

## 1. Under the Zamboa Tree

It was Saturday, October 2, 1954. The sky was clear, the sun brilliant, the southerly breeze gentle and pleasant. It looked to be another peaceful day. But to Youde, this day was the beginning of the nightmare that he would not forget for the rest of his life.

That afternoon, under the Zamboa tree in his backyard, Youde was playing GO (black and white chess) with his grade school classmate Yung-chuan. The spot was cool, amply shaded by luxuriant, overlapping leaves. Youde was in the habit of leaving the GO table out there where he would sometimes study the manuals by himself or play a game or two with his GO cronies, Yung-chuan among them. They were comparable in skill. This afternoon, as always, they started alternately with black stones.

"Hey, you haven't lost any of it, not only that, your game has gotten better, even though you haven't touched the thing for a whole year," Yung-chuan said. "I think maybe a stay in America did make you stronger in GO. I wonder if it helps GO when one broadens his horizons."

Youde had just returned from a year in America. He was granted a leave of absence from his teaching job to study abroad with an all expenses paid government scholarship. During the year abroad, his horizons had indeed broadened greatly.

At that time, America was at the height of its economic prosperity. Under the aegis of the Marshall Plan, America was spreading its wealth to assist the economic development of many poor countries. Here in Taiwan, even though the war effort ended eight years ago, it had not yet recovered from extreme devastation and

shortage of goods. The country was barely sufficient in rice, its main staple. Electrical appliances such as refrigerators or televisions were literally unimaginable. Like any citizen from a war-ravaged country in South East Asia, Youde felt his trip to America was no less than a beggar's tour of heaven. To him, even tin cans and packing materials were too precious to be thrown away.

A year ago in Putzu, a town of 30,000 people that borders the Tropic of Cancer, when the news arrived that Youde was selected to go to America to study, the town's people were surprised and delighted for him. He was the pride of the town.

Youde was an English teacher at the newly established Putzu High School. Having graduated from the Normal University of Taipei at a time when qualified English teachers were in short supply, he had chosen to return to his hometown in spite of more lucrative job offers in the city. Just at this juncture, the Marshall Plan passed the American Congress and the Republic of China in Taiwan became an aid recipient. The amount of 100 million dollars per annum was akin to rain during a drought for Taiwan, a country whose foreign currency reserve was practically nil at the time. U.S. aid dollars were used mostly for direct economic aid, but a portion of it was allocated to promote democracy in education as well. Among the programs, one was to send educators to America to observe first hand democracy in action. Youde was very fortunate to be the only applicant selected, being only a lowly high-school teacher. Three criteria were used to review the applicants: first, the person had to be graduated from an accredited college, second, the person had to be fluent in English and third, the person must have taught for at least three years.

In addition, there was one essential pre-condition: that was, the candidate must be a Kuomintang Party (KMT) member.

Youde had joined the Kuomintang Party soon after graduation. At the time, all college graduates were forced to go through a job orientation program to gain employment. However, the high-sounding, so called 'job program' was in reality a mechanism for thought control. One on one, the counselor then urged the graduate to join the KMT.

"The Party needs able intellectuals like you," the counselor said. "Besides, it would be wise for you to join the Party. You should do it for the country, for the Party, but also for your own good. If you say yes, we can get the president of your college and the director of this program to be your sponsors, both are big names in the Party, you know. So you see, it is to your advantage to join now rather than later. In any case, there will be no path of advancement unless you join the Party. For example ... Now do the right thing and show us the spirit of the true patriotic youth that you are."

The counselor openly urged and pressured. As if destined, many Taiwanese joined the Party. Not a few, however, resolutely refused and chose to face a life of teaching with no advancement.

Youde had solicited advice from his uncle with regard to joining the Kuomintang. The uncle, a graduate of Tokyo's medical school and a general practitioner in town, was highly regarded for his knowledge and insight; a Kung-ming (an ancient Chinese wise man), some called him.

"Go ahead and join the KMT," he had advised. "The way I see it, you would not be joining to gain advancement. The

Kuomintang government is indeed corrupt, but at least it still proclaims democracy and that makes it better than the Communists. If good, righteous young Taiwanese join the Party in numbers, I think we Taiwanese will eventually gain a voice in the Party and some of our proposals will perhaps prevail."

Youde joined the KMT and, along with three hundred others, was sworn in at the Kuomintang Party headquarters. Right before the swearing-in ceremony, Hsiao, a graduate of the Department of Chinese Literature, patted Youde's shoulder from behind. He said with a smirk,

"So you too, joined the muddied."

'To join the muddied' is a Chinese expression. It means a clear stream running into a muddied river and thus losing its own purity. Hsiao acted embarrassed as if he was partaking in a Satanic rite, selling out his soul. Youde chuckled and said, "If there are more clear streams joining the river, even the big muddy can eventually become clear."

Shoulder to shoulder, the two entered the hall. They raised their hands and were sworn in.

And, barely three years later, the reward arrived. Youde was allowed to go abroad to study, or to be exact, to become a trainee in the US aid program. During his absence, his family in Taiwan was to receive his school salary in full while he himself was to receive a \$300 dollar monthly stipend from the U.S. government. At a time when the monthly salary of a college graduate was a mere \$30 dollars, it was a sweet deal indeed! An additional stipend of \$150 dollars was given out for travel preparation. On September 1, with \$150 dollars in his pocket and a Northwest Airline travel bag

swung over his shoulder, his chest swelling with hope, Youde boarded the propeller airplane for Tokyo's Haneda airport together with three other trainees. They were to stay overnight in Tokyo then continue their journey to Seattle in a larger propeller plane. Through the car window, Youde saw a Tokyo that had returned to peace yet was littered with remnants of wartime fire bombings. Here and there, people gathered in front of shops to watch television. In the entertainment district, U.S. soldiers swaggered as if they owned the place.

To Youde, Tokyo was not new. He had attended this city's high school. For five years, he had lived the stoic wartime life of this city. Then in 1943, when Japan's defeat had become quite apparent, he gave up the hope of attending a university in Japan and returned to Taiwan by boat, taking considerable risks. The boat took thirteen days to reach Keelung, normally, only a two-day journey. Upon return, Youde took a job as a substitute teacher in his hometown of Putzu, but soon he was drafted into the Japanese military and greeted the end of the war eight months later. After the war, he again left home and entered the Normal University in Taipei.

Nevertheless, seeing Tokyo after eight years, Youde was filled with longing, stirred by sentiments from his youth. That evening, he purchased a suit, a suitcase and other things from a department store spending all of \$50 – the U.S. dollars were worth a lot then. The next morning, the traveling trainees once more boarded the late model propeller plane and flew toward America.

The America that Youde found was full of confidence; its mainland received not a scratch of damage during the war. It



■ The author and his classmates of George Peabody College, Nashville, Tennessee in 1953

remained the only number one, wealthy, big power in the world. In that year, Youde met numerous trainees from the four corners of the world and they shared their lives in America together. These fortunate people, not only were able to live comfortably during their stay, but were able to take home with them rare and novel goods. Youde, too, lugged home a can opener, an electric shaver, a

record player and an electric fan, among other things, to the envy of many onlookers.

Presently, the melody of The Tennessee Waltz from that 33 1/2 LP player wafted through the courtyard and onto the shade underneath the Zamboa tree. The music ended after 30 minutes of play.

"Hey, it's finished," Yung-chuan reminded Youde.

"It's O.K. The turner will stop automatically," Youde replied without lifting his head from the GO board.

"So, it does! It stops automatically!" Yung-chuan was impressed.

"Sorry, I am taking these." Youde advanced.

At a good breaking point in the game, Youde stood up to go inside the house to put on a new record. But it turned out to be unnecessary as his wife Panto beat him to it. This time a symphony was playing. Youde sat down once more and with a resounding clack took a stone.

"I give up." Yung-chuan threw in the towel. Including this game, Youde had beaten him three in a row.

"Let's have one more. Boy, you sure did get stronger," Yung-chuan said, combing his fingers through his hair.

Grinning with satisfaction, Youde leaned back in his chair, picked up the glass and drank the iced juice that Panto had set down beside him. The breeze stirred once more. The Zamboa leaves trembled.

## 2. Chi-lin! Chi-lin!

Alerted by the clicking sound of the GO stones, Youde's only daughter Ah-jing rushed into the courtyard. When Youde left for America, she was eight months old and barely crawling. But now, a year later, she was able to run, was quite a talker and had quickly become attached to her daddy since his return. Ah-jing had already bathed and had on a nylon dress that Youde had brought home from America. Panto, Youde's wife, had picked out the dress for Ah-jing – her way for hinting that it was time to quit GO and take Ah-jing out for a while.

"Papa, chi-lin, chi-lin."

Ah-jing tugged at Youde's hand which was sweeping the GO stones into the bowls. 'Chi-lin, chi-lin,' the sound of bicycle bells, was Ah-jing's verb for riding bicycle.

These days, a daily routine for Youde was to perch Ah-jing in a rattan basket seat mounted on the front handle bar of the bicycle and ride around to different places. The bicycle ride was Ah-jing's 'chi-lin chi-lin' and her greatest joy. She liked most to ride to the riverbank. The river, called Putzu River, in modern times skirts the town, then meanders to the fishing port of Tong-shih where it empties into the Taiwan Straights. But in the old days the river was deep enough for ships from China to sail up to Putzu, whereby Putzu prospered into a center of commerce with south China coastal regions. After Taiwan became part of Japanese territory, the trade gradually slackened off and the riverbed rose with sand accumulation, so that ships were no longer able to enter the town and Putzu's economy quickly shriveled.

Fortunately or not, Putzu possessed one important characteristic, that is, the town's folk were unusually devoted to their children's education. As a result, its rank of high school and college students had always outnumbered other places. In a steadily deteriorating economy, the investment in education was no doubt quite a burden to many. How sad, it turned out, that many whose parents had exhausted the family savings for their schooling, were imprisoned or executed before graduation, bringing not glory and wealth but only tears to their families. Town of Sorrow, its name was Putzu.

"Chi-lin, chi-lin," Ah-jing again tugged at Youde's hand.

"It's about time that somebody else shows up." Youde glanced toward the house. If another person would show up then Yung-chuan could play with the new arrival, freeing Youde to take Ah-jing out for her ride.

Youde's home had been a gathering place for friends and their friends. People came to listen to music, to take part in lively conversations and would often borrow books to take home with them. Whenever he watched their faces immersed in music, Youde was glad that he had lugged the LP player home from America. But today, for some reason, nobody else appeared at the house other than Yung-chuan.

Yung-chuan, ignoring Ah-jing's fussing, placed the first black stone on the front star position.

Youde's mother came to the rescue. In her hand, she was holding a bowl and a spoon.

"Ah-jing, have some green bean soup," she said and gestured for Ah-jing to come to her. Ah-jing left Youde and ran toward her

grandmother. The effortless, harmonious life of this family, four people of three generations, was happiness itself. It would not have been extraordinary for it to go on forever.

But, at that very moment, the town's police department had already received from Taipei Garrison Command the order to arrest Tsai Youde and had completed the arrangement to execute the order.

### 3. Arrest

The GO game progressed smoothly. Soon they finished the stone-placement and entered the mid-game.

"Anybody home?" a voice came.

In a typical Taiwanese house, it was the custom that gates were left open during the day and since there were no doorbells, visitors customarily would call out at the door, 'Is there anybody home?', while close friends and relatives would often just walk right in.

"Anybody home?" again, the voice asked.

"Somebody is finally here," Youde said without lifting his eyes from the board. He assumed the voice belonged to a friend, a late Saturday visitor. The footsteps approached.

Suddenly, Yung-chuan shot up. His sudden motion jiggled the stones violently as his knees were touching the board. His face paled.

Youde looked back toward the house. He saw three large men approaching in a line side by side. One was a policeman in uniform

with a gun tucked in the holder. One was detective Hsu, a schoolmate a year ahead of Youde. Hsu was a well-built kid and was on the judo team. Youde had heard that Hsu entered the police training program upon discharge from the Japanese army. Between the policeman and Hsu was a third man, smaller than the other two, and wearing a Sun Yat-sen suit. From his apparel, it was apparent that he was a mainlander, a Wai-sheng-jen.

The Sun Yat-sen suit, or Chung-shan-fu, originated in China, reportedly designed and favored by Sun Yat-sen, the father of Chinese republican revolution. The suit has a buttoned-up collar and four gigantic pockets on the outside. When Taiwan was restored to Chinese rule after the war, people had at first saved up their meager income to acquire a Sun Yat-sen suit, as a show of respect for Sun Yat-sen. But as they learned about the true nature of Wai-sheng-jen, Taiwanese stopped donning the suits lest they be taken for Wai-sheng-jen. Cynics joked that the gigantic pockets were better for stuffing the "Sun Yat-sen's", the Taiwan paper bills that carried Sun's likeness.

The man in the Sun Yat-sen suit faced Youde and said,

"Are you Tsai Youde?"

"Yes," Youde nodded slightly.

"We would like you to come to headquarters with us."

"Well?"

"It's not a big deal, but we have some things to ask you about, so we decided to ask you to come with us."

His words were polite. Nevertheless, they carried a tone that foreclosed any arguing. Youde noticed also that both Hsu and Sun Yat-sen suit carried pistols on their waists.

"I understand. I will change my clothes presently."

Youde put down his GO bowl and stood up, "Yung-chuan, I guess this game will just have to wait."

Yung-chuan was stone still, not uttering a sound.

Youde thought he himself was pretty calm. He had anticipated this day in his imaginings and even dreamed it in his dreams. Even after learning the visitors' intention, Youde did not experience the terror that he had in his dreams.

Youde almost bumped into Panto at the house entrance, who was just hurrying out.

"What's going on?"

"Well, they said that they wanted to question me and would like me to go to headquarters."

Maybe to prevent an escape attempt, the policeman moved to stand by Youde and Panto while Hsu and the Sun Yat-sen suit followed closely behind. Youde went into his bedroom, put on a dress shirt, dropped a pack of cigarettes in the breast pocket and changed into a pair of slacks.

"Are you all right?" Panto inquired.

The Sun Yat-sen suit, who had followed right into the bedroom, replied for Youde, "Mrs. Tsai, it's nothing. He will probably be back by tonight."

Stepping out of the gate, Youde saw the images of his mother and Ah-jing, but had no time to speak to them. In the front, a large jeep was waiting with the engine running. Hsu jumped in first, then pulled Youde up and seated him in the back between himself and the uniformed policeman. The Sun Yat-sen suit rode in the front passenger seat and whispered something to the driver.

interrogations. He also knew of many who returned from interrogation crippled. It was common knowledge that the intelligence organizations were ordered: 'Never miss one true criminal, even if a hundred are killed mistakenly.'

But Youde had one strong suit, that is, the fact that they had let him go to America only a year ago. At the time, they had conducted a thorough investigation of his 'thoughts' before issuing his exit papers, in reality clearing him of his conduct and activities during Youde's college years - the most questionable period. 'There shouldn't be any questions about that,' Youde thought to himself.

On the highway, there were no other cars but for occasional ox-pulled carts on the road-side. Ahead lay the green ranges, standing in sharp relief against the autumnal, blue sky. The jeep continued to speed east toward Chia-yi. They passed the marker for the Tropic of Cancer and entered the city of Chia-yi. It passed through the city's busy marketplace and stopped in front of the Chia-yi police headquarters. A plaque in front read 'Security Command - Detective Battalion - Chia-yi Home Division.' To the general public, the various intelligence organizations were very confusing. They were alike yet distinct and one often found multiple signs hanging in front of a single building.

Youde, held by each wrist by Hsu and the uniformed police, got off the jeep and was quickly led through the front door. Following the Sun Yat-sen suit, they climbed a flight of stairs. Awaiting them in front of a room were two large men, also clad in Sun Yat-sen suits. Youde was handed over to these two and led into the room. The drapes were drawn despite the daylight. Instead, the room was lit by four or five naked light bulbs. To one



■ Chia-yi Police Headquarters

side of the room, there were six desks arranged in three facing pairs. To the opposite side of the desks, there was a sofa set. Youde thought it was a fairly common office - not much for atmosphere, but it did not look like a venue for interrogation either.

One of the large men sat Youde down at the middle desk by the wall while the other set a cup of tea in front of him. The desk was clear save for the cup and an ashtray. The two large men sat down and waited, their work seemingly finished. 'What's to follow?' Youde had no idea. Youde took out a cigarette and lit it. He could feel his hand trembling.

## 5. Self Renewal Policy

The door opened. There entered five or six men with a Sun Yat-sen suit in the lead. The man in the Sun Yat-sen suit was different from the previous one in that he appeared more worldly and his suit was of obviously more expensive material.

"This is Captain Tao," the man in the blue shirt said and pulled out the chair opposite Youde. Captain Tao gestured Youde to sit down as Youde stood up to greet him across the desk. The man in the blue shirt leaned on the desk and said to Youde, "Captain Tao thinks rather well of you. Do listen to him carefully. Really, you can't do better than doing as he says."

Other men all took seats around Youde. Three packs of cigarettes were put on the desks. Tao pulled out a cigarette, which was instantly lit by the blue shirt. Captain Tao drew a long one on his cigarette, then said, "So, Mr. Tsai, How was America? Did you have an interesting time?"

"Yes...," Youde hesitated, as the question was quite unexpected.

"You are a lucky man, being selected from among many to go abroad. Our country has spent a lot of money on you and can surely use your service. You have an enviable future awaiting you, Mr. Tsai. You would probably become the principle of the high school in a short time and then advance rapidly from there."

"...."

"But, something has happened that only you, yourself, can solve."

Captain Tao's eyes turned menacing.

"All right? It all depends on you. Your brilliant future can vanish in an instant. Are you understanding what I am saying to you?"

"Yes," Youde nodded.

"As you know, we investigated your past before you left for America. To be truthful, at the time, we had different opinions as to whether to let you leave."

The blue shirt weighed in, "It was Captain Tao who made the final favorable decision."

"Thank you." Youde bowed shallowly and uttered his heartfelt gratitude.

"But, during your tour abroad, we discovered a blind spot in our investigation."

"....."

"While you were enjoying the good life of America, back here, we were sitting on needles."

Nevertheless, the intelligence organization did not arrest Youde at the airport upon his return. Instead, they had put him under observation and had let him stay home for a whole month.

Captain Tao took a sip of tea and continued, "Are you aware of the Self-Renewal Policy?"

"Yes."

The 'Self-Renewal Policy' was a law announced in May of 1950, a year after the 'Laws on Rebellion' was enacted in June of 1949. Its thrust was that a person, even a Communist Party member, would be rendered not guilty if he came forward voluntarily and supplied all relevant information. It appeared to be a rather lenient law, on the surface, but because tens and even hundreds of



arrests could result from one single 'Self-Renewal,' and also because a slight untruth or a minor omission in the confession could incur the maximum penalty instead, it was also exceedingly cruel.

Captain Tao said, "Now, if you lay out all the facts, I will make an effort to apply the Self-Renewal Rule in your case. No, I can even promise you that we will."

"....."

"You wouldn't know, of course, but I have always thought well of you." Tao continued, as the blue shirt was about to interrupt. "I can't stand sending a young man of your bright future to the military court. I hope you understand my feelings."

Captain Tao leaned back and started to drink his tea, fixing a steady gaze into Youde's eyes. Youde, wanting to look away, gingerly picked up his teacup.

## 6. Choose One of the Two

Finally, Captain Tao stood up and asked, "You know Chen Ming-chih, don't you?"

"Yes, I do."

Ming-chih was a younger brother of Youde's classmate and a childhood friend. A doctor's son, lacking nothing, he was also bright, energetic and outgoing, and was always bringing new toys to school. He went to Tainan Second High School, then entered National Taiwan University. But then, he abruptly quit school, an act that confounded his friends until this day. He was a strong GO

player who had snatched a title as a freshman. Even with a two-stone advantage, Youde was rarely able to beat him.

Captain Tao said, "Ming-chih came forward and confessed, you know. Self-Renewal Rule was applied in his case and he is now leading a pleasant life. Isn't it so?"

Youde knew of Ming-chih's affair, that he had turned himself in about three years ago. That night, almost simultaneously, three college students from Putzu who had been home on vacation, were arrested. Huang Lieh-tang got the death penalty. Wu Che-fu and Tu Ping-lang were sentenced to fifteen and twelve years respectively. They were serving their sentences on Green Island at the moment. As for Ming-chih, he had remodeled his deceased father's clinic and opened a pharmacy – a pleasant life, no doubt, compared to the three others.

"You know Huang Lieh-tang, too, don't you?"

"Yes. I know him."

"He lost his life because he did not think it through. Look at the father he left behind, an old man, overnight."

The sight of the white-haired father of Lieh-tang, mindlessly lumbering around town, after losing his only son, had brought tears to all, Youde remembered.

"Well, the preliminary has kind of gotten long, but, in any case, the important point is that a person's fate can be as different as heaven and hell, all by just one thought. Right now, you are in a position to choose one or the other."

"...But ..."

"Speak truthfully. You should tell us all, without covering up anything."

"But, I don't have anything special to tell."

"Listen. We have in our possession certain information about you. I can't tell you just now what it is all about, because if we tell you first, the Self-Renewal Rule could not be applied. Believe me, we are trying very hard to minimize the matter and find you not guilty."

Mystified, Youde could not bring himself to say thanks.

"So," Tao leaned forward, "The most important thing to tell us is when, by who and at what place were you recruited into the Communist Party, and what did you do and whom had you recruited. Tell us truthfully. We will then fix the matter up properly and let you go home as soon as possible."

"I did not join the Communist Party. I did not participate in any of their activities. Therefore, I did not recruit anybody," Youde quickly replied, pouring out what had been bottled up for a while.

"Be serious!" the blue shirt barked. "We have firm evidence. You don't seem to appreciate Captain Tao's good intentions."

Youde said firmly, "I am grateful for your good will. But, it is the truth that I did not join the Communist Party."

Tao appeared disappointed and said, "Coming so suddenly, maybe you have not been able to weigh the matter carefully. Perhaps, you need some time. All right. Take some time to think it over and decide."

Captain Tao glanced at his watch and said matter-of-factly, "Let's eat."

## 7. The Mouse That Supped with the Cat

When Captain Tao rose, everybody followed. Uncertain, Youde remained seated hesitantly. For the first time, it hit him that he had lost his freedom. When he looked around, he discovered a folding table had already been set up on the other side of the room and many dishes of food were being laid on top of it. As if attending an ordinary dinner gathering, one by one, the men took their seats. Youde knew only one of them, General Hu, because he was stationed in Putzu and was much feared by the townspeople. The general's full name was Hu Han-chang and was actually just a lieutenant general in the army. But because he always wore his uniform with the gold shoulder bars, he was addressed as General. For an overseas Chinese from Indonesia, he spoke Taiwanese well. According to the General himself, he had answered Chiang Kai-shek's call to duty and had returned to China to serve in the Intelligence Bureau and had eliminated more than one high ranking official in the puppet government of Wang Ching-wei.

Youde turned to General Hu with a beseeching look on his face.

"Mr. Tsai, come here. We are to have dinner together."

Hearing General Hu's unexpectedly gentle language, Youde felt relieved and sat down next to the General. The dinner was rather sumptuous. There were eight dishes and even soup. Including Youde, there were ten people around the table. A man who was dressed in an old Japanese Navy pea coat put a bowl of rice in front of Youde. Youde thanked him timidly.

"Well, let's start." General Hu said.

Like a mouse invited to the cat's dinner party, Youde moved his chopsticks tentatively. A half-bald officer joked, "Don't stand on ceremony, now. It is like we are being treated by you."

During dinner, the men talked among themselves, ignoring Youde's presence. Youde felt that he should say something to General Hu but could not find a topic, so he merely moved his mouth. Perhaps General Hu was in the same bind, because the only common topic they had between them was about Mahjong. Mahjong playing was prohibited by law, even though many people played semi-openly. It did not seem appropriate to talk about Mahjong in this occasion. Halfway through the dinner, General Hu finally opened his mouth.

"How is your Mahjong luck lately?"

Youde had not touched Mahjong since his return from America a month ago.

"I haven't played for a long time."

Youde had played Mahjong with General Hu maybe ten times. When Hu would drop by Ming-chih's pharmacy while Youde and Ming-chih's were in the middle of their GO game, Ming-chih would quietly put away GO and switch to Mahjong. This was no problem if Hu had brought along a partner, as they were able to make a foursome. But when Hu showed up alone, Ming-chih would hop on his bicycle to round up the fourth hand, which was not always easy. Several times, Youde also had been asked to be the fourth hand at Ming-chih's. Especially hard for Ming-chih was the fact that many people despised playing Mahjong with General Hu. After drawing several bad tiles in a row, he would often swear and even curse 'fuck!' and slam down the tiles on the table, so hard

sometimes causing the tiles to fall off the table and roll around the floor like jumping squirrels. Always, it was Ming-chih's job to pick up the tiles from the floor. But, so long as General Hu was in the game, they did not have to worry about a raid by the police.

Around the dinner table, casual conversation continued. They talked about movies, about food, about the new drug penicillin, about bicycles, their children, the new kindergarten, fabric for men's suits and about shoes. Youde thought it was reasonable to talk about where to buy cheap shoes, as a pair of shoes could cost a man's monthly salary. But they were not completely oblivious to Youde either. When the conversation turned to women, about 'hostesses' and prostitutes, the talk would halt and the sentences left unfinished. At these times, Youde felt he was being watched by others.

Even though the conversation was rather frivolous, Youde was able to take in some points. Since they addressed each other as 'old' so and so (Mr. so and so), Youde was able to learn the names of the ones that he was not introduced to. He was also able to guess at the home provinces of some of them, from the accent of their speech. Old Ho, who set the rice in front of Youde, was the only Taiwanese among the bunch. The half-balding man was 'Old Su' and was from Fuchien province. The man in the blue shirt was 'Old Wang' who, like Captain Tao, was a native of Chechiang province. Captain Tao apparently had interrupted his college education to join the Youth Army. He also seemed like a rather devoted father to his children.

The dinner was over at around nine o'clock. Youde had inconveniently forgotten his watch. He knew that the dinner started

late, but had no idea what time it was, being unwilling to ask the others about it. 'They must be worried about me at home,' he thought. He saw the faces of his mother and his wife in his mind.

"Do you need to go to the toilet?" Ho, a seemingly nice person, invited Youde to go along.

The men's room was across the hall from their room. Three or four of them entered the men's room together. Ho stood behind Youde and waited. Youde pulled out his shrunken penis but was unable to urinate even though it had been hours since he last went. Youde felt bad about keeping Ho waiting, yet the more anxious he became the less able he was to urinate. The others had finished their business and gone out, but Youde's muscles were too tense to function properly.

"Don't be so tense, take your time," Ho said to Youde and stepped up to another urinal himself. Urinating, Ho said softly, "You have been treated rather well. You really don't need to worry so much." Then, Ho said something perhaps he shouldn't have said to a suspect, "To your good fortune, recently, they have changed their policy to not rough up intellectuals unless there is firm evidence."

'Might Ho be hinting they had decided not to torture me? So don't say irresponsible things! What a considerate gesture from a fellow Taiwanese!' Finally, the muscles relaxed and Youde urinated copiously. When he came out to the hallway he found the others were waiting. Youde was taken back to the room and seated once again in the same seat.

## 8. Now, Write !

There were papers on the desk.

Captain Tao again sat down at the opposite side of the desk and threw a cigarette across to Youde. But his attitude had become cold.

"Since you seem to have difficulty talking about it, we will have you write it down then. Write down everything, large and small, of all your associations and social activities, beginning from the time of the restoration of Taiwan to China in 1945 up to the time you left for America. If what you write agrees with our intelligence report, thus proving your truthfulness, we may be able to accept you as a 'Self-Renewal' case and send you home right away. You will then be able to resume your teaching job. As you can imagine, by now, your family must be quite worried. You should ease their mind, the sooner the better!"

"But, social activities, what sort of things should I write about?"

"I think you know quite well, better than we, what we meant. You were pretty active."

".....," Youde could not exactly ask, "for example?"

Captain Tao straightened up in his seat, looking hard at Youde through the corner of his eyes and said, "You have participated in a lot of things. In fact, before your return from abroad, we have reviewed your case and the more we looked into it, the more suspicious points we have turned up."

"....."

"Maybe they are mere friends or maybe they are your com-

rades, but, so far, more than thirty of them have been found guilty. Can you see how we just can't really leave you alone any longer? We did not invite you over just for dinner tonight, you know."

"....."

"But if you do not admit to what you have done and stubbornly stay mum, this matter can get a little sticky for all of us."

After flashing a brief sardonic grin, Tao looked long and sharply into Youde's eyes. Then he stood up, leaned over the desk, placing one hand on the desk to support himself, he gently patted Youde's shoulder with the other hand and said, "Do not forget. This is your last chance."

Tao turned and headed toward the exit. He appeared angry. Five or six others followed Tao out of the room. At the door, Tao whispered something to Wang who nodded his head several times. The door closed. Left in the room were Wang, of the blue shirt, and another man in a loud floral Hong-Kong shirt. The latter, addressed as Old Tien by others, did not talk much during dinner. The two locked the door from inside and pulled up chairs opposite Youde and sat down.

Wang took out a ballpoint pen from his breast pocket and placed it in front of Youde.

"Now, write! Truthfully."

## 9. What to Write

Picking up the pen, Youde had no idea how to start. Had he actually joined the Communist Party, he would have

no problem following Tao's instructions. But since he never joined the Party, that was out. In fact, Youde was not knowledgeable about Communism. He read a few books but did not find them particularly useful, nor did he find the ideology sympathetic. To him, the proletarian literature was just another genre, neither superior nor poisonous. Now, turning over Captain Tao's words, phrases such as 're-investigation,' 'blind spots,' 'friends who were found guilty,' 'reliable intelligence (Wang used 'reliable evidence)'), Youde contemplated: Why is it necessary to re-investigate? It is hard to believe that the investigation before the granting of his exit-permit was nothing but thorough. Some new circumstances must have developed during my absence.

The friends who had been found guilty were roughly of two camps: those who were from his hometown, Putzu, and those who were college friends. Most of them had already been arrested and convicted prior to Youde's trip abroad and his associations with them were part of the original investigation. Thus, Youde had been already absolved of the matter. Otherwise, Youde would never have been able to leave the country.

However, there was one exception: Chang Yu-kun, who was arrested during his absence. Youde had learned soon after his return, that there had been over twenty people arrested from Putzu and its vicinity alone, all implicated by Yu-kun. 'Something injurious to me must have turned up in Yu-kun's investigation,' Youde pondered. 'It's true that I've had a long and deep association with Yu-kun, yet there shouldn't be anything that could be construed as criminal evidence. And, Yu-kun would never invent things, would he? If I were to write about Yu-kun, five or six pages would never

do. Besides, since they did not openly say that I am here on account of Yu-kun, it would be odd to single out Yu-kun among many friends. Can't have them think that I am acting guilty.'

Youde was in even more of a quandary as to how to start.

"Come on. Start writing!" Wang urged, his up-slanting triangular eyes looking definitely unfriendly. 'No point asking him for help,' Youde thought to himself!

Youde finally decided to write it in the autobiographical style. He outlined in his head, in chronological order, the details of his introductions and subsequent associations with his convicted friends, taking care to clarify what might be deemed suspicious or what Tao might have referred to as 'blind spots.' He started with his own birth.

## 10. This Friend, That Friend

"I am Tsai Youde. I was born in 1925 and entered Putzu Public School at age eight. In my class were Yeh Chin-kuei, Huang Shih-lien and Chen Chin-tu. Chang Yu-kun was a class above me. Li Shui-ching was four years above me, and three years under me were Chen Ming-chih, Huang Lien-tang and Tu Ping-lang. After graduating from grade school, I went to Japan and enrolled in a middle school there. The Pacific war broke out when I was in my third year of middle school. Subsequently, after graduation I returned to Taiwan and became a substitute teacher in the Putzu Boy's Public School. Soon after, I was drafted into the army. Eight months after that, the war ended and Taiwan was restored from a

Japanese colony to a Chinese province. Like many others, I shed tears of joy at Taiwan's restoration to the motherland. Soon, I enrolled in the newly founded Normal University in Taipei. I was twenty-two years old.

In Taipei, I lived with my brother's family in the faculty housing of the Chien-kuo Middle School where my brother became a teacher after his return from Japan. Li Shui-ching, who also taught at the same school, moved in with us, he being from the same hometown.

In my freshman year, I started the Taiwan Drama Society and was elected its president. During the summer vacation, I returned to Putzu, where, together with Chang Yu-kun and Cheng Wen-bang, I organized the Putzu Student Friendship Association and was elected its president. During my college years, I translated and adapted several pieces of drama and staged them in Taipei, Chia-yi and Putzu.

In 1947, the February 28th Incident erupted. The number of English majors in my class in the Normal University dropped by ten. After this incident, student movements became popular and the campus was thrown into tumult. The president of the Student Self Government, Chou Shen-yuan, appointed me to head up the recreation committee. On April 6th, 1949, a general student crackdown was ordered. All student activities were banned, the Student Self Government and the Taiwan Drama Society were disbanded. My class drastically dropped to a little over twenty. Arrests continued. The last year and half of my college years, we lived in fear. At graduation, my class of fifty had less than twenty left.

After graduation, during my job orientation sessions, I joined

the Kuomintang Party. I then took up teaching at Putzu's new high school. A year later, at age 27, I got married.

In 1953, I went to America on an U.S. aid program and returned after one year of study. One month after my return, I was taken in by the Garrison Command."

Youde knew that the most problematical were the four years during college. First of all, Youde lived with Li Shui-ching for almost a year under the same roof. Li was a committed, bona-fide, pro-mainland Communist Party member and also was the chief officer of the National Alliance of Student Members. Li was the first to be arrested in the April 6th student incident and was executed in September of 1950 by a firing squad at the Ma-Chang-Ting river bank, along with ten other students and one elementary school teacher. Li's body was displayed in public as a warning to others.

The elementary school teacher whose body was also publicly displayed was Huang Shih-lien, Youde's childhood friend. When Huang's name appeared in the newspaper, people who knew him were incredulous, "A gentle person like him!" One of the ten students was also from Putzu, Cheng Wen-bang, who was a student at the College of Law and Commerce. Cheng's father was a doctor and an influential person in town. Consequently, Cheng attended the elementary school reserved for Japanese children. He was the treasurer at the Putzu Student Friendship Association. Despite being born into the town's foremost capitalist family, Cheng became a believer of Marx; and now his life disappeared like the fleeting dew of Ma-Chang-Ting.

Four of the remaining nine students were members of the

Taiwan Drama Society. Youde remembered that he was quite startled when he learned about their involvement from the newspaper. He knew he couldn't escape the suspicion of having played a role in bringing them together. Perhaps this is what Captain Tao had referred to as a 'blind spot.'

Youde could not skip over Chou Shen-yuan, the president of the Student Self Government. Chou was from Shui-shang, a neighboring town of Putzu, and was a graduate of Chia-yi middle school. Because his brother lived in Putzu, he visited often as a middle school student. Chou had a strong build and also a keen sense of justice. He and Yu-kun were fast friends. Later on, he was elected President of the Student Self Government at Normal University and became the ring leader of the student movement there. Many stories of daring-do surrounded him:

One month prior to the April 6th incident, the secret police showed up at the university dormitory. Handcuffed and sitting between two secret police, Chou was taken away in a pedicab. As they passed in front of the student dormitories of the National Taiwan University, Chou threw himself off the pedicab and yelled for help. The students there rushed to his rescue and the secret police made a hasty retreat. His next bravado took place on the eve of the April 6th crackdown. He again miraculously broke through the ring of military police and escaped. But two years later, the goddess of luck finally deserted him. Lured out into Tao-yuan by an informer, Chou was again surrounded. This time he resisted to no avail. His body riddled by bullets like a honeycomb, his fresh, crimson blood spilled across the road, his young life ended.

Youde wrote about meeting Chou, about becoming an officer in the Student Self Government, his reasons for organizing the Taiwan Drama Society, about its goings on and various activities. He also explained his relationships with the student demonstrations.

## 11. Tough Guy – Yu-kun

Having used up his own pack, Youde reached for the cigarettes on the desk.

"May I?"

"Ya."

Wang nodded. Wang had been silent ever since Youde started writing. He did not press, but whenever a page was filled, he would pick it up, scan it and set it back with a dismissive gesture. 'Is he being contemptuous? Is the writing not meeting his expectations?' Youde wondered.

Finally Youde had to turn to Yu-kun.

Yu-kun was a year ahead of Youde in school from kindergarten on, through elementary school. There was so much to write about him, as he was such a stand out. Putzu's only kindergarten was shared by Taiwanese and Japanese kids. Whenever a Taiwanese kid was picked on by the Japanese, big, strong Yu-kun was at the ready to take on the fight, sometimes taking on two or three opponents at a time. On the athletic field, he was on the relay team, often winning much applause from his schoolmates. And later on while a student at Tainan Second High School, he was said to cut quite a figure on campus being a black belt in judo. In a

word, he was nothing less than a heroic character to his friends.

Earlier during the February 28th Incident, Yu-kun, like other college students, did not participate much. Most victims of the February 28th Incident and its aftermath were either Taiwan's cultural elite or from the small town gentry class. In contrast, college students who had neither positions nor means were relatively unharmed. Nevertheless, the incident was a turning point. The fact was that the college students, in their despair, quickly turned against the Kuomintang government and looked toward the Communists in search of hope. Yu-kun probably joined the Communist Party at this time. Within a year, left-wing fever spread like a prairie fire, practically getting out of control. The students marched and shouted anti-government slogans. Needless to say, Yu-kun stood at the head of the crowd.

The government finally decided on a crackdown on intellectuals and persons with 'thought problems' and began mass arrests of university students. This is the so-called April 6th student incident of 1949, two years after the February 28th Incident. The ranks of college students were badly decimated. In Youde's English department, the number of students dropped from forty to twenty. In the mathematics department where Chou Shen-yuan was a student, only one student remained.

Of course, not all disappearances resulted from arrests. Perhaps more than half either escaped or gave up on college altogether.

Naturally, Yu-kun was a target of arrest. Sensing the impending arrest, he went home to hide. The secret police, after missing him in the school dormitory, traveled southward at once and sur-



rounded his home. Yu-kun, in dark clothing, roped himself up to the roof from the second floor window, then leapt from roof to roof and escaped, leaving the secret police pounding at the front gate. That was Yu-kun's first escape. For a year afterwards, he was sheltered by the village of Hsia-chi-tze, a remote seaside place about ten kilometers from Putzu. When the secret police eventually got wind of it and mobilized a large number of police for his capture, he had slipped out of the village just the day before. This was his second escape. He then entered the mountains and joined the other political fugitives in a camp where they led a minimally self-sufficient existence. In this manner, Yu-kun and his friends stayed leisurely for two years in the mountains, oblivious to the bloodhoundlike secret police. Then, one day, for some reason, Yu-kun came into Chia-yi dressed like a farmer, and when he was eating a bowl of noodles in the market place, he was overtaken by several large men, his schoolmate officer Hsu among them. They handcuffed him and tied his body around and around with a heavy rope and took him to the intelligence agency. The secret police must have received rewards and congratulated themselves for catching such a big fish.

This all happened while Youde was in America. Panto had informed Youde of Yu-kun's capture in her letter, just one line, very casually, "Ghandi (the nickname of Yu-kun) has been arrested."

## 12. Restoration - A Moving Experience

Setting aside their shared childhoods, Youde started his associ-

ation with Yu-kun after the Restoration. 'Restoration' – kuang-fu – refers to Taiwan's return to Chinese rule. It became customary to use 'before Restoration' and 'after Restoration' when one talked about Taiwan's history.

In August of 1945, when Japan surrendered, the dream of many Taiwanese suddenly became a reality; a dream shared by many past generations whom had struggled vainly in search of the motherland. People wept with deep gratitude. It is not too much to assert that those who do not know first hand the outpouring of feelings of the Taiwanese people at the time of Restoration, are not qualified to talk about Taiwan's history. Old and young, farmers, merchants, day laborers, civil servants, housewives and children, even the underworld figures were all drunk with the fine wine which was the Restoration! One did not forget to carry a small national flag even just out for a stroll. The underworld figures and common thieves voluntarily organized themselves into Loyalty Tong to keep order after the Japanese police had left town. It seemed that overnight the crime rate had dropped to zero.

The town's young people returned one by one from their military service: Youde from the Japanese Air Force, Yu-kun from the Japanese Army, Wen-bang, Che-fu and Ming-chih from the Student Corp. They immediately formed the Three People's Principles Youth Corp, so they might be the foundation of the new government, this time, their own. They spontaneously assisted in matters of all things. The first order of things was to learn the national anthem then teach it to the others. But since they were not able to pronounce the words in Mandarin Chinese, they had to annotate the characters with Japanese kana. The pronunciation was atro-

cious, the butt of many jokes in later years, but there couldn't have been many national anthems sung with as much tearful passion. They gathered what they could in the way of musical instruments and taught the town's folk how to sing the national anthem, in the temple courtyard, in assembly halls or in empty lots, always with a large national flag hanging in the background. Men's voices, women's voices, children's voices, old people's voices; the sound of the national anthem echoed in every corner, in every port. At this same period of time, the song 'Righteous Army March' also entered the airwaves. The townspeople sang it too because it was a song about the courageous Chinese Army, with no inkling that the song would later become the national anthem of the Chinese Communist regime, the People's Republic of China. The words of the march moved many people to tears:

Rise! Do not remain enslaved.  
Let's build a new Great Wall with our own blood!

Then, there were new songs written in Taiwan:  
Today Taiwan celebrates a great day.  
Above is the blue sky and white sun.  
Six million people share in the joy  
Food and drink to show welcome.

The tousle-haired, young men on the podium cut heroic and manly figures as they stood and waved their batons. To the people present, they symbolized the brilliant future of Taiwan.

The young people also helped with the town's clean-up, which had become unkept during the war years: weeds on the no longer

needed air shelters, long neglected potholes filled with festering water. Youde and his friends divided areas among themselves and gathered townspeople, even grade school children to tackle the clean-up. Every morning, with bamboo brooms and hoes in their hands, they persevered. In just a few weeks, the town was spruced up, nearly unrecognizable from its old self. Also, the young men and women started a class to study the Three People's Principles and to study Mandarin Chinese. They happily studied the language of their motherland along with its political ideas.

To a Taiwanese youth like Youde, the sky was truly blue with the white sun, ch'ing-t'ien-pai-jih, just like the symbol of the national flag, and the whole world was filled to the brim with beautiful hope.

They were totally unaware that a fate, more cruel than that of 'before Restoration' was waiting for them in the wings.

### **13. Ah ! Blue Sky White Sun (Ch'ing-t'ien-pai-jih)**

Youde finished writing about their activities during the exhilarating months following the Restoration. He hesitated at the mention of one certain event. Although it had no relevance to his case, it was just the example to show how the Taiwanese 'sweet potatoes' had loved their motherland at the time. Nothing bad can possibly come of it anyway, Youde thought and decided to write about it. The event was that in the midst of the joyous frenzy following the Restoration, three anti-Japanese heroes returned to Putzu from the