



# EASTERN HORIZON

monthly review

in this issue

***Mei Lan-fang* My Stage Life**

***Tagore* Two Poems**

***Frederick Joss* Christmas in Hiroshima**

***Emanuel Vlček* The Abominable Snowman**

***Edita Morris* The Gateway to India**

**A Great Actor *a portfolio***

Eastern Diary

News and Views

Newsletters

Book Reviews

December 1961

Volume One No. 15

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# EAST AND WEST

## Quarterly Review

A magazine which aims at promoting cultural and spiritual relations between East and West and at throwing light on the relations between the two parts of the Eurasiatic continent, in the past and at present. The meeting points of Eastern and Western cultures will be illustrated by the contributions of the most outstanding specialists in this field of studies.

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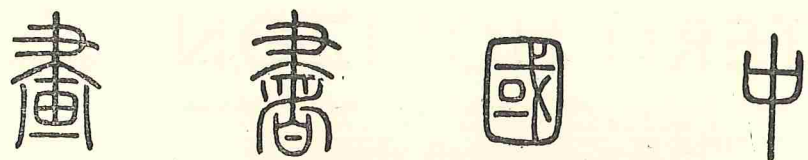
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(Volume One)

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## LETTERS

FROM LEWIS BUSH

Thank you for the magazines which I found most interesting, as do many of my friends.

I am sending you herewith an article which I think is in keeping with the trend of the times when there is so great interest everywhere in television and perhaps an extraordinary lack of knowledge abroad concerning the impact of this new mass communications media on Japanese society in general. I did a similar story for the British Broadcasting Corporation for their series on world television.

Under separate cover I am sending you a copy of my latest book, *Habakari Hankin*, which I hope you will favour with a review . . .

LEWIS BUSH

617, Gokurakuji  
Kamakura  
Japan

FROM EDITA MORRIS

Thank you for your very kind letter. I am delighted that *Eastern Horizon* is publishing 'The Gateway to India' in December.

Yes, I shall be happy to write for your publication from time to time. I'm snowed under with work at present (finishing a new novel), but when this is out of the way I would like to write you a 'Letter from France'. I shall be in the company of dear friends: Mulk Raj Anand is one of our oldest and best friends, so is Cedric Belfrage. Han Suyin is a 'new' friend, but a delightful one! I loved, and have re-read her exceedingly good novel . . . *and the Rain My Drink* . . . We intend to visit her in Singapore on our next visit to yours and her part of the world—in April when the filming of my novel, *The Flowers of Hiroshima*, is to get under way in Japan . . .

EDITA MORRIS

Nesles  
par Rozay-en-Brie  
Seine-et-Marne  
France

FROM HELMUT KOSSODO

I would like to receive regularly *Eastern Horizon* and possibly some interesting numbers that have already appeared. As a publisher I am particularly interested in the literary production. Will you please see that I get the review? The subscription fee will be sent to you by postal money order.

HELMUT KOSSODO

*Les Éditions Helmut Kossodo*  
6, Rue Bellot  
Genève

THE WAY OF ALL FLESH?

After a lapse of three months I received the October issue of your journal. I was relieved because I thought this fine publication like most others had gone the way of all flesh . . . Perhaps this is a holiday requirement.

T. P. AMERASINGHE

*Asian Artistes & Speakers' Bureau*  
Mahara Walauwa  
Kadawata  
Ceylon

MARGARET GARLAND LEFT N.Z.

I'm sorry not to have let you know before that I have left New Zealand. That's why I stopped the New Zealand letters. I asked someone to take it over, and I hope they wrote to you. I hope all goes well—I expect it's an uphill fight.

MARGARET GARLAND

London

A POEM FROM FAIZ

Thank you for your letter. I am enclosing herewith a poem by Faiz (not a translation from his Urdu). This was an idea conveyed into words, originally intended for a film script.

Regarding your invitation to write a letter now and again. Of course scope is limited—i.e. to social and cultural matters. Would this interest you? Lahore is alive now for the winter with cultural activities—but I do wonder whether this is not too limited an interest.

ALYS FAIZ

Lahore  
Pakistan

in next and future issues

Ardjasni

*Riwayat Hidup Saya: My Life*

Roma Gelder

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Lewis Bush

*Television in Japan*

Faiz

*The Unicorn and the Dancing Girl*

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Hans Henle

*Chinese Studies in W. Germany*

Rewi Alley

*Brick Lattice of Kiang-nan*

Edward White

*Letters from America*

etc., etc.

*EASTERN DIARY*

Blue skies, calm seas, golden harvest: Autumn is here. At this time of the year, Hongkong is in its loveliest form. The days are always so bright, the nights so soothing. This is the time to look around, to walk along the seashores, to enjoy Nature's colours, to meditate or to think things over.

Autumn is the best season to live in Hong Kong. Why don't you come—if you are not here yet?

\*

Recently we've had quite a few visitors. First, it was Field-Marshal Viscount Montgomery from England. He stopped here on his way to Peking and back. A great soldier is he indeed because he hates war games. He is a big man, always sincere and stirring. He says what he means, and says it bluntly. Perhaps that's why he is hated by some but liked by so many.

Talking of his recent visit Lord Montgomery said in London, 'China is a vast country. They have more living space than they want.' He added, 'I do not believe that you can treat the biggest nation in the world as if it does not exist.'

I do not believe that you can ignore some commonsense just because Lord Montgomery said it.

\*

Then there was a general from Washington—Maxwell Taylor, Mr Kennedy's Chief Military Adviser. This much-decorated ex-paratroop commander is specially known as a fanatic advocate of the 'Little War'.

After seven-days' 'fact-finding' in South Vietnam, he flew into Hong Kong and listened for three long days to what's going on around. He is all for small-scale, deadly guerilla warfare in Asia and

his critics regard him as a walking peril, it is reported.

And soon after his departure, the 9,450-ton destroyer *Piedmont*, one of some ten visiting US warships here, rammed and sank a ferry when entering the harbour in a bright morning. All passengers on the ferry were thrown into the sea. At least 4 deaths are reported.

What is this? Rehearsal of somebody's 'Little War' tactics?

\*

By the way, who were General Maxwell Taylor's companions in Vietnam this time?

According to the London *New Statesman* (27 October), Walt Rostow has accompanied General Taylor on his 'inquiry' in Vietnam. One of President Kennedy's White House advisers, Walt Rostow has specialised in guerilla tactics in Asia.

'Joe Alsop, most gloomy and most bellicose of commentators, is also with General Taylor in Saigon. Even before the General has had time to get his inquiry under way, Alsop reports that conditions there are, as he has so often told us, "very grave and very urgent" . . .'

'Very grave and very urgent,' one would like to ask, for whom?

\*

Word from Singapore says that Tengku Abdul Rahman, Prime Minister of the Federation of Malaya, had a 'nasty dream' about a plane crash the night before he left for a 3-day official visit to South Vietnam.

On Tuesday, barely an hour before the Tengku boarded his plane for Saigon from Singapore, a Royal Malayan Air Force single-engined Pioneer crashed into a hillside while searching for a party of 72 lost mountain climbers.

On his return to Singapore, the Tengku said, 'I had a nasty dream before I left. I told Mr Lee Kuan Yew about it. I told him that there was a crash in my dream, but things were not very clear.'

But some people seem to think that it was nearly foolhardy of the Tengku to proceed with his trip to South Vietnam after such a premonitory nightmare. Our subconscious is often wiser than our conscious.

\*

In some ways, East and West still do not quite meet. A friend of mine (a Chinese businessman) had this experience:

He went to Calcutta on business and there met an Englishwoman, newly arrived in the East. Soon they were comparing notes on Calcutta: its vastness, its bustling commerce, but also its poverty. My Chinese friend said, 'There are so many poor people, so many beggars. This is the place where you can really see the need of Asia, where you can understand why all the people of Asia want a better life.'

'I don't agree with you at all!' exclaimed the Englishwoman. 'Of course the people are terribly poor, but it's even worse for the dogs. I feel something must be done about the dogs. It's really inhuman to let dogs starve like that.'

My friend tried once again to say something for the humans, but the English lady was not to be moved.

'People understand what's happening to them,' she said, stonily brushing past a beggar woman with a baby in her arms. 'But dogs can't understand. That's why it is worse for them.'

\*

Here is some arithmetic of politics. I read this in a recent issue of the New York weekly *The Nation*:

*For years the Committee of One Million has existed mainly on public relations. It has never had a million members. Its own official history states that, as of 1961, it had only 6,000 contributing members. For all the suggestiveness of its clever name, the committee finds it appropriate to print no more than 25 to 35 thousand copies of the various brochures it publishes from time to time. It does not appear to be short of funds, however, and has long been one of America's most effective pressure groups. Its most powerful instrument is its promise to focus the full emotional power of anti-Communist public agitation against the candidacy of any person opposing the committee's views on China.*

According to *The Nation*, the so-called Committee of One Million is a bipartisan organization created at the end of the Korean War to oppose Peking's representation in the U.N. The magazine also says that 'the (Kennedy) Administration's decision to "buy more time" on the China question is clearly a concession to right-wing pressure in and out of Congress. The serious question it raises is whether the temporary domestic peace it may buy is worth the high international price tag it carries.'

You can buy time only when time is on your side.

\*

Mei Lan-fang, modern China's greatest actor, died in Peking on the 8th of

August this year. The most distinguished player of *tan* (or female) roles in Chinese classical theatre was born in 1894 in a famous actor family in Peking. He began learning *ching hsi* (Peking drama) at eight years old and appeared on the stage for the first time at eleven. At the age of nineteen, he made his debut in Shanghai. Since then, for more than half a century, Mei Lan-fang has remained the idol of the Chinese stage. No other actor has ever been so much loved by the Chinese people. He gave performances in Japan in 1919 and again in 1924, in the United States of America in 1930, and in Soviet Russia in 1935. His name is widely known in many foreign lands.

In 1950 he started the writing of his memoirs under the title of *Forty Years on the Stage*, the first two volumes of which have been published in book form, and chapters of the third, and last, volume have appeared in periodicals. In the last few years Mei also wrote many essays on the art of Chinese classical theatre.

In this issue of *Eastern Horizon* you will find a selection of Mei Lan-fang's reminiscences. These are a few chapters taken from the great actor's various writings. (See pp. 11—29).

Liu Pengju

*Indian Girls in London*

Indian and Pakistani girls in London are adding Western touches to their traditional national dress, fashion experts reported here.

Following the fashion for narrow trousers and jeans, Indian girls are narrowing the legs of the trousers they wear under their tunics.

The East-West blend of fashions does not appeal so much to the girl's mothers.

An 18-year-old Sikh girl from the Punjab living in London said: 'Some girls are making their trousers skin tight and our mothers say they look like Teddy girls.' (Teddy girls and boys are British teenagers whose extreme style includes narrow trousers.)

'All Indian girls make their own clothes and we introduce quite a few Western fashion notes into them,' she said.

*China Mail* (H.K.) Special,  
London, Sept. 14

*The Ideal UN Secretary?*

The newspaper, *Combat*, yesterday published the following portrait of the 'ideal' UN Secretary-General:

He has Khrushchev's face, Kennedy's forehead and hair, Castro's beard, de Gaulle's height and Macmillan's hands. He wears a coat like Adenauer's and, like Nehru, a rose in the buttonhole, sports an Arab fez, an African 'boubou' gown under the coat, plays a South American guitar and carries—in reserve—a Chinese hat.

UPI, Paris, Sept. 22

*Widow Sues Tshombe*

Mrs Kathleen McKay, a penniless widow, is claiming £7,700 from the Katanga Government because her husband was eaten by cannibals while serving with the Katanga army.

She was notified six weeks ago that her husband, William Edwin McKay, a bricklayer, was missing and presumed killed. Later a search party discovered he and another mercenary had been eaten.

Mrs McKay's lawyer said he had submitted a compensation claim through President Tshombe's Cabinet Secretary and the British

consulate in Elisabethville, and so far had received no reply.

Mrs McKay said her husband joined President Tshombe's forces because he had a long period of unemployment.

AP, Bulawayo, Sept. 22

*A Road in Cambodia*

A road built in Cambodia with American foreign aid was 'so badly bungled' that it had damaged United States prestige, a report by the House Foreign Operations Sub-Committee said yesterday.

The final report on the road stated, 'The road, which was intended to be a showcase of American 'know-how,' was so badly bungled that it has damaged our prestige, burdened us with costly repairs and supplied the Communists with an effective source of anti-American propaganda.'

The road runs from the Cambodian capital of Phnom Penh to the port of Sihanoukville on the Gulf of Siam about 130 miles away. The cost was originally estimated at US\$15,000,000 but has already cost more than \$34,000,000, the Sub-Committee said.

Reuters, Washington, Sept. 24

*Chinese Books in US Library*

Dr Edwin G. Beal, head of the Chinese section, Orientalia Division of the Library of Congress, the national library of the United States, gave a talk to the Hongkong Library Association, in the Library of the University of Hongkong, last evening.

Dr Beal mentioned that the first Chinese books received by the Library of Congress were a gift from the Emperor of China in June, 1869. The collection has continued to grow in the years since then, especially after the appointment of Dr Arthur W. Hummel in 1927. It now totals some 325,000 volumes.

Probably the most widely-known publication in the Chinese field by the Library during Dr Hummel's tenure, which ended with his retirement in 1954, was *Eminent Chinese of the Ching Period*, a two-volume biographical encyclopedia published in 1943-44. Other publications were *A Catalogue of Chinese Local*

*Histories in the Library of Congress* (1942), and *A Catalogue of Rare Chinese Books in the Library of Congress* (2 vols., 1957). Acquisitions of special interest are described each year in the February issue of the *Library of Congress Quarterly Journal of Current Acquisitions*.

S.C.M Post, Hong Kong, Sept. 25

*'Go to Miami . . .'*

The last of Havana's gambling casinos closed down quietly today within minutes after Dr Fidel Castro had announced his Government is cleaning up the city.

Addressing a huge rally at Havana's Square of the Revolution, the Prime Minister promised measures to rehabilitate Havana's prostitutes and drive out white slave racketeers.

He warned dealers in the vice they face stiff penalties and told them to 'go to Miami if they want. We will even pay their plane tickets.' This was greeted with cheers.

AP, Havana, Sept. 29

*Artists Protest to Mac*

Fifty-nine British artists, musicians and writers today sent a memorandum to the Prime Minister, Mr Macmillan, protesting against 'the immorality of power politics.'

The memorandum, signed among others by Sir Herbert Read, Graham Sutherland and Barbara Hepworth, said: 'Culture means the affirmation of life. There can be no true culture while we make stock-piles of nuclear weapons—they are the negation of life.'

'It is said that the bones of our children and grandchildren will be contaminated by dirty tests. But all our minds are already contaminated by the present situation.'

The protest said, 'We the undersigned, believe that hope and good for the human race can only come out of doing what is right.'

'Expediency, fear and hatred have already left their mark on our children and will leave it on their children.'

'We call upon our Government to take some initiative to break through the present deadlock and we ask all governments, in the name of all the arts, to halt the contamination of man's spiritual growth.'

AFP, London, Sept. 30

*Peace Marchers Reach Moscow*

A tired-looking band of 'peace marchers' finally achieved their goal today of walking from San Francisco to Moscow.

After tramping 8,000 miles across six countries, the 29 marchers walked into Moscow this morning.

They headed for Red Square where, with the help of the Soviet authorities, they are due to stage a demonstration later today.

As they walked, the marchers handed out Russian-language yellow leaflets to the Russians, advocating general disarmament and explaining their stand against military service and payment of taxes.

The Muscovites read the pamphlets curiously. Many Soviet citizens applauded the marchers and waved to them. The marchers called out in Russian to bystanders: 'Peace and friendship.'

The Soviet press today stressed the difficulties the marchers encountered in capitalistic countries, in contrast with the 'heartfelt reception' given them by the Soviet authorities and people.

UPI, Moscow, Oct. 3

*China and Nepal Sign Boundary Treaty*

King Mahendra of Nepal and President Liu Shao-chi of China today signed the boundary treaty recently concluded between the two countries, the New China News Agency reported.

The agreement comes into effect immediately. King Mahendra is on a State visit to Peking.

The draft boundary treaty was completed last August for forwarding to the respective governments. Nepal and China signed an agreement in Peking in 1960 to demarcate the 500-mile Himalayan boundary with Tibet.

Later, Mayor Peng Chen told a mass rally of 100,000 Chinese that a 'reasonable settlement of the Sino-Nepalese boundary has been achieved to the satisfaction of both sides.'

'The continuous Himalayas, which have never been an obstacle to China-Nepal friendship, will henceforth be all the more a link of friendship between the two countries,' he added.

AFP, Peking, Oct. 5

*Somerset Maugham Comes to the Rescue*

Somerset Maugham has announced that after his death most of his money will be set aside for a fund to help sick or struggling writers.

Mr Maugham, the 87-year-old novelist and playwright, is believed in London literary circles to be one of the richest writers in the world.

Apart from substantial royalties which continue to flow in from all over the world, including Russia, he has a collection of Impressionist and post-Impressionist paintings said to be worth about £7,000,000.

The collection—in his luxury Riviera home—includes works by Renoir, Picasso, Matisse, Monet, Utrillo and Toulouse-Lautrec.

At a press conference at his London hotel last night, Mr Maugham said his fund would be administered by the Incorporated Society of Authors, Playwrights and Composers, and would comprise 'a substantial sum.'

'Barring certain bequests, I want to leave everything I have to the Authors Society, because I have the impression that there are a lot of younger writers who are hard up and would be glad of a holiday,' Mr Maugham said.

There were other writers who were old and ill who needed help too, and he would be glad to think that the Society could 'come to the rescue,' he added.

AFP, London, Oct. 8

### *Chinese-style paintings*

Chinese-style hand paintings are now permitted entry into the United States under the Comprehensive Certificate of Origin system, a Government Information Services release said yesterday.

The release corrects a statement made recently that certain goods, including Chinese-style hand paintings, might not be imported into United States territories from Hongkong under any circumstances.

S.C.M. Post, Hong Kong, Oct. 10

### *A School for Cooks*

A model school for specialists of 'services professions' was opened in Peking's eastern outskirts recently.

It will train cooks, laundrymen, dyers, menders, hair-dressers, photographers and waiters.

Some 440 pupils, boys and girls, all about 16, have already been enrolled.

Upon graduation they will be classified as 'secondary technicians.' The curriculum of its main departments requires two or three-year studies.

'Three years intensive training is not too much for a qualified cook if the worldwide reputation of Chinese cuisine is to be preserved as a national heritage,' a responsible official told the press.

A recent research, he said, showed that Chinese cuisine embodied some 5,000 various courses of which Chinese post-revolutionary chefs selected through synthesis and elimination some 1,500 as basic ones.

During the first two years, students will learn the art of preparing some 600 'non-essential' dishes alongside with the study of more basic subjects like elementary biology, menu composition and preparation of basic dishes.

'Grand Masters' of cooking art from Peking, Shanghai, Szechuan, Hunan and Kwangtung will train them during the third year.

AFP, Peking, Oct. 9

### *Fervour to Work*

The dominant impression Queen Mother Elizabeth of Belgium gathered from a twelve-day tour of the interior of China was 'fervour to work' which she thought was a common trait shared by Chinese and Belgians, she confided to members of her entourage which includes her daughter, Marie Jose, former Queen of Italy.

Queen Mother Elizabeth was reluctant to make direct statements to the press, but through members of her entourage, she said that her present visit to China was the most interesting travel she had made in her life-time.

The 85-year-old Queen, who has visited practically all countries of the world at different times, said she saw no hatred whatsoever in China, only boundless hope in the future, an impression she gathered from several visits to urban rural communes, schools, factories.

She will be leaving China on Oct. 19 after a three-week stay.

AFP, Peking, Oct. 16

## My Life on the Stage

### *Mei Lan-fang*

Like all children I used to wait eagerly for the lunar New Year when I was a child so that I could wear new clothes, new shoes, try my hand at dice games, and eat preserved fruit and sweet-meats. I was enormously interested in all these. The year I was fourteen, during the last lunar month, wind and snow raged fiercely, stopping only on the twenty-fourth, the day the Hearth God is sent back to Heaven.\* We set off some fire-crackers before sitting down for a dinner with our grandmother. Starting the next day everyone would be busy preparing for the New Year and the festive atmosphere would grow as the day drew nearer.

It was the custom to sacrifice to our ancestors before eating the New Year's Eve dinner. On the sacrificial table were tablets inscribed with the names of my grandfather, Mei Chiao-ling, and other Mei ancestors. A small tablet bearing the name Chiang stood to one side. Why was it there, I wondered. Unable to repress my childish curiosity, I asked my grandmother, 'Why should the Meis sacrifice to a Chiang?'

'This is a custom left by your grandfather. I don't think we should sacrifice to him either. It's a long story. I'll tell you all about it after supper.'

That night I was the last one to go into my grandmother's room to offer her season's greetings. 'I wish you cleverness and wisdom and congratulate you on

adding one more year to your age,' she said as I entered. 'Thank you, grandmother,' I replied. Smilingly she took my hand and let me sit on a stool beside her. Outside, fire-crackers were exploding. The New Year atmosphere was everywhere.

'You are growing year by year,' she said. 'But you know very little of our family. I'll tell you while I'm still alive and healthy. Your great grandfather opened a shop which sold wood-carvings of figures and buddhas in Taichow City, Kiangsu Province. He had three sons. Your grandfather was the eldest. When he was eight he was adopted by an old man named Chiang in Soochow who had no sons. He treated your grandfather fairly well at first. Later, he married a second wife who gave birth to a son. After that she looked upon your grandfather as an eyesore. Later, a man who traded in children for the theatre came to Soochow. Old man Chiang made arrangements with him to sell your grandfather to be trained as an actor.† When he asked for your grandfather's opinion he agreed at once. Someone had warned him to leave the Chiangs' as soon as

\* The twenty-fourth of the twelfth lunar month is called 'Small New Year' in China. On that day the Hearth God, who is supposed to look after the household, is temporarily relieved of his post and goes to Heaven to report on his duties.

† In old China, acting was considered a lowly profession. No family was willing to let their children learn this trade if they could possibly avoid it.

possible so that he would not be ill-treated to death by that woman.

'Your grandfather's luck was bad. The trader sold him to the Fu Sheng Opera Company when he was eleven. Yang San-hsi, the master, was known for ill-treating his apprentices. Your grandfather was often thrashed and endured a lot of hardships. It was customary then for masters to take it out on their apprentices when they were unhappy or had met any setbacks. Yang San-hsi often beat your grandfather's palm with a piece of hard wood until it swelled so that the lines on the palm flattened out.

'Your grandfather changed masters three times before he finished his apprenticeship. He played female roles and was very popular on stage. Gradually he gained fame and headed the Szu Hsi Company to which he devoted all his energy.'

I remembered my father, Mei Chu-fen, at this point. 'Please tell me something about my father,' I requested.

She glanced at me and said, 'He was unfortunate, dying at the age of twenty-six.' Her voice changed and tears rolled down her cheeks. This made me feel sad too. I wanted to weep, but it was bad luck to cry on New Year's Eve. 'Your father was a hard-working, honest person. He learned to play the role of old men first, and then shifted to playing young men. In the end he learned to perform the roles of women. He was able to play all the roles your grandfather had learned. Most of the regular theatre-goers considered him the living image of your grandfather.'

The early cocks began to crow. I raised my head and saw the pale light of dawn coming in through the window.

### My Training Days

Like my father and grandfather before me I also started studying for the theatre at a very early age—when I was only eight. Wu Ling-hsien, an old artist in

female roles, was my first teacher. Every morning at five, he took me out into the open air for a walk and to train my voice. After lunch another teacher would arrive to give me vocal training after which I practised stage movements and learned tunes. The evenings I spent studying librettos. Except for eating and sleeping, I worked hard all day long.

Wu Ling-hsien's method was to make me memorize the words of a passage before teaching me the tune. He sat in a chair while I stood by the table. In his hand was a flat ruler which was generally used to beat both time and the pupil. But Wu Ling-hsien never hit me. We always had a stack of big coppers on the table. Each passage had to be sung twenty or thirty times. Every time I went through a passage, a copper was removed from the stack and placed in a lacquered tray. By the time all ten coppers were in the tray they were put back into a stack and we started all over again. Though sometimes I had learned the passage quite well by the sixth or seventh round, my teacher went on drilling me. Other times when I was very sleepy though I kept on singing my eyes would close against my will and I found myself dozing off. Then Wu Ling-hsien would give me a gentle nudge which brought me back to my senses. Pulling myself together, I would continue my lesson. In those days to treat a pupil the way he did was considered most enlightened. Had it been any other teacher I would have had the ruler on my head.

Wu Ling-hsien believed that to gain a firm foundation every passage should be sung dozens of times. If a person does not learn his lessons properly, if he flits through like a glimmering shadow without understanding thoroughly, then as time goes by he will easily forget or be unable to do it exactly the right way.

There are certain basic movements for the *chingyi* (the respectable woman) role which must be practised over a long period of time before accuracy can be

achieved. These include the walk, opening and closing the door, the hand movement, pointing the fingers, swinging the sleeves, touching the hair at the temples, pulling on a shoe, throwing up a hand to call to heaven, swinging the arm to bewail something, pacing round the stage, and fainting into a chair.

I remember using a long bench for exercises when I was quite young. A brick was placed on the bench and standing on it with little stilts attached to my feet I tried to remain on the brick for the time it takes to burn a stick of incense. When I first started, my legs trembled and it was torture. I could not stay up for more than a minute before it became unbearable and I had to jump down. But after some time, my back and legs developed the proper muscles and I gradually learned to stand on the brick quite steadily.

In the winter I practised fighting and pacing around on ice while wearing short stilts. At first I slipped easily, but once I became accustomed to walking on stilts over the ice, it was effortless to go through the same motions on stage without the stilts. Whatever you do, if you go through a difficult stage before reaching the easy ones you'll find that the sweetness is well worth the bitter trouble.

I used to get blisters on my feet when I was practising on stilts and suffered much pain. I thought my teacher should not have made a boy in his teens go through such severe trials and felt bitter about it. But today when in my sixties I can still do feminine warrior poses in such operas as *The Drunken Beauty* and *The Mountain Fortress*, I know that I am able to do so only because my teachers were severe with me in my basic training.

I learned most of my acrobatic skills from the acrobat Ju Lai-ching who began my physical training with the basic exercises for fighting on stage. These include the usual thrust and parry and hitting out to the right and left and up and down. None of these basic exercises is

ever used on stage but every beginner has to learn them. Our second step was to practise the 'quick lances' and 'matching lances.' These are the most frequently used acrobatic forms on stage, but they are quite different from each other and have different meanings. When the 'quick lances' is performed one of the fighters must emerge as the winner while the fighters in 'matching lances' come out even. If two actors fighting each other with lances pause and face the audience in a still pose as the tempo of the gongs and drums slow down, and then each raises a thumb in an approving gesture to the other, this is called 'praising the warrior' in professional parlance. When the two exit quickly after this they have been merely 'matching lances.' If it is still necessary to see which one of them comes out the winner, the fight must switch to the form of 'quick lances.' These are all set rules.

While the hands are learning the motions of fighting, there are three possible kinds of training for the feet. I have tried them all. One is on stilts; this is something the acrobatic maid must learn. Another is to fight in bright shoes with pompons or thin soled boots; this is for the warrior maid role. The last is to fight in thick-soled boots; this is for the acrobatic male. I was accustomed to wearing shoes with pompons and found it very difficult to do the fighting motions in thick-soled boots. I practised for nearly two months before I dared wear them on stage.

The basic exercises for the arms, waist and legs include the following: (1) Raising the arms. The left hand is held out straight from the shoulder with palm upwards, the right hand is bent towards the left shoulder and then pulled back until it is straight. In doing this the feet must be firmly planted and a person who has mastered the skill will be able to stand for a long time without quivering. (2) Bending backwards. You bend backwards from the waist with feet



slight parted and hands raised high. The eyes must be fixed on the two thumbs and the palm turned outwards as you bend. The requirement is to practise until your hands are able to grasp your own ankles. But I never quite mastered the final step. (3) Bending over the leg. You begin by putting one leg up on the table and bending the body over it. If your head is able to touch the toes then your training is more or less up to the mark. I had of course practised all these before I started training for the fighting.

In my youth I watched the performances of many famous artists of the older generation and learned a lot from their valuable experience. As time went on I found that this unconsciously helped me to raise the level of my own performance. Gradually I was able to get the right gesture and movement, the smile and the wail I needed on the stage, and make them fit in naturally with the accompaniment. This method of linking one's own studies for the theatre with watching the performance of others is a must for every artist who wishes to improve his art. The greater the variety of the performances he attends the better. For instance a pupil preparing to perform the woman's role should not limit himself to watching performances where this role is featured. He should also observe artists in other roles, and learn to tell the good from the bad and adopt the strong points of others. Only in this way can he enrich his own skill and develop a more comprehensive artistry.

As I have mentioned earlier, our family's theatrical tradition—started by my grandfather—stressed seeking instructions from older artists. In my own case, besides my first teacher Wu Ling-hsien, I benefited from the instructions of such senior artists as my uncle Mei Yu-tien, a musician, Chen Teh-lin, a famous performer of the *chingyi* role, Wang Yao-ching who did much in perfecting the art of female roles, Lu San-pao, an artist in the young women's role, Ju Lai-ching

the acrobat and Li Shou-shan who started in the role of the young women but turned to male roles. Besides these teachers of mine, I also have many friends outside the theatre who are opera lovers and good opera critics. When they sit among the audience they concentrate on finding fault with my acting and singing. If they discover a shortcoming they point it out and help me correct it. Since I cannot see my own expressions and movements, these kind friends are like a mirror and a lamp constantly lighting my way.

Once an uncle of mine, Hsu Lan-yuan, a well-known *hu-chin* player, told me of a couplet which I think well describes the art of the theatre and the degree of perfection required in acting. The couplet says:

*Those watching you should not see your original self,*

*Nor should you think in terms of that self while on stage.*

*Look the part of whatever role you play,  
Whoever plays a character must be that character.*

#### First Appearance on the Stage

The first time I went on stage I was only eleven. It was the seventh day of the seventh lunar month in the year 1905 and I played the weaving maid in *The Cowherd and the Weaving Maid*,\* a colourful opera with a fancy stage setting for the double seventh festival. My teacher, Wu Ling-hsien, put me on a chair to mount the magpie bridge which was decorated with a good many magpies—actually lighted candles. I was very excited as I stood there singing.

\* An opera based on the legend of the Weaving Maid in heaven and the Cowherd a mortal, who fell in love with each other, got married and had one son and one daughter. A few years later the Heavenly Mother summoned the Weaving Maid back but the Cowherd taking along their children chased after her. He nearly caught up with her when the Heavenly Mother cleft the sky with her silver hairpin and made a celestial river separating the two lovers. Later, the Heavenly Mother relented and allowed them to meet once every year on the seventh day of the seventh month. On that day the two meet each other on a bridge built by hundreds of magpies.

Three years later I was formally enrolled as a temporary member of the Hsiliencheng Company.\* Although I now belonged to the company I was paid little more than an apprentice, since at that time I was performing more or less to gain theatrical experience. I received a very small sum every day, but to me it was quite satisfactory. I still remember the first time I acted with the Hsiliencheng and how I took home the meagre sum I had received, proffering it to my mother with both hands. Both of us were very excited. To my mother it meant her son was now able to earn money for the family. I was then only a child of fourteen. To me, it didn't matter how big the sum was. At least I was able to bring something home to her. This was a comforting thought for a child. But to my great sorrow she fell ill the following year. She died in our humble little house on the 18th of the seventh month leaving me an orphan all on my own.

At that time I performed a daily matinee, mostly playing *chingyi* (respectable woman) roles. Sometimes I played the lead, other times I was only one of the cast. In those days, the distinction between the *chingyi* and the *huatan* (bold young woman) was very clear-cut.

A person taking the *huatan* role must give much attention to facial expression, movement and impromptu humorous dialogue. Her costume also tends towards the bold, colourful and splendid. In the Chinese classical theatre, the *huatan* represents the lively, romantic woman. Her walk and gestures on stage differ distinctly from that of the *chingyi*, but for her the need for a good voice and a high degree of perfection in singing are not too strict. The teachers of apprentices for

\* A famous Peking opera company formed in 1903. In the decades since it was established it had produced a number of good actors. Well-known Peking opera artists like Ma Lien-liang and Tan Fu-ying were both students in the company and other artists like Mei Lan-fang and Chow Hsin-fang were its members at one time or another.

the theatre usually take constant and careful note of the natural talents of the pupils and assign them to different roles accordingly. For instance a pupil whose facial expression is stiff, who is clumsy and heavy in build and whose eyes lack a lively look will never be chosen to learn the *huatan* role.

The main emphasis for the *chingyi* is on singing; the rest, such as expression and movements are of little consequence. *Chingyi* players usually need only look cold and remote as the ice and frost. When they come on stage they always adopt a sedate walk, with one hand on the stomach and the other hanging by one side. In their sedate and steady walk no swaying is allowed. In the classical theatre, the *chingyi* represents the serious obedient character, the typically respectable female. Women in the old society were usually under fairly heavy pressure. They had to carry themselves, 'without looking either left or right and never smile so boldly as to show the teeth.' They were required to behave in a way befitting a woman who 'obeys her father before her marriage, her husband after marriage, and her son when her husband is dead.' When such a character appears on stage the audience ask only that she sings well. No one notices her facial expressions and gestures.

I followed the path of the family theatrical tradition established by my grandfather. He started with *kunchu* opera and then went on to learn the *chingyi* and *huatan* roles in Peking opera. In his times he was considered to be very versatile to have learned so many different kinds of roles. I started by learning the *chingyi*, then I gradually tried the various other female roles (the respectable woman, the *ingénue* and the serving maid) in *kunchu*. Later I studied the warrior maid and the lively maid in Peking opera. I acted in modern-costume opera as well as period plays. In other words after my debut on the stage I learned several kinds of female roles. Grand-

father and I differed only in that I never attempted the comedies of the romantic maid while he never tried the acrobatic feats of the warrior maid. The reason is simple enough. He was too heavily built for acrobatics, while I felt that my temperament was not suited for the role of a witty woman who can jest and poke fun.

### Keeping Pigeons

As a child I was not very robust. I was a little near-sighted and people told me that my eyelids drooped. Sometimes out in the wind my eyes would get bleary; anyway they never managed to look lively. For a stage artist, of all the facial features the eyes are of the greatest importance. Theatre-goers often like to say so-and-so's face is full of expression, or so-and-so's face registers no emotion. Actually the real difference lies in the eyes. The eyes are the most vital parts of a person's face. They are able to express feelings and emotions. That is why many actors and actresses have brilliant eyes, beautiful eyes showing character and spirit. Friends and relatives interested in my welfare used to be bothered about my eyes. They felt that my future career might be affected by them. I too used to worry about them. To everyone's surprise my fancy for pigeons cured this defect of mine. It was indeed quite unexpected.

I happened to keep a few pairs of pigeons the year I was seventeen. At first it was just for fun and I looked upon it as nothing but a pastime. Gradually, I became more interested and spent some time every day tending the pigeons. After a little time, my interest grew so that I began to look upon this hobby as a necessary part of my life. I never grew tired of it.

Training pigeons is like training an air force. You need organizational abilities. My method was to tie down the pigeon's wings with string when I first got them so that they could only flutter

up to the roof top but could not fly away. This was to give them time to orient themselves to the location of the house. After a time, about a week or ten days, one wing was set free, and then a few days later both wings. Now it was time for the pigeons to practise going out on flights.

I used a long bamboo pole to direct them. Red silk attached to it was a signal for the pigeons to take off; green silk was the signal for them to come down. It was necessary to train some of the pigeons first to become my basic team which could fly far off into the sky and still find their way back. Then, every time this team went out, one or two untrained pigeons were sent with them to learn the necessary discipline. If the team met someone else's flock and the birds got mixed up, the outcome depended on what training the pigeons' keeper had given them. Perhaps the other flock would lead some of my untrained ones astray. Or maybe my trained team might bring back an untrained straggler from the other flock. This is the sort of game which involves a battle of birds in the sky. All the pigeons had marks on them and if they got lost their owners could get them back by exchange, the way you get back prisoners of war.

It was no simple task to take proper care of these little birds. I had to get up at the crack of dawn, about five or six in the morning. As soon as I finished washing I hurried to open the pigeon house and sweep it clean. Filling the food and water tray was of course part of the day's work. When all this had been attended to it was time to send the birds out on a flight. The group which was able to stay in the air the longest was sent out first, next the second batch, then the third, and so on. When all my trained pigeons had enough of sporting in the air, they flew into one flock and began circling over the house. This meant they were ready to come down. But if I wanted them to take some untrained pigeons up

with them, I would signal with the pole, forbidding them to alight. Then I tossed the new pigeons up one by one so that they would mingle with the flock of trained birds and learn what to do. When the whole flock had returned, all the pigeons were turned out on the roof for a spell before I directed them back into their cote. Finally they were given food and water. This process had to be repeated a number of times a day. Tending a large flock of pigeons was in a way more troublesome than looking after a human being.

Pigeons are faithful, orderly, peace-loving and obedient creatures. Every morning after finishing tidying the cote, I had only to swing one hand in a commanding gesture and my first batch of pigeons would immediately leave their cote and assemble in an orderly file on the roof top to await further orders. As their young master I took great pride in the fact that these pigeons which I had reared followed my order so militantly. I acquired much experience from this which helped me in my career later on.

When the pigeons were high in the air I had to look up and watch closely to see which were mine and which weren't. This was not easy. It meant that my eyes had to follow the pigeons as they flew into the distance, high in the sky. I had to gaze at the horizon and even try to penetrate the folds of the clouds. This went on not just once or twice but day after day. Before I knew it my eyes were completely cured. At the same time holding a fairly thick bamboo pole to direct the pigeons meant using arm muscles. Waving this bamboo pole day in and day out gradually developed not only the strength in my arms but toughened the muscles of my entire body as well.

The court robe I wear in *The Drunken Beauty* is embroidered with first-grade gold thread. I have used it for over twenty years, but the colour is still as fresh as ever, which shows the quality of the material. Although the robe is

extremely heavy, now in my sixties I still do the bend back swing in it and my arms can still bear the weight of the sleeves without discomfort. For this I have to thank the long bamboo pole which I used to wave on the roof top every day.

### Growing Flowers

I have loved flowers ever since I was a child. But I started to grow them only at twenty-two. In autumn I grew chrysanthemums and in winter I grew plums and built miniature gardens in pots. I grew cherry-apples and peonies in spring; in summer it was morning glories. Busy all the seasons growing different kinds of flowers, I found great pleasure in it.

Of all the flowers I have grown I like morning glories best. For they are not only good to look at, they have given me great help in my art too. Morning glory is also known as 'diligent wife.' The name tells us that lazy people are not suited to grow them. First of all, you have to get up early in the morning, for they bloom in the early morning and wither after noon. A person who sleeps late never sees these flowers at their best.

Morning glory is a kind of convolvulus like Virginia creeper. Most people grow them beside fences or lead them up walls and eaves on strings. They must have the help of man. They cannot climb of their own accord.

Even before the sun rose, my pots of morning glories would begin to blossom. The bigger ones had a diameter of about six inches while the smaller ones were about the size of a coin. At one time I had hundreds of pots of them. When the flowers all bloomed together, every shade of rare colour was displayed before me. They were at their best when viewed from afar. There they looked like a piece of colourful brocade. They were extremely beautiful. Their medley of colours was really a glorious sight. It is no exaggeration to say that my eyes were dazzled

when I looked at them closely. Dew drops were still standing on the petals and leaves as the flowers bloomed early in the morning.

Once when I was looking at them carefully it suddenly struck me that these ever-changing designs were offering me a chance to select the colours I wanted. Matching the costumes and headgears I wore on stage had always been a difficult art. The morning glories told me what colours were bright and attractive when put together and which were gentle and plain. And yet some colours could never be put together. When these were arbitrarily matched they were discordant. My original intention in growing morning glories was just to make myself get up earlier for the benefit of my health. I had never thought that it would be such a great help to my judgement of beauty. This was much easier than matching and choosing among the various coloured silks in the shops. The costumes and properties of China's traditional operas are basically a complex composition of many colours. An actor with no sense of beauty can infect the character of the person he plays by choosing unharmonious colours and wreck the whole atmosphere of the play. So growing flowers and painting have actually increased my knowledge in this respect.

#### Learning to Paint

Around 1915 when I was in my twenties I got to know more people and began to make more friends. Some of my acquaintances were connoisseurs and collectors of art. Since I went around with them in my spare time I was able to see the ancient and modern paintings and calligraphy in their collections and was much struck by the beauty and splendour of the landscapes and figures, the birds and flowers. I began to see that the harmony of colour and the perfection of composition in paintings had much affinity with theatrical art. To me the

costumes, properties, makeup and acting in Chinese opera seemed to form one living ink-and-colour painting in the traditional style. I wanted very much to draw some good material from the art of painting to enrich my theatrical art. This was how I became more and more interested in painting. I found time to dig out the scrolls and painting manuals in our family library and copied them from time to time. However, I knew nothing about the technique of blending colours and applying ink, nor how to compose the picture and the strokes. I merely painted at random.

Later a friend introduced me to the artist Wang Meng-pai. I asked him to be my teacher. Mr. Wang would first paint something while I looked on. He told me to pay attention to the way he held his brush and the way he used his wrist. When one painting was done he would hang it on the wall for me to copy while he watched by my side, giving instructions as I worked. He held that in painting you must think and learn to understand how other artists paint, how they plan their picture, where they start their strokes, how much ink to use and how to harmonize the colours. Doing this often will help you to paint on your own. Although Mr Wang was referring to painting when he told me to learn how other artists work I found his remark equally inspiring to me as a stage artist. We actors train ourselves through diligent practice and hard work. We also learn how other artists portray characters by watching their performances on stage. I have benefited much from the experience of other artists as they record their observations of life in artistic creations.

About the same time I was learning painting from Wang Meng-pai I made the acquaintance of a number of famous artists such as Chen Shih-tseng, Chen Pan-ting, Chi Pai-shih and others. I learned a lot about painting through my association with them. Sometimes they



MEI LAN-FANG: A GREAT ACTOR



*In the title role of  
The Girl Lien Chin-feng*

*With Yü Chen-fei (right) in The White Snake*



*Discussing stagecraft with colleagues*



*With Chiang Miao-hsiang*



*Practising sword dance*

would gather in my house and several of them would co-operate on one painting. I had the rare opportunity of watching them as they wielded their brushes and discussed how to compose the picture.

On my thirtieth birthday in 1924 they painted a picture as a present to me. It was done in my study. The first to begin was Ling Chih-yu and he painted a loquat tree which took up quite a lot of space. Yao Mang-fu who was next added roses and cherries. Chen Shih-tseng put in bamboos and rocks and Wang Meng-pai painted a parrot perching on a rock. Finally it was Chi Pai-shih's turn. By then the painting was already more or less done and nothing seemed to be lacking. After some thought, Chi Pai-shih took up his brush and painted near the parrot's opened bill a little bee which became the prey pursued by the parrot. This addition made everything most vivid and we all clapped and acclaimed it. The little bee was a final touch of genius which brought the whole picture to life. Although Chi Pai-shih only added an insect it changed the whole composition of the painting and the mood as well.

The complexity of the natural scene done by the others formed a strong contrast with Chi Pai-shih's one little bee and I discovered that this contrast of the complicated and the simple, the big and the small, also had much in common with the technique of contrast in theatrical art. A painting is static but an opera has movement. Painting involves arrangement and composition while drama too must consider both. The painter brings out on a piece of white paper his artistic perception of landscapes, people, birds and flowers while an actor expresses himself in three-dimensional space on a stage within the stipulated scenes of the opera. Though the forms of art are different, both involve the question of arrangement and composition. Such considerations in Chinese painting as that of empty space and substance, of the simple and the complex, of the dense and the sparse, are

fairly close to the concepts of stagecraft.

Once made up and costumed and standing upon the stage, the actor is no longer an ordinary human being but an object of art, equal in value to the images produced by the artist's paint brush. The painter and the actor, using different means of art to portray a similar theme, achieve the same results in different ways.

Good painters are able to catch the most vivid of a person's thousand and one gestures and moods and set them down on paper with his brush. In painting figures it is most essential to convey the spirit; paintings which are vivid and reflect life are considered first-rate ones. All this simply means that a painting should convey the essence of life. Since the characters appearing in the classical theatre, their costumes and the articles they use, are all very different from those of the present day, we can get some idea of how the ancients lived by looking at old paintings.

Yes, there is indeed much we can learn from painting. But we should not borrow indiscriminately because some things which painters express well with their brush cannot be brought out on the stage, while the painter simply cannot portray some things actors are able to. I think we should merely try to learn from the association of ideas but not abandon the characteristics of our own forms of art. I was much inspired by such paintings as *Raining Flowers* when staging the opera *Angels Come to Scatter Flowers*.\* However, many of the angels depicted in classical paintings fly horizontally with both feet pointing skywards. Naturally we can hardly imitate this pose. We can however, without trying to copy the pose, achieve the ethereal and soaring effect of angels in flight. When we pick a pose for a 'still' on stage we must choose a static one which we can hold for at least a few seconds, otherwise the pose is hard-

\* When Vimalakirti was ill, Buddha sent angels down to earth to scatter flowers on him as a message of comfort.



Visiting Japan (1956)



Meeting Charlie Chaplin in Los Angeles (1930)

ly possible. The characteristic of painting is that it puts motion down on paper and retains its lively appearance. The characteristic of drama is that characters appear in a steady flow of motion from the moment the curtain goes up; it is necessary therefore to have beautiful and enchanting 'stills' as a diversion for the eyes of the audience. The final still pose in a lively big scene is usually extremely important, for very often the climax of the scene is reached in that instant of motionless drama.

### My Two Favourite Operas

*The Drunken Beauty* and *The Maid Who Feigned Madness* are both my favourite operas. The former is a difficult piece which combines intricate singing and dancing. There are various dance movements like leaning backwards holding the winecup in the teeth and sliding slowly to the ground. This can only be done properly after much training of the waist and the leg muscles. The part is therefore usually played by actors skilled in the performance of woman warriors.

The story of *The Drunken Beauty* is quite simple. Emperor Ming-huang of the Tang dynasty promises to come to a feast at Hundred Flowers Pavilion with Lady Yang the imperial concubine. The emperor breaks his word and goes instead to Lady Mei in the west palace. Lady Yang has to feast alone. Because she is unhappy, she drinks heavily and talks and behaves in an intoxicated manner. Finally, bitter and sad, she is helped by her maids to return to her palace late at night.

In this opera, she drinks three times, and her feelings are different each time. The artist must demonstrate these three different stages. First, learning that the emperor has gone to the west palace, she feels lonely and disappointed. But she is afraid that the attendants will laugh at her, so she pretends not to care and keeps a dignified appearance. Then after

drinking a bit, she thinks about the emperor and his other favourite, and is jealous. Raising her cup she reveals her annoyance somewhat. Finally she has had too much to drink and can no longer control herself. She smiles and imbibes recklessly until she becomes completely drunk. One can see from the title of this piece that it mainly depicts a lady in her cups. However it should be performed with discretion and not be over-exaggerated. The artist must keep in mind that here is a noble lady of the court getting drunk and forgetting herself in her loneliness and grief, not a woman of loose conduct behaving wildly after drinking. Only by interpreting it this way can one convey the spirit and produce a beautiful drama.

In 1935 during my visit to the Soviet Union a critic commented on my performance of *The Drunken Beauty*, saying that I was depicting a noble lady getting drunk and there were three stages in my gestures and expressions. First the lady decorously screens her face with her sleeve as she drinks, next she drinks openly, and lastly she drinks with abandon. This I think is a very penetrating observation. Another foreign critic said to me, 'Actually when a person gets drunk, she becomes disorderly and sick, a disgusting, unseemly sight. But on the stage one mustn't show it that way, but should emphasize graceful movements and the harmony of singing and dancing so that the audience gets a feeling of beauty.' This is exactly so. We always say that on the stage one must convey a feeling of beauty; his words show that he had the same idea.

I use *The Drunken Beauty* only as an example. An artist should study well the character and social position of every character he plays, and analyse with care so that he may express the emotions correctly. He should also study the good points of other artists, grasping the main things and absorbing the best. One must not mechanically imitate good intonations

or gestures while forgetting to adapt them in a flexible manner.

Of all the operas I have performed in, *The Maid Who Feigned Madness*\* is one on which I have spent the most effort. The emotions of the daughter in this opera are very hard to describe. There are two kinds of feelings which have to be portrayed on stage. One is the character's joy, anger or sorrow. When things go well, you are happy; when there is misfortune, you show sadness. This is fairly simple. The other type is conflicting, hidden emotions. This is more difficult.

As soon as the daughter appears on the scene, she recites these lines: 'The nightingale weeps on the bough, shedding sad tears in secret.' These words show that she is suffering agonies in her heart. A sudden calamity has struck. Her home has been broken and her husband has disappeared. Returning to her parents' home, she has discovered that the fabricator of the plot against her husband is her own father. Under these complex circumstances, the artist should convey her internal conflict—intense suffering and the necessity to remain calm.

She now realizes how completely heartless her father is. He wants to give her away as a gift. And the emperor is all mighty—she can never escape his clutches if he becomes interested in her. How can a weak woman like her defy him? She has therefore to devise some clever means to extricate herself. Here I try to convey her effort to keep cool.

At this critical moment, she suddenly notices her maid-servant, a mute, indicating by gestures that she should feign madness. Then I show how she forces herself to accept this plan, as a last desperate measure.

Why is it most important to depict

\* This opera tells the story of an evil minister Chao Kao who after trying to murder his son-in-law decided to present his daughter to the Chin emperor. The daughter, however, does not yield to pressure, but helped by a dumb maid, feigns madness and saves herself.

these feelings? We are feigning already when we act a part, and the character in this opera is, in addition, feigning madness. We have to remember all the time that she is only pretending to be mad. She is not really insane, and this can only be shown through her expressions. Since the one who suggests this plan to her happens to be a dumb servant who has lost the power of speech, the daughter can only communicate with her by means of gestures and facial expressions. So from the time she considers feigning madness, one has to show three kinds of feelings: genuine feeling when she accepts the dumb slave's plan, pretended feeling and feigned madness towards her father Chao Kao, and conflicting feeling when she is pondering in doubt. All these different emotions have to be portrayed within a very short time. The performing artist has to work all this out himself. The first thing to do is to forget that you are acting and make yourself one with the part. Only then can you depict those feelings profoundly and meticulously.

Like all other arts, the Chinese classical opera has its own aesthetic basis. The Chinese classical opera is based on singing and dance movements which must follow the cadence of the music to form a certain pattern. The beautiful dance movements created by past artists are all based on gestures in real life, synthesized and accentuated to become art. And so the performing artist has this two-fold task: apart from acting his role according to the development of the story, he must also remember that his job is to express himself through beautiful dance movements. If he fails to do this, he cannot produce good art. Whether the character in the play is truly mad or is just feigning madness, the artist must see to it that all the movements on the stage are beautiful. In this opera the daughter is supposed to pull a few whiskers from Chao Kao's beard with her middle finger and thumb, grimacing at the same time. This gives comic relief if done lightly. But it is not

the least amusing if over-emphasized. Whenever I perform this part, I always see to it that the audience laughs.

The daughter feigns madness both at home and in the imperial court, but her gestures are quite different. In the imperial court her gestures should be more effusive. This is to show her fearless spirit, that she holds them all in contempt, even the emperor and his officials. It also suggests to the audience that the imperial court is a big place, quite different from her own house. When she comes out, she first sings four lines: 'With lowered head I descend from the phoenix carriage. . . . I shall see what the tyrant has to say.' At this moment she should look calm and ready to cope with the tense situation awaiting her.

When she goes up the steps, before paying homage to the emperor, she should pretend to dust her cap and gown like a man in a dashing and swaggering manner. This arouses the audience's interest.

When the emperor is berated by her, he grows angry, and orders his officers to cross their swords before her, to threaten her with their arms. According to tradition this is done by two soldiers. But I felt they were not enough, so I made a change. I let four soldiers come up on all sides and besiege me with their swords. Then I shake my sleeves at them and drive them back. In this way I felt the tension was further heightened. It showed the daughter's unbending courage more strongly and intensified the drama of the episode.

After she leaves the imperial court and sees her dumb slave again, she registers sadness and joy, as if she cannot express her feelings fully. Even then I must not relax for one moment. Though the play is nearly over and I am tired, I laugh three times, with a touch of sadness, and the drama concludes in a solemn and melancholy mood.

A friend who has seen me playing the leading role in these two operas several times commented that I like to keep

changing my gestures and movements. Actually I do not do so purposely. As I perform a part, new understanding of it makes me alter my gestures unconsciously. Of course you cannot change the main elements in a drama. But you can always improve your technical skill by dint of hard study. Maturity is attained slowly. You come to understand a part only after much practice. Unless you really understand a character, even if you are taught how to act it, you cannot interpret it correctly. The technical skill of a performing artist improves with the years; it cannot be forced. I admit that I have improved my art by constantly revising my technique.

There is no limit to the perfection of an art. There is a well-known saying among professionals: 'The teacher gives you initial knowledge, but how far you go depends on yourself.' This means that to achieve something in art, you must struggle hard and persevere. If you rely on your own talent and do not work hard, or become conceited as soon as you achieve some slight success and do not welcome criticism from all sides, it is certain you will never achieve much.

I have never felt satisfied with my performing technique. Take the opera *The Maid Who Feigned Madness* for instance. I have studied this part for dozens of years, and people seem to think that this is one piece I do fairly well. But even now I keep discovering shortcomings. I remember, one day a few years ago when I was playing the part in Shanghai, it happened that my voice was not too good that day, so my acting was also somewhat different. The following day a friend made this criticism: 'I like this opera of his best of all and I have seen it many times. I am full of admiration for his wonderful acting. However in the performance yesterday I think he overacted a bit, and lost some of his usual balance and poise. I hope he will pay attention to this, for over-exaggeration means bad art.' I took these words very seriously.

Because my voice was not good that day, in order to hide my weakness in the part, I unconsciously overdid my gestures. I am very grateful that this friend pointed out my mistake, for I have always believed in balance and poise in stage art, and in not accentuating certain characteristics. This was what I have aimed at all these years. When I trespassed on my own rule, it was lucky that it was pointed out to me in good time, so that I could correct myself. It has been most helpful to me in subsequent performances.

### My New Audience

Since commencing my stage career at the age of eleven, I only stopped performing during the few years when Shanghai was under the domination of the Japanese aggressors. During that period I grew a moustache to emphasize my refusal to work for the enemy. In all my years in the old society, though I had made a name for myself as an actor, I never truly understood for whom I was working.

But my new audience, the workers, peasants and soldiers who are China's labouring people, brought tremendous changes to my stage life. Their enthusiasm and interest in my art have greatly encouraged me, bringing me new strength, and giving my art a new lease on life. My confidence was restored. I began performing in different places, many of which I had seldom visited before. Now I have a much wider audience.

In the spring of 1953 I played in Shihchiachuang. A peasant nearly eighty years old who came in from the countryside to see my performance happened to stay in the same hotel as my troupe. To one of our actors he said: 'I have travelled dozens of *li* to see Mei Lan-fang and queued up four days for a ticket but I still haven't been able to get one. Now I have spent all my money I hope you will give me a programme to take back as a souvenir.' The actor told me this story

and I felt very moved. I immediately persuaded a friend of mine to give up his ticket for the old man.

Some people cannot understand why I work so hard on the stage when I am already quite old. Do I have to work for my living? Or is it because I want to satisfy my private passion for acting?

No, neither of these is the answer. The main reason is that the audience has not lost their interest in me; they are still urging me to advance, to do something new and better. They want me to bring out before a wide audience all the best I have learned in the past decades from the old masters so that the younger generation of artists can make use of it. I cannot fail them in their hope. Today many of the artistic achievements and technical improvements of past artists are gradually being forgotten, while the new generation of artists has not yet reached maturity. At this juncture, as a stage artist of the older generation I should work to the best of my ability and as much as I can. So in 1959 I produced a new opera—*Mu Kuei-ying Takes Command*.

### Artistic Perception and Judgement

A person usually tends a bit towards hero-worship when watching the performance of a famous artist. It's easy to hold his attention, and therefore easy to move him; the performance does not just drift over his head. On the other hand, it is more difficult to recognize the merits of an artist who has not made his name although possessing a good technique. When viewing a stage performance you should not ignore the lesser known artists, for this is the opportunity to practise your artistic perception and judgement.

When I was young, each time I finished playing my part, I would watch the show from the wings. Sometimes I saw some minor parts being played by actors who did not have a good appearance or a good voice, and the audience paid them little attention. But backstage they were

treated with great respect. I realized that these were veteran artists who had good technique, but frankly speaking, at first I could not see why they were considered good. Only after watching and listening carefully over a long period did I come to understand that such artists knew a great deal, were very meticulous in their art and really surpassed the others in many ways.

For instance, when actors A, B and C play secondary roles in an opera you may not see what outstanding talents they have. But if one day the actor B should die, and someone else takes his place, you realize immediately that B has certain talents which his substitute does not possess. Through such actual experience you learn to improve your artistic perception.

Apart from learning from actors playing your kind of roles, you also should study the art of actors playing other roles in order to broaden your outlook. Watching a new type of Chinese opera or a foreign drama is also a good way to train your artistic perception. It is difficult to appreciate the good things in a drama which is entirely new to you, but if you study it patiently, you can gradually recognize its good points and shortcomings. You should tell the experts in that form of drama what you think are good or bad whenever there is an opportunity, so that you may learn their reactions to your amateurish views. When you can criticize correctly a new form of art, it means that you have improved your artistic perception and judgement.

You should do this patiently and consistently, not just when the mood suits you. Otherwise you lose opportunities to improve your art. Let me mention one example: I remember once I went to a local opera I had never seen before. My first impression was that the singing and dialogue were ridiculous and the music jarring. I wanted to get up and walk out. Then I reminded myself to be patient and not forget my profession and

purpose in seeing this drama. I forced myself to study it. Suddenly I found I could understand some of its good points. My eyes and my ears became more receptive. After studying such operas several times, I not only could understand them, but learned to enjoy the performance of some of the actors. In the dozens of years of my stage career, I have always tried to learn new things although sometimes I lost patience and became subjective. If I had not reminded myself in time, I would have lost some good opportunities. It is entirely up to yourself whether or not you improve your perception and judgement.

This is so not only when studying performances on stage; it is even more applicable when studying with a teacher. The teacher gives us our basic training. In the beginning, naturally we have no artistic perception or judgement; we can only imitate his every sound, every gesture. After we reach a certain level, we have to concentrate on the teacher's special technique. For example, at the time I studied the *kunchu* opera *The Peony Pavilion* under veteran *kunchu* artist Chiao Huei-lan, Chiao had already long since given up the stage. My impression of him was that of a wizened old man. But when he started demonstrating gestures, I felt that the aged man wearing an old furcoat had ceased to exist. I could only see the exquisite movements of the heroine in the play. I thought then, if someone ignorant of the art was watching, he would think it was extremely funny.

Another veteran artist Chen Teh-lin also taught me the same role, and he also gave me the same impression. Their performances without make-up were just as enthralling as their performances on stage. This is real art. When you are with such veteran artists, apart from learning the many fine movements they teach, there is also a great deal they cannot put into words which you discover just by watching closely.

When you develop perception, not only can you emulate your teachers—you discover things worth noticing everywhere. For instance, you observe the expressions of a man sitting leisurely, those of a person who has lost his child on the road, the way a good calligraphist holds his pen, the adept movements of a woman washing clothes, and so on. All unusual expressions or highly rhythmic movements can be grasped by a person with a sharp sense of perception, then translated into art and adapted for the stage.

When an actor tries to depict a certain character in a drama, apart from learning from past literature and the accumulated experience of famous artists of the past, he has to absorb new material from life to enrich that character and give new life to traditional art. If he is unable to differentiate the good from the bad, the beautiful from the ugly, the things he absorbs from life will be unsuitable, or even bad.

Sometimes the artist intends to absorb useful material from life, but because he cannot differentiate the good from the bad, the beautiful from the ugly, and has not studied properly the experience of past artists, or having studied cannot

grasp this experience thoroughly and treat it seriously enough, then he does not know what things can be adapted to the stage and what cannot.

Take for instance the character of the Monkey King. When played by a good actor, the audience feels that he is a hero, a god; on stage he looks splendid. His make-up and movements convey his heroic spirit, while at the same time he displays the characteristic agility of the monkey. That is how the character should be depicted. However, some actors playing this role do not convey the same feeling. They try hard to imitate a real monkey, bringing to the stage a lot of unbecoming gestures. Such an indiscriminate adherence to nature is a very bad tendency.

Of course an artist should be inventive in his stage art, but this originality must come through study. If he has not studied widely, if he has not properly digested past experiences, he will not be able to find the right means of expression. He will only be able to invent things out of his head. This not only hampers the development of his art, it may even lead him astray.

Translated by Yang Chin-sheng





## Two Poems from Puravi

### FULFILMENT

One silent sleepless night  
in deep emotion,  
your head bent low,  
your face tear-stained,  
you kissed my hand and  
said:

'If you go far away,  
a boundless emptiness  
will make my world  
one vast arid waste.  
A weariness of spirit  
stretched from sky to sky,  
will rob my mind  
of every hope of peace.  
That wordless grief  
is worse than death.'

And I drew your weeping face  
close to my heart,  
and whispering said:

'If you go away,  
the dark sky  
will fill with our separation,  
and blaze with pain.  
Sorrow's clouds

will sweep my soul  
from end to end.  
Far and away if you go,  
you will remain  
nearest to my heart;  
your right to my world  
full and final.'

The seven stars  
listened to those  
whispered secrets  
as our words drifted along  
the fragrance of Rajanigandha.  
Then, with stealthy steps  
Death came and put us asunder  
like an ocean  
dividing one from the other.  
You passed into that  
greater realm beyond  
where speech does not cross  
nor touch, nor sense.  
And yet  
this void is not empty:  
it is white with the heat  
of an aching heart.  
All alone,  
out of this fire,  
I fashion my world of dreams  
in radiant songs.

1924

### THE EXCHANGE

She brought me flowers of joy  
and I had with me  
the fruits of my sorrow.  
Who will be the loser  
I asked her,  
if we exchange?

Amused and smiling  
she said,  
Come on then, let us.  
My garland is yours,  
I shall accept  
your fruit of pain.

I looked up at her face  
and saw that she was pitiless  
in her beauty.

She clapped her hands  
in glee,  
and picked up  
my basket of fruits,  
while I held to my heart  
her garland of flowers.  
I win,  
smiling said she  
as in a moment  
she flitted away.

The sun rose  
to the mid-heaven  
and it was burning hot.  
At the sultry end  
of the day  
all the flowers withered  
and shed their petals.

1925

*Translated from Bengali by Kshitis Roy*

## Christmas in Hiroshima

*Frederick Joss*

It was Christmas and it was Sunday. Sunday is heartbreak day in Scotland and also on Japan's railways. There were only crawling local trains. So I decided to spend Christmas Day evening in the damned city.

Having seen Nagasaki and read reports about present-day life in Hiroshima, I confidently expected that Hiroshima's most tragic feature would be its name. Hiroshima! A landmark of the history of mankind like Pearl Harbour and Auschwitz or the sacking of Constantinople by the Crusaders.

I expected another Nagasaki with the addition perhaps of a peace cathedral with thousands of burning candles and a super-organ celebrating the Feast of Peace.

Hiroshima is not built into the mountains like Nagasaki. Hiroshima straddles across seven arms of a river estuary, and the neighbouring hills are low. It was almost dark when the train slowed down even further and the plaintive voices of the conductors wailed out the syllables 'Hiroshima! Hiroshima!'

I thought I would arrive at a brand-new railway station as in Kyoto and hundreds of other Japanese towns. But Hiroshima Station is an ugly patched-up reconstruction of the original building designed in the Prussian style of Japan's pre-1914 affinity to the Germany of the Kaiser.

It is ill-arranged and dirty and it was difficult to find the left luggage office.

Then I went out into the station square. The new central post office and telegraph office and bus terminus were there, as in all Japanese station squares. But the pavements and the roadway were dirty. There was a drizzle of icy rain. An unplanned agglomeration of buildings facing the station were lined with brightly-lit arcades. They were mostly restaurants, hotels and shops. I turned to the right and followed the buses up a rising road which parted to allow one branch to cross over a ramshackle bridge over what appeared to be a river arm. I glanced at the shop windows. They seemed to belong to junk shops. Both in politics and in the retail trade the Japanese are the finest window-dressers in the world. The tiniest shop in Kyoto and even in Tokyo or Osaka is clean and well ordered; every window reveals miracles of arrangement. Japanese shop windows are but another pearl in that necklace of the domestic arts which include miniature gardening, flower arrangement and interior decoration. These Hiroshima shops were little more than shacks, as you would expect to see in a shanty town thrown up in a gold rush or in the aftermath of war.

I walked over the bridge. Refuse floated on the water below. Grotesque outbuildings patently made from scraps of waste timber and old boxes were stuck on to larger constructions supported by wooden struts and ladders. All over

Japan the irrepressible little Japanese whizzed energetically through the street, chattering and smiling and bowing to each other. Here shabbily clad men and women and children dragged themselves listlessly to and fro.

The quarter at the other end of the bridge did not look Japanese. In its squalor it reminded me forcibly of Korean cities. The lighting was bad and so was the road surface.

Infected by the mood of those around me I slouched back to the station square by a different route.

It was raining harder now and I was glad to have the protection of the arcades opposite the railway station. It was then that I noticed the many young girls who were standing around in groups. One sees many girls in the streets of other Japanese cities. They are students and office workers and shop girls waiting for buses or having a chat before going home. But there was something about these girls here in Hiroshima that was different. About half of them were dressed in gay kimonos, a proportion rather unusual in Japan's modern cities except on the most important holidays. And there was something different about the behaviour of these girls. Clearly these girls were prostitutes. Street-walkers plying their trade in the dazzling lights of the shopping arcades in Station Square, Hiroshima.

They solicited, charmingly and demurely, but they solicited. As street-walkers in other parts of the world they had many refusals. They smiled sweetly and bowed as if the refusal or acceptance were a great honour.

I did not trust my eyes. I had seen street-walkers in many parts of the world. But not in Japan except one or two hanging around the Dai-Ichi and other hotels in Tokyo. Even there and in the side streets of Osaka they were furtive and sought protection in darkness. I had been solicited in Kobe and Tokyo and even in Gion Gay Quarter in Kyoto, but not by the women themselves. Miserable

male pimps had tugged at my sleeve and whisperingly promised me 'nice Japanese girl or geisha'.

Prostitution is banned by law in Japan. Parliament had decreed it three years ago and students of sociology had shaken their heads. For, if social and economic conditions favour prostitution, a legal ban can only drive it underground but never abolish it.

But just as no French Home Minister can nowadays own the biggest Paris brothel as in the good old Stavisky days, open street soliciting is simply not possible in the Japan of today. In Tokyo as in London hotel porters and massage salons, model agencies and some dance halls receive their whack before the women get theirs.

But here in Hiroshima the serried ranks of prostitutes paraded in the gleaming limelight, unafraid and undisturbed.

Every why has a wherefore and it was not too difficult to establish the aetiology of street prostitution in Hiroshima. Hiroshima was different from other Japanese towns. Hiroshima was dirty. Hiroshima was depressed. Hiroshima stank. And Hiroshima has droves of parading teenage prostitutes.

As I ambled along, girls spoke to me, in Japanese and broken English. I wore a shabby gabardine coat and a dripping beret. When I said 'Sorry, no money' the girls seemed to believe it. They said politely 'Sorry' or *Sumimasen* and bowed with a smile. But one dimpled moon-faced teenager was more enterprising. She replied: 'But not much money.' Whereupon I said:

'But not enough money.'

And she asked: 'You have money for cup of coffee?'

I nodded.

'I show you where you have coffee,' she said, and gestured.

Other girls had overheard us and smiled. My pick-up smiled, and I smiled.

I was guided through a maze of wooden houses and past a number of

tea-rooms, as Japan's coffee bars are named.

'Not this one. Not that one,' said my guide, and it was clear that she was taking me to a place where she received a commission for bringing customers.

At last we arrived. It was a tea-room not different from any of the others but it seemed the girl's operational headquarters. We were greeted by Papa-San and Mama-San—the teahouse owner and his wife—and the girl ordered coffee for me.

'How much?' I asked cautiously.

'One hundred yen,' said Papa-San.

That was about two English shillings and a little above the normal rate for a cup of coffee in Japan.

I agreed and asked the girl: 'You want a cup of coffee?'

'You have enough money?' There was some concern in her voice. I ordered the second cup and we sat down, squeezing into the narrow compartment of one table and two benches just as you will find anywhere in the Sohos of the world.

Next to the bar stood a huge Christmas tree richly but skilfully decorated. The candles were real. Mama-San lit them in our honour.

'Where you come from?' asked the girl and I told her that I had landed at Moji and was on my way to Tokyo.

'You get money in Tokyo?'

'I hope so. When I landed I had not much more than the railway ticket.'

Then I asked if she did not miss business by having coffee with me.

No, she said, it was cold and wet outside and it was nice to sit down in the warmth and have coffee with me.

Another girl came in and was introduced. I ordered a third cup of coffee. She was uninitiated and asked demurely if she could have whisky. We all laughed and she was told by her colleague that coffee was as far as my purse would go.

Yet another girl came and the process was repeated.

Four were as many as could be seated at one table and my Christmas party was complete. Western church music came over the radio and the girls sang Christmas carols.

The boss was interested to hear that I had come from Hong Kong. He had heard that shopping there was cheap. He pointed at my wristwatch.

'Is this Hong Kong watch?'

'It is Swiss watch bought in Hong Kong,' I said.

'May I see, please?' he asked. 'Very nice watch. How much?'

'Three thousand yen in Japanese money,' I said, 'about fifty Hong Kong dollars.'

'Very cheap,' said the coffee house owner as I fastened the wristlet, and he offered me three thousand yen.

I sold him the watch and ordered whisky for all, and the girls were happy.

'How long you stay in Hiroshima?' asked my pick-up.

'I must take the night train to Kyoto,' I said, 'in half an hour's time.'

When I arrived I had played with the idea of staying the night in Hiroshima. But my heart was like a lump of lead.

'Why you not stay the night?' she asked.

'I have no time. And even if I had the time I have no money for a room.'

'You stay in my house, please,' she said in a low voice.

'I have no money for you.'

'You stay, no money,' and she pressed my hand.

It was Christmas night in Hiroshima.

'I must leave for the station now,' I gulped and started putting my coat on.

The girls helped me into it and my pick-up gave me a box of matches.

'This is the name and address of this teahouse and I've written my name on it,' she said. 'You come back to Hiroshima? Soon?'

I said I would, and I did, a fortnight later, but I avoided the prostitutes' pitch

under the arcades and the little quarter with the café.

I forced myself to look at Hiroshima in a more systematic and less sentimental manner. On my second pilgrimage I did not arrive alone but together with my Canadian friend, Herb, a thoroughly non-arty twenty-six-year-old Jewish lawyer from Oshawa, a Toronto suburb. We had caught an express train at Osaka and were hungry. Between the two of us we did not have enough Japanese money to take a porter to carry our bags. Herb had American traveller's cheques and I had a Swiss 50 francs note which a friend in Zurich had sent me as a present.

We had a jolly meal in the dining-car and proffered traveller's cheques when the bill was presented. Several conferences were held between the catering and engineering staffs of the train, but 'very sorry, no can take traveller's cheque.' I produced my Swiss bank note. A bright-eyed waitress took it and returned a quarter of an hour later with a European traveller in the garb of a Roman Catholic priest. Lo and behold, he was Swiss and knew the current rate of exchange to the last decimal. He was accompanying Father Pire to Hiroshima.

'Father Pire, the Nobel Prize winner?' I exclaimed, having seen the famous philanthropist's face in Japanese newspapers. He had won the great award for having founded refugee villages on the European continent.

'Would you like to meet Father Pire?' asked the priest and he promised to bring the famous man to the dining-car. They came but could not sit down with us because they had a charming Japanese young lady with them, who later turned out to be a well-known concert pianist. There were three of them and two of us and only four diners could be accommodated at one table.

Father Pire, a lean, sharp-faced man with quick eyes, was very communicative at first and I heard all about his programme in Hiroshima. He asked me

what I was going to do there and I told him about my work and my first visit to the martyred city and my meeting with the little whores. After that the atmosphere sank by a couple of dozen degrees.

But the pianist wrote down her name for me, with her Tokyo telephone number.

The Swiss priest was stationed with a mission in Kyoto. He spoke perfect Japanese and acted as Father Pire's interpreter.

At Hiroshima Station their party was welcomed by dignitaries and guided to a little cavalcade of cars.

Herb and I studied the tourist office posters advertising 'Atomic Tours' in special coaches, but decided to walk and look at things slowly.

By then I had gathered, journalist-fashion, a bunch of historical data concerning the rebirth from the ashes of the great city of Hiroshima. A few courageous Americans launched the flow of Hiroshima literature, beginning with the spine-chilling book published by John Hersey in New York in 1946. The latest is Robert Jungk's *Children of the Ashes*.\* It is his second or third book on Hiroshima and he is so familiar with the place and its horrors that he describes the Hiroshima of 1959 and 1960 as a wonderful place, with only few traces of the early inferno. I had not seen Hiroshima in the early days as Robert Jungk has, and I can compare today's Hiroshima only with Japan's other rebuilt cities, not with the post-atomic desert inhabited by cripples and gangsters that he knew.

Many of the data I had collected in Tokyo are also given at length in Jungk's latest book, and many more that I had never heard of.

One detail appears more ghoulish and fiendish to me than the most sickening descriptions of the lacerated bodies which

\* Heinemann, London, 25s.

took weeks and months to burn to death. On 16th February, 1946, a report appeared in Tokyo newspapers claiming that 'The effect of the radiation on persons who had been at least three kilometres from the centre of the explosions was positively beneficial, in that it had acted therapeutically in cases of tuberculosis and stomach ulcer.'

For years under the Occupation regime Japanese newspapers and medical men were forbidden to utter the slightest hint that there was such a thing as radiation disease. The people who died of it or, worse, lived with it were consciously or unconsciously subversive propagandists. The treatment of the survivors of Hiroshima during the first few years by official Japan, by the Occupation power and by the world at large was far more cruel, far more humiliating, far more demoralising than the *pikadon*—'lightning thunder', as the Japanese call the atom bomb—had been itself. There was no help, no sympathy, not even a hearing for the Damned of Hiroshima. Those who tried to escape from the poisoned rubbles were treated as contagious lepers, as lazy good-for-nothings, as shameless beggars wanting to cash in on the atom bomb.

The first unit of good samaritans from Tokyo, Japanese doctors and nurses, were expelled from Hiroshima when the Occupation authorities discovered that the medical men had sent reports claiming the existence of an atomic sickness, an after-effect of radiation, to the Research Centre of the capital. Such foolishness was not in the interest of the free new world which was being built on the ruins of Japanese Imperialism, on the ashes of Nazism and Fascism.

First things first: before the first Occupation troops arrived in the area the one and only police launch in service, to be known to history as the *Hoan Maru*, sailed up and down the arms of the river estuary, along the coast and from island to island of the Inland Sea, buying 500 young girls and women—most of them

from honourable working families—with money out of a public fund organised by a patriotic citizen who had been a prosperous brothel keeper before the war. Every one of his colleagues had to contribute 20,000 yen. The organiser had acted under the authority of the police officer who headed the Security Office of Hiroshima Prefecture. The uplifting speech the police official made to the assembled pimps on 20th August, 1945—only two weeks after the *pikadon*—in the ruins of the Kangyo Bank is on record. A few weeks later the police acknowledged the fact that ten brothels had been set up in the Hiroshima area, the biggest just outside the gate of Kaita Barracks. Seven hundred Japanese women—200 were survivors of the bomb—were ready when the 34th Infantry Regiment of the U.S. Eighth Army marched in, and the 'houses of consolation' were flying the flags of the liberating nations which were laying the foundations of a new and better world. Prostitution was the first officially organised and internationally practised industry of the new Hiroshima, and the brothels the first planned buildings.

For five years desperate mayors, vice-mayors and aldermen besieged in vain the seats of democratic power in Tokyo: Parliament, Government, international agencies. They begged them to stop punishing the victims. In vain they pointed out that Hiroshima was a festering sore on the body of Japan which could poison the rest with its crime and filth. Effective power was not in the hands of civil authorities or the police, which were both infected with the germs of corruption and racketeering. Two well organised gangs held sway in Hiroshima, warring against each other but jointly dominating the social fabric as Al Capone's miserable gangs had done in Cicero, Chicago. Hiroshima remained boycotted and shunned, a snake-pit kept in quarantine by the rest of the nation and the rest of the world.

Then suddenly came sympathy, relief,

money—even privileges—to the unspeakable shacks and hovels that were the post-pikadon Hiroshima. Factories and shipyards were rebuilt, docks and roads reconstructed: there was work for thousands, and night clubs and massage salons took over from the emergency kitchens. Hiroshima rose from the ashes. Hiroshima has more inhabitants now than before, more taxis, more buses, more private cars. One planned super-street cuts across the former atomic desert, and neon-lighted replicas of aerial rockets and atom bombs blaze at night decorating the skyline, which consists of ill-assorted semi-skyscrapers and ramshackle buildings. Crime is still rampant. Sixteen years after the *pikadon* survivors hide the shame of their disfigurement in their slum homes and in dark corners, and the orphans of the bomb walk the streets in the well-lit shopping arcades waiting for the stray customer. Survivors and newcomers throw their refuse from the bridges. Business and squalor march hand-in-hand in the designated City of Peace of Hiroshima.

What brought about this miraculous change which ended the pariah life, the suppurating pauperism of the atom bomb city?

War. The answer is war. War broke out in 1950. Korea was a flame, and all Japan was the base. The old arsenals had to serve again, and Hiroshima had been one of the greatest. Arms, ships, lorries, gun tractors again rolled and flowed, newly-built or repaired, from the assembly lines in the City of Peace. War had killed Hiroshima, and war has brought it to life again. That is the lesson that the history of our day has beaten into the scarred and blister-covered heads of the survivors of the *pikadon*.

The Occupation regime ended and with it the embargo on sympathy and research. Added to the industry of war, which had brought back Hiroshima into the fold of humanity again, was the industry of peace. 'Peace' is the slogan

of the tourist industry in Hiroshima. Monumental palaces of peace have arisen as tourist attractions. A Park of Peace invites philanthropic meditation. In inclement weather the peace tourist is invited to think his pious thoughts in brand-new grey temples. The Atom Bomb Museum, a steel and glass box on post-Corbusier stilts, contains no Madame Tussaud-type Chamber of Horrors, but you can see tiles and stones with human shadows on them which are the only remainder of human beings. A few steps away Hiroshima displays to visiting importers specimens of goods produced in the City of Peace which are not bought by governments at war: tinned fish, rayon and silk, DDT, toys, rubber gloves and hot-water bottles.

Two industries are peculiar to the new Hiroshima: the adaptation of American-made guns for use by the less tall gunners of Nippon, and atom bomb tourism. There is some disagreement over the centrepiece of the Hiroshima pilgrimage, the 'Atomic Dome', a half-destroyed building with naked girders, carefully preserved as a ruin like the spire of the Kaiser Wilhelm Memorial Church in West Berlin. The smug profiteers—who are not survivors of Hiroshima—are not pleased at the sight of those gaunt girders; they feel, with the instinct of the businessman, that trans-Pacific peace pilgrims prefer to see smooth and newly-built peace monuments. *Heiwa*—'peace'—is the brand name of business-like Hiroshima. Peace is prosperity and should not be symbolised by ruins. This aesthetic thought gains more supporters every day and perhaps next time I make my pilgrimage I will not find the remains of the Atomic Dome but a gleaming and neon-lighted Hiroshima Tower neatly decorated—like so many other new Hiroshima buildings—with an elegant atom bomb at the top.

Perhaps by then the last survivors of the bomb will have perished and healthy people fill the City of Peace.

## Letter from New Delhi

# The Writer and Indian Unity

New Delhi

On a tour in South-east Asia recently, I happened to spend three days in Delhi, and met some writers from India.

It was actually on the day of the Gandhi Jayanti, the celebration of Gandhi's birthday. Thousands of people thronged the Gandhi Mela, or fair; there, under a tent, continuous spinning by long queues of volunteers went on all day. Men, women, young and old, each took a turn for a few minutes at one of the hand spinning chakras, or wheels, making cotton thread, in memory of Gandhi, who taught his people in India to break the power of the cotton mills of Lancashire, in England, by spinning their own cloth and boycotting English goods.

The writers I met came from many parts of India; some from the south, some from Punjab, others from Bengal, etc. And they had come together, informally, and so we talked about what was worrying them all: the problem of Indian unity.

For lately, the unity of India has shown, if not signs of cracking, at least danger signals. There has been a revival of all those things which make for splitting rather than for integration. While we were in Delhi a National Integration Council was sitting, trying to find ways and means of promoting more unity in India.

What are the problems, and how did they arise?

In order to answer this question, let us examine first the course of the national liberation movement in India during the past decade since independence.

A national liberation movement is composed of many elements: in order to get rid of colonialism, all sorts of forces, many classes, except the one closely allied to colonialism and directly depending upon it, unite to fight oppression and exploitation. Among these various forces are progressive ones, but there

are also reactionary forces, especially in countries in Asia where many feudal elements remain. Thus the colonial oppressor finds himself confronted by a united front of many elements. In India, independence was achieved by this amalgamation of forces.

But afterwards, as time went on, reactionary elements in India which had supported national independence gradually gathered themselves to stop any further advance towards progressive reforms within the country itself, and in order to protect their own feudal and class interests of all kinds.

Thus, at the beginning, the national liberation movement vigorously castigated that old evil of India, the evil of caste; efforts were made to break the barriers of caste down and to give untouchables the same rights and opportunities as other castes. Unity of language through the use of a national language (Hindi) was strongly advocated. India proclaimed herself a secular state, where all religions would be free, but none would be allowed to interfere with the running of the state or the freedom of citizens. And so on.

But today, caste has once again begun to play an evil role; untouchables still find it difficult to be accepted; education is still difficult for them in certain areas. The Brahmin, upper caste, often is also the wealthiest, or the best educated, or both, and tends naturally to favour its own caste-class complex. Provincialism is rampant. Thus in any district, it is difficult for a person who is not of the same province to maintain a job. The South complains (sometimes with reason, but sometimes without) that people from the South find it extremely difficult to get jobs in government service, and that the 'plums' are reserved for people from the North. The reply is that all promotion is by examination in the Hindi language, and that many people from the South do not pass this examination satisfactorily.

This brings us to the problems of language, and therefore to the writers I met. There are sixteen main language groups in India (including English). That means that of the 3,000 or more listed writers in India, there are sixteen languages in use among them. And that many of them cannot read the works of other writers of India, because the languages are not the same.

Thus Tamil writers are not easily read in Bengal or Punjab or Assam, in fact scarcely at all, if they write in the Tamil language. Similarly Punjabi writers cannot be read in Madras if they write in the vernacular.

Now linguism is being used as an obstacle, and this dismayed many writers, who are all for unity in India. To combat this, many schemes are suggested, chiefly translation. Inter-Indian translation of works of writers is of great value and importance, to get writers in India better acquainted with each other. Even Tagore's works have not been translated in all the languages of India. This work is now going to be done.

For this work the Sahitya Akademi, in Delhi, is dedicating a large amount of funds and time. It is very important work. All the writers I met were aware of the importance, not only of getting to know literature from abroad and getting it translated in Hindi and other of India's languages, but also of getting to know each other's works.

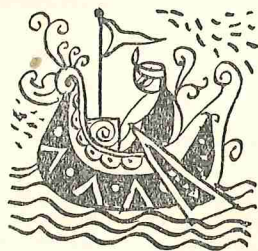
Then, last but not least, there is religion. As we all know, independence in India started in a very bloody and horrible manner, with the Partition. The colonial power had carefully nurtured the divisions and distinctions between

Hindu and Muslim, even putting them on separate electoral rolls, so that when independence came there was absolute bloodshed, and many hundreds of thousands of people were killed, in religious riots. Now there is absolutely no reason at all why religion should lead to bloodbaths . . . except that religion is a highly emotional conditioned reflex, and is used, or rather misused, as an excuse for other grievances. This happened in India. But with the realization of independence, it looked as if this Hindu-Muslim unnecessary controversy would die down. Alas, recently, in no other place but in a University (Aligarh University), there were again Hindu-Muslim riots, and these afterwards spread to quite a few places. Altogether about 40 people have been killed so far in these riots.

To a writer, to the Indian writers there, all this was cause for extensive grief. The writer feels that he has a responsibility towards society, towards his own human kind, which is the promotion of understanding, the promotion of progress for humanity, and the fight against oppression, and also ignorance and superstitions of all kinds.

What can the writers of India do when faced with these problems? Those I met felt that their responsibility was to face these difficult issues and to promote unity in possible ways. But for this much work, comprising the reorganizing of the social structure of India, must be done. As long as a social and class structure which encourages the survival of casteism, linguism, and communalism remains, the struggle will be hard.

Alamah



## Letter from Peking

# The Ginko's a Glory in Gold

Peking

Autumn in Peking and one thinks of the old ginko trees out by temples in the Western Hills, especially the two at the Sleeping Buddha Temple which change to such a gorgeous gold, adding their vivid colour to the reds and greens of the temple columns and paintings. Every year I go, and every year get a thrill from taking in nature's final art exhibition before the west winds swirls the leaves away, and we live with but the hope for another spring.

This year, I tried to follow the sun southward and catch a little more summer before coming back to the excitements of a Peking National Day. Below as one flew south, the great rivers curled across the plains. Everywhere one could see where irrigation works had been carried out, and soon the Yangtze was below us and our wheels touched the runway.

A surprise awaited me on going to see the Nanking Museum. It has been well known as one of the best provincial ones in China, but now it has taken a new road, concentrating on the relics of Kiangsu province alone. A great mass of both old and new Neolithic specimens have been unearthed, some of the most interesting right from the centre of Nanking city itself nearby the old Drum Tower. Here a skeleton lying on its back was found, a dog beside it, a stone tool by its waist, and protective armour over its genitals in the form of a tortoise shell with holes for tie strings at each end. There were many Neolithic pots that reminded me of those found in the West Kansu, one with a cover like the modern Chinese tea bowl. There was a lifelike phallus of natural size in red pottery, such as I had seen in stone in the Northwest. Maybe these early Neolithic peoples came down the great river from the highlands where they had evolved from more primitive forms. Some of the stone tools, too, reminded very much of Polynesian forms.

In Nanking too, the Taiping Museum has been re-organised, and much new material added. It is a peaceful spot to spend an after-

noon, for the Ming period garden beside it is being reconstructed, with its ancient rockeries and pools, little bridges and bamboos. The stone boat in the gardens of what was once in the palace of Hung Hsiu Chuan, the Taiping Emperor, is worth going to see. In these buildings is the office of Sun Yat-sen, first President after the fall of the Manchus, and here too Chiang Kai-shek made his offices. Now the premises are those of the provincial Political Consultative Council.

The road to Wuhu is mostly industry, but from Wuhu south into the Huangshan region of south Anhwei, one is really back in the country again. One lunches on top of a rise looking at the serried peaks of Chiu Hua Shan, then takes a hot bath in the modernised mineral baths of Huangshan. Climbs through bamboo groves, plays with children, looks at movies every night, and rests up in general with considerable comfort, and much appreciation of what is surely one of the scenic wonders of the East. A road is being cut up the mountain side so that in future the fat and middle aged will be able to get up to the more scenic spots without too much difficulty.

Back in Nanking, we found all bustle and excitement preparing for October the First celebrations. Streets being swept, towers and archways being erected, and everyone busy. On the foundation of one of the old Ming palaces, a collection of Ming palace stones are being placed. Heavy bases for palace pillars, carved lintels and tablets. A grand place for Nanking children to run and play hide and seek amongst, as they were doing the evening we came.

National Day in Peking this October was especially brilliant, as if the people said, 'We have had drought for three seasons, but our spirit has not suffered. We will show them!' The militia marched with precision, children released balloons and doves, writhing dragons chased fleeing suns with careless abandon through the clouds, floats were never more gorgeous, mountaineers came past in a solid

block like a mountain itself, and swimmers following with graceful steps, lithe limbs and straight bodies showed the new China perhaps best of all—man against all the forces that would pull him down, man clear of encumbrances going ahead in gaiety and determination together. The folk from the seventy countries attending were impressed. No one could help being so.

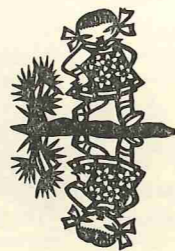
The functions that went on over the holidays were outstanding in their way. The President of Cuba brought his message. Amongst those who came with him were children of some of the leading figures in the Cuban revolution—a son of Castro, along with a bright eyed thirteen year old boy film star, and a cheery bunch of others. A nice human touch they gave to the various functions. It would be interesting to know their total impression of their tour when they get home. Then amongst the distinguished visitors were the King and Queen of Nepal, the Belgian Queen Mother, who were finding much to interest them in the China they see for the first time. I noticed at one function the ex-Emperor and now happy commoner Pu Yi, smile and nod as he passed the Panchan Lama down to Peking from Lhasa. Government leaders seem ageless, as spry and on the ball as they were twelve years ago when they came into Peking. Harvests on the whole have been better this autumn, which must encourage them a good deal. Then all the major targets of the second five year plan have been fulfilled, which too is no mean thing in a land as large as in China and with all its difficulties.

Autumn and child life of Peking takes to heavier clothing in the traditional way. Red woollen jerseys lend colour to the streets. A

small boy in Lu Li Chang where I walked this afternoon had a bright idea. He was about seven, and he mustered up some four and five years old and had them going on all fours like horses while he shouted commands and flayed them with a whip made of a piece of string suspended from a stick. The string of course could not be even felt through all that clothing and made no impression on even the bare bottoms that emerged from the comfortable split pants. Everyone was having a wonderful time, the passers by all laughing as much as the participants. Peking back streets never lack something fascinatingly human, and Lu Li Chang, with its old curio and art shops is always a good place to go for varied interest, at any time of the year.

Once the Imperial court would not permit ordinary folk to grow the ginko—'Bai Kuo' as it is in Chinese. In the North it was a special tree reserved for such place as temples, though in SE China, especially in Chekiang it grows wild, its timber being used for tools, seals, abacus beads and so on. Going out to look at my favourite autumn specimens, I found a white bearded old man carefully collecting leaves, and telling his grandson how such used as bookmarks will keep book worms away, and how if put in the water of paddy fields, they act as an insecticide against rice pests. The lad looked a bit unbelieving, but went on collecting anyway, and the last I saw of them they were sitting on a stone bench in front of the trees each with a heap of the vivid gold leaves on his lap, the boy's head affectionately resting against the old man's shoulder, and his inclining towards the boy's as they talked together.

A. Li



## Singapore River

Ian Hope

I had seen the river a thousand times from Anderson Bridge, going over in my car or in a bus. I had seen it as countless thousands of other citizens see it almost every day of their lives. Never more than a fleeting glimpse through green girders upon a dark odoriferous melancholy stream low in its muddy bed at the ebbing of the tide, or a bright green swell of rushing waters dancing high against granite grey wharves. A few exciting seconds on the big bridge, and then it all runs out of sight and mind in as little time. No time to stand and stare at thirty miles an hour, but you can do it on foot, going down to the water's edge and walking upstream, as it were.

I did it this way one morning, starting from the famous two-way bridge. There was no plan; it was a chance venture that began when I stopped to watch a loaded *twakow* cutting its way through a full tide into the river mouth. A smaller vessel was towing it in, and I was taken by the way the big thing dipped its bow into the water every now and then, like a duck diving its head into a pool and tossing water on to its back.

I watched the tug and the *twakow* skirt that shoulder of land at the river's

mouth and pass under the bridge and me. Then I crossed to the other side of the bridge, ducked under the railings and came down the embankment opposite the obelisk in Empress Place. I kept on walking along the side of the river, keeping abreast of the boats. They were soon under Cavanagh Bridge, and I was on it. I stayed there to take in the scene and watch my boats thread their way through clusters of larger craft, like insects creeping among the grapes on a vine. The congestion of boats at the quay side were like ducks at feeding time. There were big boats and little boats, tugboats and towboats, *tongkang* and *twakow*, *kotah* and *sampan*. These were the river craft that carried cargoes down to the sea in shifts.

As I gazed upon this familiar scene of boats in the bulge of the river, I wondered who they belonged to, who operated them, what they really carried, and where they went and came back from. I moved on along the bridge, and went down the steps to the foodstalls behind the Bank of China building. This narrow alley-way was teeming with life—in the stalls, in the shops and trading houses, on the lorries at the quayside, and in the river-

side homes and stores and boats. Here I had a closer look at the men of the boats at work, and the cargoes they carried on their shoulders and dumped into the waiting lighters. The men wore no shoes, no shirts. They took short quick steps under their loads, and crossed over a narrow gang-plank to a half-empty *twakow*, and tossed the gunny sacks into the open hold. They covered their heads and shoulders with a blue cloth to protect themselves from the roughness of their loads. As they shuffled back for more, they looked like hooded monks in an endless procession. They worked in rhythmic movements, and I could imagine them working to music in exactly the same way.

And as my attention turned from the men of the boats to the boats of the men, I noticed that many of them had huge severe eyes painted on their bows, and I looked around for someone not at work to tell me all they could about these boats and their embellishments, and the cargoes they carried. But here I came across the one obstacle that prevented me from getting to know the boats and their people. No one would talk. I had come up against the clannishness of the river community. I was an outsider, and there was nothing I could do about it. So I had to be content with what I saw. No questions, no answers!

But I did manage to see quite a lot. John Masefield should have been there to see the cargoes up-quay. There were spices galore, chillies, pepper and nutmeg. And food of course—rice, coffee-beans and sago pellets. There was oil and gums and copra. Rubber, ratan and ironware. And the skins of crocodile and snake and lizard. And there also were sacks of onions, potatoes, garlic and ginger, and different sorts of grain. And when a few potatoes or onions burst out of a hole in an old gunny sack, the children would scoop them up and take them away.

There were groups of little children playing along the quayside. They all

belonged to the river community, like the labourers who loaded the boats and the men who took them out to the ships in the roads. Like the quayside stall-holders and hawkers, and the folk who lived by the riverside, in the boats, and even under the bridges. These people of the boat quays made the fullest possible use of the limited space they had to move about in. They made boats, sold firewood, kept hens, bred goldfish and grew plants; some even managed to keep goats and parrots and pigeons. And the children made their own playgrounds and their own equipment for their games. They played at the water's edge, on the quays, in the alleyways and backlanes. On Elgin Bridge, further up the river, a group of boys were flying their kites from a space no larger than a ship's gangway. And across the road, in a bomb-site, little boys were playing at tops and marbles, and little girls were minding babies they could hardly carry and amusing themselves with sticks and stones and empty tins that had fallen out of a garbage bin nearby. And there was a game of badminton going on in the middle of a crowded backstreet.

The women were washing clothes at the riverside, fetching their water from a standpipe; and they hung their clothes out to dry on poles pointing out over the river. They scrubbed and swept and cooked and sewed and gossiped, and old women sat at cigarette stalls, or squatted by the homes, and watched their world at work and at play. They were, most of them, poor folk; but there were no rags, no beggars. Some of the workers on the wharfsides sported wrist watches, and smoked American cigarettes. Others appeared to be well dressed and well groomed. There was nothing stagnant about the lives of these energetic people. They were all as busy as bees, and apparently contented with their lot.

A little beyond the next bridge upriver, I had a close look at a cluster of wooden huts built on stilts. They were not very different in design from the Malay huts

I had seen on Blakang Mati island. The river huts, however, were much smaller, and the people who lived in them were Chinese. One of them was so tiny that it reminded me of a doll's house. You could not stand up in it; I doubt whether you could have lain down in it. I saw a family having a meal there. They all sat on the floor, which was neatly covered in coloured linoleum, and chattered away animatedly as they ate from their rice bowls. After the meal they crouched to come out, and then I could see that the hut served only as a shelter, and a place for eating in. The men slept outside.

Coming back down the other side of the river, I noticed a dwelling-place tight underneath Read Bridge, with a gang-plank leading to it from the quay. It was deserted; so I went in to see. It turned out to be a sort of chapel. There was a large altar in the middle of it and a smaller one on one side, and on each was an idol. Near a side table was a tin filled with red joss sticks, and from the ceiling hung a small coloured lantern. The stone walls were covered over with advertisement pages of American magazines. For a moment it looked as if Jayne Mansfield was the presiding goddess, even though she looked down somewhat irreverently upon the large altar and the image upon it.

I could not find out more about this little place, but it was obviously connected with the river, and the life it gave to the people of the quays and the boats. When I came out I saw that a small silent crowd had gathered to observe me inside the little improvised temple underneath the

bridge, and they politely made way as I went by.

A little further along that side of the river I was puzzled to see so many large boats so far up the river in a narrow neck of the waterway. And it occurred to me that although the river looked as if it was knotted at that point in a hopeless traffic jam, that was in fact not the case. The men of the boats knew their river, and they could steer a bulky *twakow* downstream as if manouvring a sampan among ships in the roads.

When I finally got back to Cavanagh Bridge in the heat of the midday sun, I leant over the railing once again to look upon that irresistible scene of the boats in the bend of the river. The water was still green and gay, and still high along the walls of the quays. I had seen it black, inky black when the tide was out. Then the boats were at rest. Now they were all on the move. Some were being filled, others emptied. Some were tied to clusters of other craft, some were moving out. And as they went gracefully out into midstream and passed under my bridge to the open sea, I hurried along to Anderson Bridge, where I had started, and looked out across the wide bay to the ships in the harbour. And as I did this I thought of the links our river had with the great ports of the world—from Norway to New Zealand, from New York to Nagasaki—and how the river community too was linked with people like them in faraway places where port and river combined to establish trading ties with the remotest parts of the world.



# The Abominable Snowman

## What Does He Look Like?

Emanuel Vlček

In the past period we have read reports in the daily press on the work of the special expedition led by the well-known mountain climber E. Hillary to the Mount Jolmo Lungma (Mt. Everest) region the purpose of which was to help solve a question that has been discussed for a long time—the existence or non-existence of the so-called *Yeti* snowman.

It is understandable that such a mysterious being became, primarily, a journalistic sensation. The hunt for sensation on the one hand, and attempts at a realistic evaluation of the problem on the other hand, divided the specialists and the general public into two camps. One camp firmly believes in the existence of this mysterious being, although thus far they have no concrete image of it. The other camp stubbornly refuses to accept the possibility of the existence of a creature unknown to date. The negative results of the Soviet expedition to Pamir added to this scepticism.

Should we take a positive attitude towards this question? Are we dealing with a scientific hypothesis or mere imagination? Two things give evidence of the existence of this creature; un-

reliable reports of the local's encounters with the *Yeti* snowman and a few reports by mountain climbers, and the repeated discovery of footsteps in the snow. Hillary's expedition also found these footsteps. After a thorough examination of other evidence, such as scalps or hands of the *Yeti* snowman kept as relics in several Himalayan temples, none were proven authentic. The scalps were pre-



sumably sewn together from the skin of wild boars or fox, or the skin of camel's humps and the hand was the mummified paw of a panther. We see that to date there are only oral assertions and a few unrelated photographs of footsteps in the snow at our disposal in support of the belief of the existence of the so-called abominable snowman. Some explanations of the existence of this creature question whether it hasn't been mistaken for a type of bear or monkey unknown till now. Another group completely rejects any attempt at a zoological explanation and at most entertains a mythical interpretation. According to this group the 'snowman' is an imaginary creature.

It is clear that with our present knowledge it is not yet possible to give a satisfactory explanation of this puzzle that could have scientific value of conclusive validity.

When the expedition of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences left for Mongolia in 1958 the members of the expedition naturally had no idea that they would be able to help solve this problem, and at that, with a very concrete contribution.

I was working with the expedition as their doctor and at the same time as an anthropologist. In addition to my anthropological research I was interested in old Buddhist medical and natural scientific literature in which I was looking for certain facts showing the direction of the development not only of lamaistic therapy, but also the results of morphological sciences, mainly anatomy and anthropology. Thus, while studying old books on natural science in Tibetan a discovery was made that is an important contribution to the solution of the question of the existence of this queer creature.

Among the books in the library of the former lamaistic university Gandan in Ulan Bator there is a book called *The Beautifully Decorated Book on Origins of Medicines Explained by Dri-med Shel-phreng*. Among the systematic descriptions of the fauna of Tibet and the

surrounding areas on page 24a I found a picture of a creature resembling the legendary abominable snowman among a group of bears and monkeys. It is a picture of a creature standing up straight on a hill with one arm reaching out. Its head, face and entire body, except for his hands and feet are covered with long fur-like hair. The picture, a woodcut, is stylised in the nature of lamaistic art. The picture has captions in three languages. The Tibetan caption *mirgod* and the Mongolian *Kümün göregesu* could be translated as man-animal creature, whereas the Chinese name *p'i* in translation means bear. The book was published in Peking at the end of the 18th and beginning of the 19th century.

During further studies of literature in the library of the Scientific Committee in Ulan Bator I found a later edition of this book published at the turn of the 19th century in Urga (today Ulan Bator) in the Tibetan department. In this book, in a systematic description of the natural conditions of Tibet, there is a picture on page 119 of the creature standing on a hill. His posture is identical with the previous one, he also has an uplifted arm and slightly bent knees. His head is covered with hair, his face has a beard and the rest of his body is covered with fur-like hair. He is again placed between the monkeys and bears. The picture of this wild man is thematically absolutely identical with the Peking model, but it is less stylized and the creature looks more human. The three-language captions again give different meanings. The Manchu *shuwa nasin* and Chinese *p'i* mean bear when translated, while the Mongolian *kümün göregesu* means wild man. Unfortunately the Tibetan title is only the transliteration of the Chinese name. The picture is accompanied by a text in Tibetan which says: *Mi ko* is a creature of the bear family, it lives near the mountains and resembles the man. It is very strong. Its meat is good against evil spirits which cause illnesses.

The medical book *Lhan t'ab* says that its gall cures illnesses of the gall bladder.

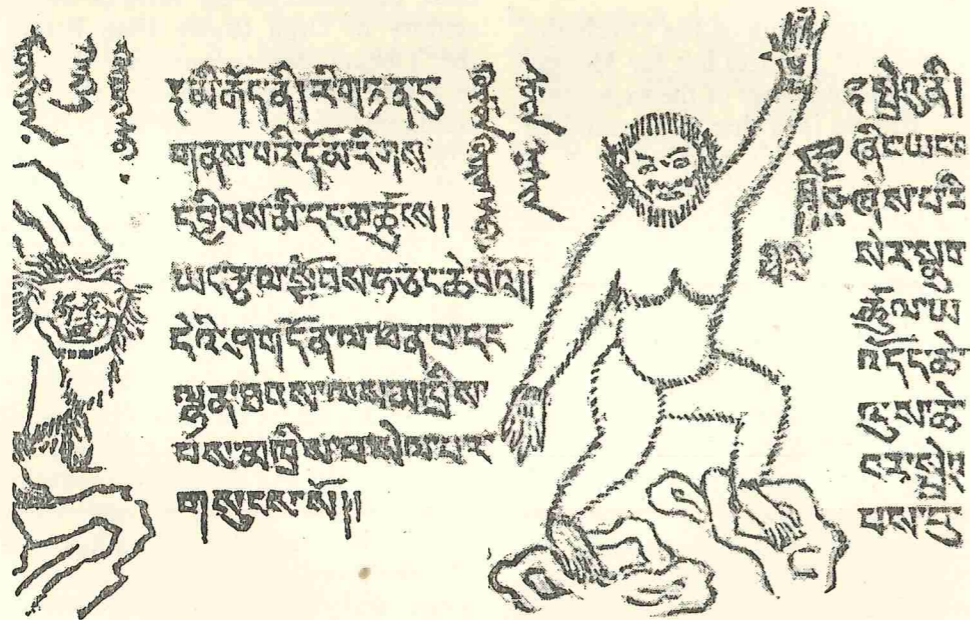
Both pictures of the so called wild man notably document the existence of a certain creature or a being known to the natives and monks of Tibet and the surrounding areas for over two centuries. They saw him and therefore reproduced him in their standard textbook of the nature of Tibet, used mainly for medical purposes in Buddhist schools. The Mongols did not know about these pictures. In our search we discovered interesting evidence that the people of Central Asia long ago had knowledge of the 'wild man' who is still a mystery to us.

On the basis of the two above cited literary documents we can try to place the 'wild man' in the following zoological system of Tibet: in both editions it is in the same place, between the bear group

groups at the end of the lamaistic zoological system: bear—wild man—monkey—man.

Of course, there is the possibility that what the picture conveys is not identical with its meaning. The picture need not be the image of a certain physical being with a zoological basis; it may be an imaginary legendary being. An important fact is that neither of these books contains pictures of fantastic imaginary animals such as the dragon, the unicorn, the *makara*, etc. They include only animals that really exist. Regardless of the above mentioned artistic stylization they are so real that you can always identify them exactly. The added text in the Mongolian edition is further evidence that it was a creature made of blood and flesh.

From what was said we see that it is difficult to take a responsible attitude



and the monkey group. This is underlined by the various meanings of the name 'wild man' in the different languages used. While in Tibetan and Mongolian they speak of a 'wild man' as such, in the literal meaning of the word, the Chinese and Manchu show a connection with the bear. Thus we come to the following order of the main

towards this imaginary or possibly-existing creature. After a careful summary and sober thinking I can come to only one of two opinions. It is either a myth and the pictures of the 'wild man' are a certain symbol meaning something in lamaism, or it is one of the primates eventually on the level of an anthropoid. Other explanations are not probable.

a short story

The Gateway to India

Edita Morris

Oh, heck, in gay Bombay they all get sad! With one foot in town, the other on the *North Star's* launch, Mother called to Papa, 'Look! This is me—split. Half of me wants to dash into India, my other half clings—to safety.' But then the foot that had landed in Bombay shot back onto the launch. 'What's that in the water?' she whispered, and grabbed Dr McGregor's sleeve. 'It's—a body. A dead body!'

'Heck!' Papa said. 'Don't be so jittery, Funnykins. Why, that was nothing but an old dead dog. You'll see plenty of dead dogs in Asia.'

'It wasn't a dog,' Mother said, holding onto Dr McGregor's sleeve. 'Oh, India frightens me, Doctor—frightens me. There are so many people here, and they keep dying.' She looked over her shoulder towards the spot where the dead dog lay floating. 'I almost wish I were back home. I'm afraid of seeing India,' Mother said.

But Doctor McGregor put his hand under Mother's arm and helped her onto the pier. 'You *won't* see it. Don't worry! All that you cruise passengers will see is the India you brought along with you from the tourist agency in New York.'

He said that, and then he got red, he often says things that annoy Mother, but

he's so nice-looking that usually he gets away with it. Today Mother turned on him. She had on her print dress with the little apes printed on it, and half of the apes looked scared and half looked angry. Mother looked like one of the angry apes.

'Don't be such a wet blanket, you glum Scotsman. You bet I'm going to see India! They keep talking about underdeveloped countries and underprivileged people. Well now we're here and we're going to see them,' Mother cried, and her voice sounded like the telephone when it rings and rings.

'Heck!' Papa said. 'Don't mind Funnykins, Mac. She has a soft heart. The idea of poverty and hunger—just panics her. My God, the flies!' He lifted his folded newspaper and hit at the Indian flies, that have feet as clammy as if they were wearing galoshes. 'Don't know if I like this Asia so well,' Papa said, looking at the *North Star*, floating out there in the bay. 'Maybe we should have gone to California like we do every winter.'

He tried to swat another fly, but his swatter almost hit a bowing man. The man salaamed again, putting together his hands and holding them before his face. 'I'm your bearer, Sahib,' he said. He wore a green turban with a golden tiger

embroidered on it, and he kept smiling and bowing. 'Welcome to Bombay, Sahib and Mem Sahib!' he cried, 'The little Mem Sahib, too, most welcome to Bombay. We have reserved beautiful rooms at the Taj Mahal Hotel—only a few steps away. You will be there before Jack Robinson. Ah, thank you!' he cried, though he didn't have much to thank for. All papa had given him was a package to carry to the hotel.

We began walking off the quay, our bearer going ahead and shooing away beggar children. '*Jaldi jai!*' he cried to them, but there was one boy who didn't want to be *Jaldi jai-ed*. He had no clothes on at all and he was crying. 'You see this big stone arch, Sahib, Mem Sahib and little Mem Sahib,' said our bearer, waving away the boy. 'That's what we call the Gateway of India. A second ago you weren't in India. Now that you've passed beneath the stone arch—' He tried to shoo away the naked boy again, '—you're *right* in India. Please don't be afraid of that baby making faces, 'he said to me. 'He does it to show that's he's hungry. *Jaldi jai!*' he cried again in such a sad and soft voice, and this time the Indian boy ran off, holding one hand over his hungry stomach and the other over his weeping mouth.

Our sitting room in the Taj Mahal glittered in the sun, and the ships on the bay of Bombay came sailing straight at our windows. Flies sailed in too, and I took Papa's newspaper swatter and swatted.

'Will you *look* at those orchids!' Mother cried happily. She picked up the bouquet and sat down on the pink sofa, 'An invitation too, What fun!' Mother cried, making her gladykins face at Papa.

But then she got worried, as she always does, 'what on earth will we do with Mary when we go out? We can't leave her here alone,' Mother said, and Papa answered, 'Throw it in the waste paper basket—the invitation, I mean, not

Mary. We see people enough aboard ship.' He lay back in his chair and yawned, but mother tossed him an envelope which looked like thick cream, 'Refuse an invitation to Mr Bomerjee's party tonight? Then why did we entertain that lump of curry in New York—and introduce him to all your business friends? Now don't be a killjoy, Fred.'

'Oh, all right,' said Papa. 'Heck!'

'Heck, heck, heck, that's all you know how to say. You've taught Mary your silly heck, too.'

'And what have *you* taught her?' Father said.

Mother looked at him sort of astonished, but she didn't answer. She picked up the creamy sheet of paper and read the invitation again, and as she read all the worry went out of her face.

Straight into our glittering sitting room dashed our Indian bearer. He flicked his hand and a waiter jumped out from behind the carved screen by the door, with a tray of glasses, a whisky bottle and a syphon.

'How's that for a loving husband?' Papa chuckled. 'I brought a bottle from the *North Star*, seeing that Bombay's dry as an old bone. Now do you like me better than that handsome young ship's doctor of yours?'

'Idiot!' Mother said, and she made her sweetkins face for Papa. 'It was darling of you, Fred. I'm sorry I'm so nervous. It was that dog, I guess.' She poured out whisky and soda for herself and Papa. 'I'll just scribble a word to Ramesh Bomerjee to let him know that we'll turn up tonight,' she said, fishing in her hand bag for her writing pad with the enamel pencil dangling from it. 'Oh, Bombay's not bad at all. It's *gay*. Listen, Fred, while I'm about it, why don't I dash off a note to Dr McGregor to join us?'

Papa walked over to the window where I was sitting swatting flies. He looked down at me, and his face was awfully tired.

'And what do you think of gay Bombay, my quiet one?' he said. 'I wonder what you'll do with yourself this evening. Even in India the supply of flies may give out.'

But he'd scarcely said it when our bearer hopped out from behind the screen.

'I couldn't *not* hear!' he cried happily. 'Sahib, what luck! I mean that I have an American Miss Gray up my sleeve, and can bring her before you can say Robinson. Let me run off and catch this Miss right away. She taught some English children in the hotel, but now they've travelled 'back to London.' He gave his green turban a tug. 'Ah, thank you!' he cried, and whirled out of our sitting room.

Mother, too, hurried away so as to dress, and Papa followed her. I sat on, counting my dead flies, and then I unfolded the swatter, which was really a newspaper, and I read in it. It said, Cinema Attractions, and down below it said, For Kiddies. The Punjab Cinema was giving 'Jack and the Beans Talk', written just like that, and I wanted to show it to someone and laugh, and suddenly there was Miss Gray in the room. She wore a yellow dirndl and her hair was just the colour of corn silk and swung back and forth. I showed her Jack and the Beans Talk, and she did laugh. She had teeth like snow flakes. 'Shall we go to the movie right away?' I asked Miss Gray, but she said, 'Oh, I never go to the movies. Life's too short.' 'Should we go all the same?' I asked her, and she laughed and said, 'Of course! Of course we'll go and hear your beans talking.'

'Miss Gray?' Mother asked. She hurried in, looking like a gold fish in her shimmering dress. 'It was nice of you to help out. Why don't you take Mary along to the movies, Miss Gray? She misses them so. Without movies and television, there's really nothing for a child to do. Oh, I hate leaving you, Mary,' she said, and blew me a kiss. 'But

it can't be helped. Order yourself anything you like for supper. Just anything at all, darling.'

Papa came in, too, still tying his tie, but when he saw Miss Gray he finished tying it in a hurry and took a step toward her.

'Fred, can you imagine it!' Mother said from the doorway. I just realized that Dr McGregor hasn't sent back an answer. He hates parties, I know, but he might put himself out a little for us cruise passengers. Don't you think so?'

Papa shrugged his shoulders and followed Mother from the room. But at the door he stopped to turn about. For a moment he stared at all the lovely things Miss Gray has in her face. Then he smiled at us and went out.

'Do let's get out of here, too, shall we?' Miss Gray said, looking about our glittering room as if she didn't like it. She bent to pick up an orchid that had fallen to the floor, and put it in a pitcher on the tray. She stood looking at it for quite a long while, and I wondered what Miss Gray was thinking. 'If you don't like movies, we won't go to one,' I said to her. 'Oh, indeed we will,' she said, grinning. 'Do let's go—you little tadpole.'

In the street everyone was an Indian. Thousands of Indians ran past us lugging loads, and they were thin and bent as hair pins, with eyes like holes. I said to Miss Gray, 'Why don't they stop and mop themselves?' and she answered, 'If starving people stopped one second, they might fall down and die from hunger before the day is over. The poorer people are, the quicker they've got to run. That's how it is, tadpole.' She took my hand, and her hand felt like a silk mitten. Miss Gray pointed to a man hurrying past us with a crate as big as a small house on his back. 'He's the poorest man in the world,' she said. 'That coolie earns ten American cents a day. If India's tens of millions of hungry coolies never stop running one second, they can earn ten cents

a day. But they must always keep running—running and running.'

I got hungry just from hearing how hungry those coolies were. 'Are we going to have our supper *after* the movies?' I asked Miss Gray. 'Oh, we can have something to eat now, if you like,' she said, and she steered us to a place where everyone sat shovelling rice into his mouth as if he were afraid someone might steal it from him. We sat down and Miss Gray opened her purse. 'I have four rupees, twelve annas,' she said. 'We can have a cup of tea each, and biscuits, and still go to the movies.' 'Is that all the money you have with you?' I asked her, and she answered, 'Between you and me, it's all the money I have, period.'

She undid her belt, then pulled it tighter around her waist that was almost like a bee's. 'It's good to have a lot of holes in your belt,' she told me, and grinned. 'If you do, you can keep tightening it again and again.'

When we got out from our eating place it was dark, and we looked about for our movie. Miss Gray asked some Indian gentlemen, who told us 'That way!' but it wasn't that way at all. We tramped a long while and we never saw a movie, but the further we walked, the more Indians there were on the streets. Some were washing their teeth in the gutter, and some were washing themselves and their rags, and smells came out of the houses. I asked Miss Gray who lived in all that small. 'Most of Bombay,' she answered. 'That is, most of those who don't sleep on the streets. Come on, I'll show you.'

We walked into the courtyard of a tall house, and thought that something had happened, a fire or something. A lot of children kept running down the stairs, and a lot kept running up them, and their mothers lay peeking at them from black holes on the landings. 'What are those Indian ladies doing in the holes?' I asked Miss Gray, and she answered, 'Why, living in them! Their holes are

ten feet by eight, and up to ten people live in each hole. Those holes are their homes, tadpole.'

We came out on the street, and then we decided to give up looking for our movie. We walked on a way, and suddenly we found a hopscotch game chalked out under a street lamp. Miss Gray began playing hopscotch, and her light hair flew about, and she laughed a lot. We weren't going to the movie, so I began to play hopscotch too.

'Are you really a governess?' I asked Miss Gray, and she answered, 'Well—not really. You see, when I finished high school, two years ago, I decided to become a teacher. I should have gone to a teacher's college, but instead I jumped on the first cargo boat sailing for abroad. I'm working my way round our planet now, tadpole. When I've been all around the world, I'll go back to America and teach children what things are like on their earth. What they are *really* like, I mean! Then those children will do something about it.'

It had got pitch dark, so we began hurrying back to the Taj Mahal Hotel. I stepped on something soft. An Indian man sat up and looked at me and then he lay down again. Next to him another Indian lay on the sidewalk, and next to him another, and like all Indians, they wore a sort of white cheese cloth wrapped around them, instead of clothes. 'They look as if they were dead,' I said to Miss Gray, and she answered, 'Not yet. They will be, pretty soon.'

We had to move out into the street because the sidewalks had got full of people lying on them. 'It's slow walking through Bombay at night, isn't it?' Miss Gray said. 'Half a million people sleep on the sidewalks because there aren't enough holes for rent in houses, and besides, they haven't any money to rent themselves a hole.' 'Why haven't they?' I asked her, but Miss Gray didn't answer. She turned away her face, and I could just see her cheek. It looked sad. She

said to me, 'Keep asking yourself that question, tadpole. Never, never stop asking it . . .'

Heck, when we got back to the Taj Mahal Hotel, someone was standing in our sitting room scribbling on mother's writing pad—someone in a ship's officer's white uniform. It was nice Doctor McGregor from the *North Star*. 'I was just writing a word to your mother, Mary,' he told me. 'She asked me to go to a party.' He stood twirling Mother's little enamel pencil. 'You know,' he said, 'I can't for the life of me understand why anyone in his right mind should want to go to a party.' Then he got red, as usual after he's said something.

He turned to say hello to Miss Gray. I suppose he only wanted to glance at her sort of politely, but all at once he was staring, not glancing. Just like Papa he kept looking at all the pretty things she had in her face, and getting redder all the time. He and Miss Gray were somehow like each other. They had the same colour hair and eyes—and in other ways too, I felt that they were like each other. Perhaps that was the reason they smiled at one another now.

Dr McGregor picked up the pad and pretended to read through what he had written. 'I suppose you went to the movies,' he asked me, and I answered, 'No, we didn't. Life's much too short.' Doctor McGregor laughed, and he and Miss Gray exchanged another look. Miss Gray put her silky arm round my neck. 'I'll come round for you tomorrow, then we'll go sight-seeing some more, OK?' 'Yes, OK.' I said. 'Well, goodnight now, tadpole,' said Miss Gray.

She walked out into the corridor. Heck, how Doctor McGregor hurried after her! He just flew. He'd thrown Mother's pad on the pink sofa, and Mother's little pencil dangled to and fro, looking sort of useless. I watched Doctor McGregor catching up with Miss Gray in the corridor, then I went to my room and got into bed. But suddenly I didn't

feel terribly like lying in bed any longer, I got out and lay down on the floor. It wasn't as hard as Bombay's sidewalks, but it was hard, all right. Still I felt like lying on it, and I lay there and went to sleep on the floor.

'Please come to breakfast!' our bearer called to me in the morning. I ran into our sitting room, and up by the window stood a table that was so loaded with food that it looked as if it would sink through the floor. There was a bowl of strawberries, and rolls, and a pyramid of pineapples and butter made into a glistening swan, and eggs lolling in curry sauce. Inside a percolator our breakfast coffee threw itself about because the flame it sat on was so high. The coffee seemed to be having terrific discussions with itself, and there was another discussion going on in Mother's and Papa's room. I could hear them through the door. 'Haven't my parents had breakfast yet?' I asked our bearer.

But half of him was leaning out of the window. He was craning his neck toward the gateway of India, and when I looked out I saw that there was a whole crowd of Indians on the quay, staring into the water. Funny! It was right near the spot where Mother had seen the dead dog yesterday.

'What are they all looking at?' I asked our bearer and he jumped as if I'd pricked him with a pin. 'Oh, at nothing at all!' he cried, 'Nothing at all, little Mem Sahib.' He pulled himself back into the room so quickly that his turban banged against the top of the window and fell off his head. I stared at the bearer. He looked very different without his swanky turban! He looked just like the Indian who'd carried a big crate on his back, his nose was just as long and tired. And his cheeks looked hungry. He wasn't any different from all the needle-thin Indians I'd seen with Miss Gray last night.

'Why are all those people down there talking to each other and staring into the

water?' I asked him again. 'Did someone fall in or what?' 'Ah yes, someone did fall in. A *man* fell in a little while ago,' the bearer said at last, but he sounded as if he wanted to suck the words back into his mouth. He leaned out the window, and sighed. 'Ah, poor man, little Mem Sahib! A peasant. In his village there is a famine and they'd sat down to die of starvation—the whole village that is—so this man tramped to Bombay to beg an armful of grain for his family. He went to the fine houses, but they told him, go away! He limped about on his sore feet, trying to get up his courage to ask someone for a mouthful to chew. But when he saw that the poor in Bombay looked just as hungry as the people in his village, that peasant sat down on the quayside and let himself slide into the water. A doctor has been working on him for an hour, but it's no use—he was too starved. Ah, poor, poor peasant! Poor, poor India, little Mem Sahib! There are so many of us . . . and no one gives us food . . .'

Mother's door flew open. Our bearer bent down quickly to pick up his turban, and wound it round his head, looking embarrassed. But Mother didn't even notice him. She was dressed to go out and wore her print dress with all the little apes on it. Some of them looking scared and some of them looking angry. This morning Mother looked both angry *and* scared.

'Mary, we're leaving!' she cried. 'Something happened this morning—right beneath my window—something horrid. I don't want to stay in Bombay another minute.' She turned to our bearer, 'Please get our luggage together and bring it to the *North Star* as soon as you can, will you? We'll go ahead.'

'But Mem Sahib!' cried the bearer, 'Are you really leaving? Why, you haven't visited our Hanging Gardens. Or Malabar Hill. You have seen nothing of our great city . . .'

'I've seen *all* I want to see,' Mother

said, throwing a scared look at the crowd on the quay. 'Yes, all I ever want to see of India.' She snatched up her hand bag.

Our bearer ran over to the breakfast table. He lifted the lid and his nose did a lot of sniffing. 'Oh, aren't you going to eat your curried eggs, Mem Sahib, or even your strawberries . . . ?'

'I couldn't eat a thing after what has happened. Could you, Fred?' Mother asked of Papa, who was coming out of their room with our passports in his hand. She took her handkerchief out of her bag. 'Oh, Fred, I feel all shaky. How can they let such a thing happen—and right under our windows? It's so unfair. This has just spoiled India for me, for good.'

'Poor Funnykins!' said Papa. He picked up his straw hat from the table. 'I have an idea. Let me fetch Dr. McGregor. His room's right down the hall. He'll give you something to make you feel better.'

Mother shook her head. 'No, no,' she said, 'I don't want to see him.' Her voice wasn't jittery any more, it was cross. 'He was too tired to join us at Mr Bomerjee's party. He wasn't too tired to go out with that Miss Gray. Well, he can do anything he wants, as far as I'm concerned.'

Just then a car backfired in the street. Mother jumped. She hurried to the window and stood staring down at the four men who were carrying away the dead peasant in a sheet, with lots and lots of people following them.

'Oh Fred, let's hurry,' Mother cried. 'Who knows if those hungry people won't take it into their head to storm the Taj Mahal Hotel? That's how hunger riots get started in Asia—some poor devil committing suicide and inciting others to violence.' Mother looked even more terrified than the print apes on her dress. 'Let's get away, Fred! Once on the *North Star*—we're safe.'

She pulled open the door and hurried into the corridor. Up from the hotel

lobby came such jumpy dance music, and a little bell boy ran by whistling the tune. It seemed sad to leave the music and Miss Gray and everything, but Mother and Papa were already walking off, so I ran after them.

Then I remembered that I hadn't said goodbye to our bearer. Heck, I ran back! There he was by our breakfast table, staring at our eggs in curry sauce, and his face was all screwed as if he wanted to cry. The door was open and the dance music kept coming up from the lobby, so happy and gay. I ran up to our bearer and put my arms round his middle and squeezed him. Oh, he was thin! As

thin as all those Indians on the street. I never knew that anyone could be so thin.

'Say goodbye to Miss Gray for me,' I said to him, 'Will you, please?' Our bearer answered, 'Oh, thank you, little Mem Sahib.' But he wasn't really thinking of what he said, or really noticing me. He was staring at that dish of eggs in curry, and he had the queerest look in his eyes. Papa shouted to me from the stairs, 'Ma-ary! Are you coming?' so I knew that I only had another moment. I wanted to say something to our bearer, but I couldn't think what. He looked up from the eggs, and for just a second our eyes met. Then I turned and ran down the corridor.



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## books

# Echo in Asia

## Echo in Asia

by Edita Morris  
(Dennis Dobson, London, 1961. 13s. 6d.)

This book is subtitled *A fictional travelogue* and that is a fairly accurate description of what it is: a travel book with a superimposed romantic story to hold the various episodes together.

It's a form that has become more and more popular in recent years as travel has become easier and duller, and the interesting adventures have had to be sought after or even invented. One feels perhaps that writers have failed to keep up with their means of transport; that they have gone on hoping for the old situations and failed to realise that centres of interests have shifted. Romance in the old sense is as out-dated as imperialism in the old sense: behaviour patterns have changed in the Coca Cola world just as values have been reassessed. Nowadays the travel writers are journeying about in ever-increasing numbers, but one feels that even in some of the most primitive communities they visit, they themselves are slightly more old-fashioned than the inhabitants. The traveller today usually falls into one of two categories: the bearded one who bicycles through the jungle to prove something about tyres or diets, stubbornly unaware of the air corridors above his head; and, secondly, the tourist who flies in and out in the night and has written in detailed distortion of his visit in next Sunday's papers on the other side of the world. Exaggerations, of course, but one could think of actual examples that would seem much more exaggerated. The trouble is that both categories are trying to dodge the real questions, seeking to avoid the complexities of the new situations with which they are constantly confronted, trying to assert that the old order has never really changed.

It is this tendency towards over-simplification that is irritating, and it is present to a

certain extent in Edita Morris's latest book. She is as always a strikingly vivid writer, but the gift of description is of little value without that of understanding. That she is capable of both is obvious in her earlier book, *The Flowers of Hiroshima*, where there was a great amount of insight into the problems of those who survived the bomb, only to find themselves outcasts in the new society, the rebuilt city that wanted above all to forget the past. In comparison, *Echo in Asia* is necessarily disappointing, lacking a sense of controlled direction and insight.

I'm not sure which of the two categories I mentioned Edita Morris falls into as a travel writer. In many ways this is a tourist's book; and, in fact, the most successful passages are not so much about the people and the places that the young heroine visits, as about her terrible companions on the round-the-world liner. As the ship's doctor says:

*'No one is under sixty, most are eighty, and they've just finished a seven-course dinner. They will now gorge themselves on indigestible lobsters and wash them down with poisonous champagne.'*

He goes on to advise the richest and most gruesome of all the passengers:

*'You must guard against night starvation. You have no idea how important it is to eat at night as well as in the day . . . I tell that to all my patients—that is, to those who can afford to eat at all.'*

One sees these people all over the world, lost in the lounges of luxury hotels, clinging together for protection. And perhaps in attacking them Edita Morris is seeking for a too-easy

target, trying to condemn what is merely pathetic. These type characters are never more than two-dimensional cardboard figures. They are blown up to larger-than-life size by the vivid writing, but this only means that the cardboard becomes more obvious. This is not so much a fault in itself; in fact in satire it can be just the opposite. But when the people that such figures represent are not in themselves worthy of anything more than pity it all begins to seem rather pointless, verging on a precious exercise. To put it another way: when one wants to criticise elements in a society that are dangerous, it is surely inadvisable to attack what is most obvious and stupid.

Then we come to the part of the book that is in the other category of travel writing. The heroine is constantly trying to get away from the limbo of the luxury liner into the 'real' world of the poor quarters of Madras, Calcutta, Singapore, Bangkok and Djakarta. She is always turning off down side streets—any one will do—to get into the jungle of the slums. But this in a way is no more than the attitude of the slightly more sensitive or intelligent tourist. At the bottom of the ladder you have the ones who will be happy as long as they get their ration of lobster and temples and champagne. And just a little further up there are the ones who are looking for every opportunity to bicycle off into the metaphorical jungle. And yet they know so little about it really, for surely any social class anywhere protects itself behind innumerable facades, and the smile of a forty-eight hour visitor is hardly enough to dissolve them.

This is why so much of the book rings false. The over-simplification extends not only to the tourists who are despised, but to the native inhabitants who are admired. It is a world of melodrama and happy smiling faces in the midst of immense squalour. And yet one seems to have heard about these happy smiling faces from the other side of the fence

—the supporters of apartheid in South Africa, for instance. 'They're quite happy. They've got all they want already. What right have you to interfere in our internal affairs?' And one can only reply that one has every right to go on asserting that poverty is not happy or ennobling, but a state that destroys man's potentialities for happiness or dignity; that poverty is the result of artificial inequalities of any kind; and that until these man-made inequalities are removed poverty will remain as an insult to humanity as a whole. By glossing over the facts, by melodramatising, distorting or ignoring them, we get nowhere.

One is sorry not to be able to praise this book, because its heart is so obviously in the right place. There is so much sympathy, but it is sympathy that lacks direction or control. American Negro jazz musicians have a name for the attitude of those white players who make them constantly aware of their colour by sympathising too much rather than too little. They call it Crow Jim. Thus, although the heart is in the right place, one gets the impression that the head has been left somewhere behind. Sympathy without understanding is useless. Here we have a book about racial inequality and intolerance, a book with the right attitudes presented in the wrong way. These are serious and complex problems that must be treated as such, and any distortion can only make matters worse, removing us still further from the already very distant solutions.

It is for these reasons that *Echo in Asia* is so disappointing. Edita Morris has shown clearly in the past that she can write with a great amount of insight, and even here there are passages that are brilliantly amusing or moving or bitter. But they are spoiled by being seen in a context where both the story and the basic attitude are those of the tourist. In the end the best one can say about *Echo in Asia* is that *The Flowers of Hiroshima* is an extremely good book and well worth reading.

W. I. McLachlan

## A Useful Aid

### Japanese Studies on Japan and the Far East

prepared by S. Y. Teng

(Hong Kong University Press, Hong Kong, 1961. HK\$60.)

This book has a unique purpose; it is intended to bring Japanese living authors on Japan and the Far East in one view to those foreigners who are interested in oriental studies. Altogether it contains 485 pages, listing more than 5,000 books and magazine articles by 760 living writers of various calibres on different aspects of oriental culture—archaeology, anthropology, governments, economics, education, history, arts, architecture, techniques, linguistics, literature, international relations, and so on. It is worthy of note that of the 485 pages China alone takes 143 pages, Japan 118, while the rest of Far East and South-east Asia take about 100 pages—only 5 pages for India.

After the *Meiji* Reform Japan rapidly turned herself into a modern nation, matching her increasing political power by cultural development. As a result of this Tokyo soon became a centre of learning in the Far East, which until the last war, attracted each year several thousand students from China alone. Meanwhile the development of capitalism and imperialism in Japan necessitated extensive research on the Asian continent as well as the South-east Asian countries; and thus under the auspices of government agencies—like the Army and *Kaimusho*—and industrial groups, research institutes were set up in her neighbouring Asian countries, and large number of 'specialists' were sent out to the same regions for investigation.

Since Japan launched out for expansion, multitudes of books on oriental studies—mostly on China, Mongolia and on the Southeast Asian countries, were printed each year. As can be expected the majority of these, having an immediate purpose to serve—exploitation or political aggression—are necessarily shallow, prejudiced and hardly worth serious reading; and they are therefore only destined to an ephemeral existence. Of course, there

are always among these some honest, high-standing scholars, whose objective, painstaking works make valuable contribution to the studies they are engaged in, but they are mostly limited to such studies as archaeology, ancient legal institutions, history and literature, and, compared with the rest, they are overwhelmingly outnumbered.

The worst thing the Japanese writers used to turn out is probably analysis of contemporary politics and sociological descriptions of other Asian nations. Most writers of this category of literature betrayed a sense of self-superiority and pernicious depreciation of other peoples, which was designed to serve the aggressive purposes of Japanese adventurers. Careful readers will certainly sense this in most of the books written by the Japanese before the war.

Since the authors collected in this book represent scholars of twenty universities in Japan, it provides a great convenience to those foreigners who are interested in oriental studies, though one can also find most of the authors, with less facility perhaps, in several other 'who's who' books. Apparently this book is only useful to those foreign students who have a good knowledge of the Japanese language; and about books on China and South-east Asia, can one not, with more profit, turn direct to catalogues of those countries? For after all books written by foreigners about other nations are usually superficial and even appear puerile to the scholars of the nations concerned.

In spite of all this, it is a good thing that Hong Kong University Press has undertaken the publication of this book; for, though few individual scholars on oriental studies are likely to buy a catalogue of books which are all written in a foreign language they may be ignorant of, any public library worth the name should provide itself with one copy for rare consultation.

L. K.

## ABOUT OUR CONTRIBUTORS

Mei Lan-fang, the greatest actor of modern China, died last autumn in Peking. 'My Life on the Stage' is a selection taken from his various writings.

Frederick Joss, British artist and writer, is still 'feverishly' writing a book on his Asian experiences. 'Christmas in Hiroshima' is a chapter from his new book. For the time being, he is staying in London, but he is returning to the East soon.

Kshitis Roy, who translated Tagore's 'Two Poems from Puravi' from Bengali into English, is Curator of Rabindra-Bavan, Visva-Bharati, Santiniketan, India.

'The Writer and Indian Unity' is sent from New Delhi by Alamah, our Correspondent in Singapore, who visited India recently.

A. Li is an old resident of Peking.

Ian Hope is a Eurasian journalist who lives in Singapore.

Emanuel Vlček, author of 'The Abominable Snowman', is a Czechoslovakian anthropologist.

Edita Morris is a writer of Swedish nationality and the author of a number of novels and many short stories composed in the English language. Her last two novels are *The Flowers of Hiroshima*, describing life among the survivors in that tragic city, and *Echo in Asia*, 'a fictional travelogue' which describes the experiences of a young girl on a South-east Asia cruise trip and takes the readers to the various ports of call of South-east Asia.

*The Flowers of Hiroshima* has now appeared in twelve languages and is to be made into a film in Japan next spring. *Echo in Asia* is reviewed in this issue of *Eastern Horizon* (See page 57).

W. I. McLachlan is a regular contributor. He is lecturer in English at the University of Hong Kong and has published poems and critical articles in magazines in Britain, France and America.

L. K. is a member of the Editorial staff of this journal.

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