



China
*For the 60th Anniversary of
the People's Republic of China*
In Songs

Compiled by Li Fengying Translated by: Transn

新星出版社 NEW STAR PRESS

图书在版编目 (CIP) 数据

岁月如歌: 英文 / 李凤英编著; 传神翻译译. —北京: 新星出版社, 2010.1
ISBN 978-7-80225-985-0

I. 岁… II. ①李…②传… III. 歌曲—中国—现代—选集 IV. J642

中国版本图书馆CIP数据核字 (2010) 第117462号

岁月如歌

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责任编辑: 张 维

责任印制: 韦 舰

装帧设计: 视觉共振

出版发行: 新星出版社

出 版 人: 谢 刚

社 址: 北京市东城区金宝街67号隆基大厦 100005

网 址: www.newstarpress.com

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传 真: 010-65270449

法律顾问: 北京市大成律师事务所

国际经销: 中国国际图书贸易总公司 (中国北京车公庄西路35号)

公司地址: 北京邮政信箱第399号 100044

印 刷: 北京尚唐印刷有限公司

开 本: 700×1000 1/16

版 次: 2010年1月第一版 2010年1月第一次印刷 (英)

书 号: ISBN 978-7-80225-985-0

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The Chinese people have marched forward with songs telling their emotions and aspirations of different days. These songs, always echoing across the land and lingering in the ear of every Chinese, will remain the sweet memories of all Chinese and leave a brilliant page in the history of the People's Republic of China.

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FOREWORD

As is known to all, poets write to express their aspirations, while singers sing to reveal their bosoms of emotions and feelings. In the final analysis, songs are nothing but a major form for expression of thoughts and emotions, a truth that applies everywhere and every age. It is precisely for this reason that songs have never lost their charm in human history. Instead, they have not only lived generation after generation, but also kept gaining richness and appeal as time goes on, with each age seeing the creation of some great songs of its own.

Long ago in ancient China, some great minds had come to realize the great artistic expressiveness of human voice, and concluded that stringed musical instruments (such as the *erhu*, the *pipa*, the *liuqin*, and the *sanxian*) came second to bamboo-based ones (such as the *sheng*, the *xiao*, the *di*, and the *suona*) while human voice was the champion of the three in terms of their musical appeal. They greatly admired and lavishly praised some great singers of their day because their voice was so sonorous that it could “send trees waving” and “stop the flow of clouds” and so sweet and soul-stirring that it would always “keep lingering in the ear of the audience for days.” Legend even had it that Confucius, the greatest philosopher in ancient Chinese history, became so overwhelmed after watching the musical performance titled *Shao* that he could not tell the

taste of pork for the three following days. In the West, people sing hymns, such as the classical Alleluia, as an expression of their devotion to and eulogization of God. Even Beethoven, the great saint of music, broke free from convention to include human voice in the 4th Movement of his Symphony No. 9 to express his lofty republican ideology. Majestic, magnificent, and soul-stirring, the addition has once again proved the great power of human voice in the performance of music, a power that has extended the expressiveness of this piece of music beyond the reach of all musical instruments.

Sixty years have elapsed since the founding of the People's Republic of China. These are years of development, changes, plain sailing, and difficulties and disturbances. They are also years of songs. When the people feel happy or have an ideal or aspiration to share with others at any time of these years, they would sing. Such instant expression of feelings and emotions have both resulted in the development of songs with a historical colouring and left us with a history of songs.

During the early days of the People's Republic, for instance, the words "liberation" and "standing up" were the key words that were heard and read most frequently. After the long time of wars and oppressions under the three big mountains (namely, imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat-capitalism), the Chinese people finally stood up and became masters of their own destiny. Now with land of their own to till and a better life to expect, the people could not but feel boundlessly grateful, hence the creation of the songs

including *Ode to Our Motherland*, *My Motherland*, *Fanshen Daoqing* (*Ode to Liberation*), and the *Emancipated Serfs Are Singing*. Meanwhile, as the waves of socialist revolution and construction surged across the country, the whole nation stirred itself and enthusiastically jumped into action in response to the government's calls, accompanying its triumphant marches with songs such as *We Are Following a Boulevard*, *Ode to Our Motherland*, and *I'm Exploiting Oil for My Motherland*.

The catastrophic 10-year "cultural revolution" (1966-1976) was a time many Chinese would hate to recall or talk about. Without exception, political autocracy results in the ossification of thinking, the distortion of the soul, and the withering of culture. For all their unmusical stress, the songs adopted from the quotations of Chairman Mao Zedong became the exclusive hymn among the people in those days. Born with a strong aspiration for art, however, many Chinese would not submissively give themselves up. Some people with outstanding talents tried to get inspiration from the poems of Chairman Mao and put their talents into best use. As a result, many great musical works were created and proved to be big hits. Some have even remained in the repertoire of many singers to this day. In these songs adapted from his poems, Mao is no longer extolled as a deity. Instead, he was presented as a great man revered by all his people. Permeating these songs are the manhood and mind of a great man, as well as the romantic quality of a great poet, character that compels universal admiration even today. Thanks to the creation of these songs, the Chinese did not spend their days silently during the turmoil of the "cultural revolution".

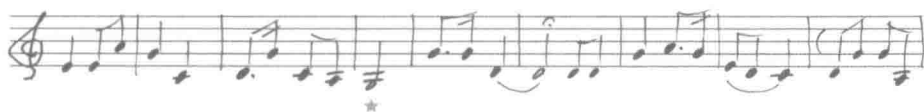
October 6, 1976 is an extraordinary day destined to be written into the his-

tory of the People's Republic of China. The Gang of Four (Jiang Qing, Wang Hongwen, Zhang Chunqiao and Yao Wenyuan) was broken up, and the nation came to bathe in bright sunlight once again. The spiritual haze gone, the *Toasting Song* came to echo jubilantly across the country. Soon after in late 1978, the Communist Party of China (CPC) called the 3rd Plenary Session of its 11th Central Committee to establish the national policy of reform and opening-up. A future of hope loomed ahead, culture and art began to flourish, and the *Story of Spring* was passed from mouth to mouth. Keeping to their excellent tradition of artistic creation based on everyday life, Chinese artists tried to record the social changes and spirit of their day from different angles, creating a large number of beautiful songs such as *On the Hopeful Field*, *I Love You China*, *Pearl of the Orient*, *Stepping into a New Era*, *Love My China*, and *You and Me*. Meanwhile, a large number of songs fresh and graceful in style, tasty of the milk of human kindness and strong in emotional appeal came out, such as *Sweet Honey*, *Nostalgia*, *Dedication of Love*, *The Old Tick*, *Nothing to Lose*, *The Moon As My Heart*, *Wish You Safe and Well*, and *The Sun, the Moon and the Stars*. As China moves ahead with its economic reform, Chinese composers and singers are also striving for changes and new aesthetic pursuits, adding brilliance and colour to vocal music.

The Chinese people have marched forward with songs telling their emotions and aspirations of different days. These songs, always echoing across the land and lingering in the ear of every Chinese, will remain the sweet memories of all Chinese and leave a brilliant page in the history of the People's Republic of China.

Ode to Liberation

As the sun rises to make the mountains glow,
A new life to our Party we all owe.
Lowest in social position we used to stay,
We were not but bullied day after day.
We harvested only for landlords to enjoy,
We suffered with no one a hello to say.
It's Chairman Mao who's given us land to sow,
Food and clothing are now enough to go.
Tears in eyes the old days we had to spend,
Up as our own masters we today stand.
We poor people should under one roof unite,
For a better tomorrow let's work and fight.



Ode to Liberation (Fanshen Daoqing) is a thanksgiving song expressing the happiness and joy of Chinese farmers who were given land to till right after the founding of the People's Republic of China. As one of the traditional folk art forms in China, the musical form *daoqing* has its origin in *God's Will, Son of Heaven* and other music developed in the Tang Dynasty (618-907). At its start, it was called the "walking ballad" performed without the accompaniment of any musical instruments. Starting from the Southern Song Dynasty (1127-1279), musical instruments made with bamboo or wood were introduced for accompaniments or rhythm marking, hence the name *daoqing yugu*, meaning the music performed to the accompaniment of bamboo or wooden musical instruments. As time went on, *daoqing* gradually became secular and developed into an art form varying from region to region, such as the Shaanxi *daoqing*, the Shenchu *daoqing*, the Jiangxi *daoqing*, the Hubei *yugu*, the Hunan *yugu*, and the Sichuan *zhuqin*. Singing takes up the major part of a *daoqing* performance, with talking supplementing it now and then. In some cases, *daoqing* is performed exclusively through singing, which varies in tone from region to region, without the supplementation of talking.

