

and with the people moving about, the danger was now almost past and without waiting to tell Mao of the awful fate that we had so narrowly escaped, I ran back to the trees to fetch our bundles and umbrellas. There was now little fear of attack.

I grabbed our things and, ready to run at top speed, I turned quickly to look where the tiger had sat crouched so menacingly. The big black tiger was still there. It had not moved and I looked more carefully in the clearer light. My fierce big black tiger was a natural formation of black rock!

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After Leaving the Sandbank

Leaving our night's resting place we decided to continue along the bank of the stream, since this river path seemed to be the only road to Anhwa.

Just as we were taking up our bundles to set off for the day, a huge green snake suddenly came out from the grass along the lower bank only a few yards from where Mao had been sleeping a few minutes before. I got quite a scare because this vicious-looking reptile could not have been very far away during the night. If it had seen Mao, would it have bitten him? Had it crossed over to the trees, I also would have been in danger. The tiger had turned out to be the creation of my own too-vivid imagination, but there was no doubt about the reality of this snake. I recalled how people said if you were bitten by a snake, the poisonous venom entered the bloodstream and quickly poisoned the whole body. In this out-of-the-way place it would have been very dangerous to get a snake bite because it would be impossible to find a doctor or to obtain any treatment. I told Mao what I had been thinking and we decided that we would sleep no more out in the open.

Our walk was monotonous and the river seemed to be interminable. Along the bank at frequent intervals were low straight trees which made one think of a line of soldiers standing at attention as we

passed. We seemed to be holding review and I imagined the troops saluting us as we passed by.

After an hour of this we came to a bridge with a stone sign bearing the words, "Anhwa City: Right." We crossed the bridge and turned on the road to the right, which parted company with the river and led to a group of hills. At the foot of one of the hills was a small pavilion by the roadside—a square pointed roof like those of the pagodas, supported by four columns and with the sides open to the air, and containing only a long wooden bench for travelers to rest upon.

We sat on this bench to rest, and looking around, I saw a path leading up to the top of the hill on which appeared to be a small temple. Telling Mao to wait there for me, I walked quickly to the top and found it was, in fact, a relatively small temple, only four or five meters wide and about seven meters high. In the center stood a small stone statue. The walls were white and bore no inscriptions. There was a fine view and from this point one could look out into the far distance from all four sides. I descended the hill, took my brush and ink from my bundle and returned to the temple where I wrote just two words on the white wall: *yuan ta* (far and great).

When I returned to Mao, another traveler had arrived and they were talking. He asked me the name of the temple and I said, "I don't know its name but I have just written the words, '*yuan ta*' on



the wall. You remember how Professor Yang Huai-chung, of the First Normal School taught us that there are five principles in cultivating one's character and the first of these was *yuan ta*. He explained that this meant that one's conduct and thoughts should be far-seeing and one's purpose should be high. One should always aspire for something above the ordinary. I have never forgotten that lesson, those words immediately came into my mind. They seemed to me to be symbolical."

Mao understood immediately and said, "Very good. Very good, indeed."

Only a short distance from the pavilion we came to a little tea-shop where we begged for our breakfast. The owner as usual was a young woman of about twenty years. She seemed very kind and understanding and immediately gave us each a big bowl of rice. I wondered if she knew the story of the little temple, so I asked if she knew its name.

"It's called the Liu Pang Temple," she answered.

"The Liu Pang?" asked Mao. "How do you write that name?"

"I don't know how to write. I only know that the temple is called the Liu Pang," she replied.

"Is there a person called Liu Pang who lives near here?" continued Mao.

"That I wouldn't know," replied the girl. "I was born in Anhwa City; I was married there and came here to live only two years ago. I know very little really about the history of this place."

Mao was thoughtful for a moment, then he said, "Liu Pang was the name of the first Emperor of the Han Dynasty. He didn't come from here and I doubt if he ever visited this part of China. I wonder how it is that this temple should bear his name?"

"Really I don't know," the girl answered. "I didn't know that Liu Pang was the first Emperor of the Han Dynasty."

"Do you know why this temple was built on this mountain top?" persisted Mao.

"No, I have no idea at all," replied the girl patiently.

At this moment a man came in who looked as if he might be her husband; so we turned to him with our questions about the temple, and this is what he told us: "We're not quite sure how the

name Liu Pang came to be given to the temple. Some people say that Liu Pang was an Emperor; others that he was someone with the same name as the Emperor. I don't know. There is an interesting story told about this temple: Years ago there was a man who fell sick. He was desperately ill, on the point of death. Everyone thought there was no hope for his recovery. Then one day he had a dream and in his dream a man named Liu Pang appeared. This Liu Pang gave him a prescription for some medicine which would cure his illness. When he wakened, he sent his son to have the medicine made up and when he took it, he was immediately cured. That, they say, is why he built this temple to the memory of the Liu Pang who appeared to him in his miraculous dream."

"Was he the Liu Pang who was the Emperor?" I asked.

"That I don't know," replied the husband. "Some say he was, others say no. I don't know."

"How long ago was the temple built?" asked Mao.

"I really don't know. I remember seeing it when I was quite a little boy and now I am twenty-six years old. There are people around here who say it is an ancient temple. But I don't know about that."

We thanked these two, picked up our bundles, and set off again down the road. As we walked, I pondered over the possible origin of this dream temple. Who was this unknown Liu Pang? But did it really matter? However, the name Liu Pang had awakened a train of thought, and as we walked, we talked of the Emperor whose life interested Mao so much.

"Why was Liu Pang called Liu Chi?" he wanted to know.

I explained that Liu was his family name and that Chi was his second name, or his private name, just as his was Jun-chih and mine Tzu-cheng.

"Liu Pang was the first commoner in history to become Emperor," he continued thoughtfully. "I think he should be considered to be a great hero!"

"Oh no," I remonstrated. "Liu Pang was a bad man! But lots of bad men are called heroes," I conceded.

"He was a commoner who gathered together an army to depose the despot of the Ch'in Dynasty," argued Mao, hotly. "He was

founder of the Han Dynasty. How can you call him a bad man?"

"He was a bad man. He was too selfish, too self-centered to be an emperor," I explained, "that's why I call him a bad man. He was really nothing more than a man with political ambitions who was successful. Perhaps he was not at heart a bad man, but political ambition tends to grow and become a vice. Ideals become obscured and one's character begins to degenerate. Then he's a bad man."

"At least Liu Pang was a successful revolutionist who succeeded in overthrowing the Ch'in despot," Mao countered.

"Yes, he got rid of one despot only to become another himself. Ch'in went out and Han took his place. What's the difference? Both were bad."

"I suppose," Mao suggested, "that you think that after his revolutionary forces had gained control of the country, he should have established a democratic republic. Two thousand years ago democratic republics had never been thought of! People had never heard of such a form of government! It was impossible for him to visualize a democratic system in those days."

"Yes, I know," I said. "But even if he couldn't visualize a democratic republic, he could at least have avoided being a cruel despot!"

But Mao persisted, "You can't really call him cruel, if you take into account the age in which he lived and compare him with other Emperors of his time."

I still disagreed, "He was treacherous and absolutely devoid of human sentiment. Remember the friends and generals who risked their lives fighting for him? When his armies were successful, these men became famous leaders and he became afraid that one or another of them might try to usurp his throne; so he had them all killed. Some of them, you remember, were literally cut to pieces, and he had whole families and all near relatives of others exterminated! He bore a knife in his breast in the place where his heart should have been. He was a very cruel bad man."

"But if he hadn't killed them, his throne would have been insecure and he probably wouldn't have lasted long as Emperor," said Mao.

"So in order to be successful in politics, one must kill one's friends?" I asked. "Politics seems to be a lottery. Many people buy lottery tickets and, of course, someone gets the first prize. Political success

is nothing more than that. Liu Pang was not only cruel, bad, and treacherous, he was also uncultured, low-minded, and nothing but a vulgar boaster!"

"Just what do you mean by that?" asked Mao.

"Well, a very good example of his mentality is the proclamation he wrote when he returned to his native province after becoming Emperor. Do you remember how it ran? 'The strong wind blows and the clouds fly. The all-powerful ruler returns to his place of birth. How can brave men be found to stand guard?' The first line shows his spirit of boastfulness and conceit; the second is written to awe or frighten the simple country people; and the third shows clearly that he realizes that his throne will be difficult to preserve and, at the same time, that it will be no easy matter to find faithful guards who can be trusted not to revolt."

"And that is why you call him uncultured and low?" asked Mao.

"Yes, but there's another episode. Did you know that he made his nephew the Marquis of Soup?"

"The Marquis of Soup? No, I haven't heard that one."

"Well, once when he was very poor, he asked his sister-in-law for a bowl of soup. She refused him. He never forgave her, nor forgot the incident. When he became Emperor, he conferred on her son the title, Marquis of Soup, to make him the laughing stock of the court and of his friends."

"I think that's very funny!" laughed Mao. "But now I remember something else. He was very kind to your family. He made your ancestor Siao Ho his first Prime Minister!"

"Yes," I agreed. "But that was because my ancestor was no soldier. If he had been a soldier, he too would have been cut to pieces like the rest long before he could reach such a high position. Siao Ho was interested only in his books and culture; so he was no threat to the Emperor's position."

"He didn't treat Chang Liang badly," persisted Mao, determined to find some good and to prove that Liu Pang was not a bad man.

"And why did Chang Liang become a Taoist?" I asked. "Wasn't it so that he would have a good excuse for going on a pilgrimage when he realized that Liu Pang might at any time accuse him of unfaithfulness and have him killed? No, believe me, politics is

the most degrading profession that exists! Can you tell me of just one person who has been successful in politics who can still be regarded as basically honest? No. Take Ch'in Shih Huang. Han Kao Ts'u, T'ang T'ai Tsung, Sung T'ai Tsu, Chen Ch'i Szu Han, Chu Yüan-chang, and others; were any of these good, honest men? No. From the most ancient times in China, those who have worshiped power have been mean in spirit. The two things seem to go hand in hand. To struggle for a high position by the use of force indicates meanness of spirit."

I knew quite well that Mao Tse-tung would not wish to continue the argument further lest I might criticize him directly. We both knew that he was identifying himself with Liu Pang in his ambition and I knew that he would not admit that he was himself *hsiao jen*, mean of spirit.

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Difficulties in a Distant City

After we left the Liu Pang Temple, we took things easier than we had before. We paid more attention to our discussions than to the speed of our progress; so it took us several days to reach Anhwa City, the district capital. On entering this city, we really felt that we were a long way from home. The people spoke with a different accent; their habits were strange to us; and it really seemed as if we were in a foreign country.

Though we knew that some schoolmates lived here, we decided not to visit them because we were afraid they might wish to entertain us lavishly, as had been done on the Ho farm. However, we had no idea what we would do here, since our last money had been spent long ago. We were truly beggars who had to live by their wits.

When we arrived, it was about ten in the morning and we were very hungry, since we had eaten no breakfast. When we came to a teashop, we hesitated a moment; then, throwing caution to the four winds, we walked resolutely in. We sat down at a square table in front of a window with umbrellas and bundles beside us, and