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Author's Preface

In this book I intended to write about a certain segment of society and a certain kind of people in modern China. In writing about these people, I did not forget they are human beings, still human beings with the basic nature of hairless, two-legged animals. The characters are of course fictitious, so those with a fondness for history need not trouble themselves trying to trace them out.

The writing of this book took two years altogether. It was a time of great grief and disruption, during which I thought several times of giving up. Thanks to Madame Yang Chiang, who continuously urged me on while holding other matters at bay, I was able through the accumulation of many small moments to find the time to finish it. This book should be dedicated to her. But lately it seems to me that dedicating a book is like the fine rhetoric about offering one's life to one's country, or handing the reins of the government back to the people. This is but the vain and empty juggling of language. Despite all the talk about handing it over, the book remains like the flying knife of the magician—released without ever leaving the hand. And when he dedicates his work in whatever manner he chooses, the work is still the author's own. Since my book is a mere trifle, it does not call for such ingenious disingenuousness. I therefore have not bothered myself about the dedication.

CH'IEN CHUNG-SHU
December 15, 1946

Translators' Preface

Ch'ien Chung-shu ranks among the foremost twentieth-century Chinese novelists, and his novel *Wei-ch'eng* (*Fortress Besieged*) is one of the greatest twentieth-century Chinese novels. After receiving extensive treatment of his works in C. T. Hsia's *A History of Modern Chinese Fiction* in 1961, Ch'ien was largely neglected until recently. The present translation of *Wei-ch'eng* reflects that renewed interest, and it is hoped that it will generate even greater interest in Ch'ien Chung-shu and his works.

This translation is the cooperative effort of Jeanne Kelly and Nathan K. Mao. Whereas Jeanne Kelly did the first draft of the translation, Nathan K. Mao revised it; in addition, Mao wrote the introduction, refined the footnotes, and prepared the manuscript for publication. Despite our divided tasks, this book is our joint responsibility.

We wish to thank Professor Joseph S. M. Lau of the University of Wisconsin and Professor Leo Ou-fan Lee of Indiana University for their expert editing assistance, patience, and encouragement; Chang Hsu-peng for help in the first draft of the translation; James C. T. Shu of the University of Wisconsin and Professor Mark A. Givler of Shippensburg State College for reading the entire manuscript and offering their advice; Mr. George Kao of the Chinese University of Hong Kong for permission to reprint chapter one, published in *Renditions* (No. 2, Spring 1974); and lastly Professor C. T. Hsia of Columbia University for supplying us with biographical and bibliographical information on Ch'ien Chung-shu.

We also wish to express our gratitude to Mr. Ch'ien Chung-shu himself for reading the biographical part of the Translators' Introduction as well as the Author's Preface during his visit to the United States in April-May of 1979. He clarified several items of biographical detail and made some corrections. We are deeply honored that this translation has the author's full endorsement and support.

Chevy Chase, Maryland JK
Chambersburg, Pennsylvania NKM

Introduction

Fortress Besieged, or *Wei-ch'eng*, first serialized in *Literary Renaissance* (*Wen-i fu-hsing*) and published in book form in 1947, has been acclaimed as "one of modern China's two best novels," [1] or her "greatest novel;" [2] it has been the subject of two doctoral dissertations and one master's thesis and various scholarly papers in English and Chinese.[3] Among differing views on the merits of the novel, C. T. Hsia has highly praised the novel's comic exuberance and satire;[4] Dennis Hu, its linguistic manipulation; Theodore Huters, its relationship to modern Chinese letters; and Mai Ping-k'un has written favorably on both Ch'ien's essays and his fiction. What each critic has stressed is one aspect of the novel's multifaceted brilliance, and it is the intent of this introduction to discuss the novel as an artistic whole.

On November 21, 1910, Ch'ien Chung-shu, the author of *Fortress Besieged*, was born into a literary family in Wuhsi, Kiangsu province. His father Ch'ien Chi-po (1887-1957) was a renowned literary historian and university professor. Ch'ien was a precocious child, noted for his photographic memory and brilliance in writing Chinese verse and prose. Upon graduation from grade school, he attended St. John's University Affiliated High Schools in Soochow and Wuhsi. In high school, Ch'ien excelled in English. When he sat for the

matriculation examination of the prestigious Tsing-hua University, it was said that he scored very poorly in mathematics but did so well in English and Chinese composition that he passed the examination with some éclat.

At Tsing-hua, Ch'ien was known as an arrogant young man, who cut lectures and kept much to himself, Among his few intimate friends was Achilles Fang, the "word wizard" (as Marianne Moore called him), who was then a student in the department of philosophy. There Ch'ien also met his future wife Yang Chiang. After graduating from Tsing-hua in 1933, he accepted a teaching appointment at Kuang-hua University in Shanghai.

In 1935, on a Boxer Indemnity Scholarship, Ch'ien went to Exeter College, Oxford, and majored in English literature. He read more thrillers and detective yarns than was healthy for a student devoted to serious research. He also developed a keen interest in Hegel's philosophy and Marcel Proust's fiction. Perhaps most ego-deflating was his failure to pass the probationer examination in English palaeography, and he had to sit for it a second time. Nonetheless, he did achieve his B. Litt. degree from Oxford in 1937. His thesis, composed of three meticulously researched chapters ("China in the English Literature of the Seventeenth Century" and "China in the English Literature of the Eighteenth Century"), was later published in the English edition of the *Quarterly Bulletin of Chinese Bibliography* (*Tu-shu chi-k'an*). Having taken his Oxford degree, he studied a year in Paris.

Returning to China in 1938, the second year of the War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression, Ch'ien, at home in the literatures of two or three major European languages, taught at the National Southwest Associated University in Kun-ming;[5] the National Teachers College at Lan-t'ien in Pao-ching, Hunan province; Aurora Women's College of Arts and Sciences in Shanghai; and Chi-nan University in Shanghai. From 1946 to 1948 he was also the editor of the English language periodical *Philobiblion*, published by the National Central University Library in Nanking.

Among the small corpus of pre-1949 works by Ch'ien, the following are noteworthy. At Tsing-hua he wrote a number of short stories and vignette-type essays for *Crescent Moon* (*Hsin yüeh*) and *Literary Review* (*Wen-hsüeh*

tsa-chih) magazines. In 1941 the essays were published in Shanghai as a volume entitled *Marginalia of Life* (*Hsieh tsai jen-sheng pien-shang*). Some of the short stories were anthologized in his 1946 publication entitled *Men, Beasts, and Ghosts* (*Jen, Shou, Kuei*). In 1948 he published *On the Art of Poetry* (*T'an yi lu*), composed in an elegant *wen-yen*, or classical, style.

After the Communist victory in 1949, he returned to Peking to teach at Tsing-hua University. While still in Shanghai, Ch'ien had become dissatisfied with *Fortress Besieged*, and thought he could do better. He began to write another novel to be called " Heart of the Artichoke" (Pai-ho hsin), after Baudelaire's phrase "*Le coeur d'artichaut.*" He had written some 3,000 to 4,000 words, but unfortunately the manuscript was lost in the mail when the Ch'iens moved from Shanghai to Peking. He has not worked on the novel since then.

In Peking Ch'ien first worked as a researcher in the Foreign Literature Institute of the Academy of Sciences; then he transferred to the Chinese Literature Institute of the same academy. Since the foundation of the Institute of Literature in the Academy of Social Sciences in 1952, he has been one of its two senior fellows, the other being Yu Ping-Po, well-known for his studies on the *Dream of the Red Chamber* (*Hung-lou meng*). Ch'ien's wife Yang Chiang is a researcher in the institute.

Ch'ien seems to have abandoned the writing of his earlier vitriolic works and restricted himself to literary scholarship. His most significant post-1949 work has been *Annotated Selection of Sung Poetry* (*Sung-shih hsüan-chu*),which was published in 1958. Later he headed a team of scholars responsible for the writing of the T'ang and Sung sections of a history of Chinese literature. In 1974 it was widely rumored that he had died. The rumor prompted C. T. Hsia to write a memorial essay, "In Memory of Mr. Ch'ien Chung-Shu" (Chui-nien Ch'ien Chung-shu hsien-sheng).[6] Ch'ien, however, is alive and well and has been "resurrected" after the fall of the Gang of Four. His recent activities include visits to Rome in the fall of 1978 and to the United States in the spring of 1979 as a member of Chinese academic delegations. While he was in Italy, he talked with three scholars who were translating or had translated *Fortress Besieged* into French, Czech, and Russian. Yang Chiang was a member of a Chinese delegation in Paris while her husband was in America.

Her most recent publication was a Chinese translation of *Don Quixote* in 1978, and it is now in its second printing.

In 1979 Ch'ien published a book containing four studies, one on Chinese painting and Chinese poetry dating back to the 1930s and the other three essays written since 1949 (including one on Lin Shu, which was partially translated by George Kao and published in *Renditions*). Also in 1979 a new edition of *Annotated Selection of Sung Poetry* with thirty additional notes was published.

Ch'ien's most important publication in 1979, however, is a mammoth work of over one million words entitled *Kuan-chui pien*, in four volumes. Each section focuses on one major classical Chinese work: *I ching, Shih ching, Chuang-tzu, Lieh-tzu, Shih-chi, Tso-chuan*, and the complete pre-T'ang prose. Altogether ten studies, both philological and comparative (Western), comprising the four divisions of *ching, shih, tzu,* and *chi*, are written in a style more elegant and archaic than that of *On the Art of Poetry*. Ch'ien wanted to show the world that there is at least one person in China who can write in this style and has not broken with the old tradition; he also hoped to inspire younger Chinese everywhere to study the Chinese past. *Kuan-chui pien*, Ch'ien believes, will be his masterwork.[7]

Ch'ien's B. Litt. thesis, *On the Art of Poetry*, and *Annotated Selection of Sung Poetry* are all works of solid scholarship. The first represents meticulous research; the second contains many references to Western poetics from Plato to the Abbé Bremond and an honest evaluation of Chinese poets and their shortcomings; and the preface to the third is a masterpiece of literary analysis.[8] Apart from these works, Ch'ien is primarily a satirist in his essays and short stories. For example, the first essay in *Marginalia of Life* is "Satan Pays an Evening Visit to Mr. Ch'ien Chung-shu" (Mo-kuei yeh-fang Ch'ien Chung-shu hsien-sheng), a satire on man through the supernatural, the targets being hypocrisy and ignorance. In "On Laughter and Humor" (Shuo hsiao), he attacks those lacking humor; he mocks and scorns false champions of morality in "Those Who Moralize" (T'an chiao -hsün); he chides the hypocrites in " Men of Letters" (Lun wen-jen) and literary charlatans in "Illiteracy" (Shih wen-mang). In a similar vein, his vitriolic fire is also apparent in his short stories, most notably in " Inspiration" (Ling-kan), a satiric and harsh attack on the writing profession itself and a lampoon on a number of

well-known literary figures. Lampooning as much as he does in *Men, Beasts, and Ghosts*, he is also a fine writer of psychological insight. His story "Cat" (Mao) is a good example of marital strife which mars the happiness of a certain Li family. Even finer than "Cat" is "Souvenir" (Chi-nien), often considered the best story in *Men, Beasts, and Ghosts*. A study of the seduction of a lonely married woman by an air force pilot during the War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression, it emphasizes the heroine's feelings of guilt, fascination, revulsion, and relief toward her extramarital affair. Also well done is the story's ironic ending. After the pilot dies in action, the woman's husband, not knowing of his wife's infidelity and impregnation by the pilot, suggests that they commemorate the dead pilot by naming the baby after him, if it is a boy.

Fortress Besieged, however, remains the best of Ch'ien's pre-1949 works. Structured in nine chapters, it is a comedy of manners with much picaresque humor, as well as a scholar's novel, a satire, a commentary on courtship and marriage, and a study of one contemporary man.

The nine chapters can be divided into four sections, or what Roland Barthes calls "functional sequences":[9] Section I (chapters 1-4); Section II (chapter 5); Section III (chapters 6-8); and Section IV (chapter 9). Section I begins with the story of Fang Hung-chien, who is returning to China from Europe in 1937; continues with his brief visit to his hometown, Wuhsi, and his experience in Shanghai; and concludes with his accepting a teaching appointment at the newly established San Lü University in the interior. Section II is relatively short and centers on the trials and tribulations Fang Hung-chien and others encounter in their journey to the university; Section III highlights in vivid color the true story of Chinese pseudo-intellectuals within the confines of an academic environment; and Section IV details the trivial misunderstandings between Fang Hung-chien and his bride and ends with the dissolution of their marriage.

In each of the four sections, Ch'ien Chung-shu emphasizes the hero's experiences from hope through frustration to defeat; a functional unit in itself, each section has its own curve of hope, frustration, and defeat. Furthermore, Section I serves as a microcosm for the other sections. The theme of "besiegement" is seen in Ch'ien Chung-shu's description of the various types

of pressures closing in on Fang Hung-chien in Section I; the pressures are amplified in Sections II and III and concretized in Section IV. Traits of character that we are to know in excruciating detail for tens of pages are unmistakably sketched in a few. Fang's ineffectualness as a person in Section I clearly hints at the failures that are to haunt him in later sections. An inkling of the types of characters we are to meet in other sections also surfaces in Section I. For example, the comprador Jimmy Chang in Section I is to return as Mrs. Lu in Section IV; the effeminate pseudo-intellectuals in Miss Su's circle are to be reborn as gossipmongers and power grabbers in Section III, and Japanese collaborators in Section IV. Even the boat trip in Section I is to be repeated in Section II and Section III to indicate the ebbing of the protagonist's fortunes.

Even though Section I serves as a microcosm for the whole book and reveals the structural cleverness of the novel, this is not to say that the tone and mood of each section is the same; in fact, a definite pattern toward the worsening of Fang Hung-chien's fortunes can be discerned. Section I has the frivolousness of spring; Section II, the comic delights of summer; Section III, the somberness and seriousness of fall; and Section IV, the worst moments of wintry chill. By making each section a separate unit, by fashioning Section I into a sampling of the other three sections, and by showing the continuous change of tone and mood from Section I through Section IV, the author demonstrates that he is a very careful artist who fabricates and engineers every small part to fit his overall plan, down to the point of supplying us with an omniscient narrator who steers us all the way. The result of this careful engineering is a mighty singleness and a massive consistency.

Besides the careful engineering that goes into the structure of the novel, *Fortress Besieged* is a comedy of manners in its presentation of representative segments of the author's time. We meet the lowly porters, shopkeepers, innkeepers, bus drivers, countryfolk, soldiers, prostitutes, and French policemen serving their mother country in her Concessions in China; the middle-class returned students, country squires, journalists; and the rising middle-class bankers, compradors, factory managers, Japanese collaborators, and others. Each group has its own particular characteristics, somewhat exaggerated and simplified, by which they are easliy comprehensible. In minute and accurate detail, Ch'ien Chung-shu shows their idiosyncrasies. What results are brilliant caricatures of avaricious

porters, defensive shopkeepers, superstitious countryfolk, hollow intellectuals, vulgar compradors and businessmen.

In Section II there is also a great deal of picaresque humor, resulting from the interplay of characters and their very different standards and assumptions. One brief example must suffice. After traveling for some time on the road, Fang Hung-chien and his companions check into a nondescript inn. In examining the menu, they learn that there is "milk coffee" available and they ask the waiter for more information.

> The waiter assured them at once that it was good stuff from Shanghai with the original seal intact. Hung-chien asked what the brand was. This the waiter didn't know, but in any case it was sweet, fragrant, and top quality, for one paper bag made one cup of coffee.
>
> "That's coffee candy to cajole children with," said Hsin-mei, suddenly understanding.
>
> "Don't be so particular," said Hung-chien in high spirits. "Bring us three cups and then we'll see. At least it should have a little coffee flavor."
>
> The waiter nodded and left. Miss Sun said, "That coffee candy has no milk in it. How could it be called milk coffee? Milk powder must have been added to it."
>
> Hung-chien jerked his mouth in the fat woman's direction and said, "As long as it's not her milk, anything'll do."
>
> Miss Sun frowned and pouted in a rather charming expression of disgust.
>
> Reddening, Hsin-mei restrained a laugh and said, "You! Your remarks are disgusting."
>
> The coffee came; surprisingly enough it was both black and fragrant with a layer of white froth floating on the top. Hung-chien asked the waiter what it was. The waiter said that it was milk, and when asked what sort of

milk, he replied that it was the cream.

Hsin-mei remarked, "It looks to me like human spit."

Hung-chien, who was about to take a drink, brusquely shoved the cup away, saying, "I won't drink it!" (pp. 153-154)

Fortress Besieged is also a scholar's novel. Throughout the novel, particularly in Section I, references are made to Chinese and Western literature, philosophy, logic, customs, laws, educational systems, and other areas such as foreign languages and feminism. The author's knowledge is so wide that he is probably modern China's foremost "scholar novelist," a designation for a special class of literary men " who utilized the form of a long narrative not merely to tell a story but to satisfy their needs for all other kinds of intellectual and literary self-expression." [10] Among the works of Chinese literature that belong to this special category are *Journey to the West* (*Hsi yu chi*), *Dream of the Red Chamber* (*Hung-lou meng*), *The Scholars* (*Ju-lin wai-shih*), *Flowers in the Mirror* (*Ching-hua yuan*), *Yeh-sou p'u-yen, T'an-shih*, and *Yen-shan wai-shih*.[11]

However, a distinction must be drawn between *Fortress Besieged* and the others. Whereas the others are mostly episodic in nature and often digress on such subjects as astrology, arithmetic, calligraphy, gardening, medicine, and so forth for the sole purpose of displaying their authors' erudition, *Fortress Besieged* has structural unity and never burdens the reader with unnecessary or excessive information on any subject. The author's knowledge merely helps the narrative strand of the novel in supplying the reader with an observant, witty, and rhetorical narrator.

The narrator is indeed all of the above. His observations are sharp and direct. Remarking on the filth on the deck of *Vicomte de Bragelonne*, he muses: "The French are famous for the clarity of their thought and the lucidness of their prose, yet in whatever they do, they never fail to bring chaos, filth, and hubbub, as witness the mess on board the ship" (p. 4). In a second instance, the narrator's wit bubbles forth in his description of Miss Pao: "When men students saw Miss Pao, they burned with lewd desire, and found some relief by endlessly cracking jokes behind her back. Some called her a *charcuterie*—a shop selling

cooked meats—because only such a shop would have so much warm-colored flesh on public display. Others called her 'Truth,' since it is said that 'the truth is naked.' But Miss Pao wasn't exactly without a stitch on, so they revised her name to 'Partial Truth'" (p. 7). Rhetorically, the narrator takes a great deal of delight in word play. His penchant for definitions is seen in the following two examples: "It is said that 'girl friend' is the scientific term for sweetheart, making it sound more dignified, just as the biological term for rose is 'rosaceae dicotyledonous,' or the legal term for divorcing one's wife is 'negotiated separation by consent'" (p. 26). In another case, he writes, "Kao Sung-nien, the president of San Lü University, was an 'old science scholar.' The word 'old' here is quite bothersome. It could describe science or it could just as well be describing a scientist. Unfortunately, there is a world of difference between a scientist and science. A scientist is like wine. The older he gets, the more valuable he is, while science is like a woman. When she gets old, she's worthless" (p. 188).

The author's knowledge of Chinese classics and pidgin English unquestionably helps him to better caricature Mr. Fang Tun-weng, the protagonist's father, and Mr. Jimmy Chang, a Shanghai comprador. In the case of the former, his every thought is an allusion, a proverb, or a quote from the classics, as evidenced in the following letter advising his son to pay more attention to school work:

> I did not begrudge the expense of sending you hundreds of miles away to study. If you devoted yourself to your studies as you should, would you still have the leisure to look in a mirror? You are not a woman, so what need do you have of a mirror? That sort of thing is for actors only. A real man who gazes at himself in the mirror will only be scorned by society. Never had I thought once you parted from me that you would pick up such base habits. Most deplorable and disgusting!
>
> Moreover, it is said that "When one's parents are still living, a son should not speak of getting old." You have no consideration for your parents, who hold you dearly in their hearts, but frighten them with the talk of death. This is certainly neglect of filial duties to the extreme! It can only be the result of your attending a coeducational school—seeing women around has put ideas in your head. The sight of girls has made you think

> of change. Though you make excuses about "autumnal melancholy," I know full well that what ails you are the "yearnings of springtime." (pp. 9-10)

Fang Tun-weng's style of writing is the man himself: allusive, self-righteous, prejudiced, traditional, and pedantic. The success of the portrait of Fang Tun-weng is due, to a large extent, to the author's understanding of the empty posturings of the traditional country squire whose ideas are those of the imperial past though he lives in the modern twentieth century.

On the other hand, Ch'ien Chung-shu's portrait of Jimmy Chang is precise. The following is a description of Fang Hung-chien's visit with Jimmy (the words in italics are in English in the original):

> As Mr. Chang shook hands with Hung-chien, he asked him if he had to *go downtown* every day. When the pleasantries were over, Hung-chien noticed a glass cupboard filled with bowls, jars, and plates and asked, " Do you collect porcelain, Mr. Chang?"
>
> "*Sure! Have a look-see.*". . . Unable to tell whether they were genuine or fake, he [Hung-chien] merely said, " These must be quite valuable."
>
> "*Sure!* Worth quite a lot of money, *plenty of dough*. Besides, these things aren't like calligraphy or paintings. If you buy calligraphy or paintings which turn out to be fakes, they aren't worth a cent. They just amount to *wastepaper*. If the porcelain is fake, at least it can hold food. Sometimes I invite foreign *friends* over for dinner and use this big K'ang-hsi . . . plate for a *salad dish*. They all think the ancient colors and odor make the food taste a little *old time*."
>
> ..."But I have a *hunch* when I see something and a sudden—*what d'you call?*—inspiration comes to me. Then I buy it and it turns out to be quite *OK*. Those antique dealers all respect me. I always say to them, 'Don't try to *fool* me with fakes. *Oh yeah*, Mr. Chang here is no *sucker*. Don't think you can cheat me!' He closed the cupboard and said, "Oh, *headache*," then pressed an electric bell to summon the servant.

> Puzzled, Hung-chien asked quickly, "Aren't you feeling well, Mr. Chang?"
>
> Mr. Chang looked at Hung-chien in astonishment and said, " Who's not feeling well? You? Me? Why, I feel fine!"
>
> "Didn't you say you had a headache?" asked Hung-chien.
>
> Mr. Chang roared with laughter. . . . Turning to Hung-chien, he said with a laugh, " '*Headache*' is an American expression for 'wife,' not 'pain in the head!' I guess you haven't been to the *States*!" (pp. 43-44)

What brings this little scene so splendidly to life is the way the author captures the pidgin English around him, so that Jimmy Chang becomes not a dim personification, not a stock figure of allegory, but a genuine flesh-and-blood comprador living in the great metropolis—Shanghai. It is a subtle passage not because Jimmy is a subtle character or his shallowness hard to see through, but because the precise nature of that shallowness is revealed to us with a remarkable economy of words and without much extraneous comment.

Ch'ien Chung-shu is also thoroughly familiar with Western literary techniques. In his investigation of the linguistic and stylistic points of view in *Fortress Besieged*, Dennis Hu details Ch'ien's efficient use of imagery and symbolism and cites numerous examples of his linguistic manipulation (e.g., personification, symbolic prefiguration, plurisignation) and of his semantic manipulation (verbal paradoxes, narrator intrusion). The application of the above-mentioned techniques, in Hu's view, has contributed significantly to the sarcasm, satire, irony, and wit found in the novel.[12]

It should also be stressed that Ch'ien Chung-shu's early reading of Western fiction has significantly helped his writing of *Fortress Besieged*. Most notably his familiarity with Western points of view has allowed him to integrate successfully the omniscient narrator's point of view with that of Fang Hung-chien;[13] Ch'ien's reading of Dickens and other English novelists has perhaps sharpened his skills of caricature and made him aware of the picaresque tradition. What we have, then, in Ch'ien Chung-shu is a modern Chinese scholar-novelist who has the benefit of both Chinese and Western learning;

consequently, his *Fortress Besieged* appeals to readers of both China and the West.

A comedy of manners and a scholar's novel *Fortress Besieged* may be, yet Ch'ien Chung-shu's ultimate aim is to make a statement about life by revealing the flaws of the people who live it. Ch'ien, however, does not write sermons to expose society's faults as he sees them; instead, he uses satire.

One primary target of his satire is the fad of studying abroad, which had its roots in the old Chinese concept of "reflecting glory on one's ancestors" (*k'uan-tsung yao-tsu*). In the imperial days, reflecting glory on one's ancestors meant passing all sorts of local, provincial, and state examinations. After the abolition of the examination system in 1905, the substitute was to study abroad. Fang Hung-chien himself makes that comparison:". . . studying abroad today is like passing examinations under the old Manchu system. . . . It's not for the broadening of knowledge that one goes abroad but to get rid of that inferiority complex. It's like having smallpox or measles, or in other words, it's essential to have them. . . . Once we've studied abroad, we've gotten the inferiority complex out of the system, and our souls become strengthened, and when we do come across such germs as Ph.D.'s or M.A.'s we've built up a resistance against them" (p. 77). And this craze of studying abroad continued until the Liberation of the Mainland in 1949, by which time it had pervaded all levels of society.[14] The sardonic narrator observes further that not only science students want to go abroad, but also students majoring in Chinese literature: "It may sound a bit absurd for someone majoring in Chinese to go abroad for advanced study. In fact, however, it is only for those studying Chinese literature that it is absolutely necessary to study abroad, since all other subjects such as mathematics, physics, philosophy, psychology, economics, and law, which have been imported from abroad, have already been Westernized. Chinese literature, the only native product, is still in need of foreign trademark before it can hold its own. . . ." (p. 11)

Thus it is quite easy to understand Fang Hung-chien's desperation in seeking to acquire a foreign diploma. Pressured by his parents and his "in-laws," he muses, "This diploma, it seemed, would function the same as Adam and Eve's figleaf. It could hide a person's shame and wrap up his disgrace. This tiny square of paper could cover his shallowness, ignorance, and stupidity. Without