

## *Author's Introduction*

This book was written neither in admiration of a hero nor in condemnation of a bandit. I had neither object in view. Moreover, to my mind, the line of demarcation between the bandit and the hero is at times faint.

No, in the following pages I have attempted merely to set down an accurate record of certain episodes in my life selected from the storehouse of memory as of certain interest to the public at large and in connection with current events in the Far East. More important than this, I feel it my duty, not only towards my own people but to humanity as a whole, to record a number of facts which may well be distorted to a greater or lesser extent in official histories—for I have already seen the germs of inaccuracy appearing in print.

My memory is one of my most precious gifts—I can still remember cradle days—and in writing these pages I have been able to relive the years Mao Tse-tung and I spent together with such clarity that no recourse to the diary I kept at that time has been necessary. This reliving of the past has afforded me many pleasant hours—although as those who know me well can vouch, I am far from being a day-dreamer.

I believe this is the first authentic account to be published to date of Mao Tse-tung's formative years and of the birth and organized development of the Communist movement in China. I sincerely believe I am the only person today who knows the details and secrets of these events and, since I am not in the political field, I can reveal them fairly and freely.

Since the Sino-Japanese war, in 1937 to be exact, when Mao Tse-tung appeared publicly on the scene, a number of friends—both Chinese and Occidental—begged me to write the memoirs of my life with Mao Tse-tung—known and unknown—and I commenced by writing the beggar episode directly in French. I had just completed this when my friend Mr. Lin Yutang asked me to write on the early life of Mao Tse-tung as the main

article for a magazine he was editing. It was difficult to cut down the story and I set it all down in a further twenty-four chapters, but before I had finished the magazine ceased to be published.

I thus had two manuscript drafts, the first consisting of seventeen chapters in French and the second of twenty-five in Chinese, and I thought of completing both. My wife, meanwhile, had read the manuscripts enthusiastically and said she would like to translate the two into one English whole. That is how the present book came into being.

Up to Chapter 8 of this book, part of the story was told to me by Mao himself and part was related, sometimes as a joke, by friends and people in the country round our homes. I knew his younger brother Mao Tse-ta'n very well. I was told that while an officer in the army, he was killed by the Nanking Government forces well before Mao Tse-tung came to power.

From our meeting in the First Normal School—that is, from Chapter 8—I wish to repeat clearly, I myself became an actor in the scene and can vouch for the truth of every word written. I have obviously recounted only selected episodes, since it would be impossible to set down all that happened in that fateful decade during which the two of us lived and worked together.

I have been most careful throughout this account to maintain the exact sense of all reported speech. The conversations recorded, it must be remembered, took place about forty years ago. If we were to discuss the same problems today, the views expressed would not be very different, but my point of view would be even more forcibly and maturely expressed.

For about twenty years, I have read articles and booklets in Chinese, Japanese and Occidental languages on the early years of Mao Tse-tung and the birth of the Chinese Communist Party. Often I could not control my laughter over the exaggerations and falsifications. The publications by the Chinese Communists are written under orders of the Party, which considers propaganda of more importance than truth. In all works published by the Communists they usually avoid using my name, though I worked and organized with their leader. If they do mention me, they place a word like "reactionary" before my name, because I was not a Communist and my name does not serve their cause. On the other hand, I do not hesitate to use Communist names in full in my book. I am writing true history and not propaganda for any cause.

This book is a sad souvenir for China as well as for me personally. My wife Phyllis Ling-cho had courageously completed the English translation on the eve of her serious operation. She had complete confidence that this book would be widely read because of its important message, but she did not live to see it in print. Besides her many poems and prose works in Chinese, this is her sole work written in English, though she had plans for many such projects which, alas, she was unable to realize.

It is appropriate that the book should be published by the Syracuse

University Press because my wife left her footprints at Syracuse University day and night for several years as a student. When she went to the United States for the second time, she exhibited her paintings and gave a lecture at the Museum of Art in the city she loved so much.

The appearance of this present account is in a great measure the result of Mr. Lin Yutang's insistence and I am deeply indebted to him for his kind Foreword.

I wish to record my most sincere thanks to Dr. Raymond F. Piper, Professor of Philosophy, Emeritus, for his very fine Preface and the brief Chronology and to Mrs. Lila K. Piper, for her gracious assistance in preparing the manuscript for publication. They are the first American friends to read this manuscript and have always shown their enthusiasm for the book.

I fully appreciate the wide experience and capabilities of Mr. Donald Bean, Director of the Syracuse University Press and Mrs. Arpena Mesrobian, Executive Editor. Their great faith in this book has been shown in the efforts they have expended in its publication. I also wish to express my sincere thanks to Dr. Robert C. North for his commentary appearing at the end of the narrative.

It is my hope that this account will be of interest to those seeking true information about the beginnings of the Communist Party in China. There is yet much to tell—perhaps in another book.

SIAO-YU  
Montevideo  
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