

# Poetry from Peking

Translated by Hsu Kai-yu

*The poems in these pages are taken from Kai-yu Hsu's new book, The Chinese Literary Scene: A Writer's Visit to the People's Republic, to be published August 1975 by Random House. They are but a tiny part of a vast outpouring since Communist China came into being. Although these works all seek to carry out Mao Tse-tung's dicta on literature and art they fall into two clearly demarcated periods: the first two poems translated here were written in the 60's and by poets, as such; the other selections are products of the 70's, after the Cultural Revolution, written or rather "voiced" by workers, peasants and soldiers. Professor Hsu, Chairman of the Comparative Literature Department at San Francisco State University, translated and edited the anthology Twentieth Century Chinese Poetry, which covers the first forty years' output of modern Chinese verse written in the vernacular.*

## THOUGHTS, THOUSANDS OF MILES AWAY

Village on Dragon Pool,  
Your river flows through me;  
Dragon Pool, ah—Dragon Pool,  
Your drumbeat taps inside of me;  
    Can't forget!  
    How can I forget?

The old man traveled to Peking, thousands of miles,  
Blue is his jacket, strong his care;  
He brought walnuts for us to share,  
And their old scent returns from years ago  
    The scent of the nuts,  
    The scent of the Commune.

A sheet of paper, a thousand miles of snow,  
A line of words, the Great Wall of ten thousand li,  
A stanza of verse to the Commune, will you please  
Bring it back to the Dragon Pool Village.

## 千里思

蛟潭莊呵蛟潭莊，  
河水流在我心上；  
蛟潭莊呵蛟潭莊，  
鼓聲響在我心上；  
——不能忘！  
    怎能忘？

老人千里來北京，  
藍布褂子熱心腸；  
老人捎來核桃果，  
嚼着還似當年香；  
——果子香！  
    公社香！

千里白雪紙一片，  
萬里長城字一行；  
寫首詩獻給公社，  
捎支歌給蛟潭莊。

The flag that flew on the walnut tree  
Still flutters above my shoulder;  
The drum that sounded under the tree  
Still resounds inside of me.

Of the drum, the drum, the drum . . . .  
Once a poor peasant said in tears—  
“There, in there, are my three children,  
And, and my poor woman, their mother . . . .”<sup>1</sup>

Hob-nailed, edged with tracery, the drum  
Struck out a flood of tears;  
Red, cowhide-covered, the drum  
Struck out notes that resounded on and on.

Rocks tumbled on the Tai-hang Mountain,  
A new look has come to the Hu-to River;  
The drum's stirring beat, the men's uplifted spirit,  
You are with me now, and I with you.  
And the drum is still there,  
Still sounding, on and on.

—T' IEN CHIEN  
Winter 1962—Winter 1963.

<sup>1</sup>During the 1947 land reform, Chao Ho, a poor peasant from Ping-shan, Hopei Province, told of his bitter experience: in 1926-27 he had to sell his three daughters for 60 strings of cash to pay his rent owed to the landlord. Then ten years later he had to sell his wife for the same reason. For a whole day and a whole night husband and wife cried together, but there was no way out. All the 80 silver dollars, the price of his wife, went to the landlord, except five which were handed over to the village government as a divorce fee. The village government used it to buy a drum, a hob-nailed, cowhide-covered red drum with its edges painted in tracery. Upon liberation, the drum was handed back to the people.

The Dragon Pool Village is located in the Ping-shan County. I stayed there for a period of time in 1938. It was then the seat of the leadership for the Hopei-Chahar-Shansi Border Area.—T'ien Chien.

核桃樹上那面旗，  
依然飄在我肩上；  
核桃樹下那面鼓，  
依然響在我心上。

鼓呵鼓呵這面鼓，  
有個貧農哭着講——  
「鼓裡有三個孩子，  
還有那孩子她娘……」<sup>①</sup>

花邊鐵釘牛皮鼓，  
大鼓一敲淚汪汪；  
紅色油漆牛皮鼓，  
大鼓一敲聲聲浪。

太行山上石頭倒，  
滹沱河上換新裝；  
鞑鞑的鼓聲佼佼的兒郎，  
你在我身邊我在你身旁；  
——鼓呵鼓還在，  
鼓呵鼓在响。

—田間  
1962年冬—1963年冬

<sup>①</sup>一九四七年土地改革時，河北平山縣貧農趙合哭訴說：民國十五、六年，他因為交不起租子，賣掉三個女孩子，一共六十吊錢。過了十年，又因為交不起租子，把老婆賣了，兩個分別時，哭了一天一夜。賣老婆的八十塊白洋，除了交租，五塊錢給村公所作離婚費，村裡用這錢買了一隻鼓，一隻花邊、圓帽，鐵釘、紅色油漆牛皮鼓。這隻鼓裝滿了血淚。解放後這隻鼓歸了人民。蛟潭莊是平山一個村子。一九三八年我到晉察冀邊區時在這裡住過一段時間。當時邊區領導機關也在這裡。—田間

## 黑水蘆花

黑水河的水呀，  
為甚麼這樣黑？  
兩岸的古森林，  
新葉催敗葉。

蘆花鎮的花呀，  
為甚麼這樣白？  
經霜洗過的清風，  
吹得花苞裂。

水邊的高屋，  
石頭砌，  
花中的炮台，  
石頭疊。

石頭間，  
開出新田開出地，  
石頭縫，  
種出甜蕎種出麥。

豪壯的藏族居民，  
更有石頭的性格：  
一碰就迸火花，  
一煉就成鋼鐵。

黑水黑，  
蘆花白，  
黑的像烏金，  
白的像雪。

—梁上泉

1962年4月2日，重慶

### *BLACK WATER AND REEDS*

Water in Black River  
Why so dark?  
Virgin woods on both banks,  
New leaves push the old.

Blooms at Reed Bloom Village  
Why so white?  
Winds bathed in frost  
Have split the buds.

Tall houses near water  
Built of stone;  
Gun terraces amid the flowers  
Rock-lined.

Between the rocks,  
Plots of land have been planted.  
Even the cracks and crevices  
Are filled with crops.

Sturdy Tibetan people  
Strong-willed, like rocks;  
They spark easily when rubbed,  
And are easily tempered into steel.

Black River, black.  
Reed blooms, white.  
Black as black gold,  
And white like snow.

—LIANG SHANG-CHUAN  
Chungking, April 2, 1962.

EVERY CALENDAR PAGE,  
A VICTORY POSTER<sup>2</sup>

A journey of three thousand miles glowing in red  
sunlight,  
Thousands of wood shavings curl up a spring tide  
under the plane.  
In long strides we fly across the threshold of 1971,  
Every leaf from the calendar, a victory poster.

—CHEN AN-AN

Yenan Machine Casting Factory, Shanghai.

張張日曆化喜報

萬里征程紅日照，  
千朵刨花卷春潮，  
飛步跨進七一年，  
張張日曆化喜報！

—陳安安

上海延安機模廠

<sup>2</sup>This and the following three poems are translated from  
*Thousands of Songs Dedicated to the Party*, Shanghai, 1971.

讚星火日夜商店

說你大，  
你只有三尺櫃台；  
說你小，  
你胸懷整個世界。

一杯茶，一塊餅，  
無限溫暖無限愛；  
一本書，一張報，  
階級情誼深似海。

一年三百六十天，  
紅日高照春常在；  
工農兵來到你身邊，  
像遇見親人心花開！

夜間的星火白天的旗，  
毛澤東思想放光彩；  
星光商店前面走，  
各行各業追上來！

—劉鴻毅

上海浙江南路肉食品商店

THE SPARK 24-HOUR STORE

To say you are big—  
You have a counter only three feet long;  
But to say you are small—  
You have the whole world in your bosom.

A piece of cake, a cup of tea,  
Infinite warmth, infinite concern;  
A book, a sheet of newspaper,  
Deep as the sea is the comradeship.

Three hundred and sixty days a year,  
Unfailing red sun, unfailing spring;  
Workers, peasants, and soldiers come near you,  
They feel they are with someone very dear.

You are a spark at night, a banner during the day,  
A shining light of Mao Tse-tung's thought.  
You, Spark Store, lead the way;  
All other lines of business will follow suit.

—LIU HUNG-YI

Meat Products Store, Chekiang South Road, Shanghai.

*IN MY NET I PULL UP  
A TREMBLING HEAVEN AND EARTH*

Water blending into the sky,  
And a sweep of red cloud—  
Beautiful is the eastern sea.  
Hundreds of boats race; thousands of flags fly.

Waves freeze in fright;  
Stormy winds take flight.  
When its sound is heard the motor is already ten  
knots away,  
And the fishing vessels shoot forth like arrows.

Arms swinging, heads held up high.  
A shout at the sky, "Let's go!"  
In my net I pull up a trembling heaven and earth,  
And the eastern sea is hauled aboard.

Red sun on the cabin window,  
Sails swollen with eastern breeze;  
Heroic gusto fills Leap-forward songs—  
We shall not return until ten eastern seas are in the  
net!

—SHEN PIAO

*The East-Is-Red Farm, Shanghai.*

**一網拉得天地晃**

水天一色，  
紅雲一片，  
呵！東海無限美，  
百舸爭流旗萬桿。

巨浪驚呆，  
海風躲天邊，  
機聲一響飛十裡，  
漁船快如箭。

揚臂昂頭，  
朝天一聲「幹！」  
一網拉得天地晃，  
東海裝進船。

紅日映艙，  
東風鼓征帆，  
豪情譜出躍進曲，  
拉起十個東海再回岸！

—沈飈

上海市東方紅農場

**老錨工**

老錨工，多英豪，  
滿肩風霜滿臉笑，  
一道道皺紋疊波浪，  
兩隻大手像鐵錨。

登上船頭昂首立，  
像要扛着藍天跑，  
出航汽笛一聲響，  
嘩啦啦，他拔起一對錨……

*THE OLD ANCHORMAN*

The Old Anchorman, what a guy!  
Wind and frost on his shoulders, and on his face,  
a broad grin.  
His wrinkles repeat the wave lines on the sea;  
His huge hands, modeled after the anchors.

He stands forth on the bow, holding his head high,  
He's racing ahead, bringing with him the whole  
blue sky.  
And as the whistle blows, clink-clank rings the  
chain;  
A pair of anchors are up, in his hand. . . .

他是咱們的新委員，  
羣衆推選的好代表，  
今年五十入了黨，  
嘿，革命青春永不老！

他地位變了人不變，  
時刻沒忘這對錨——  
伴他戰鬪了幾十年，  
降服過多少大風暴。

當年海員鬧罷工，  
他胸對屠刀不起錨！  
紅旗一展汽笛鳴，  
海港怒濤卷狂飈……

文化革命春雷滾，  
他劈風斬浪不彎腰，  
步步緊跟毛主席，  
黨交給的大權掌得牢。

他常說，有毛主席給咱指航向，  
有黨給咱來撐腰，  
巨輪不到目的港，  
休想叫咱把錨拋！

—丁林發

工農兵十二號輪

He's our new committeeman,  
A deserving representative elected by us all.  
At fifty, now he joins the Communist Party;  
Hey! the youth of revolution never ages.

His position has changed, but not he  
Who never forgets this pair of anchors—  
They've fought shoulder to shoulder with him for  
decades;  
Together they've conquered untold numbers of  
storms.

That year when the seamen went on strike,  
He stared at the bayonets in his face but refused  
to touch the anchors.  
The whistle blew only at the sight of red flags  
unfurling  
Over angry waves that packed wild gusts of wind  
in the harbor.

The Cultural Revolution, a spring-heralding thunder  
peal.  
He splits the winds and waves, standing always erect.  
Following closely the steps of Chairman Mao,  
He grips the great power entrusted in him by the  
Party.

Often he says: with Chairman Mao giving us  
direction,  
And the Party giving us unfailing support,  
Before our big ship arrives at its destination,  
Nobody can make us drop anchor any time any  
where.

—TING LIN-FA

*Seaman on Motorboat Worker-Peasant-Soldier No. 12.*