

pletely lacked sympathy. In my guilt, I mused, "If I had not been married, if I had accepted her love, she would not have been arrested as Mao Tse-tung's wife and been shot. It might have been."

One day in Geneva, my wife, Siao-ying (the courtesy name of Mme. Siao-yu), and I were talking about Mr. Yang's family. She was deeply touched and said "Was it not a predestined tragedy? It is really very poetic."

Immediately I took out my pen and composed some lines which, translated literally, read as follows:

Beautiful dreams are very difficult to realize in this life.

I think sadly of something which happened forty years ago.

I gave no indication that I liked her, but she did.

It was impossible for us to fly side by side like a pair of birds as she wished, because I was married.

Our hearts were never in contact.

How can I make her happy?

Another had no heart; he abandoned his wife for the sake of ambition (Mao).

His wife still hates him in the other world.

12

Our Mutual Friend, Ts'ai Ho-shen

In relating the beginnings of the Chinese Communist Party, mention must be made of our friend Ts'ai Ho-shen, who was the first Chinese to accept, unreservedly, the principles of the Communist doctrine. He played a very important part in the conversion of Mao to Communism.

Ts'ai Ho-shen, whom we called Ho-shen, was born in my home district. He was tall and slender, and his two front teeth protruded noticeably. He was strong-willed and, though one rarely saw him smile, he was very kind to his friends.

Ho-shen and I were schoolmates in First Normal, but he was two classes lower and later he transferred to the Yao-lu Shan Higher Normal School. His mother conducted the school in our town, and we

called her "Aunty." She also had a daughter, Ts'ai Ch'ang, who is now President of the Communist Women's Association. When Ts'ai Ch'ang was a girl in her teens, we used to call her "Little Sister." She was very strong-willed like her brother, though she was quite small and did not resemble him physically at all. I was very fond of Ho-shen and respected his family.

Ho-shen was handicapped by a lack of initiative and drive, and he was averse to asking any help or favors of others. As a result, he remained without a job after graduating from Higher Normal, and he lived with his mother and sister who had rented a house at the foot of Mount Yao-lu. They were desperately poor and often had no rice to cook on the fire.

I had a regular income, since I was teaching in both the Hsiu Yeh and Ch'u Yi schools, and I had my living quarters in the latter. Mao Tse-tung knew of my friendship with Ho-shen and one day he came very hurriedly to see me in the school, and said, "Have you had any news from Ho-shen?"

Surprised, I replied that I had not seen him for quite some time, and waited for his news.

"Well," Mao Tse-tung continued, "someone told me that the family has no rice and that Ho-shen is so worried at home thinking that he is a burden to his mother that he has taken a basket full of books and left for the Ai Wan T'ing under Mount Yao-lu." Ai Wan T'ing is the Pavilion of the Evening Breeze, a small pointed-roofed shelter supported by four columns and open to the air. "He has nothing but the winds for his meals and he sleeps in the open air."

"Have you seen him?" I asked.

"No, I haven't seen him. Ch'en told me about it."

"Why don't you go and see him?" I asked.

"It's quite useless for me to go. There's nothing I can do to help him," shrugged Mao, leaving the responsibility with me.

After Mao had gone, I asked for a short leave from duty and immediately set out across the river toward the Yao-lu. As I approached the pavilion, I saw Ho-shen seated on the stones, with his back against one of the columns. He held his book in one hand and was reading so earnestly that he did not hear me come up. He appeared for all the world like a statue. When I spoke his name, he looked up,

startled, and said, "How do you find time to come all this way across the river to see me?"

"I asked for the day off," I answered.

"No doubt you are going to the Yao-lu Academy?" he asked.

"No, my friend, I was not going to the Academy. I came especially to see you. And I also want to visit Auntie Ts'ai," I replied.

"What is the news? It's such a long time since I've been to town, and we have no newspapers here."

"There's no special news," I said. "Do you live in this pavilion? No doubt it is very nice and cool, but it will not be quite so pleasant if it rains."

"But it's not the rainy season now."

"I came here to invite you to come and live at our school, the Ch'u Yi. I feel very lonely there. Just outside my bedroom is a little cubicle with a bed in it. You could do your reading there, and after classes we could chat together."

"But it's not your home," he protested. "You're living in a school and I don't want to make trouble for you."

"But it would be no trouble at all. The building where we have our dormitory is just as if it were my own home. It will be no trouble at all. You'll feel right at home immediately. Come. You must come with me now. Today."

"I must go back to arrange my things first. I shall go with you tomorrow," he replied.

It was agreed and we set off together to see Auntie Ts'ai. Ho-shen held his broken basket of books together very carefully. When we arrived at his home, Auntie Ts'ai called her daughter to gather some twigs from the mountain trees, and very shortly, with a happy smile "Little Sister" brought me a cup of boiling water. They could not afford to buy tea. Auntie apologized for not "having time to go to town to buy tea" and asked me to accept the hot water. I gave her an envelope with four dollar notes in it, explaining, "A little gift for Auntie."

"Oh, thank you," she said. "But you shouldn't do that!" Carefully, she put it in her pocket.

She guessed, no doubt, that it was money, but she did not know how much. At that time four dollars was quite a generous sum with

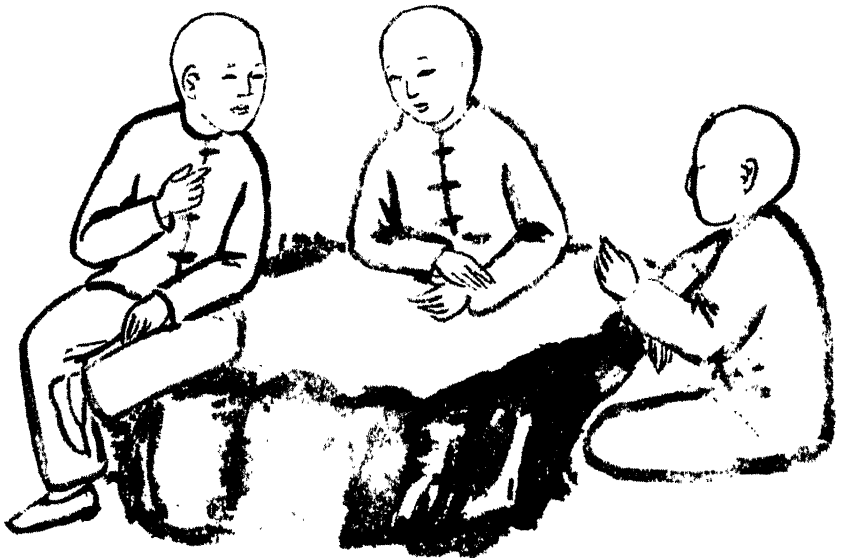
which mother and daughter could buy food for at least two months. Soon she went into the house and returned a moment later with a cheerful smile on her otherwise inscrutable face. She made no comment, but I knew that she had opened the envelope.

"Aunty Ts'ai," I said, "I have come to take Ho-shen back to school with me. He is lonely here, and I am lonely in the school after classes; so I have come to fetch him to live with me."

"Oh, that will be fine," Aunty Ts'ai exclaimed. "He has been very lonely and worried here. That's why he went to live in Ai Wan T'ing!"

Next day Ho-shen brought his small bundle of belongings to the school and settled himself in the little room outside my dormitory. There he had a table and a bookshelf, and there was good light for reading from the window. Outside the window was a beautiful flowering tree.

Mao came again to see me in the afternoon while I was still on duty; so we had opportunity for only a few words, but when my class finished and the students left, we had a long talk. Mao proposed that Ho-shen prolong his stay and the latter was delighted to hear this.



Later we all dined together before Mao returned to First Normal where he was still a student.

Since I had to have my meals with the students, Ho-shen was obliged to eat alone in my room. I had asked the cook to prepare his food, but I learned that he was eating only one meal a day, at noon. Afternoons, he went out and did not return till after dinner. When I asked why he did not have dinner with me, he replied, "In the afternoon I like to go to the library to read. Sometimes I go home. Of course I eat dinner at home and then I come back here to school."

This seemed very strange, since his home was very far away and he had to cross the river. How could he return home for supper every day? I could not imagine where he could get a meal in town. No, he must be eating only one meal a day.

Shortly afterward the cook jokingly commented on my friend's appetite. "What a big eater your guest is!" he exclaimed. "I used to give him half a little *t'ung* (small pail of food), but now he eats three or four people's portions."

On hearing this, I had little doubt that Ho-shen was eating only one meal a day and I asked him again where he ate at night; but I saw that he did not care to answer; so I said no more. He probably hated to have me pay for his meals and he wanted to save me additional expense. Yet he did not want to explain his motive. Needless to say, I was touched by this episode and I asked the cook to give him an extra meat dish so as to provide a satisfactory daily diet. This gave some idea of Ho-shen's stoicism and integrity in friendship.

Later he and I created a "half-day work" movement for students and in 1919, he, his mother, and sister went to France, where he lived in the Montargis Middle School, studying French. There he fell in love with our best woman colleague, Miss Hsiang Ching-yu. Since I was in France at the time, Ho-shen told me all about his love affair. The two of them wrote a booklet about it, entitled "Alliance toward High Things." When they asked my opinion, knowing that they were living together as man and wife, even though they were opposed to the principles of marriage, I replied, "You two are my best friends. I wish to congratulate you both and dedicate a short phrase to you—'alliance toward low things'—the name of your booklet with just one word changed."

Previously Ho-shen had frankly expressed his distaste for the so-called capitalist system. This had been his own frank opinion long before the Russian Revolution, but he had not discovered how he could do anything about it. With the establishment of the Russian Communist Government it was, therefore, logical that he accept their doctrine wholeheartedly and unconditionally. I tried to tell him to study and analyze the Communist principles before accepting them, but he insisted there was no need since the truth of them was quite obvious. The French newspaper, *Humanité*, was full of Communist propaganda and although Ho-shen had by no means mastered the French language, he pored over this paper every day with a dictionary in his hand. Since he did not understand too well, he made many mistakes in translation, but he would not admit his errors, even to himself. He had preconceived ideas and nothing could shake his conviction. But when we had discussions, they were always pleasant and amiable. Although our opinions differed very considerably, we respected each other's ideas and until Ho-shen's death, our friendship remained firm and intimate.

While he was living among the Chinese students in France, he organized the propagation of the doctrine through selected Communist comrades. Among those most strongly influenced by him were Hsiang Ching-yu, Li Wei-han, Ts'ai Ch'ang, and Li Fu-chun. Mao Tse-tung was strongly influenced through letters from Ho-shen.

In 1921, Ho-shen and his family returned to Shanghai, where he became editor of the Communist Party's newspaper *Hsiang Tao* (*The Guide*).

While I was teaching at the French-Chinese University in Peking in the year 1925, I received two long letters from him. His sweetheart, Hsiang Ching-yu, had been arrested in the French Concession in Hankow and he asked me to help her. Though I did all I could, she was finally shot. I was very sorry, for, even though we held different political views and philosophies, she was a good friend.

Ts'ai Ho-shen died a few years later. Though he was one of the founders of the Chinese Communist Party, Ho-shen remained a dear and highly respected friend to the last.