

*The Road to Yiyang District City*

Leaving Anhwa, we set off along the main road and soon came to a stone signpost on which was carved: "To the right for Yiyang District City." This was to be our next destination, since from the start, we had decided to be guided only for the broadest road, take us where it would.

We had no idea how far Yiyang might be and since we were not especially interested in distance, we asked no questions. It was all the same to us. Our feet walked on, one step after another with regular monotony, like a ruler measuring the road; but the movement was purely mechanical, since our interest was completely concentrated on our conversation and we were oblivious to everything else.

After we left Anhwa, we discussed the conversation I had had with the tea store owner who had set one of his sons to study, but since learning could not be relied upon to bring in an income, had arranged for the other two sons to go into businesses. Each was to have a separate business, so that, if one failed, the other could be depended upon to carry on. I criticized the father's decision as one that was selfish, since he contemplated only the welfare of the family unit, without taking into consideration the wishes of sons or what might be more beneficial to society as a whole. This led to a long discussion of the family system in general. I held that this store owner was a typical Chinese father, but that his ideas were antiquated and out-of-date.

Mao replied, "You know the old saying which speaks of bringing up children to care for their parents in their old age! That's been the Chinese system for countless generations. The chief function of the son is to take care of the father and mother when they are old. They depend upon him entirely."

"It's strange that I should never have shared this selfish conception of the family," I stated. "Naturally if I had a son, I'd be very fond of him; but I should never regard him as my own private property to dispose of as I thought fit. He should be a member of society and

it would be my responsibility to bring him up and train him. His attitude toward me later in life would depend upon his own sentiments. I would not for a moment expect him to support me in my old age! My father has always had similar ideas and, even though he belongs to a previous generation, he has always been against selfishness with children."

"I think it is because the idea of family is so strong in China that the people are so lacking in nationalistic sentiments," Mao suggested.

"The son doesn't belong exclusively to the family," I added, "but neither does he belong to the State! An exaggerated nationalistic idea is just as bad as an exaggerated family system."

"Your ideas of children are new and strange even to me," said Mao, surprised.

I explained, "The truth of the matter is this: a person comes into the world as a member of the family into which he happens to be born; at the same time he is an integral part or unit in the country or nation; and also, he is a citizen of the whole world. He has responsibilities to his family, to his country, and to the world as a whole. In a word, he is responsible to society."

Mao did not agree. "I believe that the State comes before everything else," he said.

I explained further, "My idea is that if an individual is confronted with a line of conduct which would be beneficial to himself but harmful to his family, he would not follow it. If it would benefit his family but harm his country, he should not follow it. And most important of all, if it would benefit his country but be harmful for world society, he should turn aside from such conduct. The ultimate good of society is the final test of conduct."

"But the State protects the people," Mao argued, "and therefore the people are under obligation to protect their State. The people are the sons of the State. In the ideal State of the future, children will be taken from their parents and they will be brought up and educated at public expense."

"Then there would have to be two systems," I said, "one for bringing up the children and another for taking care of the old people. If you take away the support of the aged to which they have become ac-

customed by tradition, you will have to care for them in some other way."

"The first and foremost need," stated Mao positively, "is for a strong and powerful government! Once that is established, the people could be organized!"

"But when the government becomes too strong and powerful, it means the curtailment of the freedom of the people. It would be as if the population were a flock of sheep and the government were the shepherd. That's not the way it should be," I countered. "The people should be the master and the government should be their servant! However, all governments do inevitably want to become shepherds or masters!"

"But I do regard the people as a flock of sheep," insisted Mao, "and it is obvious that the government must play the part of the shepherd. If there is no shepherd, who will guide the sheep?"

"There's another way of looking at this problem," I stated. "If people are a flock of sheep, the government must also be sheep, and that's the worst type, those who scheme for power, who want to be masters. The members of a sheep government will say they are the most intelligent, the most capable. They will never admit that they are the bandits of the group!"

"Following your idea," said Mao, "if you don't want sheep to form the government, who will be the shepherd?"

"If the sheep are looked after by a shepherd, it means they have lost their freedom. They are at the mercy of the shepherd. They have no individual security. The shepherd can kill them at will. The only thing left for them is to eat, work, and sleep. Why must they have a shepherd?"

At this point in our discussion, we observed some cows peacefully munching grass on the plain some distance from the road. Apparently no one was looking after them. "See, Jun-chih," I said. "Look at the cows. Aren't they quite happy and content? What better organization do they need?" Mao did not answer and we walked on in silence, watching the cows. Before we got level with them, suddenly a man, carrying a long whip, appeared. The cows seemed to associate the whip with painful beatings, because, as the man approached, they scattered quickly in all directions. Those lying down chewing their cud jumped

up, and those that were standing started to run. Instantly the whole herd became disorderly. They were too frightened to think of eating more grass.

I looked at Mao significantly. "You see the effect the shepherd has upon the cattle? When he's around, they live in terror!"

Mao Tse-tung answered stubbornly, "The cows have to be kept in order! The man has a whip and he must use it to beat them. It really seems that this particular 'shepherd' is too weak with them and is incapable!"

"What a pity that the cattle cannot understand your excellent explanation!" I ejaculated.

"It's because they cannot understand what the man says that they have to be beaten and that they have to have someone to look after them," Mao replied.

As Mao spoke, a big fawn-colored cow in front of all the others stopped suddenly, raised its head, and bellowed loudly! It seemed to be protesting. I said, "If they are continually bullied and domineered, even cows and sheep may revolt one day."

