

that you don't agree with Communism. What he really means is that he doesn't want them to have any confidence in you, but to follow him alone."

I told Mao what Ho Hu-tzu had said and he confirmed it without hesitation. I asked, "Why do you say I am bourgeois? If I have ever said I did not agree with Communism, you know that it is the Russian Communism that I am opposed to. I am, as you know, very much in favor of the principles of Communism and I believe that Socialism should gradually be converted into Communism."

Mao Tse-tung said nothing for the moment and Ho Hu-tzu laughed loudly, "Siao Hu-tzu" (here the term "moustache" was respectful and intimate), he cried, "When you are not here, Jun-chih (Mao) wants me to go one way, and when Jun-chih is not here, you try to persuade me to go another way; when neither of you is here, I don't know which way to go; and now that you are both here with me, I still don't know which way to go!" This caused a great laugh but it was quite true.

Ho Hu-tzu, although he spoke in jest and only for himself, had, nevertheless, been acting unconsciously as spokesman for practically all the members of the Hsin Min Study Association, since there was a noticeable element of indecision at that time. However, Ho had been the only one who spoke out frankly and sincerely to call attention openly to the division of opinion between the two leaders and the consequent split in the group.

# 16

## *A Summer Vacation in School*

Summer vacation was about to begin. A notice appeared on the bulletin board to the effect that all classes had completed their examinations; that we were to have two and a half months' holiday; and that all the students were expected to leave the school within three days.

Everyone commenced to pack, smiling happily in anticipation of soon being at home for vacation. Books were taken from study halls

and packed away in suitcases, of which there were more than a thousand in the big baggage room. For two days, crowds of excited students walked in and out of this room continuously and it was almost like a big Customs Office. Everyone talked and laughed noisily. Classes were over and everyone was in a holiday mood. "Have you written to your wife? Does she know you're coming home?" "Is your fiancée coming to meet you?" and other similar comments could be heard all day long.

Finally, all the studies were emptied. That is, all except mine. All my books, brushes, and ink were still on my table and my book case was still full. Mao Tse-tung came in to talk with me. When he saw that I had not started to pack my things, he sat down and said, "Mr. Siao, when are you going home?"

"I have decided not to go home," I replied.

"Are you really going to stay at the school? When you spoke about it last month, I thought you were just joking."

"No," I continued, "I have decided to stay here for a couple of months and then to go home for about twenty days. It will be quiet here at the school for these two months and I shall be able to do a lot of studying."

"What is your plan for these two months? What do you plan to study?" Mao inquired.

"I mean to study algebra, geometry, English, and geography by myself for the next semester, and then I shall probably read some philosophy also."

"I see. And will the Principal allow you to stay in the school?"

"Yes, last night I went to see him and told him what I wanted to do. He said it was against the school rules, but since he believed I really wanted to study seriously, he would give his consent. He told me the porter would be here as well as the four domestics; so I shall not be here alone. He said he would tell the servants to sleep near my dormitory to look after me. Some of the cooks will remain, too; so they will be able to cook for me. But, of course, I have to pay my board. The school cannot be responsible for any extra expense."

"That sounds good. I should like to stay with you, too. What do you think?"

Mao Tse-tung was my best friend; so I was delighted, and said as much, "Come, hurry and see the Principal at once. I'll go with you

if you like. I might be able to help. It will be good to have a friend and companion here with me. I do hope you can stay."

"But tell me," Mao Tse-tung hesitated, "how much will you have to pay the cook for your board?"

"I have to pay two dollars and fifty cents a month. Each meal will consist of soup and one other dish."

"Two dollars and fifty cents a month! That means five dollars for the two months!" exclaimed Mao. "That's too much!"

"No, it's not. I think it's quite cheap! But don't worry about the cost. If you don't have enough money, I shall lend it to you. Come now, let's go at once and see the Principal."

We went off to see the Principal, who granted Mao's request without question. When the other students heard that we were staying, two more wanted to stay with us, and they asked me to go with them to see the Principal. Again he agreed and so it was that we four remained behind during the summer vacation. Although I knew the other two fellows quite well, they were only slightly acquainted with Mao. We considered them rather ordinary and not of high enough caliber to be elected to membership in the Association.

In the summer, the weather was so very hot that it was impossible to work in the afternoons. We studied during the morning and after lunch we would chat, but sometimes it was too hot even to talk. The temperature rose so high that we would perspire freely even when we sat quite still and did nothing.

Our work during the morning was not the same for all of us. I wanted to study English and algebra to start with, but Mao was not at all interested in them, and he did not wish to look for a method to study mathematics and English by himself. He spent most of his time reading old classical essays and history. During our rest periods, I passed the time practicing calligraphy, but Mao was very awkward at this and he never did manage to improve his ugly characters.

Mao Tse-tung's reason for wanting to stay at the school during the summer vacation was quite different from mine. He had no warm sentimental feeling for his home and at the end of the summer, if he had gone home, he would have had to help his father in the fields, cutting and harvesting the wheat. Working on the farm now held even less appeal for him than it had when he first decided to leave

home and go to school. However, his only pair of shoes was very badly worn and cut. Both shoes had holes in the soles; so later he would have to go home at least once to get a new pair made.

At that time, practically all the students wore homemade shoes and it was quite unusual to see shop-made shoes in the school. Wearing store shoes indicated unnecessary expense and a desire to show off, and consequently the wearer was usually looked down upon. One of the two fellows who had elected to stay in the school with Mao and me appeared with a beautiful pair of shop-made shoes. For us, these fine shoes had less value than the old worn-out pair which Mao had on. When our companion realized how we felt about his shoes, he did not put them on again, while Mao's torn ones took on a veritable halo of glory!

In such reduced company, differences of character were much more apparent than during school time. I felt almost a moral obligation, or at any rate, it was an ingrained habit, to keep my desk, my books, and my room as tidy as possible, even though there was no one to inspect it each day. Mao's desk, on the other hand, was always in complete disorder. The same was true with our studies; mine was always orderly and neat, but Mao's was invariably untidy and he never once thought of sweeping it. Once I said jokingly, "If a great hero does not clean and sweep out his own room, how can he possibly think he is capable of cleaning up the universe?" To which Mao replied, "A great hero who thinks about cleaning up the universe has no time to think about sweeping rooms!"

The hot water system did not function during the holidays; so we had to heat what water we wanted on the kitchen stove—each man for himself. I had a bath every day, but Mao used to let several days pass without a bath despite the terrific heat. He complained that I took too many baths—"So much unnecessary trouble!" he said. I used to retaliate by telling him, "Jun-chih, you smell awfully sweaty!" which was only too true, but he was not at all sensitive about it, nor about being told that he smelled. Nor did my telling him change his slovenly habits. At first, all four of us sat at the same table for our meals, but after a time, the other two decided they preferred to sit by themselves at a table some distance away. Mao could not understand what had prompted this sudden decision!

Not only was he content with being dirty himself, but he objected to my cleanliness. For instance, I always brush my teeth after meals and he would mock me, saying, "After eating, you have to brush your teeth! That's typical of the son of a rich father! You're quite the gentleman, aren't you!" He started to nickname me "son of a rich father"; later he was to call me "bourgeois" (*shen shih*), but at this time he had not yet learned that word. There was no doubt that for him, cleanliness implied a bourgeois type of mentality; but I could not see why belonging to the proletariat and being a Communist prevented one from having a free will in such matters, or compelled one to be dirty.

In school, we had to wash our own clothes and I quite enjoyed this task because it was a change from studying, but Mao hated it. Although we had such different personalities, backgrounds, and personal habits, and did not hesitate to criticize each other, we never really quarreled. We were, in fact, quite fond of each other and felt mutual respect. After an exchange of personal criticism, we ended up laughing, and we always liked to joke, because it provided some relaxation and a change.

Our serious discussions were not in the least influenced by these small differences of opinion and habit. We had a long talk every afternoon, usually not about any specific subject, but just whatever occurred to us at the time. More often than not we discussed the latest news which we had read in the papers.

We talked a lot about Germany, since at that time, the Chinese felt a special respect for Germany and Japan, though we realized that Japan imitated Germany. Mao Tse-tung, of course, adored Bismarck and Wilhelm II, but I did not care for the type of character displayed by these two gentlemen. We had several hot arguments about them and these finally got us back to the subject of the educational system in China.

In the Normal School, the aims of education were considered of the greatest importance, and on a large scroll over the entrance to the Ceremonial Hall was written in large characters: "The first aim of our educational system is moral training; second, industrial; third, military; and finally, aesthetic training to perfect the virtues." This was Ts'ai Yüan-p'ei's declaration when he was the first Minister of

Education for the Republic of China in 1912. The reference to military training was, of course, in emulation of Germany and Japan, but Mao thought it most admirable. I did not agree. I remember, during one discussion, I said, "Ts'ai Yüan-p'ei's declaration is sensible enough, but I think it is very commonplace. Only one point, the idea of aesthetic training, raises it somewhat out of the purely commonplace and conventional. Some time ago, he wrote a good essay on this subject, 'Aesthetics in Place of Religion.'"

"But," Mao insisted, "military education is much more important. If the country is weak, what's the good of talking about aesthetics? The first and most important thing to do is to conquer one's enemies! What does it matter if you have an aesthetic education or not?"

"The perfection of the virtues is emphasized in the ancient poems, in the classics, and in music. It's all the same idea."

"If the people are weak, what is the use of perfecting the virtues?" asked Mao. "The most important thing is to be strong. With strength, one can conquer others and to conquer others gives one virtue." Thus our basic philosophies differed, but in the delights and enthusiasms of our youth, we were probably unaware of the depth of our differences.

# 17

## *The Hsiu Yeh and Ch'u Yi Schools*

The two middle schools of greatest repute in Changsha City were the Hsiu Yeh and the Ch'u Yi, though there was one other called the Ming Te.

Two months before my graduation from First Normal in 1915, I was invited to teach in the Hsiu Yeh, and I spent just one semester there. In January, 1916, I went to teach in Ch'u Yi and I continued in the Ch'u Yi for more than two years.

I was the only graduate from First Normal that year who was invited to teach in these schools and my fellow students considered this to be a very great honor. Mao Tse-tung was very impressed. Remarks he made to me on several occasions left no doubt that he had great