

be thrown in jail again at my age."

"Were you imprisoned when you were young?" Kao asked.

"Oh, sure. We were in and out of jail all the time. In my personal experience, the sentences from the Japanese government were only one, two or three months, at the most, at a time. Sure, I was severely beaten by Japanese MPs, but never had to worry about a death sentence."

Chang looked at the four faces around him, one by one, and said, "It's great to be able to talk face to face with you all. This is the first time in five months."

"What?"

"I've been in solitary confinement in the Secret Protection Bureau, so I've been living a lonely existence all by myself."

"Is that so!"

"The cell was less than six feet square with solid walls on all sides. The door had an opening like a mail drop and the guard passed me food and water through that. And even the opening had a cover. Sometimes, the guard would lift the cover of the opening and peek inside. And we sometimes were able to push up the cover from inside and exchange a word or two with people next door. That's about the extent of communication we got, let alone seeing each other's faces. Compared to that, this place is easy street."

Chang smiled.

The Secret Protection Bureau was reputed to be the most terrifying among the intelligence organizations, Youde had heard.

"What were you in for this time?" Liu asked.

"I'll tell you the whole story later."

Chang extended his hand once more and firmly seized everybody's hand one by one.

"It's been a long time since I grasped human hands this way."

And he smiled again as he spoke.

91. Implicated by a Big Fish

After dinner Chang talked about the reason for his arrest.

The person who brought the disaster upon him was none other than Hou Kan, the man who showed up at Chang's magazine stand right after the February 28th Incident. Hou had since fled successfully to Hong Kong then, subsequently, into mainland China. It was soon after the establishment of the People's Republic and its people were full of hope and the nation full of energy. Despite the fact that Hou hadn't been politically active since the end of the war, he received a hero's welcome based on his past achievements as a Communist in Taiwan. For the next several years, he worked on China's Taiwan policy under various august titles. An old Taiwanese Communist was thus turned into a new Chinese Communist, you might say. Then, last December, he brazenly snuck back into Taiwan with a new mission – he was appointed the supreme director of Taiwanese Communists.

"But," Chang continued, "he was captured within the first twenty-four hours after landing."

"I wonder why he was caught so easily." Liu was miffed.

Youde thought it strange too, so he said, "The Secret Protection Bureau didn't have to arrest him in such a hurry. After all, he was

as good as a bagged turtle. They could arrest him any time they chose. I wonder why they didn't let him roam free so they could observe him and choose a good time to bag his associates too. Even with a small fry like myself, they observed me for one month after I returned home. Could it be that the agency was eager to get the credit for bagging a big fish?"

"I got it!" Wu said loudly. "Nothing to it. I think Hou Kan himself was betrayed by the Chinese Communists. After all, they are Chinese too - what's to betraying a comrade? Hou must have done something to tick off the Chinese authorities but they couldn't very well arrest and execute a so recently celebrated hero. So they appointed him the High Honor of the Supreme Director of the Taiwanese Communist Party and sent him to his death, taking care to leak the intelligence in advance to this side. This is what's called 'to kill by borrowed knife,' an ancient tactic in China. That is why Hou found upon landing not Communist connections but KMT special agents waiting for him." Wu laid out his theory with full confidence.

"In any case," Chang continued, "Hou told them about me after his arrest. He told them that he showed up at my magazine stand and that I had given him money. As this all happened six or seven years ago, I don't remember how much money I gave him. But it couldn't be more than a day's take and that wasn't much. Hou told them that he applied the money I gave him to finance his escape."

"What a coward. For a so called 'Big Fish' to mention something like that," Wu lamented.

"I was taken to the Secret Protection Bureau right away for

questioning. I admitted frankly that I gave him money. Also, I couldn't very well deny that I knew his identity and his past. So the charge of Article 4 against me was quickly established."

"But," Liu cocked his head as he asked, "the Hou Kan you knew was Hou of the Japanese Communist Party. I would think his Communist identity was no longer in effect after the Restoration, and since he was not yet a Chinese Communist when he came to see you, I should think the Law on Sedition is not applicable."

"I argued the very same point also, of course. But it didn't do any good."

"Was Hou Kan sent over here with you?" Liu asked.

"No. One other person came here with me. Hou Kan stayed behind in the Secret Protection Bureau."

"What this Old Taiwanese Communist brain of mine can't figure out is that Hou was constantly drinking and having call girls with the special agents."

"Is that so!" Everyone was impressed.

To be able to have call girls and to be able to drink in the prison! Nothing can beat that.

Liu asked again, "Was the other man who came here with you also connected to Hou Kan?"

"Of course. He was in the cell next to mine, so for two months we exchanged simple words several times a day. But I only saw his face for the first time today - tall and cultivated looking. I really feel for this man. All he did was help Hou Kan."

Chang paused briefly as if taking the man's plight into his heart, then continued, "After the February 28th Incident, the man

initially went into hiding and later fled to Hong Kong where he waited until the dust had almost completely settled before returning to Taiwan and turning himself in. He said he was freed under the Self-Renewal Policy and was able to live two peaceful years. If Hou Kan had not returned, he would still be continuing his peaceful existence. But after Hou's arrest, just like me, he was called into the Secret Protection Bureau and was accused of aiding Hou Kan's escape to Hong Kong. You see, in his Self-Renewal confession, he had confessed all about his activities related to the February 28th Incident, except for his dealings with Hou Kan. Hou was by then safely in Hong Kong and was not expected to dance back on the stage and blab about him. You could say the man was bitten by his own dog. For this omission, his pardon under the Self-Renewal Policy was withdrawn and he was charged with Article 4. Seeing that the authority has Hou Kan's testimony, I think the man's life probably can't be saved."

As Youde listened to Chang's story about the man, he had a sudden hunch.

"What's the man's name?"

To an anxious Youde, Chang answered, "His name is Wang Tien."

"Eh? Is he from Putzu?"

"Yes. His is a man from Putzu. Are you too?"

"Ah ..." Youde cried in a loud voice even before Chang was finished. It was such an unusually loud uttering for Youde that everybody turned their eyes on him.

Youde said broken-hearted, "Wang Tien is my cousin."

92. Cousin Tien

The first thing that came to Youde's mind after learning of cousin Wang Tien's arrest was his mother, Youde's auntie San-yi.

Auntie San-yi was a younger sister of Youde's mother by five years. But because cousin Tien was the oldest of his siblings and Youde the youngest among his, Tien was ten years older than Youde. Auntie San-yi was of tiny build with a sickly constitution. As a matter of fact, Youde often thought of Auntie San-yi and the medicine cabinet in the same breath.

Cousin Tien was born a multi-talented man. He was adept at musical instruments of all kinds and in GO too reached the level of Shodan. It was still during the Japanese era, when he was recognized for his ability and was appointed an officer in the town's credit union. Consequently, when the February 28th Incident erupted, he was promptly elected to the town's Aftermath Management Committee. Fortunate as he might have been to escape the subsequent wholesale massacre of the committee members by the KMT government, he became a fugitive after that. "The hardships of a life on the lam are beyond words," Cousin Tien had once told Youde. At long last, he escaped to Hong Kong; a fortunate turn of events one would think. Except, cousin Tien took along Hou Kan in the same small boat. They had become acquainted during hiding. Cousin Tien couldn't have known even in his dreams that the helping hand he extended was to cost him his life.

After living in Hong Kong for five years as a fugitive, Cousin Tien learned about the Self-Renewal Policy and returned to Taiwan to turn himself in. That was a year prior to Youde's sojourn in

America. It was plain that cousin Tien had put the consideration of his mother's health above his own safety.

He confessed to every involvement he had with regard to the February 28th Incident. Given that five years had passed since the Incident, and also because the authority had begun to reflect on its own initial wanton killings, cousin Tien was set free without much difficulty. But, cousin Tien did not broach the subject of Hou Kan because Hou was then already safely ensconced as a revolutionary hero in the Chinese mainland.

How Youde remembered auntie San-yi's extraordinary joy when cousin Tien was home as a free man. She rose from her sick bed and visited one and every Buddhist temple, even Christian churches, to offer her thanks to gods of all ilks. She kept that up everyday without a break. During the two years she spent with cousin Tien, she was joyous and happy, oblivious to her ailments.

But, fewer than two months after Youde's arrest, cousin Tien was also arrested, thanks to Hou Kan's confession. In the final analysis, cousin Tien was taken in by the Self-Renewal Policy when he should have remained in Hong Kong. The special agents barged into his house, handcuffed him and took him away in front of a surprised auntie San-yi. Youde could picture San-yi crumbling to the floor, begging the special agents for mercy.

Youde's thought went to his San-Yi: By now San-yi is probably again clinging to her sick bed praying daily for her son's release instead of her own health. Sadly, the gods are about to abandon her. Cousin Tien's death sentence and his subsequent execution were a fact accompli. Auntie San-yi had endured the pain of her son's arrest, but how was she going to survive her son's execution?

Chang said, "Wang Tien is resigned to his death. He said he can go in peace because he did not implicate a single person."

There must have been many helping hands extended to him during his five years of hiding. Among them, especially the person who provided the boat for Tien's escape, some could face a death sentence. That cousin Tien did not bring trouble to anyone was indeed to be commended.

"Wang Tien also said that, if possible, he would rather his mother die peacefully than to hear about his execution," Chang added.

93. A Common-Law Wife

The first letter arrived for Chang. It was from his common-law wife. She was his only kin, as they had no children.

The first page of her letter was passed around. It mainly said that her livelihood was not a problem so he should not worry. The writing was fluent and refined.

"Great penmanship and wonderful writing too," Youde praised her letter.

Chang smiled and said, "My wife has more schooling than me. I only had a sixth grade education, but she is a high school graduate from Taipei's No.3 Girls High School."

High schools for girls of that age were the preserve of only highly intelligent girls from wealthy families.

"How come she married you?" Wu was blunt, to say the least.

"We never officially married. I can't say that I blame them, but

my wife's family was violently opposed. I was then but a hapless worker in the refinery and an underground Communist to boot. Besides, not only was I hated by the local police, I actually had been to prison. Her mother supposedly fainted when she learned of her daughter's intention to marry me. You see how there's no way we could have had a wedding and all that. Actually, because the police were constantly watching and harassing us, we Old Taiwanese Communists all pretty much stayed away from marrying openly."

"You must have been handsome or something," Wu was not one to beat around the bush.

"No, no. Not for my good looks, rather, I think she fell for my devotion to social activism. I will tell you the whole story sometime."

"No way, Senpai. Such a good story, you've got to tell us now!" Wu was insistent.

Chang started to tell his story, rather relishing the opportunity.

"Our story began over twenty years ago at a Bonsai and Ikebana exhibition at the Lung-shan Temple at a time when the newspaper headlines were screaming about Japan entering the Extraordinary Period. I was about to leave after viewing only the Bonsai displays because I held the opinion then that Ikebana was but masturbation for women of the bourgeois class. But, for some reason, I changed my mind and went over to the Ikebana section. As I glanced through the exhibition absent-mindedly, I noticed a flower arrangement entitled 'Double Oppression.' 'Double oppression,' being a term we used among the Taiwan Communist circles, naturally, it was with great interest that I went to the office to find

out about the entry. And there in the office, I ran into her, the artist. It turned out her 'Double Oppression' was somewhat different from ours. The first one referred to the same oppression of colonial Taiwan by Imperial Japan. However, her other oppression meant the oppression of women by men, she being also a feminist. As we talked we found that we were of the same mind and I fell for her like a ton of bricks. Hum, I better stop here because what followed was plain mush. We designated the day we met as our wedding anniversary. She enriched my life and made my life worth living."

Kao asked tentatively, "The flower arrangement, 'Double Oppression,' what was it like?"

"Well, I don't understand it very well either, but I remember a pathetic pink flower covered by some bamboo leaves, which in turn were sat upon by even larger leaves."

Chang was not very good at describing the art object.

For a person with only a grade school education, Chang seemed to be well read. The Old Taiwanese Communists were known for reading many difficult books. Perhaps that explained why Chang chose to be a book vendor for his livelihood.

"Hey!" Wu suddenly yelled after starting on the second page of the letter, which he snatched from Chang's hand.

Liu and Kao encircled Wu from either side and peeked at the letter.

"What a tear-jerker love story this is," Wu said with obvious lament and handed the letter to Youde.

The gist was that, belated as it was, she would like to make their marriage legal.

Chang muttered, "And at a time like this."

"No," Wu approached Chang who was ignorant of Wu's divorce and embraced him by the shoulders. "Senpai, I am envious of you. Your situation is exactly the opposite of mine."

94. Two Documents

On May 10, a man with the title of Secretarial Officer appeared outside Cell No.7 and handed Youde two documents. He made Youde press his thumb print on the receipt and left immediately.

The first document was a petition, namely the prosecutor's indictment to send Youde to re-education. The second document was the judicial decision in response to the petition.

Youde had thought all along that he would be required to appear in court to receive the decision. The fact that his case was being disposed of with such casualness made him feel somewhat deflated.

He read the petition first:

Security Protection Headquarters Petition (44) - #1478

Accused: Tsai Youde, Male, Age 31. Occupation: Teacher (In detention)

Having investigated the accused in relation to a case of sedition, we conclude that the accused needs to be sent to re-education for the following reasons:

The accused Tsai Youde had frequently associated in the past with rebels Li Shui-ching and Chang Yu-kun, had organized the Student Friendship Association and the Blue Cloud Drama Club in

his hometown of Putzu, in which rebel Cheng Wen-bang and others participated. The accused admitted during investigation of having read the Japanese edition of "Materialism," "The Treatise on Art," "The Fundamental Questions in Philosophy" and other reactionary literature such as Lu Hsun's novels. The above were found to be facts based on the investigation conducted by the Chia-yi Police Bureau. According to the accused himself, he had never joined any rebel organizations and the plays he produced had not been pro-rebel nor had they benefited the rebel's propaganda. The accused further stated that he was unaware of the Communist identities of Li Shui-ching, Chang Yu-kun, Cheng Wen-bang and others. Nevertheless, the fact that the accused closely associated with rebels and had read reactionary literature indicated that the accused, more than likely, harbored pro-rebel sympathies. Thereby, we petition the court to decide in accordance with Item 1.2 of Article 8 of the Statutes for the Denunciation and Punishment of Bandit Spies During Emergency Period.

Addressed to: Department No.2 of Military Court

Dated: April 11, 1955

Signed by: Fan Chueh-fei, Military Court Prosecutor

Verified by: Sung Ya-ting, Secretarial Officer

The prefix (44) in the document number indicated the year was the 44th of the Republic of China, while #1478 meant there had been 1477 people sent to re-education for brainwashing. After reading the petition, Youde's cellmates were unanimous about it being an unbelievably generous indictment.

Next, Youde read the second document, the judicial decision:

Security Protection Headquarters Decision (44)-#54

Accused: Tsai Youde, Male, Age 31. Occupation: Teacher (In Retention)

Re: the prosecutor's petition to send the accused to re-education, in accordance with the Statutes for the Denunciation and Punishment of Bandit Spies, the decision is as follows:

The court decided that Tsai Youde be sent to re-education for a duration to be determined by a separate order.

Reasons:

The accused, Tsai Youde, closely associated with convicted rebels Li Shui-ching, Chang Yu-kun and others around 1949 and had read the Japanese edition of 'Materialism,' 'The Fundamental Questions of Philosophy,' the Kuang-ming Daily and Lu Hsun's novels. The prosecutor, having judged the accused to harbor pro-Communist thoughts, had petitioned the court to send the accused to re-education. Having reviewed the case and found no deviation, the court thereby grants the petition.

Dated: April 23, 1955

Signed by: Fan Ming, Judge, Military Court

Verified by: Wu Chun-sheng, Secretarial Officer

The document #54 meant Youde was the 54th person to be sent to re-education this year.

After finishing reading both documents, the first thing to strike Youde was that 'Mao-Wen-Chi,' which the investigators so tenaciously pursued, was nowhere to be found. Of course, the disappearance of 'Mao-Wen-Chi' was more than Youde dared to wish for.

"Yu-kun must have recanted his own testimony about 'Mao-Wen-Chi' during the final witness interrogation," Wu spoke what everybody was thinking.

"Well," Liu said, "It's not so easy to recant what one once said. Take our case, no matter how much we tried to retract our own statements, they would not take us up on it. It has gone well for you, Mr. Tsai. That was great."

"Congratulations!" Kao said.

"But," Chang spoke in a measured way, "even under the colonial rule of Imperial Japan, the fact that one has a few Communist friends or having read those books was never reason enough to be convicted of a crime. They didn't have anything called re-education either. You may have been forced to retire from a government job and that's the extent of it."

"Ha, ha, ha," Wu started to laugh, "This goes to show you that this country of ours is advanced in the anti-Communist stance."

In any case, the decision had come down and Youde had the sense the matter had come to a close. If one stopped to think about it, it had been a long ordeal. Yet, Youde's couldn't begin to compare with the hardship and misfortunes of other prison friends, for what he got was the lightest of the sentences.

Youde put away the documents and started to write a letter to his wife.

95. The Decision on Ex-policeman Wu

Youde expected to be sent to the re-education center at Pan-chiao right away, but the order didn't arrive. One day after another he waited. Eventually, twenty days passed and it was June.

As he had already said his goodbyes to his cellmates and neighbors, Youde felt somewhat awkward about staying put. But his cellmates seemed more than happy about not losing a companion.

The deliberate pace of business, even when it concerned a person's freedom, could only be characterized as mainland-style, Youde fumed.

Sung, the communicator in the next cell had an explanation.

"The new re-education center in Pan-chiao was filled up the day it was opened. They are going to make you wait here until a slot opens up in Pan-chiao."

Sung added, "But, it is better to be here. Here, we can talk to each other without fear and suspicion. I heard that Pan-chiao has a great facility but it also houses all kinds of people. They said you have to lie or play dumb and be suspicious of everybody. Some say days there are like sitting on needles."

"There are some good things over there though," Wu chimed in. "They have guest houses where I heard you can have conjugal visit. Hey, you are going to enjoy being with your wife again. I am green with envy."

Halfway through June, good tidings arrived from Youde's wife: she had given birth to a boy. She added that the mother and baby are both doing fine. This was the best news yet since his

imprisonment. The news soon traveled from cell to cell and was known throughout the prison. Everybody was happy for him, almost extraordinarily so. While it had been only eight months since Youde lost his freedom, most people here had been separated from their families for over a year and nobody had yet heard about a birth. In Taiwan, the birth of a baby boy was believed to bring good luck.

"I would love to share some of the good luck," Wu said with an uncustomarily serious face.

Then, the very next day, suddenly Wu was called out for the first time in five months.

"Court appearance," Panchang Teng came to fetch Wu. Panchang's face was sober.

But after Wu left, the intelligence bulletin arrived that six Petacos were seen in the guards' office. The cell was instantly dead silent. Is Wu, the ex-policeman, to become a man of no return after all? Tears glistened in Liu and Kao's eyes.

Believing there were no Petacos, Wu had left rather happily. He must have been greatly startled and disappointed when he spotted the Petacos in the guards' office. Did the Petacos cease to show themselves after Lin's resistance?

Liu recounted to Chang about Wu's case of 'Failure to Report.' Silently, Chang shook his head from side to side.

"I thought he would get fifteen years if lucky and life at the worst. But death! I guess he was given the additional penalty because he was a policeman," Kao said with vehemence.

"Oh," Liu stood up abruptly and took down a package from the shelf, then extracted an envelope containing Wu's parting

notes.

Liu's hand hesitated as he was about to open the envelope and he asked, "What shall we do?"

"Why don't we wait a little longer," Kao suggested.

"All right." Liu replaced the envelope in the package.

Liu said, "The day he put his thumb print on the divorce papers, he ripped up his parting notes to his wife. So the envelope should contain only his letter to his son."

Time passed oppressively. Here and there singing of "Horse Drawn Wagon" sounded like funeral music. Youde and his cellmates, only four remaining, started to circle the room while singing "Wishing Your Early Return," a Taiwanese song Wu loved.

Everyday, I think of only you
 Yet we have no way to meet
 Like swans we followed each other
 Never expected ever to separate...

In short order, the song was picked up by others and reverberated throughout the prison walls.

Between verses, Liu said in a voice thick with tears, "I don't have to open his notes to know what it says. I had the opportunity to glance it over."

"Is that so?" Youde awaited Liu's next words, more with sympathy than with curiosity.

"I was impressed most with one sentence in it."

"What was that?"

"Wu told his son: When you grow up, you must be good and

do your best for your mother because this is your father's most fervent wish."

Liu's eyes glistened with tears again.

"Wow!" Everybody was moved.

The true person of Wu, who had constantly badmouthed his wife, was now unmasked.

Then in the middle of a fitful nap after a late lunch, a commotion started by the prison entrance. The clamor mixed with shouts and sounds of hands clapping quickly surged like an angry wave and reached Cell No.7.

To the startled eyes of Youde and his cellmates, here was Wu grasping the hands and greeting the inmates in other cells. Wu had come back safe and sound.

Panchang opened the lock and Wu stooped to pass through the door. Three cellmates pulled him up to the wooden floor.

"I am so glad." For the first time, Youde hugged Wu with all his strength.

"Four were called out, but I alone was refused entry by Yen-lo, the gatekeeper of Hell," Wu said and showed his court decision document to all.

It had: "...accordingly, sentenced to life."

Two lines were drawn across the word 'life' and 'fifteen years' was written alongside instead.

When the commotion finally died down, Wu slapped Youde by the shoulder and said, "Hey, it could really be due to the good luck from the birth of your son. Ha, ha, ha."

"No, no," Youde waved his hand and stopped Wu's words, saying with conviction, "It is because your son's prayer has reached

heaven."

Instantly, Wu's smiling face froze like a stopped picture frame and his eyes flooded with tears.

96. Loo Spoke of Mosula

A few days later, Wu was sent to the Military Prison and Cell No.7 was left with four.

Despite the loneliness, there was an advantage to having fewer people - mixing with inmates from other cells during the bathing and walking period.

Among the new bathing companions was the clownish Flim Flam Loo. While Youde was glad to see a hometown fellow at such a place, Loo, too, repeatedly said how glad he was to be together with Youde. Learning Loo had yet to receive a care package, Youde gave him a towel and a bar of soap for which Loo thanked Youde every time they met.

Loo had many special skills, ventriloquism being one of them. So during bathing, Loo would station himself next to Youde and tell Youde all sorts of things right in front of guard's eyes. It was ironic that Youde never spoke with Loo while they both lived in Putzu, but they talked like old friends now.

Loo spoke of his own case, the cases of his cellmates in Cell No.12, about people implicated by Yu-kun; his topics were abundant. Loo pointed out to Youde two inmates among the bathers who were also implicated by Yu-kun.

It turned out that both men were named Li and they were vil-

lagers of Hsia-chi-tzu where Yu-kun hid during his first escape. One knew at a glance that they were honest looking peasants. As time passed, they both started to exchange words with Youde whenever possible. Youde found out that they were both charged with Article 4 for hiding Yu-kun and had been incarcerated for a year and five months.

"Can't do good deeds," they spoke sardonically and with regret. Simple words. Yet they made Youde shudder for they embodied a serious prophesy about Taiwanese society: Almost all who were charged with Article 4 helped somebody out of kindness and now must face the life and/or the death penalty for their actions. No wonder we see a drastic reduction in the number of people willing to help others. The civility of society deteriorates no end, Youde thought with lament.

One day, Loo brought up Mosula.

"Mosula missed you coming in and was sent away right before you came back. You and Mosula just passed each other by."

Mosula was the nickname of Youde's grade school classmate Yeh Chin-kuei. During Chia-yi's interrogation, Youde was questioned tenaciously about his relationship with Mosula. A superb student, he passed the notoriously difficult entrance examination to the Tainan Normal School on his first try. He was recruited into the Communist Party by Li Shui-ching while teaching at a grade school. Arrested soon after Li's capture, he had already been sentenced to a twelve year term and was serving in the military prison on Green Island.

Mosula had a stubborn streak about him that earned him a reputation for being an intransigent underling. In the prison he

must have been viewed as incorrigible as well because he was said to have sustained injuries all over his body from repeated punishments. And by surviving the ordeal, he earned himself the nicknames of 'death defying Yeh' and 'The Amazing Beast Mosula.' This time, he was sent back from the island not to be tried for sedition, but for staging some kind of disobedience.

Mosula arrived at the Military Court prison when Youde was routed over to the Investigation Bureau. By the time Youde returned, Mosula had been taken somewhere else.

Youde asked Loo, "Where was Mosula taken?"

"I don't know."

"Do you think he was sent back to the island?"

"Back to the island? If so, he is sure to die there this time."

"How was he physically?"

"He sustained injuries inside and out. Not a single organ was unharmed."

"....."

"He was strung up and beaten. They tied his hands to his back, then strung him up by a rope over a building beam, then took turns beating him with clubs."

"....."

"I heard that more than the pain from the clubbing, what happens to one's shoulders is the most excruciating. When a man is strung up all night, his arms that are tied to the back gradually get stretched out by his own body weight and eventually they were above his head pointing backward, like a person shouting Banzai. They said Mosula was unconscious when they cut him down the next morning."

"How cruel."

"Cruel guys, these Pigs."

"Any idea why he was treated so harshly?"

"It seemed that he rebelled against the counselor."

Youde recalled a young Chin-kuei, ever unyielding despite his small and delicate physique. But for him to resist to such a degree there must have been something that really sat wrong with him.

"Did he suffer after-effects from the beating? Is there something still wrong with him?" Youde asked.

"His shoulders did not mend completely and his head still hurts from time to time. But he moves in good stride during the walking period."

"Well, he is 'Mosula the Amazing Beast' after all."

The next day, prodded by Youde for more about Mosula, Loo told about the lockers on the Green Island.

"Mosula was once put in the locker for a week, which was but a concrete underground bunker. He was confined for a week inside with his own bodily waste. The ground inside was flooded with water so he couldn't lie down and the only source of light came from the gun windows. His meals were passed to him through the gun windows too; meals consisting of brown rice and salt in little matchboxes. But do you know what was most intolerable? Guess."

Youde shook his head.

"It was the mosquitoes. There were a million mosquitoes in there. They fed on Mosula non-stop for a week! Anybody else would have died."

How could such inhumane treatment still exist today! Youde

was indignant.

"When he was carried out from the bunker after the week was over, his body was rotting and he was just a breath away from death."

The thought of the hellish sufferings of his childhood friend filled Youde with anger. Many wakeful nights followed.

97. Leaving the Military Court Prison

It was now July. Still no word about a move to Pan-chiao for Youde. For the next three months, the same condition persisted as if the whole matter had been forgotten.

Liu suggested, "Why don't you write a report?"

But Sung the neighbor was of the opinion that there was no reason to hurry it up.

Sung said, "There is no clear, pre-set curriculum in re-education. The term is usually three years but the rules don't require that it be served in a re-education center. Unlike schools, it doesn't give a graduation exam either. I know some people who spent two of the three years here as prison servants.

The counselor gives you points solely by his subjective judgment anyway, and you are done when you accumulate enough points.

I heard that the scoring goes like this: One point for completing the day's lesson, two points for notable good behavior, etc. Show gratitude to Baldie (Chiang Kai-shek) and pile on tearful praises of his contributions and you get three points for sure. You

are supposed to accumulate three thousand points in three years. But, points can also be taken away. So, Mr. Tsai, you must be extremely careful about what you say when you go over there. Just utter the word, 'Baldie,' and if somebody informs on you, it's going to cost you one hundred points!"

Liu interjected, "And I guess the informer gets additional points, right?"

"Exactly. That's why I say it's rather safer to be here than being over there and having points subtracted for doing something stupid. Well, don't worry about it too much and enjoy your life here."

Following Sung's advice, Youde lived day by day pleasantly, paying little attention to the matter. Then, just past the middle of July, he received a notice informing him of the transfer to the re-education center the next day.

Youde again bid farewell to his friends.

Sung offered his final advice, "Bribe the counselors. You will get out sooner."

To ask the family already deprived of its breadwinner to send money for bribery was absolutely reprehensible. Youde knew Sung was only half kidding, nevertheless, and said flatly, "Never. My pride would not allow it."

Sung laughed out loud and added another piece of advice.

"One more. And this is not a joke. Don't open your heart to anybody. You know the saying, 'Silence is Golden?' Well, that's the truth in the re-education center. You must swallow and keep mum even if you are itching to say something."

Sung's expression was dead serious, not a trace of kidding

around.

The next morning at bathing, Youde told Loo of his impending departure. Loo was sentimental. He said, "I would be so happy if I could see you again on the outside. As you know, I don't have a permanent address, but I know where your house is. May I visit you?"

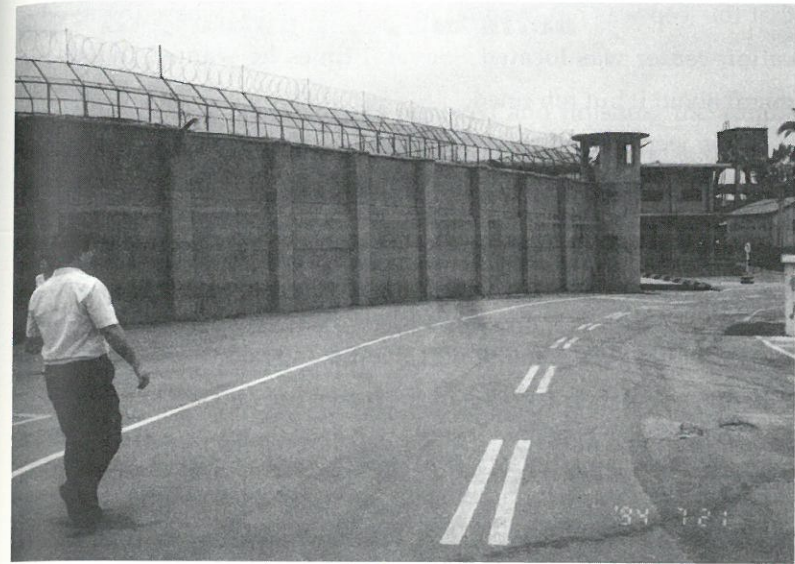
"Of course. I'll be very happy too."

Loo said, disheartened, "But, that will be at least eight years from now."

Youde presented Loo with an undershirt – Loo's hole-dotted undershirt had pained Youde for sometime – which Loo received with such exaggerated thanks that he attracted the guard's attention. The guard came over with his gun pointing and examined the undershirt. Fortunately, the present was passed to Loo without incident.

Around ten o'clock, Panchang arrived. Hugging Liu, Kao and Chang, Youde said goodbyes for yet another time then stepped out of the cell. No handcuffs. Youde, carrying his bundle under his arm, waved goodbye with his free hand. Panchang followed from behind. Prison friends from other cells waved goodbyes. They walked past the open yard and entered the guard's station by the gate. Once again, he passed through the iron gate to enter the prison office – by now a familiar route. After paperwork, Youde was made to wait standing. A short time later, a man with a full beard was brought in from the West Area. The man's name was Yang, Youde learned when the clerk addressed him.

Finally, two guards in different kinds of uniforms arrived to receive Youde and Yang. They took out the handcuffs and linked



■ The exterior of Anka Military Prison

the two prisoners together. Yang whispered, "Are you going to the Re-ed? Me too." Youde nodded.

The guards took the two out and seated them in the front seats of a waiting jeep. They themselves guarded from the backseats. One of the guards said, "Listen. We are taking you to a nice place from where you'll soon go home. So don't try anything funny, O.K.?"

Out of the gate of the Military Court Building, the jeep entered Ching-tao East Road. The outside world that greeted Youde anew had turned into mid-summer. But this time, Youde's heart was light. Yang must have been of the same frame of mind because, spontaneously, their eyes met and they exchanged smiles. The jeep headed east then south. After a short while, Youde became aware

that the jeep was not heading toward Pan-chiao where the re-education center was located. Several times he wanted to ask the guard about it but refrained.

The jeep passed the front of the National Taiwan University and kept on going toward the south-east. At last, the direction became clear to Youde. We are heading toward An-kang of Hsin-tien – the An-kang of the Military Prison, the An-kang with the execution yard.-- and this is the identical road traveled by the executed Lin the Bull, Chou Shui, Little Lu and countless others. The difference was their trucks had the heavy canvas flap to keep them from seeing the outside.

Youde decided to ask the guard.

"Aren't we going to the re-education center?"

No answer. Youde repeated his question. One guard answered impatiently, "Yes, we are. Shut up."

The jeep passed through the crowded main street of Hsin-tien, crossed the suspended bridge and entered a mountain path.

At last, the notorious An-kang Military Prison came into view, enclosed by a fear-inspiring high concrete wall, snaking as far as the eye could see. The jeep came to a halt in front of the stately gate. A guard with gun came out to check the papers and gave Youde and Yang a once-over.

The jeep entered the gate, and this time, stopped in front of a brand new building. Youde and Yang, linked by handcuffs, were again made to wait like a couple pieces of luggage.

98. Beginning Re-education

After having the handcuffs removed and finishing the admitting procedures in the front office, Youde and Yang were taken by a guard in a khaki-colored uniform to a room identified by two separate plaques: "Consultation Room" and "Counselor's Room." It turned out that the room was partitioned by a plywood wall; the room on the right was the Consultation Room and the one on the left was the Counselor's Room.

Youde and Yang were taken into the Consultation Room, which had a set of rattan furniture in the center and a small table by the wall with a tea set on it. The large wall clock, an object of nostalgia, was pointing to twelve. The room was filled with sunlight, bright and airy. Youde couldn't help but remember with pity the last prison cell he occupied where a light bulb strived to illuminate the mid-day.

A man in an olive-green tee shirt came out of the Counselor's Room whereupon the guard shouted "Salute !" which prompted Youde and Yang to hurriedly follow suit. The counselor ordered them to sit down and leisurely opened and browsed the file, all the time inquiring about their personal data. Youde thought the counselor cracked a small smile at one point as he was going through Youde's file. Youde was relieved to find the counselor not a devil incarnate as they were reputed to be.

As if to answer Youde's unspoken question, the counselor said, "This is the temporary branch of the Pan-chiao Re-education Center. I am responsible for everything here. This place is not as well equipped as Pan-chiao and that causes various inconven-

niences. On the other hand, we have a bit more freedom here. I'm not fond of nit-picking."

The counselor grinned.

"But, you must do your daily lessons and not be sloppy about it either. In the morning, you write a study report and in the afternoon you will express your opinions in study sessions to learn from one another. Remember not to get into fights no matter what. Write it up in a report to me if you find something intolerable."

The counselor ordered the guard, "Call Comrade Cheng in here."

In a moment, a half-bald, middle-aged man who answered to Comrade Cheng, came in. He was wearing a navy blue uniform.

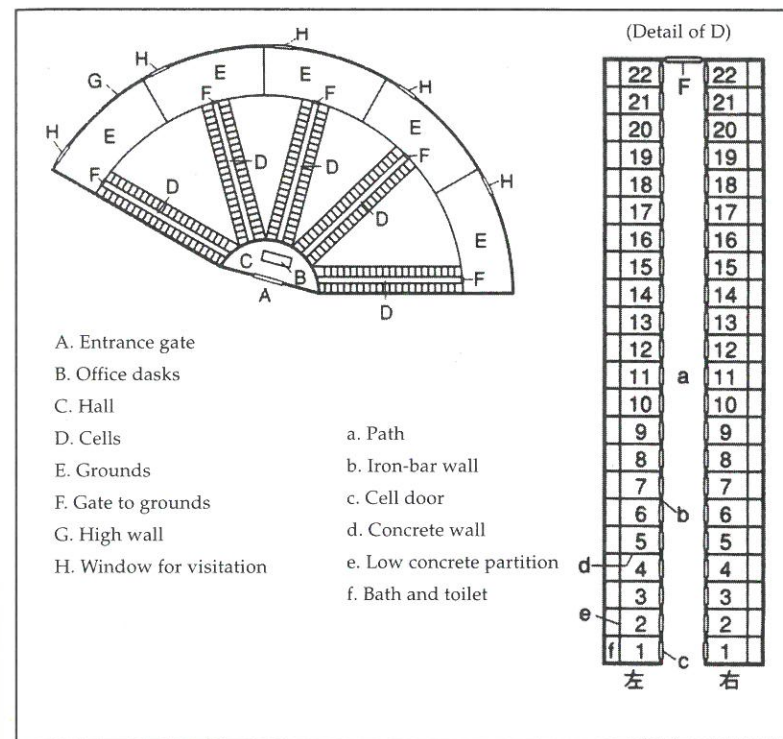
The counselor introduced Cheng, "This is Comrade Cheng. He will look after you. Listen and follow his words as my orders."

Youde and Yang bowed slightly to Cheng and said, "Thank you in advance for looking after me."

After following the counselor to the next room, Cheng soon returned with some books and handed four books each to Youde and Yang. They were Sun Yat-sen's "Three People's Principles," "Writings of Sun Yat-sen," Chiang Kai-shek's "The Fundamentals of Overturning Communism and Opposing Russia," and "The Biography of President Chiang" by Tung Hsien-kuang.

As he led them out of the room, Cheng lowered his voice and said, "I am also in re-education. I was once appointed a section leader but my Mandarin Chinese is too poor to do the job. Now I work as prison servant. I am allowed to smoke on the job."

Soon they reached the sentried iron gate which opened to a half-round, rather spacious hall. In the center of the space, sat a



■ Diagram of Ankang Military Prison

cluster of about ten desks and a few guard-like men in khaki-colored uniforms who were taking their lunches. Here and there men who looked like prison servants – in navy-blue uniforms like Comrade Cheng – were sitting around smoking and chatting. They barely glanced over to the two newcomers before resuming their chats. Various items - a score of large kettles, mops, hemp sacks, paper cartons - lay around haphazardly, giving the place a market-like appearance.

From the hall, five arcade-like buildings fanned out and

extended in different directions. Voices from these buildings, voices from caged human beings, could be heard in the hall. Each building had a rather wide corridor in the middle and was lined on each side by a row of wood-floored, cage-like rooms, fronted by iron bars. Each row extended for about one hundred meters, affording the building a capacity of one thousand.

A different guard with the keys joined the party. The party of four walked into the middle building and stopped at the nearby Room No.2-R, for No.2, right side. Youde noticed the door to Room No.1 was left open. Perhaps it's the servants' room, he thought.

They stepped into Room No.2-R to find about ten people in the room. Some taking lunch and some having finished eating were picking their teeth, all in underpants, some wearing sleeveless tee shirts for tops. Others were bare-chested.

All gave the two newcomers a once over but none came to greet them. What a difference from the welcome at the Military Court Prison where Youde was greeted with "Mr.Tsai, glad to see you" and was dragged up to the room by his cellmates. No matter, some did smile and show friendliness.

Cheng called over two men who occupied the seats on either side of the entrance and made the introductions.

"Here is Tsai Youde of Section 1 and here is Yang Chi-min of Section 2."

To Youde and Yang, Cheng said, "Comrade Chen here is the section leader of Section 1, and here is Section 2's leader, Comrade Hsiung."

Cheng left as soon as he finished the introductions.

The two section leaders were both mainlanders. Section Leader Chen made them approach the wall next to his own seat. On the wall was the roster of Section 1 from which one name was scratched. Section Leader Chen added Youde's name to the bottom of the list. 'I came to fill the hole of the scratched person,' Youde thought. Section Leader Chen, pointing to the names on the roster one by one, introduced his comrades to Youde. Each person being introduced nodded and returned immediately to what they were doing, showing no sign of getting up to shake hands. Next, section Leader Hsiung introduced comrades in his section. All together, including the newcomers, there were twenty, exactly half of them mainlanders. Addressing each other as 'Comrade' was exactly like what Communists do. Youde found it ironic that Communist manners were employed in a place where people were sent to be brain-washed clean of Communism.

The section leaders took the two newcomers to the back of the room and showed them their spaces, a first in Youde's experience to have a space in the back of the room offered to a bottom-rung newcomer. The fact that a bath area and a flush toilet were on the other side of a half-meter high, concrete fence at the end of the room might explain why. Youde untied his bundle and put his stuff on the shelf.

Comrade Cheng kindly brought lunches in for them. Youde was not hungry, yet could not very well refuse, so he hurriedly took a few mouthfuls and dumped the leftovers into a bucket. Naptime was from lunch till two. Youde sat down on his own seat.

He took a rough measure of the room: four meters wide and eight meters deep. The floor was mopped to a shine. The room

was bright without any light bulbs, thankfully. Despite crowding twenty people to a room, one could not detect body odor or any sweaty smells, perhaps because the room was new and spacious, and also because the building was situated in the mountain village of An-kang.

Toe to toe, they lay down in two lines to take naps. Between lines of toes, a space of about sixty centimeters was left open as a path.

Youde examined his new prison friends, rather, his comrades.

"There are all kinds of people over there." Youde recalled vividly what Sung had said.

This place has its own way of life. It was said that if one were to utter the word 'Baldie' or to hum a Communist or even a Japanese song, one could be promptly informed on. Can I adjust quickly to this kind of life? Youde was somewhat worried.

99. A Rain Shower

"It's raining!" Somebody gave a small yell. Several people sat up from their nap to listen. Sure enough, raindrops were falling on the roof tiles.

"Wow! It's raining!"

Cheers arose. Everybody was elated like a bunch of children.

"Why are you so happy about rain?"

Wearing a big grin, a smallish man by the name of Wang who slept next to Youde explained, "The study session will be canceled. That's why."

The study sessions were to be conducted outdoors everyday from two to four, right after the midday nap.

Wang became Youde's first talking friend. He was addressed as Little Wang for there was another Wang in the room. Little Wang was a native of Kuan-miao and was a vendor in the town market. He was in the habit of criticizing the government, but the trouble started when he was overheard by a customer, a mainland housewife, and got into an argument with her. It had been six months since he had been detained for questioning and one month since arriving here.

Little Wang added, "Almost everyone here got into trouble because of their mouths. Somebody, a superior, a spy-colleague, or a neighbor informed on them to the authority for criticizing the government."

"That's exactly what happened to me," Yang abruptly joined the conversation.

Yang was a native of Chang-hua and worked as a technician at the Telegraph Bureau.

"At work, I observed day after day the corruptions of my superiors and had often mouthed criticisms in private. But one day, at a wedding banquet of a guy who worked for me, I had a few too many and loudly denounced the Pigs."

"Shhhh," Little Wang placed his index finger across his lips and gestured Yang to stop. Yang quickly rolled his tongue and closed his mouth. Yang seemed to realize only just now that half the members in the room were mainlanders.

Little Wang asked Youde, "Let me guess, Comrade Tsai, I think you are here for reading forbidden books."

"How do you know?"

"You look like one of those. I have a good feel about people, an inborn ability."

"I see. But I read the books before they were banned. What was I to do?"

"I'm sure that's the case. Because you wouldn't be here if you had read them after they had been banned. Instead, you would have gotten three years in prison followed by re-education at Pan-chiao. As it is, people sent here all received the verdict of "not guilty, need re-education", therefore, only very few are here for reading banned books. Yu over there is the only one."

Comrade Yu glanced at Youde, then said to Wang, "Hey, Little Wang. Don't spread anything funny about me. What I read was newspapers, not books."

"What's the difference?"

"Oh, no. I did not read banned books. It was only the widely available Kuang-ming Daily."

Yu came over to join the small cluster around Youde. Youde wondered if the duration of re-education depended on whether one read newspapers or books. Judging from his accent, Yu was apparently from the Fu-chien province of China. The Kuang-ming Daily was well known and widely available. It was mentioned in Youde's decision document as well.

Yu said, "At the time, the Kuang-ming Daily often showed up at people's mailboxes in the morning. One time when I was down south on business for a few weeks – it's part of my job with the Monopoly Bureau – my maid took the newspapers inside and kept them in a stack for my return, she being illiterate you know."

"Lucky break for her. Otherwise she would be here too," Little Wang chimed in.

"It was partly my fault because I didn't burn the papers as soon as I got home." Then, Yu added, "I had always been a staunch anti-Communist."

Section Leader Chen, a native of Shanghai, stopped by on his way to the toilet. He said, "The so-called maid, though, was doing wifely duties night after night, right?"

Yu shot back, "I see you are speaking from experience."

As Yu was making his way back to his seat, the man next to Little Wang by the name of Chou pointed to Yu and said, "The man's brother is a big shot, supposedly a supreme court justice."

Chou continued in a whisper, "That's why you can't take what Yu says at face value. Who knows, maybe he was involved in something far more serious, something a 'sweet potato' nobody would have gotten ten years for, but with his brother's influence he was slapped with re-education."

"After all it was only the Kuang-ming Daily; they would normally ignore it." Little Wang also lowered his voice.

Servant Comrade Cheng came in and made a formal announcement, "The study session is canceled due to rain," then started to collect purchase orders from everybody. Youde hurriedly acquired an order form and ordered a few stationary items.

"Look at Comrade Cheng," Little Wang said, "he is but an errand boy here, but he used to be a distinguished councilman of Tainan prefecture. A very nice man, a native of Ta-chia. He criticized Chiang Kai-shek in the council meeting by a slip of the tongue."

"Hey, Little Wang, you won't be going home in three years judging from your progress," Chou teased. "What you are supposed to say is, 'Comrade Cheng is here to study because he failed to appreciate the many, benevolent policies of the great President Chiang and made improper criticisms.' Got it?"

Little Wang in turn pointed to Chou and said, "This guy, too, was informed on for criticizing Chiang Kai-shek."

Chou shook his head slowly, a bitter smile on his face. Youde too broke into a grin.

"Comrade Tsai, you are a lucky man. If you had gone to the other side you wouldn't be laughing like this at all."

"The other side? Where?"

"Room No.2-Left, across the hallway where Section 3 and Section 4 are housed. They seem to have squabbles all the time, sometimes even fist fights. And their servant, Chu, was convicted of false incrimination, hardly a person we can call 'comrade.' It's not of much concern to us, but we do mix with them during study sessions, so we do need to be wary."

Youde strained to look into the room on the other side. He found, behind bars, twenty other men of similar fates conducting their lives in a similar manner.

That's the extent of the An-kang Branch of the Re-education Center. Without a building of its own, it operated out of two borrowed rooms of the military prison.

The afternoon shower soon passed and the room cooled off somewhat.

"It would be great if it rains everyday," Little Wang muttered.

100. Two Section Leaders

With the study session canceled, the next event to wait for was bath time.

Youde went over to the front of the room and studied the daily schedule pasted next to the roster.

- 5:00 Rise
- 5:30 Breakfast
- 6:00 Room cleaning
- 7:00 Study, outdoor exercise, individual counseling
- 12:00 Lunch
- 12:30 Nap
- 2:00 Study session
- 4:00 Bath
- 5:30 Supper
- 6:00 Lecture, free activities
- 9:00 Lights out

Youde asked Section Leader Chen, "Do we have lectures every evening?"

"By regulation, we are supposed to have two lectures a week. But in reality, we make it about once a week."

The 6 a.m. room cleaning involved picking up and cleaning the floor, polishing it being the major chore.

Section Leader Chen explained the activities listed under 7 to 12 a.m., "Think of it as a time for self-directed study and taking walks. We in this Building-No. 3 take walks outdoors in five shifts for a duration of about forty minutes. This week our room goes

out at ten. You can use the rest of the morning to write your study report or your re-education progress report. Sometimes, the counselor might call you for an individual counseling session. That's when you can tell them whatever opinions you might have. Lucky for us, our counselor Fu is not very demanding. As far as I know, nobody has had his re-education report turned down for being too short or for it being a copy of somebody else's."

Section Leader Chen was friendly and considerate. Youde felt kindly toward him.

"The water is running!", somebody shouted.

Water, available only for a limited time daily, started to drip from the faucets in the bath area. In groups of four, they took turns to bathe under the four faucets. Youde was in the last group.

Section Leader Chen, being the first to finish, politely inquired about Youde's story. Youde knew that he need not hide anything, yet knowing Chen's obligation to write a daily report to the counselor, he should exercise caution and never utter a hint of dissatisfaction.

When Youde finished telling his story, he asked Chen, "May I know why you are here?"

"On account of radios. I listened to the radio broadcast from the mainland. You may say that my misfortune sprang from the ears. Many people here belong to this category." Chen pointed to Comrade Hsiung and three others in Section 2 who had just come back from bathing.

"These four people were school teachers on Quemoy Island and they used to gather at night to listen to broadcasts from the mainland. They got together naturally because there were only a

few radios, not because they were forming an organization or a secret society, nor were they in contact with the Communists or anything like that. If to be faulted, they were just more curious than others. But being firm believers of the Three People's Principles to start with, their records here are great, way above the rest."

Drying his hair with a towel, Hsuing said with a smile, "Well, I think being here gives me time to get down to real studying and will actually be beneficial for my future. Good and bad fortunes are entwined together sometimes."

"Oh, Comrade Tsai," Section Leader Chen turned to Youde as if just reminded of something, "Did either Counselor Fu or Comrade Cheng tell you about family visits?"

"What? Family visits? No, I haven't heard anything about it. So I will be allowed visits?"

"Yes, on the second and fourth Sunday of each month. You had better let your wife know right away."

The thought of seeing his wife and children in person stirred Youde with excitement.

Section Leader Hsiung started on something else, but when Youde recovered from his excitement, Hsiung had switched the topic and was expounding on his view on Taiwan.

"Taiwan is nice. I had only seen it from a car but I can tell that the stores are large and are lined with all kinds of things. And people of Taiwan dress well, on par with Shanghai if you ask me. Taiwan has good roads that lead in all directions and there are many cars too. It has many modern buildings. On top of that, with abundant rain, rice crops must grow well. From where I came

from, this place is really a treasure island."

Then Hsuing added, all seriously, "Taiwan really lives up to the name of 'The model province of the Three People's Principles.'"

For some reason Comrade Hsiung failed to mention "Taiwan has lots of modern prisons too."

101. Unexpected Reunion

The next morning, after room cleaning, the morning study session began.

The group sat leaning against the wall with their knees drawn, a piece of plywood across their laps for placing a book or for writing. Some people used a rolled up blanket as a desktop instead.

Youde took out the four books given to him the day before. "The Three People's Principles" and "Essays by Sun Yat-sen" were familiar ground, as they were required reading for all college freshmen. "The Fundamentals of Fighting Communism and Resisting Russia" was a pamphlet of a mere seventy pages, an easy one-day's read if one put his mind to it. And there was nothing new in the fourth book, the biography of Chiang Kai-shek, since the main events of Chiang's life had been widely circulated in newspapers and magazines, usually accompanied by illustrations or photographs. Nonetheless, the Chinese way of studying required rote memorization of entire books, and the thought of a daily regime of studying and rote recall of such books for the next three years filled Youde with dismay. Youde stifled a sigh, a sure reason to have points subtracted if seen.

Counselor Fu came up to the entrance to inspect the study session.

"Comrade Fu, how are you?" all said in unison.

Counselor Fu nodded with satisfaction, smiled and moved on to Room No.2-Left across the corridor.

Around ten in the morning, the guard opened the door; it was time for the outdoor walk. All headed out at once, some wearing shoes, some barefoot. The wide corridor leading outside was instantly crowded by the two hundred people let out from ten rooms; the regular prisoners and the 're-eds' mixed together in one surging horde. After passing Room 25 at the end of the long corridor, they entered the open clay yard surrounded by a high wall. The morning sun was shining brightly, casting the shadow of the high wall and the prison building into part of the yard.

Following the guard's orders, the two hundred men formed into four columns and started to walk around and around the yard. In no time at all, some people took off their shirts to get some sun. This was the most enjoyable part of the day and also the only time a prisoner was able to communicate with people other than his own roommates. Despite the fact that there were no prison rules that prohibited them from speaking to people in other rooms -- since all of them had already been tried and sentenced -- the brick room partitions and wide corridors made it impossible in practical terms.

A man walking ahead of Youde in the next column turned his head and asked with a smile, "Mr. Tsai, do you remember me?"

Youde drew a blank.

"I don't blame you, Mr. Tsai, because you never got a good

look at me really."

The voice. That's right! It's Fu-lin, the fellow who followed me into the Chia-yi jail.

"The name was Fu-lin!" Youde shouted.

It was merely ten months ago, but Youde recalled with fondness the several days they spent together as if a lifetime had passed. Back in Chia-yi's jail, Youde was only able to look at Fu-lin across the hallway through the prison bars. No wonder he couldn't recognize Fu-lin. And Fu-lin, he only had one opportunity to have a good look at Youde too – on the night Youde was sent to Taipei. What a good memory for faces! Youde was amazed.

The man directly in front of Youde kindly switched places with Youde, so he was able to walk side by side with Fu-lin.

"I remember you were with another man called Po-sung," Youde asked.

"Yes. As you predicted, both of us got ten years. Po-sung is here too, in a different building, so I don't get to see him."

"How about Mr. Chuang. Did he as expected ...?"

"Yes. He was sent to Taipei the same time as us. Soon after, he was executed. Well, he was our leader after all. It's been six months already since we've been here."

"Is that so? In that case, you have seniority over me."

"Ha, ha," Fu-lin said laughing, "you were nice to us back in Chia-yi, a couple of know-nothings we were. We must have come across as real immature to you."

The fearful Fu-lin of yesterday was nowhere in sight. He had turned into a different person, strong and impressive.

"Mr. Tsai, are you here for re-education?"

"Yes."

"You may be able to go home pretty soon," Fu-lin said with a decisiveness that suggested more than an attempt to console.

"Is that so? I thought one term is three years, isn't it?"

"It was, but right now the home campus at Pan-chiao is filled to capacity and so is here. I know for fact a fellow was released directly from here and he was here for only a year."

"He must have compiled a superb record," Youde said. Yet, momentarily a new ray of hope reared its head. 'It's not a piece of bad news in any case,' Youde surmised

But the man on the other side of Fu-lin cut in, "The fellow was sent away to an intelligence organization to be a spy, he being fluent in both Japanese and English. They need people like him badly."

This was not a joking matter, Youde was alarmed. 'I can't possibly become their lackey and push fellow Taiwanese into hellish misfortunes for their so-called crimes. Yet, to refuse is also to endanger oneself.' His newborn hope quickly turned into terror. 'I would much rather stay here than become a spy,' he thought.

The man in front of Youde turned his head from time to time and opined, "In a nutshell, the length of your thought-reform is already decided at the time of the court decision. Depending on the degree of your Communist poisoning, you are either in the 'heavy,' 'medium,' or 'light' class. For a guy in the 'heavy' class, no matter how hard he works or how great a record he compiles, it's no use. And you know there are the 'extreme heavy' among the 'heavy' class who, in essence, are no different from people with life terms. That's why I say there's no reason to work too hard. Just

wait for your destiny, ha, ha."

Fu-lin asked, "You seem to know a lot. You are not making things up, are you?"

The man looked back again and said, "No, an ex-judge told me about it before he was executed."

Turning to Youde, Fu-lin said, "If they have the so-called 'extreme heavy,' they may have the 'extreme light' as well. The man who went home could be one of them. I pray that you are one of the 'extreme light', Mr. Tsai."

Fu-lin seemed determined to hold out bright hope for Youde.

Suddenly, the guard yelled in a high-pitched voice, "T-u-r-n around!"

The two hundred prisoners in four-column formation turned on their heels and started in the opposite direction, some flinging their arms high, some rotating their necks as they walked.

As walking was about to draw to a close, Fu-lin asked, "Do you know Mosula?"

"Yes. I know him well."

"He is also in Building No.3. You will run into him one of these days during walking."

The man next to Youde kindly added, "Mosula is in Room No.15. You might want to look in on him on the way back."

Youde never addressed his childhood classmate Yeh Chin-kuei as Mosula, a nickname he acquired after surviving horrendous tortures. As Youde's image of Yeh did not quite match that of 'Mosula the Amazing Beast,' he did not wish to call his friend Mosula, yet that was the name he was known by around here. How unexpected it was to see him here! Youde was elated. On his way back to

his room, Youde carefully counted the rooms he passed by and stopped right in front of Room No.15.

Mosula, nee Yeh Chin-kuei, was expecting Youde by the front of his room. And the moment he saw Youde he stuck out both his hands through the iron bars and anxiously sought Youde's hands.

Youde ran to the iron bars and firmly grasped Mosula's hands. Their eyes glistened with tears as they locked their eyes and called each other by their childhood names.

Mosula was as thin as ever, but his face and his physique appeared firm and solid. His rough hands, however, told the story of a life full of hardship. Youde recalled at once Loo's stories about Mosula's ordeals. To think that the Chin-kuei he had played catch with in the school yard had miraculously survived and is now the celebrated 'Mosula the Amazing Beast!' Youde squeezed the hands in his grasp with extra force.

Two classmates who used to vie for number one in grade school, now again are fellow prison friends under the harsh, foreign regime. Who would have foreseen the meeting of these two men, grasping each other's hands in a prison? Youde's heart was full with lament.

102. Study Session

The study session started at 2 p.m. A guard came to open the door and everybody, carrying books and notepads, stepped out. They then put on their shoes that were lined up outside the room, as bare feet were not permitted. From the room across the corridor,

people of Sections 3 and 4 also straggled out. They proceeded to the large hall, where each picked up a canvas, folding stool, and lined up into a neat formation.

With the section leaders leading the way, they headed toward the open yard via the long corridor. The Comrades' attire varied, mostly in tanks and boxer shorts, they could hardly be taken as anything but a bunch of prison inmates.

"Again!" Some people in rooms along the corridor stared from behind the bars, not a few with abject contempt. Youde thought: With good reason too. Because the marching column was about to attend a gathering to sing the praises of the very dictator who had wasted these inmates' lives. As they passed in front of Room 15, Youde instinctively turned to look and met Mosula's eyes head on. Mosula gave a small nod.

The re-ed counselees, forty in all, entered the open yard and settled in a shaded corner. Counselor Fu sat down by the wall. The counselees opened their folding stools and sat in front and around him. Section Leader Hsiung quickly took the place to the right of Fu. While Youde was still trying to make up his mind – thinking maybe he should stay far away from the counselor – and was still wandering about carrying his stool, Counselor Fu called him by name. Yang was called upon too. The two newcomers ended up sitting next to Fu and became the focus of everybody's attention.

Section Leader Hsiung was to conduct today's proceedings. He stood up and commanded briskly and in succession: "Stand up!" "Bow to Counselor Fu!" "Take your seats!" "Talk by the Superior Officer!"

Counselor Fu stood up and introduced Youde and Yang then raised his voice as he started to talk. He first commented that the work of re-education was progressing smoothly with everybody's cooperation and that all made good achievements in their studies, a fact the headquarters also recognized. Then he admonished the group to carry on the good work and not to slacken. That concluded his customary introductory remarks. Next, he gave a 'Report' which was a run down of news events on the outside. Everybody listened with great interest. Newspaper reading was not permitted in here. Starved of outside news, the inmates were thankful for the 'Report.' Youde thought with irritation: But why can't they permit newspaper readings to the already-sentenced, especially since the newspapers are heavily censored to start with?

After the news report, Fu gave the following sermon:

"The world situation is developing in our favor. President Chiang had given us clear and accurate directives: Prepare in the first year; attack in the second year; root out the enemies in the third; and achieve the victory in the fifth year.

"The moment of victory is approaching. You must correct your past mistakes as soon as you can and, as our fellow comrades, work toward the construction of the true, new China of the Three People's Principles. Our government has been humane and generous toward you. Suppose tables were turned and you were arrested by the Communists for being pro-KMT? You know, without exception, you would all have been shot. You must be thankful for our great leader President Chiang and pledge your allegiance to him!"

A familiar sermon no doubt, because the group sometimes

smiled and sometimes nodded. Nodding was not a problem, but it was not so easy to smile properly, lest it be taken for a sneer. Youde noticed that Section Leader Hsiung was maintaining a Mona Lisa-like smile in suspension. Youde thought of Mosula's horrendous abuse by a counselor. Could it have started from not being able to sustain such a smile?

Following Counselor Fu, Section Leader Hsiung stood up and announced, "Today's topic of discussion is 'The immediate goal and the ultimate ideal of nationalism.'"

Hsiung called on Comrade Ting, his fellow teacher from Quemoy, to speak first.

Comrade Ting stood up and started to speak from a prepared draft: "The immediate goal is to overturn the Manchu regime in order to construct a nation of the Chinese people. Then, to abolish all the unequal treaties that China had signed under duress with the strong nations of the world, so as to pull China out of the status of sub-colonialism. The ultimate ideal of nationalism is to help all weak and helpless peoples of the world and to realize the Confucian ideal of a peaceful One World."

These were Sun Yat-sen's enlightened views, except the Manchus had collapsed some fifty years ago and the unequal treaties had also been abolished way back when. What was the sense of rehashing this stuff? Youde brooded.

After Comrade Ting spoke, Section Leader Hsiung asked the rest of the group to express their opinions. Two or three raised their hands and quickly read their mostly formulaic opinions. When no more raised hands were to be found, Section Leader Hsiung went down the row, one by one, and asked for their opin-

ions. Waiting for one's turn to speak was tiresome at best. Yet it continued on and on, compelling all to wish for the afternoon shower.

Little Wang, who was sitting across from Youde, hurriedly covered his mouth to stifle an unguarded yawn. Then, as if satisfied with a successful coverup, he smiled.

The time was up when there were still a few people ahead of Youde to be called on.

Counselor Fu stood up, assigned the person to conduct the next session, gave the next day's topic and disbanded the study session.

For Youde, the very first two hours of brainwashing was finally over.

103. Visitation

At last, the fourth Sunday of June arrived. It was the day for family visits. Youde's wife had written to say she would surmount all difficulties to make the visit.

The visiting hours for Building No.3 were set for 1 to 5 p.m. Youde waited impatiently all morning long. This was the first time in ten months he would see his wife since his arrest on Oct.2 of the past year.

Youde's name was announced soon after one o'clock. Together with Yang and two others, Youde left the room. He saw a few others coming out of other rooms, among them Fu-lin. The group passed through the iron gate at the end of the large hall and was

taken to the side of a tall fence. This modern, brand new prison facility apparently had no visiting room.

There were five eye-level openings on the fence with a few feet between them. The openings were covered with shutters that had large, numerals in white paint on them. The visits were to take place through the openings with the fence in between.

Youde's name was called. He stood in front of the number 1 opening, the size of a large roof tile. The guard gestured for Youde to open the shutter himself.

Youde pushed the shutter to the side.

Three feet in front of him was his wife's face in close up.

"Oh, Panto!" Youde blurted.

"Honey," Panto called. No more words were possible.

Tears flooded their eyes, choked words gurgled in the back of their throats – a teary scene that Youde had not expected.

"Mama, why are you crying?" came a child's voice from the other side of the fence.

"I brought Ah-jing with me," finally his wife's voice formed into words.

Youde could hear the sound of Panto stepping off a platform. The opening was apparently higher than eye-level from the outside.

No sooner had he wiped the tears from his eyes, he saw daughter Ah-jing's face, hoisted up by Panto. Ah-jing had just turned two and half and was reputedly a good talker.

"Papa!" Ah-jing called in a loud voice and stared at Youde with interest.

"Good girl, Ah-jing!" Youde choked again.

"Papa, look at my new dress," Ah-jing tried to show her dress to Youde.

Panto raised Ah-jing up higher. It was a white dress with red polka-dots, a make-over from Panto's own dress, Youde immediately recognized.

"It's a pretty dress," Youde stuck his hand through the opening to reach Ah-jing's face. The reach was short by a tad.

"Hey!" Youde withdrew his hand in a hurry at the guard's hollering. Right away a guard approached to examine Youde's hand, suspecting a sharp object might have been received.

Ah-jing pointing with her finger asked, "Mama, is it America over there?"

Her innocent words brought up tears afresh.

His wife's face switched back.

"I've been telling her that you are in America."

"I see. Not a bad idea."

"She's been praying for your early return."

".....How is mother?"

"She's in very good health. You don't have anything to worry about. Baby Liang is doing fine too."

"I am glad it's a boy."

"I would love to show him to you soon. Everybody says he's a dead ringer for you. Maybe I should bring him next time."

"Better not try to do too much. Where is he today?"

"Mother's taking care of him. That's why I have to go back home by today's train."

"You look a bit tired."

"Really? It's probably from lack of sleep. I didn't sleep well

last night. You look like you have lost a little weight. I am sorry that I couldn't manage to send more care packages. But today I did bring a lot of stuff, mother's homemade ba-fu(seasoned dried pork) too. I had to turn them in at the Service Office."

"I don't need care packages anymore, really. The food here is the regular military fare and is not bad. Please don't bother about care packages. I would rather you folks at home eat good nutritious food and stay healthy."

Panto chuckled as she said, "You seem kinder and gentler."

"I've always been kind and gentle."

"You also seem to be more manly."

"I guess so. I've been through a few things."

"I read the court decision. It did not seem like much."

"It was nothing to start with. Anyway, it's a not-guilty verdict."

"Then why don't they release you? It's a not-guilty verdict, isn't it? When can you come home?"

"I have no idea," Youde couldn't quite bring himself to say it was going to be three years from now. It was a matter not so easily explained to somebody who has no knowledge of how re-education works.

"Maybe another three months?" his wife was concerned about the amount of time left to serve.

To live day by day without thinking about the passage of time is the way of the prison. Instead, Youde said, "Ya, it would be nice..... How are you getting along money-wise? You probably had to go to some trouble to come up with the travel expenses for this trip, did you not?"

"It will be all right. Travel expenses are nothing. Don't you worry about it. Not too long ago, I sold the gold cigarette case you got in Mexico. I'm sorry for doing so without asking. You know, I sold it for two thousand yuan. The money will last a while."

The gold cigarette case fetched a sum equivalent to two and half months' salary. Youde was quite grateful for the unexpected windfall. Except the cigarette case was the only valuable they owned.

"I see, that's great. Sell anything you like, the fan, the record player, the records. We can acquire them again later."

"I can't. I can't sell the things that you took so much pains to bring home. How can I?" Tears filled her eyes anew.

"The fact is," she said after catching her breath, "I have applied to return to teaching to the Department of Education of the Chia-yi prefecture. I may get the good news sometime next month. You see, I wasn't going to tell you until then ... But, well, it's out now."

"What are you going to do with the children when you go back to work?"

"We can hire a nanny. Besides, mother is there so I don't have to worry. Mother, too, likes the idea very much of me getting back to work."

"I see. But it's probably better not to put too much stock in getting your job back. I wonder if they will allow a thought-criminal's wife to teach."

"Sure. There is already one who's a wife of a thought-criminal. Chen Ching-tu's wife is teaching at Ta-tung Elementary."

"In her case, her husband was arrested while she was still on

the job. They can't very well fire her for her husband's arrest."

"What's the difference? Besides, you got a not-guilty verdict."

His wife was strong willed and rather optimistic. 'Does she know that once branded a thought-criminal one would come under all sorts of restrictions?' Youde wondered.

"One way or another, I will know something about it come next month," his wife said with confidence.

August is the beginning of the new school year and teachers' contracts usually come out before that.

"Next month is only three days away."

"There are cases where people did not receive their contracts until the latter half of August. As long as it's in time for school opening in September."

The guard blew the whistle.

Ten minutes of visiting time had evaporated.

"Do look after yourself," Panto once again hoisted Ah-jing up to the opening.

"Papa, goodbye!" Ah-jing said spiritedly as she waved to Youde.

Pshiiit! The shutter of the opening slid shut with indifference.

104. America Amidst the Bitter Sea

Youde stepped back from the fence into the shade. Fu-lin, having just finished his visitation, came over to talk to Youde.

"Did your wife come to see you?"

"Yes. My daughter too. Did you see your wife too?"

"No, my wife was just here not too long ago. Today, Mrs. Chuang came to see me, all the way from Heng-ts'un. She really didn't have to."

Heng-ts'un is the southern most town of Taiwan.

"Is that so? I'm surprised." Youde was impressed.

Fu-lin said, "Chuang left a note before he was executed. How foolish of me, of course, it's before...ha, ha..." Fu-lin laughed at his own linguistic bungling. "In it, supposedly, he told his wife that he had done us wrong and asked her to do whatever she could to help us for his atonement. This is the second time Mrs. Chuang has come here. She brings a large care package when she comes. I told her not to bother anymore, but she still comes. I would imagine it's not easy supporting a family by herself."

"I see, what an unusual story. But, do you hate Mr. Chuang?"

"Not at all, not anymore. Actually, I feel so sorry for him. I talked about Mr. Chuang with hatred back in the Chia-yi jail, didn't I?"

"Not that I remember."

"Yes, I hated him then. But the hatred has long since gone, because I came to understand Mr. Chuang's predicament after witnessing and hearing so many different stories since then. On the contrary, if I had the chance, I would have told him not to blame himself to such an extent."

"Does his wife still run the charcoal business?"

"Yes, she does. Just today, she said the business is doing well. But it must be quite a job to have to toil covered from head to toe in black powder. I can see traces of black on the tip of her nose, on her earlobes, as if the black powder has penetrated into her skin.