# A SNOWY DAY AND OTHER STORIES

## A Lnowy Day and Other Ltories

BY CONTEMPORARY CHINESE WRITERS

Goreign Languages Press
Peking 1960

Printed in the People's Republic of China

### Contents

A SNOWY DAY Chang Lin	, 5
THE S. S. INTERNATIONAL FRIENDSHIP Lu Chun-chao	21
MAMMA	. 44
Wang Yuan-chien	
TWO ABLE WOMEN	64
Hu Cheng	V-
COMRADE	96
She Yi-ping	90
LITTLE BROTHER	105
Shen Hu-ken	. 103

此为试读,需要完整PDF请访问: www.ertongbook.com

### A Lnowy Day

#### Chang Lin

It is snowing. Sitting by the fireside and gazing out the window at the whirling snow-flakes, I cannot but recollect Lin-sheng, my dear, dear young son. Were he still living, he would be twenty-six years old.

He was born in an icy, snow-bound forest, under conditions almost too difficult to imagine. It was in the winter of 1932, the second year of the Mukden incident when the Japanese invaded Northeast China. Under the instructions of the Communist Party, my husband and I went to the Payen District at the lower reaches of the Mutan River to organize a branch of the Anti-Japanese and National Salvation Association. One night, when it was snowing heavily, just as it is now, we passed through a large forest on our way to the mountainside. I walked very slowly as I was already eight months pregnant. Suddenly I felt a tremor. My husband thought I had caught cold. He took out a few jentan pills and put them into my mouth. However, it gave me no relief. There was another in our group, Old Hung,\* a peasant and a member of the Association. He was less than forty years of age, and the father of three children. He had an imposing moustache. We thought he was an old, experienced father. Upon hearing that I had taken ientan. he was so worried that he stamped his feet and shouted at my husband, "She is pregnant. How can you give her such a thing? It will only make her feel worse. . . ."

I was only twenty-one years old then and my husband was twenty-five. We had been married for two

<sup>\*&</sup>quot;Old" before Hung in Chinese makes the name one of endearment used by his intimate friends.

years and were utterly ignorant of matters concerning childbirth. We were stupefied by his words. Good Heavens! How horrible it was in that forest with boundless ice and snow and not a single village to be seen.

My husband was always withdrawn and silent when he was doing underground work. I never saw him nervous or excited, even when the situation was critical. He often hummed a few notes of a song, but now he was very upset. He spread his hands as if to ask for help and said to Old Hung, "What can we do? What can we do?"

Squatting beside me Old Hung thought for a while and then slowly stood up. He said to my husband, "To stay here is worse than to push on. We had better keep going."

Old Hung and my husband supported me as we walked in the endless forest. The wind whistled through the trees. The snow filled my high boots. I clenched my teeth; my legs moved involuntarily for a few  $li^*$  and gradually evening set in. My body was drenched with perspiration as a result of weakness and I was about to swoon from the pain in my abdomen. They had to let me rest a bit against a big tree. Old Hung looked ahead and let out a happy shout, "Light, there's a light!" My husband looked in the direction he indicated and also said gayly, "Thank Heaven, there is a village."

They helped me stand up and we went on. With aid in sight, the pain seemed to have abated, but I was still moving forward, half pushed, half carried.

They dragged me on at a snail's pace, from tree to tree, and at last we succeeded in reaching the place where we had seen the light.

It was not a village but a lonely, small, wooden shed. The door was made of branches. We pushed the door open and entered. Two old men were sitting by a fire roasting corn-flour cakes. I vaguely saw the shotgun by

<sup>\*</sup> A li is equivalent to half a kilometre or one-third of a mile.

their side and several dead hares. At a glance we knew that they were hunters. They did not know who we were and were astounded. Old Hung patted one of the hunters on the back and said, "Don't be afraid. We are members of the Anti-Japanese and National Salvation Association. One of our comrades is sick and we want to ask your permission to stay here for a little while." When they heard this they relaxed. One old hunter said, "This shed belongs to our people. If you don't think it too uncomfortable, you may stay."

My husband asked how far we were from the nearest village.

"Oh, not less than twenty li," one of the men answered, as he moved the corn-flour cakes in the fire with a twig.

The shed was pitifully small. With the fire in the middle there was not enough space for five persons to squat around. The two hunters, conscious of the congestion, picked up the shotgun and went away. The fire was going out. Old Hung undid his coverlet of coarse cloth, which he had brought with him, and spread it on the ground by the side of the fire. Then he went out to fetch some firewood.

My husband took the white cup tied to his knapsack, filled it with snow from outside and put it on the fire to boil.

Soon, Old Hung returned with firewood. He broke a few twigs and put them on the fire. "Now it will be all right," he said to me.

The twigs crackled as they burned slowly. The snow in the cup had melted and was sizzling. I suddenly felt that I was going to die by the side of the fire and involuntarily I began to weep. I had been accepted as a member of the Communist Party not long ago and I had just begun to have a deeper understanding of life. How I longed to live!

My husband looked at the flames in silence. Old Hung added some twigs. He spoke slowly to comfort me,

"Don't be afraid to give birth to your child. My third child was born in a corn-field when my wife was breaking the ears of corn. The infant dropped on the corn sack."

I felt a bit easier on hearing what he said. But on second thought, his wife had already had two children, she was experienced. How could I be compared with her?

I turned and tossed the whole night by the fire. At dawn the baby was born. I awoke from a stupor without hearing the baby's cry. I opened my eyes and saw my husband wrapping the baby in a piece of black cloth.

"Is the baby still alive?" I asked.

"Of course," he said in agitation. "See, a boy!"

He put the baby beside me tenderly. I saw it was wrapped in a piece of black cotton cloth. I asked him where it came from, but he did not reply. When I saw Old Hung's long coat had become a short jacket, I understood. Poor child! He was born without even a wrapper. But for the piece of cloth which Old Hung had torn from his coat, he would have been naked. I turned my face away and wiped my tears secretly.

Under the light of the pine twigs, I saw the small, ugly, wrinkled face of my baby. I said to myself, "My pitiful, tiny life! Why do you choose such a time to come into the world?"

My husband and Old Hung were discussing what we should do. They said that they must find a village in the vicinity so that the baby and I could be sent there. I was in torment. What chance did a baby have to survive under such conditions. In tears, I said, "This baby was born prematurely and in such a terrible place. It is hopeless to keep him alive. Perhaps it would be better to abandon him."

My husband did not say anything. Old Hung stared at me and said reproachfully, "What are you saying! Think! Why are we fighting guerrilla wars, fighting the A SNOWY DAY 9

Japanese? Aren't we doing it all for our children?" He looked at the baby and continued, "If we can find a place to bring the baby up, he will be a seed of the revolution."

The chirping of the birds in the forest had driven away the night. Old Hung melted a cup of snow over the fire, drank it, said a few words to my husband and went out.

My husband went outside for another cup of snow and put it on the fire to boil. He then sat beside me silently, now looking at the baby, now at me. I saw that he was pale and his eyelids were swollen, yet there was a light in his eyes that I had never seen before. It was a glow of happiness. Probably this is common to all those who become a father for the first time — I don't know.

Old Hung came back at dusk, accompanied by two local men. He carried a black porcelain jug which contained corn-meal soup. He warmed the soup on the fire, unwrapped two pieces of corn-bread from a handkerchief and gave them to my husband. Then he took five hard-boiled eggs from his pocket, peeled them and dropped them in the soup. "You must not eat cold food," he said. "You have to wait till the eggs are hot. When you finish your meal, we'll set out again. I have found a place for you." So saying, he broke two twigs for me to use as chopsticks.

I looked at his curving moustache and felt that he was really my beloved father. My heart was filled with gratitude and I could hardly restrain my tears. But I wiped them away before he could see them.

At night, the two local men fixed up a wooden door as a stretcher and they carried me and my baby to Sun Village.

There were only twenty-five households in this hamlet, most of them dependent on hunting for a living. I stayed with widow Wang and her family. When the baby opened his eyes and cried, Mrs. Wang gave him a small cup of warm boiled water and the crying stopped. He shut his eyes and slept. By the dim light of an oil lamp

on the table, I could see the velvety yellow down on his face. Perhaps he was ugly, but I loved him deeply. Now my only hope was that the baby stay alive and be healthy. Just as Old Hung had said, let him be a "seed of the revolution"!

My husband entered on tiptoe. He put his face next to mine and said happily, "Old Hung has a name for him—Lin-sheng (born in the forest). What do you think?"

What a nice name! I clasped the baby in my arms, kissed his small face lightly and called him in a low voice: "My little darling, my little Lin-sheng!"

At that time we were expanding our armed forces. My husband could not stay with me any longer. The next evening he went away with Old Hung.

The baby's face looked more and more beautiful as the days went by. The wrinkles on his forehead became fewer and fewer, his hair became dark, and his small eyes were bright. He was like a kitten when he was fed, curling beside me quietly. I felt the happiness of being a mother. How could I ever leave him?

On the sixth evening of the second month after his birth, my husband and Old Hung returned. My husband hugged the baby in his arms and kissed him fervently. His wind-roughened face woke the baby, but he did not give the infant to me until the baby began to cry. He sat by my side and told me cheerfully that our guerrilla forces had expanded very quickly. Now we had more than a hundred people and many young students had come from Harbin. There were five girls among them.

I was very happy at the news. I said, "I can't stay here to nurse the baby. I must go back." He agreed.

Next day, we sent the baby to Old Hung's home in Hung Village. It happened that a distant relative of Old Hung's had lost her baby and could nurse my infant. Through the persuasion of Old Hung's wife the woman agreed to take care of Lin-sheng and we promised to

pay her a monthly fee. We left as soon as the arrangements were made.

Wartime is so difficult. Sometimes one day is as long as a month. But we were too busy with our work to notice the passage of time. We had to go everywhere, no matter what the weather or time of day. Five years thus slipped by imperceptibly. In 1937 our guerrilla forces had already expanded to an army of more than a thousand persons. My husband became a commander of a regiment in the First Army of the Anti-Japanese Allied Army and I was the political commissar of the supply section of the regiment. Old Hung was in charge of the factory making uniforms and bedding.

During these five years, we often went to see our child. Lin-sheng was now a big boy. The original family which had taken him had their own child, and therefore they had long since sent Lin-sheng to Old Hung's family. Whenever our forces won a victory, we would send a few of the spoils such as biscuits, tins of food and sweets to our child. I remember the day we destroyed five enemy trucks and got quite a lot of eatables. One evening when it was raining hard, I went to see Lin-sheng. He did not recognize me. Old Hung's wife pushed him towards me and said, "Lin-sheng, dear, call your mamma." But the boy was naughty; he turned his head and ran away. When he was out of the room, he looked in and stared at me. I could not control myself and my tears ran down like rain.

Old Hung's wife was a kind woman. She sighed when she saw me crying. "Ah, it is the Japanese who destroy our families," she said, "driving us from pillar to post with the result that even a son does not recognize his own dear mother!" And she began to cry too.

I could not but dry my tears and comfort her. She was a tender-hearted woman. She wiped her tears and consoled me in turn. She said, "Comrade Chin, a child is the flesh of his mother. Her heart is always with him

when he is away from her. Don't worry when you are in the army. Your child will be treated just like my child. I would not treat him ill. Times will be better if you drive the enemy away soon."

Each time I came back from seeing my child, I felt stronger and more determined.

The Japanese launched a big "mopping-up" operation in the autumn of that very year. One day, my husband and I were very distressed to learn that Hung Village was in the area of hostilities. Old Hung was naturally even more anxious than we. Since my husband and I were not able to leave we asked Old Hung to hurry back to his home instantly with some men dressed as civilians.

Old Hung liked Lin-sheng very much. He wanted to be my son's godfather, but my husband smiled and said that it was unnecessary since there could be no more intimate relationship than that between comrades in the revolutionary forces. Old Hung plucked at his bushy, drooping moustache and answered with a laugh, "Wouldn't it be better if we become relatives in addition to the relationship between revolutionary comrades?" When we heard this, we all burst into laughter. However, I always thought that the boy should call Old Hung his godfather. Didn't he pay more attention to the boy than we did?

The next evening Old Hung came back. To our surprise, he brought Lin-sheng with him. We were holding a meeting to discuss our work. When we saw our child, we only thought of hugging him and the meeting was forgotten. The boy was now as tall as a short gun. His hair was black and he was well-fed and plump. His cheeks were as round as apples, glowing with health.

Suddenly I noticed that Old Hung looked very distressed. He stood on the side with a blank expression on his face. I hurriedly asked, "What is the matter with you?" With tears brimming in his eyes and one hand holding

A SNOWY DAY 13

his forehead, he said, "Our village has been burned by the Japanese. My wife and children failed to escape. . . ."

My husband and I were thunder-struck.

These were the facts. When Old Hung's wife heard that the Japanese had entered the village, she anticipated that they would harm the people. She was afraid that the enemy might discover Lin-sheng, so she secretly asked an old woman in the neighbourhood to take the boy away. But she and her children did not succeed in escaping and were all burned to death in the house. When Old Hung reached home, the village had already been turned into a piece of scorched earth. He could find neither the corpse of his wife nor the remains of his children. Finally he met one of his countrymen and found Lin-sheng.

We shared his sorrow and his anger. I remembered his wife — such a kind-hearted woman! She saved Linsheng's life, but she and her children died at the hands of our enemy. My heart filled with never-to-be-forgotten hatred.

That year, the Japanese carried out their cruel policy of burning and killing and amalgamating the villages throughout the northeastern provinces. Innumerable mountain hamlets were destroyed by the fires set by the Japanese. As a result many people died and the survivors had to escape to a few large villages. The enemy set up strongholds in these large villages and encircled each of them with a wall built on piles. Sentries were posted at the gates. The Japanese promulgated a law to the effect that ten households would be annihilated in the event one household had any connection with the "bandits" (meaning the Anti-Japanese Allied Army). This was known as the "mutual guarantee system" and was rigidly enforced.

Under such conditions our activities became increasingly difficult. Contact with our comrades was either severed or could only be maintained secretly. It would be dif-

ficult to find another village in which the boy could be left, and so we had to keep our five-year-old son with us in our guerrilla unit.

Our anti-Japanese activities shifted from mountainous hamlets to forests. We lived in tents and slept on dry hay. The words of a song described our life well: "The sky is our dome; the earth is our bed; the fire is our life; the forest is our home; and wild herbs are our food."

Our life was difficult enough, but the added burden of raising a young child doubled my fiery ordeal. The forests were full of wild animals. When our forces were stationed in the woods, I dared not leave him alone in the tent and I had to take him with me.

The boy caused us trouble, but also gave us joy. We adored him. When we marched, he would run ahead of me with his hands swinging. After a few li he would be so tired that he would not be able to move. Our comrades then carried him in turn like a sack of corn-bread. When we encamped for the night, we would be dead tired, but the boy would run around the forest like a fawn. The fatigue of our comrades vanished as they watched him. They played with him and taught him to sing. My husband and I frequently heard conversations between them like the following:

"Lin-sheng, what will you do when you become a man?"

"Oh, fight the Japanese!"

"Do you know how to fight?"

"I'll take my father's gun and I'll do like this. Bang, bang, and the bad man will fall down dead."

I remember, once, when my husband and I heard these words, we looked at each other and smiled. I said, "Can't the people of our generation drive the Japanese out without having to wait for our children to fight them?" "Yes," he replied, "I think we will. By the time the boy becomes a soldier; we shall already have succeeded in our revolution. Then we might be living in a big house."

A SNOWY DAY 15

No matter how busy Old Hung was, he always had time to give Lin-sheng a hug and rub his hairy chin against the boy's shoulder. Lin-sheng now became like his own flesh and blood. The life in the army was hard; our food consisted mostly of wild herbs and steamed cornflour cakes. However, Old Hung tried his best to find some rice or flour for the boy.

For more than two years Lin-sheng lived in the forests with us. His tender, white face turned brown. Gradually he developed and learned. He could walk with our troops for twenty or thirty li without being carried. One day when we were setting out on a march, what do you think he said to me? "Mamma," he said, "I'll help you carry your things." "Good, my boy," I answered, and I tied a rope around an enamel basin and let him carry it on his back. It looked as if he were carrying a small drum.

The situation became worse in 1940. The enemy assembled big forces and attacked us in an enveloping action. We divided our forces into several small units and continued to fight back in the scattered mountains and forests. It was winter, heavy snow had fallen twice and all the larch trees were crowned with white. It was more than twenty degrees below zero, but still we had no padded clothes. When my husband saw how pitifully cold the child was, he took his own overcoat, which had been a prize from the war, ripped it apart and made a small overcoat for the boy. With the remainder he made a jacket for himself.

One evening, my boy and I were warming ourselves by the fire in the tent. My husband entered wearing only thin clothes. He embraced his son and asked fondly, "Linsheng, do you feel cold?"

"No, no. Just feel my hands; they are warm." He put his hand on his father's cheek.

Even under such conditions my husband was optimistic. He would joke with me whenever he had time. When we talked about the lack of clothing, he said smilingly,

"Comrade Political Commissar of the Supply Service, why don't you try your best to provide us with winter clothes? Will you let us always remain in summer dress?" Although it was just a joke between husband and wife, I felt a pain in my heart. What could I do? We were completely blockaded. We tried every means to get clothing, even lives had been lost in the attempt, yet nothing could be obtained.

When he saw that I was upset by his words, he tried to comfort me, saying, "Don't be unhappy. The men won't blame you if they suffer." His eyes brightened suddenly and he added in a low voice, "We are preparing to attack the enemy in order to solve the problem of getting padded clothes." He took the boy's two hands and clapped them together while teaching him to sing this song:

We have no food, we have no clothes, The enemy will give them to us. We have no rifles, we have no cannons, The enemy will make them for us. On this sacred land we were born, Not an inch of this earth From us can be torn. . . .

Look! Lin-sheng was like a big boy. He sang without difficulty.

A few days later, our regiment succeeded in breaking into a small county seat and we obtained more than three hundred bolts of white cloth and several hundred catties of cotton padding. In addition, we got three sewing machines. What happy news! The tragedy was the sacrifice of Old Hung in this engagement. I never saw my husband cry, but whenever we mentioned this hero of ours, he would remain silent and his eyes would fill with tears.

We set up a factory in the dense forest to make bedding and uniforms. The white cloth was not suitable for