

PORTRAIT OF A
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**PORTRAIT OF A
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BY LAO SHE

TRANSLATED BY K.C. YEH

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What a twentieth-century Chinese can possibly enjoy and possess, Pao Shan Ch'in has been enjoying and possessing. He has money, a western-styled house, an American motor-car, children, concubines, curios, and books which serve as decoration; he also has reputation, position, and an impressive chain of official titles which can be printed on his visiting-cards and eventually included in his obituary notice; he has friends, all kinds of friends, and, he has already enjoyed a fair share of longevity and health in a body fortified by varieties of tonics and stimulants.

If only he would allow himself to take things a little easier, to be a bit retiring-minded, he could rest bathed in comforts. With his children and concubines to attend to his wants, life would be one effortless existence. Should he die at this moment, his wealth would more than provide for the comforts and pleasures of one or two generations of his children, and in the customary biographical sketch written for distribution after his death there would be enough poetic eulogies and lamentations to glorify his name. His coffin would be made of such expensive wood as to be able to stand against erosion for a few score of years. And he would, of course, have sixty-four coffin-bearers and be properly paraded through the main thoroughfares.

But Pao Shan Ch'in would not think of giving up what he and most people in China call "a political career". His political career does not involve any policy, or political ideal. He has only one determination, that is, he shouldn't be idle. He could not stand seeing other people in power and in the swim of things. He somehow feels that whatever he has no part in will eventually work against him; he must do all he can to frustrate it, or crush it altogether. On the contrary, he misses no chance of getting into something. Like a fisherman, he always makes full use of the wind with his sail to reach the exact spot where he is sure to make the biggest catch. It matters little whether the direction of the wind would work havoc to others; so long as it sets his own sail flying, he likes it.

To be able to sense which way the wind is blowing and to set his own sail to it accounts for the success of his political career. Once the sail is set right and has the full support of the wind he will reap with the least effort what a politician in China rightfully expects.

Pao Shan Ch'in had no wish to retire. It would be doing himself injustice, to say the least, to let such foresight and genius of his go to waste. As he grows older, he becomes all the more conscious of the accuracy of his political foresight and the immaturity of others: to deny such gifts of expression would be absurd. He is only just passed sixty, and is confident that so long as he lives and his experience

and wisdom remain such as they are, there would be political activity wherever he breathes.

He hates those who have newly sprung into political prominence; even recent events seem distasteful to him. The older he grows, the more he feels that his old familiar friends are lovable. For the good of his old friends, he should seize every opportunity that comes his way. He seems to have a natural aversion to things new: new terms, new systems, new theories; and that makes him cling to his old ways all the more tenaciously. Be they foreigners or Chinese, so long as they recognise his "abilities", he sees no reason why he shouldn't support and co-operate with them; for the same reason those who deny him power become at once his enemies. He admits that his "political views" are extraordinarily tolerant; and that in dealing with people he is at times unscrupulous, and not entirely free from jealousy and prejudice. But why shouldn't he be so? All statesmen, he thinks, have been more or less like him. He is proud of the fact that he understands himself so thoroughly and that he is no hypocrite. To those he could afford to challenge, he is capable of a kind of defiant showdown expressed in a smile on his plump face, which seems to say: "Be my friend, or be my enemy, have your choice now!"

He has just celebrated his sixtieth birthday, and his photograph appears again in all the newspapers in the occupied territories. This time it bears the caption: *Mr. Pao Shan Chin, Newly appointed Head of the Commission of National Reconstruction*. Glancing a few times at his photograph in the paper, he nods to himself complacently as if to say: "the old guard, they can't do without him!" He thinks of his past political career and the experience he has gone through, all of which seems to lend weight and prestige to his present new title, which in turn will give him yet more experience, more prestige, paving the way for still higher titles to come. For what the future may yet hold in store for him, he can't help feeling expansively ambitious. For over two years, his picture has not appeared so widely in the papers. To him, it is evidence enough that he is still going strong. New men may crop up from time to time but he, old Pao Shan Ch'in, is like the firs and cypresses which grow greener, firmer, and more luxuriant with age. For him, the consistent formula has always been to have and to hold. There is no other way to get along in this world, and for the Kwan Liao [\[1\]](#) in old China, this has always been and still *is* the Golden Rule. Pao Shan Ch'in never objects to being called a *kwan liao*. "Only people who can't find the way to be one ever call me a *kwan liao*," he had said when he was forty. And he hasn't changed his opinion since.

Looking, at his own picture, he feels that it definitely falls short of himself. The chubby face, the big eyes, the short beard, the thick short neck, the barrel-like body, they are all there; but there is a decided lack of liveliness among these obvious physical traits, which do not fully represent him. Like famous Chinese actors who know by experience which of their postures or movements will most frequently bring applause, he too has learned what manners and what facial expressions of his can create the desired effects on people. He is not just a short, chubby, amiable person. He wishes that some competent photographer could have been given the opportunity to snap him in his two favourite and very effective tricks, which have become habitual with him and which he employs and manipulates with the ease and control of an artist. One is the facial expression which he puts on when he meets new acquaintances or receives his subordinates: his big eyes would stare inanely for a moment as if confronted with strange objects while the flesh on his cheeks would droop first and then contract upward; benevolence would shine in his eyes until it finally melted into a smile; only then would he begin to speak, his tongue slightly curled to give a rounded and almost feminine quality to

his voice, thus adding innocence to amiability. His second favourite trick is performed by his feet: his feet are small but thick, and he knows how to manipulate them to great advantage when he advances or retreats in the presence of his superiors. With his knees slightly bent, his feet would move forward or backward in short punctuating steps. The nimbleness of this foot-work would normally be a source of danger to that bellyful of flabby, slack flesh, had he not drilled himself to stability. As they are, his steps are not only steady but are able to express respect and humbleness.

To discover these two masterful physical movements in himself is to have discovered his inner self. To be in politics is an art, he often says, and these two tricks are expressions of his particular attainment of that art. He wishes that the public could be let into the secret of his success. But the stupid papers are only contented with a simple photograph. of a cheerful, chubby man.

Of course, it doesn't really matter. So many things, important things, are never known to the newspapers. He recollects how successful his last exhibition of foot-work was! The Chairmanship of the Commission of National Reconstruction had been 70 per cent decided in favour of Wang Hsin-lau, [2] when Pao Shan Ch'in paid a courtesy call to Yamamoto and incidentally performed his footwork. What Wang Hsin-lau was afraid of promising Yamamoto, Pao Shan Ch'in offered with both hands: "You appoint me as Chairman of the Commission, I'll appoint you the High Adviser," he said conclusively as he took leave of his High Adviser. It was then that he performed his foot-work: smiling, he backed out in quick mincing steps, punctuating his verbal civilities with short pauses in his steps and with his body slightly stooped. Poor Wang Hsin-lau, he didn't even get a seat on the Commission. Stubborn as he is, after all he is an old friend. "Yes, I must get him some position!" "Pao Shan Ch'in never lets down any of his old friends. No." His face broadened into a smile unconsciously.

Wang Hsin-lau was stupidly stubborn. Too stubborn! Yamamoto is an influential man; he shouldn't have offended him; besides, to have him as adviser would surely make things easier for himself. The Japs like to have power, but with subordinate titles. This must be understood and reconciled with. To know and to accept this means to have your political career here doubly insured. Strange! Old Wang has been an official all his life, yet he can't see through it all. He has been --- yes, what hasn't he been! --- Minister of Railways, of Education, Head of the Salt Gabelle, of Customs, etc. He ought to know by this time that whatever job you hold, it all boils down to the same thing: all that you actually do is to submit to your superior with your signature the papers that have been submitted to you by your subordinate and to hand down to your subordinate, with your signature, the papers that your superior has handed down to you. Why should he have offended Yamamoto? Could he have some subtle scheme on his mind? "I don't think so! I'd better nose round. Prudence first! Does Wang Hsin-lau want to spoil my show?" he asks himself. He never likes to consult people on his intimate affairs, so he often resorts unconsciously to soliloquy. "No, not Wang Hsin-lau. Not he. No." The inauguration ceremony took place without mishap. The newspapers said not a thing which indicated trouble of any sort. Though some of the members of the Commission were absent at the ceremony, they will turn up in a few days when they see that everything is all right. Yamamoto was very pleased with the ceremony that day. He invited all of us to dinner. The food wasn't much, but as good as you'd expect from a Japanese. So far, everything has been smooth, and with Yamamoto as boss there shouldn't be any trouble in the future. "Yes, I'd better do something to get Wang Hsin-lau a position partly because he is an old friend and partly to save myself the trouble of suspecting him all the time. As to the

question of the under-staff of the Commission, the rough outlines are already settled. The few recommendations from high quarters have already, been put up with. In the future, what jobs I can give, I'll give; whatever I can't afford to give, I'll pass the buck to Yamamoto. Yes, this time I can't complain of bad luck. No, I can't."

"I'll try to have Yamamoto's motor-car changed to a new one. Yes, I must do that. Japs like petty favours. It's time that I myself should have a new car too. But no, I'll have his changed first. Why should I be in such a hurry? . . . Why can't we both have new cars at the same time? After all, I am the Chairman, and he only an adviser. No, go slow, don't be like Wang Hsin-lau! Better let Yamamoto have it first, yes."

This decided, there is no need to worry any more. If there is anything else worth thinking about, it is whether the second concubine's birthday to-morrow should be celebrated. She is too young to have a celebration party; besides, those who have failed to get on the Commission may get nasty and use it as a butt for malicious slander. If I allow no preparation to be made, what if some friends should turn up to offer greetings? A political life has this standing difficulty; it requires careful deliberation everywhere, which can't be expected of ordinary people. In trifles as well as in grave matters, a slight slip leads to disaster. Take the matter of concubines; a man in politics simply can't help having concubines, but what troubles they bring! As for him he has been singularly fortunate in this matter of concubines, partly because he has always had luck, partly because he is able to think out such matters for himself. Didn't he get rid of that Russian woman in Harbin with only \$500? Yes, that was clever! He smiled conceitedly. 'I won't have a foreign hussy again. Their skin looks white enough but how rough it feels when you touch it! Then, the odour on their bodies and those yellow hairs! I won't want to have anything to do with another one. The best concubine is still a middleclass lassie from Soochow or Hangchow, the *Lin Tai Yu* type, delicate and bashful, like my second. Young and pretty, she really deserves to have her birthday celebrated. Poor little thing, she has never been given much social recognition. Besides, it would provide an opportunity to ask Yamamoto to dinner; it won't appear so obviously for him. Yes, he will be the guest of honour. We will only have three or four tables altogether. I shall not mention anything of the birthday, and at the same time the little thing won't feel slighted. That's an idea!

Pao Shan Ch'in's happy destiny has brought him wealth and position which he retains by "his ability to think," a phrase he loves to use. His political and private life bear sufficient witness to this; Madame Pao has retreated into Buddhism, leaving him free with any of his concubines; the eldest son has a nice job; his eldest daughter is in college; the No. 1 concubine has three children; No. 2 gave birth to a girl last winter; and there hasn't been any family scandal, thank God! He never had much confidence in the morals of his grown-up children: what don't they learn in school nowadays! Fortunately, the eldest son has already got a good position and is soon to be married; as to the eldest daughter, he hopes she will get through college without any scandal and be properly married soon. The thing to avoid is scandal; politicians are never afraid of scandals, but belonging in age and experience to the older generation, he likes to set an example to the younger generation; that is what one calls political morality. Being in politics one has to think of morality. The political stage is a place full of snares; without morality, you will be deprived of the courage to enter into adventures. At the age of sixty and with such responsibilities as have fallen on his shoulders, would he have the courage to forge ahead if his morality were a trifle weaker? No doubt, in the eyes of others his morality stands still higher

than he is willing to acknowledge.

He doesn't want to look at the photograph in the paper any longer: it is nothing but a short chubby neck of a man, behind which lie the thinking power, the morality, the talent, the experience, and the luck of a statesman. He now feels like playing a few rounds of mah-jong with his concubines, just to have a little mental exercise; his mind seems too calm to remain idle.

"Commissioner Fang to see you, Master." Chen Shen quietly puts down a large-sized visiting-card on the table.

"Show Commissioner Fang in." Pao Shan Ch'in likes Fang Wen Yu, whose recent appointment to the Commission was entirely due to his influence. And he has turned up at the most appropriate moment, making up the fourth "leg" to the mah-jong party.

When Fang Wen Yu enters, Chairman Pao remains seated. He knows that Fang not only will not feel offended, but will be pleased with this stroke of familiarity. Pao Shan Ch'in's dilated eyes stare for a second, then grow smaller and smaller until rings of smiles appear on his broad face. Pao Shan Ch'in knows that this alone will more than make up for his not getting up. In fact, Fang feels patronized and flattered.

Such finesse pleases himself and makes him feel superior, definitely above Fang Wen Yu.

"Sit down, Wen Yu, sit down. I am so lazy. These few days have been pretty stiff for an old man, making calls and so on, you know." He doesn't want people to have the impression that he has been idle at home. He really dreads to be on the go, but he always likes to tell people that he is busy.

"Yes, I know that Shan-lau must be busy these days, I, I just --- ", Fang Wen Yu said apologetically, fearing that he had called at the wrong moment and appearing to want to sit down, yet not quite daring to take things for granted.

"No, sit down, you've just come at the right moment." Noticing his embarrassment he seems to like this chap even more. Fang Wen Yu will get on in this world, he concludes.

Forty odd, tallish, pale-complexioned, Fang Wen Yu is addicted to opium, which throws an anaesthetic effect on all his other desires. To Pao Shan Ch'in he is a promising young man, smart, thoughtful, and has a style with him, but unfortunately he has never had much luck. After all the trouble he has taken this time to get him the commissionership, he hopes that he will get on to a wave of better luck.

"Wen Yu, you've come in time. I was just thinking of a few rounds of mah-jong. I trust you've brought enough cash with you, haven't you?" The tip of his tongue twirling for an affected naïveté.

"I never knew that one had to fork out cash when one lost to Shan-lau at mah-jong," Fang Wen Yu smiled, showing a few of his opium-stained teeth, but he doesn't laugh freely until Pao Shan Ch'in too chuckles.

"You have every right to say so, really. A member of the Commission gets only five hundred and sixty dollars, no carriage allowance, a pretty tight affair, when you get down to it. But Wen Yu, you must know how to make use of your position, keep your eyes open, above all. When Yamamoto has formulated our organisation plan, there will be appointments made for every district. You can recommend some, but don't just rely on letters of recommendation. You have to know the men you recommend personally. They will all have chances of becoming magistrates, you know. That will ease up your finance a bit, I dare say. Otherwise, you will lose money on the job with a salary of \$560!" His eyes rest on the toes of his feet and he nods. After a short pause, he is jovial again, "All right, I will accept your credit this time if you lose. By the way, are you getting the stuff?"

"Yes, Little Liu brought me some real stuff the other day. He wanted me to try it first. Not bad stuff, of course, but the price is shocking!" He shakes his head, while taking up a "Three Castle" cigarette with his nicotine-stained fingers.

"I also have some of it here. Not bad also. You can ask my No. 1 concubine for it. She takes it occasionally. I don't allow her to get into the habit. Let's go to the inner court." Pao Shan Ch'in is on the point of getting up when the telephone rings. He hates telephone calls. In fact, he never likes to handle things electrical, though he likes to have them round the house. It gives him a sense of authority when he makes use of them, such as telling the servants to order food or other things by telephone. It somehow adds to his prestige to have his orders carried out at a great distance. He has a sneaking fear of machines, and he knows that he is not one of those politicians who would rush about in aeroplanes.

"Would you mind . . ." he asks Fang Wen Yu diffidently, half standing up.

"Yes, gladly," Fang Wen Yu answers quickly. He takes a few long strides to the telephone, picks up the receiver, and smiles back to Pao Shan Ch'in, "Yes, this is Mr. Pao's residence . . . What . . . Mo-lau, oh yes, it's me, yes, you want to speak to Shan-lau yes, but you know he doesn't like to speak on the telephone unless you insist, oh yes, I can take the message for him . . . yes, yes, I have everything. Thank you, see you tomorrow, see you tomorrow!" He gives the receiver a look and hangs up.

'Mo-Shan?' Pao Shan Ch'in's jaw receded while his eyes bulge, as if questioning.

"Yes, Mo-lau," Fang Wen Yu nods showing some unwillingness to disclose the message. "He wanted me to tell you two things: the first is that he will come to offer you greetings tomorrow on the birthday of your third *Tai-tai* [3] and will be prepared to play a few rounds of mah-jong here."

"What a capital memory! He never forgets such things!" Pao Shan Ch'in likes to have his friends remember the birthday of his pet No. 2. "And the second?"

"He had heard, it may not be true, that the university students will be out again to make trouble!"

"Make what trouble? What do they want this time?" His voice becomes low but clear, as if each word is an individual effort.

"Mo-lau said he had heard that they want to demonstrate against the Commission."

"Nonsense!" Pao Shan Ch'in sits down, his toes tapping the floor lightly.

Fang Wen Yu lights another cigarette from the burning butt.

"Of course, it's absurd. But I think we have to take precautions. Things have been going so well with us. We can't afford to let them come out, yelling and shouting slogans, and with those awful white banners like in a funeral! Don't you think we'd better notify the Bureau of Public Safety and ask them to send up some men to guard your house and a squad or two to each school to stop the students from passing the gate?"

"Let me think, let me think a while." Pao Shan Ch'in's toes tap more quickly, the tip of his tongue sticking out slowly to wet his thick lips, his eye-brows remain knitted for a moment. "We'd better ask Yamamoto's opinion first. What do you think?"

"Good! Good!" Fang Wen Yu lets fall his cigarette ash on the carpet, his left hand slowly picks and squeezes his nose a few times, as if in deep thought. "But in any case we better notify the Bureau of Public Safety first and ask them to send down a squad of policemen in plain clothes but with arms. It's better to be cautious. Let the men guard both entrances of the *hutung*." The opium-smoker's face becomes lined with blue bulging veins and his eyes shine with a forced glitter. "Yes, have both ends guarded. If necessary, they can open fire. I'm afraid nothing else can be done."

"Yes, nothing else can be done!" Pao Shan Ch'in appears just as upset, but is not so rash as his younger friend. "But still it is better to ask Yamamoto's opinion first before we act. If he wants to use force, our conscience would be clear; if he stands for peaceful measures, there is no need for us to stiffen up. I've thought out the matter. Tomorrow Yamamoto is coming to dinner. We shall talk over the matter with him."

"Shan-lau, I hope I am wrong," Fang Wen Yu says apologetically, "But what if tomorrow should prove too late! Even if we can discuss the matter with Yamamoto tomorrow, it is safer to have some men here first."

"All right, send for some men," Pao Shan Ch'in yields in a low voice as if in soliloquy. After a short pause, he seems not willing, yet compelled, to add something. He looks at Fang Wen Yu as if to make sure that he is the right person to impart this piece of confidence. "Wen Yu, things are not so simple. You see, I can't go and discuss this matter with Yamamoto right away. The Japs always want to ask for details. If I speak to him about this matter, he will surely ask me who is the instigator. Just think, what can a group of ignorant young students know of anything; they must be incited by some people, the real trouble-makers. You will probably say that communists are behind them." He notices that the corners of Fang Wen Yu's mouth twitch. "No. No." He shakes his head decisively and with an obvious sense of revelation. "There are no real communists in China. I've lived for sixty years and haven't seen one single communist yet. Behind the students there must be other people. These people are not communists; they are the very people who want to replace us, replace you and me," his voice

becomes louder and his face reddens. "We've got to find out who is or who are these people behind the movement, so that we won't be stuck when Yamamoto takes us to task. You see, suppose Yamamoto should ask me who is really behind the movement and I couldn't tell him, he will stare blankly at the ceiling and say sarcastically, 'Mr. Pao, don't you know who wants your position?' I can't stand that. As to how to handle our enemy, we can listen to Yamamoto, but it is up to ourselves to find out who our enemy is. Am I not right?"

Overwhelmed with admiration, Fang Wen Yu stutters, "Shan-lau, should I live another forty years, I doubt if I could acquire as much wisdom as you have shown. I wish I could see things half as clearly!"

Shan-lau makes no answer, his eye-lids drop for a moment to acknowledge the compliment. "Yes, 'in capturing rebels, capture their leader first.' Once we get the instigator, the students will quiet down in no time. I've said we can leave it to Yamamoto to mete out the proper punishment as he deems fit. We'd better leave that to him, because the instigator, whoever he is, is probably no small person, don't you see?" In another moment he continues: "If we can't find out who is behind all this nonsense, Yamamoto can easily say, if you don't know who is the instigator, then we have to consider this as a mere case of student trouble. That will be terrible. Think of it, we can't even handle a mere case of students getting unruly; even for this we have to beg for advice. We will not only lose face but invite trouble. You said, if the worst comes to the worst, the men will have to open fire and that will scare them away. But why should we be responsible for the firing? If Yamamoto is responsible, let him do anything he wants; he can order the guns to fire on them, if he likes. Wen Yu, don't you think I am right?"

"Most decidedly yes." Fang Wen Yu wipes his eyes with a dirty silk handkerchief. "But, even if we did order the firing ourselves, what of it? Don't they deserve it even if they are some one else's puppets? What do they expect when they don't study and insist on making trouble? Our Japanese friends, Chinese friends, the merchants, the labourers, even the farmers will sympathise with us. These young idiots! We have to show them some discipline. After all the pains, the sacrifice and the efforts we have made to set up things, to let them come round and shout ta-tao [\[4\]](#) to us! The impudence!"

Seeing Shan-lau nodding in approval, what little fire of indignation an opium-smoker is capable of subsides. "How about this procedure, Shan-lau? I will ask the Bureau of Public Safety to send down some men, while we try to find out by telephoning to different places who is behind the thing." Then his eyes suddenly brighten up, "What do you think of calling a meeting of the Commission?"

"Let me think it over." He doesn't want to appear completely dominated by Fang Wen Yu. From experience, he has learned that very often not to reach any decision is itself a decision, and procrastination sometimes kills both time and trouble. "Don't telephone to the Bureau of Public Safety yet. They should come to us first. It is their job and it is their chance to show off. Why should we go and beg of them first? As to the meeting, there is no need, I think. In the first place, the members are not all here yet; in the second place, not everyone of the members was recommended by me. To have a meeting under these circumstances may even create trouble for ourselves. Our first step is still to find out who the instigator is. When we get the man," Pao Shan Ch'in pushes with his two fat palms, "we will pass everything to Yamamoto. We shall then spare ourselves the trouble and the mental

agony, and at the same time we needn't offend anyone."

Fang Wen Yu is about to speak when the telephone rings again.

This time he doesn't wait for Fang Wen Yu to offer his services; instead, his plump little feet carry him in quick steps, like a duck wobbling hurriedly, to the telephone. He picks up the receiver and draws a deep breath: "Who is it? Oh, Secretary Feng, yes, how are you? How is your chief? Oh, yes, how I forget! Of course, he has gone to the old home to celebrate the birthday of his mother, my memory is so short these days! . . . Thank you for telling me . . . let me think it over, I'll ring you back . . . yes . . . yes. . . thank you."

He puts down the receiver, exhausted, and drops into an armchair like a bale of fine cotton. He closes his eyes a while and mumbles: "My memory is getting so bad now. Only the other day I sent over the birthday 'curtain' for Commissioner Chang's mother and I seemed to have forgotten all about it just now. How awful!"

"What did Secretary Feng say?" Fang Wen Yu asks disconcertedly.

"He said the students are already out and asked me what to do." He smiled derisively. "Before we say anything to them, they are already trying to shift the burden on to us. If we had asked for protection, the whole bloody force of that Bureau would be operating from my house. The scoundrels! What is their duty?"

"But you say the students are already out!" Fang Wen Yu has no more idea as to what to do than he, only his drug habit makes him more nervous. "What are you going to say to him?"

"Don't worry, he will telephone to his boss for instructions. I don't draw the salary of the Commissioner of Public Safety and I have no obligation to do his job for him." He looks at his desk calendar.

"But this place must have protection. We can't afford to take chances," Fang Wen Yu says with good intention.

"All right, Wen Yu, you ring up Chang Chi and ask him to send down fifty ruffians immediately, all armed, eighty cents per day for each person. They are far more reliable than the Police."

Fang Wen Yu feels more settled. He immediately rings up Chang Chi. Pao Shan Ch'in also feels less worried and rests on the sofa with his eyes closed. Fang Wen Yu looks at him, not wanting to think further about the matter, but what is he going to say to the Secretary of the Bureau of Public Safety? He promised to ring back, didn't he? The old chap is certainly calm! Pao Shan Ch'in no longer remembers the presence of his guest. He knows that if things get worse he will just quietly slink away; he doesn't have to worry about him. He is counting over in his mind the members of his family one by one. So long as they are all in, there is not much to worry about. Suddenly he opens his eyes, sits up and presses the bell, meanwhile calling, "Chen Shen, Chen Shen!"

Chen Shen runs in quickly and light-footedly. "Is the eldest miss back yet?" He raises his head to look at the calendar, "Isn't to-day Sunday?"

"Yes, this is Sunday, Master, and the eldest miss hasn't returned." Chen Shen answers while he serves fresh tea.

"Telephone to the school and ask miss to come home at once. Serve the tea later, telephone first."

Of all the daughters, he loves the eldest the most and is most concerned over her conduct. She is the *tai-tai's* daughter, so he feels more paternal towards her. There is even an element of respect in his attitude. He of course loves the concubines' children too, perhaps even more, but the affection is a little different. Only in his eldest daughter does he find something to identify the traditional virtues and morality of the family. She is *the* daughter. He can't afford to let her do anything improper or anything that exposes her to criticism. He has always wanted her to be a model for the other women in the household. Her character must be above reproach. If she should mix with her schoolmates in a public demonstration, it will be a blow to his cherished hopes of her, not to think of other consequences. And the idea of her coming into frequent contact with boy students always presents premonitions of the most dreadful kind.

"Master, the school telephone is cut!" Chen Shen doesn't quite want to put down the receiver.

Send Little Wang to the school to escort her back. What's the good of sticking that receiver to your ear all the time, you fool." Pao Shan Ch'in's eyes bulge out with anger.

Chen Shen rushes out. Instantly there is the tooting of a motor-car horn. But no sooner has he disappeared than in he rushes again, this time excitedly: "Master, Chang Chi is here with his men!"

"Send him in." Pao Shan Ch'in's hands slightly tremble. The name of Chang Chi has become associated with trouble, disaster and oftentimes bloodshed. With Chang Chi's presence he couldn't help feeling that trouble is at his own door. A stroke of fear grips him, though he knows that Chang Chi is here to protect him and his family.

Chang Chi dare not advance beyond the threshold of the parlour. He stands outside it, slightly bowed: 'Pao *ta-yen*, I beg your pardon, I've brought only thirty-five men, there is a shortage of men because men are needed everywhere to handle the students. I shall place these 35 men here first, I'll go to fetch more. You needn't worry, your honour, I'll make up the number of fifty before dark."

Pao Shen Ch'in glances at him patronisingly: "Very well. Are they all armed? Good. Hurry up and get more men. Their pay will be taken care of by the Commission. As to you, I'll personally reward you."

"No, Your Honour, don't reward me. Haven't I spent enough of Your Honour's money? If Your Honour has no other orders, I am going now." Chang Chi starts to go.

"No, wait a while. I've sent the car to fetch the eldest miss. You wait until the car is back. Meanwhile, see to it that your men are properly divided between the gate and the two entrances of the *hutung*."

"Don't let them all stay together in one place."

Chang Chi goes out to inspect his men. Pao Shan Ch'in turns to Fang Wen Yu: "Wen Yu, what do you think? You don't think it's going to be serious, do you?" He shuts the door and paces up and down the room with his hands gripped behind his back.

"You never can tell." Fang Wen Yu also stands up, his face turning still paler. "The trouble is with the Bureau of Public Safety. Their boss not being here, that coward Feng is likely . . ."

"Is likely to run away," Pao Shan Ch'in finishes up for him. "A case of the *Empty City Plot*. [5] Yes, there will be trouble, riot and what not; anything can happen. We are in a jam, I can see. And yet we know nothing of the ringleader. What shall we do?"

Telephone. Fang Wen Yu rushes to it without being told. "Who? Little Wang? Wait. Shan-lau, it's your man Little Wang, telephoning from somewhere up the street. He says that the students are already out in the streets. Your eldest daughter has joined in the demonstration. The streets are in utter confusion. There has been already some hand-to-hand fighting.

"Tell Little Wang to come back immediately."

"Chen Shen," he shouts out of the window, "tell Chang Chi to come in."

"Chang Chi, a reward of fifty dollars for you: you go and find the eldest miss for me, you know where her school is?"

"Yes, I do, but Pao Ta-Yen, how can I find her among the thousands of students in the streets? Even I found her, I have no way to drag her back!"

"You do your best. Try. If you find her, I'll give you an extra ten dollars."

"I'll go and try." Chang Chi appears none too optimistic.

"Little Wang is back, Master," Chen Shen reports.

"Give me my hat, Chen Shen." Pao Shan Ch'in seems hesitant for a moment, and turns to Fang Wen Yu:

"Wen Yu, you stay here, I am going out to have a look at things, a young women can't . . ."

"No, Shan-lau, no," Fang Wen Yu grabs his hand which is cold. "How can *you* go out, let me go. I am less known! Your photograph has just appeared in the papers! They will surely recognise you."

They simultaneously turn their eyes to the paper on the table.

"You can't go either, Wen Yu." Pao Shan Ch'in's legs begin to shake. He sits down. "How about asking Yamamoto what to do? This is not a small matter. It concerns my daughter. If he can send out a few of

his private guards, they will find her, I am sure."

"Suppose he refuses to interfere, where will your face be?" Fang Wen Yu says slowly in a suppressed voice.

"Listen to that!" Pao Shan Ch'in straightens up his back.

Chairman Pao's house stands near enough from the street to hear the tooting of horns from passing automobiles. Now the sound is like the distant thunder of an approaching summer rain, a conglomeration and precipitated din, not analysable but definitely menacing and advancing like the Chien Tang bore.

Fang Wen Yu's face turns from paleness to tragic green. He suddenly opens his mouth to swallow his breath; [6] "Shan-lau, we have to get away!"

Pao Shan Ch'in's mouth twitches without uttering anything, his face turning scarlet. Torn between anger and fear, he becomes speechless. "The students! A group of idiotic brats!" He mumbles to himself, "What do you know? You want to put an end to my political career, eh? What harm have I done to the people? What harm? You scoundrels!"

Chang Chi rushes in, forgetting to remove his hat: "*Ta Yen*, they are out, the students, I came up against them on my search for the eldest miss."

"Is the west entrance of the hutung well guarded?" Pao Shan Ch'in finally asks with some difficulty.

"They are not coming this way. They are going to gather at Chiao Chang."

"If they come into the hutung, fire at them, I tell you," he seems less frightened when he hears that the students are not coming this way.

"Listen!" Chang Chi goes to the door and pushes it wide open.

"Down with the traitor!" Hundreds of voices shout simultaneously.

Pao Shan Ch'in's big eyes look round, as if to expect the characters *mai kuo tsei* (traitor) to float down like a kite in the wind, but before he could see anything of the kind, comes another wave of "Down with *mai kuo tsei*" in the air. He glances at Fang Wen Yu and at Chang Chi and tries to force a smile but can't. He stutters out, "Chang Chi, where is the eldest miss? I told you to look for her, didn't I?"

"She is in this very group which shouts the slogans now. There are lots of men in it too."

"Did you see her?"

"She is the first one at the front carrying a big flag!"

"Down with *mai kuo tsei*!" This time Pao Shan Ch'in seems to have distinguished clearly the voice of his own daughter.

"Well, Well!" his hands and lips continue to tremble. "A group of bandits and whores with 'no idea of the king and the father'. I'll get even with you yet! I can't control other people's daughters, but you, Miss Pao, you can't get out of my grip! Calling your father a traitor, eh, I'll fix you!"

"Shan-lau, Shan-lau!" Fang Wen Yu makes an effort to pacify him while trying to hold out against his opium-appetite, "Don't be angry, she is too young to know what she is doing. She can't be really against you. No. It can't be!"

"You don't know." Pao Shan Ch'in trembles more nervously, "If she wants money or clothes, or a motor-car, she can tell me, she can have them all. Why should she choose to walk the streets shouting idiotic slogans! She is mad! Traitor, traitor! Your father a traitor! Do you like that? Fool! Shameless!"

The telephone rings, but no one cares to go to it. Fang Wen Yu pines away in the twilight stage of his opium-dream, while Pao Shan Ch'in seems too angry and crestfallen to make a move.

Presently Chang Chi walks over to the telephone: "Your Honour, it's Secretary Feng of the Bureau of Public Safety," he said to Pao.

"Hang up, tell him I don't know what to do . . ." Pao Shan Ch'in lies down on the sofa.

"Chen Shen, Chen Shen!" Fang Wen Yu calls out faintly.

Chen Shen comes in immediately from the courtyard.

Fang Wen Yu points to the direction of the inner court and thrusts out his lips making a faint purr like that of a cat.

Chen Shen and Chang Chi retire together.

NOTES

- 1 Literally meaning officials and bureaucrats, but often used in the derogative sense.
- 2 The use of lau (the aged) after the first or second character of the given name is an expression of respect for older men of position.
- 3 The second concubine.
- 4 "Down with "
- 5 Title of the famous Chinese opera, in which the master strategist Chu-K'o Liang of the Three Dynasties succeeded in deceiving his enemies. When attacked before reinforcements could come to his rescue, he opened the city gates and invited the enemy troops to come in. The enemy commander, thinking that it was a plot to trap him, ordered an immediate retreat.
- 6 A common habit with opium-smokers during an attack of appetite.