



# RED CRAG

Lo Kuang-pin and Yang Yi-yen

# RED CRAG

LO KUANG-PIN and YANG YI-YEN

FOREIGN LANGUAGES PRESS PEKING

A heavy grey fog lay like a pall over the mountain city at the junction of the Yangtze and Chialing rivers, and the Monument to the Victory of the War of Resistance\* was hidden in the dense mist. The gloomy morning heralded the beginning of another year in an era of turmoil.

It was New Year's day, and in spite of the damp and cold, the streets in the apparently prosperous shopping districts were crowded with pedestrians.

A barefooted newspaper boy ran through the fog, shouting: "Paper! Paper! *Central Daily!* *Peace Daily!* . . . ! China's prospects for 1948! . . . Read all about it! United States nuclear exercises! Third world war imminent! Read all about it!"

As he hawked his papers, he continued to shout: "Read all about it! The police order! Fireworks prohibited over the New Year! No firecrackers! Strict precautions against fires!"

Yu Hsin-chiang, walking swiftly through the stream of pedestrians, involuntarily started at the mention of fire. He glanced over his shoulder, but the newspaper boy had disappeared in the crowd, his voice fading in the distance:

"Read the local news! Public functionary bankrupt! Whole family take poison! Leaves long suicide letter . . . ! Read all about it!"

Yu Hsin-chiang was not dressed like a worker today. His stocky body was garbed in a neat blue cotton high-button jacket. A pair of deep-set, penetrating eyes gleamed under his heavy black eyebrows. He was not yet thirty, but his serious manner was that of a much older man and gave one a feeling of capa-

---

\* Now re-named Monument to the Liberation of the Chungking People.

bility and prudence. His brows contracted slightly as he heard the newsboy's shouts, and he hastened his steps, swinging his arms vigorously. Either because he was hot or for convenience, he had rolled up his sleeves, revealing darkly-tanned forearms and large calloused hands.

He picked his way through the milling crowd, stopping now and then as buses drove by, trailing long black clouds of exhaust fumes. The rattle and screech of these antiquated diesel-engined vehicles, the strident calls of hawkers and stall-keepers peddling surplus U.S. goods, the yells of hurrying ricksha men and the noise of the holiday crowd filled the streets with a chaotic din.

Yu Hsin-chiang walked along, preoccupied with his own thoughts, but the kaleidoscopic street scenes continuously forced themselves on his attention: the tall buildings lining both sides of the street, markets, banks, restaurants, dance-halls, employment agencies and unusually thriving auction shops were all garishly decorated with boldly inscribed New Year's greetings. This year the decorations were somewhat different, probably a trick by some commercial establishment to attract attention: long ribbons of brand-new ten-thousand-dollar bills pasted together festooned the tall fog-shrouded buildings instead of the usual red and green silk streamers. Some shops were even using the newly-issued hundred-thousand-dollar bills as if anticipating that million-dollar bills would soon come rolling off the printing presses! The businessmen had probably reckoned that it was cheaper to use worthless banknotes than to buy red and green silk streamers. It was unfortunate that the hundred-thousand-dollar bills were no bigger and no better printed than the ten-thousand-dollar ones and with their drab colours were less attractive to the eye. These streamers of "national currency" fluttered and rustled in the slightest breeze. No one seemed to find the use of money as decoration lacking in respect, and though the authorities had prohibited fireworks displays, they had not forbidden this.

Big posters blowing about in the icy wind, advertised in glaring letters: New Year's cut-price sale! We sell at a loss! Buy

one article and get another free! Sacrifice sale! Yu Hsin-chiang was not taken in by these devices. Everyone knew that a nought had been previously added to all the price tags, and it did not require much imagination to realize that behind these posters were worried men struggling on the verge of bankruptcy.

A woman's voice warbled a song from a loudspeaker at the top of the Victory Monument: "Fragrant flowers are few, and rare is the beautiful view. . . ."

Several long blasts from an automobile horn startled the pedestrians and scattered a crowd of street urchins scrambling for cigarette butts. Yu Hsin-chiang looked casually around, and saw a white-painted police car speeding along. It was closely followed by several streamlined closed cars, flying the Stars and Stripes, with "U.S. Information Service" painted on their sides in Chinese. Escorted by fully-armed police, the cars drove towards the Victory Building where the municipal authorities were holding a New Year's reception party for the "Allies." Yu Hsin-chiang frowned at the cars as he noticed that the passengers included some of the Americans who often came to the armament works. He suddenly observed that someone had stuck a poster, "Yanks Go Home!" on the upswept tail of the last car. Yu Hsin-chiang glared at the passing cars, crossed the busy street, and continued on his way.

He made a deliberate detour through several streets, and when he was sure that he was not being followed headed straight for the lodgings for employees of the Tachuan Bank. They were situated in a tree-lined avenue near the centre of the city, and though it was New Year, few of the residents were about. He pressed the door-bell at No. 5 and the black-painted door was slowly opened by a middle-aged man. He was dressed in a Western suit of dark-blue serge, and had an overcoat thrown over his shoulders. Nodding to Yu Hsin-chiang, he beckoned him to come in, and by force of habit, glanced up and down the street before closing the door. His movements created the impression that he was accustomed to living in a difficult and complicated situation.

On entering the parlour of the house, the caller was struck by its well-cared-for appearance. It was neat and clean, and a cloth had been spread over a little round table on which was a vase of fragrant plum blossom. A colourful display of New Year cards and several dishes of sweets gave it a festive appearance. Scrolls decorated the wall, among them the painting of a horse by Hsu Pei-hung (Ju Péon). A glowing charcoal fire in the brazier made the room warm and cosy, but although Yu Hsin-chiang did not feel as much at home here as he did in the workers' simple living quarters, neither did he find it too unpleasant. He fully understood the struggle was very involved, and that underground Party members had to protect the organization and themselves from persecution by the reactionaries. If the work required his host to adopt this mode of life as a camouflage, then of course it was right for him to live this way. Yu Hsin-chiang walked over to a sofa by the window, explaining that Lao Hsu\* had sent him; and his host, Fu Chih-kao remarked, "I saw the fire on the other side of the river last night. I was thinking. . . ." He hung up his coat and busied himself making tea, then hospitably asked: "Which do you prefer, Dragon Well or scented tea?"

"It's all the same to me," Yu Hsin-chiang replied. "I usually drink cold water."

Fu Chih-kao laughed, and set a cup of tea on a small tea table saying: "When comrades come to see me, I practise communism. I share and share alike." Then he scrutinized the deep-set eyes of his companion and patted him lightly on the shoulder.

"Hsin-chiang, you didn't sleep last night, did you?" he asked. "How did the fire start?"

Fu Chih-kao was a member of the Shatse\*\* district Party committee and specialized in economic affairs. Yu Hsin-chiang was distressed by these inquiries into events at the plant. In his

---

\* Lao, literally "old," put before surnames as a sign of familiarity.

\*\* Short for Shapingpa and Tsechikou, two districts on the outskirts of the city proper.

mind he relived the scenes of the previous night: fierce fire engulfing whole rows of sheds, leaping flames roaring and crackling and casting their fiery glow into the night sky. He picked up his cup and nervously gulped down the tea without answering, as if he were parched with thirst.

"Don't worry," said Fu Chih-kao trying to comfort him, his expression showing that he had already given the matter some thought. "We are sure to find a way to help the workers. How much money does Lao Hsu think is necessary?"

After a moment's pause, Fu Chih-kao, a note of concern in his voice, continued: "Did you read the papers? They say that the plant caught fire because of 'carelessness' on the part of the workers." He picked up a copy of the *Central Daily* and pointed to a subhead, saying: "I think there's more to this than meets the eye, what do you say?"

Yu Hsin-chiang jumped to his feet, heavy eyebrows quivering: "Caught fire? A big lie! Secret agents started that fire, I saw them with my own eyes!"

He recalled how he had rushed towards the scene of the fire and come upon a crowd of workers, among them the master workman Hsiao, the Party secretary at the Artillery Plant. They were marching along two securely trussed fire-raisers. The workers had recognized them as secret agents, members of the armament works' security staff.

Yu Hsin-chiang glared at the wall as if the two arsonists were standing there in front of him. After a long pause, he said to Fu Chih-kao: "These two secret agents were caught red-handed. They confessed that they had started the fire on orders from the Second Department of the Southwest Bureau."

"The Second Department?" Fu Chih-kao was startled. "That is an organization of the MIB!"\*

Intent on his own angry thoughts, Yu Hsin-chiang did not

---

\* Military Investigation Bureau, the biggest secret service organization of the Kuomintang. Its full name was the Bureau of Investigation and Statistics of the Military Council of the Kuomintang.

hear Fu Chih-kao's exclamation. Stepping forward, he said with grim determination:

"The monk can run away, but not the monastery. We'll make the enemy pay for all the losses suffered by the workers!"

He remembered that before the fire many signs of impending trouble had been observed at the branch factories of the Yangtze Ordnance Works. First, large numbers of soldiers and police had arrived at the factories and compelled the workers to work longer hours and extra shifts. Then the authorities had said that the workers' shacks at the Artillery Plant were occupying space required for factory expansion. They had tried to force the workers to pull down their own living quarters and move out. Last night the enemy had started the blaze, thus bringing the struggle to fever pitch. Today, the workers of all the branch factories of the armament works were to assemble at the Artillery Plant. The authorities had sneaked out of the plant, but the angry workers were determined to take possession of the construction material which had been prepared for the expansion of the factory, and use it to rebuild their shacks, now in ashes. The struggle would continue until victory was achieved! Yu Hsin-chiang banged the little round table with his clenched fist, bringing down a shower of plum blossom.

Yu Hsin-chiang's emotion touched a chord of sympathy in Fu Chih-kao, who because of the nature of his work, had little opportunity of participating in mass movements, but was, nevertheless, keenly aware of the political situation.

"Yes," he said, "Chungking's armament industry constitutes eighty per cent of Chiang Kai-shek's productive capacity. If he wants to do a good job as 'quartermaster' and make up for his heavy losses of U.S. equipment, he must devote greater attention to Chungking!" Fu Chih-kao's eyes flashed with unusual emotion as he asked: "Hsin-chiang, do you remember how last spring before the *Hsinhua Daily*\* was stopped Comrade Wu\*\*

\* Organ of the Chinese Communist Party then published in Chungking.

\*\* Wu Yu-chang, then Secretary of the Szechuan Provincial Party Committee.



sharply condemned the enemy? 'Just look!' he said. 'Your armament works are on the other bank of the river, for months now they have been going full blast, manufacturing arms day and night. What does that signify?' It is obvious that the U.S.-Chiang Kai-shek reactionaries are intent on continuing the civil war and have reached the stage where they will stop at nothing! This time our Party must lead the workers' struggle to the end!"

"We Chungking workers must not soil our hands by helping the reactionaries to slaughter the people," said Yu Hsin-chiang. As he spoke, the significance and importance of the current struggle to oppose the removal of the workers' living quarters and the expansion of the factory became increasingly clear to him. "Lao Hsu says that he has decided to expose publicly the enemy's criminal incendiarism and muster support from all quarters. We will also start a campaign among all the workers in the city for funds to alleviate the hardships of the Artillery Plant workers, until the time when the enemy is made to compensate them for their losses. . . ."

Fu Chih-kao broke in before Yu Hsin-chiang had finished speaking, saying: "I can find some way to help out until the donations are available." He realized that it was no easy matter to support several hundred workers' families; but some of the Party's expenditure came within the scope of his responsibilities.

Yu Hsin-chiang nodded and stated the amount needed for the present, adding: "Lao Hsu says that whatever you lend us will be paid back out of the donations."

"Don't worry about that. I'll give you the money tomorrow."

New Year had just passed and there was not much ready cash about, but Fu Chih-kao did not mention it. On the contrary, he offered to find some way of obtaining more, if that wasn't enough.

Noticing that Yu Hsin-chiang looked very weary, he urged him: "You must take a rest and have a bite to eat before leaving." Looking at his watch, he added: "My wife has gone shopping, she'll be back any moment now. The maidservant

has gone to her village to spend the New Year with her family, so we are cooking our own meals these days."

Yu Hsin-chiang failed to notice the other's concern. He was not given to conversation, and his temperament was such that he forgot everything else when he had work to do. If some matter required his attention, he could not even be bothered with meals. His mother often complained that he did not take proper care of his health and Lao Hsu had also criticized him for this, but it was difficult for him to change his ways, particularly at present, when there was so much to do. He had less time than ever for eating and sleeping. The truth was that Lao Hsu also neglected himself when busy. After hearing Yu Hsin-chiang's report that morning he had gone to the factory without a bite of breakfast, and before parting had assigned him several tasks.

"There's something else." Yu Hsin-chiang looked at Fu Chih-kaio. "Lao Hsu intends to set up a reserve liaison post in the Shatse District."

This idea had been taking shape with the development of the workers' movement in the Shatse District factories, but up to the present, Lao Hsu had not made up his mind who should be entrusted with this task. He had hesitated because he did not want the setting up of the liaison post to be mixed up with other aspects of the work of the Shatse district Party committee of which he was responsible. Remembering Lao Hsu's attitude to this matter, Yu Hsin-chiang stressed:

"The liaison post has to be kept separate from the work among the masses, so Lao Hsu plans to entrust this special task to you. He wants to know whether you will agree or not."

"Chiang Hsueh-chin is leaving soon and the district committee intends to put me in charge of some work in the students' movement," Fu Chih-kaio smiled complacently and took on this new task without the least hesitation. Indeed, any task, any additional work was a source of satisfaction to him.

He said: "There are quite a number of educational institutions in the Shapingpa area, and a bookshop would be just the

right cover for a liaison post. The question of finances presents no difficulty, but we shall need a trustworthy shop attendant."

"Lao Hsu has already thought of someone."

"Who?"

"Chen Sung-lin, a worker comrade. He's a good friend of mine," said Yu Hsin-chiang by way of introduction.

"Splendid! When is he coming?"

"In a few days. You know the situation at the factory. . . ."

Fu Chih-kao was more than pleased when he heard that Lao Hsu had also considered the possibility of setting up a bookshop, and he was in high spirits. Yu Hsin-chiang said that Lao Hsu had advised that the bookshop should be small, free from any political associations and not carry any progressive books. . . .

"Yes, yes! I operated a liaison post myself a few years ago," Fu Chih-kao nodded and smiled. Then he changed the subject, "Hsin-chiang, have you read the latest edition of *Forward*?"

He took a roll of pink typing paper from his pocket. It was the underground Party paper, which he had been reading just before Yu's arrival.

"Look at this," he said, "'The Present Situation and Our Tasks,' a truly inspiring document written by Chairman Mao Tse-tung. The Chinese Revolution has reached a great turning point! Victory is at hand!" Fu Chih-kao was deeply stirred. He shook a loose sheet, covered with closely-written characters, out of the newspaper, "These last days I've been thinking about what we should do to prove ourselves worthy of this great era. We must redouble our efforts in the mass movement, we must make greater contributions to the Party! The thought of the future fills me with boundless energy and strength. . . ."

The ringing of the door-bell interrupted him. "It must be my wife back from her shopping. You know," Fu Chih-kao confided to his caller, "she thinks a lot of you — a worker who also writes poetry. She read your short poems in the *Hsinhua Daily* and was deeply moved."

Yu Hsin-chiang was in a hurry to leave, but Fu Chih-kao wouldn't hear of it. He pushed him down into the chair as he

said: "She's very eager to meet you and she'll cook you a few simple dishes which I'm sure you'll enjoy. It's cold today and I can't allow you to work for the Party on an empty stomach!" So saying he eagerly thrust the sheet of paper which he had shaken out of the newspaper into Yu Hsin-chiang's hands, explaining that it contained his reflections after studying Chairman Mao's epoch-making document. He had spent two whole nights putting them down and intended to have them published in the Party's underground publication. He asked Yu Hsin-chiang to read them and let him have his comments.

The bell rang again. Fu Chih-kao threw his overcoat over his shoulders and with a happy smile went to open the door.

The new bookshop opened on Shapingpa's High Street. It was rather small and, in addition to selling ordinary books and publications, dealt in all kinds of second-hand textbooks. The customers were mostly students from local colleges and middle schools.

The assistant was Chen Sung-lin, a round-faced young fellow of about nineteen years, short but solidly built. He had been transferred from the Repair Plant. No one at the plant knew that he had become a shop assistant. He had never done this kind of work before and missed the militant atmosphere of the workshop. He was very anxious to know what was happening at the Artillery Plant, but had no way of finding out and was not allowed to make random inquiries. Moreover, the bookshop was as yet only a reserve liaison post, and Lao Hsu had not yet visited it. Under these circumstances Chen Sung-lin felt that he wasn't doing very much for the Party.

The bookshop was under the direction of Fu Chih-kao, who while maintaining his position as chief of the accounting department at the bank, was nominally its manager. He frequently came to the bookshop to give advice to Chen Sung-lin who did not know the ropes. As he was a man of wide experience, his directions were practical and down-to-earth. He had many good

ideas, and it wasn't long before he had won Chen Sung-lin's respect and confidence.

Chen Sung-lin had no acquaintances hereabouts, and when the bookshop was closed on Mondays, he would go to nearby Chungking University, where Fu Chih-kao had instructed him to deliver some publications printed in Shanghai and Hongkong to a student named Hua Wei. He met the student once a week and they soon became friends.

Today was his day off again. Chen Sung-lin changed his clothes, rolled up two copies of the *Masses*, a Hongkong magazine, in a newspaper, locked up the shop, and walked towards Chungking University.

Turning into the street leading to the university, he passed the Shatse Hospital. The gate of the Youth Hall across the street was decorated with two crossed Kuomintang flags. A big red poster announced that some professor was going to give a talk on "The Truth of Saving the Nation Through Study." It also announced that a film would be shown after the lecture. Chen Sung-lin gave it a cursory glance as he walked past.

The road leading through this district was generally plastered with students' advertisements, offering books and clothing for sale. Today, however, many other notices had appeared, and Chen Sung-lin noticed with surprise that they called upon the students to make donations to help the workers at the Artillery Plant. One huge red paper sign read: Lend a helping hand to our suffering worker brothers! It also carried a special report describing how secret agents had burnt down the workers' quarters at the plant because they had refused to produce armaments for the civil war and had also refused to make way for the expansion of the plant. This sign had been scribbled over with reactionary slogans: "Down with the red medical college!" "Rumour-mongering!" However, alongside them was another slogan: "Defend freedom of speech! Oppose the civil war!"

He came across many rival slogans, which reflected the sharp conflict between the different forces. What a contrast between these and the posters advertising empty speeches on so-called

"truth" which he had just passed lower down the street! He also observed that some of the notices had been torn and others were scrawled over with offensive remarks, such as: "Sedition!" "Insults to the Generalissimo!" "Undermining the government!" But an edition of the *Comet*, a student paper, created the deepest impression on Chen Sung-lin. It had been torn down before the paste had time to dry, and only the name of the newspaper and half the editorial remained. The editorial was captioned: "Protest Against the Plot to Expand the Civil War!"

Chen Sung-lin had heard Hua Wei say that Chungking University, like other educational institutions, was preparing to join in the struggle with the workers who had suffered from the fire. Nevertheless, he was amazed to see that matters had already reached such a pitch at the university. One notice in particular caught his eye. It read:

The Students' Self-Government Association at Chungking University has invited a workers' representative from the Artillery Plant of the Yangtze Armament Works to deliver a report on the facts of the fire.  
Place: Students' Club-House.  
Time: Nine o'clock, Monday morning.

Beside it a rival poster announced:

The Chungking University branch of the San Min Chu Yi Youth Corps\* has invited Professor Hou Fang to make a speech on "The Truth of Saving the Nation Through Study."  
Place: The Shapingpa Youth Hall.  
Time: 8:30, Monday morning.  
(After the meeting the Hollywood technicolour film, *Bathing Beauty*, will be shown.)

"The bastards! They're trying to steal the show!" swore Chen Sung-lin. It was obvious that the San Min Chu Yi Youth Corps was trying to get an audience by using a sexy film as bait. They often used this trick when peddling their reactionary wares.

There were other notices stuck all over the place, one issued by the Students' Refectory Committee at the College of Law,

---

\* A fascist youth organization of the Kuomintang.

urging the students to pay up their board fees. "No money, no food!" threatened the notification. Chen Sung-lin walked on.

His attention was attracted by a commotion in the distance, and he turned his steps towards a clump of trees from whence the noise came. Students were crowded in the doorway of the Proctor's office, and more students were joining them from all directions. Some were shouting: "Fellow students, hurry up, come to the Proctor's office!"

Chen Sung-lin unconsciously hastened his footsteps and followed the stream of students. Some overtook and passed him in their haste and he heard them asking each other what had happened. By the time he reached the trees, a dense crowd had formed an impenetrable human wall around the Proctor's office. He thought he saw Hua Wei pushing his way forward, but lost sight of him again.

A high clear voice could be heard coming from the front of the crowd protesting: "Is there any guarantee at all for the students' safety? Will the Proctor kindly answer this question?" It was a girl's voice and seemed familiar to Chen Sung-lin, but he could not place it. The human wall in front of him obstructed his view, and although he stood on tiptoe, he still couldn't see the speaker, nor anything else for that matter.

The sound of a dry, harsh voice, evidently forcing itself to appear calm, came from the office, cutting short the girl student's denunciation. "Don't make such a row. We do not tolerate coercion and rabble-rousing. Everyone except the representatives keep silent. Who are the representatives?"

Again the voice of the girl student was heard. "I'm the representative of the College of Arts."

"What department? Your registration number? Your name?" rapped out the Proctor.

The girl student was not intimidated by the questions of the shrivelled-up Proctor, and back came her firm answer: "My name is Cheng Yao, and I'm a first-year student in the department of Chinese literature."

Cheng Yao? Chen Sung-lin was startled. Wasn't she the younger sister of Manager Cheng of the Repair Plant? Chen Sung-lin had often seen her there, and had been told that she studied at Chungking University, but he had only known her as a lively young girl and had never before heard her speak with such firmness. Now she was a student representative giving voice to the students' demands!

"She's our department representative. Let her speak! Quiet, fellow students!"

From among the crowd came a few scattered whistles and hisses.

"Who's heckling? Step forward, and let's see your ugly mugs!"

"Fellow students, this is the way things stand —" continued Cheng Yao, who had the support of the majority of the students. The hubbub died down somewhat. Her voice rang out, clear and deliberate. "Last night, the College of Arts called a meeting of the representatives of all its departments and sections to discuss proposals to assist the workers at the Artillery Plant who are in dire need as the result of the fire. The student Wei Chi-po, a spy. . . ."

"What right have you to slander people?" someone in the crowd shouted. "What proof have you?"

"He's a secret agent, either of the MIB or the CIB!\* Everybody knows what he is!" someone called out.

"Don't speak out of turn," came the Proctor's icy voice from the office. "Only the representative may speak. In an educational institution of our standing all statements must be backed by full proof."

"Of course I have proof!" Cheng Yao's voice became even more excited. "That spy Wei Chi-po tried to disrupt the meeting last night, but he failed. This morning while he was drawing up a blacklist he was caught by students of our department. Take a look, fellow students! This is the proof! Here is the

---

\* Central Investigation Bureau, Kuomintang secret service organization.



blacklist in his own handwriting! We also found secret orders from the police in his pockets!" The fury of the crowd erupted like a volcano. A tall lanky student wearing a blue cloth gown, standing in front of Chen Sung-lin, shouted: "Those secret agents are going too far! Where's Wei Chi-po? Bring him out!"

"Wei Chi-po is in the office," said Cheng Yao. "We demand that the university authorities take this matter in hand and deal with it effectively. Fellow students, listen! I'll read out his secret orders, and the blacklist he prepared. . . ."

"Take a photo of him and let everyone see it! Hold a public inquiry!"

"Right! And let the department of law take charge of it!"

The Proctor spoke again, but this time his voice was tinged with a note of apprehension:

"Students, do not be carried away by your emotions! Let everyone be calm! This is an institution of higher education, the highest in Southwest China. We cannot arrest people, nor have we the right to conduct trials!"

Back came the challenge from the students: "We'd like to ask the Proctor, is the drawing up of a blacklist legal or not?"

"What do you mean 'carried away by emotions?'" The lanky student in the blue gown was again challenging the Proctor. Chen Sung-lin noticed that his face was flushed with anger.

"Fellow students!" he shouted, "we cannot allow spies to run amuck within the sacred precincts of our university. We demand that the university authorities guarantee the safety of all faculty members and students!"

"Hear, hear!"

At this moment a shadowy figure jumped out of the window at the back of the office and stealthily slunk away. Shouts immediately rang out:

"Wei Chi-po is escaping!"

"The Proctor has allowed the spy to escape!"

A roar of indignation burst from the assembled students:

"The spy has escaped, but the Proctor can't run away. We'll settle accounts with him!"