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The Class Teacher

How would you like to meet a young hooligan and spend every day with him? I'm sure you wouldn't like it. You'd probably find the question outrageous.

But Chang Chun-shih, the teacher of a junior grade three class, didn't find it so odd when Old Tsao said this to him. Perhaps Tsao didn't put it quite so bluntly, and of course he did it in a confidential way. Thin and wizened, Old Tsao was the Party Secretary of Kuangming Middle School. In the Party branch office where they talked, Chang thought seriously for a moment before answering curtly: "All right. I'll meet him...."

A few days earlier, Sung Pao-chi, a juvenile delinquent, had been released from detention. He had been arrested as a member of a gang of hooligans, but during questioning he had made a clean breast of his offences and informed about the crimes committed by the leader of the gang. His parents, too ashamed to remain in their neighbourhood, had moved and applied to have him transferred to Kuangming Middle School, which was near their new home. Sung was of the age to join junior grade three, and Chang's class fortunately had a vacant place. Chang was an ex-

perienced teacher and a Party member, so the Party branch committee agreed to accept the boy. Old Tsao asked Chang what he thought of the situation: "What do you say? Will you accept Sung Pao-chi?"

Chang's thoughtful eyes met Tsao's hopeful and encouraging glance. He agreed.

2

What was this Chang like? Let's have a closer look at him as he cycles towards the Public Security Bureau in the dusty spring wind to find out more about his new pupil.

Thirty-six years old, Chang was of medium height and slightly overweight. His clothes were old, but clean and tidy, every button done up. Friendly, lively and an animated talker, he tried to instil in his students revolutionary ideas and knowledge, while weeding out their muddled and wrong thoughts. Chang pedalled his bike calmly. When he reached the bureau and heard the details about young Sung's case, he had been filled with strong emotions, rather hard to identify, but bordering on indignation, disgust and scorn. These had later given way to determination, worry and a heavy feeling of responsibility.

It was three o'clock in the afternoon before Chang returned to school. Wiping the sweat from his brow with a neatly folded handkerchief, he walked into the teachers' staffroom. Everyone knew that young Sung was to join Chang's class the next day. Yin Ta-wei, the maths teacher, confronted Chang immediately. That was the first ripple that young Sung's coming caused in the school.

3

Yin and Chang were the same age and had graduated from the same teachers' training college. Together they had joined the staff of Kuangming Middle School. They had often taught the

same classes and were very good friends. If they had an argument they spoke out without any reservations.

In that spring of 1977, Yin had great hopes for the future of education in the country, in his work and classes. The "gang of four" had been overthrown in the previous October, and education was moving ahead rapidly. It was just what he had longed for as a teacher.

But the imminent arrival of Sung Pao-chi had infuriated him. Immediately he saw Chang he attacked him. "Why the hell did you agree to admit that little thug?" he blasted forth. "You know damn well all our grade three classes are trying to improve their work and study harder. If we teachers have to cope with that little hooligan as well, we'll have our hands full just keeping an eye on him. How can we pay attention to improving our teaching methods as well? A rotten apple spoils the barrel, as the saying goes. Why didn't you consider this before you agreed to take him? Really, I can't fathom you!"

Some of the other teachers agreed with Yin, though not with his harsh words. Others felt he meant well but disagreed with him. A few hadn't formed any opinions on the subject and merely pitied Chang for his extra burden. All stared at him silently. Even a model of an ear used in the biology classes, which was on top of a bookshelf, seemed to be waiting expectantly for Chang's reply.

There was some truth in what Yin was saying, but he had taken it to extremes. Chang thought before answering: "Well, we can hardly send him back into detention or to his former school. I'm his class teacher, so it's my responsibility to help him..."

His few quiet words struck Yin as just, and the other teachers were moved too. They wondered how they would have behaved if young Sung was joining their classes.

Chang started his work at once when Hsieh Hui-min, the young secretary of his class' Youth League branch, came to see him.

Hsieh Hui-min was taller than the boys in her class, and carried herself very erect. She had a healthy athletic look, and one basketball coach thought he saw the makings of a promising player in her. Imagine his disappointment when this big-eyed, oval-faced girl jumped too low and kept her wrists as stiff as boards when she tried shooting. She had no interest in such games whatsoever.

She had little interest in any kind of recreation except going to the pictures or singing some songs she had learnt from the radio. Her studies were mediocre and sometimes she didn't finish her homework, but this was excused since she had to engage in many social activities for her Youth League work.

When Chang had become their class teacher, Hsieh was already the secretary of the Youth League branch. Soon after that they went to the countryside to do some agricultural work with the peasants. On their way back home, Hsieh had noticed a boy waving an ear of wheat in his hand. Angrily she had demanded: "Why did you take the peasants' wheat? Give it to me. I'm going to give it back to them." The boy had argued, however: "I want to show my parents how well the wheat is growing." Most of the students thought that Hsieh was making a mountain out of a molehill. So Chang had the last word. Holding the wheat in her hand, Hsieh looked at Chang, her lips parted expectantly.

To everyone's surprise, Chang supported Hsieh. Heated arguments and whispered conversations buzzed around as Chang watched Hsieh race back along the muddy dirt track to the village. Chang was strangely moved. Perhaps Hsieh could have handled the situation differently, but she had had only three months' experience in the Youth League and her determination not to suffer the peasants to lose a single ear of wheat showed the pure and fine feelings in her young heart.

But the sinister influence of the "gang of four", which so oppressed and damaged our country, also affected the everyday life of our teachers and students. The municipal Youth League, which

was controlled by the "gang of four" had sent liaison men to Kuangming Middle School to set an "example". Hsieh, naive and honest, was often summoned to talks. While failing to see their motives, since it was not her habit to speculate about politics, she found that some kind of unexplained contradiction arose between her and her teacher.

For instance, when Hsieh had reported that two of the five members were inattentive at Youth League meetings, Chang, instead of criticizing them, suggested: "Perhaps it's because you always read newspapers. Why not do something different for a change? Have a hill-climbing contest?" Hsieh stared at him. She could hardly believe her ears. "A hill-climbing contest!" she protested. "No, that won't do for a League meeting."

Another time, in between classes, all the girls went over to the window to get cool in the suffocating heat. Chang called Hsieh over. Looking her up and down, he said: "Why are you wearing a long-sleeved blouse in this hot weather? You should wear short sleeves and set the others an example. Anyway, you girls should wear skirts." Hsieh blushed with annoyance though she felt very hot in her long sleeves. What was he talking about? There was only one girl who wore a pretty blouse and skirt, and that was Shih Hung, the Youth League committee member in charge of propaganda. Hsieh secretly thought this meant she had "bourgeois" ideas.

With the fall of the "gang of four", some of the differences between her and Chang were bridged, though not completely.

Hsieh now said to Chang: "We hear that Sung is going to join our class. The boys say he is a hooligan. Some of the girls are scared and say they won't attend school when he comes."

Chang was stunned. He hadn't expected this. The Youth League committee must help. "Are you scared?" he asked. "What do you think we should do?"

Shaking her two short plaits, Hsieh replied: "Of course I'm not afraid of him. It's a question of class struggle. If he tries to bully us, we'll fight against him."

Chang was stirred and recalled Hsieh running along the dirt track with the car of wheat. In a warmer tone he asked her to call a meeting of the Youth League branch and the class monitors.

5

The meeting ended at twenty minutes past four. Chang, Hsieh and Shih Hung remained behind.

Shih sat facing the window. The afternoon sun shone on her round cheeks. Her full chin rested on her hand as she slowly gazed around, trying to work out the lines of a poem she was writing to stick up on a wall-newspaper the next morning. Chang and Hsieh talked. Preparations for young Sung's arrival were under way. The boy League members had the job of explaining to all the other boys that Sung had done wrong and so needed a lot of help. Instead of isolating him, they should all do their best to help him. The girls were sent to the homes of those girls who were refusing to attend school either out of fear or disgust. They promised them and their parents that Sung would not be allowed to bully them, and tried to persuade them that to avoid him would only make him worse. They should attempt to transform him into a useful member of the society.

Chang would later visit Sung and talk to him and his parents. Shih Hung, in her poem, was encouraging her classmates to help China advance under the guiding principle of order and discipline.

Chang and Hsieh had ended their discussion as Shih Hung was touching up her poem. Chang had brought back some objects from the Public Security Bureau to show to the League members. They had been found after Sung had been arrested. There was a long bicycle chain which he used as a weapon in fights, a pack of worn playing cards, a metal cigarette case with a lighter attached and a coverless novel. Hsieh proposed: "Tomorrow we'll call a meeting of the Youth League members and activists among the classmates and show them these things and criticize them." Shih supported the idea. Chang also agreed saying:

20

"O.K. We'll use this opportunity to educate the students against corruption."

But an unexpected argument arose as Chang was packing the things in his bag. It was the last object, the coverless novel, which he hadn't had time to examine carefully before. He was astonished to find it was a translation of *The Gadfly*, which had been published before the Cultural Revolution by the China Youth Publishing House.

Hsieh quickly took the book, never having read or even heard of it before. An illustration of a foreign man and woman embracing made her cry out in horror: "How terrible! A decadent book! We must condemn it tomorrow."

Chang's brows were knitted in thought. He remembered when he'd been a Youth League member at middle school, and this book had been recommended to them. Once around a bonfire, they had taken turns to read it aloud with much youthful passion. During an outing to the Great Wall they had heatedly discussed Gadfly's merits and faults. This novel, written by an English woman, Ethel Boole Voynich, had greatly inspired Chang and his classmates. Perhaps they had underestimated the book's weak points and failed to understand fully its good ones. Yet... He turned to Hsieh and replied sharply: "The book is not decadent."

Hsieh frowned in indignation. Glaring at him, she demanded angrily: "Not decadent? Then what is?"

Hsieh was convinced that all books obtained outside bookstores and libraries were automatically bad or pornographic. How could she think otherwise, having grown up during the time when the "gang of four" exercised a fascist dictatorship over culture? Hsieh had naively and trustingly swallowed all that had been printed, devoutly reading the newspapers and magazines which were full of the "gang's" pernicious writings. If only someone very close to Hsieh could have pointed out at that time that the "important articles on theories of proletarian dictatorship" by members of the "gang of four" like Chang Chun-chao and Yao Wen-yuan were dubious and not authoritative Marxist-Leninist writings. But for various reasons no one ever did. Her parents urged their

21



children to follow Chairman Mao, listen to the broadcasts, read newspapers, be disciplined, respect their teachers and study hard.

She grew up a daughter of workers, with strong proletarian feelings. Yet when the bourgeois and revisionists appeared in a revolutionary disguise, then people with simple proletarian feelings were prone to be duped. Young and inexperienced, aspiring to be a good revolutionary, Hsieh had become narrow-minded and confused under the influence and restrictions of the "gang of four". To her, *The Gadfly* was a poisonous book. And not only that, even people who talked about a newly revived film and a new song on the radio were "bourgeois".

A few days previously, she had confiscated a thick novel that Shih was reading in a self-study period. Hsieh's heart pounded as she leafed through *The Song of Youth* published in 1939, and she determined to hand in the "decadent" book to her teacher. Shih, however, snatched it away and told her: "It's a very interesting book. You should read it." A quarrel had ensued.

Hsieh forgot to report the matter to Chang because she had had to attend a meeting. Now she was shocked to find her teacher to be worse than Shih, defending a foreign book. And foreign decadent literature was a hundred times more dreadful than anything Chinese. She thought of other disagreements she'd had with him and her respect for him lessened. She pursed her lips and frowned.

Shih, having finished her poem, wanted to recite it to Chang and Hsieh, when she heard Chang's defence of the book. She quickly went over to have a look at it. Seeing Hsieh so angry, Shih shook her arm and urged: "Don't talk like that. You know my parents said that this book is worth reading. I'm now in the middle of *How the Steel Was Tempered*. Its hero, Pavel Korchagin, a proletarian, was a great admirer of Gadfly." Shih had wanted to read *The Gadfly* but hadn't been able to get hold of a copy. Taking the book from Hsieh, she flicked through it and her desire to read it grew even stronger. What was the book

about? Who was this Gadfly? Was he really a hero to admire? Handing it back to Chang, she couldn't help asking: "What can we learn from this book? What should we note?" Hsieh looked at her friend feeling irritated.

Chang turned the pages of the worn book, wishing he could explain that it wasn't a decadent book, but checking his impulse to do so. In Sung's copy, all the pictures of the heroine had a moustache drawn savagely on her face. Had Sung thought it decadent also? The book had been through some strange experiences. It would take time and a suitable opportunity to explain to a naive child like Hsieh the very complicated phenomena of life, and how to distinguish between good and bad literature.

Putting the novel into his bag, he said kindly to Hsieh: "Let's discuss this another time. It's almost five. Recite your poem to us, Shih, before we leave."

Shih's poem fell on deaf ears as Hsieh stared at the flickering tree shadows on her desk. She wanted with all her heart to respect Chang, yet his attitude to such a book distressed her. She wondered how a teacher could talk like that.

6

Shortly afterwards, Chang arrived at Sung's new home; two rooms in the east wing of a small courtyard where everything still lay scattered about.

Having swapped her rest-day to move house, Sung's mother, a shop assistant, was busily putting things in order. Chang's appearance both comforted and embarrassed her. She summoned her son from the inner room to greet his teacher and serve tea.

Her husband, who worked regular hours in a tree nursery, got off at six but didn't come home until after eight o'clock each evening. Sadly his wife told Chang that for a year he had got into the habit of playing cards after work. He bicycled to the Yuehtan Park where he sat on the ground playing with his friends. When it became too dark, they moved to the light of a street lamp and continued until one of them left to go on night shift.

Without any ideals in life, it was no wonder that he hadn't educated and handled his son well. The mother's bitterness showed how much she had suffered, having doted on her only son.

But the family were not bad. Although the rooms required a lot of work before they would be spick and span, already portraits of Chairman Mao and Chairman Hua were neatly hung side by side on the northern wall. A smaller one of Premier Chou in a homemade frame of silver plum blossoms was carefully placed on top of the cabinet. This ordinary, middle-aged couple shared the feelings of their countrymen. They had their faults of course, but who was really responsible for their barren inner life?

At a quarter to six, Chang suggested that the mother continue her work, while he went into another room to have his first talk with young Sung.

What was Sung like? His muscular, well-fed body was revealed by his nylon vest. He was lucky to be part of a society where there was sufficient food and clothing. Chang, who was accustomed to studying the faces of his students, shuddered when he looked at Sung. It wasn't that he was ugly. No. But the muscles on his face, his scarred upper lip, torn and stitched after a fight, the nervous quivering of his nostrils and particularly the vacant stupid expression in his eyes showed a warped and twisted youth. Chang was depressed.

After about thirty questions, Chang had summed up young Sung. He had no sense of political consciousness whatever; his educational level was grade one; though muscular, he was rotten at sports. People who were content to label a person and then forget about him might have said he was "full of bourgeois ideas", but this was a most inadequate definition of him. Nor could it help him to start a new life.

Sung was, of course, bourgeois in his thinking. But what were these bourgeois ideas?

The bourgeois uphold "freedom, equality and fraternity". They strive to be independent, expert and famous. They cloak their exploitation and oppression of others with their "humanism". And

Sung? Well, he had to obey the strict rules of his gang. Bigger hooligans had bullied him and tortured him, burning his scalp with cigarette butts. This didn't enrage him or make him retaliate. It simply never occurred to him to be independent or demand "freedom, equality and fraternity". He was blindly loyal to his gang and obeyed the older hooligans. And he, in his turn, bullied the younger ones.

To be an expert in some field and be famous had never once occurred to Sung. After all, he'd grown up at a time when all scientists, engineers, writers, professors and others were attacked as decadent intellectuals by Lin Piao and the "gang of four". The status of intellectuals was even lower than that of hooligans like young Sung. So why should he emulate them and strive to be one? To hell with knowledge! Where did knowledge get you? Rather "rebel". Look at Chang Tieh-sheng, who handed in the blank examination paper for the university entrance examination! He got promoted to a high official position.

You had to understand young Sung's problems in order to help him. It wasn't enough to dismiss him as being "full of bourgeois ideas". Those bourgeois concepts played little, if any part at all, in his thinking. What was wrong with him was his blind attachment to the so-called "brotherhood" of feudalism and the reactionary hedonism of the bourgeoisie in their decline. To some extent, young Sung's problems were quite common.

Chang took out the worn novel from his bag. "Do you remember the title of this book?" he inquired.

The sympathetic questions of this teacher were much better than those posed by the Public Security Bureau. Sung replied meekly: "It's Gad ... something."

"*The Gaily*. Do you know what that means?"

Staring at a butterfly, the boy frankly said he didn't.

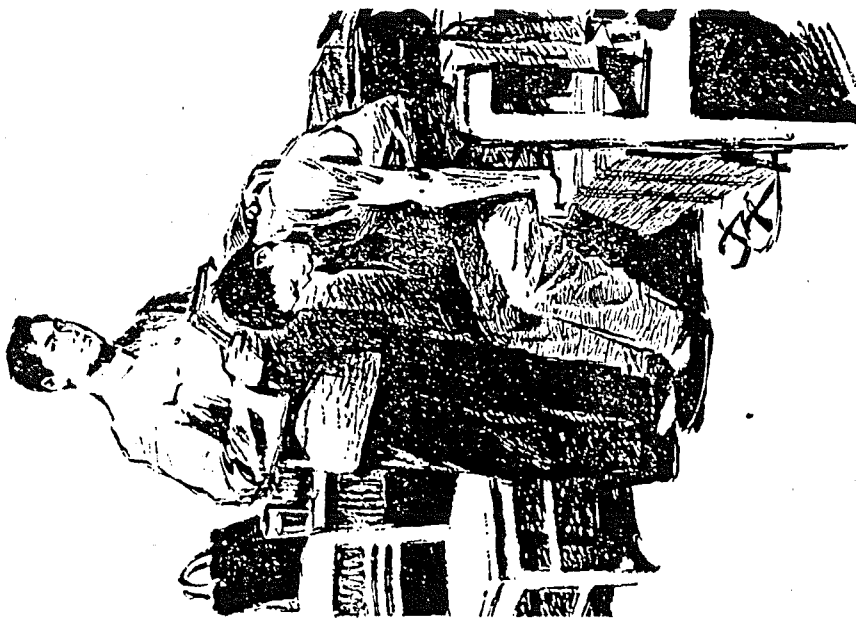
"Have you read it?"

"Oh, I must have flicked through it, but I didn't understand it."

"Why do you have it then? Where did you get it from?"

"We stole it."

"Where and why did you steal it?"



"It was in the room where our teachers kept forbidden books. We broke in and stole two bundles of books."

"Which ones? Do you remember their names?"

"Of course!" Sung was pleased that he could show he wasn't a complete ignoramus. His eyes blinked for the first time in concentration, as he tried to recall the list. "There was *Red Crag*, and ... *Peace and War*. Or was it *War and Peace*?"

Chang was distressed as he listened, not by the theft, but by the list of harmless and valuable books that had been hidden away and prohibited. Sung and his gang had not committed the crime

of reading bad books, as was generally supposed. They had enjoyed creating havoc and profiting by it. Their behaviour had not been influenced by their reading.

Fingering the book, Chang demanded: "Why did you draw a moustache on all the pictures with a woman in them? What was the idea?"

Ashamed, Sung lowered his eyes and replied: "It was a competition. We each took a book and drew a moustache on every woman in the pictures. The one who drew the most was to be the luckiest...."

Chang was outraged and speechless. Sung stole a glance at him. Afraid he had displeased him, he quickly added: "I know it was wrong. We shouldn't have read those decadent books.... We were just trying to find out who would be the first to find a girl friend.... I... I won't do it again." He thought of the Public Security Bureau and his mother's tearful eyes, showing a mixture of love and hate, as she took him home.

"We shouldn't have read those decadent books...." This upset Chang. After all there was a world of difference between good girls like Hsieh and bad boys like Sung. Yet both had one thing in common. They'd reached the same conclusion that *The Gadfly* was a decadent book without ever having read it. What a shocking social phenomenon! What was the reason?

Chang's hatred for the "gang of four" burst forth more violently than ever. Never before had so many people been fooled by reactionary policies disguised as true revolutionary logic, as during the period of the "gang of four".

His chin on his chest, Sung sat propped up by his strong arms on his bed. He gazed aimlessly at his feet which he rubbed together in a pair of black cloth shoes. This boy had rejected useful knowledge and culture. Chang almost cried out in despair.

How to salvage the children whom the "gang of four" had ruined?

Spring days were short, dusk was descending as the clock on the Telegraph Building struck seven.

Wheeling his bicycle into a small park, Chang found an empty bench in a quiet spot. Parking his bike beside it, he sat down and lit a cigarette. He frowned as he tried to channel his feelings into some positive plan of action.

The long willow branches swept over the bench in the breeze. Elm seeds drifted down on him. The fragrance of lilac flowers came from somewhere out of sight.

His first contact with Sung and his family had evoked in him feelings so strong and powerful of love and hate that he had almost lost control of himself. He wanted to talk to his class there and then, explain his ideas, pour out his heart to them, give them his suggestions and criticisms, guiding and encouraging them. He was certain that if he could speak to them at that moment, he could move them with his thoughts and examples, so that they would accept his words.

His love for China deepened. His country's future now was bright. The goal of a fully modernized state by the end of this century made him feel more anxious to defend China from those who would insult, ridicule, or try to impede her progress. He thought of his responsibilities as a teacher of the people and as a class teacher. He wasn't just teaching students, he was nurturing China's future, so that the Chinese people could live in prosperity among the nations of the world.

He had never hated the followers of the "gang of four" who had done so much harm to the country as then. It wasn't just the damage done to the economy, it was the harm done to the mind by the "gang of four" which was so serious. The so-called "rebels" like Chang Tieh-sheng weren't the only freaks brought about by the "gang". Remember that delinquent youths like Sung and good children like Hsieh were made that way and confused in their thinking by the "gang of four". The "gang" had not only trampled on China's present, but also on her future.

Chang's hatred for these wrongs intensified his love for his people and vice versa. When love mingled with hate, it gave people courage to fight for the truth and even to sacrifice their lives for it.

Abruptly he rose and looked at his watch. A quarter past seven! Supper-time! He'd almost forgotten it until he was reminded by his rumbling stomach. He still wanted to see a few of his pupils and find out their feelings about Sung. But supper-time was not a good hour to go. He strolled about slowly, hands behind his back, planning to leave the park after half-past seven.

The scent of the lilac flowers, growing stronger all the time, brought pleasant thoughts to his mind. With the "gang of four" overthrown and the Party Central Committee headed by Chairman Hua, the new, good situation gave the country hope in the present and for the future. Young Sung wasn't a hopeless case beyond saving any more. And Hsieh's misunderstandings and anger with him could be removed. That girl, despite her confusion, was basically good and committed to socialism.

8

Pushing his bicycle out of the park, Chang ran into Yin who was carrying a bulging bag.

Flabbergasted to see him, Yin asked: "How come, Chang, you're still able to relax and enjoy a walk in the park?"

Chang answered with a smile. He didn't ask Yin where he had been or where he was bound. He knew that for the past month Yin had been coaching some pupils who were poor at maths at four o'clock and then at their homes, teaching them individually in turns. He knew Yin very well. During the time of the "gang of four", Yin had complained about the Ministry of Education, the school leaders, the pupils and the parents. To hear him, you would have expected him to quit. In fact he'd worked very hard. However much he complained, he never slackened in his efforts despite many setbacks and difficulties. Even when the students, influenced by the anarchist ideas of the "gang of

four", had created hell in his classroom, he returned as soon as the bell rang despite his threat to leave made the moment before in the staffroom. He continued to persuade, scold and cajole the students, urging them to listen attentively while he rapped on the blackboard with a piece of chalk.

Chang knew that Yin was making for the bus stop, on his way home after some individual coaching. His day's work done, he'd start complaining when something triggered him off. Sure enough, Yin patted Chang's bicycle seat, let out a deep sigh and launched into his grumbling before Chang could say a word. "Look what a bunch of dummies the 'gang of four' has presented us with. I had to explain a simple mathematical theorem again and again to two of my students... You're even luckier with that oaf Sung on your hands. Really I don't understand you. There's so much to be done, and you waste a whole afternoon on him. Was it worth it? Why can't he go back to his old school if the Public Security Bureau has finished with him? And if they won't take him back, then he can stay at home...."

Chang began to explain sincerely: "After today, I realize it's not a question of whether or not we accept him. Perhaps we should have special schools or classes for juvenile delinquents. Perhaps he should start in grade one, which is his level. But these questions aren't the crux of the matter. The crux is that the 'gang of four' has had a bad influence on the younger generation. That was made clear this afternoon. It hadn't struck me so deeply before. You know, Yin, this spring is beautiful and people are happy. We must work and fight harder. We must think of the future."

Chang didn't say all that he felt in those few words, but when Yin saw in his friend's eyes his new confidence and strength, all his complaints vanished. The spring breeze blew gently as the two teachers fell into silent thought.

Chang was planning to have a talk with Yin soon, to point out to him that he sometimes over-simplified things foolishly. Emotions should never be a substitute for sound policy, and impetuous behaviour and complaints did not help the revolutionary cause to advance. It required persistence and patience. Hatred for

young thugs like Sung could be transformed into sympathy and love for the young people who had been warped by the "gang of four". So he wanted to talk to him about philosophy, dialectics, the present and future, love and hate, life and work, as well as about books like *Red Crag* and *The Gadfly*.

The clock struck half-past seven. Patting Yin on the shoulder, Chang said: "We must have another talk soon. But now I must be off and see some of my students."

"Oh," said Yin, suddenly remembering. "First go immediately to Shih Hung. One of my students told me that she and Hsieh had a quarrel. I think you'd better go and sort things out." Worried, Chang pedalled away at once.

9

Shih Hung's father worked in the district committee, and her mother taught in a primary school. Not long before the start of the Cultural Revolution, both had joined the Party. They had made it a habit to study Marxism-Leninism. The books on their shelves were dog-eared, underlined and marked for future study. Their edges were covered with finger prints. Shih had become a bookworm too.

She was lucky. In her family, after supper meant sitting round the table reading. Her father pored over the historical books he so loved; her mother corrected homework; while Shih worked on physics or maths problems. Sometimes they discussed the news or literature and art. They all debated furiously. Even during the time of the "gang of four's" suppression of culture, they had on their bookshelves "forbidden" Chinese and foreign literature.

Chang had once asked Shih Hung to bring the works of Marxism-Leninism and the *Selected Works of Mao Tsetung* which she had read from cover to cover and two of her notebooks to school to show the other students and for a parents' meeting. Her ability to analyse according to the principles of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought pleased Chang very much.

Chang knocked at her door and entered to find a room full

32

of people. Sitting at the table, Shih was reading a book. Five of her classmates were listening. One, wide-eyed, stared at Shih. Another rested her chin on her hands. Another had her arms round the back of her chair. One played with her pigtails. These were the girls who had sworn not to attend school if Sung did.

Absorbed in her book, Shih was oblivious to Chang's presence, but some of the girls looked up and smiled shyly at him. Not wishing to interrupt Shih's moving story, they didn't greet him aloud.

Shih's mother appeared and led Chang into another room, asking him to sit down while she softly explained: "They are listening to Lu Hsun's translation of *The Watch*."

The Watch was a story for children written by the Russian writer Pantaleyev soon after the October Revolution. It described the transformation of a young offender in a reformatory. Lu Hsun had translated it with great enthusiasm. Chang having read it years before remembered some of the episodes and characters. He knew at once why the girls were reading the book. Shih's mother explained. "Shih Hung told me about young Sung when she came home. During supper she didn't say much, she was thinking so hard. While we were washing up she spoke to me about inviting Hsieh and the other girls over here to listen to *The Watch*. I agreed and so here they all are except for Hsieh."

Having just finished a paragraph, Shih popped into the room, book in hand, and exclaimed happily: "You're just the man I want to see. Please come and talk to us."

The girls all rose to greet him and then bombarded him with questions.

"May we read this book, Teacher Chang?"

"Hsieh said it was a bad book. Is that true?"

"Did you go and see Sung? Was he better or worse than the boy in this book?"

In reply, Chang simply said: "Why isn't Hsieh here? Did you quarrel with her, Shih? You should all try to convince her of your opinions."

As all the girls spoke at once, Chang couldn't understand a word they were saying. Shih told them to be quiet and then ex-

plained: "She refused to come until the newspaper published an article stating *The Watch* is a good book."

Shih's initiative had pleased Hsieh when she had seen her approaching, but immediately her feelings changed to disgust when she heard about the plan to read *The Watch*. Shih felt the book was good and would help the girls. Hsieh cut her short by asking if it had been recommended in the papers. Shih was disappointed. After a while she replied it hadn't been.

"So you don't care about its bad influence?" Hsieh inquired. "We cadres shouldn't corrupt ourselves or others." Earnestly Hsieh warned Shih against making mistakes. Shih then shouted at her out of frustration. As she left, she took Hsieh's hand and begged her to come. Hsieh merely brushed her hand away. After she had left, Hsieh was very upset as she went outside, the night breeze caressing her flushed cheeks.

Chang sat down and talked to the girls about *The Watch*, the transformation of the Soviet Union, the misguided youth in the book and then about Sung. He spoke about the education of delinquents and his confidence in transforming most of them into useful citizens. Then Chang asked them: "So will you stay away from school now?"

Exchanging glances all the girls cried: "No!"

Chang left. The starry sky was a deep blue.

Hsieh was in Chang's mind all the time he spoke to the girls. He cared for her like a doctor for a healthy child who has caught some infectious disease. The germs spread by the "gang of four" on an upright and simple girl with a strong sense of justice could be got rid of with careful treatment.

He felt depressed as he rode. Although he could hardly be held responsible for Hsieh's present ideas, he did blame himself for not having fought against the reactionary lies of the "gang of four" in a stronger and more determined way before their overthrow. Soon after he had become their class teacher, he had subtly suggested to her that instead of memorizing quotations and blindly accepting articles explaining Chairman Mao's thinking, she should study for herself the original writings of Marxism-Leninism and have an independent mind. Hsieh had failed to

see what he was driving at. Perhaps he should have talked more directly with her to help her to open her eyes and be more discriminating in judging fallacy and truth.

He had an idea. He would leave *The Gadfly* with her and try to persuade her to read it and tell him her opinions of the book. She could analyse it from a Marxist-Leninist-Mao Tsetung Thought standpoint and try to find answers to certain questions. How should we understand life and history? How should we look at literary and artistic works? How should we criticize what is bad and assimilate what is good from our cultural heritage? How do we view questions in their entirety and dialectically? How do we distinguish between true and false Marxism-Leninism? What kind of a woman does she hope to become? How can we fight for the modernization of our country and the bright future of communism?

Feeling moved, Chang braked and dismounted at Hsieh's gate. His idea had crystallized. He would organize extensive study activities to repudiate the "gang of four" and educate the class, including young Sung. He would talk to the Party branch the next day and get their support. He pictured Old Tsao, the Party secretary, saying: "Now is the time to run education according to Chairman Mao's thinking."

Chang sought hard work, and he would get the support he needed. But the doubts of some of the teachers passed through his mind also. He must speak at the teachers' meeting. Apart from teaching science and arts subjects in class, and giving the students an overall education, developing their morality, intelligence and physical health, a teacher must not only take them to farms and factories to integrate theory with practice, but also broaden their horizons and interest them in world culture. They must develop their analytical abilities, so as to be better successors of the socialist revolution and construction.

The sweet fragrance of the flowers and the twinkling stars overhead seemed to approve of his idea and encourage him....

Illustrated by Chen Yu-hsien