made the Northwestern Bureau of the Party Central Committee decide that five professional units including the Lu Hsun Art Academy, the Youth Art Theatre and the Northwest Art Ensemble should be sent to five different districts of the Shensi-Kansu-Ningsia Border Region to perform to the troops and local villagers and popularize the new *yangko* movement there.

Our Lu Hsun Art Academy was assigned to the newly organized Suiteh District where land reform had not yet been carried out and there were still landlords. We set to work by first making investigations to see how best we could co-operate in different localities and what model workers there were there to write about; some of us also studied the local literature and art, sought out the local folk artists and learned from them their folk-songs, *yangko* dances and other special art forms. After such investigations we created and put on new items suited to the local conditions. As they were starting a movement at that time to reduce rents and rates of interest in the countryside, we took part in the struggle meetings against landlords and put on shows geared to the movement which proved highly successful.

Our *yangko* team worked for more than four months in the countryside before returning to Yenan. Most of our comrades had never had such a long stay in the countryside or such close contacts with the peasants, enabling them to see for the first time the class struggle of the poor peasants and hired hands against the landlords. Upon our return we summed up our experience and agreed unanimously that we had learned more in these four months than from all the books we had studied in the Lu Hsun Art Academy. We began to see the importance of the “bigger” academy.

I am dwelling at such length on this new *yangko* movement because it laid the foundation for the creation of our new opera *The White-Haired Girl*. If not for this period of studying from the masses, we should have been unable to solve many of the problems which we later encountered. For instance, the last scene of the opera in which the peasants struggle against the despotic landlord Huang Shih-jen is based on real-life material from the struggle meetings in which

we participated. Before going down to the countryside we had never witnessed such struggles.

Another indispensable condition for the creation of this new opera was the return of our work corps from the front with the new folk legend of the White-Haired Girl and rich experience at the battle front, where for five or six years they had lived and fought with the peasants and shared their joys and sorrows.

At that time every unit was preparing for the Seventh Party Congress to be held in Yen-an. Our Lu Hsun Art Academy wanted to produce a full-length new *yangko* opera better than any of the previous ones, and we decided to take as our subject this legend of the White-Haired Girl.

From beginning to end this opera was a collective work. The whole Lu Hsun Art Academy paid serious attention to it. Everyone offered suggestions and took part in discussions and heated debates. The wall newspapers published different opinions regarding its content, main theme, portrayal of characters, overall treatment and even the language and music. We were not the only ones concerned over this opera either. Other literary and art workers in Yen-an as well as cadres who were interested in art and literature, and peasants in nearby villages, all came to watch the rehearsals. What concerned them most was what happened to the characters in the end. The production of this new opera benefited greatly from their friendly advice, which helped to raise the political and ideological level of the work.

On the day after the dress rehearsal, I remember, we went round collecting opinions. One of the cooks who was chopping up vegetables slammed his chopper down hard, exclaiming: "The opera is fine. Only that swine Huang Shih-jen ought to be shot!" However, as we were fighting against foreign aggression, we felt that unless a landlord became a traitor and sold out to the Japanese we ought to unite with him. To shoot him would be against Party policy. So even after hearing that criticism we did not change the ending.

The first performance of this new opera was given in the auditorium of the Central Party School to an audience composed of delegates to the Party's Seventh Congress and the whole Central Committee. Chairman Mao, busy as he was, made time to come, and the perform-

ance was a great success. The next day the General Affairs Office of the Central Committee sent a messenger to pass on to us the comments of Chairman Mao, Vice-Chairman Chou En-lai and other leading comrades. These were: First, this opera was highly topical; secondly, the wicked landlord Huang Shih-jen should be shot; thirdly, artistically this opera was effective.

The messenger who passed on these comments explained that the basic problem of the Chinese revolution was the peasant problem, as the peasants constituted the great majority of the population; and their main problem — their opposition to the exploitation of the landlord class — was reflected in this opera. After the victory of the War of Resistance Against Japan this class struggle would become even more acute. And since the opera reflected this reality, it was assured of widespread popularity. But if Huang Shih-jen was not shot for his many crimes, it meant that the script-writers had Rightist inclinations and dared not let the masses take matters into their own hands. The audience would not agree to that. When we heard these comments, we felt as if a veil had been lifted from our eyes. We realized that in producing this opera we had not grasped its underlying political significance as Chairman Mao, Vice-Chairman Chou and other leading comrades had. In particular, we had failed to realize the importance of the treatment meted out to Huang Shih-jen. The Chinese revolution had reached a new stage; but without these timely instructions from Chairman Mao and Vice-Chairman Chou, we would not have understood this and would have continued to view the changing class relationships in the old way, in terms of a united front against Japan. We also realized that we should have paid more attention to the cook's opinion which represented the view of the masses — a view which coincided with that of our Party's leading comrades. So we forthwith changed the opera's ending and had Huang Shih-jen shot.

After the production of this opera, we received many letters from people who had seen it which greatly encouraged us and gave us specific suggestions for further improvements. Many women wrote to us that this opera reminded them of their own past. Many of them had suffered in much the same way as the poor peasant's daugh-

ter Hsi-erh, the White-Haired Girl, so that this opera made them weep so much that they could not watch it to the end. One of these women wrote us her own life story. From these letters it was clear that although the story of the White-Haired Girl was largely legendary, it reflected the real situation in China's class struggle and had profound, typical significance.

Those of us who produced *The White-Haired Girl* had never foreseen the impact it would have. This opera played a most important role both in the land reform in the various liberated areas and in the War of Liberation. I took part in the land-reform movement in the northeast, going there with our opera company. Each time we came to a new village, we performed this opera to arouse the masses. When the villagers saw how Huang Shih-jen forced the poor peasant Yang Pai-lao to pay his debt and hounded him to death, and how cruelly he treated Hsi-erh, they could not contain their anger -- some even threw stones at the actor playing the landlord. As soon as the performance ended, we would call a meeting to discuss it and the land-reform movement would start off with a swing.

This opera made a strong impact on our troops too. In our campaign to defend Yen-an, before setting off for the front our troops saw this opera; and seeing it once was not enough, they insisted on two consecutive performances. The performances started after supper and lasted till dawn the next day. The soldiers would shout, "Revenge Hsi-erh!" "Revenge Yang Pai-lao!" And then, not stopping to rest, they would march straight off to the front. "Revenge Hsi-erh!" became a common slogan in the War of Liberation. Some soldiers even inscribed it on the butts of their guns to show that they would never forget this class hatred.

Chairman Mao pointed out in his *Yenan Talks*: **"Revolutionary literature and art should create a variety of characters out of real life and help the masses to propel history forward. For example, there is suffering from hunger, cold and oppression on the one hand, and exploitation and oppression of man by man on the other. These facts exist everywhere and people look upon them as commonplace. Writers and artists concentrate such everyday phenomena, typify the contradictions and struggles**

within them and produce works which awaken the masses, fire them with enthusiasm and impel them to unite and struggle to transform their environment."

Because this new opera *The White-Haired Girl* was created in accordance with these instructions, it attained the standard set by Chairman Mao for our literature and art. Those of us who created this opera which produced such a tremendous impact upon the masses were ordinary literary and art workers. It was only because we had been educated by the *Yenan Talks* and had gone among the people to learn from them and to serve them faithfully that we became familiar with the life and feelings of the masses and so were able to produce such a work.

Two Anthologies of Poems by Taching Workers

On my desk are two anthologies, *Battle Songs of Taching* and the *Triumphant Songs of Taching*, published respectively by the Peking People's Literature Publishing House and the Heilungkiang People's Publishing House. Containing between them more than one hundred and fifty poems, they were written by the workers and cadres of the Taching Oilfield. With revolutionary ardour, they praise the Taching workers, represented by Wang Chin-hsi, known as the Iron Man, for upholding the principles of self-reliance and hard work and for making a great contribution in building socialism.

On the first page of *Battle Songs of Taching* are these lines by Comrade Wang Chin-hsi, outstanding representative of the Chinese working class:

One shout from us oil workers
Shakes the earth.
Making revolution with enthusiasm,
Never to retreat!

What a heroic image! This shows their invincible spirit, vigorous and mighty! The nine poems by Iron Man Wang Chin-hsi selected

in the anthology, together with other oil workers' stirring songs, dramatically present the Taching spirit. Confronted by the damage caused by the Soviet revisionists and the interference of Liu Shao-chi's revisionist line in the early sixties, Taching workers nevertheless remained firm and undaunted. "No hurricane can bend their will; no thunderbolt can split it asunder." They remembered Chairman Mao's teachings: "**Be self-reliant**" and "**work hard**". Their slogan is: "When the conditions exist, we'll forge ahead. When they don't, we'll create them and forge ahead!"

When cranes were not available, they set up oil rigs by their own labour. With hands and shoulders like iron, they were determined to erect drills on the grasslands. When no water was accessible to mix the mud and cement, they carried it in their aluminium helmets, enabling the drills to "sing day and night". Immense difficulties weighed on them, but they bore these cheerfully. In that extremely tough situation, they successfully battled to produce petroleum and rapidly developed the big oilfield, achieving a most impressive feat.

Taching workers are the pioneers of socialism. They know that it is imperative to overcome all obstacles and difficulties in their way in the advancement of this cause.

Reading these poems, I seemed to see the early scenes in the first years after the opening up of the oilfield. . . . At the sound of the first explosives, oil workers arrived from all directions. Bringing with them Chairman Mao's works, they settled on the vast grassland with only the sky over their heads. "With only the reeds in the pond to keep away the wind and drills as their companions", they lit the first bonfire. Armed with Chairman Mao's thought from his philosophical writings, *On Practice* and *On Contradiction*, they started the battle to wrest oil from the earth. In the freezing cold of winter, worksites were covered in ice, a yard thick; "even the hills were shivering with cold". The dauntless Taching workers, however, cloaked in snow and ice, "raised their hands to imprison the hurricane under their arms, lifted their feet to kick the icy snow aside".

Whatever the season — in scorching summer, dark clouds rolling, rain pouring — when "eagles drew in their wings, and wolves and rabbits returned home early", our oil workers said: "We shall con-

tinue to do what is necessary.” They worked on. By the time “the wind and rain had been scared away and the red clouds had reappeared”, they had finished drilling another well and “the oilfield marched forward another step”. All these images are faithful portrayals of the Taching workers’ stirring life.

At Taching, many veteran oil workers, as vigorous as ever, are resolved to go where Chairman Mao directs, enabling the Taching spirit to flower everywhere. Many newly arrived young oil fighters are willing “to enter the furnace a thousand times, to endure storms ten thousand times”, devoting their youth to the oilfield for the socialist cause of their motherland, “like the Iron Man fighting all his life”.

“With a touch of frost adorning the ends of their pigtails”, the iron girls, wearing on their heads aluminium helmets, donning oil workers’ clothes, water well-sites with their sweat. In return they “make the oil’s fragrance float far and wide”. To find the best way to open up the oilfield, scientists and technicians disregarding hardships trekked through hot summer and bitter winter side by side with the workers. Taching cadres, sharing the lives of the men and women workers, set up their headquarters “in a cowshed with draughts from all corners” and designed ingenious plans of the oilfield, leading the workers from victory to victory.

Having endured more than ten years of arduous struggle these heroic people, following the example of the Iron Man, are undaunted and indomitable in the face of any enemy and difficulty. They have pioneered China’s own road of industrial development. Our great leader and teacher Chairman Mao himself raised the red banner of Taching, and our beloved Premier Chou took meticulous care to foster its growth. Now our wise leader, Chairman Hua, is holding high this red banner, having dispelled the poisonous atmosphere created by the “gang of four”. During the years when the “gang of four” acted arbitrarily, making life difficult for the masses, Taching workers retaliated against them, resolutely defending the Taching red banner. Maintaining their position, they raised the resounding, militant slogan: “It is justified to expend everything for socialism; it is meritorious to sacrifice everything for socialism; it is glorious

to go all out for socialism; and we will redouble our efforts in doing so!” This slogan in itself is a good poem, every word imbued with the Taching workers’ boundless love for their socialist motherland and their great hatred of the “gang of four”.

Poetry expresses aspirations. These two anthologies express the Taching workers’ willingness to sacrifice everything for socialism and continue the revolution. This is the most noble, most splendid aspiration. That is why both the anthologies have a clear revolutionary and strong fighting spirit. The writers are not only courageous oil workers but also oilfield poets. Through their struggles they have acquired a passionate fervour. With their earnest feelings, written in a bold yet simple style, they have created poems rich in depicting their lives. We believe that as the national mass movement of **“In industry, learn from Taching”** unfolds further poetry written by workers everywhere will also blossom.

CHRONICLE

35th Anniversary of the Publication of Chairman Mao's "Talks at the Yen-an Forum on Literature and Art"

May 23 this year was the 35th anniversary of the publication of Chairman Mao's *Talks at the Yen-an Forum on Literature and Art*. To mark this occasion, the literary and art workers in Peking put on special performances and an art exhibition and organized discussions of the *Yen-an Talks*.

More than two thousand members of 27 professional and amateur troupes and army units in the capital took part in the performances. They presented a great variety of items, new ones as well as old favourites dating from different historical periods since the publication of Chairman Mao's *Yen-an Talks*. These included choral singing, full-length dances, *yangko* operettas, songs and such popular folk dances as the dragon dance, whip dance, boating dance and fan dance.

At the discussions many cultural workers spoke warmly of the historic significance of the *Yen-an Talks* and the great headway made in the revolution in literature and art under its guidance. Besides exchanging their experience of learning from the *Yen-an Talks*, they exposed the crimes of the "gang of four" in obstructing Chairman Mao's instructions and the revolution in literature and art. Speakers at the meetings included the worker poet Li Hsueh-ao, the old writers Tsao Ming and Yang Mo, the musician Chou Wei-chih, the novelist Hao Jan, the actor Ma Tai, the actresses Tien Hua and Yang Chiu-ling as well as representatives of the amateur cultural troupe of Taching.

The art exhibition displayed 764 outstanding works created since the publication of the *Yen-an Talks* in 1942. They included woodcuts, oil paintings, New-Year pictures, posters, sculptures, cartoons, serial pictures, gouaches, water-colours, sketches and drawings. No previous exhibition had shown the work of so many different artists or covered such a wide range of significant subjects, presented in a great variety of artistic forms.

Selection of Chen Yi's Poems Published

The *Selected Poems of Chen Yi* was recently published by the People's Literature Publishing House. It contains over 300 poems written from 1929 to 1966, and these are preceded by a photograph of Chen Yi, another of him and his wife, and facsimiles of two poems.

Chen Yi was one of the proletarian revolutionaries of the older generation, a staunch fighter devoted to the Chinese people. His poems express his warm love for Chairman Mao, the Party and the people, and his hatred and contempt for imperialists, reactionaries and revisionists of every kind. They are stirring because written with genuine feeling in a simple, refreshing style.

The *Selected Poems of Chen Yi* was edited by Chang Chien, his comrade-in-arms and wife. Before her death she wrote a preface and two poems as a postscript for this book.

New Literary and Art Works

A number of new literary and art works were recently published in Peking. Among the 27 reproductions of paintings printed by the People's Fine Arts Publishing House to commemorate Chairman Mao are such oil paintings as *Grand Inauguration of the People's Republic*, *With You in Charge, I'm at Ease*, *Comrades-in-Arms* and *Advance to Victory*. *Songs in Praise of Chairman Hua*, a collection of folk-songs, was put out by the China Youth Publishing House; *Chairman Hua Leads Us Forward Triumphantly* is a collection of songs from the People's Music Publishing House and *Red Hearts Turn For Ever to Chairman*

Hua, a collection of ballads from the People's Literature Publishing House. To spur the nationwide movements to learn from Taching in industry and from Tachai in agriculture, the People's Literature Publishing House has published the full-length ballad *Brother Oil Worker* and *Selected Folk-Songs on Learning from Tachai*, and the People's Music Publishing House the selection of songs *The Red Banner of Taching Flies High*.

Among the new novels and reportage published recently by the People's Literature Publishing House are *Song of Alamas* which praises the struggle of the people of the Mongolian nationality, *Storms over the Yenshan Mountains* portraying the life of north China forestry workers and *On the Roof of the Earth*, a truthful account of the second expedition of Chinese mountaineers up Qomolangma Feng (the world's highest mountain peak) in the spring of 1975.

Peking publishing houses also published or republished a number of outstanding works reflecting the life and struggles during the democratic revolution, works on historical subjects and Chinese and foreign classics. They include Chu Po's novel *Tracks in the Snowy Forest*, Yang Mo's novel *Song of Youth*, Wang Shih-kuo's sketches *Blood-stained Jacket*, Ku Yuan's woodcuts *Rent Reduction*, a collection of poems and essays by Lu Yu (1125-1210) of the Southern Sung Dynasty, a new edition of the satirical novel *The Scholars* by Wu Ching-tzu (1701-1754), Gorky's *Mother* and Ostrovski's *How the Steel Was Tempered*.

CULTURAL EXCHANGE

Romanian "Muresul" Ensemble in China

At the time when the Romanian people were celebrating the centenary of their country's independence, the Romanian Folk-Song and Dance Ensemble "Muresul" came to Peking to give performances in China.

The Romanian artists started their programme with *Independence Epic*, a dance showing how enthusiastically the Romanian people were celebrating the centenary of independence and ended it with *People, Ceausescu, Romania*, a chorus expressing the confidence and revolutionary drive of the Romanian people who, rallying closely around the Romanian Communist Party headed by Comrade N. Ceausescu, are united to fight against imperialism and superpowers in defence of their national independence and to build up their country. *Heroes Cross the Danube*, sung by the distinguished singer Angela Moldovan, praises the fighters who fought so fearlessly to free their motherland during the war of independence. Other fine folk-songs and sprightly dances showed the Romanian people's love of labour and life. To express their feeling for the Chinese people, the Romanian artists sang with great verve in Chinese *Hunghu Waters*, *Wave on Wave* and *From Peking's Golden Hill*.

The "Muresul" Folk-Song and Dance Ensemble, made up of the best amateur artists of the Mures-Tirnavia Region, lays great empha-



Romanian singer Angela Moldovan

sis on the study of folk arts. Their performances had a striking national flavour and style and were warmly welcomed by the Chinese audience.

Yugoslav "Abrasevic" Ensemble in China

The "Abrasevic" Folk-Song and Dance Ensemble, set up in 1905, is the oldest workers' amateur troupe in Yugoslavia. Their programmes feature the songs and dances of various nationalities and regions of their country. In May this year, the ensemble came to China and performed for audiences in Peking and other Chinese cities. Their lively folk dances and rhythmic and gay folk music had a strong national flavour. The dances *Ero* and *Insurgents* showed the dauntless



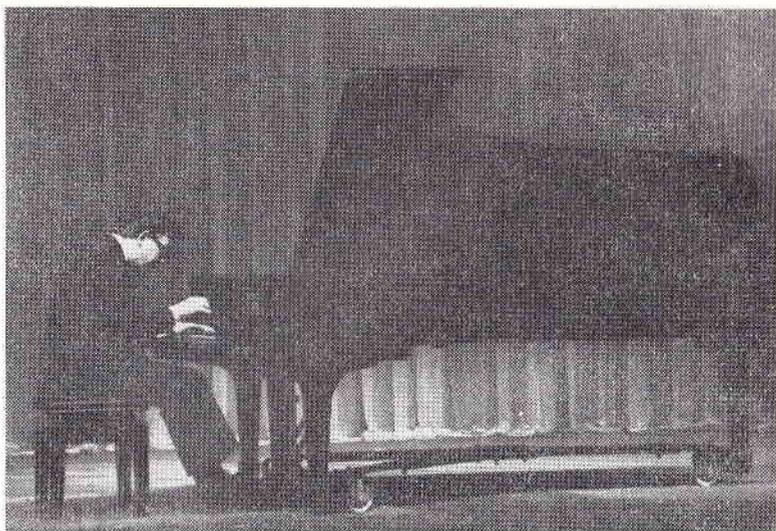
Yugoslav "Abrasevic" Ensemble

struggle waged by the Yugoslav people against aggressors, while the *Dance of Vojvodine*, *Dance of Croatia*, *The Women of Macedonia* and *The Herdsmen* depicted their love of freedom, their capacity for hard work and their optimism.

Norwegian Pianist Gives Recital in Peking

Under the auspices of the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries, a concert was organized in May this year at which the noted Norwegian pianist Kjell Baekkelund gave a recital of classical and contemporary European compositions. The pianist included in his programme works by Handel, Mozart, Beethoven, Chopin and the Norwegian composers Grieg and H. Seaverud. He showed virtuosity and fidelity in his interpretation of these works.

Mr. Baekkelund played a Chinese composition *Wild Lilies Bloom Red as Flame* as an expression of friendship for the Chinese people. This also drew warm applause from the audience.

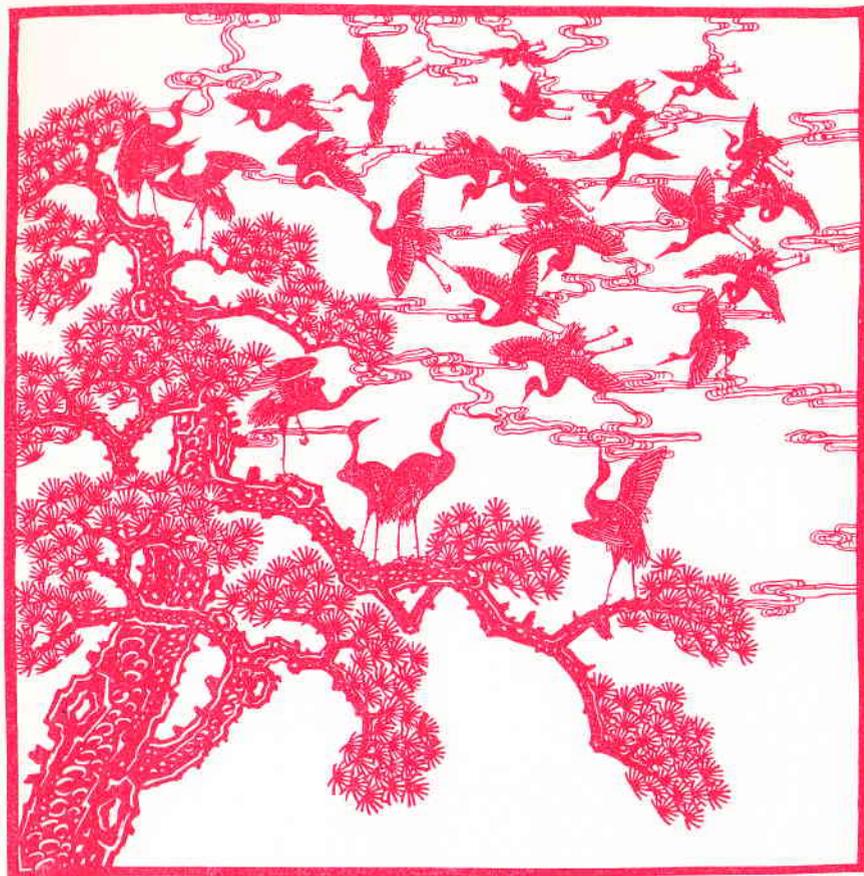


Norwegian pianist Kjell Bækkelund

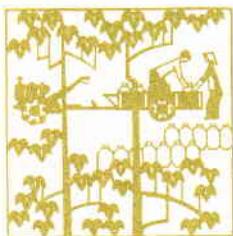
Chinese Song and Dance Ensemble Visits Japan

China's Tientsin Song and Dance Ensemble paid a friendly visit to Japan in May this year. Included in their programme were: the full-length dance *Celebrating the Great Victory* and the Chinese instrumental music *Hail the Defeat of the "Gang of Four"* showing the Chinese people's jubilation at the smashing of this anti-Party clique. The Korean nationality dance *Red Clouds* conveyed the love of the Chinese people for the late Chairman Mao Tsetung, Premier Chou En-lai and Comrade Chu Teh, Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, and their determination to rally closely around the Party Central Committee headed by Chairman Hua and carry through to the end the proletarian revolutionary cause pioneered by Chairman Mao. The *Sheb* nationality dance *Water of Happiness* showed how Chinese peasants by learning from Tachai are building up a socialist countryside.

The songs sung by the celebrated sopranists Wang Kun and Kuo Lan-ying and the dances performed by the Uighur dancer Aetella were warmly welcomed by the audience.



Pine and Cranes (scissor-cut)



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& Periodicals, Inc.**

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415-282-2994

San Francisco • New York • Chicago

中国文学

英文月刊1977年第9期

本刊代号2-916