A CRITICAL STUDY OF "CHIH-YEH,"
A SHORT STORY BY HSIAO CHÜN

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STATEMENT BY AUTHOR

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When I first read Evan King's translation of Hsiao Chünk's *Village in August* (1942), I had not yet read C. T. Hsia's devastating dismissal of it (1961, pp. 272, 275, 280). Hsia relegated Hsiao Chünk's first major work to the ranks of the puerile, propagandistic literature of the period, placing *Village in August* in a category which Hsia, the critic, was reluctant to classify as literature. Since I was primarily interested in "good" Chinese literature of the 1920's, 30's, and 40's, it is quite probable, had I first read Hsia, that *Village in August* would have gathered a much thicker layer of dust before finding itself in my hands.

As it turned out, I did read the novel, and I enjoyed the novel. I found *Village in August* to be well knit, for a novel of its size, realistic, not romanticized, while having romance, and delicately probing of contemporary and age-old problems of China and, by extension, of all mankind. I found pleasure in Hsiao Chünk's sometimes almost lyric use of nature imagery while wishing that his description of the village and the landowner's manor had been made more detailed. I found a warmth of human feeling—compassion would be a better term—and a depth of human understanding integrated in a recurrent archetypal symbolism. Yes, perhaps flawed, but even without leeway given to the author for *Village in August* being his first published work, the novel stands its own ground and, at least to my mind, places very well in a Hemingwayesque genre.
If *Village in August* merits compliment in my judgment, why, I asked myself, was C. T. Hsia's criticism of it so decidedly negative, and why was his dismissal of Hsiao Chün as a writer so derogatory? In the following lines I will relate some possibilities which occurred to me for the differences between Hsia's and my evaluation.

First and foremost, I had read a translation. Without reading the work in its original language, how could I determine the degree to which Evan King, in his translation, may have edited Hsiao Chün's creation. Second, perhaps while C. T. Hsia directed his criticism against *Village in August*, he was incorporating a collective assessment of Hsiao Chü'n's other works. This explanation, however, I found difficult to accept. While one novel doesn't make the author, criticism, by its very nature, must be selective and specific; further, at other points in *A History of Modern Chinese Fiction*, Hsia shows discrimination between various works by the same author. Third, while among pundits in the field of Chinese Literature C. T. Hsia is considered something of a hierophant, with my limited background, I had to admit to being little more than a tyro in the understanding of literature and literary criticism. Hsia, and Schyns, Su, and Chao (1948, p. 92) criticize Hsiao Chün's style and grammar. Were they evaluating the intrinsic worth of his works in terms of mechanics? If so, was the criticism valid—that is, we must ask, can content be separated from form? Since I conclude, in the company of most critics, that the answer is an emphatic *No!*, if the case is poor grammar and style, then there is no question but that Hsiao Chün is lacking in merit of achievement if not
in aspiration. But is the criticism applicable and valid, or is the criticism in fact an instance of biased rejection of a style different from that which has been handed down by tradition as being good and proper, and also, is the criticism a manifestation of the prejudice that writing, in order to be considered good, must be in the smooth, polished Mandarin of the cultured, educated, Chinese elite and not in an unrefined dialect, such as the languages from beyond the passes—the Manchurian dialect? In my final analysis, I could not accept dialectical differences as a slur on a piece of literature when the dialect is the language of so vast a number of people as the Manchurian people and when the literary work is aimed at an audience first specific, then general. Second, no Western critic will insist that there is one prescribed, correct style, but will own only that for aesthetical evaluation, in art, the form and content should be judged on the merits of harmony and mutual enhancement. Having reached this point, I had to acquire some better understanding of literary criticism. Then, upon translating some work by Hsiao Chün, I would be able to form some more precise conclusions concerning his merit as an author.

In choosing a work by Hsiao to translate, conscious that there was a distinct difference between the style evinced in Village in August (1934), in Hsiao Chün's political essays during the Yenan period (e.g., "The 'Bulba' spirit in literary circles" [1942], and Coal Mine in May [1954]), I sought a work that was both close in time to Village in August and of length sufficient to embody more development than would be found in an average short story, yet short enough for me, with my limited
language skills, to translate. On the basis of these criteria—date and length—I selected Hsiao Chün's "The Job" written in 1935 (in Yang 羊 [Sheep], n.d.).

In the translation, I claim full credit for all errors. In determining whether certain sections of the story should be translated in the past or present tense, a feature not always brought out in Chinese as well as might be wished, I yielded to my aesthetic judgment, justifying myself only in that Hsiao Chün appears to make tasteful, limited use—almost as though experimental (and to Chinese literature of that time it was experimentation)—of stream of consciousness.

At this point, I think it appropriate to say that the stylistic and grammatical differences from the Mandarin which I had been studying were, at times, extensive. Also, Hsiao Chün unblushingly used idiom where appropriate in dialogue and wherever it better carried the description. Just as we from time to time encounter terminology used by a counter-culture or in a subcultural environment, just so in "The Job" we encounter terms that are foreign to Chinese and Chinese speaking Westerners removed from the conditions of occupation and "interrogations" by the Japanese during the 1930's and 40's.

I should like to extend my appreciation to Professor William Schultz for unstintingly lending his assistance in helping me smooth out the rougher parts of my translation. I would also like to thank the several Chinese instructors at The University of Arizona and Mr. Liu, the Oriental Studies librarian, for their aid at those times when a native feeling for the language was necessary to catch the flavor of
a phrase or passage. I am especially thankful for the variety of backgrounds represented among the Chinese instructors in the Department of Oriental Studies. Without the aid of two native Manchurians, for all my efforts, the translation might well be less accurate than my humble ploddings have made it.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABSTRACT</td>
<td>ix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;CHIH-YEH&quot; IN LITERARY PERSPECTIVE</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TECHNIQUES IN &quot;CHIH-YEH&quot;</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX I: &quot;THE JOB&quot;</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REFERENCES</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ABSTRACT

A Critical Study of "Chih-yeh" incorporates a translation of a previously untranslated Chinese short story written in 1935, an attempt to place the story in historical literary perspective, a critical examination of some elements of technique used in the story, and a biographical sketch of the author, Hsiao Chun. The story is archetypal and has been classed with the works of realistic authors, such as Hemingway and Conrad, whose writings reflect a deep understanding of and compassion for man suffering in his often tragic struggle for survival against the brutalities of the world he lives in. The biographical sketch, beyond giving factual information, attempts to point out the characteristics of Hsiao Chun's personality. In discussing the other authors, when parallels of life pattern exist, an attempt has been made to point these out. Emphasis is placed on the existential element in the story and the reader is called upon to make an existential commitment to enhance his understanding. The main thrusts of the critical overview encompass the skillful use of point of view, passage of time, and the archetypal framework as integral parts of the success of "Chih-yeh."
According to the autobiographical sketch which he gave Edgar Snow (Living China, 1936, p. 205), and Village in August, "Introduction," (1942, p. xv), Hsiao Chün, real name Lo San-lang (Maruyama Nobora, "Hsiao Chün," Ajia rekishi jiten [Asia Historical Encyclopedia], 1960, IV, 376), a native of Chincho in Liao Ning province (Maruyama Nobora) approximately 175 km. southwest of Mukden (Encyclopedia Britannica World Atlas, 1967, p. 59, 13.4), was born in 1908 of peasant origin. Hsiao was born in a small village isolated from the nearest city by some seventy li of mountain trails:

The population consisted of peasants, craftsmen, hunters, soldiers, and mounted highwaymen—i.e., bandits.

My grandfather was a peasant and my uncles and my father were at first farmers, then carpenters, and later on merchants, army officers, and "mounted bandits." At times my family had property, at times we owned nothing at all. After the Mukden Incident (September 18, 1931, when Japan invaded Manchuria) my father and three of his brothers—the youngest still clung to his carpentry—enlisted in the Volunteer Army against the Japanese. My third uncle is now imprisoned in "Manchukuo." The little property we had, including some houses and lands, had been confiscated by the "Manchukuo" authorities (Snow, 1942, p. xv).

Hsiao Chün's education was limited and disjointed: "I received no systematic education, was invariably expelled by the authorities of every school I attended, and in all studied in school only six or seven years" (Snow, 1942, p. xv-xvi).

From 1925, Hsiao Chün's life was not unlike a mixture of elements taken from the lives of Chekhov, Dos Passos, and Hemingway. At
the age of sixteen or seventeen he joined the army. Until 1931 Hsiao Chun served in the cavalry, "gendarmery," artillery and "cadet corps" becoming a junior officer (Snow, 1942, p. xvi). In 1931, he joined the Volunteers. Between this time and 1934, he began writing in earnest (Snow, 1942, p. xvi) under the pen name T'ien Chun (Maruyama Nobora). In addition to his army and guerrilla experiences, Hsiao Chun brings an existential variation to his writings; "Besides my career in the army I have been a vagabond-tramp, a secretary, an apprentice to a professional boxer--one of those stunt-doers in open-air markets--a waiter, a milestone pusher in a bean-curd shop and what not" (Snow, 1942, p. xvi). In 1932 Hsiao Chun met Chang Nai-ying in Harbin; they married sometime before coming to Shanghai in 1934 (Schyns, Su, and Chao, 1948, p. 7).

The Shanghai period, from 1934 until shortly after the death of Lu Hsun in 1936, during which the activities of his personal life are somewhat vague, may be viewed as Hsiao Chun's creative period. His autobiographical sketch, previously mentioned, tells us that he had begun writing much earlier than his Shanghai period and the dated notation for the completion of Pa-yueh ti hsiang-ts'un (Village in August) (Shanghai, 1949) is October 23, 1934; however, the public acclaim following the publication of this novel which catapulted him to fame may serve to delineate the years to follow from those which had preceded.
Hsiao Chun and his wife became well acquainted with Lu Hsün. In *Gate of Darkness* (1968) T. A. Hsia tells us that Lu Hsün "gave instructions to his young friends . . . recently arrived from the Northeast . . . about the streets of the strange metropolis of Shanghai, made fun of their names, and invited them to dinner with brief notes of playful elegance" (p. 117). The intimacy between Lu Hsün, a renown, but even then mortally ill, figure of the Literary Revolution, and the two young refugees is only hinted at by the enthused referral Lu Hsün gave of them to Edgar Snow when Snow was compiling *Living China* (p. 205); it is more fully apparent from T. A. Hsia further telling us both that "fifty-four of Lu Hsün's letters to either Hsiao Chun or the couple are in Correspondence" (not available in translation) and that "Hsiao Hung has left for us a very intimate portrait of Lu Hsün, evincing great feminine perception in describing his home, his parties, his working habits and his illness" (p. 117).

In the 1930's, neither Hsiao Chun nor his wife seemed to have been directly involved in the literary quarrels occurring among the groups in Shanghai, "although their intimacy with Lu Hsün brought them close to the antagonistic parties" (T. A. Hsia). Goldman, 1967, substantiates this (p. 21), but indicates (p. 9) that Hsiao Chun may have been a member of the League of Left Wing Writers, and states (p. 12) that Hsiao Chun was a member of Lu Hsün's organization, Chinese Literary Workers, set up after the dissolution of the League, opposing Chou Yang's United Association of Chinese Writers.
Caught on the fringes of the dispute over "correct" literary ideology (which was to engulf him fully when it raged anew in Yenan in 1942) and finding his anti-Japanese works on the KMT's proscribed list (Snow, 1942, p. ix), Hsiao Chun was being prepared for the next phase of his life—the political arena.

On October 19, 1936, Lu Hsun died. Schyns, et al. (p. 93) tells us that in 1937 The Third Generation was published and "during the early years of the Sino-Japanese War, he [Hsiao Chun] edited the literary supplement of the newspaper Hsin Min Pao in Chen-tu. Later he went to Yenan . . . ." Snow (1942) tells us, regarding Hsiao Chun, "once our paths almost crossed in Shansi, soon after the war began. Not long afterward I learned that he had joined some guerrillas in Shantung. The last I heard, he was in far off Chinese Turkestan. His recent war stories have not been many, but they are very popular . . . ." (p. xvi).

Snow's remark about narrowly missing Hsiao Chun in Shansi brings to mind a note of Snow's which results from his journalistic activities in the Communist controlled area which may lend to better understanding the critical situation in which Hsiao Chun and his fellow writers were soon to find themselves. In Random Notes on Red China (Snow, 1957) Snow's interview with Po Ku, then "Chairman of the Northwest Government, "reveals a rising antipathy towards the recently joined intellectuals whose trials, for the most part, in sharp contrast with those of survivors of Chiang Kai-shek's Fifth Extermination Campaign, the Long March,
and the Sixth Extermination Campaign\(^1\), consisted of a romantic, idealized Jacobinism, similar to that described by T. A. Hsia in *Enigma of the Five Martyrs* (Summer, 1962), bred out of a bohemian life amidst KMT persecution and suppression, and internecine party squabbling where the most noble sacrifices and battle scars resulted from demonstrations and riots, arrests accompanied with (often brutal) interrogation, and dying a lingering death from consumption or pleurisy while dedicating one's last ounce of strength to the "cause." Po Ku, during the interview, told Mr. Snow of the problems foreseen by the Party leaders: "there is a real danger of the party becoming dominated by the petty-bourgousie point of view if we take in too many intellectuals over a long period" (Snow, 1957, p. 23).

Hsiao Chün arrived in Yenan in the late 1930's. His popularity with the masses, due to his long-standing call for resistance to the Japanese coupled with the party's political desire to have a renowned Manchurian in the ranks of the government, brought Hsiao membership in the legislative body of the "Shensi-Kansu-Ningshsia Border Region Government Assembly" (Goldman, 1967, p. 27).

Hsiao Chün, at this time, "surrounded himself with a coterie of refugee writers and youths from Manchuria" (Goldman, 1967, p. 27); this group may be the "Northwest Group" referred to in uncomplimentary terms (with respect to their literary ability) by Schyns, et al. (1948, p. xxix).

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We will never know for certain how much of the dissatisfaction which eventually manifested itself in the writings of the newcomers was justified. The stringencies of life described by Snow in *Red Star Over China* and *Battle for Asia* while then an accepted and accustomed aspect of life for the old campaigners, could not but be felt to be less than severe deprivations to the romantics among the newcomers resulting in a severe dampening of their ardent idealism and a growing sense of disappointment and bitterness, much like that which many colonists of the New World felt when they discovered that all wasn't milk, honey, and euphoria. According to Goldman, "the influx of intellectuals and writers became another disruptive factor. Many, accustomed to the unregimented life of the large cities, continued to think and behave in an undisciplined fashion" (p. 18).

Beginning at least as early as 1940, the bitterness and disappointment of some of the writers began to appear in their productions. The party sponsored criticism of these complaints, which were rapidly becoming a trend, found its culmination in the rectification (cheng feng) campaign.

Goldman (1967, p. 27) tells us that in the latter part of March, 1942, Hsiao Chun finally entered the arena where verbal daggers were being hurled by writers and cadres when he wrote an essay entitled "On 'Love' and 'Forebearance' among Comrades" in which he "reveals his

2. Although undocumented, Goldman's view on this point (1967, p. 18) merits consideration: "at that time the leadership cadres were losing some of their zeal for revolution and the spartan life. They were becoming more concerned with finding and maintaining their niches in the bureaucracy."
disappointment that in Yenan 'the wine of love among comrades has become
more and more diluted' and he seems to be preoccupied above all with
ethical concepts . . . " (Fokemma, 1965, p. 19). With reference to this
essay, Goldman (1967) goes somewhat further:

Like his master Lu Hsün, Hsiao undertook to act as spokes­
man for the young intellectuals, especially for the ones who
had difficulty conforming to the party's demands. He tried to
make the party aware of some of their problems. "Some comrades
have become dissatisfied with their environment--with the
people around them . . . and with their work. They have even
become weary of the revolution." . . . Hsiao explained that
their dissatisfaction was due to the fact that they were forced
at times to act against their own wishes. They found "revolution
difficult and demanding great sacrifices." . . . Hsiao pleaded
that their shortcomings be overlooked and that they be given
another chance (p. 28-9).

According to Goldman (p. 42), in the all-out attack on Wang Shih-wei
following Mao's "Talks" in May, 1942, Hsiao Chun alone did not capitu­
late and thoroughly repudiate Wang.

In October, 1942, Hsiao Chun came under formal criticism, party
sponsored and largely carried out by the writers who had capitulated
during the attack on Wang Shih-wei. Hsiao neither accepted the criticism
nor avowed to reform and was sent off to the "countryside" for labor
reform; but, although there was no public or written confession, "he
must have made some accomodation with the regime because his fate was
no worse than that of his colleagues" (Goldman, 1967, p. 45).

Hsiao Chun continued to write and continued covertly to criti­
cize the thought reform of the cheng-feng movement, but he was tolerated
either because of his popularity with the masses and the fact that not
so very long ago he had been highly praised by the party, or because the situation, while remaining sore, no longer was as tense as it had been earlier.

In 1946, Hsiao Chün returned to Manchuria with the Red Army (Goldman, 1967, p. 72) "where he was regarded as the region's foremost author and was praised for his ability to express the feelings and the thoughts of the ordinary Manchurian peasant" (Goldman). With party assistance, in Harbin, Hsiao established Wen-hua pao (Cultural News) a journal published every four days which first appeared May 4, 1947 (Yang I-fan, 1956, p. 6) and became affiliated with the artistic and cultural circles from which he collected a following of young writers who met at the bookstore which, together with a publishing house, Hsiao Chün had set up (Goldman, 1967, p. 73).

However, he maintained his independence, and soon his editorials and essays critical of the Communist methods of re-education and land reform in Manchuria, Soviet activities in Manchuria, the affiliation of the CCP with the Soviet Union, and the oft-times brutal methods of the cadres brought the wrath of the party upon his head.

In the midst of the life-death struggle between the Communists and KMT forces, he "opposed the use of force against Chiang Kai-shek" (Fokemma, p. 32) arguing the brotherhood of all Chinese and arguing that it was the workers and peasants who suffered most the horrors of war. Hsiao Chün, the individual, was a humanitarian and a nationalist, and he was sickened by the resumption of the internecine struggle after an interlude of years of carnage between the Chinese and Japanese. C. T.
Hsia (1961) tells us that "in an editorial greeting the new year of 1948 he castigated the Communists as worse than Li Tzu-ch'eng and Chang Hsien-chung, two infamous Ming bandits hitherto unsurpassed in Chinese history for their record of wanton killing and pillage" (p. 277). The editorial was inflammatory, uncomplimentary to the party, provided further fuel for the dissent that was beginning to find voice with the younger writers under Hsiao's influence, and poorly timed because it appeared concurrent with the raising of the anti-Hu Feng campaign.³

Concerning the campaign against Hsiao Chun, Goldman (1967) tells us:

The drive against Hsiao was conducted through a barrage of articles in Shen-huo pao from late August through October of 1948, the very time that criticism against Hu Feng was in full swing in Hong Kong. These articles initiated a more intensive stage of ideological struggle in Manchuria. Full-scale meetings were held in schools, factories, and party organs in the Harbin area, specifically to criticize Hsiao's ideas (p. 80).

In 1948, Hsiao Chun was sentenced to labor reform at the Fushun coal mines in Manchuria, but according to Goldman (p. 85) criticism of his thought continued until the spring of 1949.

Hsiao emerged after "two or three years" and went to live in Peking, where, in October of 1954, he published a revised edition of Village in August and in November published Mine in May⁴ (Goldman, 1967, p. 221). C. T. Hsia (1961, p. 278) tells us that Coal Mine in May is a "routine piece of propaganda." However, after a calm year of acceptance

³ For further information about the attack on Hu Feng and time parallels see Yan I-fan, The Case of Hu Feng (1956). For details on Hsiao Chun's activities in Harbin see Yan I-fan (p. 6-8) and Goldman (1967, pp. 78ff).

⁴ The more accepted title Coal Mine in May is used hereafter.
if not acclaim, in December, 1955, Hsiao Chun again came under attack (Goldman, 1967, p. 221) along with others who had been involved in the Yenan controversy in 1942. After this full-scale attack, Hsiao Chun quietly faded into oblivion. Fokemma tells us that in 1958 Hsiao was criticized by Ma T'ieh-ting for his 1942 article "On 'Love' and 'Forebearance' among Comrades." According to Haruyama Nobora Hsiao Chun had plans for further work before he was silenced at the end of 1955: "the author has been saying that he would next write Age of Aggression and Victorious Age with an intention of making those two based on the material he gathered at Manchuria . . . ." I have encountered nothing which indicates whether Hsiao Chun may be alive or dead. The "study" The Communist Program for Literature and Art in China, by Chao Chung, for Communist China Problem Research Series (1955), which is rivaled in its errors only by its distortions, tells us that after the closing down of Wen-hua pao in Harbin in 1948 "nothing was mentioned of how Shao (sic) would be dealt with but from that time on Shao was heard of no more. However, precisely because the Chinese Communists kept his fate a secret, we can be sure it must have been a tragic one" (p. 59) Not having Chao's depth of perception of Chinese Communist character, I will only venture that if Hsiao Chun is still alive today, he is not publicly active; he would be 62 years old and probably very tired.

I can agree with Chao Chung that Hsiao Chun's fate was tragic, but not in the sense that Chao would have it. Hsiao Chun was a crusader out of his time. There is no place for crusaders in a political arena since in order to be a crusader a certain degree of naïveté is required--
a naivété such as Don Quixote and Lu Hsün also shared with Hsiao Chun—and naivété has no chance before the cold, hard pragmatism and opportunism of political self-seeking. C. T. Hsia in his "epithet" to Hsiao Chun and Ting Ling espouses the jaundiced view which seems to have become orthodox among critics of modern Chinese literature and politics:

Hsiao Chun and Ting Ling especially are typical of the many patriotic and idealistic writers who finally saw through the cruel hoax of Communism and dared to defy tyranny. Their attempt to reassert their integrity deserves all our sympathy and admiration, but there is no reason why we should condone their earlier works as other than crude propaganda. With all the apparent nobility of some of these writers, their gullibility in accepting the Communist doctrine in the first place betrays a want of intelligence essential to the creation of a mature literature (p. 279-80).

Leaving the questionable relationship, if any, of creative ability and gullibility to wiser heads than mine, Mr. Hsia’s statement, aside from reflecting his views on Communism and the school of literary theory to which he subscribes, shows only how far he has missed comprehending the thrust and aspirations of the life of Hsiao Chun, the humanitarian and nationalist. Against the corruption and indifference of the KMT, China’s gentry and bourgeoise, and budding capitalism as it manifested itself in China and Manchuria, Hsiao Chun turned to socialism and communism as a tool—a way to overcome all that was despotic, despicable, and filthy, only to learn too late the truth of Martin Heidegger’s adage—the great man is only great when he gives himself to a cause or to the state and, I might add, once man commits himself to a cause or to the state, he forgoes the freedom of his life and finds his life sucked away by the political necessity of the state which he serves in order to nurture, serve, and sustain the state. Such was the tragic fate of Hsiao Chun.
"CHIH-YEH" IN LITERARY PERSPECTIVE

The two striking elements of "Chih-yeh" are timelessness and suffering—the eternality of human suffering locked in a timeless depression and a placeless forever. Sheer human misery is etched in pictures—pictures of the dormitory, the wind-blown streets, the muddy window-film separating Li Ho from warmth and conviviality, though it is a conviviality which itself embodies the suggestion of human degeneration. The police station with the disheveled and dumb gaping in the dust where they crouch frightened at the base of the catwalks—themselves symbolic in a Kafkaesque grotesquerie—offers a complex of feeling and thought which conveys an endless, ever downward, tortuous and twisted course of dying—inescapably reminding itself, paralleled with the tragic physical and moral degeneration of the central character.

Hsiao Chûn's emphasis is on suffering—individual and general—as a universality of man. It is this emphasis on the community of human suffering that lifts Hsiao Chûn from just his period and places him in a phase of writing not bound by periods, and among the ranks of such writers as Hemingway, Conrad, Chekhov, and Malamud—all sharing a deep, sympathetic understanding of the tragedy of man and in their fiction expressing an underlying concern with man as man and the problem of responsibility to self and to others, especially as others fade in the intensity of self-preservation.
While by no means axiomatic, still a general statement can be made indicative of *vis vitæ* in the works of Conrad, Chekhov, Hemingway, and Malamud: their works reveal them as the creators of dreary worlds without exit, of subcultures drained of vitality and inhabited by pseudo-tragic, sometimes ridiculous, but always pathetic and sad people. Like Hsiao Čün (Snow, 1942, p. xvi) Malamud, Conrad, and Hemingway all read Chekhov; for this reason, after reflecting on some representative examples by these writers, an exploration of the Chekhovian type will serve as a springboard from which to launch an exploration of how Hsiao Čün has achieved the elements of "timelessness" and "suffering" in "Chih-yeh."

In his fiction, Joseph Conrad was not so much interested in his characters advancing in life, as he was preoccupied with man's responsibility to himself, which he believed ultimately hinged on the sodality of man. Conrad's propensity for employing settings and conflicts alien to every day middle-class society indicates his inability to find a suitable answer to his questioning of the tragedy of human life. The theme of guilt and atonement permeates Conrad's works, whether as in *Lord Jim* man strives under the burden of conscious guilt and the need of expiation, or as in *Nigger of the Narcissus* society is made to feel uncomfortable in its reflection of its inseparability from the disintegration of the individual whom it has outcast. In *Under Western Eyes* Razumov parallels the central character in "Chih-yeh" in elements of tragedy, if not in physical decay and suffering. Like Li Ho, Razumov's moral betrayal, though in a different aspect, is in a deed
of physical betrayal. Here, as in "Chih-yeh" the problem explored is not that the central figure has betrayed--sold out, if you will--his fellow man and in so doing sold himself, but the problem instead is an understanding of the reasons for him selling himself. Indirectly the reader senses that while the act was not morally justifiable on the ideal plane, it was inevitable in reality; therein lies the tragic element.

The author is sympathetic, but the plot is not satisfied with our realization of the external elements--the social forces--impinging upon the main character. To attain this end there must be self-realization by the degenerated individual in the true manner of Aristotelian tragedy. In the end Razumov and Li Ho encounter a self-realization, but while Hsiao Chün leaves the future unspoken and open to speculation (with the exception that we know that Li Ho is a dying man), Razumov himself is betrayed and goes to his death reconciled to the justice of it, while ironically, almost with Fate's mocking laughter ringing in our ears, we observe the continuous degeneration of the social process and are forced to ask the question, "why?"

While Conrad claims that he was not influenced by the Russians, it is safe to assume that he at least read Chekhov, and it is certain that he was influenced by Dickens, Balzac, and Stendhal; the latter too reflected Dickens's spell while Balzac felt at least as much the power of Dickens as Dickens did of Balzac. Like Jo in Bleak House, the crime of Razumov and Li Ho was to be born, but their sin of moral transgression, deeper and more Balzacian, determines them as tormented
characters who, although faced often with despair, curse, submit, and even turn aside, yet still cling to a Romantic determination to reject old evidence, to present a new solution that will be bigger than its conglomerate parts.

A distinctive quality of Hemingway's novels is that a sympathetic, strong, purposeful character is pressured, in one way or another, to compromise or surrender. The arresting effect of this mode of portrayal on our sympathies is compounded through our realization that the character to a greater or lesser degree understands and tries to come to grips with his dilemma and that his final decision often leads to tragic consequences, with due consideration to variation, as in *A Farewell to Arms, For Whom the Bell Tolls,* and *The Old Man and the Sea.* Hemingway is often preoccupied with the question of tragedy and youth in life, often concluding on a tragic note or, as with Jake in *The Sun Also Rises,* a sob of despair wherein the character resigns himself to the Cross of a maladjusted life, again a subject for the mocking laughter of the gods.

Generally, the examples given of Conrad and Hemingway reflect one possibility of the Chekhovian plot as exemplified by Chekhov in *"The Horse Thief"* and *"The Black Monk."* Malamud, who also has demonstrated his ability to work with the tragic and mock tragic, seems to give greater emphasis to a Chekhovian variation.

With Chekhov, there is often a portrayal of a character change for the worse. This change occurs when he starts with a protagonist who was at one time sympathetic and full of ambition and subjects him
to some crucial loss which results in his utter disillusionment. He then has to choose between picking up the threads of his life and starting over again or giving up his goals and ambitions altogether. In many works Chekhov exhibits almost a preoccupation with the question of how a person can live after all his ideals, hopes, and goals have been shattered, as in "The Duel," and The Seagull. Chekhov achieves the critical situation of conflict by maneuvering the main character into a position in which, in fact, he has only one real choice he can make. Without recourse to retreat and beginning afresh, he must resign himself to his position or accept the necessity to remodel, or even totally discard, his system of values.

Among his longer works, Malamud best portrays the Chekhovian plot of character change and critical opportunity for regeneration in The Assistant and The Natural. In A New Life Malamud seems to take a fresh outlook of brightness. In this novel the devolution has already occurred and the plot centers on "picking up of the threads of life" and ends almost on a note of savage joy of impending success by which two people will have achieved the task of reconstructing the human personality and freeing it from repression and "the distortion and dismemberment to which it has been subjected in class society" (György Lukács, 1950, p. 5).

Before proceeding, there is one point I should clarify. It is not the purpose of this paper to establish that Hsiao Chun, or that any of the other writers whom I have paralleled with Chekhov were strongly influenced by Chekhov. While this very well may be, I would rather
only suggest that the lives of these men and their understanding of life have lent themselves well to a mode of plot structure and character portrayal of which the similarities to Chekhov far outnumber the differences. Not a minor argument in support of this suggestion may be found in the lives of each writer I have mentioned.

With Dickens, the bourgeois well acquainted with the conditions of lower-class English society, the element of the denigration of the individual under the relentless, pitiless, pressures of society enter gradually into his works marking the gradual process of his own alienation from society. Balzac, tied to the upper-classes, yet alienated through the realization of the need for social reform, finds himself, somewhat like Swift, torn between the consequences of change and the social structure which he reveres. His writings evince a philosophy of despair for the collapse of a world and destruction of a culture in the birth-pangs of a new way of life. Conrad, an orphan and expatriate while still a youth, represents the intellectual with neither home nor roots in search of something indefinable because the roots had already died, questing instead the souls of men repressed by a changing society in the upheaval of the Industrial Revolution. Hemingway, a member of America's "Lost Generation," the age of Fitzgerald, knew a similar intellectual alienation, making him a brother-in-spirit with Chekhov in thought and in a vagabond life of wanderlust seeking a will-o'-the-wisp. In like vagabondage we can trace Hsiao Chun's early years before his arrival--as an expatriate--in Shanghai, in Yenan, or, once returned to Manchuria, in Harbin. Malamud, another alienated
intellectual, the son of Russian immigrants to America to escape from
the anti-Jewish pogroms, had little family life—his parents were first
tied to an egg and butter business and then to a grocery store. He
worked in factories, as a clerk in the Census Bureau, in stores, and
as a high school teacher. The subject of his writings is social in-
justice and man's inhumanity to man. Mark Goldman, in his essay
"Bernard Malamud's Comic Vision and the Theme of Identity" (Critique:
Studies in Modern Fiction, VII: 2, 1965, p. 96), tells us that Malamud's
stories often "take place in a deliberately vague setting of bleak ten-
ment rooms where characters confront one another, and themselves, in a
Kafkaesque parable of pain and suffering, to emerge in some kind of
moral perception."

All the writers discussed, like James, focus the "view-point"
or angle of narration of their fiction upon the actual experience of
living to the extent that the external plot often withers away. Their
area of concern is focused not on outside events, but on the inner life
and the conflicts not infrequently transferred entirely to warring ele-
ments within the individual from the external social forces. They use
psychological realism to portray not so much what people do or say, as
to prove what they actually are; in this they are able to reveal a vast
and chaotic world within even the outwardly mundane character—a char-
acter who while central to the story, is not a hero.

Having placed the Chekhovian plot and character within a fairly
generalized literary spectrum and having indicated some similarity of
the authors's formative backgrounds, a case could conceivably be made
for an archetypal framework, a thematic variation within the context of
hubris. And it is just so. In "Myth As a Device in the Works of
Chekhov" (Myth and Symbol, Bernice Slate, ed., 1963, p. 71-8) Thomas G.
Winner considers the subject of archetypes in Chekhov's works. It is
not my purpose to delve deeply into "mythological echoes and allusions"
(p. 71); however, Mr. Winner's essay further suggests a universality of
the prototype for the Chekhovian type, therefore fixing it not to 19th
Century Russia, or even to a stream of human pathos and suffering inde­
pendant of time or culture. Before studying how Hsiao Chûn has accom­
plished the archetypal pattern of "timelessness" and "suffering," it re­
mains only to explore and develop the elements ingredient to the
Chekhovian theme.

In his introduction to Chekhov: A Collection of Critical Essays
(1967), Robert Louis Jackson tells us,

The inner meaning of the underlying Chekhovian theme . . . . cen­
ters on fated clashes between strong-willed and weak-willed peo­
ple. One might give a slightly different emphasis to this thought
and say that a fundamental philosophical interest of Chekhov is
the relationship, most often tragic, between will and environment,
freedom and necessity, man's character and his fate (p. 2).

This theme is permeated by a philosophy of gentle ruefulness which is a
commentary on the limitation inherent in life and mankind, where mankind
itself represents the victim of man's inhumanity--the injustice in life,
of life, to life--where the individual finds the cards of an intensely
competitive society stacked against him. Suffering is the theme, gro­
tesque and menacing, and Chekhov explores it through "images not of
heroic or unusual people, but of minor pedestrian personalities, people
who have failed to realize themselves" (Jackson, "Introduction," p. 2).
Chekhov's vision of man's striving is non-religious, almost bleak. The norm is something that man seeks, but it is not something given beforehand, established, as it were, a priori by philosophical or theological means. Man is alone. But man's tragedy, for Chekhov, lies primarily not in any absolute helplessness before his fate, but in the fact that he is continually affirming fate's autonomy through abdication of his own responsibility not unlike Ivan's recitation of the "Legend of the Grand Inquisitor" to Alyosha in The Brothers Karamozov.

The image of the hunted animal merges in Chekhov's consciousness with the spectacle of a half-crushed human being to which he is so accustomed. John Gassner, in his essay "The Duality of Chekhov" (Jackson, 1967) tells us that the characters in Chekhov's stories and plays, . . . behave and speak as if they were unaware of having been snared in the net of literature. They seem immersed in the stream of their own lives. They feel for themselves, think their own thoughts, and dream their own dreams; so much so, in fact, that they fly off from the center of action and contribute to the play a centrifugal action [or, on occasion, inaction] of their own (p. 178-79).

Chekhovian tragedy, then, bears witness to a senseless universe in which godlessness deprives human existence of all meaning and justification. Chekhov's works live because of this enlargement of life, that is, because of that poetic generalization which transforms the individual and the contemporary into the typical and universal. The Chekhovian type is superior to his prototype; he represents a profound statement on certain aspects of the human condition.

Robert Jackson ("Introduction," p. 6) further tells us, "man as we find him in Pushkin or Chekhov is revealed in a light that is free
of romantic distortion. Lucid realism always blends with a rich but not sentimental or prettifying compassion." The positive Chekhov adheres to a faith in human potentiality and progress, but the realistic Chekhov lucidly discloses man's tragic actuality. All men suffer and need to move beyond narrow self-interest and visual limitations to encompass the situation of others—the existential dilemma.

Chekhov's character then is the uncomplicated man who, as much as he can, tries to alter his fate within the social confines limiting and mocking him. Chekhov raises, and at times leaves open, the question of despair and futility—the struggle and striving toward what end? His characters are highly individualized and probed into psychologically. For Chekhov the search for truth seems more important than the truth itself. Even more, the search for truth and the belief in an ideal is itself part of reality, part of the truth, and leads to a final moment of self-recognition and reality.

Though the search for truth is participated in by all men, they at times seek desperately to avoid a conscious knowledge of it. But it is at such times that the truth may loom up as the great apocalyptic leviathan, enlightening man as it destroys him. Such it is with Hsiao Chün's Li Ho. In a desperate search to sustain his existence, he finds that in the process he has destroyed the real value of his meager life, humanity. With consummate care, Hsiao Chün has built a pattern of universal human suffering in Li Ho's quest which ends not in a self abnegation of human consciousness, but in a searing acuteness of self-recognition and reality.
In *The Craft of Fiction* (1931, rev. ed.) Percy Lubbock observes: "The literary critic, with nothing to point to but the mere volume in his hand, must recognize that his wish to be precise, to be definite, to be clear and exact in his statements, is hopelessly vain" (p. 11). The great disadvantage of any attempt at literary criticism is its radical ignorance. This ignorance, apparent at the inception of all attempts at criticism, by the very need for criticism, predestines the aims of the attempt to failure because to be critical is to be narrow in the crucial act or process of judgment. With this in mind I will first discuss the contents of "Chih-yeh." Then, in my consideration of the form of the story, how it is made is the only question I shall ask; and though this question will unavoidably raise a good many others, these I shall follow no further than can be helped.

The plot of "Chih-yeh" is uncomplicated, the theme is moral, the content is archetypal and the form is social tragedy. Li Ho, with a chronic respiratory illness has been unemployed and living in a public dormitory for almost a year. Just prior to beginning a job as a secretary at the local police station for the *Kempeitai* (the Japanese equivalent to the Gestapo) of the Japanese occupation forces, he visits his friend Mr. H and is forced to return to his dormitory in the depths of a bitterly cold night resulting in a turn for the worse in his illness. He abhors the nature of the department to which he is
assigned; but he soon becomes inured to the nature of the work of the department and to the unpleasantness with which his job brings him in contact, and when he receives his first month's pay he goes to see his friends Mr. and Mrs. H so that they might join him in rejoicing his good fortune after the year of famine only to find out that he has played a part, though minor, in the death of another of H's friends, a participant in the anti-Japanese resistance movement, and realizes that he has alienated his one friend and has morally betrayed his fellow man.

To speak of "Chih-yeh" as a moral story is not to suppose it to be moral in the traditional sense of the word; the characters are not served up in a sauce of morality. The reader is called upon to make an existential commitment, to come down from the stands and onto the playing field, from the warmth and security of his study to the dismal desolation of a dying man's fading existence in a dormitory, "Cold, gloomy, the walls completely alive with frost . . . ." In answering the call for an existential commitment the reader must go beyond the customary request of realism--the request to make a moral judgment on the basis of the interaction of the character's nature with the total sum of objective circumstances. He can no longer consent to make an isolated value judgment of the character's "good" and "bad" qualities, but he must stand looking over the shoulder of the character, thereby seeing beyond that character's range of vision and confronting the subjective truth that the character, Li Ho, can sustain his life only by denying his humanity and that his life-instinct--the blind will to
survive—causes him to turn his face from the consequences of his actions. Herein the problem of suffering is formally stated, and the emphasis is upon existentially grappling with the fact of the universality of suffering in order to comprehend the enormity of the moment of moral crisis. The reader does not forgive Li Ho; he understands him. To forgive is to be sanctimonious. If the reader makes the existential commitment he recognizes that the individual human stake is the tragic predicament of the world—and suggests by extension that the moral value of his conclusion, if he can make one, extends to all mankind. With this commitment the reader finds himself face to face with a myth, an endless story. In the existential encounter with the reality of the injustice in life, of life, the moral question in "Chih-yeh" becomes more than a classroom study in ethics; it is instead a participation in alienation and suffering. From out of the existential encounter I am reminded of the words of Lu Hsün translated from What is Required of Us As Fathers Today in Lu Hsün ch'uan-chi (Complete Works) by T. A. Hsia (1968).

Let the awakened man burden himself with the weight of tradition and shoulder up the gate of darkness. Let him give unimpeded passage to the children so that they may rush to the bright, wide-opened spaces and lead happy lives henceforth as rational human beings (pp. 146-47).

Thus, out of tragedy, man should gather the threads of his existence and begin afresh; but the distance between what should be and what is is often as vast as life itself. As his story unfolds before us, Li Ho establishes the universal pattern of suffering and social tragedy un-
veiling an understanding much like that of the Actor in the final moments of Maxim Gorki's *The Lower Depths*.

In taking up again the consideration of "how it is made," is actually dealing with technique. To speak of technique is to speak of nearly everything of which the work is a composite including the substance of content and the intangible of arrangement. Technique is the means by which the writer's experience, which is his subject matter, compels him to the discovery, exploration, and development of his subject in his attempt to convey its meaning. Allen Tate in "Techniques of Fiction" (William Van O'Connor, ed., 1948) writes,

Technique is really what T. S. Eliot means by "convention": any selection, structure, or distortion, any form or rhythm imposed upon the world of action; by means of which, it should be added, our apprehension of the world of action is enriched or renewed. In this sense, everything is technique which is not 'the lump of experience itself . . . (p. 11).

Point of view, one aspect of technique, is of primary importance to the meaning of "Chih-yeh." The story is narrated by the protagonist, therefore, we see the world from Li Ho's eyes. The people and scenes he draws for us are sketchy, but the manner and the details limned for us not only provide for a skillful and complex psychological development of an outwardly uncomplicated character, but give emphasis to the individual as separate from but framed by a passively crushing society. In looking at the scene through Li Ho's eyes, we occupy a position above and to the side—we can objectively look over his shoulder—from where we see him against the full setting. While we see nothing that he does not see, hear nothing that he does not hear, be-
cause he is our narrator and he alone can open his thoughts to us, as
the sounds of the "interrogation" carry to the room where he waits
alone, we are enabled to fully feel his horror and repugnance at war
with the dire urgency and need which has brought him there for the
job and will keep him there. In modern fiction, where the great sub-
ject is man alone in society, in this view of man isolated we see
developed to the highest possible point of skill, sensitivity, and
power of technique the placing of man wholly into his physical setting.
The action is not stated from the point of view of the author; it is
rendered in terms of situation and scene.

Henry James said that the work of fiction must be "a direct
impression of life." Using a first person narrator to reflect this
"direct impression of life" allows complexities as deep as life itself
to be ordered, fixed, and dramatized into arrested action. Through
direct impression of sensation at a particular moment, that is, by
rendering what the character alone could see and hear---to experience,
charges the scenes with actuality--actuality rendered by focus on some-
thing without his thoughts affecting his impressions.

From point to point we follow Li Ho, always looking back to the
subject itself--not Li Ho, but a condition of life--in order to under-
stand the logic of the course he pursues. Following such a course we
find ourselves creating a design from which the whole emerges, in the
end to confess itself as a timeless pattern of suffering in life.
There is flow and break in the development of the story, just as life
itself follows no conscious development in its often twisted mockery
of our sense of justice. For his subject, is it possible for Hsiao Chun to conceive of a better course to pursue? When we speak of "Chih-yeh," we must speak of it as a whole—as a picture, if you will. Its moral is in its design and without the design the author has chosen, the scattered scenes would not achieve the picture.

Percy Lubbock (1931, p. 49) tells us "the subject is not given at all unless the movement of the wheel of time is perceptible." This theorem is in keeping with the time-honored time-space dictum of Coleridge's Theory of Life and poses not a small problem in consideration of passage of time and change of circumstances in "Chih-yeh." This problem has been faced by other writers in the past and at least troubled Henry James enough to cause him to discourse on it. After probing the difficulties presented in "Chih-yeh," I will look at how James wrestled with his similar problem in "Roderick Hudson."

The time span of the entire story encompasses thirty-six days; by my calculations, from November 25 through January 1. Within a few days of the outset, Li Ho's health has abruptly changed for the worse. Within approximately a month from beginning his job, his revulsion toward the brutality to which he is exposed has modified to the point that very few things upset him. He is still far from enjoying his work, and would prefer to leave it at the office. We don't see the changes occurring—they are only hinted at or revealed obliquely. The question of time raises itself in two aspects: first, can we accept the reality of the passage of time, that is, does the attributed time-space elapse accord sufficiently with our credulity to account for the change from
chronic to (inferred) terminal illness and Li Ho's changed response to the nature of the work in which he is involved? Second, if the changes can be deemed credible, does the degree of change in Li Ho's attitude indicate a moral flaw—is his attitude perhaps actually pseudo-sanctimonious—or can we accept the change without a lessening of our cognizance of him as a sympathetic figure?

In The Theory of the Novel (1967), Philip Stevick, from the preface to "Roderick Hudson," has edited Henry James's thoughts on the problem of time, foreshortening, and the conveyance of an impression of reality:

... the time-scheme of the story is quite inadequate, and positively to that degree that the fault but just fails to wreck it ... Everything occurs ... too punctually and moves too fast: Roderick's disintegration ... swallows two years in a mouthful, proceeds quite not by years, but by weeks and months ... appearing to present him as a morbidly special case ... My mistake ... is that, at the rate at which he falls to pieces, he seems to place himself beyond our understanding and our sympathy. These are not our rates, we say; we ourselves, certainly, under like pressure ... would make more of a fight (p. 168-69).

Having stated this apparent shortcoming, James then explores the nature of the problem:

I felt too ... how many more ups and downs ... my young man should have had to know, how much more experience it would have taken ... either to make him go under ... the question was ... how to make it present to the reader? How boil down so many facts ... so that the distilled result, the produced appearance, should have intensity, lucidity, brevity, beauty, all the merits required for my effect? (p. 169).

Finally, after noting that genius alone, in the shade of Balzac, is not troubled by the "eternal time-question," James hedges and offers what I interpret to be his mea culpa:
This eternal time-question is accordingly . . . always there and always formidable; always insisting on the effect of the great lapse and passage . . . . What I clung to as my principle of simplification was the precious truth that I was dealing with an Action, and that no action . . . was ever made historically vivid without a certain factitious compactness; though this logic indeed opened up horizons and abysses of its own (p. 170-71).

Seemingly, the writer must tackle the admittedly insurmountable question head on and hope for the best, leaving questions, such as Li Ho's source of food during the term of his unemployment, open-ended as unimportant to the main thrust of the story and unessential both for its completeness and to maintain the tone of realism.

Returning now to a consideration of the sufficiency of "movement of the wheel of time" in "Chih-yeh," it is essential to make an existential commitment. It is my view that there are sufficient factors revealed to justify a belief that the change in physical and mental condition is credible and that despite the character degeneration, Li Ho is unchanged as a sympathetic figure; the moral degeneration has already occurred and can be laid at the feet of society. What are these "sufficient" factors? Li Ho's chronic illness was a debilitating factor even before the loss of his job, which at the outset of the story has occurred at least almost a year earlier. Jobless, sick, lonely, without money, decent clothing, or means to enjoy life in any way or care for himself, and living in the morale-crushing gloom of a cold, unsympathetic, public dormitory--it would try a romantic hero not to suffer decline, degradation of spirit, and further debilitation of health.
That it is approaching the heart of the Manchurian winter gains in meaning through reading the following excerpts from T. A. Hsia's *Gate of Darkness* portrayal of Ch'ü Ch'iu-po's journey to Russia in 1920:

As he stepped out of the [Mukden] station, on the early morning of October 20, what greeted him was a vast, empty field, closed in by rows of bare, shivering trees. Frost was everywhere, hard as ice . . . (p. 27).

In the latter part of December the group stopped at . . . Chita . . . for more than two weeks. Chita, at forty degrees below zero, Réamur, was suffocatingly cold. A few minutes' walk in the open covered Ch'ü's overcoat with a layer of frost, and he began to complain of his lungs (p. 30).

Ch'ü Ch'iu-po developed tuberculosis and at least twice while in Russia spent time in a sanatorium. Just prior to having "the routine of the sanatorium" start again, T. A. Hsia tells us that Ch'ü was walking at night and "found the freezing air unbearably oppressive. He met a woman . . . who supported him all the way back to the hotel. Blood came out with the cough" (p. 41-2). Li Ho has no sanitoriums but only the memory of the doctor's words of advice: "more rest, don't drink, also don't smoke cigarettes, don't worry yourself over trivialities, and your illness will gradually pass . . ." In taking the job, Li Ho had a choice—he could either die or deny his scruples. A parallel might be drawn with the sonner kommandos of the World War II extermination camps. The situation of the tragic self-dissolution of ideals because of economic necessity as in the case of Li Ho can credibly result in the reduction of the human being as a commodity which may be bought—body, and converted or numbed—mind, but who can retain a soul (?). In the final analysis, there are sufficient factors, skill-
fully presented or suggested in the story, to allow for the physical disintegration and spiritual degeneration without necessitating moral degeneration and the demuement of Li Ho as a sympathetic figure, and it is through the physical disintegration and spiritual degeneration that the movement of the wheel of time is made perceptable.

In conclusion to my study of the major points of technique employed in "Chih-yeh" I will consider the aspect of archetype. In Wilbur S. Scott's introduction to "The Archetypal Approach" (Five Approaches to Literary Criticism, 1962) he tells us,

Anthropological literature seeks to restore to us our entire humanity, a humanity which values the primitive element in human nature. In contrast to the splitting of the human mind by emphasizing the warfare between the conscious and the subconscious processes, anthropological literature re-establishes us as members of the ancient race of man (p. 25).

The archetype reflected in "Chih-yeh" has come in for more than its share of emphasis in contemporary fiction and has even received recognition by the motion picture industry.

The tragic archetype finds many expressions. The pattern of expression here is that of man in a situation of great physical and mental stress. Following the pattern, the protagonist fails to maintain focus on his life situation, that is, he loses clear perspective of himself in his value-oriented relationship to his environment. In unconscious mental accommodation to demands made on him for sheer physical or mental survival, the protagonist may rationalize, compromise, or even deviate from a rational pattern of behavior to the extent, or for so long a period of accommodation to the environmental demands made upon
him for self-survival, that he loses moral perspective of the actual situation in terms of his core-value orientation. When, eventually, in the denouement, the protagonist becomes cognizant of the position to which his distorted perception of reality has brought him, there occurs the fulfillment of Aristotelian tragedy which may, but not necessarily has to, result in the death of the protagonist.

As Hsiao Ch'üin skillfully leads Li Ho through this archetypal pattern we sense; rather than see, the forces of nature in Li Ho's physical and social environment acting themselves out upon him, first reducing him physically and mentally by long illness, poverty, and demoralizing surroundings. The nadir of his decline is reached just when Li Ho sees the possibility of salvation--a job!! At this point, what little force there is binding his physical being to his basic values is ravaged by the effects of his journey back to the dormitory. His mind cries out, "Death be quick!" When he returns to consciousness two days later, we see a creature the slightest nudge away from rationalizing his most sacred ideals for the sake of self-survival. Once the initial step was taken, in full realization of what the job which offered survival entailed, it easily followed that Li Ho's physical being would draw a defensive curtain between his conduct and his moral being. When this curtain was drawn open by Mr. H., Li Ho fought to keep it closed--a condition necessary for him, a basically moral man, to carry on in a mode of existence which violated the principles of his ethical being ("How was he questioned? This was a bit unpleasant! Now, your bringing it up again makes it seem as if I see it again, and
thinking about him makes me feel uncomfortable . . . ."). When a man's conduct in life goes so fully against the grain of his values, his mind, in order to survive against the opposing forces of id and superego, creates a defense mechanism without which the individual surely could not go on as he is. In the climax of the story, Li Ho's defenses are shattered and we are left with a view of him, his mind confronted with the enormity of his transgression against his values--a situation from which he might move in only three directions: he might destroy himself; he might reject his values and deny his humanity; or he might try to pick up the threads of his life and start anew--no easy task for a man in his physical and emotional state. But we don't see these alternatives. Hsiao Chün, for reasons we can only speculate about, did not go that far. But the point where he left off was sufficient and we are left with the realization that Li Ho, caught in this final moment of anguish, is doomed for all eternity to suffer in the realization of his transgression against his fellow man.
APPENDIX I

"THE JOB"

Coughing caused me to bury my chin as deeply as possible in the collar of my overcoat; at the same time I tugged and tugged at my hat attempting to get both ears inside. This was absolutely impossible, my too long hair entirely filled the hat and it was only possible to let my ears stick out—like my nose, exposed.

Each time I went out this pattern of preparation was followed. The old fellow who kept watch over the dormitory also every day, according to pattern, stood close to me—usually always at the same distance—leaning against a cot beside the door in a manner as if supervising me, but this couldn't have been. Always he waited until my preparations were completed, then he, as always, according to pattern spoke in this manner:

"Mr. Li, please go early and return early. The weather is very cold! Opening and barring the gate is not easy!"

With his hand he wiped the nasal drip from his beard. Sometimes he also used the corner of his jacket to wipe his continuously tearing eyes. As for me? I too knew this was not easy—not easy—but still what else was there to do? Therefore, I always spoke to him contritely:

"Old fellow, I'm really sorry, wait until I get a job, then things will be better, I certainly . . . ." Certainly what? I had
never concluded. Continuing from that "certainly," I was unable to stop coughing. Fortunately the old one never asked what should follow this "certainly." His manner was such that he never seemed to consider the matter.

"Fine!! Wait until everyone returns and then you can sleep peaceably! Perhaps I won't be returning this evening—Chhaw—Chhaw—Chhaaw . . ."

With much difficulty I could stop the coughing; afterwards I would make a gesture to the old one to close the door. Today, however, the old one didn't follow his usual pattern. He still woodenly held his place. That expressionless face full of wrinkles turned toward the lamp. I turned my head and looked at him, and he, still stroking his beard, said, "Did you hear? If you have nothing to do then return a little earlier! It is much warmer in the room than on the street. Ahh! There is no help for young men who are stubborn like this . . . ."

I did not answer the old one's remarks. Further, I had no answer--and an answer was not essential. Those words, alike with the light that radiated through a seam in the door, quickly melted away behind me--also from my thoughts.

The main gate is situated close to the end of Artillery Avenue facing the east. This so-called gate had no door leaves. There was only a three-sided wooden framework, like the honorific arch of a Japanese shrine. Only, this frame is often in danger of being blown down by the wind.
As soon as one leaves the boundary of the courtyard, from Pine Flower River—which forms a T-shaped character with the street—the northwest wind sweeps along and very quickly penetrates one's every pore! I tightly clenched my hands in my two pockets. My pockets, ordinarily empty, this time seemed still bigger, my clenched hands alone suspended in them. I was really ill-at-ease—a kind of nauseous feeling like I wanted to throw up, which I strongly resisted, but the scratching again started in my throat—the tears which had been roused by my recent coughing were not yet dry and new tears began to appear. These troubled my vision causing the whole road to be a little indistinct. My eyelashes were in danger of being frozen together. While I didn't dare to close my eyes a new fit of coughing wracked me, and I had to squat down, temporarily hunching my body. In this way I somewhat reduced the surface blown and beaten by the river wind. I waited like this until after that which insisted on coming up was vomited, and with my sleeve wiped the fast-congealing tears . . . . In this manner I stood up, but before my body resumed a degree of erectness a new feeling of nausea and a new bout of coughing started once more. Not until I was troubled in this manner through five repetitions of standing and squatting while my forehead was bathed in perspiration was I able to attain a degree of calm; then I again set off toward H's residence, trodding the avenue of new-fallen snow.

Unlike previously, my legs were somewhat different—lighter, stronger . . . dzu-jyaah, dzu-jyaah . . . the sound of the snow crunched beneath my shoes was also very resonant. In my heart was a
feeling of fullness and calm such as I had not felt previously this past year. I thought, when I see Mr. H, at first I will not tell him that I have already found a job. It would be best to make him guess, to guess what fortunate condition had befallen me. Further, I ought to lay a small wager with him. If he loses, I'll tell him afterwards. In this way, won't he certainly be still happier? Yes, when I go in I will certainly feign a manner of unexpected good fortune entirely different from the ordinary and startle him. I'll startle him into putting down his pen to question me. His eyes will certainly flash still more ... he will be able to take this story of mine as a subject and write a very good novel, and won't the selling price certainly make him want to invite me to a very good dinner! ... also, he has been very concerned about my job ....

The distance of my journey really could not be considered short. There is at least approximately three li. If I were to walk it every day, I still fear that I would not be able to walk the distance without stopping. Here the street lamps are not as many as those on Central Avenue; also there are no large stores. Although there are some newspaper and tobacco shops on the corners or small wineshops and so forth ... really, they are certainly not willing to waste electricity and light up the area they front on the street in the way the larger stores do. Stingingly, they do not have even so much as a door lamp. There are some shops through the windows of which there are five.

5. There are three Chinese li to the U. S. mile.
penetrates the little brightness that ventures to pass through the bleared, vapor-clouded, ice-clad glass. When I still had money—no—that is to say, when I still was employed, I, too, frequently made purchases at these small shops; for example, such things as soap and toothpaste. Yet there also was a time I drank a half-glass of wine and ate a slice of sausage in those little wine shops. The greater number of the drinkers in there were "gypsy" spendthrifts, aged beggars, "gypsy girls" and children who had not yet reached adulthood but who had already become pale and gaunt from eating heroin . . . . almost all of them had the customer qualifications of having the means to buy a glass or a half-glass of samshoo⁶ with which to obtain warmth in there through half the night. If there are many more extravagant customers, they will be asked by the proprietor to leave for a while, to go out in the street or to go to another place. No need to worry; in a period of time which is never very long, everyone of them returns. Drinking wine, they have the energy to sing and pound their feet on the wooden floor making it resonate trraa . . . taa . . . trraa . . . ta . . . . They will follow in this way continually until the time when the closing of the wine shop is announced. Once outside, they will hail one another with shouts, then separately run off. Where is it that they would all run off to? This I have never before thought to ask about. Only my very warm dormitory of that time and my present lodgings are so completely different—also there wasn't such an old fellow like this one—but I also often would not return until midnight.

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These were the doings of last winter. Now that wine shop still follows the same pattern. In the window, like before, glares a bright, yellow electric light, silhouettes also still moving to and fro, and, too, the large one—the proprietor of the wine shop, sporting his full beard, just as I clearly remember him. Many times in the past he has shaken hands with me—at those times I was employed, you know? My conduct in the wine shop had already reached an affectation of free living, although I only was a thirty-dollar-a-month clerk, and moreover every time only drank one-half glass of wine and ate one or two slices of sausage—sometimes also eating several meat dumplings and drinking a cup of tea... yet never once did I eat lunch. Still, no matter how many guests in the wineshop, not once was I ever asked to leave. That time was one in which I really was fortunate! I don't know but with my present changed circumstances, would I still receive such preferential treatment? Since I have not had a job, I haven't gone there even once. That wine glass and sausage... so remote! These were the doings of a year ago, or could it have been a year?!

To follow after wine drinking was not my inclination. While I was employed monthly I would go to the doctor for an examination, and he would say, "More rest, don't drink; also, don't smoke cigarettes, don't worry yourself over trivialities, and your illness will gradually pass..." After the examination, I customarily would give him three dollars. In this way, of my thirty-dollar-a-month salary, every
month I would generally draw out one-third\(^7\) to see the doctor. Sometimes he would also give me the name of some strengthening medicine, some "cod-liver-oil" kind of thing of which I also took two bottles. Later on, I felt that this was too troublesome, and after I left the doctor I casually tore up that part which was written in a barbarous and beautiful foreign writing, and carelessly threw it away. In the end I simply no longer went to be examined as the cost of the examination which I saved I was then able to spend bit by bit at that wine shop. At that time I thought: why is it that the doctor says these useless words? I only ask him am I going to die soon or not? Or, perhaps, how it will end, or what does rest have to do with me? Perhaps he doesn't know the kind of man that I am; isn't to rest to starve to death? Afterwards, I knew that I had wrongly blamed the doctor. The doctor, because of his occupation, so long as he encounters sick people who live as I do, he must speak to them like this: "more rest, don't drink; also, don't smoke cigarettes, don't worry yourself over trivialities, and your illness will gradually pass . . . ."

It has been more than a year and I have not been back for an examination. How can I know if there has been any degree of improvement? Wait! Don't I have a job?—today is the twenty-fifth—I will begin working tomorrow, I then can plan on having five barren days until the first, but from the first on shouldn't there be a salary? Therefore, at the end of the month I should have a surplus of more than three

\(7\) This error, either of the typesetter or a mental slip of the author, is repeated throughout the story
dollars. Then I ought to go to the doctor for an examination. Going on the way I have been will certainly never do! I certainly must pull myself together, at least if I am to get well I ought not go against what the doctor says. Aren't I still very young? Why should I let the old one laugh at me . . . . When I see Mr. H. I will certainly tell him this plan . . . .

The river wind no longer blew and beat so bitterly from behind. In this fashion I was almost to the middle of Central Avenue. I need only turn the street corner, not more than several tens of steps, at most it won't exceed one hundred paces, then I'll be at Mr. H's residence. That young gateman knows me, he'll not go so far as to refuse to open the gate for me, will he? It can't be said that it's late.

"Hey! Please open the gate I want to go to Hr. H's place."

"Still visiting at this time?" The doorman's entire face and chin cheerfully encased by a hat and the collar of his overcoat left only two eyes, a nose, and a mouth which spoke. His coat collar was deeply coated with white frost. It was only after a long while that he opened the gate. My coughing began anew. At the same time, under the allurement of the doorman's leather collar and hat, my ears and nose seemed to have regained sensation. Because of the unbearable pain, I urgently stamped my feet.

"If you intend to go, please go early! If it is too late there will be no one to open the door. My master has commanded, the conditions of the year are too unsettled . . . . It is not easy to distinguish between good people and bad people . . . ."
"Uh-huh!" I replied, at the same time thinking, why was the lout disagreeable like this today? Has Mr. H offended him? It really isn't fitting that Mr. H should live in the courtyard of a landlord like that. The greater number of his friends are poor. In any case I thought, from tomorrow I will be a man with a job, and it is better to come less often. I don't want to inconvenience Mr. H.

I am afraid to say it, but I am more familiar with Mr. H's home than with the place where I stay. One only has to pull on the outer door and the door's lower corner rubs the bricked ground with a rasping sound. Every time I have to wipe the dirt or snow accumulated on the bottom of my shoes outside to save causing Mr. H's wife time and effort cleaning the floor. But today, however, I couldn't pay attention to this because my ears and nose were frozen to the point that they felt almost as though they weren't part of me. Owing to this I didn't think to take my snow-clogs off.

The room is certainly different from outside! In the past it has always seemed like living in a world which had two seasons. They were the same always, living in this small box-shaped room. Mr. H's wife gives me a cup to tea. Mr. H is not at home. At the beginning, with my face and my nose and ears ... paining with a sort of heart-rending burning, and that unstoppable coughing, I forget everything else. The interesting things which I had thought about on the road ... I even totally neglect the question which Mr. H's wife asks me.
I have just a swallow of tea to compose myself, my body spasming with shivers, when Mr. H returns, the mouth of his collar also coated with white frost.

"It's cold!" he calls out as he enters the door. "Ah! Is it you?" He reaches out to grasp my hand, I very quickly pull back and he discovers that he hasn't taken his gloves off and understands the reason for my pulling back my hand. Thereon, he pats his two leather gloves, saying, "It's cold as iron!"

For the moment we all drink tea in silence. At the same time I think, how ought I tell them that I have a job? I must consider my first plan to be a failure.

"I've gotten a job!"

"You what? Really?" Mr. H begins just like I had thought he would, his eyes especially brighten, but as I continue his eyes lower and stare into the tea cup which he holds in front of his breast with both hands, avails himself of a swallow of tea, and tightens his mouth a little.

"What job? Still a clerk?" This is asked by Mr. H's wife.

"Why, naturally! Other than that what employment would be given him? Do you need to ask?" Mr. H gives by way of reply, seeming that he isn't happy about me being a clerk.

"How much will you get a month?"

"The amount hasn't been settled on yet--," I said.
"It will be twenty dollars at most!" Mr. H states very determinedly. However, in my heart I hold hopes for thirty dollars: ten for lodging, ten for eating, and another ten besides for an examination once a month. Whatever is left I can use as I wish to go occasionally to that small wine shop to drink half a cup of wine and in addition, eat a slice of sausage, all with nothing to hinder me. The big shop-keeper with the full beard will certainly still be intimate as before. I also should give the old one who watches the dormitory a dollar . . . .

"In general it is better than being unemployed for the better part of the year!" Mr. H's wife says this in a comforting tone of voice. Mr. H, this time, however, puts his glass down on the table so heavily that the water almost splashes out, and indignantly says:

"For twenty or thirty dollars you should bury men alive?" Mr. H's wife and I do not in the least comprehend the reason for his talking this way. There is total silence, then H continues to speak: "He is ill . . . to a point such as this, and still must work . . . . 'clerking' is most unsuitable to your condition, do you understand? If this is not being buried alive, what is?"

My cough begins to give me trouble. For a while the room is filled by my coughing.

Through a long while we drink tea—not speaking.

Outside the window there is someone speaking. I listen. It is the voice of the gatekeeper. He knocks at the windowpane with his hand and says, "Mr. H, isn't your friend leaving yet? It's after 10:00."
I reach out to get my hat saying, "I must go. Tomorrow I'll be going to work." Mr. H, however, holds me back; he says that it's too cold outside, at the same time he replies to the gatekeeper:

"Lock your gate! My friend isn't going tonight--why is there always this kind of annoyance recently?"

At that time I am thinking of the river wind, and the snow, and the old one . . . .

"He's staying?" The gatekeeper, with a half-playful, half-serious tone coloring his voice, repeats, "Staying?"

"He's staying."

"My master has given orders . . . the time of the year is bad . . . the people are disorderly." The gatekeeper leaves, muttering under his breath. Mr. H still, for some time, stands erect near the window, not breathing. I draw him over to a seat beside the table and say:

"I ought to go, shouldn't I?"

"No--these dogs rely on their master's power and influence! They're always troubling people this way." Mr. H angrily curses. This expletive also gives me a little satisfaction.

"Recently the population is really too much! With it the way it is no wonder they are getting rich!" I think to assuage Mr. H's anger.

"Extreme! Because it is extreme must we then freeze people to death?" Mr. H's anger leaves off with a sigh. Mrs. H then interjects an unnecessary opinion. I then also decide seriously to stay.
There is only one bed and that is narrow. Just from the viewpoint of it normally sleeping two people, the bed still can not be considered overly large. Accordingly we then begin to discuss the question of sleeping arrangements. Mr. H. advocated that they sleep on the floor allowing me the bed. He reasons that I am ill. This reasoning of course won't stand. Mr. H's wife was not well herself. As for me, a vagrant accustomed to sleeping in a dormitory, any place at all is fine. In my turn I demur that I want them to sleep as they usually do. I only want some place to lay my head and that will be fine. In any case, there is the wall hearth, and going to sleep below the wall hearth with the added comfort of my overcoat seems just fine. Mr H and I argue, and Mr. H's wife only smiles. She has no suggestion. In the end, it is as I had said before: they open out one of their two quilts for me, and the springs of the bed sink beneath them.

In this way, each covered by his overcoat, we sleep. My cough at this time is as if it has been forgotten--already it has not appeared for a long time. I lay down and with one hand repeatedly, waveringly . . . I stroke the base of the hearth; my wide-open eyes stare hard at the white-limned window opposite me; and in my heart I feel a kind of peace such as I have rarely experienced.

I can hear the snoring of Mr. H and his wife. Thinking about their too troubled day, it is fitting that they should rest. I am anxious that my cough should not again start to cause trouble.

Here it is not as quiet as at the place where I stay. At this hour one could still hear the annoying sounds of the street. I was
thinking, shouldn't all those different men have returned to the dormitory by now? Exhaling the stink of wine and chewing on their low grade cigarettes . . . telling strange stories . . . . tonight they will certainly be pleased; my coughing will not again disturb their conversation and the quiet of their sleep. Now they should be in the midst of debating their advantages and disadvantages. That bald-headed street sweeper should again be singing a ditty . . . and, and . . . it is the time when my coughing would be most severe--thinking of this, something in my throat starts to scratch and claw like some small living creature. I don't dare move. I lightly cover my mouth with my hand which had been stroking the base of the hearth. In this way even if I cough I still will not make a lot of noise, and the people on the bed also will not be rudely awakened. They certainly are tired enough, otherwise how could they sleep so pleasantly? If the job is suitable--the sum would certainly not amount to a figure like Mr. H estimated--I must go to a doctor for an examination. My sickness will gradually pass, and in sleeping at night, certainly I too will be able to find a calm such as theirs--I am shaken several times by light coughing; just like a caged beast bumping against his pen.

Just then there is a slight disturbance and immediately my thoughts also totally turn to follow this disturbance . . . . from outside the gate comes the chug--chug--chug of an automobile like it had already halted. However, I still did not hear the horn being tooted. I wonder---is this another "nighttime inspection"? In my dormitory
the Japanese Kenpeitaig, acting with the local police, and also detectives with pistols in their hands . . . often investigate. This situation is very similar. There also is only the chug—chug—chug, also the horn not tooted, only the time should be a little later than this. I think to awaken Mr. H so that he can prepare should something be developing outside that could lead to trouble. Like proscribed novels and manuscripts.

However, before I have time to call Mr. H, my cough starts up again. I wait until after I spit what wants spitting out, and my coughing is finished. The chugging sound can no longer be heard; there is only the voice and laughter of a woman, and the very confused sound of footsteps. I feel a little more at ease; perhaps it isn't a nighttime investigation by the KPT. Most likely it is the landlord's daughters just now returning from some affair. I have often seen Mr. H's landlord's daughters, and the clothing they wear is exceedingly extravagant.

The door of the building is not far from Mr. H's window, approximately several tens of steps. I clearly hear that doorman, right at the entranceway, reporting to his master the matter of my staying with Mr. H, and adding, "That person was wearing very shabby clothing, he looked like a . . . ."

"You call Mr. H and tell him that I said that the police station has ordered, the conditions of the year are too unsettled, and no one dares guarantee who . . . . Further, say that if his friend insists on

8. From the Japanese, kenpe: gendarme. An organization similar in function to that of the Gestapo or KGB.
staying here, then, it only goes to say that I'll call the branch office and request them to come investigate a man. Naturally the KPT must also learn of this." There is the sound of the door and the laughter of the girls follows, also closed in by the door. However, indistinctly, the laughter does not break off.

This time the gate keeper's fingers rap against the glass a little noisier than before.

"What is it?" Mr. H had probably also been awakened by the chug--chug--chug of the car. However, he is still lying as before and the sound of his voice is gravelly and ragged; I look for my hat in the dark, my overcoat has long been well prepared.

"My master says the police department has recently given an order and the Japanese KPT has too. The time of the year is too confused, and no one dares guarantee who . . . . your friend . . . is he still going to stay here?"

As he reaches this point I am already snapping the light switch. Mr. H sees me go to open the door. He jumps to the floor, crosses, and grabs my hand saying off to the side, "MY FRIEND IS STAYING AND THAT'S IT. MY ROOM IS PAID FOR--what are you doing? With it cold like this, why do you want to go? As late as it is, where will you go? I am determined that you stay, considering the methods of these dogs . . . ."

H's wife is also awakened, her eyes grown wide with a look of incomprehension. Because of the strength with which H grasps my hand I again begin to cough.
"... our landlord says, if he insists on staying he will then notify the police precinct office and the Japanese KPT, and tell them to come investigate and there will certainly be trouble ... ."

"This is inconvenient! Mr. H! Don't!" I pass Mr. H a hinting look, at the same time drawing two crosses on his hand. It seemed that he comprehended the kind of danger, but, with his hand still stubbornly gripping me, he said:

"Too late, too cold, and you are sick."

"Nuhh-uhh! Anything is better than calling the KPT to come and forcibly pour "hot pepper" water, you understand, don't you?—-the cold won't kill!" Finally completely disregarding his strength, I pulled away from Mr. H's hand. Going out the main gate from Mr. H's place, that gatekeeper, by way of a joke, deliberately shut that heavy, iron gate with a thunderous clang causing my heart to leap into my throat.

I don't know with what kind of endurance, bearing the cold, bearing the slashing river wind, which came directly from the front, I ran back to the dormitory. Directly, I knocked at the door for almost half an hour---naturally I grew concerned about other people's quiet sleep---the old one only then, with a muttering, chattering mouth, opened the door. Then, mindless of the old one's mutterings, together with the annoyed talk of the men in the room, I held nothing in mind, but one thought: "Death be quick! No use wasting tomorrow's sunshine, or waiting until I kill myself!"
Altogether I lay in bed for two days. On the morning of the third day I had to go to that place. I knew that if I had lost this job already in my hands, I would probably forever more be unable to have any job given me, and until my death I would be an unemployed wraith seeking work! I crept out of bed, the coughing seemed lessened a little; however, everytime I coughed, in comparison with before, it seemed different; again it was like a new complication. I examined the inside of the spitoon which I had provided under my bed, and seeing that rotten matter I could not but feel somewhat heartsick for awhile! The old one came across and rested his hand on the edge of my bed and tremulously said:

"Are . . . you . . . a little . . . better? A friend of yours came by; he . . . he told me . . . not to allow you to go out . . . . he is going to come again in the evening. . . ." Tears flowed incessantly from the old one's eyes. The skin on his two trembling cheeks was rubbed raw and there were already discernable cracks in the skin. I knew that it was Mr. H who had come. Other than he, no other person would come to me here. I felt that my strength was too little and spoke to the old one:

"Fix a stick for me. Anything at all will do just so long as it's a little strong."

"You want to go out again?" I nodded my head a little without answering.
"It would be better not to go out yet. Aiiee! The stubbornness of youth can not be helped . . . ." He wiped the nasal drip from his beard and, continuing to speak, gave me the thick, coarse stick which he used himself.

"Go early and return soon . . . not in the black of night like two days ago . . . ."

It is during the day, the sun is out, and there is no need to bury my chin in my collar. But my shoes! The hole which had started near the front seems still bigger. This is certainly the result of my excessive haste on the journey home that night. It is no matter, in any case, if I still have a job, I can then get it mended. If not that, I ought to buy a pair, and indeed I should. Is it to be considered extravagant to have a pair of shoes a year? I'm always walking.

Although it is sunny, it still is cold! The enduring wind sweeps and cuts a person's face and ears. It certainly seems not to have let up any. Anyway, it isn't night. The packed snow on the ground on which I walk seems still more firm.

The police office (at present changed to "bureau") is very familiar to me. I had been a clerk there for three years. In the second year of my clerkship you as yet did not see Japanese officials here. From 1932 onwards, the Japanese officials were everywhere like

9. My understanding of the "shoe" in question, as well as those mentioned later, is that they were crudely constructed from leather pieces which were folded into gathers in front and at the sides, and sewn, both meeting at and forming the top of the shoe. These shoes were fastened by ankle wrappings, and stuffed with paper or cloth for insulation against the cold.
flies. Because I was careless once, I offended a small fly . . . .

That was to say that he and I were of the same official rank, but the salary of Japanese employees was five times greater than mine . . . .

Reaching the front of that door I am really ashamed because of my poverty, and at the same time there seems to be a little fear--fearful of what--I myself don't know. My heart pounds quite fearfully! I begin to cough . . . .

The guard posted at the entrance certainly is not troublesome. He, knocking the heavy and clumsy boots on his feet together to clean them, says, "Is it you? I haven't seen you in over a year!"

"Umm!"

The man responsible for recommendations is my old superior officer. He first explains the situation in which I would be working, then writes several words on a visiting card and gives it to me, saying, "Do well. At first you'll be an assistant clerk. Don't object to a small salary there. The affairs of the Provost Marshall's office¹⁰ are not related to salary, but depend entirely on a monthly division of rewards!" His eyes take in the area and then turn to me as he says, "You don't want to offend them again (indicating the Japanese)!

"Umm!" I understand this new job. I will begin as a clerk in the "investigation and arrest department." I know the commanding officer. One of his eyes is blinded and he has lost three fingers on one hand . . . . in any case I must go to see him immediately.

¹⁰ Literally, investigation and arrest organization.
"Thank you section leader!" I still call him section leader although at present he is no longer head of the section, but only assists the Japanese head in managing affairs.

"Do a good job! If we all work together we'll all share in the rice bowl!"

Coughing, dragging that rough stick . . . walking . . . .

On the way I become a little confused. I know what the Provost Marshall's office does. I also know that the people in the Provost Marshall's office are certainly to be feared! The greater part are despicable men who have entered public service. Is it not a little unfitting to be associated with these people? Everyday one must do his utmost to seize people, torture people . . . . just so one's salary will perhaps be a little more? So long as one's salary is a little more, then everything is O. K. I'll wait two months and see. At that time if I feel it unfitting, I'll reconsider. It will definitely be a little easier to look for a job if I already am employed. In any case, I'm a clerk and will not be apprehending people and torturing people.

The orderly in front leading me passes through several sections of complicated catwalks. The foot of the walls of these catwalks are filled by men shod in stiched leather wrappings, small-footed women, old women, old men, and children . . . all are there, all shabbily dressed. I guess that if these aren't related to the prisoners, then they are.principles in lawsuits or village neighbors who have been involved. They are very quiet and do not look like they are thinking
of running. Also, I am unable to discern any ropes or manacles. Two tall policemen are making their rounds on the catwalks. As I pass they stop, stand, and look at me. Then, one, using the club in his hand to point to the rough stick in my hand, says, "Leave it, you are not allowed to bring it inside--what is your business?" The word "what" is emphasized by a low tone.

"Yes, yes!" My eyes, in a manner imploring help look toward the orderly who is leading the way. I speak:

"I am the assistant clerk. I am new here. I must see the commanding officer!"

"He's been ordered to the government department over there," the orderly makes this unnecessary explanation, addressed to the guard.

"To see the commanding officer you carry that toy . . . . isn't that a little unwise?" However, he says this jokingly. But although he laughs, there is still something of loutish impudence about him!

"Uh-huh!" I reply, giving him the thick stick. The people sitting on both sides of the catwalk raise their faces and look, then again hang them in confusion.

The atmosphere of this place is prickly, changing the taste in my mouth and oppressive to my breathing. Owing to it, from time to time I still have to remind myself--you have come here to be a clerk, you have not committed a crime, they can not beat you. Here, every month there will be a salary given you . . . . what is there to fear?
In this frame of mind, the orderly conveys me, like as if I were the ghost of one who had died of an injustice. Suddenly, I am there, in the presence of the one-eyed commander.

"That's him." The orderly leaves. Rid of his responsibility, he walks away. In the small room there is just me and this one-eyed commander. He is drinking tea quietly; he kneads the card from my sponsor in the hand with the missing fingers, repeatedly looking and looking again. After a long while I realize that he can't read, that he can't even write his own name. Does he even know what he is looking at now? I forget my earlier uneasiness and want to laugh; however, I substitute a cough for the laughter.

"You're called Li . . . Li what?" He strongly emphasizes the last word.

"Li Ho . . . isn't it written on that card?"

"Ooh . . . that's right. On this card it is clearly written that you are called Li Ho . . . why didn't you come the day before yesterday?"

"I was ill!"

"You were ill? At so young an age to be sick? What illness?"

"Cold and sore throat," I lie.

He lightly puts his tea cup on the table, his one eye on my face, takes in my whole body . . . begins to roam. I have two very healthy eyes, however they dare not meet this single eye. I can only hang my head insecurely and am unable to control or focus my thoughts.
It seems as if my fate is clutched in the hands of this "One Eye." I have the remote feeling that my forehead is breaking out in perspiration!

If that One Eye's fat, red face were to be matched with the altered expression of my face, it certainly would be very interesting. It is regrettable there is no third person alongside—someone introduces an exploratory head inside the office saying, "The preparations are completed."

"Wait here for now, I'm going to check, then I'll come back." He swaggers as he leaves. There is only me left in the office.

On the walls there is no ornamentation except for very many pistols and daggers hanging there, and "body armor." These naturally had been used by apprehended criminals. I can't think—what could this "One Eye" have gone to do? From the next room the sounds of severe shouting and swallowed, strangled moaning come out to me. I restrain my coughing and hold my breath, thinking to hear more clearly. There then begins the bellowing voice of the commander "One Eye."

"Talk—where is your gun kept? Altogether, how many guns are there? How much ammunition? Also, tell us how much cash you have . . . who are your companions? They have all taken off (with the intention of hiding) . . . . Talk—save us some trouble!"

"Your honor . . . . I'm really a good man!" This voice tremblingly interjects, half like a dog whining.
"BAS . . . TARD!! Who asked you if you were a good man or not? This matter can't be accomplished without a beating. Come, give him a hundred blows to start with . . . .

The shouting inside alternates with a heavy, trembling . . . sound of wood coming against flesh! "I'll talk . . . . I'll talk." For a moment it is again quiet. And again there is the voice of "One Eye":

"Talk fast, otherwise, if you don't talk, there will be no pardon --take the bar.

There is the thudding of a bar thrown on the ground, causing a slight vibration through the entire room where I am.

"Talk!----"

"Your honor! I . . . I . . . really am a good man, uhhh . . . ."

"BAST . . . TARD! Press . . . ."

"Your honor . . . your honor . . . your hon . . . ." The voice trails off! The sound of my thudding heart also dies away. Directly coughing brings me back to life.

The one eye flashing, swaggering, he comes in and with ordinary calm says to me:

"For the present, go home and rest a day. Come at 8:00 tomorrow to begin work. I can't say exactly when one will have to go out to deal with a case nor can I say exactly when there will be 'testimony' . . . . You must be here all the time. . . . fifteen dollars a month, you don't want to consider it a small salary . . . you are assistant
clerk. Detectives all get this amount! Those in the government affairs of the Provost Marshall's office are not ones to talk of salary. Do you understand? So long as you do your job, with the commander there has never been the question of 'money' . . . understand? Your sponsor, Police Assistant Wang—we are old friends . . . ."

"Um--humm." This reply is as if it comes from another.

The job changed everything. In the dormitory recently I have also achieved a kind of power and authority. I could cough throughout the night, and it would seem that I would be badgered and cursed by no one. The old one opened the door during the night and he opened it quickly. Still, I have made up my mind. After receiving my first pay, I will move to a better place. This place is too cold and gloomy. The wall, half buried in the ground, was, in a manner, alive with fish scales of frost, like crystalized salt. There is always the disturbance of rats and mice, night after night, through the entire night; moreover, there is often the smell of stinking horse manure brought back by the street sweeper . . . finally . . . there still is . . . in my eyes this room in recent days, the more I have come here, the more it has come to be a manifestation of those things evil and repulsive. Evil and repulsive like an old country granny. It is drawing near to me in a way that I am unable to cast off. Although everytime I go out in the street I still must bury my chin in my collar, tug on my cap . . . the gaps in my shoes and my cough have not decreased. When I am paid, all this can be set right.
The one-eyed commander's trust in me also seems to have increased proportionately with every day's unerring work. When I started, I usually copied unimportant documents and read documents to him. I forgot that he was that fearful "One Eye," and the somewhat revolting impression of the hand with the cut-off fingers even reached a point where this seemed completely natural and suitable to him. Also, I was unable to think of this in terms of it being a life rising in the midst of despicable bandits. Then, even those pistols and daggers hanging on the wall, the "body armor"... the punishment room prepared with wooden poles, ice water kettles, whips, and even the thick wooden board which it was necessary to use every day to hit the palms of the hands of prisoners, and the square wooden stool with the hole in the middle with a leather harness attached... all were unable to rouse any feeling of estrangement and agitation. If today I have reached this end in my responses, I must be just like a piece of furniture and not have any ordinary feelings at all! However, I am still not hardened to the daily moans of the prisoners. Perhaps it will become a habit eventually? This is to say that I am not always able to watch "testimony." One time the one-eyed commander, a pleased look on his face, said to me:

"You handle matters very efficiently. From tomorrow on will you remember something? I am raising you to the status of regular clerk. There will be an increase of five dollars a month. You won't forget? A five dollar a month raise! You need only do your job well. The commander is not one to quibble about 'money'..."
"Umm!" . . . I was coughing. Still I would remember. He always put forth the word money especially tantalizingly in every sentence.

At the time when I first occupied the position of regular clerk I was a little uneasy. What was I to do? I looked blankly around the room for an answer. As usual the room was vast, ominous, . . . the people also are, as a rule, busy . . . the prisoners came in through a door in the side, with two detectives accompanying them, with a care like that with which one accompanies a new bride. As usual the "instruments of justice" were squatting at the side, immovable and capable. The one-eyed commander's place was in front of the farthest wall in the room, and my position was close to him but at an inclined writing table. On the right side, in the same manner, was the same kind of table where sits my colleague, in a manner somewhat mechanical and a little bored . . . lacking my discomfort . . . .

The one-eyed commander was drinking tea, the redness of his face still not the least bit altered. His hand quite naturally slapped the table once, and he quietly said, "Bring one up . . . ." The words were flat and toneless except that the tail of each word was stressed and drawn out.

There was no reply detected by me . . . .

I began to prepare and it seemed that I sucked on the brush almost one hundred times, and resolutely put it down on its stand; the paper also was squared up in place, snow white and smooth. And I si-
lently gazed at the printed columns on it ... thinking, in the first column I should fill out the name ... next the age ... next ... These were my preparations prior to being raised to the position of full clerk, and had early become routine. The hand in which I held the brush had a slight, unrestrainable shake ... a slight tremble ... I didn't dare raise my head and look at the prisoner in front of me; I occupied myself with fixing my eyes on those things which were on the table.

My handwriting then was a bit poor and unnatural. My ears were unable to relent from listening! Listening ... except for the voices of the one-eyed commander and the prisoner the room had a kind of leaden stillness!

"... TALK! Friend--good fellow, act like a man; how many years have you been a leader? (That is, of the rebels). Tell me, where is your 'lair'? How many times have you been to the whorehouses in the city? Your assistant has already told everything. Talk ... lying will get you nowhere ... ."

"Oh! Your honor, I'm a good man, ahhh ... ."

"BAST ... TARD!" The one-eyed commander sat up straight in his chair. He laid his elbows on the edge of the table and knit his seven fingers, cocking his head savagely to one side. He continued to speak:

"I'm allowing you to save face, huh--do you understand? A friendly understanding of well meaning friends. You don't want to
play the 'meat-head' here—quick, tell the truth . . . at whose house do you always stay in the city? Tell the truth. I certainly am not going to offend you . . . would you like a cigarette? . . . have a smoke!"

". . . Commander, your honor, I'm really a good man! My ancestors through the ages have plowed the land . . . I have never so much as even stolen another person's chicken . . . I have a wife and eight children . . . The biggest is fifteen . . . I swear, if I have ever done even once anything, may my entire family be slaughtered . . . As heaven has eyes . . . " The prisoner's voice was somewhat similar to the one I listened to in the next room the first time. But on no account could it be him. I knew that sentence had been passed on him earlier. This was a man who was apprehended and brought in only that morning— I peeped at him with one eye. This was a bearded man with a small queue hanging from the back of his head, already disheveled! His face was purple and mottled and a little swollen. He made as if actually to take a cigarette from a detective, but the lout said he couldn't smoke. The commander, his one eye laughing, spoke:

". . . friend! Be a little brave. This is nothing. Good fellow, be a man . . . smoke a cigarette . . . We'll chat . . . If you're hungry, in a while we can call a restaurant for food . . . TALK . . . ."

". . . I'm really a good man . . . ."
"BAST . . . TARD . . . You don't understand friendship . . . you want to deny the evidence. Fasten his hands . . . ."

Before the board comes in contact with the palms of their hands the first time, all of them say, " . . . commander, your honor . . . I'm really a good man . . . . I swear . . . ."

My body seems light and weak. I come out from the office. Or the two sides of the catwalk there no longer are those people, sitting and waiting, their arms embracing their knees. The brilliance of the sun, slanting from the window of the catwalk, projects on the wall extremely red, deep-burning, lonely . . . .

One hand is stuck in the pocket of my overcoat. The hand clutches the tightly wadded salary which was paid out today. In addition to the wages of regular clerk and assistant clerk, there is a five dollar bonus from the one-eyed commander and a three-fifty share of the reward for "clearing up a case" which everyone received! Although I am not an investigator who "clears up cases," still I had my share. This still is not up to thirty dollars, yet I have hopes . . . "so long as you manage well and efficiently, there will be many cases and everyone will have a little extra on the side . . . the commander has never been one to quibble about 'money' . . . . the commander has never been one to quibble about money . . . ." The one-eyed commander frequently speaks in this way. Today he gave me a five dollar bonus and yet again, spoke to me in this manner.
Bemused. Going out the door, I encounter several guards, faces red, beckoning hands, calling, "It's payday."

Still, as usual, following every road I take are those resonant footsteps . . . hollow footsteps . . . . I don't know, where shall I go? The dormitory is not a place to return to. Cold, gloomy, the walls alive with frost, like crystallized salt . . . .

"I can still go to Mr. H's! I should invite him to a glass of wine or to eat a little something . . . . I haven't seem him in a long time . . . also, I should invite his wife. Every time I go there, first thing, she always gives me a not cup of tea . . . ."

The banknotes in my palm grow damp, walking, I calculate how I should have to dispose of these: ten dollars for eating, ten dollars for lodging, doctor's examination, shoes also should be repaired, it's still a long time until Spring, undershirt and hat . . . perhaps that won't do . . . further, the one-eyed commander says I must get a hair-cut . . . the cutting of hair . . . official orders . . . still . . . still the old one . . . at least should give him a dollar . . . especially since in over a year . . . haven't given a copper . . . I also ought to send money home . . . it's been a year of famine . . . still, besides these, everything else blurred in my thoughts! Is it due to fatigue and the extreme effort of carrying things out through the day? Now, though I try to recall, still I can't remember and draw a breath in the chill twilight . . . .
The door to Mr. H's place still makes that rasping sound. I wipe my feet and knock twice on the door frame.

"Come in, please ...." It is H's voice. The lamp in the room is not lit yet.

"Is it you?" Mr. H stands up and sits again.

"Yes ...." Mr. H doesn't turn on the lamp.

"Where is your wife?" Encountering the warm air, I begin to cough.

"Gone out--how are you doing? How's your cold?"

"Still better. The cold seems a little better, I can't say for sure. Perhaps it's worse! Until I am examined by a doctor I won't be able to know for sure .... I've been paid."

"That's fine!"

While I am talking about being payed, I have already pulled from my pocket my hand clenching the wadded bills. I want to show Mr. H, intending that he should see that the amount was definitely not as little as he had anticipated. Most important of which was my share of the portioning of the general reward money, and the one-eyed commander's five dollar bonus. However, I don't know why, but I don't do this. Moreover, I don't even tell him the amount, but again conceal it inside my pocket.

"I want to treat you to a drink--will you go? Your wife too."

I am very anxious to assure myself that he can not refuse me. In the past we have often drunk wine together.
"No. Today I am not able--"

"Why can't you today?"

"There's no need to talk about it--are there many cases every day? And recently?" Mr. H inhales sharply.

"Quite a few. The most numerous cases are of rebels, petty thieves, and murderers, also . . . ."

"How about political prisoners?--that is people who oppose the Japanese and Manchukou . . . those prisoners?"

"There are also quite a few of them . . . . Today I assisted my commander in carrying out an interrogation." My memory is jogged a little.

"Today? You? Do you often act as an assistant?" Mr. H stands up and confusedly walks twice around the floor.

"Uhh-huh! Recently he trusts me very much. If the case is not important, then it is turned over to me for interrogation."

"What sort of person did you question today?--Do you often use torture?"

"This really isn't . . . ." I cough and continue speaking:

"Most of the ones I question don't confess . . . . Those who don't confess, then, are returned to the commander for questioning . . . I now ask you . . . . Probably a tubercular . . . because he also coughed . . . . It induced me to cough too for a very long time . . . . Surname was Feng, I can't remember his given name . . . appeared to be in his thirties! Lean . . . very poor complexion . . . forehead very broad, not much hair, sharp, pointed chin . . . probably nearsighted
... one eye was closed ... his face was also a little bloodstained ... only one lense of his glasses left—over his good eye ... ."

"What dialect?"

"Can't say for sure--"

"How did you question him?" Mr. H seems to have an especial interest. I, too, forget that I have not yet eaten supper, and I gradually relinquish the bills in my hand to lay at peace in my pocket. In place of holding the money, I rub my ears and chin . . . .

"How was he questioned? This was a bit unpleasant! Now, your bringing it up again makes it seem as if I see it again, and thinking about him makes me feel uncomfortable . . . still, he was an obstinate person. I asked him, 'Why do you want to oppose Manchukuo?' He said, very naturally, 'I don't know--probably because I'm unwilling to be a slave!' He looked straight at me with one eye. According to custom, I asked him something like, 'Tell us who your fellow party members are--' 'You running dogs will never be able to understand what a slave is! . . . fellow party members? You find out yourselves.' Because he irritated them, the detectives became angry and smacked his face several times . . . ." At this point my voice shakes a little. I stop for a moment and Mr. H inhales sharply and says:

"Was he beaten again later? Did he confess to anything?"

"No. They didn't beat him again. They didn't question him. I only told them to take him away. What happened afterward, I can't say. He is not with the prisoners . . . his voice sounded to me as if he was a good man."
"And now?"

"Before the sun had fallen, they brought him into the office of criminal cases. It is approximately just across the hall from the Japanese section head, Eguchi! There is very little difference between life and death; these are political prisoners. We only summarily question them. And at the end of the month we too are among those who get a cut of the reward."

There is a sound outside the door. I casually turn the light on. It is Mr. H's wife returning. I call across a greeting. She calls Mr. H into their small kitchen. In a moment they come out.

I speak: "Let's go, huh. We'll go drink a cup. Mrs. H, I've gotten paid."

"Uhh-huh. There's no need!" Mr. H, continuing, says to his wife, "A moment, then you'll go again! If she looks after the children well, then it will be O.K. Also, we'll think of some way to manage at this stage--we must give her this news too." Continuing, he again speaks to me:

"Your share of the reward next month will definitely be still more, won't it?" Mr. H is expressionless, except that his mouth tightens.

"Ohh!" Coughing, I quickly thrust my hands into my pockets and leave. But this time my hands experience an unusual coldness and trembling as never before encountered!

Nighttime, January 7, 1935.
Excerpt from the afterward to the collection of stories in Yang:

"It is worthwhile to say a word to the readers: that person Li Ho, in 'The Job', is already dead! I still have the black cap which he left me."

Nighttime, September 18, 1935—Shanghai.
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